ARCHIPELAGO

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Letters to the Editor are welcomed, by post or via the Internet.

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All submissions must be typed and double-spaced and sent by post with SASE or envelope and International Reply Coupon. An e-mail address is appreciated. No electronic submissions will be accepted unless Editor is queried beforehand.

Acknowledgements/permissions: Leonce Gaiter, "Live at Storyville": "I Cover The Waterfront (Heyman, Green) ©1933 Warner Bros. Inc.

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Contributors

Leonce Gaiter graduated from Harvard and lives in California. His essays have appeared in *The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times Magazine*, *FEED* <http://www.feedmag.com/html/feedline/98.01gaiter/98.01gaiter_master.html>, *salon.com* <http://www.salon.com/june97/21st/cool970605.htm>, and elsewhere.

Gerry Hull resides in Georgia. Other excerpts from ***B*** appear in *American Letters and Commentary* and *Dirigible*.

'Hecuba' is a Bosnian woman who lives with her family in the U.SA.

Sándor Kányádi was born in 1929 in Transylvania, Rumania. His parents belonged to the sizeable Hungarian minority, among whom he received his education and has spent his working life as a writer, poet, and editor of Hungarian-language publications. His volumes of poetry and translations (from Rumanian, German, and French) exceed two dozens. His poetry has appeared in translation in every Scandinavian country and in Germany, France, and Austria. In 1995 he was given the Herder Prize in Vienna. At present, he travels among Hungarian populations and gives readings to school children for the love of poetry; his book for children will appear in English (Holnap Publishing, Budapest; tel. 361 365-6624). Other poems may be read at *Zimmerzine* <http://www.nhi.clara.net/z59.htm>, and a portrait of

the poet seen at <http://www.btk.elte.hu/irolap/miem/kanyadi/index.html>. "All Soul's Day in Vienna" is considered his masterpiece; its appearance in *Archipelago* is the first in an English-language publication.

DF Lewis <dflewis48@hotmail.com>was born 1948 in Walton-on-Naze, Essex. Between 1966 and 1969 he was at Lancaster University, where he formed the Zeroist Group. Since 1987, more than 1200 of his stories have been published in books and magazine. For five consecutive years his work appeared in YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES; he has published stories, as well, in a number of journals, such as *Stand, Orbis, Iron, Panurge* and *London Magazine*; and in THE BEST NEW HORROR, Vols. 1, 2 & 8. He is the author of a novella AGRA ASKA. He is married and has two grown-up children.

George Rafael is a part-time writer and full-time wage slave. His work can be found in *salon.com* <http://www.salon.com> and *Art Review* (UK; http://www.art-review.co.uk). Under his full name he has published biographies of Salvador Dali and Miles Davis. He is at work on an essay about La Rochefoucauld.

Stella Snead was born in England in 1910. She studied with Ozenfant and Henry Moore and for fifteen years was known as a Surrealist painter whose works were said to be "amongst the most interesting of the strong surrealist movement in [England] in the 1930s and 1940s." During that period she had eleven solo exhibitions. She migrated to America, living in New York, then Taos; and in 1956, began photography, while traveling in the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Greenland. She lived in India for eleven years. She has exhibited in a great number of galleries, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Kodak House, London; Lincoln Center, New York; Donnell Library, New York; Gallery Chemould, Bombay. Photographs by her are in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the International Center of Photography, and Harvard University Archive. She has published eight books: DROWNING CAN BE FUN? A Nonsense Book (Pont La Vue Press, New York, 1992); ANIMALS IN FOUR WORLDS: SCULPTURES FROM INDIA, texts by Wendy Doniger and George Michell (University of Chicago Press, 1989); BEACH PATTERNS (Clarkson Potter, 1975); SHIVA'S PIGEONS, text by Rumer Godden (Chatto and Windus, London/Viking Press, NY, 1972); CHILDREN OF INDIA (Lothrop, Lee & Shephard, NY, 1971); THE TALKATIVE BEASTS (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1969); SEVEN SEVEN (Folder Editions, NY, 1965); RUINS IN JUNGLE (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1962). She lives in New York. A retrospective of her existing paintings was shown at CFM Gallery <cfmg@mindspring.com>, 112 Greene St., New York, from April 8 to May 9, 1999; a catalog is available from the gallery. The retrospective will open at Galérie Minsky, 46, rue de l'Université, Paris 75007, on January 13, 2000. "Early Cabbage" appeared in Archipelago, Vol. 1, No. 3, and a retrospective of her paintings in Vol. 3, 1.

Paul Sohar was born in Hungary and educated in the U.S., and works full-time as a literary translator. His poetry and translations can be read in *Chelsea, Hunger, Long Shot, Malahat Review, Seneca Review*, etc.; and will appear in *Antigonish Review, Kenyon Review, Many Mountains Moving, Sonora Review*. etc. He is preparing a book for children by the Transylvanian Hungarian poet **Sándor Kányádi** for publication in English (Holnap Publishing, Budapest; tel. 361 365-6624). His translations of ten Hungarian poets, including Béla Marko; Aladar Laszloffy; Árpád Farkas, are collected in an anthology. A selection of his translations of Kányádi and Farkas is to appear in *Peer Poetry Review*, England; his own poems will appear in a later issue. His translations of poems by Kányádi appear in *Zimmerzine* <http://www.nhi.clara.net/z59.htm>.

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We note changes for two of our staff members. In December, **Ann Fallon** moves to Seattle, where she will become editor-at-large of *Archipelago* for the West Coast. **Jane Shippen**, in Buenos Aires as a Fulbright Fellow as of February, will be our correspondent in the Southern Hemisphere.

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Emergency Money for Writers

Professional writers and dramatists facing financial emergencies are encouraged to apply for assistance to the Authors League Fund, founded in 1917 and supported with charitable contributions. The writer may apply directly to the Fund, or a friend or relative may apply on behalf of a writer who urgently needs money to pay medical bills, rent, or other living expenses. Though the money is a loan, it is interest-free and there is no pressure to repay it.

The applicant must be a professional writer with a record of publications and a U.S. citizen. For an application or more information, contact the Authors League Fund, 330 W. 42 St. New York, N.Y. 10036-6902. Telephone: 212 268-1208; fax 212 564-8363.

Poets In Need, Inc.

