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Austria, May 9, 1972

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AUSTRIA, MAY 9, 1972

Passing strange to read
the papers in German here:
die Amerikanische Luftwaffe
half a world away
poised for God knows
what last Nixonian thunder
before the last silence
and twilight of the gods.

Watching the mountain
I read in the apple orchard,
bask like a lizard
in the morning sun.

In my landlord's hall
the framed photo hangs,
shows him proud, erect
in Luftwaffe uniform
beside his shining
tri-motor training plane.

Now he limps among his apple trees,
scything the long grass, heaping it
in rings around the trunks. He props
the leaning trees with sticks, gives
them canes like the one he leans on.

The mountain is lost in a cloud;
in the orchard the sun still shines,
and bees drone in the apple-blossoms;
the birds are unperturbed;
from the mountain comes mutter of thunder.