



# Brecht

**Collected Plays: One**

**Baal • Drums in the Night  
In the Jungle of Cities  
The Life of Edward II of England  
and five one-act plays**

Edited and introduced by  
John Willett and Ralph Manheim

B L O O M S B U R Y

## Bertolt Brecht Collected Plays: One

**Baal, Drums in the Night, In the Jungle of Cities,  
The Life of Edward II of England, A Respectable Wedding,  
The Beggar or The Dead Dog, Driving Out a Devil,  
Lux in Tenebris, The Catch**

Volume One in the Collected Plays series contains Brecht's first performed stage works, whose appearance in the hectic and difficult years following the First World War immediately signalled a radical new departure not only for German drama but for the theatre as a whole.

*Baal* uses a heady mixture of Expressionism, symbolism and lyricism to portray the unheroic progress of an ugly, dissolute poet and his fatal attractiveness to women. *Drums in the Night*, set against the Spartacist uprising, is an anti-romantic 'love story' in which a soldier returns to find his fiancée engaged to an obnoxious war profiteer. While *In the Jungle of Cities* looks forward to Brecht's preoccupations of the twenties and thirties and shows a struggle to the death between Shlink, a Chicago timber dealer, and Garga whose beliefs he wishes to destroy. *The Life of Edward II of England* is Brecht's adaptation of Marlowe's play, in which he aimed to break with the 'lumpy monumental style' of the German Shakespearean tradition.

The volume also contains Brecht's five early one-act plays which remained unpublished and, except for *A Respectable Wedding*, unperformed until after Brecht's death.

Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim, the volume includes Brecht's own notes and relevant texts as well as an extensive introduction and commentary.

**Bertolt Brecht** was born in Augsburg on 10 February 1898 and died in Berlin on 14 August 1956. He grew to maturity as a playwright in the frenetic years of the twenties and early thirties, with such plays as *Man equals Man*, *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Mother*. He left Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933, eventually reaching the United States in 1941, where he remained until 1947. It was during this period of exile that such masterpieces as *Life of Galileo*, *Mother Courage* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* were written. Shortly after his return to Europe in 1947 he founded the Berliner Ensemble, and from then until his death was mainly occupied in producing his own plays.

*Other Bertolt Brecht publications by Bloomsbury Methuen Drama*

**Brecht Collected Plays: One**

(Baal, Drums in the Night, In the Jungle of Cities, The Life of Edward II of England, A Respectable Wedding, The Beggar or the Dead Dog, Driving Out a Devil, Lux in Tenebris, The Catch)

**Brecht Collected Plays: Two**

(Man Equals Man, The Elephant Calf, The Threepenny Opera, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, The Seven Deadly Sins)

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**Bertolt Brecht**

**Collected Plays: One**

*Baal*

*translated by Peter Tegel*

Original work entitled:

*Baal*

*Drums in the Night*

*translated by John Willet*

Original work entitled:

*Trommeln in der Nacht*

*In the Jungle of Cities*

*translated by Gerhard Nellhaus*

Original work entitled:

*Im Dickicht der Städte*

*The Life of Edward II of England*

*translated by Jean Benedetti*

Original work entitled:

*Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*

*A Respectable Wedding*

*translated by Jean Benedetti*

Original work entitled:

*Die Kleinbürgerhochzeit*

*The Beggar or The Dead Dog*

*translated by Michael Hamburger*

Original work entitled:

*Der Bettler oder Der Tote Hund*

*Driving Out a Devil*

*translated by Richard Grunberger*

Original work entitled:

*Er treibt einen Teufel aus*

*Lux in Tenebris*

*translated by Eva Geisel and Ernest Borneman*

Original work entitled:

*Lux in Tenebris*

*The Catch*

*translated by John Willet*

Original work entitled:

*Der Fischzug*

*Edited and introduced by Tom Kuhn*

*and John Willett*

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# Introduction

BRECHT IN BAVARIA, 1918-1924

I

This volume contains the plays which Brecht wrote in Bavaria before moving to Berlin in the autumn of 1924. In spring 1918, when he began work on the first of them, he was just twenty and a new student at Munich university. Six and a half years later he was a recognized, if controversial writer and the winner of a major literary prize. The best directors and actors of the day were performing his plays; he had also written many poems and short stories and directed one remarkable production. He had just been on the staff of the Munich Kammerspiele, one of the most enterprising small theatres in Germany, where his first and so far most successful play had been performed. Now he was about to go as a 'dramaturg', or literary adviser, to Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater in Berlin, at that time one of the world's three or four leading theatres.

Born on 10 February 1898, Brecht had been brought up in Augsburg, about forty miles west of Munich. His father, a native of the Black Forest, was sales director of the Haindl paper works there; his mother died in May 1920. *Baal*, whose first version was finished by July 1918, reflects much of the imaginary world of himself and his group of Augsburg friends, as well as the taverns and physical surroundings of the old city. For a few months just before and after the armistice of November 1918 he served as a medical orderly in a local army hospital, but had returned to Munich by February 1919, the early days of the Bavarian Soviet, during which he dashed off the first version of *Drums in the Night*. There he showed both plays to Lion Feuchtwanger, the author of *Jew Süss*, who was then living in Munich and had recently met him for the first time. His own drama professor Artur Kutscher was always bitterly critical of his work, but Feuchtwanger was encouraging, so that he began to make contact with publishers and, at the end of the summer vacation, to write theatre criticisms for the Augsburg Socialist paper. The one-act plays are also thought to have been mainly written that year, as well as a wealth of lost or unfinished works.

*Baal* was accepted by Feuchtwanger's own publisher Georg Müller, who had also published Wedekind's collected plays, but was withdrawn when already in proof for fear of the censorship. *Drums in the Night* was shown by Feuchtwanger to the Kammer-spiele 'dramaturg' Rudolf Frank, who at some point in the summer of 1920 accepted it for production. Neither publication nor production in fact materialized for another two years, but the encouragement to Brecht was obvious. He left the university in the summer of 1921 and in November set out to try his luck in Berlin, a much more important city from the theatrical point of view.

The expedition was less successful than he had hoped. Neither the Deutsches Theater nor the State Theatre under Leopold Jessner would make any promises, and although Brecht was asked to direct Arnolt Bronnen's play *Vatermord* for the experimental Junge Bühne, it ended disastrously with a walk-out of the actors. He himself was taken to hospital suffering from undernourishment, due no doubt in part to the galloping currency inflation. But at least he made many connections or friendships which were to be important for his work: notably Bronnen (with whom he began collaborating on film treatments and various joint theatrical projects), Herbert Ihering the critic of the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (a lifelong supporter, whose paper was later to serve as a launching-platform for many of his ideas), and Moritz Seeler the organizer of the Junge Bühne (who was to produce *Life Story of the Man Baal* in 1926). By the time of his return to Augsburg at Easter he had also completed the first version of *In the Jungle*.

In Bavaria 1922 was a Brecht year. Soon after his return the Munich Residenztheater accepted *In the Jungle*, thanks to the recommendations of its artistic adviser Jacob Geis and of its new chief director Erich Engel, who had arrived a few months earlier from his native Hamburg. *Baal* was at last published (by Gustav Kiepenheuer of Potsdam), while 29 September saw the première of *Drums in the Night*. Clearly this was very different from later Brecht productions, for Otto Falckenberg, the head of the Kammer-spiele, staged it in expressionist style with angular poses and sets to match by his own staff designer Otto Reigbert. But Ihering came from Berlin to review it, and in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* of 5 October he wrote that 'At 24 the writer Bert Brecht has changed Germany's literary complexion overnight. Bert Brecht has given our time a new tone, a new melody, a new vision.' Here too was 'a physical sense of chaos and decay':

Hence the unparalleled creative force of his language. It is a language you can feel on your tongue, in your gums, your ear, your spinal column.

Ihering was known to be the judge for that year's award of the Kleist Prize. This had been founded in 1911 by a group of Kleist enthusiasts to celebrate the centenary of the poet's death, and was intended for writers who had yet to establish themselves. Up to its abolition in 1932 it was probably the most significant literary award in Germany, having previously been given to the playwrights Sorge, Unruh, Hasenclever and Jahn, while in 1923-5 it went to Musil, Barlach and Zuckmayer. On 13 November the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* announced that it had gone to Brecht, and not for *Drums in the Night* only but for all three of his completed plays. 'Brecht's linguistic power,' said Ihering's citation,

is even more richly developed in *Baal* and *In the Jungle*. His language is vivid without being deliberately poetic, symbolical without being over literary. Brecht is a dramatist because his language is felt physically and in the round.

Because *Drums in the Night* was generally regarded as the prize-winning play it was widely performed all over Germany, notably in Berlin immediately before Christmas, when Falckenberg again directed it for the Deutsches Theater with a first-rate cast. Brecht always claimed that he had only written it to make money, and certainly it differs in several ways from his other works. Alone of those in this volume it seems to contain no anticipations of his later plays.

