

James Webb

*I do not live in this world alone, but in a thousand worlds (Dreams of Franz Kafka)*

2019

Dream 1 (Undated, 1910. Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." Pg: 10-12)

"In a dream I asked the dancer Eduardova to dance the Czardas just one time more. She had a broad streak of shadow or light across the middle of her face between the lower part of her forehead and the cleft of her chin. Just then someone with the loathsome gestures of an unconscious intriguer approached to tell her the train was leaving immediately. The manner in which she listened to this announcement made it terribly clear to me that she would not dance again. 'I am a wicked, evil woman, am I not?' she said. 'Oh no,' I said, 'not that,' and turned away aimlessly."

Dream 2 (2 October 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." Pg: 85-87)

"The horrible apparition last night of a blind child, apparently the daughter of my aunt in Leitmeritz who, however, has no daughter but only sons, one of whom once broke his leg. On the other hand there were resemblances between this child and Dr M.'s daughter who, as I have recently seen, is in the process of changing from a pretty child into a stout, stiffly dressed little girl. This blind or weak-sighted child had both eyes covered by a pair of glasses, the left, under a lens held at a certain distance from the eye, was milky-grey and bulbous, the other receded and was covered by a lens lying close against it. In order that this eyeglass might be set in place with optical correctness it was necessary, instead of the usual support going behind the ears, to make use of a lever, the head of which could be attached to no place but the cheekbone, so that from this lens a little rod descended to the cheek, there disappeared into the pierced flesh and ended on the bone, while another small wire rod came out and went back over the ear."

Dream 3 (9 October 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." From: "I walked through a long row of houses..." – a dream" Pg: 100-102)

"I walked – whether Max was there right at the start I don't know – through a long row of houses at the level of the first or second floor, just as one walks through a tunnel from one carriage to another. I walked very quickly, perhaps also because the house was so rickety that for that reason alone one hurried. The doors between the houses I did not notice at all, it was just a gigantic row of rooms, and yet not only the differences between the individual apartments but also between the houses were recognizable. They were perhaps all rooms with beds through which I went. One typical bed has remained in my memory. It stood at the side to the left of me against the dark or dirty wall, which sloped like an attic's, perhaps had a low pile of bedclothes, and its cover, really only a coarse sheet crumpled by the feet of the person who had slept here, hung down in a point. I felt abashed to walk through people's rooms at a time when many of them were still lying in their beds, therefore took long strides on tiptoes, by which I somehow or other hoped to show that I was passing through only by compulsion, was as considerate of everything as was at all possible, walked softly, and that my passing through did not, as it were, count at all. Therefore, too, I never

turned my head in any one room and saw only either what lay on the right towards the street or on the left towards the back wall.

The row of houses was often interrupted by brothels; and although I was making this journey seemingly because of them, I walked through them especially quickly so that I remember nothing except that they were there. However, the last room of all the houses was again a brothel, and here I remained. The wall across from the door through which I entered, therefore the last wall of the row of houses, was either of glass or merely broken through, and if I had walked on I should have fallen. It is even more probable that it "was broken through, for the whores lay towards the edge of the floor. Two I saw clearly on the ground, the head of one hung down a little over the edge into the open air. To the left was a solid wall, on the other hand the wall on the right was not finished, you could see down into the court, even if not to the bottom of it, and a ramshackle grey staircase led down in several flights. To judge by the light in the room the ceiling was like that in the other rooms. I occupied myself chiefly with the whore whose head was hanging down, Max with the one lying beside her on the left. I fingered her legs and then for a long time pressed the upper parts of her thighs in regular rhythm. My pleasure in this was so great that I wondered that for this entertainment, which was after all really the most beautiful kind, one still had to pay nothing. I was convinced that I (and I alone) deceived the world. Then the whore, without moving her legs, raised the upper part of her body and turned her back to me, which to my horror was covered with large sealing-wax-red circles with paling edges, and red splashes scattered among them. I now noticed that her whole body was full of them, that I was "pressing my thumb to her thighs in just such spots, and that there were these little red particles – as though from a crumbled seal – on my fingers too. I stepped back among a number of men who seemed to be waiting against the wall near the opening of the stairway, on which there was a small amount of traffic. They were waiting in the way men in the country stand together in the market place on Sunday morning. Therefore it was Sunday too. It was here that the comic scene took place, when a man I and Max had reason to be afraid of went away, then came up the stairs, then stepped up to me, and while I and Max anxiously expected some terrible threat from him, put a ridiculously simple-minded question to me. Then I stood there and with apprehension watched Max, who, without fear in this place, was sitting on the ground somewhere to the left eating a thick potato soup out of which the potatoes peeped like large balls, especially one. He pushed them down into the soup with his spoon, perhaps with two spoons, or just turned them."