This organization in California is devoted to helping poets and writers who find themselves in need of fiscal assistance because of health problems (many writers cannot afford health insurance) or other unusual circumstances. Checks should be made out to Poets In Need and mailed to: 2000 Highway 1, Pacifica, Ca. 94044 The Board of Directors consists of Norman Fischer, Leslie Scalapino and Michael Rothenberg <walterblue@earthlink.net>.

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Erratum: In Vol. 3, No. 3, in the article "Lee in Retrospect," the sentence "During his first freshman week at Cornell, he sat down in the undergraduate library and read GRAVITY'S RAINBOW, DON QUIXOTE and THE LAYBRINTH OF SOLITUDE" should have read V., not GRAVITY'S RAINBOW.

6

The ulcer was small, painless, easily hidden beneath my clothing, excluded me from no activity. Every night I gauged its depth with a small metal ruler and I saw nothing to be alarmed about; the minute changes I observed were probably due to fluctuations in the pressure I applied to the ruler when I inserted it into the wound. And yet when I showed it to people they would stare indifferently at my bare chest, perhaps ask if it hurt much, but they were reluctant to give their opinion and appeared anxious to change the subject; I also noticed they seemed to be looking not at the ulcer but rather at my pointed finger. I don't know, maybe they saw nothing there, or maybe this was their way of telling me I needed to fix the problem on my own time. But from then on I made a point of asking for practical advice, even from people I knew were not qualified to give it, just to reassure them I was not looking for sympathy. This seemed to break through their reserve, somewhat. Of course the advice I received was impossible to make sense of; I still tried to follow it, less with the object of healing the ulcer than of maintaining my ties to the community. Though I'd not yet benefited from them, I didn't want to lose those ties at any cost, and I was fairly sure that making the effort to follow people's recommendations would keep them on my side; I did my best to generate the impression that I was applying their treatments with encouraging results. Sometimes I suspected these lies had caused the ulcer, but they also appeared to halt its progress, and I did not look forward to the day they would be discovered.

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I was gone for a while. But I came back, through the same door I'd left. Some people were waiting for me. How had I occupied myself? I could no longer maintain that this was an inappropriate question. The initial response I gave, which I composed unassisted, collapsed before developing into a sequence of discrete and audible words, but after several consultations I was able to cite activities which were generally regarded as productive uses of time; whenever possible, I mentioned names of persons who could corroborate my answer.

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The nose of the plane rested on the ground. Some of the panels on top of the fuselage had been removed for salvage; the huge aircraft had filled with rainwater, and the frontal landing gear had collapsed under the weight. Using a rock as a hammer, we drove a heavy bolt through the underside of the fuselage, and the water rushed out so forcibly as to gouge a reservoir for itself in the hardened ground. While one of us built a perimeter wall to contain the overflow, the other excavated the long channel to irrigate our dried and distant property, for so long unproductive. To distribute the workload fairly we periodically changed positions.

45

I was en route to a meeting, rehearsing the statements I had prepared, when I noticed B laying in an awkward position on the shoulder of the road. At first he looked to be asleep, but his eyes were open; they appeared to fix on me as I approached him, but rather like the eyes of a face on a poster, and for a moment I thought he was dead. It might have been appropriate to stop and help him, but I was already running behind schedule, and if I took on responsibility for B without public support I would have to bring him to the meeting with me, which would not look good at all. And where then? Paired with another I would forget the next destination I'd had in mind, and would have to defer to B to lead me through his own degrading orbit, not being able to break free of him until finally we returned to where we began.

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The sea met the land, and trees grew on the land where the land met the sea. If rain flattened the sea, the water turned the color of lead and the weighted limbs of the trees sagged down to the land. If the tide rose at midnight, the sea carried the fish past the trees and into the filling fields beyond.

70

Renovations to our city zoo were long overdue. The primate house was in particularly bad condition; the yellow tiles that covered the inside of the cages had broken loose from years of incessant pounding, and the animals had begun chewing through the rotten substrate, perhaps out of the dumb anxiety induced by confinement, or perhaps in search of some nutrient that our dated research had overlooked. But because they did not attempt to escape through the holes they had made, repairs were again postponed, and the zoo became such a depressing sight that it was soon abandoned by its visitors, and later, deprived of operating funds, by all but the most essential employees. The occasional elopement was more by accident than intent, as if the animals only wandered out of their cages in their sleep; the custodians soon tired of leading them back to their cages and let them roam unmolested, entrusting their confinement to the low fence that circled the grounds. Sometimes one lost its way through the front gate and strayed into the adjacent city park, and there it usually ended, in the center of a huddle of mute bystanders. Perhaps it was not so strange how at such moments we forgot our own complicity at the very moment it ought to have filled us with shame, how mesmerized we were by the creature gasping at our feet, as if we were hearing the sound of our own breathing for the very first time. Most of us had never seen a thing die so completely by itself, particularly at such close range, and the sight touched us with a horror we had not felt since we were children.

G. Hull

THE TROJAN WOMEN

'Hecuba'

Prologue

Once you asked, How had I felt while acting the part of the Trojan queen Hecuba? I tried hard to answer, but I couldn't. Except for the glamorous fact that I was a part of an off-Broadway production, I did not find anything remarkable in my acting. Acting by itself was the intimately unnoticed affair of a heart surprised by experience and emotionally immature, and was left for the future to dwell on its spiritual outcomes.

Buried in my subconscious, your question was calling for a different and deeper answer. A response – a complex, ambivalent, amorphous matter – tended to release more about my emotional involvement in the project than my conscious mind could accept. At the same time, somewhere in my heart the query kept claiming a true answer, causing an immense intellectual and emotional disturbance. I had to meet something deep in myself and solve it as a problem. It called upon my profound involvement in Bosnian affairs, which were contrary to everything that could be explained simply to the reader educated by reports of current events. The conflicts of my traditions and deep feeling of Bosnian citizenship were so complicated that they were difficult to explain even to myself.

