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CD & DVD

RALF YUSUF GAWLICK  
KOLLWITZ-KONNEX  
(...im Frieden seiner Hände)



ANNE HARLEY, *soprano*  
ELIOT FISK, *guitar*

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OPUS 19  
SONG CYCLE FOR SOPRANO AND GUITAR  
2013



*Dedicated to Anne Harley and Eliot Fisk*

Texts drawn from the diary and letters of Käthe Kollwitz

Anne Harley, *soprano*

Eliot Fisk, *guitar*

# KOLLWITZ-KONNEX

(...im Frieden seiner Hände)

## Opus 19

1	Ia. <i>Selbstbildnis en face, lachend (um 1888/1889)</i> .....	6'06
2	<i>Skizzenbild Interludium</i> .....	3'11
3	Ib. <i>Selbstbildnis am Tisch (1893)</i> .....	4'34
4	II. <i>Selbstbildnis en face (1904)</i> .....	4'01
5	III. <i>Selbstbildnis, Halbprofil nach rechts (1916)</i> .....	8'24
6	IVa. <i>Vier Selbstbildnis Studien (um 1919-1924)</i> .....	7'33
7	IVb. <i>Selbstbildnis (1922)</i> .....	1'59
8	Va. <i>Selbstbildnis (1934)</i> .....	5'48
9	Vb. <i>Ruf des Todes (1937)</i> .....	6'37
10	VI. <i>Selbstbildnis im Profil nach rechts (1938)</i> .....	6'42

Total Time: 54'59

## ABOUT THE SONG CYCLE

Käthe Kollwitz produced eighty-four self-portraits throughout her life in a variety of techniques: drawing, etching, lithography, woodcut and sculpture. These portraits, emphasizing every decade of her creative activity, should not be understood however “as witnesses of vain self-mirroring. Rather, self-portraits feature prominently in the work of those artists who engage intensely with the problems of their time... With them, the self-portrait emerges as a constantly recurring critical confrontation with one’s self, a quiet, frequently unsparring self-questioning, a sober reflection on one’s state-of-being, a necessary statement in which the artist confronts herself as well as the day and age he lives in.” (Werner Trimm) The textual complement to her self-portraits are Kollwitz’ extensive letters, memoirs and diary. Here we discover her thoughts, hopes, fears and impressions. These writings, seen as literary unfoldings of the self-portrait, mirror the main themes of her art: life and death, suffering and empathy, brutality, sickness, family, children, old age and growing old, misery and innocence. She champions the vulnerable, poor, despairing; she is the artistic patron saint of mother and child, of the outcast and downtrodden, of those who are neglected and whose lives constantly hang in the balance. Her art is an art of social conscience. Of course, precisely these themes constitute and provide for the ever-presence and relevance of Kollwitz’ art: her themes are also ours and every self-portrait is part of a profound humanity with which we can (should, must) identify ourselves.

*Kollwitz-Konnex (...im Frieden seiner Hände)*, a song-cycle for soprano and guitar, is in six musical chapters organized into nine movements/profiles/pictures plus an interlude connecting *Ia.* and *Ib.* each chapter represents a decade in Kollwitz’ creative life; every profile corresponds to a specific self-portrait.

- Ia. Selbstbildnis en face, lachend (um 1888/1889)  
Skizzenbild Interludium
- Ib. Selbstbildnis am Tisch (1893)
- II. Selbstbildnis en face (1904)
- III. Selbstbildnis, Halbprofil nach rechts (1916)

IVa. Vier Selbstbildnis Studien (um 1919-1924)

IVb. Selbstbildnis (1922)

Va. Selbstbildnis (1934)

Vb. Ruf des Todes (1937)

VI. Selbstbildnis im Profil nach rechts (1938)

Both *Skizzenbild Interludium* and *IVa.* are for solo guitar; *Va.* is for solo voice. The final movement is dedicated to Eliot's father, George Fisk. The texts and textual context for the movements are taken exclusively from the artist's writings. These are not necessarily time-bound to their corresponding self-portrait since Kollwitz' writings frequently express themselves as time-in/becomes-space: premonitions, reflections, memories and reminiscences swirl into each other as in circular time. The same themes arise regularly, like an ever-repeating artistically compulsive (suffocating, rejuvenating) pulling together: children, work, death, old age, faith, art, music, children, work... Silesius' poetic sentiment can be regarded as a leitmotif in her life and work:

*Jetzt mußt du blühen*

„Blüh auf, gefrorener Christ,  
der Mai ist vor der Tür.  
Du bleibest ewig tot,  
blühst du nicht jetzt und hier.“

You Must Blossom Now

*“Awake, O wintry Christian!  
May greens before your gate.  
If now you grow not verdant,  
Death surely be your fate.”*

Silesius, *Cherubinisher Wandersmann, Drittes Buch [90]*

Poets faithfully accompanied Kollwitz on her life's path. Select maxims, sayings and poems from Heine, Silesius and her beloved Goethe (“very early he took root in me. For my entire life I never let him go”) quoted in her writings introduce the profiles of every movement (reproduced here in red).

*Kollwitz-Konnex* is a large and multifaceted Konnex: a connection between self-portraits, between the past and present, between the artist and society, and not least a connection between her art and her profound influence on my own person and music.

-RYG



**Ia. Käthe Kollwitz**

Selbstbildnis en face, lachend  
um 1888/1889 Feder und Pinsel  
in Tusche auf Zeichenkarton  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



**Ib. Käthe Kollwitz**

Selbstbildnis am Tisch 1893  
Strichätzung, Kaltnadel, Aquatinta  
und Pinselätzung  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



**II. Käthe Kollwitz**

Selbstbildnis en face 1904  
Kreide- und Pinsellithographie  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



**III. Käthe Kollwitz**  
Selbstbildnis, Halbprofil nach  
rechts 1916 Kohle auf  
hellgrauem Ingres-Papier  
Käthe-Kollwitz-Museum Berlin



**IVa. Käthe Kollwitz**  
Vier Selbstbildnisstudien  
um 1919-1924 Blei auf  
bläulichem Ingres-Bütten  
Käthe-Kollwitz-Museum Berlin



**IVb. Käthe Kollwitz**  
Selbstbildnis 1922 Holzschnitt  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



**Va. Käthe Kollwitz**

Selbstbildnis 1934 Kreide- und  
Pinsellithographie (Umdruck)  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



**Vb. Käthe Kollwitz**

Ruf des Todes Blatt 8 der Folge  
"Tod" 1937 Kreidelithographie  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



**VI. Käthe Kollwitz**

Selbstbildnis im Profil nach rechts  
1938 Kreidelithographie (Umdruck)  
Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln



## Letter from Prof. Dr. Med. Arne A. Kollwitz, grandson of Käthe Kollwitz and executor of the Käthe Kollwitz estate:



“This is an exceptional work! For the first time, my grandmother’s art has provided inspiration for a composer’s own musical creation.

The human race is shaped by experiences, events and emotions which the artist – whether painter, composer or poet – amplifies, interprets and mythologizes when translating them into pictures, music or poetry.

In turn, we also know that such works may serve as models, catalysts or raw material for artists working in parallel disciplines. This includes the musical setting of poems (e.g. Schubert) or the visual conversion of literature (e.g. Käthe Kollwitz’ *Weber-Cycle*).