Dream 4 (29 October 1911. Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." From "I dreamed today of a donkey..." Pg: 133-135)

"I dreamed today of a donkey that looked like a greyhound, it was very cautious in its movements. I looked at it closely because I was aware how unusual a phenomenon it was, but remember only that its narrow human feet could not please me because of their length and uniformity. I offered it a bunch of fresh, dark-green cypress leaves which I had just received from an old Zürich lady (it all took place in Zürich), it did not want it, just sniffed a little at it; but then, when I left the cypress on a table, it devoured it so completely that only a scarcely recognizable kernel resembling a chestnut was left. Later there was talk that this donkey had never yet gone on all fours but always held itself erect like a human being and showed its silvery shining breast and its little belly. But actually that was not correct."

Dream 5 (29 October 1911. Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." From "I dreamed today of a donkey..." Pg: 133-135)

"I dreamed about an Englishman whom I met at a meeting like the one the Salvation Army held in Zürich. There were seats there like those in school, under the blackboard there was even an open shelf; once when I reached in to "straighten something I wondered at the ease with which one makes friends on a trip. By this apparently was meant the Englishman, who shortly thereafter approached me. He had loose, light clothes in very good condition, but high up on the back of the arms, instead of the material of the clothing, or at least sewn on over it, there was a grey, wrinkled material, hanging a little, torn in strips, stippled as though by spiders, that reminded one as much of the leather reinforcements on riding-breeches as of the sleeve protectors of seamstresses, sales-girls, clerks. His face was also covered with a grey material that had very clever slits for mouth, eyes, probably also for the nose. But this material was new, napped, rather like flannel, very flexible and soft, of excellent English manufacture. All this pleased me so, that I was eager to become acquainted with the man. He wanted to invite me to his house too, but since I had to leave as soon as the day after tomorrow, that came to nothing. Before he left the meeting he put on several more apparently very practical pieces of clothing that made him look quite inconspicuous after he had buttoned them. Although he could not invite me to his home, he nevertheless asked me to go into the street with him. I followed him, we stopped across the street from the meeting-place on the curb, I below, he above, and found again after some discussion that nothing could be done about the invitation."

Dream 6 (29 October 1911. Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." From: "I dreamed today of a donkey..." Pg: 133-135)

"Then I dreamed that Max, Otto, and I had the habit of packing our trunks only when we reached the railway station. There we were, carrying our shirts, for example, through the main hall to our distant trunks. Although this seemed to be a general custom, it was not a good one in our case, especially since we had begun to pack only shortly before the arrival of the train. Then we were naturally excited and had hardly any hope of still catching the train, let alone getting good seats."

Dream 7 (7 November, but written about on 9 November 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." From: "Everything theatre' – a dream" Pg: 193-196)

"Everything theatre, I now up in the balcony, now on the stage, a girl whom I had liked a few months ago was playing a part, tensed her lithe body when she held on to the back of a chair in terror; from the balcony I pointed to the girl who was playing a male role, my companion did not like her. In one act the set was so large that nothing else was to be seen, no stage, no auditorium, no dark, no footlights; instead, great crowds of spectators were on the set which represented the Altstädter Ring, probably seen from the opening of Niklasstrasse. Although one should really not have been able to see the square in front of the Rathaus clock and the small Ring, short turns and slow rockings of the stage floor nevertheless made it possible to look down, for example, on the small Ring from Kinsky Palace. This had no purpose except to show the whole set whenever possible, since it was already there in such perfection anyhow, and since it would have been a crying shame to miss seeing any of this set which, as I was well aware, was the most beautiful set in all the world

and of all time. The lighting was that of dark, autumnal clouds. The light of the dimmed sun was scatteredly reflected from one or another stained-glass window on the south-east side of the square. Since everything was executed in life size and without the smallest false detail, the fact that some of the casement windows were blown open and shut by the slight breeze without a sound because of the great height of the houses, made an overwhelming impression. The square was very steep, the pavement almost black, the Tein Church Was in its place, but in front of it was a small imperial castle in the courtyard of which all the monuments that ordinarily stood in the square were assembled in perfect order: the Pillar of St Mary, the old fountain in front of the Rathaus that I myself have never seen, the fountain before the Niklas Church, and a board fence that has now been put up round the excavation for the Hus memorial.