In April of 1997, I suddenly received an invitation to act in Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. An actress, playwright, educator, and director, E., offered her beautiful adaptation, so contemporary and yet ancient. I had never acted before. Though I was panicked at the thought of the stage and the public, I accepted the role of one of three Hecubas. I was always attached to the theater but visited it more frequently during certain times of my life. A play and its plot, its culmination and resolution, its actresses and actors, their movements, expressions, voices, and their changes, lights, scenery, music – all this entangled in one endless excitement – bewitched me. I would sit in the audience, more often without company, motionless, breathless, and unaware of my own existence. The inexorable end would come, and I would painfully return to reality. I felt I would remain in eternal self-oblivion in the magic of the play. Thinking of my burning love for playhouses, and especially for the tragedies performed in them, I realized that it had begun in the intervals of my life when I felt lonely and somehow had lost contact with my spiritual side. I needed to live those other lives of drama to find a path to myself. And this was true: now spiritually and intellectually hungry, deprived of my own identity, which had been built up by my traditions and smashed by the Bosnian war, I plunged into this new experience.

You are probably asking what Greek tragedy has to do with the Bosnian war. My answer is: a great deal. The play underlined the nonsense of that war. It was an irresistible challenge to live in its imaginary world and metaphor. The text suggested fragrances and sounds, tastes and colors of a dazzling, roaring Mediterranean that I left behind to escape the war. To explain that all to you, and myself, I offer you these fragments of witness.

Rehearsal

E., our director, wrote the adaptation of *The Trojan Women* and offered me it on a golden plate of hovering fantasies. I am designated queen in this powerful poem of beauty and its destruction, the tragedy of women caught in the net of warlike men and their universe of vandalism set off by a god's trickery. This is a story of endless grief of women stricken by unimaginable havoc.

I am fascinated by a dream of a dazzling Troy before the war ruined it: its stone-paved streets washed and bleached by sunlight, its shade-trees and elegant architecture of simple, dignified stone; its lively markets with their lavish choice of sun-ripened fruits, vegetables, fresh fish, and goat cheese. Happily-laughing women engaging in talk with their husbands, lovers, fathers, children, merchants, pass before my gaze. They are clad in transparent, neatly wrinkled chitons puffed out by the sea breeze. Eager to touch the offerings of life spread before them, they test the quality of goods with their sensitive fingers and savor it on their mouth-roofs. In the galleries – feasts for the eyes – vases and friezes are displayed. Artisans have painted images of goddesses, gods and heroes on them with black and brown water-softened clay coloring. And the shrines are, as I picture them, marble, shaded, solemn; full of religious people engaged in quiet procession and practices of worship of the gods that would protect and bless them.

Everything is a celebration of life. Detached from reality, I am one of those joyful Trojans. I hear their resonant voices, and their fiesta fills my being with energy. The sun and breeze touch my face, and the smell of the sea is intense. But, the celebration is interrupted. In the script, these scenes of life are proportionally narrow to the tragedy that follows. The dark contrast of the events that Hecuba, Andromache, Cassandra, and the wretched Chorus of ill-fated common women subsequently experience devastates my senses and agitates my self-defense. Out of the human instinct for survival, out of the attachment to the myth of magnificent ('magnificent' in contrast to the fragility of humans) and unpredictable Nature, glorious heroes, and righteous gods, I linger on Troy's famous beauty, as I dwell on the memory of Sarajevo's, in its splendor, before its destruction that I never physically experienced. The generations needed a myth, with its symbols and metaphors that explain and justify everything to humans and their not-always-easy interactions. Men have gathered strength from the spirit of legends to endure and resist disasters and famines, wars and plagues.

And that thin strip of light which *The Trojan Women* offered at the beginning brought back to me the dream of my former happiness. It was a bridge between my memories, my desires, and cruel virtue. Sarajevo's centuries-old shrines of the Muslim, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Adventist, and other faiths; its oriental fountains set amid structures of ages clashing with modern industrial expansion; its fragrant chestnut, acacia, oak, and linden avenues; the sites of the Olympic Winter Games of 1984; the freshening banks of the Miljacka River in the middle of the city; the soothing silence of the whispering, intimate, and leafy suburban neighborhoods on the hills; the narrow cafés in the middle of the Turkish center of Bas Carsia; theaters and museums; everything that I can recall of my native city: all of that beats in my heart. The *sotto voce* tunes of *sevdah*, the Bosnian songs of longing and passionate love, are vivid in my mind. Brought to us centuries ago from the Orient, they express the power of secret desire for the always-unreachable loved one. Over time they were cultivated by the

tenderness of our Slavic souls. So many nights my friends and I awaited the dawn singing those soft melodies, to the remote sound of instruments. The ancient music would sometimes include a very old oriental chord instrument, the *saz*, which survived on our soil. In those fond nights, the delicate songs united us in the flow of the Bosnian soul. And these beautiful people of all origins, who had so often intermarried and bonded in love without prejudice, instilled with their own tradition the common life: these carefree, happy, sophisticated men and women drunk on love for their own city and life: their playful children: where are they now? Thoughts of the one-time happiness of Troy, and of my own in Sarajevo linger, and I hardly can untangle myself from them.

I have begun studying Hecuba's lines in Montauk, in early May. My stage is a deserted stretch of the beach sparkling in the sun. The weather, unusually warm, is God's gift. There is no cloud in the serene blue sky. This scenery is ancient and divine. The waves are wild horses rearing onto the heights and hurling themselves mortally to the depths right before me, braking their gracious heads and throwing the lavish white foam of their manes onto the sand. The Sun, riding across the skyway in his daily course, paints the sea in stripes and patches of indigo, azure, turquoise, sapphire, cobalt, murky gray, violet, and black. The transparent air smells of sea-salt and moisture. Starved but friendly sea gulls scream around me on the innocent, lustrous seashore. I let myself believe: Poseidon will emerge from the sea.

I read Hecuba's lines silently, trying by the effort of intellect to understand and accept her personality. I understand more, and accept less. The queen is despotic. After the fall of Troy, trying to maintain her royal superiority in her debates with Andromache and Cassandra, she commands. Although she's a war prize herself, she shouts at the faces of women enslaved on the shore. I can't prevent an image of my late mother surfacing from my childhood: she is dark of face and points her index finger at me, threatening. Both the Hecuba whom I am trying to animate and my mother's image frighten me: I feel a profound guilt that I can't explain. There are many unwelcome thoughts associated with the Trojan queen lingering in my mind these days. In my memory, formed long ago and now pulled from my inner being, shaped by prejudice and a humanly limited knowledge absorbed from my readings, Hecuba was not an attractive figure. One legend taught me that she knew her son Paris, born to her and her husband, Priam, the Trojan king, would set Troy on fire. The seer warned that any child born on a certain day, as Paris was, would cause the distraction of Troy. The prince and his mother had to die to save the city. On that same day, Priam's sister gave birth to her son. Instead of killing Paris, the royal couple decided to kill the sister and her baby. Paris was exiled to Mount Ida, and his parents believed they would never see him again.