Less frequently, though, do the fine arts inspire musical creations – most notable is Mussorgsky’s legendary *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Therefore, Ralf Yusuf Gawlick’s *Kollwitz-Konnex (... im Frieden seiner Hände)* is something very special: nine movements correspond to the same number of self-portraits he chose from the existing eighty-four. Käthe Kollwitz’ self-portraits reflect her inner development. She never eschewed this critical confrontation with herself. Gawlick’s intense discourse and questioning with each portrait inspired profound musical translations. The unusual choice of voice and guitar as medium allows quotations from Kollwitz’ diaries to supplement the testimony of the images.

The end result is a highly original, demanding and stimulating dialogue between artist and composer. I was present at the song-cycle’s European première at the Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln in April 2013 and was very impressed by the musical wealth of the composition and its superb interpretation by Anne Harley and Eliot Fisk – who are also heard on this CD.

Of course, for the work to achieve its maximum impact – and here I expressly agree with Prof. Gawlick – it is essential that it be performed in the presence of the images that inspired it.”

-Arne Andreas Kollwitz

## Connection I: Anne Harley

When I approached Ralf in 2011 about the possibility of creating a song cycle, Käthe Kollwitz was scarcely known to me. I barely suspected the profound effect that her work would have upon me and the audiences of *Kollwitz-Konnex* in these last several years of international touring and recording. In the course of working on our commission, I have come to understand Kollwitz' art and words as having a most important message for our time: in her unflinching recognition and portrayal of suffering, Kollwitz was able to transmit a sacred quality of humanity to our predominantly secular consumerist modern culture. Ralf's work is imbued with this aura of humanity, and it is my dearest hope that our performance, with its sounds that fall expressively outside the usual classical music expectations, amplifies this value. I have arrived at a sound world for the piece that embraces the broken, the otherworldly, the rough and the tender, inspired by Kollwitz' progressive series of self-portraits that disdain prettiness and perfection in favor of truthful aging and pain. From the straight tone of a youthful treble in the first movement, to the confessional tone invoked by long pianissimo passages scored well below the staff, to the horrified *Sprechstimme* of the voice of a parent losing a child, to the haunting, disembodied singing called for in *Der Ruf des Todes*, the sounds I and the composer arrived at for this recording challenge traditional received values of vocalism. Transgressing notions of *Fach* and easy beauty, *Kollwitz-Konnex* develops an expressionist palette for the voice, encouraging an exploration of uncharted timbres at the limits of pitch (both high and low) and dynamics (both loud and soft). In these liminal zones, the voice and its fragility are exposed in unusual authenticity, inviting the listener to an exceptionally direct experience of the performer's state of being. In this way, the cycle reaches through both the senses of the body (visceral apprehension of sound and response to Kollwitz' own self-portraits) and the intellect (word and ethical reasoning) to present to each audience member with a transformative artistic moment. When this music succeeds, like any sublime art, it causes us to fall in love with our own humanity and the humanity of others. This is not a trivial achievement, but a foundational operation at the root of a healthy non-violent society.

-Anne Harley

## Connection II: Eliot Fisk

Ralf Gawlick's *Kollwitz-Konnex* has been a labor of love for all involved. In fact, the work owes its existence to a complicated series of serendipitous events starting with my first chance meeting with Ralf on a snowy winter day while taking our children sledding in the park. A few years passed before, at the suggestion of maverick soprano, Anne Harley, Ralf began to compose what would grow to be a nine-movement work for soprano and guitar inspired by the life and work of Käthe Kollwitz. Unlike most Americans, I had grown up with Kollwitz. Because her feeling for the dispossessed so resonated with my father's own *Weltanschauung*, several reproductions of Kollwitz etchings adorned the walls of our home. In fact, just as Ralf was finishing the *Konnex* I found an old photograph of my father, George Fisk, at his desk in his office at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Business School. On the wall just in back of my father was the very same self portrait that a half century later Ralf had chosen as inspiration for the final movement of the *Konnex!* Inevitably, it seemed, Ralf dedicated this movement to my father. Throughout my career I have collaborated with composers who do not play the guitar. Such composers often ask us guitarists to do the impossible... and therefore expand our horizons. Yet at times it is also helpful when we interpreters make suggestions to composers so that what they have to say can sing in a natural way on the guitar. Never has this complicated give-and-take been more dramatically in evidence than in the compositional process that culminated in the *Kollwitz-Konnex*. During the months of Ralf's work on the *Konnex* I exposed him to every imaginable technique and possibility of instrumental color on the guitar, and he responded with an enthusiasm and sensitivity that were truly extraordinary. Ralf and I spent countless hours exploring new possibilities, losing all sense of the passage of time as we visited and revisited each movement. When I listen to the *Konnex* now I often think that it is really a work for voice and chamber ensemble but one in which the guitar is asked *all by itself* to assume the role of every instrument in that imaginary group.

Quite apart from this astonishing spectrum of instrumental color, Ralf's music lets us relive the great arc of Kollwitz' long and creative life from youthful idealism through the inevitable crises of middle age to the resignation and sublimity of old age and death. I am thrilled that now through the medium of this beautifully produced disc listeners can experience Käthe Kollwitz anew through the many voices of Ralf Gawlick's powerful and moving *Konnex*.

-Eliot Fisk



**A**nne Harley BA (Yale College); MMus (Boston University); DMA (Boston University) is a prize-winning Canadian performer-scholar, director and educator based in Claremont, CA. She specializes in performing and recording music from challenging and groundbreaking contemporary composers, as well as researching and recording music from early oral and written traditions in Europe, North America and Russia. Her solo performances are available on Hänssler Profil, Naxos, Sony Classics, Canteloupe, Musica Omnia, einKlang and BMOP/sound, among others. In 2012, she founded the new music commissioning project *Voices Of The Pearl* ([www.voicesofthepearl.org](http://www.voicesofthepearl.org)). *Voices of the Pearl* traces, in new song cycles, the tenuous lineage of women who dared to encounter the unmediated divine; their efforts span time, religion, nation and culture.

Harley is recognized internationally as a specialist in contemporary classical music and extended voice techniques. She has premiered, performed and recorded works by contemporary composers Evan Ziporyn, John Adams, Ralf Gawlick, Lee Hoiby, Louis Andriessen, Peter Eotvös and John Harbison, Jodi Goble, Bill Alves, Christine Southworth, Moshe Shulman, Yü Kah Hoe and Chairuck Mekara, among others. She tours regularly in North America, Europe and Asia and has appeared as soloist with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Opera Boston, American Repertory Theatre, Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Camerata, at the Banff Centre for the Arts and at the Tanglewood Festival. Opera Online US awarded her 'Best Supporting Female Role' of the year for her portrayal of Madame Mao (*Nixon in China*). She has been invited several times to première new compositions at the international annual ASEAN Music Festival (Nanning, China), and regularly collaborates with leading composers in Asia, the US and Canada.

She is extremely committed to interdisciplinary and intercultural projects that incorporate new media and movement in the service of music and drama. In 2010, she premiered Ziporyn's dance-opera *A House in Bali* performing with gamelan, Bang-On-A-Can Ensemble, Balinese traditional singers and dancers. Over the last decade, she has toured internationally with the award-winning production of *Borrowed Light*, a joint production of The Boston Camerata and the Tero Saarinen Dance Company that combines traditional early American Shaker music with new choreography. The Village Voice described her solo in *Borrowed Light* at Brooklyn Academy of

Music as transmitting a “heart-wrenching purity.” In 2014, the independent film *A Chair Fit For An Angel*, in which she appeared as soloist was awarded prizes at several international film festivals.