They acted – in the audience one often forgets that it is only acting, how much truer is “this on the stage and behind the scenes – an imperial fête and a revolution. The revolution, with huge throngs of people sent back and forth, was probably greater than anything that ever took place in Prague; they had apparently located it in Prague only because of the set, although really it belonged in Paris. Of the fête one saw nothing at first, in any event, the court had ridden off to a fête, meanwhile the revolution had broken out, the people had forced its ways into the castle, I myself ran out into the open right over the ledges of the fountain in the churchyard, but it was supposed to be impossible for the court to return to the castle. Then the court carriages came from Eisengasse at so wild a pace that they had to brake while still far from the castle entrance, and slid across the pavement with locked wheels. They were the sort of carriages – one sees them at festivals and processions – on which living tableaux are shown, they were therefore flat, hung with garlands of flowers, and from the carriage floors a coloured cloth covering the wheels hung down all around. One was all the more aware of the terror that their speed indicated. As though unconsciously, the horses, which reared before the entrance, pulled the carriages in a curve from Eisengasse to the castle. Just then many people streamed past me out into the square, mostly spectators whom I knew from the street and who perhaps had arrived this very moment. Among them there was also a girl I know, but I do not know which; beside her walked a young, elegant man in a yellowish-brown ulster with small checks, his right hand deep in his pocket. They walked toward Niklasstrasse. From this moment on I saw nothing more. Schiller some place or other: The chief thing, is (or something similar) ‘to transform emotion into character’.”

Dream 8 (19 November 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” From: “In the theatre’ – a dream” Pg: 208-212)

“19 November. Sunday. Dream: In the theatre. Performance of *Das Weite Land* by Schnitzler, adapted by Utitz. I sit right up at the front, think I am sitting in the first row until it finally appears that it is the second. The back of the row is turned towards the stage so that one can see the auditorium comfortably, the stage only by turning. The author is somewhere near by, I can’t hold back my poor opinion of the play which I seem to know from before, but add that the third act is supposed to be witty. With this ‘supposed to be’, however, I mean to say that if one is speaking of the good parts, I do not know the play and must rely on hearsay; therefore I repeat this remark once more, not just for myself, but nevertheless it is disregarded by the others. There is a great crush around me. The audience seems to have come in its winter clothes, everyone fills his seat to overflowing. People beside me, behind me, whom I do not see, interrupt me, point out new arrivals, mention their names, my attention is called especially to a married couple forcing their way along a

row of seats, since the woman has a dark-yellow, mannish, long-nosed face, and besides, as far as one can see in the crowd out of which her head towers, is wearing men's clothes; near me, remarkably free, the actor Löwy, but very unlike the real one, is standing and making excited speeches in which the word 'principium' is repeated, I keep expecting the words 'tertium comparationis', they do not come. In a box in the second tier, really only in a right-hand corner (seen from the stage) of the balcony that connects with the boxes there, a third son of the Kisch family, dressed in a beautiful Prince Albert with its flaps opened wide, stands behind his mother, who is seated, and speaks out into the theatre. Löwy's speeches have a connexion with these speeches. Among other things, Kisch points high up to a spot on the curtain and says, 'There sits the German Kisch,' by this he means my schoolmate who studied Germanics. When the curtain goes up the theatre begins to darken, and Kisch, in order to indicate that he would disappear in any case, marches up and away from the balcony with his mother, again with all his arms, coats, and legs spread wide.

The stage is somewhat lower than the auditorium, you look down with your chin on the back of the seat. The set consists chiefly of two low, thick pillars in the middle of the stage. The scene is a banquet in which girls and young men take part. Despite the fact that when the play began many people in the first rows left, apparently to go backstage, I can see very little, for the girls left behind block the view with their large, flat hats, most of which are blue, that move back and forth along the whole length of the row. Nevertheless, I see a small ten- to fifteen-year-old boy unusually clearly on the stage. He has dry, parted, straight-cut hair. He cannot even place his napkin properly on his lap, must look down carefully when he does, and is supposed to be a man-about-town in this play. In consequence, I no longer have much confidence in this theatre. The company on the stage now waits for various newcomers who come down onto the stage from the first rows of the auditorium. But the play is not well rehearsed, either. Thus, an actress named Hackelberg has just entered, an actor, leaning back in his chair like a man of the world, addresses her as 'Hackel, then becomes aware of his mistake and corrects himself. Now a girl enters whom I know (her name is Frankel, I think), she climbs over the back of the seat right where I am sitting, her back, when she climbs over, is entirely naked, the skin not very good, over the right hip there is even a scratched, bloodshot spot the size of a doorknob. But then, when she turns around on the stage and stands there with a clean face, she acts very well. Now a singing horseman is supposed to approach out of the distance at a gallop, a piano reproduces the clatter of hoofs, you hear the stormy song approaching, finally I see the singer too, who, to give the singing the natural swelling that takes place in a rapid approach, is running along the balcony up above towards the stage. He is not yet at the stage or through with the song and yet he has already passed the climax of haste and shrieking song, and the piano too can no longer reproduce distinctly the sound of hoofs striking against the stones. Both stop, therefore, and the singer approaches quietly, but he makes himself so small that only his head rises above the railing of the balcony, so that you cannot see him very clearly.