In Munich for two nights after the première it was followed by a midnight show called *The Red Grape* (*Die rote Zibebe*, a name at one time given to the tavern in Act 4, and also used of the moon which hangs so conspicuously over the action). This was described as an 'improvisation in two scenes by Bert Brecht and Karl Valentin', the latter being a famous Munich music-hall comedian. In the first scene Max Schreck, the actor who played Glubb, was the Freakshow Landlord who opened a series of curtained cabins, each containing a performer who stepped out to do a solo turn. The programme shows that these included the sailor-poet Joachim Ringelnatz, the reciter Ludwig Hardt, Brecht himself singing songs, and the dancer Valeska Gert, though for the second performance Brecht seems to have been replaced by his fellow-poet Klabund. The second scene was a sketch called 'Christmas Evening' by Valentin, whom a short programme note by Brecht compared with

Chaplin, among other things for his 'virtually complete rejection of mimicry and cheap psychology'. Valentin's influence has sometimes been seen in Brecht's farcical one-acters, though Brecht himself acknowledged it rather as affecting his work as a director, particularly his use of grouping.

That October Brecht was appointed to the Kammerspiele's dramaturgical and directing staff, where his main task was the adaptation and production of Marlowe's *Edward II*. The actual writing of this play, which is very largely an original work, must have taken place mainly in the winter of 1922-3, since the Berlin State Theatre started showing an interest in it early in the new year. It was done in collaboration with Feuchtwanger, whom Brecht saw frequently throughout 1923 and who is said to have inspired the speech characteristics of Shlink in *In the Jungle*. It was not however performed till the next year, and although there were two more Brecht premières in 1923, neither was at the Kammerspiele itself. First *In the Jungle* was staged at the Residenztheater on 9 May by Engel, with settings by Brecht's school-friend Caspar Neher: the beginning of a lifelong collaboration between the three men. Jessner of the State Theatre came from Berlin, as did Ihering, who again wrote enthusiastically, though not without observing that to anyone insensitive to its language the play must appear a muddle. This the local critics bore out; the three-hour performance was poorly received; it ran for only six evenings, and altogether was a disastrous enough flop to occasion the sacking of the theatre's artistic adviser. Nor was *Baal* in Leipzig at the end of the year any more successful. Alvin Kronacher's production at the Old Theatre on 8 December was taken off by order of the city council within a week, and the director reprimanded. It brought an interesting press controversy between Ihering and his rival Alfred Kerr as to the relative originality of Brecht and Toller, but Kerr was undoubtedly right when he wrote that 'The only hope for a Baalade like this is as a posthumous fragment . . .'. For the text as we have it was not performed again for another forty years.

The rehearsals for *Edward II* began that autumn under Brecht's own direction. Brecht also supplied the music; the sets were again by Neher, and as in the two previous Munich Brecht productions the actor Erwin Faber played the lead. The première on 19 March 1924 was somewhat thrown out by the drunkenness of one of the principal actors, but the local critics appreciated Brecht's success in conveying his ballad-like conception of the story (he apparently had the scene titles and dates announced before each episode),

while Ihering was impressed by his handling of the ensemble scenes and the careful dissection of the long speeches. Knowing something of Brecht's as yet unformulated theoretical ideas, he realized that the audience with which he most sympathized was that for boxing matches, sporting events and incidents in the street, and attributed to this novel orientation part of the success of the production. Looking back two years later he saw it as something more: a major turning-point in the German theatre's understanding of the classics. For here had been an attempt at demonumentalization, an appeal for 'not so much plaster . . .' (the title of one of Brecht's subsequent essays), in which

He did not analyse the characters; he set them at a distance . . .  
He called for a report on the events.

Viewed from 1926 it seemed like an early example of the 'epic' style.

Brecht's Munich period came to an end with the 1923-4 theatrical season, for once established in Berlin he remained based there until he went into exile in 1933. Only the one-acters had not been performed by the time of his move. *Baal*, *Drums in the Night* and *Edward* were all in print, while the *Hauspostille*, his first book of poems, was enjoying something of an underground reputation, having been announced as early as 1922, five years before its actual publication. That first winter in Berlin he was to have the rare distinction (for a young author) of two productions in the major theatres: *Edward II* directed by Jürgen Fehling (this gifted director's only Brecht production) at the State Theatre, with Werner Krauss as Mortimer and Faber once more as Edward, and *Jungle* at the Deutsches Theater directed by Engel, who had been lured to Berlin by Max Reinhardt a few months before Brecht. The outstanding young actor Fritz Kortner turned down a part in Reinhardt's *St Joan* in order to play Shlink: another indication of the interest already stimulated by Brecht's early work.

## II

If the Bavarian years made Brecht's name they also established the main lines of argument for and against his work, with Kerr and Ihering respectively as counsel for the prosecution and the defence. Already the point at issue was his literary borrowings, and a number of later attacks on him (including that dealt with in the notes to *In the Jungle of Cities*) were foreshadowed in Kerr's *Baal* critique, with its dismissal of the play as second-hand Büchner and Grabbe. 'The

gifted Brecht,' he wrote, 'is a frothing plagiarist.' To which Ihering countered:

A writer's productivity can be seen in his relationship with old themes. In *Schweiger* Werfel invented a 'hitherto unheard of story' and was none the less imitative in every respect. Brecht was fired by Marlowe's *Edward II* and was creative through and through.

At the same time Brecht had been able to build the nucleus of his subsequent team of supporters and collaborators: first and foremost Neher, then Engel, the rather older Feuchtwanger, Kortner, Homolka, Klabund's actress wife Carola Neher and the playwright Marieluise Fleisser, all of them people who have left their individual marks on the German theatre. Here Brecht's personal magnetism clearly played a part: something to which there have been many tributes, starting with Feuchtwanger's fictional picture of him as the engineer Pröckl in his novel *Success* (1931). The first three plays all bore dedications: to his school-friend George Pfanzelt (the 'Orge' of the poems), to Bie Banholzer who bore his illegitimate son Frank (killed in the war) and to Marianne his first wife, whom he married in 1922. With *Edward II* this practice came to an end.

These were Brecht's pre-collectivist, indeed in a sense his pre-political years. He undoubtedly had opinions, many of them progressive and even revolutionary, but they were far from systematic, and politics and economics were wholly absent from what we know of his reading. On the other hand it was an extraordinarily tense and eventful time for Germany in general and Bavaria in particular, and Brecht was much too sensitive a writer not to reflect this in his work. A good deal has been made of his supposed pacifism in the First World War – though his schoolboy writings show that in fact he set out from a conventionally patriotic attitude and hardly developed beyond concern at the casualties – and of the impact made on him by his military service, which in fact was done on his own doorstep and in a hospital for venereal diseases, and started only a month or two before the end of the war. Several of the *Hauspostille* poems which are held to express his post-war sense of release had in fact already been written by then. Nor is there any evidence that he was more than a spectator of the revolutionary movements of November 1918, when the monarchy fell, and the first months of 1919, when Munich and Augsburg were governed by Soviets following Kurt Eisner's murder and the short-lived Spartacist revolt in Berlin.

Yet the 'Legend of the Dead Soldier' which he wrote in 1918 and took into *Drums in the Night* (see pp. 101 and 391) is always supposed to have earned him a place on the Munich Nazis' black list, while the play itself, though their paper the *Völkischer Beobachter* thought that it 'at any rate showed something of the idiocy of the November Revolution', struck none of the liberal critics as an unfair picture. It was certainly a very confused one, as the muddle over the dating of the action will confirm, and Brecht himself came to judge it in the severest terms, very nearly suppressing the play altogether. The revolutionary setting, however, was only a background to the real drama, and it had an instinctive poetic power which was not to be found in Brecht's later amendments.

The element of revolt in his writing of this time was largely directed against his own middle-class background: the satirical first scene of *Baal*, for instance, and the first two acts of *Drums in the Night*. Much of his reading, too, was exotic-escapist, as can be seen from the allusions in this volume to Gauguin and *Treasure Island* and Rudyard Kipling, and certainly this partly explains Brecht's interest in Rimbaud, whose elevated prose underlies Garga's 'psalmodizing' in *In the Jungle* (cf. Brecht's own semi-prose 'Psalms') and whose relationship with Verlaine was surely the model for that of Baal and Ekart. 'How boring Germany is!' says a note of 18 June 1920. 'It's a good average country, its pale colours and its surfaces are beautiful, but what inhabitants!' 'What's left?' he concluded: 'America!' That year he read two novels about Chicago, J. V. Jensen's *The Wheel* (which has never appeared in English) and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and when he began work on his own *In the Jungle* it was under their influence, intensified no doubt by his first experience of 'the crushing impact of cities' (about which he wrote an early poem) in the hard winter of 1921-2.