Anne also performs internationally in the area of historically informed performance, in medieval, baroque, early American, early Russian and Russian Roma music. She leads the pioneering early Russian music ensemble, TALISMAN with Dr. Oleg Timofeyev and they have performed at Yale, Harvard, Brown, and the Boston Early Music Festival, among others. Their first recording project of modern-day premières of music by women composers from the court of Catherine the Great won the Noah Greenberg award from the *American Musicological Society*. In 2013 she held a visiting professorship at the Hannover Hochschule, Germany, supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). She has been invited to teach vocal masterclasses at Shanghai Conservatory, Beijing Conservatory, MIT and Brown College, among others. Since 2009, she is on faculty at Scripps College (Claremont, CA), teaching voice, music history and interdisciplinary humanities.



**G**uitarist **Eliot Fisk** is known worldwide as a charismatic performer famed for his adventurous, virtuosic and vast repertoire. He is also celebrated for his willingness to take art music into unusual venues (including schools, senior centers, logging camps and prisons). After more than 45 years before the public he remains as his mentor Andres Segovia once wrote, “at the top line of our artistic world.” As the last heir of the great romantic tradition represented by Segovia, Fisk unifies this aesthetic with the best of modernity. He continues to delight and inspire audiences and critics in major concert halls on 5 continents.

Fisk’s numerous transcriptions for guitar (often featured on his many award winning recordings) have revolutionized the instrument’s repertoire and include masterpieces from all eras beginning with the Renaissance and continuing to the present day with transcriptions of works by contemporary composers such as Berio, C. Halffter, Corigliano, Rochberg and Beaser. He is particularly known for his transcriptions of the works of Bach (complete solo music for violin, cello, and lute, organ trio

sonatas, accompanied violin Sonatas etc.) Scarlatti (countless harpsichord Sonatas) Mozart, Haydn, Paganini (complete Caprices for solo violin, Op. 1) as well as for new versions of Spanish repertoire by Albeniz, Granados, Halffter and Falla.

He has been the dedicatee of innumerable contemporary works for solo guitar, guitar and orchestra and guitar in various chamber music settings by composers as varied as Luciano Berio, Robert Beaser, Leonardo Balada, Nicholas Maw, Xavier Montsalvatge, George Rochberg, Kurt Schwertsik, and, as illustrated on the present CD, Ralf Gawlick, among many others.

In 2006 Eliot Fisk was awarded the Cruz de Isabel la Catolica by King Juan Carlos of Spain for service to the cause of Spanish music. Earlier recipients of this award included Andres Segovia and Yehudi Menuhin.

Eliot Fisk teaches in 5 languages at the Universitaet Mozarteum In Salzburg and at the New England Conservatory in Boston where in 2010 he was named “Teacher of the Year”. His many students have come from all corners of the earth and many have gone on to become prominent performers and educators in their own right.



World première (2013), Boston College,  
Performers (L-R): Eliot Fisk, Anne Harley



**R**alf Yusuf Gawlick, born in Pfaffenhofen-an-der-Ilm, Germany in 1969, is of Kurdish descent but has never lived in his ethnic homeland or in the town where he was born. Educated in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Austria, Poland and the United States, Dr. Gawlick holds degrees from the University of California in Santa Barbara (B.M. *cum laude*), the University of Texas at Austin (M.M.) and the New England Conservatory of Music (D.M.A).

Similarly, his music travels far afield by drawing inspiration from and engaging with literary, visual and musical landscapes both in time and place. This dialogue across centuries and among the arts informs much of his solo, chamber, orchestral, film and vocal music.

Through noteworthy festivals, recordings, and commissions, his work has received both national and international recognition, including grants, fellowships and awards from the American Composers Orchestra, American Music Center, ASCAP, SCI, the Moniuszko Musical Society, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Augustine Foundation, the Britten-on-the-Bay International Piano Composition Competition, the 1st Karol Szymanowski International Composers Competition as well as the Red Note New Music Festival International Composition Competition.

Groups championing Mr. Gawlick's works include the Slovak State Philharmonic, the Missouri Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the American Composers Orchestra, The Civic Symphony Orchestra of Boston, Sinfonietta Polonia, the New England Conservatory Classical Orchestra, the Knabenchor der Chorakademie Dortmund, the Gütersloh Knabenchor, the Poznan Boy's Choir, the Treble Chorus of New England, Youth Pro Musica, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, New York's Music at the Anthology (MATA), Composers in Red Sneakers, Majestic Brass, the Hawthorne and Atma String Quartets, as well as numerous new music ensembles and distinguished soloists.

In 2003, Mr. Gawlick was the American selection at the 1st Festival of Contemporary Art in Kosice, Slovakia. *Zrodlo*, for soprano solo, mixed chorus and full orchestra, was commissioned

in 2004 for the 25th anniversary of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Boston and the United States. The following year, his work *At the still point of the turning world* for solo violoncello was selected by the Miami ISCM Section as one of six works sent to the 2005 World Music Days in Zagreb, Croatia, representing the United States.

His works include solo, chamber, orchestral and choral music as well as music for a film documentary commemorating the 20th anniversary (2009) of the fall of the Berlin Wall, music commissioned by the German Embassy (Washington D.C.) and Boston College. The world première of his cantata *Kinderkreuzzug* in April 2010, written for the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of WWII, was supported by the German Consulate General Boston, the Jesuit Institute, Boston College as well as the Goethe Institutes in Boston and Munich. In addition to the European première of *Kinderkreuzzug* in Dortmund, Germany, in June 2012, and a performance for the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of WWII in Poland, August, 2014, his song-cycle *Kollwitz-Konnex (...im Frieden seiner Hände)* was performed at the Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln by soprano Anne Harley and guitarist Eliot Fisk in April 2013. *Missa gentis humanae*, a Mass for eight-voice *a cappella* choir was premièred in 2014 by Julian Wachner and the GRAMMY-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Mr. Gawlick's music, broadcast on National Public Radio, is available on Musica Omnia and the Capstone label.

Ralf Yusuf Gawlick teaches at Boston College and his music is available through ECS Publishing, Brazinmusikanta Publications, Musica Omnia Publishing and the American Music Center. He lives in Newton, MA, with his wife Basia and their two children.





# KOLLWITZ-KONNEX

## (...im Frieden seiner Hände)

### Ia. Selbstbildnis en face, lachend (um 1888/1889)

„Der Tempel ist [mir] aufgebaut,  
Ihr hohen Musen all,  
Und hier in meinem Herzen ist  
Das Allerheiligste.“

Goethe, *Künstler's Morgenlied*

„Es sind mit die feinsten Freuden des Lebens,  
die Freuden an Menschen und das mit ihnen  
Sympathisieren [...] \* Diese Zeit meines Lebens  
erscheint mir sehr schön [...] Das Enge in mir,  
das ist das Schlimmste. Sich dehnen, weiten,  
höher werden, danach verlangt man [...] Ich  
will doch auch frei sein von dem, was mein  
wirkliches Ich hindert. Und dieses wirkliche Ich  
ist was? Was will Ich überhaupt im Leben (...)?  
mich entwickeln, (...) mich entfalten, und zwar  
nicht mich, den Christenmenschen, sondern  
mich, die Käthe Kollwitz [...] *Mir kommt es  
nur darauf an, auszudrücken.*“



### Ib. Selbstbildnis am Tisch (1893)

„Ich weiß, daß Liebe, Liebe ihr tiefster Sinn,  
Und daß ich da, um immer mehr zu lieben, bin.“

Morgenstern, *Wir fanden einen Pfad (III)*

### Ia. *Self-Portrait en face,* *laughing (around 1888/1889)*

*“The temple has been built [for me],  
all ye lofty Muses,  
and here within my heart lies  
Holiest of Holies.”*

*“Among the finest pleasures in life are the joys  
of people and sympathizing with them [...] This  
strikes me as a very beautiful time of my  
life [...] The narrowness inside of me, that is the  
worst. Expanding, widening, growing taller,  
that is what one desires [...] I, too, want to be  
free from what is hindering the real me. And  
what is the real me? What do I absolutely want  
in life (...)? I wanted to develop myself, (...) to  
evolve, and admittedly not me the Christian,  
but me, Käthe Kollwitz [...] To me, expression  
is the only thing that matters.”*

### Ib. *Self-Portrait at the Table (1893)*

*“I know that love, love is its deepest meaning  
and that I am here to love and keep.”*

\* (...) indicates continuation of the quotation within the same passage;  
[...] indicates that the following quotation is from another text.