With this, the first act is over, but the curtain doesn't come down, the theatre remains dark too. On the stage two critics sit on the floor, writing, with their backs resting against a piece of scenery. A dramatic coach or stage manager with a blond, pointed beard jumps on to the stage, while still in the air he stretches one hand out to give some instructions, in the other hand he has a bunch of grapes that had been in a fruit dish on the banquet table and which he now eats.

Again facing the auditorium I see that it is lit by simple paraffin lamps that are stuck up on simple chandeliers, like those in the streets, and now, of course, burn only very low. Suddenly, impure paraffin or a damaged wick is probably the cause, the light spurts out of one of these lanterns and

sparks pour down in a broad gush on the crowded audience that forms a mass as black as earth. Then a gentleman rises up out of this mass, walks on it towards the lamp, apparently wants to fix the lamp, but first looks up at it, remains standing near it for a short while, and, when nothing happens, returns quietly to his place in which he is swallowed up. I take him for myself and bow my face into the darkness.”

Dream 9 (20 November 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” Pg: 212-213)

“Dream of a picture, apparently by Ingres. The girls in the woods in a thousand mirrors, or rather: the virgins, etc. To the right of the picture, grouped in the same way and airily drawn like the pictures on theatre curtains, there was a more compact group, to the left they sat and lay on a gigantic twig or flying ribbon, or soared by their own power in a chain that rose slowly towards the sky. And now they were reflected not only towards the spectator but also away from him, became more indistinct and multitudinous; what the eye lost in detail it gained in fullness. But in front stood a naked girl untouched by the reflections, her weight on one leg, her hip thrust forward. Here Ingres’s draftsmanship was to be admired, but I actually found with satisfaction that there was too much real nakedness left in this girl even for the sense of touch. From behind her came a gleam of pale, yellowish light.

Dream 10 (8 December 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” Pg: 233)

“I then dreamed that I was in a very narrow but not very tall glass-domed house with two entrances like the impassable passageways in the paintings of Italian primitives, also resembling from the distance an arcade leading off from the rue des Petits Champs that we saw in Paris. Except that the one in Paris was really wider and full of stores, but this one ran along between blank walls, appeared to have scarcely enough room for two people to walk side by side, but when one really entered it, as I did with Mrs Tschissik, there was a surprising amount of room, which did not really surprise us. While I left by one exit with Mrs Tschissik in the direction of a possible observer of all this, and Mrs Tschissik at the same time apologized for some offence or other (it seemed to be drunkenness) and begged me not to believe her detractors, Mr Tschissik, at the second of the house’s two exits, whipped a shaggy, blond St Bernard which stood opposite him on its hind legs. It was not quite clear whether he was just playing with the dog and neglected his wife because of it, or whether he had himself been attacked by the dog in earnest, or whether he wished to keep the dog away from us.”

Dream 11 (13 December 1911, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” Pg: 236-237)

“Because of fatigue did not write and lay now on the sofa in the warm room and now on the one in the cold room, with sick legs and disgusting dreams. A dog lay on my body, one paw near my face. I woke up because of it but was still afraid for a little while to open my eyes and look at it.”

Dream 12 (6 May 1912, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” Pg: 351-353)

“I was riding with my father through Berlin in a tram-car. The big city quality was represented by countless striped toll bars standing upright, finished off bluntly at the ends. Apart from that

everything was almost empty, but there was a great forest of these toll bars. We came to a gate, got out without any sense of getting out, stepped through the gate. On the other side of the gate a sheer wall rose up, which my father ascended almost in a dance, his legs flew out as he climbed, so easy was it for him. There was certainly also some inconsiderateness in the fact that he did not help me one bit, for I got to the top only with the utmost effort, on all fours, often sliding back again, as though the wall had become steeper under me. At the same time it was also distressing that [the wall] was covered with human excrement so that flakes of it clung to me, chiefly to my breast. I looked down at the flakes with bowed head and ran my hand over them.

