## Contents

List of Illustrations xi Acknowledgments xv Translation and Pronunciation xix

Introduction 1

- The Starry Castle Opens 13

  The Surrealist Situation of the Object 13

  A Choice of Abdications 22
- Zone 33
  Le passant de Prague 33
  This Little Mother Has Claws 4.
  The Time of Ardent Reason 52
  The Hangman and the Poet 63
  Tongues Come to Life 69
- Metamorphoses 79

  The Origin of Robots 79

  A Beautiful Garden Next Door to History 90

  Suicide Lane 99

  Franz Kafka's Dream 114

  Do You Speak German? Are You a Jew? 122

  Fantasy Land. Entry 1 Crown 130

  The Precious Legacy 137
- 4 Modernism in the Plural 144

  Alfons Mucha, Steel and Concrete 144

  The Ghosts of Futures Past 156

From the Window of the Grand Café Orient 170 Granny's Valley 183 The Electric Century 197 All the Beauties of the World 210

- The Silent Woman 221

  The Poetry of Future Memories 231

  Renaissance Ballet 242

  Beautiful Ideas That Kill 251

  Sexual Nocturne 261

  Cut with a Kitchen Knife 270

  A War Economy, Words of Command, and Gas 280
- On the Edge of an Abyss 288

  The Beautiful Gardener 288

  The Bride Stripped Bare 298

  Gulping for Air and Violence 304

  Orders of Things 312

  L'origine du monde 324

  Dreams of Venus 331

  A Girl with a Baton 344
- The Poet Assassinated 364

  A Wall as Thick as Eternity 374

  Didier Desroches 387

  Am I Not Right, Jan Hus? 399

  Messalina's Shoulder in the Gaslight 409

  That Familiar White Darkness 419
- 8 The Gold of Time 426

  The Necromancer's Junk Room 426

  The Prague–Paris Telephone 433

  The Dancing House 439

Notes 445 Bibliography 529 Index 561