

## Berlin

*Friday, August 26, 1955: I arose very early as was my custom. No one was around. I strolled out across the street, around the block, for several blocks and wept at the sight of the devastation. I plunged into a reverie and fell into the mood to write it down and returned to the typewriter:*

Ten years now since the world war tragedy!

High fences

Rusty fences

Proud, haughty fences around the former grand estates leveled in  
humiliation

Windblown gates unkept now hang and creak on rusty hinges

Ghosts of yesterday

Ghost houses, ghost yards

Broken swimming pools remind of luxury of the forgotten rich

Proud estates, spectre houses, all so still

No playful shouts, no children laugh

Silent walls, silent houses, silent death

Empty mailboxes—no letters ever more for them

Buildings leveled, pride leveled, innocence suffering

Naked pockmarked walls, and weeds that grow from toothlike  
stabbing jaggedness indicating where—

Chipped walls

And glassless windows, cold and open to storm and sky

Boarded windows

Bricked-up windows

Jagged chimneys pierce the skies

Iron bedsteads hang

Plumbing pipes reach into space like dragon claws

Twisted steel  
Doorways without walls  
Arches without buildings  
Porches and doorways, nothing else, porches and doorways  
Ceilings of splintered wood, shattered plaster hanging  
    like cobwebs  
Stairways lead to no place

Here are trees  
Tall trees that lean, one sided  
Amputated limbs and trunks but not by saw  
Jagged stumps of arms that point at—whom?  
Grotesque figures stand against the sky, pointing  
    into space accusingly

Excavations like graves  
Excavations which are graves where rodents play and insects find  
    their homes  
Bricks are here  
Broken bricks and pulverized  
Piles of bricks that cover bones of people never found

Rubble  
Foundations upended  
Rotting wood  
Twisted steel  
Destruction, devastation, desolation  
Broken fountains  
Shattered statues  
Creaking shutters  
Rustiness  
Ugliness  
Jaggedness  
Screaming jaggedness.  
Walls, chimneys, trees, all grotesque writhing apparitions  
Persons? Things? Dragons?  
Disfigured deformed giants slumped in misery and shame

Pockmarked trees, gaping wounds healed over  
Vines climbing naked trunks to cover broken limbs of  
    torn and battered trees

Green ivy trying hard to cover nakedness of gaping walls  
Ivy trying! trying!  
Small trees, ragged shrubs growing untended from the rubble  
Grass atop the jagged walls holding brave little flowers  
    struggling for existence  
Nature trying to sweeten sourness  
Squirrels scampering  
Tiny birds twittering  
To bring back life to deadness

—Spencer W. Kimball