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**Georg Klein**  
**The Sun Is Shining on Us**

**Translated by John Brownjohn**

## Glass

*[Extract referring to the pp. 9-16 in the German text]*

The sun is shining on us. We're sitting in the former cafeteria on the top floor of the building in question. We've moved our five chairs over to the south side and are squinting into the noontime glare of this glorious March day. I wouldn't describe the rigid glazing on the tenth floor as windows, although the view is segmented at regular intervals by aluminium struts. We look out over the Alter Salzhafen, an appendixlike bulge in the big river. Here, not far from its mouth, it divides into the deeply-dredged channel of the fairway and a dozen subsidiary waterways. Long ago converted into canals but still displaying their natural sinuosity, they meander towards the North Sea like the tentacles of an octopus.

The building that affords us this view is situated near the waterfront. We look across two rows of warehouses at the motionless grey surface of the harbour basin and the tongue of land that extends between it and the river. Enclosed on three sides by water, this area has been a preserve of the chemical industry for as long as anyone can remember. I've no idea what is currently produced there; one of the others may know, but I feel little inclination to ask them. The plumes of smoke rising from the two tallest silvery chimneys, a fragrant white vapour tinged with lime green, will have to suffice me and my four associates as evidence of active synthetic life.

There are no tall buildings in the old quarter, which nestles against the bend of the Salzhafen on our side. Even the warehouses flanking the quay are no more than three stories high. Old Hugo Heinlein, my chemist, who grew up in one of these streets, once claimed that only the district's 'low profile' enabled it to survive the war almost unscathed. Even the final bombardment – five perfectly coordinated Anglo-American day and night raids, a milestone in the history of aerial warfare – left the stunted blocks beside the Salzhafen untouched with a mixture of compassion and contempt. The ugly brick buildings, every cubic foot of which was then occupied by craftsmen, tradesmen and ordinary families, were hit by only a handful of stray high-explosive bombs and a single incendiary. To me, the newcomer, the old inhabitant jokingly remarked that, after those devastating raids on the city, all the Salzhafen's inhabitants had to do was patch up a rabbit hutch or two.

Heinlein was mistaken – either that, or his quip allowed of no exceptions – because the Western Allies' thunder and lightning did punch at least one hole in the unyielding substance below, even here. The office building that is pampering us with sunlight and a panoramic view was erected on a bomb-site, perhaps the only one in the district. And, because these narrow streets were subject to a preservation order soon after the war, the ten-story tower retained its undisputed status as the district's tallest building, even in the decades that followed. Although it continues to preen itself on that status, the panes of glass through which we're looking have not been cleaned for months. Our miniature skyscraper stands empty, and

soon, very soon, once we have rummaged through it and brought its little secret to light, what is now considered an unsightly and outdated excrescence will be demolished down to the last brick.

We're waiting for our boss, sipping five different drinks in the meantime. Without exchanging a word, we're waiting for Gabor Cziffra, our employer. We're temporary colleagues, and I may – who knows? – be Gabor Cziffra's bookkeeper. The other four may well think so, because I've been holding a slim volume clamped under my right arm ever since we got together. I must look odd, sitting here like this. Any rational person would put the little book on the table, or, if he considered some feature of it particularly worthy of protection, deposit it on his lap. I, however, am debarred from doing the obvious thing.

The book I'm hugging so tightly I acquired only this morning at Arno's Antiques, a junk shop beside the Salzhafen. It might be described as a notebook. Its cardboard cover is laminated with plastic grained to resemble leather. The pages, whose edges are badly yellowed, are ruled in red and black. Since some of the lines run the full depth of the page, I surmise that the little book was designed as a form of ledger for keeping accounts and inventories. This being so, it can't be entirely unsuited to my work – to whatever the boss has been generous and confident enough to entrust me with.

Two of our number have now struck up a conversation after all. No wonder they did so in front of the huge refrigerator, because the hum of the elderly appliance had already been providing our silence with a conciliatory obligato. The height of a man, it's beset at longish intervals by an epileptic shudder, as if the compressor and pump are about to pack up at any moment. But then, after a soft, gentle, almost lascivious slurping sound, the hum of normal operation resumes. Suspended from the refrigerator door is a bottle opener, a worn old thing that fails to grip crown corks firmly. It was their annoyance at this deficiency that got the pair of them talking. I've turned my chair a little so as to watch them, and am listening to their conversation with surreptitious curiosity. My other two colleagues beside the window are doubtless doing likewise.