When at last I reached the top, my father, who by this time was already coming out of a building, immediately fell on my neck and kissed and embraced me. He was wearing an old-fashioned, short Prince Albert, padded on the inside like a sofa, which I remembered well. 'This Dr von Leyden! He is an excellent man,' he exclaimed over and over again. But he had by no means visited him in his capacity as doctor, but rather only as a man worth knowing. I was a little afraid that I should have to go in to see him too, but this wasn't required of me. Behind me to the left I saw, sitting in a room literally surrounded by glass walls, a man who turned his back on me. It turned out that this man was the professor's secretary, that my father had in fact spoken only with him and not with the professor himself, but that somehow or other, through the secretary, he had recognized the excellences of the professor in the flesh, so that in every respect he was as much entitled to an opinion on the professor as if he had spoken to him in person."

Dream 13 (21 July 1913, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." Pg: 326-327)

"I cannot sleep. Only dreams, no sleep. Today, in my dream, I invented a new kind of vehicle for a park slope. You take a branch, it needn't be very strong, prop it up on the ground at a slight angle, hold one end in your hand, sit down on it side-saddle, then the whole branch naturally rushes down the slope, since you are sitting on the bough you are carried along at full speed, rocking comfortably on the elastic wood. It is also possible to use the branch to ride up again. The chief advantage, aside from the simplicity of the whole device, lies in the fact that the branch, thin and flexible as it is, can be lowered or raised as necessary and gets through anywhere, even where a person by himself would get through only with difficulty."

Dream 14 (11 September 1912, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." From: "New York Harbour – a dream" Pg: 366-367)

"A dream: I found myself on a jetty of square-cut stones built far out into the sea. Someone, or even several people, were with me, but my awareness of myself was so strong that I hardly knew more about them than that I was speaking to them. I can remember only the raised knees of someone sitting near me. At first I did not really know where I was, only when once I accidentally stood up did I see on my left and behind me on my right the distant, clearly outlined sea with many battleships lined up in rows and at anchor. On the right New York could be seen, we were in New York Harbour. The sky was grey, but of a constant brightness. I moved back and forth in my seat, freely exposed to the air on all sides, in order to be able to see everything. In the direction of New York my glance slanted downwards a little, in the direction of the sea it slanted upwards. I now noticed the water rise up near us in high waves on which was borne a great cosmopolitan traffic. I can remember only that instead of the rafts we have, there were long timbers lashed together into gigantic

bundles the cut ends of which kept popping out of the water during the voyage, higher or lower, according to the height of the waves, and at the same time kept turning end over end in the water. I sat down, drew up my feet, quivered with pleasure, virtually dug myself into the ground in delight, and said: Really, this is even more interesting than the traffic on a Paris boulevard.”

Dream 15 (17 November 1913, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” Pg: 344-345)

“On a rising way, beginning at the left when seen from below, there lay, about at the middle of the slope and mostly in the road, a pile of rubbish or solidly packed clay that had crumbled lower and lower on the right while on the left it stood up as tall as the palings of a fence. I walked on the right where the way was almost clear and saw a man on a tricycle coming towards me from below and apparently riding straight at the obstacle. He was a man who seemed to have no eyes, at least his eyes looked like holes that had been effaced. The tricycle was rickety and went along in an uncertain and shaky fashion, but nevertheless without a sound, with almost exaggerated quietness and ease. I seized the man at the last moment, held him as though he were the handle-bars of his vehicle, and guided the latter into the gap through which I had come. Then he fell towards me, I was as large as a giant now and yet had an awkward hold on him, besides, the vehicle, as though out of control, began to move backwards, even if slowly, and pulled me after it. We went past an open van on which a number of people were standing crowded together, all dressed in dark clothes, among them a Boy Scout wearing a light-grey hat with the brim turned up. I expected this boy, whom I had already recognized at some distance, to help me, but he turned away and squeezed himself in among the people. Then, behind this open van – the tricycle kept rolling on and I, bent low, with legs astraddle, had to follow – there came towards me someone who brought me help, but whom I cannot remember. I only know that he was a trustworthy person who is now concealing himself as though behind a black cloth curtain and whose concealment I should respect.”

