

DIE JUGEND DES FUHRERS

Next morning you relay the cherished compliment,
still savoring the night before, black polish darkening your nails:
you and your date, identically glossed and pale, told by a friend
you looked like you'd arrived through intervening years
from a dance floor in Berlin, 1927. You preen, ignorant
of Dietrich films, of brillantine or marcel waves or Chamberlain,
the desperate patent purses pinched in each girl's clutch, fingers crimped
tight and pained with fear, too cheap to paint afresh false stocking seams.

Your date is off, my dear; at least a decade soon, I think. In broad daylight,
I'm but a little shocked to think that you'd have been right there
among his youth, red-cheeked and shouting in the frontmost row,
your healthy nation crunching out the heavy, wordless tune,
new gleaming boots kicked forward, your small chiselled chin tilted
deliberately down so the newsreel photographer can capture
more effortlessly your white forehead and those sky-pure
blue eyes, innocent of any thought or of misdeed.