



# Leseprobe

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**Paul Klee**  
Life and Work

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*“Dream. I was flying home, where the beginning is. It began with brooding and the chewing of fingers. Then I smelled something or tasted something. The scent released me. At once, I was fully released, melting away like sugar in water.”* Paul Klee, 1906

later when he was a master at the Bauhaus, where such illustrated stories hung from the walls of his studio.

For the young boy, who also occasionally enjoyed playing with puppets, drawings were sometimes transformed into a menacing reality, as he confessed later: “The evil spirits that I drew suddenly took on tangible form. I sought refuge with Mother, crying that the little devils were looking in through the window.”

## THE TALENTED VIOLIN STUDENT

When Paul was five years old, his beloved grandmother passed away. At age seven, the tender child received his first violin lesson. His teacher, Karl Jahn (1846–1912), was first concertmaster with the Berne Municipal Orchestra. Klee later called him “Tonvater Jahn” (Tone-Father Jahn)—a reference to the pioneer of the German physical fitness movement, “Turnvater Jahn” (Gym-Father Jahn).

Jahn was passionate about more than music; he was also deeply interested in the history of art. He greatly admired the Basel-based historian of art and culture Jacob Burckhardt, and collected monographs on famous artists such as Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci published by painter and art historian Hermann Knackfuss. These books soon captured the attention of Jahn’s talented violin student. At the time, however, Paul felt an even greater fascination for the mythological paintings of the Swiss symbolist Arnold Böcklin (1828–1901); he was also attracted to the kitschy illustrations from his mother’s magazines. He himself was drawing constantly now. Once, when visiting the restaurant belonging to his uncle Frick—the “fattest man in Switzerland,” as Klee wrote