By the time of its first performance the French occupation of the Ruhr had given a great stimulus to nationalism throughout Germany, and not least to the Nazis in Bavaria. The *Völkischer Beobachter* particularly detested this play, claiming that the audience was full of Jews and that the Chinese characters spoke Yiddish. A month later Brecht and Bronnen heard Adolf Hitler addressing a meeting in a Munich circus, and were inspired (according to Bronnen) to work out what sort of a political show they could put on in a circus themselves. In November the Beer-Cellar Putsch interrupted the rehearsals of *Edward II* for a day. Brecht, with his colleague Bernhard Reich, went to call on Feuchtwanger, who saw

this as the sign that they must leave Bavaria (and did in fact leave in 1924). But Reich recalls no particular concern with the Nazis on Brecht's part, and indeed not only was the putsch quite firmly suppressed – and Hitler jailed – but the stabilization of the currency by the central government set the Nazi movement back for a number of years.

The period covered by this volume saw not only a certain element of political restoration throughout central and eastern Europe but also the end of Expressionism in the arts. To the poet-playwright Iwan Goll, who in 1921 published an essay called 'Expressionism is Dying', the two phenomena were connected. 'Expressionism was a fine, good, grand thing . . .' he wrote. 'But the result is, alas, and through no fault of the Expressionists, the German Republic of 1920.' Dadaism likewise was breaking up by 1922; at the Bauhaus the semi-mystical Itten was about to be succeeded by the technologically minded Moholy-Nagy; while artists like Grosz, Dix, Beckmann and Schlichter were evolving the coolly representational, socially conscious style which in 1924 became known as *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Brecht was always much too conscious of his own aims to care to be labelled as part of a movement; none the less his works of these years very clearly reflect the decline of Expressionism and the rise of the new style. He defined his position admirably in a note of 27 June 1920:

I can compete with the ultra-modernists in hunting for new forms and experimenting with my feelings. But I keep realizing that the essence of art is simplicity, grandeur and sensitivity, and that the essence of its form is coolness.

*Baal* was written as a kind of counter-play to the Expressionists' invocations of Humanity with a capital H, yet the wandering poet remains a romantic-expressionist figure, while the influence of Georg Büchner is one that is also noticeable in a number of Expressionist plays. *Drums in the Night* too, with its symbolic use of the moon, its cinematic third act and its hero's slightly mad rhetoric, can reasonably be termed an Expressionist play. *In the Jungle*, however, was written at the turning-point, the watershed between the two movements. The Rimbaud allusions, the colour references before each scene in the 1922 version, the attic-cum-undergrowth setting, the use of spotlights referred to in Brecht's note of 1954: all this is expressionistic, whereas the American milieu, the pre-occupation with the big cities and the very notion of the 'fight' were to become characteristic concerns of the mid-1920s. A further

note of 10 February 1922 even suggests that Brecht was looking forward to his own 1930s doctrine of 'alienation':

I hope in *Baal* and *Jungle* I've avoided one common artistic bloomer, that of trying to carry people away. Instinctively, I've kept my distance and ensured that the realization of my (poetical and philosophical) effects remains within bounds. The spectator's 'splendid isolation' is left intact; it is not *sua res quae agitur*; he is not fobbed off with an invitation to feel sympathetically, to fuse with the hero and seem significant and indestructible as he watches himself in two different versions. A higher type of interest can be got from making comparisons, from whatever is different, amazing, impossible to overlook.

Thus though *In the Jungle* is still wildly romantic it already foreshadows the detached impersonalities of the machine age. And those supporters who, like Ihering and Engel and Geis, thought that Brecht would help lead the theatre out of the Expressionist undergrowth can now be seen to have been absolutely right.

### III

The final texts of these plays often make Brecht's evolution difficult to follow. He was a restless amender and modifier of his own work, so that any one of them may consist of layer upon layer of elements from different periods. 'He is more interested in the job than in the finished work,' wrote Feuchtwanger in an article of 1928 called 'Portrait of Brecht for the English',

in the problem than in its solution, in the journey than in its goal. He rewrites his works an untold number of times, twenty or thirty times, with a new revision for every minor provincial production. He is not in the least interested in seeing a work completed. . . .

Thus between 1922 and its publication in 1927 *In the Jungle* became *In the Jungle of Cities*. The city allusions were strengthened, the boxing foreword was added and various boxing allusions worked into the text, the colour references at the start of each scene gave way to mock-precise ('objective') data of time and place, the whole flavour of the play was changed. The same was done still more drastically with *Baal* in 1926, though in this case Brecht later decided to scrap the more 'objective', technologically flavoured version and go back (more or less) to the 1922-3 text. *Drums in the Night* he seems to have left alone after 1922, perhaps because it was

not performed again after the first, largely topical wave of interest had subsided – though the discussion on p. 401 ff. suggests that Piscator was considering it. Then for his Collected Plays in the 1950s he largely rewrote the last two acts.

All this means that each play as we now have it reflects the views and to some extent the spirit of a number of different periods. The performances which have gone into theatrical history were not based on these particular texts. Even Brecht's own notes are difficult to understand without knowing to which version each of them relates.

It is an impossible problem editorially, and our policy has been to print the final text but to provide all the variant material from other versions published in Brecht's lifetime, together with extensive notes on the main unpublished scripts. This is so that the reader should not get false ideas of Brecht's evolution and of his ideas and achievements at any given time. Brecht was a profound believer in change, whom it would be wrong to present statically in a final 'authoritative' mould. Indeed opinions might well differ as to whether any such mould is the right one: not only are there fine things in many of the rejected versions, which it would be cruel not to publish, but informed judgement often disagrees with Brecht's last choices. Thus the chief German expert on *Baal* and the author of much the best book on Brecht's early years both prefer the 1919 script of *Baal*; an outstanding West German theatre critic wants the 1922 *Drums in the Night*; while Ihering wrote of the (final) published version of *In the Jungle of Cities* in 1927:

I love the fullness and colour of the old *Jungle*. There seemed to be no better evidence of Brecht's richness and gifts than those crackling, exotically pulsating scenes as they shot to and fro. . . . The new *Jungle*, the *Jungle of Cities*, has lost in colour and atmosphere. It has gained in clarity and concentration.

Not that there is much chance that Brecht himself would have accepted his own choices as final if he had lived longer, or seen them staged, or looked again at some of the earlier texts which for one reason or another he did not have before him when preparing the collected plays. It is characteristic that he already wanted the 1926 version of *Baal* printed as an appendix. For he was always a man in motion, who progressed best by disagreeing with what had already been said. Often it had been said by himself.

As for the translations, they are as good as translators and editors can make them, but they make no claim to be definitive.

Better translations may well appear with time – quite apart from the obvious fact that each time must make its own translations. In all the poetry Brecht's rules of punctuation are followed; that is to say there are no commas at the ends of lines, the line break being considered sufficient pause for anything short of a colon. Our aim is that the poetry should so far as possible fit any settings by the main composers with whom Brecht collaborated. A note will normally indicate where this is not the case, though there may be some tunes, particularly of Brecht's own, which we have failed to track down.

All translation in the notes is by the responsible editor, as is the selection of material printed. The aim here has been to include anything of relevance to the understanding or production of the play in question, leaving those notes which comprise more general statements of Brecht's theatrical ideas to be published in the volumes devoted to his theoretical writings. The essay 'On Looking Through my First Plays', which he wrote as a foreword to the first two volumes of his collected *Stücke* in 1954 (too late for the first printing), has been split into its component sections, of which that on *Man equals Man* will follow in the next volume. It can be reconstituted by reading it in the order indicated, starting with (i), the section on *Drums in the Night*.

The German text used throughout, unless otherwise stated, is that of the *Gesammelte Werke* (or Collected Works) edited by Elisabeth Hauptmann and a team comprising Werner Hecht, Rosemarie Hill, Herta Ramthun and Klaus Völker, and published by Suhrkamp-Verlag, Frankfurt-am-Main, in 1967. This is referred to as GW, plus the appropriate subdivision: *Stücke* (plays), *Schriften zum Theater* (writings on the theatre), and so on. When the same terms (*Stücke*, for instance, as above) are used without the prefix GW they refer to the earlier collected edition issued by the same publisher from 1953 on. Particulars of other sources are given in full where reference is made to them. We would like to thank the editors and publisher for the help which they have given with various queries. The Brecht Archive in East Berlin has been generous in supplying material, and we are grateful for the support given us from the outset by Stefan S. Brecht.

# Chronology

1898 10 February: Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht born in Augsburg.

## BAVARIA

1914 17 August: first contribution to *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*.

1919 21 October: first theatre criticism for *Augsburger Volkswille*.