Dream 16 (21 November 1913, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. “The Diaries of Franz Kafka.” Pg: 347-348)

“The French cabinet, four men, is sitting around a table. A conference is taking place. I remember the man sitting on the long right side of the table, with his face flattened out in profile, yellowish-coloured skin, his very straight nose jutting far forward (jutting so far forward because of the flatness of his face) and an oily, black, heavy moustache arching over his mouth.

Miserable observation which again is certainly the result of something artificially constructed whose lower end is swinging in emptiness somewhere: When I picked up the inkwell from the desk to carry it into the living-room I felt a sort of firmness in me, just as, for instance, the corner of a tall building appears in the mist and at once disappears again. I did not feel lost, something waited in me that was independent of people, even of F. What would happen if I were to run away, as one sometimes runs through the fields?

These predictions, this imitating of models, this fear of something definite, is ridiculous. These are constructions that even in the imagination, where they are alone sovereign, only approach the living surface but then are alone sovereign, only approach the living surface but then are always suddenly driven under. Who has the magic hand to thrust into the machinery without its being torn to pieces and scattered by a thousand knives? I am on the hunt for constructions. I come into a room and find them whitely merging in a corner.”

Dream 17 (21 November 1913, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." Pg: 348-349)

"A dream towards morning: I am sitting in the garden of a sanatorium at a long table, at the very head, and in the dream I actually see my back. It is a gloomy day, I must have gone on a trip and am in a motor-car that arrived a short time ago, driving up in a curve to the front of the platform. They are just about to bring in the food when I see one of the waitresses, a young, delicate girl wearing a dress the colour of autumn leaves, approaching with a very light or unsteady step through the pillared hall that served as the porch of the sanatorium, and going down into the garden. I don't yet know what she wants but nevertheless point questioningly at myself to learn whether she wants me. And in fact she brings me a letter. I think, this can't be the letter I'm expecting, it is a very thin letter and a strange, thin, unsure handwriting. But I open it and a great number of thin sheets covered in writing come out, all of them in the strange handwriting. I begin to read, leaf through the pages, and recognize that it must be a very important letter and apparently from F.'s youngest sister. I eagerly begin to read, then my neighbour on the right, "I don't know whether man or woman, probably a child, looks down over my arm at the letter. I scream, 'No!' The round table of nervous people begins to tremble. I have probably caused a disaster. I attempt to apologize with a few hasty words in order to be able to go on with the reading. I bend over my letter again, only to wake up without resistance, as if awakened by my own scream. With complete awareness I force myself to fall asleep again, the scene reappears, in fact I quickly read two or three more misty lines of the letter, nothing of which I remember, and lose the dream in further sleep."

Dream 18 (13 February 1914, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka.")

"Dreams: In Berlin, through the streets to her house, calm and happy in the knowledge that, though I haven't arrived at her house yet, a slight possibility of doing so exists; I shall certainly arrive there. I see the streets, on a white house a sign, something like 'The Splendours of the North' (saw it in the paper yesterday); in my dream 'Berlin W' has been added to it. Ask the way of an affable, red-nosed old policeman who in this instance is stuffed into a sort of butler's livery. Am given excessively detailed directions, he even points out the railing of a small park in the distance which I must keep hold of for safety's sake when I go past. Then advice about the tram-car, the U-Bahn, etc. I can't follow him any longer and ask in a fright, knowing full well that I am underestimating the distance: 'That's about half an hour away?' But the old man answers, 'I can make it in six minutes.' What joy! Some man, a shadow, a companion, is always at my side, I don't know who it is. Really have no time to turn around, to turn sideways. Live in Berlin in some pension or other apparently filled with young Polish Jews; very small rooms. I spill a bottle of water. One of them is tapping incessantly on a small typewriter, barely turns his head when he is asked for something. Impossible to lay hands on a map of Berlin. In the hand of one of them I continually notice a book that looks like a map. But it always proves to be something entirely different, a list of the Berlin schools, tax statistics, or something of the sort I don't want to believe it, but, smiling, they prove it to me beyond any doubt."

Dream 19 (2 December 1914, Excerpt From: Franz Kafka. "The Diaries of Franz Kafka." Pg: 466)

"Dreamed tonight. With Kaiser Wilhelm. In the castle. The beautiful view. A room similar to that in the Tabakskollegium. Meeting with Matilde Serav. Unfortunately forgot everything."