Youthfully idealistic, inspired by fairy-tales, inexperienced in motherhood, I condemned Hecuba as a malicious woman. At that age I was not attracted to this old woman whom I knew only superficially. Instead, the young, tragic Greek heroines compelled me with magnetic power. In the script I study, the legend of Paris's birth is not told. Hecuba is depicted as a figure devastated by the war: her sons, her husband, and her grandson are murdered; she loses her throne and homeland, cradle of her ancestors; and Odysseus will bring her, disgraced, to his home as a war prize. There is not the place for my bookish prejudice: I struggle to free myself from those unwanted impressions.

I spent three peaceful days on the beach meditating on the ancient Greeks. A powerful impression of ever-lasting nature and the insignificance of human life ruled by gods and controlled by heroes overwhelms my soul. In these moments of my intimacy with the universe, I feel that the energy of time and space and the spirit of human generations shifting in it, are penetrating my existence. Enfolded by the light from this (unique) stage, I discover an eternity.

I slowly recognize Hecuba's life as biding in my flux. The magnitude of her loss and the beauty of her sentiment are tempting. Her lamentation for the lost, charming Troy identifies my own expatriation. I stage her on this magnificent beach, read her lines many times, now loudly; her vibrating heart is my own. I know she is conceived in me, but I don't know when that happened.

Little by little I am giving a structure to my queen, and I am filling it in with my emotions. Later at home, sitting in the lotus position, my eyes closed, I picture her figure lying on the beach on the morning after the Trojan War. She is motionless on the pebbles and I can feel the imprints of their rough surface on my skin. The slow movement of her eyelids and her fingers mark her awakening. She becomes alive. Both of us do not want the morning of a dreadful truth to come.

The film that is unrolling in my mind is in black and white. Colors are not needed to penetrate the depth of the Greek tragedy. It is black, and the white serves only to underline its darkness. And Hecuba is a woman in black, as was my great-grandmother, mourning for my Eastern Orthodox priest great-grandfather. Jelisava, a Catholic woman from the Dalmatian coast who was not blood-related to me, but who for decades served as my surrogate aunt, was also eternally clad in the plain black cloth of grief for her late husband. Black is in my perception a color of elegance and dignity, and a symbol of the melancholy that often accompanies me. The queen's dark silhouette is familiar. I feel her blackness softly wrapping my body. It is reflected on my lifeless face.

The early morning sun gently touches my eyes and lips. My conscious mind resists the sunbeams breaking through the florescent dawn. My dress is moist, my cold body shivers, and the taste of sea salt is in my mouth. Smoke is in the air. The brutal truth finally awakens me: Troy is in flames. Reluctantly, I raise my eyes toward Troy's towers. My heart, disbelieving, shattered, can't accept the sight of this beloved city: its milky, stone spires, which glittered yesterday, are dissolving in the blaze. I remember now: all Trojan men, all my sons, and my husband, are killed. The Trojan women, chained and thrown on the beach, are the war-price of the Greek conquerors. As Poseidon whispers in my ear, I am Odysseus' spoil, and he'll bring me to Ithaca to his patient Penelope. My pain is unendurable. Spontaneously, in agony, hysterical, I yell the words that I memorized from the play: "Women, rise and be slaves." I wake from the trance, only to face the true tragedy of my heart.

In January 1992, my family had come on a business trip from Sarajevo to the United States. Our goal was to return home that June; we still keep the expired tickets for the memory. Instead, between Spring of 1992 and 1995, I watched my own catastrophe unfolding in front of me on the TV screen , like an evil dream, and my mind could not accept it. Bosnia was in a war, and the war was devised by my once-respected psychotherapist, my surrogate father, Dr. Radovan Karadjic. For almost five years, his forces shelled my city, killing people in bread lines, bombing their homes, sniping at children on the street. Sarajevo's beautiful old architecture, its monuments, Orthodox and Catholic churches, synagogues, libraries: all that could be a witness of the harmonious life in the city was destroyed. Karadjic was killing the international

heart of that civilized city in which he studied medicine, fell in love with a girl, married, raised his children, counseled people as a therapist, made friendships, drank in night clubs with writers, and wrote children's poems. Across the country, his soldiers and paramilitaries rounded up thousands of men, mostly civilians, and kept them in Nazi-type detention camps, torturing, starving, and killing them only because they were Muslim. During a few days in Srebrenica, under the command of Karadjic's murderous general Ratko Mladic, Bosnian Serb forces mass-killed about eight thousand men.

In their madness of ethnic cleansing, the Serb military gang-raped thousands of Muslim women and impregnated them with "Serb" babies. They didn't save Croats either, because they all were considered "fascists who had killed Serbs in the Second World War." Any Serb who resisted Karadjic's bloodthirsty policy was also the subject of his purges. Witnessing that through the media, I went mad during these years. Three generations of my ancestors, Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, and I myself, were born in the city. We had lived in harmony among ourselves and with everybody else. I couldn't accept that Dr. Karadjic planned this war that scandalized and terrified the world. Although he counseled me for only a short time, he did it during a difficult personal crisis of mine. He was charismatic and powerful in his impact, and had kept me in spirit for almost a decade. Usually, to solve difficulty in my emotional life, I would in my imaginations address my father for advice. Now I was more wretched than ever: Doctor Karadjic was killing the people I loved and had lived with for forty-two years, my brother in the Bosnian military trenches, and my heart.

Whenever I phoned him during these years of horror, my brother was laughing, full of life and hopes for the future, as if death's aura didn't hover over him; as if he were not a soldier on the front line. And I, a living ghost of my former self, was petrified by the pictures of the people in the death camps that Karadjic designed. At night, a dream would come to me: my brother captured, detained, sentenced to death. His ghastly face, as if he is already dead, is smiling faintly. I, accompanied by my Muslim husband, come to fetch him. I beg Dr. Karadjic for mercy, to release my brother. He is laughing innocently at me, as if he doesn't comprehend the evil character of his act. Karadjic is trying to comfort me and convince me of his righteousness, and my frantic scream awakes me. Night after night I dreamed this; always the same dream.