1921 6 September: first short story in *Der neue Merkur* (Munich).

1922 5 September: first contribution to *Berliner Börsen-Courier*. 30 September: *Trommeln in der Nacht* (*Drums in the Night*) première, Munich. Publication of plays *Baal* and *Trommeln in der Nacht*. December: *Trommeln in der Nacht* at Deutsches Theater, Berlin.

1923 9 May: *Im Dickicht (der Städte)* (*In the Jungle of Cities*) première, Munich. 8 December: *Baal* première, Leipzig.

1924 18 March: *Edward II* première, Munich, Brecht's first production.

## BERLIN

1924 29 October: *Im Dickicht* at Deutsches Theater, Berlin. October: *Edward II* at Staatstheater, Berlin.

1926 14 February: *Baal* at Deutsches Theater, produced by Homolka and Brecht. 25 September: *Mann ist Mann* (*Man equals Man*) première, Darmstadt. December: *Die Hochzeit* (*A Respectable Wedding*) première, Frankfurt.

- 1927 First book of poems: *Die Hauspostille* (*Sermons for the Home*).  
23 March: *Mann ist Mann* broadcast, Berlin, with Helene Weigel. 17 July: *Mahagonny* ('Songspiel') première, Baden-Baden. First collaboration with Kurt Weill. Produced by Brecht. 14 October: radio adaptation of *Macbeth* broadcast, Berlin. 27 November: article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on the 'Epic Theatre'. December: *Im Dickicht der Städte* (revised version) at Darmstadt.
- 1928 5 January: *Mann ist Mann* at the Volksbühne, Berlin.  
31 August: *Threepenny Opera* première, Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, Berlin.
- 1929 July: *Lindberghflug* (*Flight over the Ocean*) and *Badener Lehrstück* (*The Baden-Baden Cantata*) premières, at Baden-Baden. Both produced by Brecht. First 'Lehrstücke' (or didactic pieces). September: *Happy End* première, Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, Berlin, produced by Brecht. *Berliner Requiem* with Weill broadcast during summer.
- 1930 First three issues of Brecht's *Versuche*, or miscellaneous collected writings, including first notes on the plays.  
9 March: *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (*The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*) première, Leipzig Opera.  
23 June: *Der Jasager* (*He Who Said Yes*) première, Berlin.  
10 December: *Die Massnahme* (*The Decision*) première, Berlin. First collaboration with Hanns Eisler. First outspokenly Communist work.
- 1931 Release of *Threepenny Opera* film. 16 January: first contribution to *Die Rote Fahne* (Berlin). 30 January: radio adaptation of *Hamlet* broadcast, Berlin. 6 February: *Mann ist Mann* (revised version) at Staatstheater, Berlin. Produced by Brecht. 21 December: *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at Kurfürstendamm-Theater, Berlin. Produced by Brecht and Caspar Neher.
- 1932 Release of *Kuhle Wampe* film. 17 January: *Die Mutter* (*The Mother*) première, Berlin. 11 April: *St Joan of the Stockyards* broadcast, Berlin.
- 1933 All publications and productions in Germany interrupted.

SCANDINAVIA

- 1933 June: *Anna-Anna ou les Sept Péchés Capitaux* première at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris. Brecht's only ballet. His last major work with Kurt Weill, *Die Sieben Todsünden* (*The Seven Deadly Sins*).
- 1934 First (and only completed) novel: *Der Dreigroschenroman* (*Threepenny Novel*). Second book of poems: *Lieder Gedichte Chöre* (*Songs Poems Choruses*) (with Eisler). Writing of *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* (*The Horatii and the Curiatii*), Brecht's last 'Lehrstück'.
- 1935 June: speech to International Writers' Congress in Defence of Culture, Paris. 19 November: *Die Mutter* in English, New York.
- 1936 July: first number of *Das Wort* (Moscow) edited by Brecht, Feuchtwanger and Bredel. 4 November: *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* (*Round Heads and Pointed Heads*) première, Copenhagen. (The notes on this play contain the first known mention of 'Verfremdung', or alienation.)
- 1937 16 October: *Senora Carrar's Rifles* première, Paris.
- 1938 First (and only) two volumes of Malik edition of *Collected Plays*. May: *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches* (*Fear and Misery in the Third Reich*) première, Paris, produced by Dudow.
- 1939 March: final number of *Das Wort*. Third book of poems: *Svendborger Gedichte* (*Svendborg Poems*).
- 1940 12 May: *Das Verhör des Lukullus* (*The Trial of Lucullus*) broadcast, Beromünster.
- 1941 19 April: *Mother Courage* première, Zurich Schauspielhaus.

USA

- 1942 Release of film *Hangmen also Die*.
- 1943 4 February: *The Good Person of Szechwan* première, Zurich Schauspielhaus. 9 September: *Galileo* première, Zurich Schauspielhaus.
- 1945 June: *Private Life of the Master Race* (adaptation of *Furcht und Elend*) in English, San Francisco and New York.

- 1946 15 October: *The Duchess of Malfi* is staged on Broadway.  
 1947 August: *Galileo* (second version; translated by Brecht and Laughton) in Hollywood.

## ZURICH

- 1948 First: (and only) volume of short stories: *Kalendergeschichten* (*Tales from the Calendar*). February: *Antigone* première, Chur (Switzerland); produced by Brecht and Neher; Helene Weigel's first professional appearance since 1933.  
 4 May: student production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in English, Northfield (Minnesota). 5 June: *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht* (*Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*) première, Zurich Schauspielhaus.

## BERLIN

- 1949 11 January: *Mother Courage* at Deutsches Theater, East Berlin; produced by Brecht and Engel, with Helene Weigel.  
 12 November: *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht* at Deutsches Theater, produced by Brecht and Engel; first production of the Berliner Ensemble. Publication of the *Versuche* resumed. 'Kleines Organon für das Theater' ('Short Organum for the Theatre'), Brecht's chief theoretical work, appears in a special number of *Sinn und Form* (Potsdam).  
 1950 15 April: Lenz's *Der Hofmeister* (*The Tutor*) in Brecht's adaptation, at Deutsches Theater; produced by Brecht, with Berliner Ensemble. 8 October: *Mother Courage* in Munich Kammerspiele, produced by Brecht.  
 1951 First selected poems: *Hundert Gedichte* (*A Hundred Poems*).  
 10 January: *Die Mutter* at Deutsches Theater; produced by Brecht, with Berliner Ensemble. 17 March: *Das Verhör des Lukullus*, opera version by Paul Dessau, given trial performance in East Berlin State Opera. August: *Herrnburger Bericht* (*Report from Herrnburg*) première at World Youth Festival in East Berlin. 12 October: *Die Verurteilung des Lukullus* (*The Condemnation of Lucullus*) put into State Opera's repertoire after changes to title, score and text.

- 1952 16 November: *Senora Carrar's Rifles* at Deutsches Theater, with Berliner Ensemble.
- 1953 First two volumes of *Stücke*, or Complete Dramatic Works. 17 May: Erwin Strittmatter's *Katzgraben* at Deutsches Theater, produced by Brecht, with Berliner Ensemble.
- 1954 March: first performance by Berliner Ensemble in Theater am Schiffbauerdamm as an independent State Theatre. March: *The Threepenny Opera* (English adaptation by Marc Blitzstein) begins a long run in New York. 15 June: *Caucasian Chalk Circle* German première at Theater am Schiffbauerdamm; produced by Brecht, with Berliner Ensemble. July: International Theatre Festival, Paris. Berliner Ensemble production of *Mother Courage*.
- 1955 Illustrated war verses: *Kriegsfibel (War Primer)*. 12 January: J. R. Becher's *Winterschlacht* produced by Brecht and Wekwerth, with Berliner Ensemble. June: Second International Theatre Festival, Paris, Berliner Ensemble production of *Caucasian Chalk Circle*.
- 1956 14 August: Brecht dies in East Berlin, of a heart infarct.

*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *The Visions of Simone Machard* and *Schweyk in the Second World War* were neither published nor produced during Brecht's lifetime. They were published in the *Stücke* edition in 1957 and produced in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Warsaw respectively the same year.

Baal

*To my friend George Pfanzelt*

*Translator:* PETER TEGEL

*Characters*

Baal, poet · Mech, merchant and publisher · Emilie, his wife ·  
Dr Piller, critic · Johannes Schmidt · Pschierer, director of the  
water rates · a young man · a young woman · Johanna · Ekart ·  
Luise, a waitress · the two sisters · the landlady · Sophie  
Barger · the tramp · Lupu · Mjurk · the nightclub singer · a  
pianist · the parson · Bolleboll · Gougou · the old beggar ·  
Maja, the beggarwoman · the young woman · Watzmann · a  
waitress · two policemen · drivers · peasants · woodcutters

HYMN OF BAAL THE GREAT

Baal grew up within the whiteness of the womb  
With the sky already large and pale and calm  
Naked, young, endlessly marvellous  
As Baal loved it when he came to us.