The last of the pair at the refrigerator to wrestle with the bottle opener is now drinking low-alcohol beer. The slender bottle tips its contents into his mouth at brief, regular intervals, as if his drinking is subject to a dictatorial schedule. Tall and fleshy in a firm but not muscular way, he must have been young not long ago – at least, there's still something youthful about his movements. While speaking he holds his right fist in front of his chest and shoots out his forefinger. Occasionally the hand veers upwards, and he wags the outstretched finger just in front of his impressive nose, the tip of which displays a peculiarly asymmetrical bulge.

The other man standing beside the refrigerator is also drinking a species of beer, the sweet stuff that purports to invigorate young and old alike. If I interpret his figure as the long-term product of such invigoration, persistent consumption of this brew appears to stimulate excessive growth in the upper extremities. Of medium height at most, the fellow swings his arms continuously, perhaps in an attempt to mitigate the impression created by their

inordinate length. He now clinks bottles with the fleshy man, who tops him by more than a head, and slaps him on the shoulder.

How quickly those two pseudo-beer drinkers have made friends with one another. I sip my drink, in no hurry to finish the first bottle. The cafeteria's refrigerator contains my own favourite beverage, a branded lemonade with citrus fruit extracts. It's bitter-sweet and lukewarm. None of the drinks is chilled. I know this, having run my hand over every row of bottles. Since the glass felt less than cool, I suspect that the massive commercial refrigerator confines itself to generating noise and vibration.

The five of us are a team. Without knowing anything about the others, I've gathered as much from the nature of our silence alone. We sit, on call, in red plastic chairs. All of us have a tendency to slide our fingers restlessly to and fro between our thighs or press down on our knees with our palms as people do when about to jump up at any moment. Only occasionally do we permit ourselves to loll against the pleasantly yielding backs of our chairs and briefly stretch our legs in the warming sunshine. We're all chary of relaxing and being caught taking a breather at the wrong juncture.

Right beside me, a mere two feet away in the light, sits the only woman. She's a little too close for me to make her out clearly. Being long-sighted, I wear my glasses only when circumstances compel me to. She has been stroking her short black hair for a while, her fingers encircling the big matt silver barrette she wears on the left side of her head. My gaze flows over her, gentle as the touch she's bestowing on herself, so I gain only a vague impression of my female colleague – which is fine with me. The other three can doubtless see us with equal clarity, and I can well imagine that the trio have already, if only because of our comparatively regular features, developed an initial prejudice against us: to them we're a pair of good-looking dumbclucks. A quick exchange of glances and the hint of a smile are enough to establish agreement on such matters.

The difficulty I have in assessing the woman beside me may also be attributable to the shiny grey suit in which she turned up for our communal appointment. As I peer at it, the jagged herringbone pattern of her skirt and jacket blurs into restless undulations, and I can't even tell whether they're in the weave or only printed on the material. All at once the silver-grey figure pushes her chair back violently, scraping it twice against mine, perhaps because she finds the sunlight too dazzling. She's now sitting half behind me. Not wishing to turn my head in an obtrusive way, I have to observe her out of the corner of my eye. By rising for an instant, she revealed how slim she is. Long and snug-fitting, the jacket of her suit fell in a straight line from armpit to upper thigh. The hips concealed beneath it cannot be appreciably bigger than her waist – not unless the latter is as narrow as an insect's.

By contrast, the male colleague seated obliquely in front of me has a figure ample enough to serve as an picture-book illustration of femininity. His body looks as if it's composed of several fruit, all overripe. Even his head possesses a vegetal quality. Long and small-eared, it merges with a fleshy neck. From behind, head and neck resemble a dark-

haired, inelegant stalk with plum-, pear- or cucumber-shaped limbs and body parts attached to it. Like our female associate, this heavy-hipped, peculiarly ageless-looking fellow favours a colourless beverage. Our long wait has made an expert of me, at least in that respect. The woman in silver-grey is drinking uncarbonated mineral water – still water, so called. The plum-soft man has just fetched himself his third energy drink. It comes in a new-fangled can – I, at least, who am not up-to-date with trends in consumer goods, have never seen such a can before. The top and bottom are clearly made of the usual sheet metal, but the central portion, the cylindrical jacket, consists of some transparent plastic flexible enough to be compressed by the fat man's pudgy little hands, whereafter it springs back into its original shape with a click – almost a quack. He's drinking at this moment. Not for the first time, I find there's something familiar about the self-abandoned way he takes big gulps, following up the last drop by smacking his lips and vigorously fluttering his lowered eyelids. I'm sure I've seen this procedure before, but my powers of recall, which have never been very reliable, refuse to come to my aid.