In our phone talks, my brother always referred to our glorious past. Seven hundred years ago, my father's ancestors, Croats, lived as the nobility in Bobovac, the king's stronghold, in central Bosnia. It is told that they were shield-holders during the period when medieval Bosnia was at her most powerful, when her borders were their most extensive. My brother needed this memory, surfacing from the Bosnian collective conscience, to survive. He was so proud of the lilies on the new Bosnian flag, taken from those ancient times. Before the war, Bobovac was a medieval ruin; but I could see its high towers now, its lush evergreen surrounds, and *stecaks* around it. Some time between the 12th and 14th centuries, magnificent sculptures, tombstones, called *stecaks*, were built in many parts of Bosnia. According to numerous historians, they are related to the heretic Bosnian church. The schismatic religion spreading at that time in our land was accepted by the aristocracy, and plebes as well. In their struggle for independence, organized within their own church, Bosnian people tried to retain their land-holdings, which were threatened by both Roman Catholicism from the West and Orthodoxy from the East. The carved stones survived through centuries. Witnessing the everyday life of the rebellious mediaeval Bosnians, those stone dwellings of the dead

amazed the contemporary world with the beauty of the dancing men and women, hunters, chevaliers, warriors, worshipers, flowers, moon, sun, stars, deer, birds, lilies, that had been cut in them. I always felt a warm closeness to these sculptures, enjoyed hours of looking at those displayed in front of the state museum in Sarajevo. They were, to me, the strongest proof that Bosnian identity reached back to those remote times.

I learned that, after the Turks conquered Bosnia, and Bobovac itself fell, in 1463, my father's very old family had split apart. Some of them went to Vares, a rich mining town nearby, and remained there. Very pious, they practiced Catholicism. Most likely, some fraction of my kinsmen accepted the Muslim religion. Five hundred years later, as an elementary and high school student, I spent parts of my summer vacations in Vares and in the mountains around it. In that beautiful hilly and grassy countryside I gathered hay with my Catholic cousins. In town, I visited other relatives – coal miners and smelters. In the hardship of life lived on the edge of poverty, nothing remained of their famous past, except that they always whispered of it. I never understood then why they didn't talk about it proudly, in a loud voice; or, I paid too little attention to the reason. I understood it later, as a woman matured by the war: in Yugoslavia, after the Second World War, the aristocracy was forbidden, and nobody would dare claim to belong to it. I forgot that my uncle, my father's brother, after the war had publicly criticized the new regime and gloried in his origins. First he was beaten by the police; then, when he wouldn't stop talking, he was incarcerated in a mental institution. I have never believed he really was insane. I was convinced, he was agitated by the injustice. I had loved him dearly with a deep protective devotion.

Many of my relatives in Vares kept our forefathers' last name – my maiden name and the name of the noble shield-holders from the Middle Ages. A great many of the females married into other families and, in the patriarchal fashion, called themselves differently; but we all knew we belonged to the same origins, and secretly were proud of it. My grandfather, a metal-smith, moved to Sarajevo in early years of the 20th Century; in 1930 he handmade a brass coffee grinder for the household of his Slovenian wife; all glittery and functional, it stands now in my New York living room.

When the Bosnian scale of battle escalated in the '90s, and Croats and Muslims, allies at first, began to "ethnically cleanse" each other, the TV screen showed the fields around Vares full of refugees of both nations; newspapers described and graphically pictured their physical extermination. My bloodied, shredded heart asked: Where are those warriors who, under the medieval flag of the Bosnian kings, had fought their enemies and extended the Bosnian lands? Are their descendents aiming their knives and rifles at each other? Is it possible that we, heirs of this long-lived family glory, whatever our confession is now, might shamelessly shoot our own past?

There is so much linking me to Hecuba, who is, more and more, becoming myself, as I am becoming her. Her humanity is decomposing in the unending spin of her havoc, and this is, I realized, the haunting point of my ambivalence toward her. Wasn't I a ghost, a piece of stone in the Bosnian war? Her spirit and mine are entangled and symbiotic: we are here, suddenly, to explain each other. And, both of us know that Troy was not destroyed for Helen's love, and that Bosnia was not devastated for national difficulties. Human greed, vanity, a thirst for wealth are the creative force of any war, from ancient to contemporary times. I am glad she and I understand each other better now.

The cast meets

The cast met at the end of May in a theater in the East Village. A group of about 35 people, of all ages, from almost every part of former Yugoslavia, gathered around the long table in a small foyer. There were Muslims, Serbs and Croats from Bosnia, Serbians, Croatians, Montenegrins, and Albanians. I was among the oldest participants. Most of the Bosnians were from Sarajevo. Few faces were familiar. Before my arrival, I decided: I would not form any kind of relationship with the other participants. The Yugoslavia I loved, and my native Bosnia, microcosm of that Yugoslav society, were destroyed. In agony I buried painful illusions about my homeland; any association with the Yugoslav people would bring only more disappointment. The only reason I had come was because of my interest in the theater and my attraction to Greek tragedy.

The encounter was chilly; people looked at each other with suspicion. Before the official beginning of the meeting with the director, some exchanged courteous but hesitant words. Many of us stayed silent and remote. E., our director, and her assistants, J., a man from the foundation financing our project, and S.L., a psychotherapist, introduced us to each other. We shook hands, smiled, and pronounced our names.

The Trojan Women had also been produced the year before. For the second time, this director and her group of American enthusiasts had assembled Yugoslav amateurs as the cast. Some of the actresses and actors knew each other from the earlier performance. Some of them were warm to each other; but most of them, I believed, overemphasized their closeness. I perceived the situation as grotesque, and I could hardly wait for rehearsal to start.

At some moment a tall, blond woman, A, approached me. She recognized me. She was a TV-director from Sarajevo, and was my brother's high-school classmate; I had been at the same school with them. Another woman a few years younger than I, J., also addressed me: she was a judge and had worked in the courts with my cousin and his wife. She and my relatives were close friends, and, as she recalled, they had traveled together for various holidays. I was confused and surprised by these conversations I didn't expect or desire. I wanted to avoid further talk – I wished that so much. But the references to my family, whom I hadn't seen for five years – my brother and my closest cousin, whose mother was my mother's twin – intrigued me. I engaged in the talk. My first fight to remain a recluse among these Yugoslavs failed. I learned that J. and A., both Muslims, one married to a Croat, the other to a Serb, had spent several years with their children and husbands living under the shelling. Terrified, in order to save the children's lives, they had escaped to the United States. Once prominent Sarajevans, J. and A. now worked as chambermaids in New York. J.'s husband, a college professor in Sarajevo, worked in a restaurant kitchen. Suddenly, unasked, I tried to explain that I hadn't betrayed my origins and people. I heard myself murmuring some nonsense about loyalty toward Bosnians regardless of my nationality and religion. To prove it, I said childishly that my husband was a Muslim and that my brother had fought in the Bosnian army throughout the war.