And that sky remained with him through joy and care  
Even when Baal slept, blissful and unaware.  
Nights meant violet sky and drunken Baal  
Dawns, Baal good, sky apricottish-pale.

So through hospital, cathedral, bar  
Baal trots coolly on, and learns to let them go.  
When Baal's tired, boys, Baal will not fall far:  
Baal will drag his whole sky down below.

Where the sinners herd in shame together  
Baal lies naked, soaking up the calm.  
Just the sky, but sky to last for *ever*  
Hides his nakedness with its strong arm.

And that lusty girl, the world, who laughs when yielding  
To the man who'll stand the pressure of her thighs  
Gives him instants of a sweet ecstatic feeling.  
Baal survives it; he just looks and sees.

And when Baal sees corpses all around  
Then a double pleasure comes to him.  
Lots of space, says Baal; they're not enough to count.  
Lots of space inside this woman's womb.

Once a woman, Baal says, gives her all  
She'll have nothing more, so let her go!  
Other men would represent no risk at all.  
Even Baal is scared of babies, though.

#### 4 Baal

Vice, says Baal, is bound to help a bit  
And so are the men who practise it.  
Vices leave their mark on all they touch.  
Stick to two, for one will be too much.

Slackness, softness – that's what you should shun.  
Nothing's tougher than pursuing fun.  
Powerful limbs are needed, and experience too  
Swollen bellies may discourage you.

Baal watches the vultures in the star-shot sky  
Hovering patiently to see when Baal will die.  
Sometimes Baal shams dead. The vultures swoop.  
Baal, without a word, will dine on vulture soup.

Under mournful stars in our sad vale of trouble  
Munching, Baal can graze broad pastures down to stubble.  
When they're cropped, into the forest deep  
Baal trots, singing, to enjoy his sleep.

And when Baal's dragged down to be the dark womb's  
prize  
What's the world to Baal? Baal has been fed.  
Sky enough still lurks behind Baal's eyes  
To make just enough sky when he's dead.

Baal decayed within the darkness of the womb  
With the sky once more as large and pale and calm  
Naked, young, endlessly marvellous  
As Baal loved it when he came to us.

## Dining Room

*Mech, Emilie Mech, Pschierer, Johannes Schmidt, Dr Piller, Baal and other guests enter through the revolving door.*

MECH *to Baal*: Would you like some wine, Mr Baal? *All take seats, Baal in the place of honour.* Do you like crab? That's a dead eel.

PILLER *to Mech*: I'm very glad that the immortal poems of Mr Baal, which I had the honour of reading to you, have earned your approval. *To Baal*: You must publish your poetry. Mr Mech pays like a real patron of the arts. You'll be able to leave your attic.

MECH: I buy cinnamon wood. Whole forests of cinnamon float down the rivers of Brazil for my benefit. But I'll also publish your poetry.

EMILIE: You live in an attic?

BAAL *eating and drinking*: 64 Klaukestrasse.

MECH: I'm really too fat for poetry. But you've got the same-shaped head as a man in the Malayan Archipelago, who used to have himself driven to work with a whip. If he wasn't grinding his teeth he couldn't work.

PSCHIERER: Ladies and gentlemen. I admit it frankly: I was shattered to find a man like him in such modest circumstances. As you know, I discovered our dear poet in my office, a simple clerk. I have no hesitation in calling it a disgrace to our city that personalities of his calibre should be allowed to work for a daily wage. May I congratulate you, Mr Mech! Your salon will be famous as the cradle of this genius's, yes genius's, worldwide reputation. Your health, Mr Baal!

*Baal wards off the speech with a gesture; he eats.*

PILLER: I shall write an essay about you. Have you any manuscripts? I have the backing of the press.

A YOUNG MAN: How, my friend, do you get that accursed naïve effect? It's positively homeric. I consider Homer one,

or rather one of several, highly civilized adapters with a penetrating delight in the naïveté of the original folk sagas.

AYOUNGLADY: You remind me more of Walt Whitman. But you're more significant. That's what I think.

ANOTHER MAN: I'd say he had something rather more of Verhaeren.

PILLER: Verlaine! Verlaine! Even in physiognomy. Don't forget our Lombroso.

BAAL: Some more of the eel, please.

THE YOUNG LADY: But you have the advantage of greater indecency.

JOHANNES: Mr Baal sings his songs to the lorry-drivers. In a café down by the river.

THE YOUNG MAN: Good God, none of those poets are even in the same category. My friend, you're streets ahead of any living poet.

THE OTHER MAN: At any rate he's promising.

BAAL: Some more wine please.

THE YOUNG MAN: I consider you a precursor of the great Messiah of European literature whom we can undoubtedly expect within the very near future.

THE YOUNG LADY: Dear poet, ladies, and gentlemen. Permit me to read you a poem from the periodical 'Revolution' which will also be of interest to you. *She rises and reads:*

The poet shuns shining harmonies.  
He blows trombones, shrilly whips the drum.  
He incites the people with chopped sentences.

The new world  
Exterminating the world of pain,  
Island of rapturous humanity.  
Speeches. Manifestos.  
Songs from grandstands.  
Let there be preached the new,  
The holy state, inoculated into the blood of the people,  
Blood of their blood.

Paradise sets in.  
 – Let us spread a stormy climate!  
 Learn! Prepare! Practise!

*Applause.*

THE YOUNG LADY *quickly*: Permit me! I shall turn to another poem in the same issue. *She reads*:

Sun had made him shrivel  
 And wind had blown him dry.  
 By every tree rejected  
 He simply fell away.

Only a single rowan  
 With berries on every limb,  
 Red as flaming tongues, would  
 Receive and shelter him.

So there he hung suspended,  
 His feet lay on the grass.  
 The blood-red sunset splashed him  
 As through his ribs it passed.

It moved across the landscape  
 And struck all the olive groves.  
 God in his cloud-white raiment  
 Was manifest above.

Within the flowering forest  
 There sang a thousand snakes  
 While necks of purest silver  
 With slender murmurs shook.

And they were seized with trembling  
 All over that leafy domain  
 Obeying the hands of their Father  
 So light in their delicate veins.

*Applause.*

CRIES OF: Brilliant! Extreme but in good taste. Simply heavenly.

THE YOUNG LADY: In my opinion it comes closest to the Baalian conception of the world.

MECH: You should travel! The Abyssinian mountains. That's something for you.

BAAL: They won't come to me, though.

PILLER: Why? With your zest for life! Your poems had an enormous effect on me.

BAAL: The lorry-drivers pay if they like them.

MECH *drinking*: I'll publish your poems. I'll let the cinnamon logs float away, or do both.

EMILIE *to Mech*: You shouldn't drink so much.

BAAL: I haven't got any shirts. I could use some white shirts.

MECH: You're not interested in the publishing deal?

BAAL: But they'd have to be soft.

PILLER *ironic*: Oh, and what can I do for you?

EMILIE: You write such wonderful poems, Mr Baal. So sensitive.

BAAL *to Emilie*: Won't you play something on the harmonium?

*Emilie plays.*

MECH: I like eating to the harmonium.

EMILIE *to Baal*: Please don't drink so much, Mr Baal.

BAAL *looks at Emilie*: Do you have forests of cinnamon floating for you, Mech? Butchered forests?

EMILIE: You can drink as much as you like. I was only asking a favour.

PILLER: Even your drinking shows promise.

BAAL *to Emilie*: Play higher up! You've got lovely arms.

*Emilie stops playing and approaches the table.*

PILLER: Apparently you don't care for the music itself.

BAAL: I can't hear the music. You're talking too much.

PILLER: You're a queer fish, Baal. I gather you don't want to get published.

BAAL: Don't you trade in animals too, Mech?

MECH: Do you object?

BAAL *stroking Emilie's arm*: What's my poetry to you?

MECH: I wanted to do you a favour. Couldn't you be peeling some more apples, Emilie?

PILLER: He's afraid of being sucked dry. – Haven't you found a use for me yet?

BAAL: Do you always wear wide sleeves, Emilie?

PILLER: But now you really must stop drinking.

PSCHIERER: Perhaps you ought to go easy on the alcohol. Full many a genius —

MECH: Would you like to have a bath? Shall I have a bed made up for you? Have you forgotten anything?

PILLER: Your shirts are floating away, Baal. Your poetry has floated off already.

BAAL *drinks*: I'm against monopolies. Go to bed, Mech.

MECH *has risen*: I delight in all the animals on God's earth, but this is one animal you can't do business with. Come, Emilie! Shall we go, ladies and gentlemen?

*All have risen indignantly.*

CRIES: Sir! Astounding! That's the . . .!

