

Jung's Nightmare of Watches

Except for one sentence pierced by the explicit word “reality,” almost nothing of what will be told here happened in the distant summer of 1926, when Carl Jung, the psychoanalyst, gave his mistress a gift: a wristwatch without a minute hand. He asked her to wear it even in her sleep, because this watch, so he said, measures the time of love.

A few days later, Jung's mistress bumped into Jung's wife, who stood examining the window display of a paint-supply shop on a Zurich boulevard. The two women, who had already met once at a party, shook hands politely. Jung's mistress couldn't help noticing that on her wrist, Mrs. Jung wore a watch that had no hour hand. This encounter certainly had consequences in reality, though reality, as is well known, is paler than its own shadow. In any case, in one of Jung's dreams, the two women also asked each other for the time.

Translated from the Hebrew by Becka Mara McKay