

68. *Meridian*

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust.

Purchased by the high seas,  
he's placed himself in the hands of rival winds.

is this the great world, which is whatever is the case? . . .  
. . . to fall in love with your inscrutable life?

THE King of Days will dance before my throne.  
We both are regal but of different realms.

The heart I rule, and he ordains the bone,  
this ship of being ordered from two helms.

His stately dance turns frantic and I spin  
to see him grappling with the wheel of time.

It starts and stops, a compass to begin  
again go tacking to and fro to prime.

Exhausted now, he leaves this tar and flees.

(In hiding kings must sometimes secret go.)

When he returns, with health or with disease,  
his dance may honor me, or overthrow.

Is he at fault? No! him I love complete:  
so fascinating are his fitful feet.

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The EPIGRAPH, "Two souls, alas, dwell within my breast" is from Goethe's *Faust (Part I)* as Faust converses with Wagner as they walk outside the city gate on Easter Day. **E2**: from Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141), translated by Gabriel Levin. **E3**: "Amor Fati," *The Wilderness: Poems*, Sandra Lim, 2014 → «Whatever Changes»; I wonder how close this might be to a Christian living "life abundant" (John 10:10). The **dancing King of Days** refers to Mahakala, a Tibetan Buddhist form of the Hindu god Shiva → «Ahimsa» combining a sense of time with death. Here he is homologized with the wrathful Yama who holds the **wheel of time** or the "wheel of life," a mandala of samsara depicting the twelve co-originations and the six karmic regions in Tibetan Buddhist thought. Buddhist deities may be understood more as psychological tendencies or capacities rather than objective entities existing apart from the mind. The **helm** is the device by which a ship is steered. A **compass** is a navigational device for finding direction; like a wheel or mandala, the device is usually round; the word also means perimeter or scope; it is also an instrument for drawing circles. **Tacking** is the directing of a sailing vessel with reference to the wind. Among the many meanings of **prime** as a verb and a noun is the prime **meridian**, 0 degrees longitude, which, with its opposite, divides the world into two hemispheres; the prime running through Greenwich, England, by which a system of international time reckoning was established in 1884. **Trim** is another nautical term which can mean to position the sails. **Tar** is a familiar term for sailor.

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