

Poem
Martin Kovan

Martin Kovan is an Australian writer and ethicist. His essays, fiction, poetry, literary criticism, and interviews have been regularly published in Australia, and in the US, UK, France, Hong Kong, India, and Czech Republic. A philosophical monograph, *A Buddhist Theory of Killing: a philosophical exposition*, was published with Springer in 2022.

I

Here's an unmarked road from the tracks almost to the pit. Much used by women with children, who take it trustfully. Once they set foot on it, rough and uneven with broken

brick and stone, it waits on no-one until a second gate is reached. And through this gate they go, lacking any other way, right-angled, to arrive under speckled trees. They

unbundle their burdens, children wait on eager demands of birds overhead, hopping from foot to foot. Ready as children are after long patience, for their time of life to come.

II

Two places, asymmetric. One familiar, that wild deer bound through: light-fast, caught momentarily in aged, barbed wire. Paths, worn, but still paths. Skies wan, having seen past all possibility. Sewage works, *praktisch*, beyond the washing-rooms: in at the right, through sub-geometries which exit, left, some *arcanum* tract. A one-way passage. Two areas cordoned off: above and below ground, both worlds broken open. Between them, no excluded middle: only rail-tracks, *einfach*. But not back again. Walls fallen in on themselves. Sinking, always, towards the centre.

III

The *horah* circles, sings, around a space.
The *horah* is alive: blue, and white.
The *horah* rings round the heart of the
unbelonging, standing to the side.

(Oświęcim, 2017)