

II. SIMPLE THINGS

Let us think about simple things. A person says: tomorrow, today, evening, Thursday, month, year, during the course of the week. We count the hours in a day. We point to their addition. Before we saw only half the day, now we have noticed the movement within the whole of the day. But when the next one comes, we begin counting the hours from the beginning. In truth, however, we do add a one to the number of days. But then 30 or 31 days go by. And the quantity turns into quality, it stops growing. The name of the month changes. In truth, we do act honestly as regards the years. But the addition of time differs from all other addition. One can't compare three months gone by with three newly grown trees. The trees are present, their leaves glimmer dimly. Of months one cannot say the same with confidence. The names of minutes, seconds, hours, days, weeks and months distract us from even our superficial understanding of time. All these names are analogous to objects, or to concepts and measures of space. Therefore, a week gone by lies before us like a killed deer. This would be so, if only time helped out in counting space, if it were cooking the books. If time were a mirror image of objects. In reality, objects are feeble mirror images of time. There are no objects. Go on, try and grab them. If we were to erase the numbers from a clock, if we were to forget its false names, maybe then time would want to show its quiet torso, to appear to us in its full glory. Let the mouse run over the stone. Count only its every step. Only forget the word every, only forget the word step. Then each step will seem a new movement. Then, since your ability to perceive a series of movements as something whole has rightfully disappeared, that which you wrongly called a step (you had confused movement and time with space, you falsely transported one over the other), that movement will begin to break apart, it will approach zero. The shimmering will begin. The mouse will start to shimmer. Look around you: the world is shimmering (like a mouse).⁷

⁷ Alexander Vvedensky, *The Gray Notebook* (ca. 1932–1933), (New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2002).