PSCHIERER: I am shattered, Mr Mech . . .

PILLER: Your poetry has a malicious streak.

BAAL *to Johannes*: What is the gentleman's name?

JOHANNES: Piller.

BAAL: Well, Piller, *you* can send me some old newspapers.

PILLER *leaving*: You mean nothing to me. You mean nothing to literature.

*All go.*

SERVANT *entering*: Your coat, sir.

## Baal's Attic

*Starlit night. At the window Baal and the adolescent Johannes. They look at the sky.*

BAAL: When you lie stretched out on the grass at night you

can feel in your bones that the earth is round and that we're flying, and that there are beasts on this star that devour its plants. It's one of the smaller stars.

JOHANNES: Do you know anything about astronomy?

BAAL: No.

*Silence.*

JOHANNES: I'm in love with a girl. She's the most innocent creature alive, but I saw her once in a dream being made love to by a juniper tree. That is to say, her white body lay stretched out on the juniper tree and the gnarled branches twisted about her. I haven't been able to sleep since.

BAAL: Have you ever seen her white body?

JOHANNES: No. She's innocent. Even her knees . . . There are degrees of innocence, don't you think? And yet, there are times when I hold her, just for a second, at night, and she trembles like a leaf, but only at night. But I haven't the strength to do it. She's seventeen.

BAAL: In your dream, did she like love?

JOHANNES: Yes.

BAAL: She wears clean linen, a snow-white petticoat between her knees? Bed her and she may turn into a heap of flesh without a face.

JOHANNES: You're saying what I always felt. I thought I was a coward. I can see now that you also think intercourse is unclean.

BAAL: That's the grunting of the swine who are no good at it. When you embrace her virginal loins, the joy and fear of created man turns you into a god. As the juniper tree's many roots are entwined within the earth, so are your limbs in bed. Blood flows and hearts beat.

JOHANNES: But it's punishable by law, and by one's parents.

BAAL: Your parents – *he reaches for his guitar* – they're a thing of the past. How dare they open their mouths, filled with rotten teeth, to speak against love, which anybody may die of? If you can't take love, there's nothing left but vomit.

*He tunes the guitar.*

JOHANNES: Do you mean if I make her pregnant?

BAAL *striking chords on his guitar*: When the pale mild summer ebbs and they're swollen with love like sponges, they turn back into beasts, evil and childish, shapeless with their fat stomachs and hanging breasts, their damp arms clinging like slimy tentacles, and their bodies collapse and grow heavy unto death. And with hideous shrieks as if they were bringing a new world into being, they yield a small fruit. They spew out with pain what they once sucked in with pleasure. *He plucks the strings*. You have to have teeth for it, then love is like biting into an orange, with the juice squirting into your teeth.

JOHANNES: Your teeth are like an animal's. They're yellow and large, sinister.

BAAL: And love is like putting your naked arm into a pond and letting it float with weeds between your fingers, like the pain in which the drunken tree groans and sings as the wild wind rides it, like drowning in wine on a hot day, her body surging like a cool wine into every crease of your skin, limbs soft as plants in the wind, and the weight of the collision to which you yield is like flying against a storm, and her body tumbles over you like cool pebbles. But love is also like a coconut, good while it is fresh but when the juice is gone and only the bitter flesh remains you have to spit it out. *He throws the guitar aside*. I'm sick of this hymn.

JOHANNES: Then you think it's something I ought to do, if it's so wonderful?

BAAL: I think it's something for *you* to avoid, Johannes.

## An Inn

*Morning. Lorry-drivers. Ekart at the back with Luise, the waitress. White clouds can be seen through the window.*

BAAL *talking to the lorry-drivers*: He threw me out of his nice clean room, because I threw up his wine. But his wife ran

after me, and in the evening we celebrated. I'm lumbered with her and sick of it.

DRIVERS: She needs a good hiding . . . They're randy as cats but stupider. Tell her to go and eat figs! . . . I always beat mine before I give her what she wants.

JOHANNES *enters with Johanna*: This is Johanna.

BAAL *to the drivers, who go to the back*: I'll give you a song later.

JOHANNA: Johannes read me some of your poems.

BAAL: Ah. How old are you?

JOHANNES: She was seventeen in June.

JOHANNA: I'm jealous. He does nothing but talk about you.

BAAL: You're in love with your Johannes. It's spring. I'm waiting for Emilie . . . Better to love than make love.

JOHANNES: I can understand your winning a man's love, but how can you have any success with women?

*Emilie enters quickly.*

BAAL: Here she comes. And how are you, Emilie? Johannes is here with his fiancée. Sit down!

EMILIE: How could you ask me to come here! A cheap bar, only fit for drunken louts! Typical of your taste.

BAAL: Luise, a gin for the lady.

EMILIE: Do you want to make a laughing stock of me?

BAAL: No. You'll drink. We're all human.

EMILIE: But you're not.

BAAL: How do you know? *He holds the glass out to Luise.* Don't be so mean, Luise. *He takes hold of her.* You're devilishly soft today, like a plum.

EMILIE: How ill-bred you are!

BAAL: Tell the world, darling.

JOHANNES: It's interesting here, I must say. Ordinary people. Drinking and amusing themselves. And then, those clouds in the window!

EMILIE: He dragged you here too, I expect. For a view of the clouds.

JOHANNA: Wouldn't it be nicer to go for a walk in the meadows by the river, Johannes?

BAAL: Nothing doing! Stay here! *He drinks.* The sky is

purple, particularly if you happen to be drunk. Beds on the other hand are white. To begin with. That's where love is, between Heaven and Earth. *He drinks.* Why are you such cowards? The sky's free, you feeble shadows! Full of bodies! Pale with love!

EMILIE: You've had too much again and now you're babbling. And with that bloody wonderful babble he drags you to his sty.

BAAL: Sometimes – *drinks* – the sky is yellow. Full of vultures. Let's all get drunk. *He looks under the table.* Who's kicking my shins? Is it you, Luise? Ah, you, Emilie! Well, no matter. Drink up.

EMILIE *half rising*: I don't know what's wrong with you today. Perhaps I shouldn't have come here after all.

BAAL: Have you just noticed? You might as well stay now.

JOHANNA: Don't say things like that, Mr Baal.

BAAL: You've a good heart, Johanna. You'll never be unfaithful, will you?

DRIVER *winning*: Ace, you bastards! – Trumped!

SECOND DRIVER: Keep going, the tart said, the worst's over. *Laughter.* Tell her to go and eat figs.

THIRD DRIVER: How could you betray me, as the lady said to the butler when she found him in bed with the maid.

JOHANNES *to Baal*: Because of Johanna. She's a child.

JOHANNA *to Emilie*: Will you come with me? We can go together.

EMILIE *bursting into tears at the table*: I feel so ashamed now.

JOHANNA *putting her arm round Emilie*: I understand; it doesn't matter.

EMILIE: Don't look at me like that. You're still so young. You don't know anything yet.

BAAL *gets up forbiddingly*: Comedy, entitled Sisters in Hades! *He goes to the drivers, takes the guitar down from the wall and tunes it.*

JOHANNA: He's been drinking. He'll regret it tomorrow.

EMILIE: If only you knew. He's always like this. And I love him.

BAAL *sings*:

Orge told me that:

In all the world the place he liked the best  
Was not the grass mound where his loved ones rest

Was not the altar, nor some harlot's room  
Nor yet the warm white comfort of the womb.

Orge thought the best place known to man  
In this world was the lavatory pan.

That was a place to set the cheeks aglow  
With stars above and excrement below.

A place of refuge where you had a right  
To sit in private on your wedding night.

A place of truth, for there you must admit  
You are a man; there's no concealing it.

A place of wisdom, where the gut turns out  
To gird itself up for another bout.

Where you are always doing good by stealth  
Exerting tactful pressure for your health.

At that you realize how far you've gone:  
Using the lavatory – to eat on.

DRIVERS *clapping*: Bravo! . . . A good song! Give the gentleman a cherry brandy, if you'll accept the offer, sir! He made it up all on his own . . . What a man!

LUISE *in the middle of the room*: You're a one, Mr Baal!

DRIVER: If *you* did a real job, you'd do all right for yourself.  
You could end up running a transport business.

SECOND DRIVER: Wish I had brains like that!

BAAL: That's nothing. You have to have a backside and the rest. Your very good health, Luise. *He goes back to his table.*  
And yours, Emmi. Come on, drink up. Even if you can't do anything else. Drink, I said.

*Emilie, tears in her eyes, sips her drink.*

BAAL: That's better. There'll be some life in you yet.