„An deiner Liebe hat es mir nie gefehlt (...) Ich danke Dir, Du lieber Karl! So selten habe ich Dir in Worten gesagt, was Du mir warst und bist. Heut möchte ich es noch einmal tun. Ich danke Dir für alles, was Du aus Liebe und Güte mir gabst. Langsam ist unser Ehebaum gewachsen, nicht so gerade und ohne Hindernisse wie viele andere. Aber er ist nicht eingegangen.“

*“Your love for me has never been absent (...) I thank you, you dear Karl! So rarely have I told you in words what you were and are to me. Today I would like to do that one more time. I thank you for everything that you have given me out of love and kindness. Slowly has our marriage tree grown, not so straight and without obstacles like many others. But it has never withered.”*



## II. Selbstbildnis en face (1904)

„Ich bin aus der Wahrheit der fünf Sinne.“

## II. Self-Portrait en face (1904)

*“I come from the Truth of the five senses.”*

Goethe, *Brief an Lavater*

„Hier auf dem Felsen bauen wir die Kirche von dem dritten – dem dritten neuen Testament, das Leid ist ausgelitten.“

*“Here on this rock we will build the church of the third, the third new Testament, and suffering has suffered its last.”*

Heine, *Auf diesem Felsen bauen wir*

„Der ‘Liebe Gott’ ist uns Kindern nie nahegebracht (...) Lieben tat Ich Jesus [...] Ich will eine Zeichnung machen, die einen Menschen zeigt, der das Leid der Welt sieht. Kann das nicht nur Jesus sein? [...] Ich soll das Leiden der Menschen, das nie ein Ende nimmt, das jetzt bergegroß ist, aussprechen.“

*“The ‘Loving God’ was never brought close to us as children (...) I did love Jesus [...] I want to make a drawing, which would show a person, who sees the suffering of the world. Could that not only be Jesus? [...] I have to express the sorrow of the people that never comes to an end, that is now mountains high.”*



### III. Selbstbildnis (1916)

„Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden.“

Goethe, *Lehrbrief aus Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahren*

„Mensch, wo du deinen Geist schwingst über Ort und Zeit, So kannst du jeden Blick sein in der Ewigkeit.“

Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*

„Tief. Tief. Tiefstand. – [...] Stillstand in der Arbeit [...]...Wo sind nun meine Kinder? (...) Einer tot und einer so fern (...) Mein ganzes Mutterleben liegt eigentlich schon hinter mir [...] Peter war Saatfrucht, die nicht vermahlen werden sollte. Er selbst war die Aussaat. Ich bin Träger und Entwickler eines Samenkorns (...) Ich *darf* nicht nur meine Arbeit vollenden – Ich *soll* sie vollenden [...] ich kann es nicht mehr (...) Ich habe keine Kräfte mehr, um das *Gelebte* zu prägen (...) Ich bin zu zerstört, zerweint, geschwächt [...] Ich will mit dabei sein. Stoff von deinem Stoff und Geist von Deinem Geist [...] Ich habe oft eine fürchterliche Sehnsucht danach zurück – Kinder – meine Jungen zu haben.“

### IVa. Vier Selbstbildnisstudien (um 1919-1924)

„Zu neuen Ufern lockt ein neuer Tag.“

(solo Gitarre)

### III. Self-Portrait (1916)

“Seed for planting should not be ground up.”

Goethe, *Lehrbrief aus Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahren*

“O man, wherever you let your spirit roam over time and place then you can have a glimpse into eternity.”

Silesius, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*

“Down. Down. In the Depths. – [...] A standstill at work [...] Now where are my children? (...) One dead and one so distant (...) My entire motherhood already lies behind me [...] Peter was the grain that should not be ground. He himself was the sowing. I was the carrier and developer of the grain (...) Not only may I complete my work – I ought to complete it [...] I cannot do it anymore (...) I don't have any strength to impress the living anymore (...) I am too destroyed, wrecked by crying, weakened [...] I want to be there, too. Flesh of your flesh and spirit of your spirit [...] I often have a frightful longing for back then – children – to have my boys.”

### IVa. Four Self-Portrait Studies (around 1919-1924)

“Every new day beckons us to new shores.”

Goethe, *Faust*

## IVb. Selbstbildnis (1922)

„Du danke Gott, wenn er dich presst,  
Und danke Ihm wenn er Dich wieder entlässt...“

Goethe, *Talismane aus West-östlicher Divan*, Moganni Nameh – Buch des Sängers

„Ich suche in der Kunst, und wer weiß, ob  
ich nicht zum Gesuchten dabei komme [...]  
Manchmal will es mir scheinen, als ob der  
Vorhang sich jetzt lüften könnte, der mich von  
meiner Arbeit trennt, wie sie jetzt sein müßte.  
Es ist so ein ahnendes In-die-Nähe-Kommen  
[...] Es ist, als ob ich vor der Tür meiner selbst  
stehe. Wenn es da nicht noch etwas eigentlich  
dahinter gibt, dann lohnt das alles nicht.“ \*



## Va. Selbstbildnis (1934)

„Krieg ist das Losungswort,  
Sieg und hallt es fort [...]  
Träumst du vom Sieges-Port?  
Sieg und hallt es fort.  
Träume wer träumen mag.“

„Heut nacht träumte ich, es wäre wieder Krieg  
[...] Krieg, Krieg, und immer wieder Krieg [...] und das Schlimmste von allem ist, daß ein jeder  
Krieg [...] gebiert einen neuen. Bis, wie es in  
der Offenbarung heißt, eine neue Erde und ein  
neuer Himmel kommen werden [...] Es ist genug  
gestorben! Keiner darf mehr fallen! Ich berufe  
mich (...) auf einen Größeren, welcher sagte:  
‘Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden.’“



## IVb. Self-Portrait (1922)

*“So thank God when he imposes on you,  
and thank Him when He lets you go again...”*

*“I’m looking for something in art, who knows  
if I won’t be sought after while I’m at it? [...] Sometimes it seems to me as if the curtain  
separating me from my work, as it must be now,  
could lift now. It seems to be coming closer. [...] It is as though I am standing at the door to myself.  
If there is not really something behind it, then it  
is not worth it all.” \**

## Va. Self-Portrait (1934)

*“War! is the password,  
Victory! and thus it resounds...  
Are you dreaming of a triumphal arch?  
Victory! and it resounds...  
Let him dream who can.”*

Goethe, *Faust*

*“Tonight I dreamed it was war again [...] War,  
war and always war again [...] and the worst of  
all is that each and every war [...] births a new  
one. Until, as it says in Revelations, a new Earth  
and a new Heaven will come [...] There has been  
enough dying! No more may fall! I appeal (...) to a greater one, who said: ‘Seed-fruit should  
not be milled.’”*

\* This text comes from three different passages.  
In the musical setting, phrases have been recombined.