#### Dream 20 (19 January 1915)

"I had agreed to go picknicking on Sunday with two friends, but quite unexpectedly slept past the hour when we were to meet. My friends, who knew how punctual I ordinarily am, were surprised, came to the house where I lived, waited outside awhile, then came upstairs and knocked on my door. I was very startled, jumped out of bed, and thought only of getting ready as soon as I could. When I emerged fully dressed from my room, my friends fell back in manifest alarm. 'What's that behind your head?' they cried. Since my awakening I had felt something preventing me from bending back my head, and I now groped for it with my hand. My friends, who had grown somewhat calmer, had just shouted 'Be careful, don't hurt yourself!' when my hand closed behind my head on the hilt of a sword. My friends came closer, examined me, led me back to the mirror in my room, and stripped me to the waist. A large, ancient knight's sword with a cross-shaped handle was buried to the hilt in my back, but the blade had been driven with such incredible precision between my skin and flesh that it had caused no injury. Nor was there a wound at the spot on my neck where the sword had penetrated; my friends assured me that there was an opening large enough to admit the blade, but dry and showing no trace of blood. And when my friends now stood on chairs and slowly, inch by inch, drew out the sword, I did not bleed, and the opening on my neck closed until no mark was left save a scarcely discernible slit. 'Here is your sword,' laughed my friends, and gave it to me. I hefted it in my two hands; it was a splendid weapon, Crusaders might have used it. Who tolerates this gadding about of ancient knights in dreams, irresponsibly brandishing their swords, stabbing innocent sleepers who are saved from serious injury only because the weapons in all likelihood glance off living bodies, and also because there are faithful friends knocking at the door, prepared to come to their assistance?"

#### Dream 21 (29 September 1915)

"Many dreams. A combination of Marschner the director and Pimisker the servant appeared. Firm red cheeks, waxed black beard, thick unruly hair."

#### Dream 22 (19 April 1916)

"A short time ago this dream: We were living on the Graben near the Café Continental. A regiment turned in from Herrengasse on its way to the railway station. My father: 'That's something to look at as long as one can'; he swings himself up on the sill (in Felix's brown bathrobe, the figure in the dream was a mixture of the two) and with outstretched arms sprawls outside on the broad, sharply sloping window ledge. I catch hold of him by the two little loops through which the cord of his bathrobe passes. Maliciously, he leans even farther out, I exert all my strength to hold him. I think how good it would be if I could fasten my feet by ropes to something solid so that my father could not pull me out. But to do that I should have to let go of my father, at least for a short time, and that's impossible. Sleep – my sleep, especially – cannot withstand all this tension and I wake up."

#### Dream 23 (20 April 1916)

"A dream: Two groups of men were fighting each other. The group to which I belonged had captured one of our opponents, a gigantic naked man. Five of us clung to him, one by the head, two on either side by his arms and legs. Unfortunately we had no knife with which to stab him, we hurriedly asked each other for a knife, no one had one. But since for some reason there was no time to lose and an oven stood near by whose extraordinarily large cast-iron door was red-hot, we dragged the man to it, held one of his feet close to the oven until the foot began to smoke, pulled it back again until it stopped smoking, then thrust it close to the door again. We monotonously kept this up until I awoke, not only in cold sweat but with my teeth actually chattering."

Dream 24 (6 July 1916)

"Dreamed of Dr H. – he sat behind his desk, somehow leaning back and bending forward at the same time; limpid eyes; slowly and precisely, as is his way, pursuing an orderly train of thought to its end; even in the dream hear almost nothing of his words, simply follow the logic by which it is carried on. Then found myself beside his wife, who was carrying a lot of luggage and (what was astonishing) playing with my fingers; a patch was torn out of the thick felt of her sleeve, her arms took up only a small part of the sleeve, which was filled with strawberries."

Dream 25 (19 September 1917)

"Dreamed of Werfel: He was saying that in Lower Austria, where he is stopping at present, by accident he lightly jostled against a man on the street, whereupon the latter swore at him shamefully. I have forgotten the precise words, I remember only that one of them was 'barbarian' (from the World War), and that it ended with 'you proletarian Turch'. An interesting combination: 'Turch' is a dialect word for 'Turk'; 'Turk' is a curse word apparently still part of a tradition deriving from the old wars against the Turks and the sieges of Vienna, and added to that the new epithet, 'proletarian'. Excellently characterizes the simplicity and backwardness of his insulter, for today neither 'proletarian' nor 'Turk' is a real curse word."