EKART *gets up and comes round slowly from the bar to Baal. He is lean, a powerful man*: Baal! Brother! Come with me! Give it up! Out to the hard dusty highroad: at night the air grows purple. To bars full of drunks: let the women you've stuffed fall into the black rivers. To cathedrals with small, pale ladies: you ask, dare a man breathe here? To cowsheds where you bed down with the beasts. It's dark there and the cows moo. And into the forests where axes ring out above and you forget the light of day: God has forgotten you. Do you still remember what the sky looks like? A fine tenor you've turned into! *He spreads his arms.* Come, brother! To dance, to sing, to drink! Rain to drench us! Sun to scorch us! Darkness and light! Dogs and women! Are you that degenerate?

BAAL: Luise! Luise! An anchor! Don't let me go with him.  
*Luise goes to him.* Help me, everyone.

JOHANNES: Don't let him lead you astray!

BAAL: My dear chap!

JOHANNES: Think of your mother, remember your art!  
Resist! *To Ekart*: You ought to be ashamed. You're evil.

EKART: Come, brother! We'll fly in the open sky as blissful as two white doves. Rivers in the morning light! Graveyards swept by the wind and the smell of endless unmown fields.

JOHANNA: Be strong, Mr Baal.

EMILIE *holding him*: I won't allow it! Do you hear? You can't throw yourself away!

BAAL: Not yet, Ekart! There's still another way. They won't play, brother.

EKART: Then go to the devil, you with your soft, fat, sentimental heart! *He goes.*

DRIVERS: Out with the ten . . . Damn it! Add up . . . Let's pack it in.

JOHANNA: You've won this time, Mr Baal.

BAAL: I'm sweating all over. Got any time today, Luise?

EMILIE: Don't talk like that, Baal! You don't know what you do to me when you talk like that.

LUISE: Stop upsetting the lady, Mr Baal. A child could see she's not herself.

BAAL: Don't worry, Luise! Horgauer!

DRIVER: What do you want?

BAAL: There's a lady being badly treated here, she wants love. Give her a kiss, Horgauer.

JOHANNES: Baal!

*Johanna puts her arm round Emilie.*

DRIVERS *laughing and hitting the table with their fists*: Press on, Andreas . . . Have a go . . . high class, blow your nose first . . . You're a bastard, Mr Baal.

BAAL: Are you frigid, Emilie? Do you love me? He's shy, Emmi. Give him a kiss. If you make a fool of me in front of these people, it's the finish. One, two . . .

*The driver bends down. Emilie raises her tear-stained face. He kisses her vigorously. Loud laughter.*

JOHANNES: That was evil, Baal. Drink brings out the evil in him, and then he feels good. He's too strong.

DRIVERS: Well done! What's she come to a place like this for? . . . That's the way to treat them . . . her kind break up families! . . . Serves her right! *They get up from their card game.* Tell her to go and eat figs!

JOHANNA: How disgusting! You ought to be ashamed!

BAAL *going up to her*: Why are your knees shaking, Johanna?

JOHANNES: What do you want with her?

BAAL *a hand on his shoulder*: Must you also write poetry? While life's so decent? When you shoot down a racing

stream on your back, naked under an orange sky, and you see nothing except the sky turning purple, then black like a hole . . . when you trample your enemy underfoot . . . or burst with joy at a funeral . . . or sobbing with love you eat an apple . . . or bend a woman across a bed. *Johannes leads Johanna away without saying a word.*

BAAL *leaning on the table*: It's all a bloody circus. Did you feel it? Did it get under your skin? You have to lure the beast from its cage! Get the beast into the sun! My bill! Let love see the light of day! Naked in the sunshine! Under a clear sky!

DRIVERS *shaking him by the hand*: Be seeing you, Mr Baal! . . . At your service, sir! . . . For my part I always did say Mr Baal had a screw loose. What with those songs and the rest! But one thing's certain, his heart's in the right place! – You have to treat women the way they deserve. – Well, somebody exposed their precious white bottom here today. – Good-bye, Mr Circus. *They go.*

BAAL: And good-bye to you, my friends! *Emilie has thrown herself sobbing down on the bench. Baal touches her forehead with the back of his hand. Emmi! You can calm down now. The worst is over. He raises her head and brushes her hair from her tear-stained face. Just forget it! He throws himself heavily on her and kisses her.*

## Baal's Attic

I *Sunrise.*

*Baal and Johanna sitting on the edge of the bed.*

JOHANNA: Oh, what have I done! I'm wicked.

BAAL: Wash yourself instead.

JOHANNA: I still don't know how it happened.

BAAL: Johannes is to blame for everything. Drags you up here and behaves like a clown when he sees why your knees are shaking.

JOHANNA *gets up, lowers her voice*: When he comes back . . .

BAAL: Time for a bit of literature. *He lies down again*. First light over Mount Ararat.

JOHANNA: Shall I get up?

BAAL: After the flood. Stay in bed.

JOHANNA: Won't you open the window?

BAAL: I like the smell. – What about another helping? What's gone's gone.

JOHANNA: How can you be so vile?

BAAL *lazily on the bed*: White and washed clean by the flood, Baal lets his thoughts fly like doves over the dark waters.

JOHANNA: Where's my petticoat . . . I can't . . . like this . . .

BAAL *handing it to her*: Here! What can't you . . . like this, darling?

JOHANNA: Go home. *She drops it, but then she dresses*.

BAAL *whistling*: God, what a girl! I can feel every bone in my body. Give me a kiss!

JOHANNA *by the table in the middle of the room*: Say something! *Baal is silent*. Do you still love me? Say it. *Baal whistles*. Can't you say it?

BAAL *looking up at the ceiling*: I'm fed to the teeth!

JOHANNA: Then what was it last night? And before?

BAAL: Johannes could make things awkward. And Emilie's staggering around like a rammed schooner. I could die of starvation here! None of you would lift a finger for me. There's only one thing you're out for.

JOHANNA *confused, clearing the table*: And you – didn't you ever feel differently about me?

BAAL: Have you washed? Not an ounce of sense. Did you get nothing out of it? Go home! You can tell Johannes I took you home last night and spew gall at him. It's been raining. *Rolls himself up in his blanket*.

JOHANNA: Johannes? *She walks wearily to the door and goes*.

BAAL *suddenly turning*: Johanna! *Goes from his bed to the door*. Johanna! *At the window*. There she goes. There she goes.

2 *Noon.*

*Baal lies on his bed.*

BAAL *humming:*

The evening sky grows dark as pitch  
With drink; or often fiery red.  
Naked I'll have you in a ditch . . .

*The two sisters come into the room arm in arm.*

THE OLDER SISTER: You said we were to come and visit you again.

BAAL *still humming:*

Or on a white and spacious bed.

THE OLDER SISTER: Well, we came, Mr Baal.

BAAL: Now they come fluttering in pairs to the dove-cot.  
Take off your clothes.

THE OLDER SISTER: Mother heard the stairs creak last week.  
*She undoes her sister's blouse.*

THE YOUNGER SISTER: It was getting light on the landing when we got to our room.

BAAL: One day I'll be stuck with you.

THE YOUNGER SISTER: I'd drown myself, Mr Baal.

THE OLDER SISTER: We came together . . .

THE YOUNGER SISTER: I feel ashamed.

THE OLDER SISTER: It isn't the first time . . .

THE YOUNGER SISTER: But it was never so light. It's broad daylight outside.

THE OLDER SISTER: And it isn't the second time.

THE YOUNGER SISTER: You get undressed as well.

THE OLDER SISTER: I will.

BAAL: When you've done, come on in! It'll be dark all right.

THE YOUNGER SISTER: You go first today.

THE OLDER SISTER: I was first last time . . .

THE YOUNGER SISTER: No, it was me . . .

BAAL: You'll both get it at once.

THE OLDER SISTER *standing with her arms round the younger one*: We're ready. It's so light in here!

BAAL: Is it warm outside?

THE OLDER SISTER: It's only April.

THE YOUNGER SISTER: But the sun's warm today.

BAAL: Did you enjoy yourselves last time?

*The sisters do not answer.*

THE OLDER SISTER: A girl threw herself into the river.  
Johanna Reiher.

THE YOUNGER SISTER: Into the Laach. I wouldn't go in there. The current's too strong.

BAAL: Into the river? Does anyone know why?

THE OLDER SISTER: There are rumours. People talk . . .

THE YOUNGER SISTER: She went off one afternoon and stayed out all night.

BAAL: Didn't she go home in the morning?

THE YOUNGER SISTER: No, then she went in the river. They haven't found her yet.

BAAL: Still afloat . . .

THE YOUNGER SISTER: What's the matter?

THE OLDER SISTER: Nothing. A chill perhaps.

BAAL: I'm too lazy today. You can go home.

THE OLDER SISTER: You can't do that, Mr Baal. You shouldn't do that to her.

*Knocking at the door.*

THE YOUNGER SISTER: Somebody's knocking. It's mother.

THE OLDER SISTER: For God's sake, don't open!

