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LADISLAV KLÍMA. *GLORIOUS NEMESIS*. TRANS. MAREK TOMIN. TWISTED SPOON, 2011. 123 PP. CLOTH: £14.50.

“Only those who have experienced neither dreaming nor waking distinguish between the two—and dreaming is the same as vision and as death,” says a character in Ladislav Klíma’s *Glorious Nemesis*, a fast-paced novella, full of creepiness and mystery, that aims to disrupt every firm distinction we make between not only the real and the imaginary, but also curiosity and obsession, innocence and guilt, mental health and an unbalanced mind. A writer of philosophy as well as fiction, Klíma (1878-1928) finished revising this book in 1926, and Twisted Spoon has brought out its first English translation. The main character, Sider, a man of some wealth and no family, is very soon in an impossible situation, and we are given a hint that nothing is going to [go] smoothly for him from the first paragraph: “it was just this lack of clarity that made [certain sensations] so immensely exhilarating.” The torturous path he takes over several years while trying to establish what are facts and what are myths and rumors leads him to what some readers might call destiny, and others Romanticism in its most pungent state. What starts in a haze builds to a dissolution of the concrete world, and at the conclusion of *Glorious Nemesis* we confront the porous border that barely separates the past (and its crimes) and the present (where penance is possible). The action leads into metaphysics and questions about eternity and the afterlife. This book’s ideas might seem terribly out-of-fashion now (unless M. Night Shyamalan adapted it), and at times the plot creaks, but questions of harmful actions and their repercussions are never dated; and the febrile mind pushing things along assures that this remains a literary work that is also a page-turner.