Dream 26 (21 September 1917)

"A dream about my father: There was a small audience (to characterize it, Mrs Fanta was there) before which my father was making public for the first time a scheme of his for social reform. He was anxious to have this select audience, an especially select one in his opinion, undertake to make propaganda for his scheme. On the surface he expressed this much more modestly, merely requesting the audience, after they should have heard his views, to let him have the address of interested people who might be invited to a large public meeting soon to take place. My father had never yet had any dealings with these people, consequently took them much too seriously, had even put on a black frock coat, and described his scheme with that extreme solicitude which is the mark of an amateur. The company, in spite of the fact that they weren't at all prepared for a lecture, recognized at once that he was offering them, with all the pride of originality, what was nothing more than an old, outworn idea that had been thoroughly debated long ago. They let my father feel this. He had anticipated the objection, however, and, with magnificent conviction of its utility (though it often appeared to tempt even him), with a faint bitter smile, put his case even more emphatically. When he had finished, one could perceive from the general murmur of annoyance that he had convinced them neither of the originality nor the practicability of his

scheme. Not many were interested in it. Still, here and there someone was to be found who, out of kindness, and perhaps because he knew me, offered him a few addresses. My father, completely unruffled by the general mood, had cleared "away his lecture notes and picked up the piles of white slips that he had ready for writing down the few addresses. I could hear only the name of a certain Privy Councillor Střížanowski, or something similar.

Later I saw my father sitting on the floor, his back against the sofa, as he sits when he plays with Felix. Alarmed, I asked him what he was doing. He was pondering his scheme."

Dream 27 (10 November 1917)

"Dreamed of the battle of the Tagliamento. A plain, the river wasn't really there, a crowd of excited onlookers ready to run forwards or backwards as the situation changed. In front of us a plateau whose plainly visible edge was alternately bare and overgrown with tall bushes. Upon the plateau and beyond Austrians were fighting. Everyone was tense; what would be the outcome? By way of diversion you could from time to time look at isolated clumps on the dark slope, from behind which one or two Italians were firing. But that had no importance, though we did take a few steps backwards in flight. Then the plateau again: Austrians ran along the bare edge, pulled up abruptly behind the bushes, ran again. Things were apparently going badly, and moreover it was incomprehensible how they could ever go well; how could one merely human being ever conquer other human beings who were imbued with a will to defend themselves? Great despair, there will have to be a general retreat. A Prussian major appeared who had been watching the battle with us all the while; but when he calmly stepped forward into the suddenly deserted terrain, he seemed a new apparition. He put two fingers of each hand into his mouth and whistled the way one whistles to a dog, though affectionately. This was a signal to his detachment, which had been waiting close by and now marched forward. They were Prussian Guards, silent young men, not many, perhaps only a company, all seemed to be officers, at least they carried long sabres and their uniforms were dark. When they marched by us, with short steps, slowly, in close order, now and then looking at us, the matter-of-factness of their order, now and then looking at us, the matter-of-factness of their death march was at once stirring, solemn, and a promise of victory. With a feeling of relief at the intercession of these men, I woke up."

Dream 28 (20 October 1921)

"A short dream, during an agitated, short sleep, in agitation clung to it with a feeling of boundless happiness. A dream with many ramifications, full of a thousand connexions that became clear in a flash; but hardly more than the basic mood remains: My brother had committed a crime, a murder, I think, I and other people were involved in the crime; punishment, solution, and salvation approached from afar, loomed up powerfully, many signs indicated their ineluctable approach; my sister, I think, kept calling out these signs as they appeared and I kept greeting them with insane exclamations, my insanity increased as they drew nearer. I thought I should never be able to forget my fragmentary exclamations, brief sentences merely, because of their succinctness, and now don't clearly remember a single one. I could only have uttered brief exclamations because of the great effort it cost me to speak – I had to puff out my cheeks and at the same time contort my mouth as if I had a toothache before I could bring a word out. My feeling of happiness lay in the fact

that I welcomed so freely, with such conviction and such joy, the punishment that came, a sight that must have moved the gods, and I felt the gods' emotion almost to the point of tears."

Dream 29 (10 July 1912, from Travel Diaries)

"I dreamt that I heard Goethe reciting, with infinite freedom and arbitrariness."

Dream 30 (15 July 1912, from Travel Diaries)

"A dream: The sunbathers destroyed one another in a brawl. After the two groups into which they were divided had joked with one another, someone stepped out in front of one group and shouted to the others: 'Lustron and Kastron!' The others: 'What? Lustron and Kastron?' He: 'Right.' Beginning of the brawl."