THE YOUNGER SISTER: I'm frightened.

THE OLDER SISTER: Here's your blouse.

*Loud knocking.*

BAAL: If it's your mother you're in for it.

THE OLDER SISTER *dressing quickly*: Wait a minute, don't open yet. Bolt the door, please, for God's sake!

LANDLADY *fat, enters*: Ah ha! I thought as much. Two at a time now! Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? A pair of you in his fishpond? Night and day, that fellow's bed never gets

cold. Now I'm going to have my say. My attic isn't a brothel.

*Baal turns to the wall.*

LANDLADY: You're sleepy, are you? My word, don't you ever get enough of it? I can see the daylight through you.

You look like a ghost. You're nothing but a bag of bones.

BAAL *moving his arms*: Like swans they fly to my wood.

LANDLADY *clapping her hands*: Nice swans! The way you put things! You could be a poet, you! If your knees don't rot first.

BAAL: I indulge in white bodies.

LANDLADY: White bodies! You're a poet, you really are!

Don't know what else you are though. And the poor young things! You're sisters, are you? And snivelling because you're poor orphans, I suppose. How about a good hiding? For your white bodies? *Baal laughs.* And he laughs. You ruin poor girls by the hundredweight, poor girls you drag here. You disgusting pig! I'm giving you notice. As for you, look sharp and back to your mother! I'm coming with you.

*The younger sister sobs loudly.*

THE OLDER SISTER: It isn't her fault.

LANDLADY *taking both by the hand*: Now for the waterworks!

These girls! Oh well, you're not the only ones. That one's up to his neck in swans. There's plenty besides you he's made happy, then dumped on the rubbish heap. Off with you now, into the fresh air! There's no need for tears. *She puts her arms round them both.* I know what he's like. I know the make. Stop snivelling, else it'll show in your eyes. Go home to your mother like good girls and don't do it again. *She pushes them out.* And you, you've had your notice. You can set up your swan-sty somewhere else. *She pushes the girls out of the room and goes out herself.*

BAAL *gets up, stretches*: A bitch with a heart! . . . I'm dead lazy today anyway. *He throws paper down on the table and sits down.* I'll make the new Adam. *He sketches big letters on the paper.* I'll have a go at the inner man. I'm hollowed out, but

hungry as a vulture. Nothing but a bag of bones. The bitch!  
*He leans back and stretches his arms and legs with emphasis.* I'll  
 make summer. Red. Scarlet red. Greedy. *He hums again.*

### 3 *Evening.*

*Baal sits at his table.*

BAAL *picks up the bottle. The following speech to be delivered with pauses:* I've covered the paper with red summer for four days now: wild, pale, greedy; and fought the bottle. There have been defeats, but the bodies on the wall are beginning to retreat into the dark, into the Egyptian night. I nail them to the wall, but I must stop drinking. *He murmurs:* This white liquor is my rod and staff. It reflects my paper and has remained untouched since the snow began to drip from the gutter. But now my hands are shaking. As if the bodies were still in them. *He listens.* My heart's pounding like a horse's hoof. *With enthusiasm:* Oh Johanna, one more night in your aquarium, and I would have rotted among the fish. But now I smell the warm May nights. I'm a lover with no one to love. I give in. *He drinks and gets up.* I must move. First I'll get myself a woman. To move out alone is sad. *He looks out of the window.* No matter who. One with a face like a woman. *Humming, he goes out. Tristan is being played down below on the hurdy gurdy.*

*Johannes enters, wretched and pale. He riffles the papers on the table, picks up the bottle and goes shyly to the door.*

*He waits there.*

*Noise on the landing. Whistling.*

BAAL *pulling Sophie Barger into the room. Whistles:* Be nice to me, darling. That is my room. *He sits down, sees Johannes.* What are you doing here?

JOHANNES: I only wanted to . . .

BAAL: So you wanted to? What are you standing there for? A tombstone for my Johanna, who's been washed away? The ghost of Johannes from another world, is that it? I'll throw you out! Leave this room at once! *Runs round him.* It's

an impertinence! I'll knock you down. It's spring, anyway.  
Get out!

*Johannes looks at him and goes.*

*Baal whistles.*

SOPHIE: What did the poor boy do to you? Let me go!

BAAL *opens the door wide*: When you get to the first floor, turn to the right.

SOPHIE: They followed us after you picked me up in front of the door. They'll find me.

BAAL: No one will find you here.

SOPHIE: I don't even know you. What do you want from me?

BAAL: If you mean that, you may as well go.

SOPHIE: You rushed up to me in the street. I thought it was an orangutan.

BAAL: It's spring, isn't it? I need something white in this damned hole, a cloud. *He opens the door and listens.* Those idiots, they've lost their way.

SOPHIE: I'll get thrown out if I come home late.

BAAL: Especially —

SOPHIE: Especially what?

BAAL: The way a woman looks when I've made love to her.

SOPHIE: I don't know why I'm still here.

BAAL: I can give you the information.

SOPHIE: You needn't think the worst of me, please!

BAAL: Why not? You're a woman like any other. The faces vary, the knees are always weak.

*Sophie is half prepared to go; at the door she looks round.*

*Baal looks at her, astride a chair.*

SOPHIE: Good-bye!

BAAL *indifferently*: Do you feel faint?

SOPHIE *leans against the wall*: I don't know. I feel so weak.

BAAL: I know. It's April. It's growing dark, and you smell me. That's how it is with animals. *Gets up.* Now you belong to the wind, white cloud. *He goes to her quickly, slams the door, and takes Sophie Barger into his arms.*

SOPHIE *breathlessly*: Let me go!

BAAL: My name's Baal.

SOPHIE: Let me go!

BAAL: You must console me. The winter left me weak. And you look like a woman.

SOPHIE *looks up at him*: Your name's Baal?

BAAL: That makes you want to stay?

SOPHIE *looking up at him*: You're so ugly, so ugly, it's frightening. — But then —

BAAL: Mm?

SOPHIE: Then it doesn't matter.

BAAL *kisses her*: Are your knees steady, mm?

SOPHIE: You don't even know my name. I'm Sophie Barger.

BAAL: Forget your name. *Kisses her*.

SOPHIE: Don't — don't — it's the first time anybody's ever . . .

BAAL: Untouched? Come! *He leads her to the bed. They sit down*. You see! Bodies have poured through this room like water. But now I want a face. We'll go out tonight. We'll lie down in the fields. You're a woman. I've become unclean. You must love me, for a while.

SOPHIE: Is that what you're like? . . . I love you.

BAAL *rests his head on her breasts*: Now the sky's above us, and we're alone.

SOPHIE: But you must lie still.

BAAL: Like a child.

SOPHIE *sitting up*: My mother's at home. I have to go home.

BAAL: Is she old?

SOPHIE: She's seventy.

BAAL: Then she's used to wickedness.

SOPHIE: What if the earth swallowed me up? What if I'm carried off at night and never return?

BAAL: Never? *Silence*. Have you any brothers or sisters?

SOPHIE: Yes, they need me.

BAAL: The air here is like milk. *Goes to the window*. The willows down by the river are soaking wet, and unkempt from the rain. *Takes hold of her*. Your thighs must be pale.

## Whitewashed Houses with Brown Tree Trunks

*Sombre ringing of bells. Baal. The tramp, a pale drunk individual.*

BAAL *striding in a half circle round the tramp, who sits on a stone, his pale face turned to the sky*: Who nailed the tree corpses to the wall?

TRAMP: The pale ivory wind around the corpses of trees.  
Corpus Christi.

BAAL: Not to mention ringing the bells when plants die!

TRAMP: Bells give me a moral uplift.

BAAL: Don't the trees depress you?

TRAMP: Pff! Tree carcasses! *Drinks from a bottle.*

BAAL: Women's bodies aren't any better!

TRAMP: What have women's bodies to do with a religious procession?

BAAL: They're both obscene. There's no love in you.

TRAMP: There's love in me for the white body of Jesus. *Passes him the bottle.*

BAAL *calmer*: I wrote songs down on paper. They get hung up in lavatories these days.

TRAMP *transfigured*: To serve the Lord Jesus! I see the white body of Jesus. Jesus loves sinners.

BAAL *drinking*: Like me.

TRAMP: Do you know the story about him and the dead dog? They all said, it's a stinking mess. Fetch the police! It's unbearable! But, he said, it has nice white teeth.

BAAL: Perhaps I'll turn Catholic.

TRAMP: He didn't. *Takes the bottle from him.*

BAAL *runs about enraged*: But the women's bodies he nails to the wall. I wouldn't do that.

TRAMP: Nailed to the wall! They never floated down the river. They were slaughtered for him, for the white body of Jesus.

BAAL *takes the bottle from him, turns away*: There's too much religion or too much gin in your blood. *Walks away with the bottle.*