## Vb. Ruf des Todes (1937)

„Und so lang du das nicht hast,  
Dieses: Stirb und werde!  
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast  
Auf der dunklen Erde.“

Goethe, *Selige Sehnsucht aus West-östlicher Divan*, Moganni Nameh – Buch des Sängers

„Es kommt eben nur auf das Wesentliche an [...] Jetzt ist vor allem nur ein müder Abglanz [...] Von Euch fortgehen zu müssen (...) wird mir furchtbar schwer. Aber die unstillbare Sehnsucht nach dem Tode bleibt [...] Sterben ist ja nur als ob man sich auf die andere Seite legt. Das ist schön, nicht wahr? (...) eben auf die andere Seite... ‘im Frieden seiner Hände.’“

(solo Sopran)



## VI. Selbstbildnis im Profil nach rechts (1938)

„Gedanken [...], bisher undenkbar.“

Goethe, *Maximen und Reflektionen; Allgemeines, Ethisches, Literarisches*

„[I]ch schrumpfe nach innen. Ich meine, ich werde merklich alt. Leider, leider, ich merke es in allem – [...] Ich hatte die Vorstellung, jetzt im wirklichen Alter, würde ich vielleicht Arbeiten zustande bringen – [...] die in die Tiefe gehn [...] ‘Gedanken, bisher undenkbar.’“



## Vb. *Call of Death* (1937)

*“And as long as you lack this,  
Namely: Die and be transformed!  
then you are only a dreary guest  
on this dark earth.”*

*“It only really depends on essentials. [...] Now there is just a tired reflection of all that. [...] To leave you (...) is going to be awfully difficult. But this insatiable desire for death is still here. [...] Dying is just like turning over onto one’s other side. That is beautiful, isn’t it? (...) just onto the other side...  
‘in the Peace of His Hands.’”*

## VI. *Self-Portrait in Profile to the right* (1938)

*“Thoughts [...], unthinkable til now.”*

*“[I] shrivel inwardly. I mean, I am becoming noticeably old. Unfortunately, unfortunately, I notice it in everything – [...] I had the notion, now, in actual old age, that I would maybe produce works – [...] that get to the depths [...] ‘Thoughts, unthinkable til now.’”*

## WRITTEN CONTEXT

All song texts set to music are drawn from the following entries; they provide broader contexts that reveal Kollwitz' reflections, sentiments and existential perspectives.

### Ia. Selbstbildnis en face, lachend (1888/1889)

„Es sind mit die feinsten Freuden des Lebens, die Freuden an Menschen und das mit ihnen Sympathisieren. Liebe oder Verliebtheit braucht da gar nicht mitzuspielen.“

-Seite 102: März, 1928

„Diese Zeit meines Lebens erscheint mir sehr schön.“

-Seite 49: April, 1910

„Das Enge in mir, das ist das Schlimmste. Sich dehnen, weiten, höher werden, danach verlangt man.“

-Seite 59: 2. Januar, 1916

„Wie stehe ich denn? Ich will doch auch frei sein von dem, was mein wirkliches Ich hindert. Und dieses wirkliche Ich ist was? Was will ich überhaupt im Leben und was hab Ich gewollt? Ich wollte mich entwickeln, d.h. mich entfalten, und zwar nicht mich, den Christenmenschen, sondern mich, die Käthe Kollwitz.“

-Seite 69: Februar, 1917

### Ia. Self-portrait en face, laughing (1888/1889)

*“Among the finest pleasures in life are the joys of people and sympathizing with them. Love or being in love absolutely need not come into play.”*

*-Page 102: March, 1928*

*“This strikes me as a very beautiful time of my life.”*

*-Page 49: April, 1910*

*“The narrowness inside of me, that is the worst. Expanding, widening, growing taller, that is what one desires.”*

*-Page 59: January 2, 1916*

*“How do I stand then? I, too, want to be free from what is hindering the real me. And what is the real me? What do I even want in life and what have I wanted? I wanted to develop myself, meaning to evolve, and admittedly not me the Christian, but me, Käthe Kollwitz.”*

*-Page 69: February, 1917*

„Ich hab als Künstler das Recht, aus allem den  
Gefühlsgehalt herauszuziehen, auf mich wirken  
zu lassen und nach außen zu stellen.“

-Seite 87: Oktober, 1920

*“As an artist I have the right to pull the  
emotional content from inside everything,  
to let it take hold of me and to lay it out.”*

-Page 87: October, 1920

„Mir kommt es nur darauf an, auszudrücken.“

-Seite 86: 25. Juni, 1920

*“To me, the only thing that matters is expression.”*

-Page 86: June 25, 1920



### **Ib. Selbstbildnis am Tisch (1893)**

„An deiner Liebe hat es mir nie gefehlt und sie  
hat es möglich gemacht, daß wir jetzt nach 25  
Jahren fest zusammenstehen. Ich danke Dir, Du  
lieber Karl! So selten habe ich Dir in Worten  
gesagt, was Du mir warst und bist. Heut möchte  
ich es noch einmal tun. Ich danke Dir für alles,  
was Du aus Liebe und Güte mir gabst. Langsam  
ist unser Ehebaum gewachsen, nicht so gerade  
und ohne Hindernisse wie viele andere. Aber er  
ist nicht eingegangen. Aus dem schwanken Reis  
ist doch der Baum geworden, der im Herzen  
gesund ist. Zwei schöne, wunderschöne Früchte  
trug er. Ich danke aus tiefstem Herzen dem  
Schicksal, das uns unsere lieben Kinder  
geschenkt hat und in ihnen so  
unaussprechbares Glück.“

-Seite 63: April 1916  
Zu unserer Silberhochzeit

### **Ib. Self-portrait at a Table (1893)**

*“Your love for me has never been absent and has  
made it possible that we stand firmly together  
now after 25 years. I thank you, you dear Karl!  
So rarely have I told you in words what you were  
and are to me. Today I would like to do that one  
more time. I thank you for everything that you  
have given me out of love and kindness.  
Slowly has our marriage tree grown, not so  
straight and without obstacles like many others.  
But it has never withered. The tree has grown  
from a weak sprig and has a healthy heart. Two  
beautiful, wonderful fruit did it bear. I thank  
fate from the bottom of my heart that it gave  
us our two dear children, and in them such  
unspeakable happiness.”*

-Page 63: April 1916  
On Our Silver Wedding Anniversary



## II. Selbstbildnis en face (1904)

„Der ‘Liebe Gott’ ist uns Kindern nie nahegebracht. ‘Gott ist Geist’, ‘Ich und der Vater sind eins’, solche Jesusworte ließen uns Gott ahnen. Lieben tat ich Gott nicht – er war mir viel zu unnahbar, aber ich hatte wohl Ehrfurcht vor ihm. Lieben tat ich Jesus. Als ich dann von Hause fortkam und der Materialismus an mich herantrat, lehnte ich mich gegen alles, was Religion hieß, auf. Das Heinische ‘Hier auf dem Felsen bauen wir die Kirche von dem dritten – dem dritten neuen Testament, das Leid ist ausgelitten’, – Sie kennen es – wurde mir wirkliche Überzeugung.“

-Seite 143: 3. Osterfeiertag,  
Schneetreiben 1921?