Herr Gabor Cziffra honoured us with his presence at last. After a two-hour wait we heard the hum of the lift we ourselves had used. The auspicious sound of its ascent grew louder, but instead of proceeding all the way it stopped short at the ninth floor, or even the eighth. All succumbing to the same irrational impulse, we stared at the lift door as if Herr Cziffra might be covering the intervening distance by scaling the steel cables – as if he might, in some acrobatic manner, leap through the door and out of the hollow shaft at any moment. Although nothing happened for some time, we dared not utter a word. But our female team-mate had knocked her bottle over, and the sound of its contents trickling over the edge of the table – the agitated ping-ping of the mineral water hitting the polyvinyl flooring – was painfully attuned to our open-mouthed stares.

The boss surprised us in a different and simpler but no less spectacular way. Some fifteen feet of the wall on the left of the lift door had been covered with brown paper, presumably to protect it from splashes of paint during redecoration. The tough kraft parted with a sharp crack and Gabor Cziffra entered the cafeteria by way of the steel door to the stairs, whose leading edge rent the paper asunder as he flung it open. He advanced on us with slow and deliberate tread, as if every step merited close attention. Distinguished and demanding of respect, the boss cut a wondrously personable figure – indeed, he seemed to breathe new life into that universally outmoded expression, 'a handsome old gentleman'.

*Extract referring to the pp. 20-21 in the German text:*

Today, for our benefit, Gabor Cziffra was attired in a daringly lustrous dove-grey suit. Outlined against his scrawny old neck, a bow tie sparkled in the spring sunlight. This collar

adornment remained absolutely rigid beneath his chin as it rose and fell in time to his words, but it was a while before I realized, so intently was I watching and listening, that the bow tie was made of glass – high-quality glass, no doubt, not pressed or moulded but coerced into its propellerlike shape by the glass-blower’s breath. Our boss delivered a long speech that brooked no interruption. For the first time, we were told the object of our quest. And although no one could imagine, on the basis of what was said, what the ‘sun’ we had to find really looked like, none of us ventured to question him on the subject.

We listened to Cziffra attentively, and I’m sure that, like me, my colleagues never took their eyes off him for a moment. While uttering his closing words, which summarized his instructions to us with almost juridical concision, Gabor Cziffra retraced his steps walking gracefully backwards. Simultaneously orating and placing one foot carefully behind the other, he returned to the staircase door step by step, and I briefly fancied that our staring eyes, like radar beams, had helped him to find his way there. With an audible intake of breath, almost a sigh, he reached the steel door and shut it behind him, but not before delivering a valediction – ‘Au revoir, my dear team!’ – that gently but firmly relegated us, who remained behind, to the grammatical singular.

## **Paper**

*[Extract referring to the pp. 22-28 in the German text]*

We’re cold, and the night threatens to be a long one. The radiators have been ticking and gurgling since we turned them on, but their cast-iron ribs have so far failed to display any perceptible sign of warmth. Nearly all of us turned up for our appointment with Cziffra clad in light spring attire. The glorious March day deluded us into setting out sans overcoats or warm jackets. I suspect that Still is paying for this imprudence most dearly of all; the skirt of her grey suit is short and her pantyhose thin. But she, who should long ago have been shivering miserably, betrays no discomfort – unlike Funny, our fatso, who loudly complains of the drop in temperature. He, whose corpulence should by rights have provided the best protection against the cold, is the only one wearing a proper winter jacket – a red check monster that envelops his backside and brushes his little tomato-red ears with its turned-up collar of imitation fur.

Light and Vita began drinking together when darkness invaded the cafeteria. Their innocuous beers are probably best suited to dulling the pangs of hunger. I still shrink from opening a malt beer like Vita, deterred not only by revulsion at the brew’s consistency and cloying flavour. There’s an official, quasi book-keeperish reason for my reluctance to resort to a colleague’s tipple. As a preliminary entry in my notebook, I’ve jotted down our operational

names. Just before leaving, Herr Cziffra urgently recommended us to forgo the use of our real names for the duration of our search. This left us in the embarrassing position of having to think up the sobriquets by which we were to be addressed in the future. And this modest task became the first test of our joint activities.

It was Light who eventually spared us further fruitless deliberation. He, whom I had, with spontaneous prejudice, mistaken for a navel-gazing pedant, derived the solution from personal observation. He suggested that we should each take our names from the beverages we've favoured since getting together. Thus, he now styles himself quite simply after the low-alcohol, reduced-calory beer whose slender bottles he almost affectionately rubs up and down his sturdy chest whenever he isn't speaking.