J. and A. were astounded, almost hurt, by my words, and one of them said: "We know. You do not have to apologize." I felt stupid, as always in this war, talking to the people from the Yugoslav ground. All those contacts would bring me an incurable feeling of loss and shame, guilt and endless unease. Every word is an exaggeration, and insufficient, as I was forgetting my native language, or the language itself changed

meaning. This is one reason that my heart doesn't want to write anymore in Serbo-Croatian. For years, I didn't write to my brother and my friends; whatever I wrote was in English.

The classical theater is a small and dusky place. Its narrow hall is unfurnished; there is only a cabinet in the corner and a few tables, which we have lined up to make a conference table. We sit around it to rehearse. One of the walls is covered with photos from earlier productions. The stage, a square platform, is set in the middle of a dark, echo-filled, high-ceilinged room. Seats are placed around the three sides of it. The black curtain, hanging from the ceiling and hiding the fourth side of the stage, is the only decoration in this space. Unpretentious and dark, the place is ideal for letting the ancient world speak for itself, in its sublime, authentic words. Dragged from time and space into this ambience, feverishly excited by the prospect of the play about to be conceived, I focus all my thoughts on the work that will me bring into the universe of Greek gods and heroes. However, the first rehearsal is difficult. I have never acted before. I cannot help the questions that echo in my mind: "Can I do it? Can I endure all the temptation of the play until the end?" I can hardly wait to test myself.

People responsible for the production make their suggestions delicately and kindly. We have thirteen days to rehearse, and two days to accomplish, three performances. They assure us, exquisitely, that we have enough time and strength to achieve this. To let us newcomers feel relaxed, they have asked the returning performers to guide and set collegial examples for us. They explain that the project is imagined as therapeutic and reconciliatory for us who come from different parts of the former Yugoslavia. The goal is to revive communication among us, an attribute that may have been lost in the war and because of our different origins. The hope is that we would scatter the seeds of our newly-achieved reunion around us, to other members of our former homeland.

At once I grew unhappy, agitated, defensive. All my fears and ambivalence toward the play and its cast surfaced. The limited time we had to prepare threatened me; I wasn't sure I could learn anything. The director offered a solution that I regarded as degrading: if we couldn't learn the text by heart, she suggested, we could use our scripts in the performances. I took this play very seriously and would not accept this compromise. Promotion of the performers from the earlier production into 'higher-ranking' members who would be in charge of us 'upstarts' was degrading to me, also. I didn't want these 'seniors' to show us the pattern of conduct and sincerity through mutual contact. I expected to deal with the Greek gods and heroes, to learn about the theater, under the guidance of the director, who could teach me, yell at me, greet me: but not to be led by players who had performed here before me.

Finally, the notion of collective therapy shocked me. From the start of the war, I, descendant of Serbs and Croats, with Slovenian ties, married to a Muslim, had been miserable in my self-imposed fight with the system of values cultivated in me by those centuries of tradition that had flowed into my personality. I did not recognize or approve of a hatred originating in national, religious, or geographic attachments, even as I witnessed it. I felt, it is too difficult to solve anything here. It had been a hard decision to come and meet with people from different sides of that unfortunate ground. Everybody present dealt with difficult emotions, suspicions, and prejudices born in this war that divided and disoriented us, devastated our souls, packed us with ambiguity and feelings of loss and anger. Anyone of us was coping with sorrow in his or her own way. We were not capable of living without the ancestors who connected us; even less were we able to live disintegrated by the quarrel of their offspring. There

were mornings of unexplained guilt, when I didn't know which side of my face I should slap.

However, even we were gravely divided in our own personalities, and regardless of the cracked copulas among us, I expected no incidents to occur in the theatre. We were dignified people who wouldn't make a scandal of their private suffering in front of those who surrounded us with the magnificence of the play. Whatever happened here, hatred – I hoped not that – or affection would come by itself, spontaneously and naturally. I was not ready to be 'cured' here and be expected to communicate with my own people. Two men, one from Belgrade, one from Mostar, and I, each of us, reacted with resentment.

Wounds inflicted on us are deeper and more complicated that we are aware; memories are too fresh. The question implied here was so delicate. It was impossible to explain and discuss it, or even remain silent, without indignation. Frustration and fear filled our straying hearts with suspicion of further disappointment. It was too early to explore, comprehend, and accept feelings that might be conflicting. Why should we challenge our hearts? I didn't want to be reminded of what happened. It was best to put it all to rest for while. Deeply wounded, my beliefs disintegrated, unable to accept my new self, I regarded all ideas coming from the heads of this project as abrupt and hurtful. Then I didn't know how wrong I was. The suspicion coming from my ripped soul looking for its own, lost identity didn't let me enjoy and indulge myself in the delicate welcome of the theatre hosts. I learned about that later, after we performed. There in the very same theater I grew and overcame my indignation, and changed irretrievably.

At last the rehearsal started. Everybody read some of the script. We new players interpreted our lines in shy, low voices. The experienced ones were louder and confident. Some of them looked at us ironically, and sneered. I saw that the privileged status granted to them had encouraged them. I was crushed by humiliation and wanted to give up, but I didn't have the strength to get out of the chair and leave. I decided to go after one rehearsal, and not to come back.

At home, I spent a restless night. The feeling of embarrassment didn't leave me. All the magic of the theater melted, and the bitter ambiguity of two domineering feelings kept ripping me apart: the appeal of the play as the path lying open before me, and my desire to stand up for my dignity without compromise. But I couldn't resist the Greek drama, and I was at the rehearsal the next day, trying to justify the bitterness and its motive.

