

## *THE ADVANTAGES OF THE WINDHENS*

Gunter Grass translated by Ken Knoespele

Because they hardly take a place  
on their perch of air  
and do not pick on my tamed chairs.  
Because they do not disdain the crusted dreams,  
and do not run after the letters,  
the mailman loses every morning at my door.  
Because they stay standing,  
with swelling breast  
on a tolerated surface of small description,  
no pen forgotten, no apostrophy . . .  
Because they often let the door open,  
the key, the allegory remains,  
crowing now and then.  
Because their eggs are so light  
wholesome and transparent,  
Who has seen this moment,  
here the yellow has enough  
to plot against the ears and strike them dumb.  
Because this stillness is so soft,  
With the skin on the chin of Venus  
I nurse them. —

Often the eastwind,  
causes the dividing walls to turn over,  
a new chapter appears,  
I lean happily on the fence,  
without counting these chickens, —  
because they are countless and steadily increase.

## *CREDO*

Gunter Grass translated by Ken Knoespel

My room is still,  
religious, a cigarette,  
so mystical, that no one  
asks for rent  
or my wife.  
When yesterday the fly died  
I conceived without calendar,  
October, a dance teacher bowed,  
wanted to sell me small forbidden pictures.  
I receive visits before the door,  
the mail pasted on the pane,  
outside, the rain reads with me.  
Inside, my room is still,  
no struggle on the wall paper,  
kisses from the clocks swallowed,  
never stumbling, never striking the knee,  
because all gives way,  
religious, a cigarette,  
believing vertical,  
the spider drops, a plumb line,  
searching for the shallow, —  
we will never be stranded.

## *DEATH*

A day had ended  
Waves threw the wall  
The clasp spent itself

Whimpers rolled round the long forgotten  
wharf that lent softness to the lowly sound.  
The slab placed on it made  
the ground hard and unbearable  
for the sufferer.

Fred Schenk