Vita, the fellow with long arms, has reduced the name of his malt beer to its first two syllables, and his self-designation appeals to me. It goes with the way he gets his bottles ready for drinking. The old opener on the refrigerator door soon became too worn away by crown corks to be of further use. Vita no longer employs it as a lever, merely as an extension of his right fist. He knocks the caps off the necks of the bottles with a vigorous uppercut. Light tried to imitate this little feat of dexterity without success. Like Still, he is now dependent on Vita's goodwill.

I'm rather proud of having advised Still, our female team-mate, to take her name from some feature of the mineral water she drinks. At first she wanted to be addressed by the name of the spa from which it comes, but that mark of origin was too long and aristocratic-sounding. And, because Vita and Light also considered 'Still' to be the best solution, she gave a thoughtful tug at her big barrette – a sickle-shaped object that may be made of polished crystal – and finally gave way to us.

Funny, on the other hand, put up stiff resistance. Having no suggestion of his own to offer, he vaguely but doggedly found fault with Light's idea. We listened to him carping for a while, then presented him with an ultimatum. The choice was his, we said: he could call himself either 'Funny' or 'Fit', from the energy drink he consumes. After a final bout of humming and hawing, our plump colleague, who had hitherto failed to endear his fat self, decided on 'Funny'. I found this rather disarming – as, perhaps, did the others. We had all thought that he would insist on our addressing him as 'Fit' for the duration of our work.

We're having to spend our first night together up here in the cafeteria. When dusk fell and it became noticeably colder, and when we'd grasped that the central heating would not come on, we decided to look for more comfortable quarters on the lower floors. But we were too late. The building is devoid of anything but meagre emergency lighting: little green arrows pointing the way to the stairs in every corridor. None of the switches we tried turned on an overhead light. Vita ended by showing us round the bare and deserted eighth floor with the miniature flashlight dangling from his key ring, which is designed at most to help one insert a key in a lock. When the battery died we groped our way along in the dark and had perforce to follow the glowing green arrows.

Vita is blessed with a practical streak. Once back upstairs, he did after all discover a means of providing us with a modicum of light. The interior of the big refrigerator, which hums and shudders but doesn't chill its contents, is equipped with a powerful electric bulb. We left the door open, and little by little we all dragged our chairs into its glow, which is greasily reflected by the scuffed PVC flooring. We gaze into the huge machine's maw, not because the sight of the serried bottles appeals to us in any way, but because the colour of the light, a soft yellow that filters through the bulb's plastic cover, conveys a deceptive but lasting impression of warmth.

I've nodded off in my chair. My cramped back is aching – it may have been the pain that woke me. Funny is lying in front of the refrigerator with his knees and thighs drawn up beneath his long jacket. Each wheezing intake of breath is heralded by a gasp; then, after a brief pause, comes the exhalation, which sounds surprisingly like a clearly articulated 'Ach!' Light and Vita must have left our circle while I was asleep. They're now seated beside the window, conversing in whispers. I can see Light's forefinger jabbing the night sky. Vita listens to him with his head on one side, then reaches past his right ear and supply scratches his back below the shoulder blades. Now he interrupts Light, and twice I think I hear our boss's name mentioned. Light shakes his head, but Vita takes the big man by the forearms and shakes him to lend additional emphasis to his view of the situation.

If she wished to, Still could overhear more of their conversation than I. Her chair is situated in the twilight zone where the pool of yellowish light dispensed by the refrigerator merges with the nocturnal glow streaming through the windows. Her legs are clamped together and her hands imprisoned beneath her thighs. I'm filled with uneasiness by the thought that she must have watched me while asleep and will do so again. I slide from my chair to the floor. The PVC, which doesn't feel cold, has evidently stored some warmth. We're still profiting from the fact that the sun heats up the cafeteria via the south-facing windows. But this advantage is already turning into a disadvantage, because the precious warmth is seeping out into the cloudless night by precisely the same route.