„Ich will eine Zeichnung machen, die einen Menschen zeigt, *der das Leid der Welt sieht*. Kann das nicht nur Jesus sein? Auch auf der Zeichnung, wo der Tod die Kinder packt, sitzt hinten eine Frau, die das Leid der Welt sieht. Es sind nicht ihre Kinder, die der Tod packt, sie ist viel älter. Sie sieht auch nicht zu, sie rührt kein Glied, aber sie *weiß um das Leid der Welt*.“

-Seite 86: 26. Februar, 1920

„Während ich zeichnete und die Angst der Kinder mich mitweinen machte, hatte ich so recht das Gefühl der Last, die ich trage. Ich fühlte daß ich mich doch nicht entziehen dürfte der Aufgabe, Anwalt zu sein. *Ich soll das*

## II. Self-Portrait en face (1904)

*“The ‘Loving God’ was never brought close to us as children. ‘God is spirit,’ ‘I and the father are one,’ such words of Jesus gave us a vague idea of God. I did not love God – for me, he was too unapproachable, but I surely had full reverence for him. I did love Jesus. When I left home and was introduced to materialism, I rebelled against everything that was called religion. The Heine quote: ‘Here on this rock, we will build the church of the third – the third New Testament, suffering has reached its end,’ – you know it – became my true conviction.”*

-Page 143: Third Day of Easter,  
driving snow, 1921?

*“I want to make a drawing, which would show a person, who sees the sorrow of the world. Could that not only be Jesus? In the drawing, where death grabs the children, a woman who sees the sorrow of the world sits at the back. They are not her children whom death grabs, she is much older. She does not pay attention, she does not lift a finger, but she knows about the sorrow of the world.”*

-Page 86: February 26, 1920

*“While I drew and the suffering of the children made me cry with them, I truly experienced the burden that I carry. I felt that I surely could not withdraw from the work of being an advocate. I have to express the sorrow of the people that*



Leiden der Menschen, das nie ein Ende nimmt, das jetzt bergegroß ist, aussprechen.“

-Seite 85: 5. Januar 1920

„Mir fällt wieder Hansens Verwunderung ein, daß nach diesem Evangelium Jesus letzte Worte gewesen sein sollen: 'Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen?' Und vorher zu dem Landpfleger dies stolze: 'Meinst du nicht, mein Vater könnte ein Legion Engel für mich schicken? Es muß aber alles so gehen usw.' Auch in Gethsemane: 'Es sei denn, ich tränke ihn', also vollkommenes Aufnehmen des Geschickes, weil es so *sein muß*. Und dann am Kreuz diese Worte. Als ob Jesus zuletzt doch noch auf das Wunder gewartet hat. Vielleicht etwas Ähnliches wie das, was ich in meinen kleinemenschlichen Verhältnissen erlebt hatte, als ich Peter gab und er fiel. Da sagte ich auch nicht, es muß alles so sein, sondern ich sagte: Mein Gott, warum hast Du mich verlassen? Im Geheimsten hatte ich wohl erwartet, ich würde nicht verlassen werden. Jesus begriff vielleicht doch auch nicht, daß sein Vater die Legion Engel nicht schickte, und ich begriff nicht, daß er nicht das Böckchen zum Opfer gnädig gewährte. Warum wurde Abraham denn nicht beim Wort genommen, warum genügte bei dem der Wille? Jesus *will*. Aber als er am Kreuz hängt: 'Warum hast du mich verlassen?'"

-Seite 91: 21. April, 1922

*never comes to an end, that is now mountains high."*

-Page 85: January 5, 1920

*"Hans' puzzlement comes back to me, that according to this Gospel, Jesus' last words were said to be: 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' and previously to the governor the proud: 'Don't you think, my Father could send me an army of angels? But it must go this way, etc.' It is also in Gethsemane: 'Unless I drank it,' such a perfect acceptance of destiny, as it must be. And then on the cross, these words. As if Jesus, at the end, was still waiting for a miracle. Maybe something similar to what I lived through in my small humanity, when I gave Peter and he fell. I did not say, it must be this way, instead I said: My God, why have You forsaken me? Surely, I had not expected to be abandoned. As Jesus surely did not understand why his Father did not send an army of angels, I did not understand why he did not mercifully provide a ram for the sacrifice. Why was Abraham not taken at his word, why was the will sufficient for him? Jesus wills. But as he hangs on the cross: 'Why have you abandoned me?'"*

-Page 91: April 21, 1922



### III. Selbstbildnis, Halbprofil nach rechts (1916)

„Tief. Tief. Tiefstand. –“

-Seite 87: April, 1921

„Stillstand in der Arbeit (...) ich kann es nicht mehr. Ich bin zu zerstört, zerweint, geschwächt. Es geht mir wie dem Dichter bei Thomas Mann: er kann nur dichten; zugleich das Gedichtete leben, dazu langen seine Kräfte nicht. Ich umgekehrt. Ich habe keine Kräfte mehr, um das *Gelebte* zu prägen.“

-Seite 64: 22. August, 1916

„...Wo sind nun meine Kinder? Was bleibt eigentlich der Mutter? ein Junge rechts und einer links, mein rechter Sohn und mein linker, wie sie sich nannten. Einer tot und einer so fern, und ich kann ihm nicht helfen, kann ihm nicht von mir abgeben. Das ist alles verändert für immer. Verändert, und ich bin ärmer geworden. Mein ganzes Mutterleben liegt eigentlich schon hinter mir. Ich habe oft eine fürchterliche Sehnsucht danach zurück – Kinder – meine Jungen zu haben, einer rechts und einer links, mit ihnen zu tanzen wie früher, wenn der Frühling kam.“

-Seite 60: 17. Jan., 1916

„Mich überkommt fürchterliche Depression. Erst allmählich wird mir klar, wie sehr ich schon zu den Alten gehöre und meine Zukunft hinter mir habe.“

-Seite 61: 31.3.16

### III. *Self Portrait, in Half-profile to the right (1916)*

“Down. Down. In the Depths. –”

-Page 87: April, 1921

“A standstill at work (...) I cannot do it anymore. I am too destroyed, wrecked by crying, weakened. I feel like the poet in Thomas Mann: he can only write poetry; his strength is not sufficient for living the poem, too. In the reverse. I don't have strength to impact the living anymore.”

-Page 64: August 22, 1916

“...Now where are my children? What is left for the mother? one boy to the right and one to the left, my right-hand son and my left one, as they called themselves. One dead and one so distant, and I cannot help him, cannot pass on from me to him. It is all changed forever. Changed, and I have become poorer. My entire motherhood already lies behind me. I often have a frightful longing for back then – children – to have my boys, one right and one left, to dance with them like before, when the spring came.”

-Page 60: January 17, 1916

“Horrible depression comes over me. Only gradually do I become aware how much I already belong to the old and have my future behind me.”

-Page 61: 3.31.16

„Peter war Saatfrucht, die nicht vermahlen werden sollte. Er selbst war die Aussaat. Ich bin Träger und Entwickler eines Samenkorns. Was Hans sein wird, wird die Zukunft zeigen. Da ich nun aber Träger sein soll, will ich treu dienen. – Seitdem ich das erkannt habe, ist mir fast heiter und viel fester zumut. Ich *darf* nicht nur meine Arbeit vollenden – ich *soll* sie vollenden. Das scheint mir der Sinn von alle dem Gerede über Kultur. Sie entsteht nur durch Ausfüllen des Pflichtenkreises durch den Einzelnen. Wenn jeder seinen Pflichtenkreis erkennt und ausfüllt, kommt *echtes* Wesen heraus.“

-Seite 57: 15. Februar, 1915

„Ich will mit dabei sein. Stoff von deinem Stoff und Geist von Deinem Geist. Ich will mit Dir zusammenfließen, wie ein Fluß in einen anderen fließt, und dann *zusammen* weiter, vereinigt, stärker, tiefer, strömender. Liebster, Liebster, mit Dir zusammen! Kann das nicht sein, muß das nicht sein, daß Verwandtes aneinander schießt? wie sich bildende Kristalle? Wenn ich frei werde von der Erdenform, so kann meinem Geist doch nicht wie einem Dienstmann irgendeine Stelle angewiesen werden? Mein befreiter Geist sucht und bindet sich mit verwandten Geistern. Und die Menschen, die man hier sehr geliebt hat, die können sich zu neuer Form vereinigen.“