The subsequent rehearsals linked us in pleasure and anxiety. For a few intense hours each day we practiced building our characters and weaving them into the tapestry of the play. E. led our hard, exhausting work enthusiastically. Now I can imagine her painful embarrassment at the complex situation in which she handled the gravesites of our ashen souls. If I couldn't understand myself, how could she? But she did. Zeal to perform was the common sentiment all of us shared. The magic of the play brought so much pleasure to everybody. It helped to overcome the ordinary aggravations of immigrant life and our special grief. At the same time, all of us underwent our own particular pain, which was unintelligible to others and a cause of the tensions that lingered between us. Afraid of each other, of our limited English, of our ability to grasp the play and perform; anxious to achieve a brilliance that would distinguish us from everybody else in the cast; striving to satisfy our own vanities and conquer feelings of inferiority, we sometimes grew offensive. Ironic smiles, mocking

faces, nasty comments, and malicious remarks occurred. We exchanged poignant words and gossip, and some, including me, threatened again to leave.

Whatever happened, there were no visible hostilities related to the war. All our disagreements stayed on the level of ordinary human vanity, the envious nature deeply rooted in humankind. No one uttered a single hint of national or religious disagreement. If there was any reference to bloodshed, it started in shy whispering. There was nothing secret in these undertones; we just didn't want to hurt each other or provoke the rage of vengeful emotions. It seemed as though we had a secret, sacred, unuttered pact that we would not degrade ourselves more deeply than we had already done in the fratricidal carnage.

Slowly, we loomed our characters around each other's creations, weaving them into the epic: at first, amorphous, sluggish; then, more clearly outlined, consistent, dynamic. In the theater, voices tolled alternately in three languages: English, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian. Three performers worked together on the creation of each character. Although the director, delicately, never said so, I perceived that this concept symbolically represented three sides of the Balkan combat. Our overlapping lines are, at the beginning, clumsy and confusing; but later they come to sound as canonic music.

And then someone brought music from somewhere in South Serbia or Macedonia. Somebody else brought Yugoslav Gypsies' songs. A fellow from Belgrade played Bosnian tunes. I accepted the melody; I couldn't resist, nobody could. First it was a shy and silent song; then it became louder and louder, a chorus of harmonious voices singing all known tunes from all the parts of our former Yugoslavia. And, in exaltation, following the chords of the guitar, hand in hand, feeling a current run through our fists, we danced a folk dance surprisingly common to all of us.

In these moments, each of us, no matter where we came from, recognized a rhythm, a common pace, the notes themselves, and we became one soul formed of something that politically, geographically, legally, did not exist. Here in New York, willing or not, we were only Yugoslavs, striving to revive an old, lost life. I felt the radiation of longing and mutual sympathy for that lost country, and I surrendered to these emotions.

Hecuba

Hecuba is a pivotal figure. *She stands* in the middle of the stage and is present from the beginning to the end of any rehearsal. Three of us, J., N., and I, act the Trojan queen. N. performed last year; she is already familiar with the text and self-assured. J. and I, debutantes, are intimidated, and we make many mistakes. I can hardly pronounce English words which have been so long familiar to me. My lines in Serbo-Croatian aren't clear. Panic and lack of confidence have melted all sensations that I had wakened with on the beach, meditating on the brilliance of the script and the dazzling beauty around me. The Hecuba whom I had created at home, reading and rereading the script, visualizing it, imagining myself as this queen, recalling memories to help me, has disappeared. Stage fright has overpowered all other feelings. My voice, fragile and scratchy, is stuck in my throat: I can barely hear myself onstage. If I manage to speak out my words more loudly, they sound expressionless and metallic. My acting is dull, my poise inadequate. I can't focus, or memorize text, or find the places where I should interrupt or be interrupted, or remember when to get up or move or sit. Insecurity overcomes me, and I am only a helpless amateur who can't envision a proud queen.

Several times a small group of youngsters has followed my interpretation with low-voiced laughter. They do not hide their scorn, and are not noisier only because they don't want to upset our director. I've seen their laughing faces directed toward me. I know I am not their only victim: they don't hesitate to ridicule anybody who looks embarrassed onstage. Some of the actors affected by their contempt, and some who have not experienced it but have a sense of decency, have protested, sternly. Two teenagers who play Talthybius's role have stood in my defense; but I feel no satisfaction. Mocking hurts desperately and requires additional strength from me.

E., our director, has her own beautiful conception of how to make this production. If her idea materializes, I am sure that it is going to attract an audience. Unfortunately, it is so different from what had I imagined and desired. All that I had done before our first rehearsal looks so wrong now; it would have been better if I hadn't worked on my own at all. Disappointment overcomes me.

I knew that we would have three performers for every character, and that three actresses would create Hecuba. This should be interesting for the public; but the existence of three of us, J., N., and I, confuses and distracts me. Besides, the image of classical tragedy I had borne my entire life is opposed to the idea of three performers at the same time playing one heroine.

It seems that we are parading senselessly around the stage, murmuring lines awkwardly and without passion. E. requires that we repeat them, as I see it, an endless number of times. There is so much anguish over this play's birth. Tiredness, nervousness, quarrels, ironic remarks, crying, envy are common. As an oversensitive pessimist, I desperately want to escape. There are tensions among the three Hecubas. All of us are Sarajevans, and mature women. All three of us feel we strongly belong to Bosnia. We share a common agony over its destruction. Our culture and background are alike. We belonged to the same social circles. All three of us live in mixed marriages, and nationality and religion do not matter to us. We have some Sarajaven friends in common. There is no apparent reason for unease among us; but it exists.

The director, with great energy and patience, certain of her result, persists in her work with us. She teaches, advises, or corrects us individually, and connects us into groups, and makes these groups into a whole cast. Slowly, calmly, she weaves a net of characters around the Trojan queen.

As the days go forward, our voices sound sounder, more confident; our movements are more relaxed and suggestive; our individual expressions are more in agreement. The set is increasingly becoming a memorial to the loss of homeland, freedom, dignity, fathers, lovers, husbands, and children. The symphony of emotion is coming to accord. We start to believe, at least for the time we are together, that we are what we perform. The magic becomes reality, and reality is magic: the sparkling dream that I conceived on the beach has come closer to me.

Cassandra

Cassandra rises on the stage interpreted by three young girls, each of them distinctively beautiful and sensitive. S., El., and G., little by little, take on the features of this unfortunate daughter of Hecuba. Cassandra, soul-mate of my youth and my secret pain, miraculously grows here on the platform before me, so close that I can touch her with my fingers and my heart. The strong threads of my fantasy and the glimpses of my inner life, experienced so long ago and apparently forgotten, entangle the magic of the theater with that real world. I am fascinated by this.