I stretch out on my back and slide the notebook under my head. My skin creates the illusion that its cover is yielding, but it must have been the cartilage of my outer ear that softly, for one tiny moment, cushioned the weight of my skull. It pleases me greatly to lay my head on handwritten paper for the first time, and this unusual pillow will doubtless feel more voluminous when more of the pages have been written on. The little book wasn't cheap. The new proprietor of Arno's Antiques, a young Pakistani, has introduced some drastic price rises. It was probably inevitable that old Arno's successor would jack up the prices of his junk, because he has discontinued the sideline formerly associated with the shop, a lucrative mail-order business. At all events, his shop window no longer displays a sign inscribed 'Arno's Soiled Panties by Mail'. Perhaps the new owner is a devout Muslim; his black beard and

moustache, together with the grave demeanour that belies his chubby-cheeked youth, incline me to suppose so.

In the past, when buying my paperbacks and an occasional video from old Arno, I often found him engaged in packing up one of the said pairs of soiled panties. Arno's advertisements in the relevant periodicals claimed that all his merchandise, for which payment was required in advance, came from the red-light district bordering the Salzhafen. This guarantee of origin was no empty promise – even today, I would stake my life on that. I several times saw the old second-hand dealer haggling with the ladies who supplied him, and I use to enjoy watching him prepare the undergarments for mailing.

The last time I saw Arno, he was busy packing up several particularly impressive specimens. For some considerable time, postal hygiene regulations had compelled him to mail soiled panties to their fans in airtight envelopes. For this purpose Arno had acquired a heat-sealer. The gadget was child's play to use, but by that time, on the day when we were chatting together in his cosy workplace beside the till, my second-hand dealer had already been paralysed down one side by a stroke. This meant that heat-sealing, like everything else, had to be done one-handed.

The cold is now seeping into my back through my thin jacket after all, so I roll over on my left shoulder. Lying on my side like this, I'm looking straight at Funny's footwear, cowboy boots with stars on the shanks. The toes are very pointed, and the high heels are set at such an angle that the wearer's heels overhang them. As I lie there dozing and shivering, I can't help reflecting on the advantages of Funny's lumber-jacket, and I'm assailed by a seductive urge to snuggle up against our fatso's back. I can't recall the last time I was so relatively close to a man. Possibly when some charitable impulse prompted me to assist Arno with the heat-sealer. Together – three-handed, as it were – we managed to fold an enormous pair of dark-green and unmistakably soiled lace knickers until they they were small enough to fit into an envelope. Then Arno heaved his crippled arm on to the counter and exerted downward pressure with his twisted hand. I slid the plastic film over the knickers, Arno cut it off with his unimpaired right hand, my own hands enveloped the merchandise in its colourless artificial skin, and Arno welded the seam.

*Extract referring to the pp. 39-41 in the German text:*

Still has been all the way downstairs. She took a closer look at what we barely noticed yesterday, when entering the place: our high-rise building is enclosed by a tall board fence that shields it from the gaze of passers-by. Anyone going over to a ground-floor window will see nothing but long, stout planks with canvas nailed over them. Moreover, a framework of light metal scaffolding poles is secured to the exterior of the building's first three floors.

There are no ladders or wooden catwalks, so its sole and manifest purpose is to support a vertical steel net. This hugs the façade so tightly that the windows on the lower floors cannot be opened outwards.

Funny, who is looking very pale, and whose forehead, although he repeatedly mops it with the sleeve of his jacket, soon glistens anew with sweat, greets Still's description with a contemptuous snort. He proceeds to inveigh against Cziffra in a half plaintive, half indignant tone of voice. The boss, he says, must be afraid that one of us will get drunk and fall out of a window. Although this jibe elicits a half-hearted grin from no one but Vita, Funny raises his drinks can to each of us in turn, empties it at a gulp, squeezes the flexible cylinder and releases it with a click, and rounds off his performance with a multiple belch.

Light and Vita, who were the last to return to the cafeteria, inspected the central floors and foraged around in all kinds of abandoned detritus. They brought one technological find upstairs with them, and now that the gloomy afternoon light is starting to fade once more, we are investing a considerable amount of hope in this peculiar gadget. No one but Vita would have known what it was. A brightly painted, partly chrome-plated box, it bears no resemblance to any ordinary household appliance. However, something about the design and its harmonious combination of shape and colour strongly suggests that it may prove both neat and useful in the domestic domain.

Vita claims it's a stove that burns kerosene and other special fuel oils so cleanly that its use without a flue is permissible. He and Light also believe they've found the fuel that goes with it. At any rate, they returned bearing two glass carboys with yellowish, oily liquid sloshing around in them. Still unscrews the cap of one of them, sniffs it warily, and hands it to me. I put my nose to the neck of the carboy and detect a sweetish, fruity aroma underlaid by an earthy, almost bituminous smell. The second container is only half full. Holding it up to the light, Funny says that the spirit, as he calls its fluid content, behaves more like high-proof liquor than water, and he wouldn't be surprised if our little stove was a form of distillation plant. He opens the carboy, and Still only just prevents him from scouring the cap with the tip of his tongue.