-Seite 67: 13. Oktober, 1916

*“Peter was seed grain that should not have been milled. He himself was the sowing. I am the carrier and developer of a seed of grain. What Hans will become, the future will show. Now, given that I am to be the carrier, I will faithfully serve. – Since I realized that, I am in a more cheerful and stable mood. Not only may I complete my work – I ought to complete it. That, it seems to me, is the meaning of all the talk about culture. It emerges only through an individual filling his or her circle of responsibility. When everyone recognizes and fills their own circle of responsibility, true character comes out.”*

-Page 57: February 15, 1915

*“I want to be there, too. Flesh of your flesh and spirit of your spirit. I want to flow together with you, like one river flowing into another, and then together onward, together, united, stronger, deeper, swifter. Sweetheart, sweetheart, together with you! Can it not be, must it not be, that relatedness flows together? like forming crystals? When I become free from the earthly form, my spirit cannot simply be directed to a particular spot like a servant. My liberated spirit looks for and bonds with related spirits. And the people, that one had loved very much here, they can unite into a new form.”*

-Page 67: October 13, 1916



#### IVa. Vier Selbstbildnisstudien

(um 1919-1924)

„Noch mal möchte ich übrigens kaum meine Jugend wieder durchleben, wohl aber die Jahre des Heraushebens aus dem Leidenzustand, des klar Empfindens meiner Kräfte. Schließlich aber geht das ähnlich wie bei einem Musikstück. Die Fugen greifen immer wieder durcheinander. Wenn man meint, ein Thema ist beiseite gelegt, dann kommt es doch immer wieder zum Vorschein, nur freilich in etwas veränderter und abgebogener Gestalt, meist reicher. Und das ist ja auch sehr gut.“

-Seiten 123-124: 19. November, 1912

„Ich kann mir doch kaum denken, daß eine andere Kunst außer der Musik so ins Innere dringt (...) Schaut. Keine Worte (...) In mir gewaltsames Drängen, mich zusammenzuraffen.“

-Seiten 100-101: Sonntag, 13. Februar, 1927

#### IVb. Selbstbildnis (1922)

„Der Durchschnittsbeschauer versteht sie nicht. Kunst für den Durchschnittsbeschauer braucht nicht flach zu sein. Sie wird ihm noch gefallen, auch wenn sie platt ist. Sicher aber wird ihm wahre Kunst gefallen, die einfach ist. Es ist ganz meine Meinung, daß zwischen Künstler und Volk Verständnis sein muß, zu den besten Zeiten ist es auch immer so gewesen.“

#### IVa. Four Self-Portrait Studies

(around 1919-1924)

*“Anyway, I would hardly like to relive my childhood, but surely would relive the years of lifting my state of suffering and clearly perceiving my strengths. After all, it is similar to a piece of music. The fugues are always crisscrossing each other. When you think that one theme has been put aside, it always comes back to light, only of course in a slightly different shape and bent, usually richer. And that’s also a very good thing.”*

-Pages 123-124: November 19, 1912

*“I can hardly imagine that any other art besides music can penetrate so into a person’s interior (...) Look. No words (...) Forceful insistence in me to pull myself together.”*

-Pages 100-101: Sunday February 13, 1927



#### IVb. Self-Portrait (1922)

*“The average viewer does not understand it. Art for the average viewer does not need to be plain. The viewer will not like it, even if it is flat. But, certainly they will like true art that is simple. It is entirely my opinion, that there must be understanding between the artist and the people, in the best of times, it’s always been that way. The genius may well run ahead and look*

Das Genie kann wohl vorauslaufen und neue Wege suchen, die guten Künstler aber, die nach dem Genie kommen – und zu diesen rechne ich mich –, haben den verlorengegangenen Konnex wieder zu schaffen (...) Es ist eine Gefahr für mich, daß ich mich zu sehr vom Durchschnittsbeschauber entferne. Ich verliere die Verbindung mit ihm. Ich suche in der Kunst, und wer weiß, ob ich nicht zum Gesuchten dabei komme?“

-Seite 61: 21.2.1916

„Manchmal will es mir scheinen, als ob der Vorhang sich jetzt lüften könnte, der mich von meiner Arbeit trennt, wie sie jetzt sein müßte. Es ist so ein ahnendes In-die-Nähe-Kommen.“

-Seite 86: 26. Februar, 1920

„Meine eigene Arbeit: Es ist, als ob ich vor der Tür meiner selbst stehe. Wenn es da nicht noch etwas eigentlich dahinter gibt, dann lohnt das alles nicht.“

-Seite 76: Im November, 1917

„Mir ist zumut, als wenn ich jetzt unmittelbar vor der letzten Stufe meiner Arbeit stehe. Ich glaube sie so wichtig, daß ich mir nicht denken kann, daß ich sie nicht schaffe.“

-Seite 99: 22. Oktober, 1926

*for new ways, but the good artists who follow the genius – and among these I include myself –, need to recreate this lost connection (...) I run the risk of distancing myself too much from the common viewers. I'll lose my connection with them. I'm looking for something in art, who knows if I won't be sought after while I'm at it?“*

-Page 61: 2.21.1916

*“Sometimes it seems to me as if the curtain could lift now, the one separating me from my work, as it now must be. It's a sort of hint of a coming closer.”*

-Page 86: February 26, 1920

*“My own work: It is as though I am standing at the door to myself. If there is not really something behind it, then none of this is worth it.”*

-Page 76: In November, 1917

*“I feel as if I am now standing directly in front of the last stage of my work. I believe it to be so important, that I can not imagine not completing it.”*

-Page: 99: October 22, 1926



## Va. Selbstbildnis (1934)

„Heut nacht träumte ich, es wäre wieder ein Krieg, ein neuer drohte auszubrechen. Und im Traum bildete ich mir ein, wenn ich nur meine andere Arbeit ganz ließe und nur mit anderen zusammen alle Kraft aufs Reden dagegen legte, könnten wir es hindern.“

-Seite 146: Mariakerke-Ostende, 11. Juni, 1926

„Krieg, Krieg und immer wieder Krieg. Für ganz Europa, ja die ganze Welt, denn ein jeder gebiert einen neuen. Bis, wie es in der Offenbarung heißt, eine neue Erde und ein neuer Himmel kommen werden.“

-Seite 163: Nordhausen, 1. März, 1944

„Die Menschen sind bis zur Möglichkeit ihres Ertragenkönnens verwandelt. Aus Deutschlands Städten sind Trümmerhaufen gemacht, und das Schlimmste von allem ist, daß ein *jeder Krieg seinen Antwortkrieg schon in der Tasche hat.*“

-Seite 161: Nordhausen, 21.2.1944

„Es ist genug gestorben! Keiner darf mehr fallen! Ich berufe mich gegen Richard Dehmel auf einen Größeren, welcher sagte: ‘Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden.’“

-Aus „Vorwärts“ Oktober, 1918

## Va. Self-Portrait (1934)

*“Tonight I dreamed it was war again, a new one threatened to break out. And in my dream I imagined, if I would only lay down my other work entirely and, together with others, joined all our strength to speak against it, we could prevent it.”*

