**“The Carousel”**

**From *Berlin Childhood Around 1900***

**by Walter Benjamin**

The revolving deck with its obliging animals skims the surface of the ground. It is at the height best suited to dreams of flying. Music rings out – and with a jolt, the child rolls away from his mother.

At first, he is afraid to leave her. But then he notices how he himself is faithful. He is entrhoned as faithful monarch, above a world that belongs to him. Trees and natives line the borders at intervals. Suddenly, his mother reappears in an Orient. Then, from some primeval forest, comes a treetop – one such as the child has seen already thousands of years ago, such as he has seen just now, for the first time on the carousel.

His mount is devoted to him: like a mute Arion, he rides his mute fish; a wooden Zeus-bull carries him off as immaculate Europa. The eternal return of all things has long since become childhood wisdom and life an ancient intoxication of sovereignity, with the booking orchestrion as crown jewl at thecentre.

Now the music is slowly winding down; space begins to stutter, and the trees start coming to their senses. The carousel becomes uncertain ground. And his mother rises up befor ehim – the firmly fixed mooring post around which the landing child wraps the line of his glances.

**Translated by Howard Eiland Harvard University Press 2006**