*Extract referring to p. 47 in the German text:*

The trough is a lucky find. On this dire morning, after last night's catastrophe, the four of us would probably have been defeated by our urgent problem if Still hadn't remembered it. It's oval, about six feet in length, and filled to the brim with sand. The whole of the ground floor is ankle-deep in the same fine silica sand. Just now, when we arrived here with our burden, we were relieved to be confronted by this broad white expanse after the elevator's frightfully cramped interior. We saw the lines of overlapping footprints we'd made two days ago, on our

way to the elevator, and followed the track Still had left in the soft layer during her tour of inspection yesterday. It led to the receptacle that will now be of use to us.

Having kicked the side with the toe of his boot, Vita explains that troughs of this kind, which consist of black, acid- and alkali-resistant rubber, are used for slaking lime and mixing mortar. Light, Still and I take his word for it. Vita can be persuasive when it comes to practical matters. The two paper sacks propped against the trough are indicative of construction or renovation work. One contains cement, the other lime, and Vita proposes that, once the body has been buried in sand, we seal it with a hygienic layer of lime.

*Extract referring to the pp. 51-52 in the German text:*

Funny's corpse seems less heavy when we heft it over the edge of the trough, as if it has already lost substance in the last hour, the final cooling phase. We slide his legs in first. The heels of his cowboy boots dig into the residue of sand, and the weight of his sagging torso, as it slithers in after them, bends the knees with a faint crack. There's something peaceful about the way Funny lies there with his knees slightly flexed, his hands resting on his stomach and his double chin nestling against the fur collar of his lumber-jacket. One could almost believe that he's warm enough for the first time since we started work.

Reluctantly, we proceed to refill the trough. All four of us avoid emptying our buckets in the vicinity of Funny's face, but the sand-level climbs steadily up the trough's black sides. The first grains are already trickling over the corners of his mouth and between his parted lips, and the sand eventually comes up to our colleague's eyes. Still closed them upstairs in the cafeteria, but the lids have reopened to varying degrees and are now exposing his moist eyeballs, which are still far from glazed.

Funny died in our care. It was a quick but painful death, and wretchedly protracted despite its brevity. We – the four who would outlive him – were awakened by a gurgling cry and saw him crouching in front of the open refrigerator, retching and moaning as he strove to open a can of his energy drink. This he managed to do, but when he put it to his lips he lost his balance, keeled over sideways, and, in clutching at the refrigerator for support, wrenched out one of the racks complete with its array of bottles. Kneeling amid the broken glass, he once more raised the can to his lips but let it fall, then sprang to his feet with startling rapidity and tottered past us. The repulsive wheezing sounds that accompanied his progress to the window ceased only when his forehead hit the glass. Our fat associate rammed his head against the pane twice more, as if trying to batter his way through it into the cool night air. But the window remained intact, and Funny, without another sound, slid slowly down the pane and over the narrow aluminium sill to the floor.

Still, who was the first to venture over to him and had turned him on his side, called to us that he had stopped breathing. We reluctantly came closer and bent over Funny's body, and Light felt for a pulse in his fleshy wrist. Still and Vita, being braver than us, knelt beside Funny's chest and tried in turn to inflate his lungs with their breath. I don't know if they did this correctly, but after the twentieth or thirtieth and final breath, an almost violent expulsion of air delivered with skill or lack of the same, Vita's mouth detached itself from our fatso's dark, discoloured lips.

*Extract referring to p. 55 in the German text:*

We know what Funny died of. A thin trickle of oily liquid was running down his chin from the left-hand corner of his mouth, and Vita made no secret of what had been oozing from his lips. He and Still had both detected a taste of kerosene whenever they applied their lips to those of the dying man, the man who had died under their exhalations. As soon as he thought no one was looking, our fatso had drunk from one of the carboys. Although he can't have taken more than one big gulp, pure greed or fear of being caught had caused him to suck the oil into his lungs. Light explained how dangerous to respiration this could be – indeed, he even had a name at his fingertips for the spasmodic occlusion of the bronchial tubes, a long medical term made up of Latin and Greek components that instantly endowed his explanation with technical cogency. And, although Light's know-it-all manner irritated me more than ever, I was glad not to have to look into the eyes of the slowly cooling deceased – eyes liberated from their last sight on earth – without some form of conceptual enlightenment.