-Page 146: Mariakerke-Ostende, June 11, 1926

*“War, war and always war again. For the whole of Europe, yes the whole world, since each one births a new one. Until, as it says in Revelations, a new Earth and a new Heaven will come.”*

-Page 163: Nordhausen, March 1, 1944

*“People are transformed by the limit of what they can possibly bear. Germany’s cities have been made into heaps of rubble, and the worst of all is that each and every war has an answer-war already in its pocket.”*

-Page 161: Nordhausen, 2.21.1944

*“There has been enough dying! No more may fall! I appeal against Richard Dehmel to a greater one, who said: ‘Seed-fruit should not be milled.’”*

-From “Vorwärts” October, 1918



## Vb. Ruf des Todes (1937)

„Es kommt eben nur auf das Wesentliche an.“

-Seite 83: 28. September, 1919

„Für kurze Zeit kommt das starke Glücksgefühl wieder, das Glücksgefühl, das sich mit keinem anderen vergleichen läßt, das der Arbeit, der man gewachsen ist. Was hat man gehabt in seinen besten Zeiten, und wie kurz waren sie doch. Wie lang das mühsame Hin- und Herlavieren, das Gehemmtwerden, das immer von neuem Zurückgeworfenwerden. Aber all das wurde aufgehoben durch die Zeiten des Könnens und Gelingens. Jetzt ist von allem nur ein müder Abglanz.“

-Seite 106: Ostern, 1932

„Was ich heute schreibe, mißverstehst nicht, und haltet mich auch nicht für undankbar, aber ich muß es Euch sagen: Mein tiefster Wunsch geht dahin, nicht mehr zu leben. Ich weiß, daß viele Menschen älter werden als ich, aber jeder Mensch fühlt, wenn für ihn selbst der Wunsch, sein Leben ablegen zu dürfen, gekommen ist. Für mich ist er da. Daran ändert nichts, ob ich noch etwas hierbleiben kann oder nicht. Von Euch fortgehen zu müssen, von Euch und Euren Kindern, wird mir furchtbar schwer. Aber die unstillbare Sehnsucht nach dem Tode bleibt.“

-Seite 165: Nordhausen, 13. Juni, 1944

## Vb. Call of Death (1937)

*“It only really depends on essentials.”*

*-Page 83: September 28, 1919*

*“For a short time the strong feeling of happiness comes back, the feeling of happiness that can't be compared with any other, that of work you're fit for. What have you had in your best times and how short they have been. How long this exhausting trekking here- and there, this being hemmed in, this getting pulled back all the time. But all this was canceled by the times of ability and success. Now there is just a tired reflection of all that.”*

*-Page 106: Easter, 1932*

*“Don't misunderstand what I write today, and do not think me ungrateful, but I have to tell you: My deepest wish is not to live anymore. I know a lot of people grow older than me but everyone feels for themselves when the wish arises, to be allowed to lay down one's life. For me, it is here. Whether I am able to stay here a bit longer or not, that doesn't change anything. To have to leave you, you and your children, is going to be awfully difficult for me. But this insatiable desire for death is still here.”*

*-Page 165: Nordhausen, July 13, 1944*

„Sterben ist ja nur als ob man sich auf die andere Seite legt. Das ist schön, nicht wahr? Anders ist das nicht, man legt sich eben auf die andere Seite...“

-Seite 161: Nordhausen, den 17.2.1944

*„Dying is just like turning over onto one's other side. That is beautiful, isn't it? It is no different, one simply lays oneself onto the other side...”*

-Page 161: Nordhausen, 2.17.1944



## VI. Selbstbildnis im Profil nach rechts (1938)

„Ich breite mich nicht mehr aus, ich schrumpfe nach innen. Ich meine, ich werde merklich alt. Leider, leider, ich merke es in allem – am schlimmsten, daß ich es in der Arbeit merke. Klagen nützt nichts, beten nützt auch nichts, *es ist so.*“

-Seite 85: 1. Januar, 1920

## VI. Self-Portrait in Profile to the right (1938)

*“I do not spread myself out anymore, I shrivel inwardly. I mean, I am becoming noticeably old. Unfortunately, unfortunately, I notice it in everything – the worst: I notice it in my work. Complaining is of no use, praying is also of no use, that's just as it is.”*

-Page 85: January 1, 1920

„Alter bleibt Alter, d.h. quält und plagt und dämpft. Wenn andere dann die paar Leistungen sehen, sprechen sie von dem glücklichen Alter. Ich glaube, es gibt kein glückliches Alter.“

-Seite 108: Sylvester, 1932

*“Old age remains old age, that is to say, afflicts and disquiets and mutes. When others see a few achievements, they speak of a ripe old age. I believe, there is no such thing as happy old age.”*  
-Page 108: New Year's Eve, 1932

„Ich hatte die Vorstellung, jetzt, im wirklichen Alter, würde ich vielleicht Arbeiten zustande bringen – zu diesem Thema –, die in die Tiefe gehn. Wie der alte Goethe sagt: 'Gedanken, bisher undenkbare...' Es ist nicht der Fall. Die Zeit des Alterns ist zwar schwerer als das Alter selbst, aber produktiver. Gerade, da der Tod schon hinter allem sichtbar wird,

*“I had the notion, now, in actual old age, that I would maybe produce works – on this topic –, works that get to the depths. Like the old Goethe says, “Thoughts, unthinkable til now...” It is not the case. The time of growing old is indeed harder than being old itself, but more productive: Since, where death already becomes apparent behind everything, it disquiets one's*



beunruhigt er mehr die Phantasie. Das Drohende ist aufregender, als wenn man dich vor ihm steht und ihn in seiner Größe doch nicht überblickt, ja, nicht mehr solchen Respekt hat vor ihm.“

-Seiten 108-109: August, 1934

„Kraft: das ist, das Leben so fassen, wie es ist, und ungebrochen durch es – ohne Klagen und viel Weinen – mit Stärke seine Arbeit tun. Sich nicht verleugnen – seine Persönlichkeit, die man nun einmal ist, aber sie verwesentlichen.“

-Seite 70: Februar, 1917

„Ich habe es ja so außergewöhnlich gut gehabt in diesen vierzig Jahren (...)“

-Käthe Kollwitz in einem Brief von 1937 an Beate Bonus-Jeep. Bonus Jeep, Seite 262

„Ich segne mein Leben, das mir bei allem Schweren so unendlich viel Gutes gegeben hat. Ich habe es auch nicht verschleudert, ich habe nach meinen besten Kräften gelebt, ich bitte Euch nur, laßt mich jetzt fortgehen, meine Zeit ist um.“

-Seite 165: Nordhausen, 13. Juni, 1944

*fantasy. The threat is more exciting than if one stands closely in front of death and doesn't see it in all its immensity, yes, and no longer has such respect for it.”*

-Pages 108-109: August, 1934

*“Power, that is, to grasp life how it is, to do one's work with fortitude – unbroken through it – without much sorrow and crying. Not to deny one's self – one's personality, which one simply is, but to get down to its core.”*

-Page 70: February, 1917

*“I have had it so extraordinarily good in these forty years (...)”*

*-Käthe Kollwitz in a letter from 1937 to Beate Bonus-Jeep. Bonus Jeep, Page 262*

*“I bless my life, which has given me so much unending goodness through all the hard times. I have also not squandered it, I have lived according to my best might, I beg only of you, let me go forth now, my time is up.”*

*- Page 165: Nordhausen, June 13, 1944*



Translations of the diary entries and written context by Professor Rachel Freudenburg and Boston College seminar students; translations of the epigrams in red preceding each diary entry by Professor Michael Connolly. Only the epigraph for *Vb.* is sung.

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