A legend says Apollo was madly in love with Cassandra, his priestess, the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, and gave her the gift of clairvoyance. She rejected Apollo's love. The god punished her: she could foretell everything, but no one would ever believe her. Cassandra had predicted the Trojan catastrophe, but she was distrusted and dismissed. Everybody held her for a lunatic. Isolated, scorned, mocked, deserted by people around her, even her own parents, she awaited in horror the tragedy to come, all of its strokes in a precisely predicted order. She recognized the evil, deceitful character of the wooden gigantic horse, gift of the Greeks, and the subsequent destruction of Troy, the death of all of her brothers and sisters, her father's murder, the slavery of the women and children, and her own coming death.

The text of the play makes only brief reference to Cassandra's life in the Trojan court preceding the war. S., El., and G., with an electrifying passion, create the image of this virgin sacrificed to the bed of Agamemnon as the war prize. Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and the Greek commander-in-chief, an older man described in myth as being of treacherous character, will bring Cassandra home to his wife Clytemnestra, who will kill them both in revenge. While acting, S.'s face holds the ambiguous expression of a prophetess mistaken for a fool. Her voice cries in ironic desperation as she foresees her own death. In the sarcastic design of her fate, she will die in the embrace of her master and killer of her brothers. Her smile is helplessly cynical and bitter in response.

El., gentle, fair-haired, a serious-looking beauty, creates a noble and credibly grave character. Her painful but stoic words are said in a compelling, velvet-like voice. Her wide-open chestnut eyes convulsively prophesy terror. G., with her teenage face and slender, not yet fully developed body, invokes disgust toward the licentious Agamemnon. The girl is the age of Agamemnon's own daughter Iphegenia, whom he sacrificed to appease the goddess Artemis, when his fleet was becalmed in Aulis. His ambition was stronger than love for his own child: He is not respected by the other Greek chieftains: his glory was his motive and justification for the girl's murder in Artemis's shrine.

The actresses blend their three-sided princess into one mighty and moving character in delirium. Warmly, I love this misjudged and insulted girl on her way to death. I can't help her and my heart earnestly curses Apollo for his vengeful vanity and the anger of the primitive male which is not fitting for the god. I had expected a god more dignified in the agitation of rejected lover. However, I like the Greek gods so much for their human-like complexity, which can explain everything in us. I can scold them in my own helpless anger of the humble. They would punish, of course, but the penalty is so humanly predictable, and I am not scared of the known. The misery of the men is more devastating in its deaf, monster-like, unpredictable self-degradation. From the bottom of my heart I loathe the idea of Agamemnon's presence in the play.

My relations with Cassandra are not simple. My heart refuses to accept her madness as an option. Instead of curses I can only say words of compassion. My heart cries in remorse for failing to accept my prophetic girl in time. In the ambiguity of my position, floating between the queen whom I interpret, and my own self, the child inside me suddenly, irresistibly, emerges. First unconscious, then fully awakened, I mirror my adolescence in this Cassandra. It is impossible to disregard comparison with the past. As I grew up, my parents were busy, as were their generation at that time, after the Second World War, rebuilding their demolished and impoverished Yugoslavia. They were young, my mother twenty years old when she bore me, my father three years her senior. They struggled to earn our daily bread and reorganize

their lives traumatized by the war. By the time she was fourteen, my mother had already fought fascists in Serbia. My father, a young Croat member of Sarajevo's underground resistance, was captured and sentenced to death by Ustashe, the Croatian collaborators with the Nazis. He escaped to the mountains and spent the rest of the war as a partisan. He was seventeen years old.

Overworked now, having lived then in dread of the war, deprived of their own youthful dreams, my father and mother had ashen hearts. They did not understand the life of their daughter. As all growing children in the world do, I needed nurturing of the heart. I don't remember that my parents had time to talk to me, play with me, dream with me, laugh with me, bring me to the zoo or the movies, discuss life with me. Once or twice we visited the puppet show. My father wanted to be left alone to arrange our Christmas tree; at the same time I desperately needed to take part in this event, but was not allowed to do it. All our communication somehow was brusque, even rude, and emotions had no place in it. And, my mother, whose toes had frozen on the battlefield, was already physically ruined. I do not recall their warm words, kisses, or touches of their hands on my hair. Both of them looked after my safety and dutifully provided me with clothes and the best education they could afford; and they passed their sense of justice and honesty on to me; but the tender loving ties between us never fully developed. My urges to express my childish creativity were ill-fated. Once as a six-year-old, I played teacher and talked to my imagined students. At that time I dreamed of becoming a teacher. To draw my mother's attention, so much needed, I was lecturing loudly, and who knows what nonsense I was talking? Wasn't I entitled to speak irrationally at this age? Isn't fantasy any child's way of acknowledging a world? My mother's stern voice awoke me. I won't forget her angry words, keen as knives: "Stop speaking stupidity." I shrank back. Always, I was afraid to play, except when I was sure I was alone.

No one noticed my loneliness. In the peace of solitary life I longed for the love of my family. There, freely, without fearing of their judgment, I built my own imaginary world. They sometimes scorned and punished me. Often I didn't know, and didn't have a chance to ask why, and in time learned not to question even myself for an explanation. I desperately longed for warm connections with people – there was so much spirit in me to offer – but I lived in self-exile. I had no honest friendships in my youth. Distrustful and reserved, I never opened myself to other children. I grew from an alienated and sad child into an oversensitive, sometimes rebellious teenager, then into a timid young woman. The only real affair of my heart at that time was for my brother, four years younger than I, whom I thought of as my baby. A fear of all other humans – fear is a bad adviser – taught me that nobody needed whatever I had to give.

Pushed away unjustly from the human world, I plunged passionately into literature. Unknowingly, I cultivated a tragic sense in my heart, and I found inspiration in the tragic Greek heroines. They gave me comfort and greatness: identifying my life with theirs, I grew into a self-indulgent, uncontrolled sufferer.

Cassandra is an unconscious symbol of me being ostracized by others and myself. Antigone, a caring daughter and loving sister who sacrificed her own life to bury it in death with a disgraced brother, brought me the satisfaction of my own sisterly love. Andromache, Electra, Iphigenia, were the subjects of my endless mental analyses, self-comparisons, and self-compassion.

My life, however melancholic it had been in youth, turned toward an ordinary end: my marriage and my profession – a law practice, occasional writing for newspapers and technical journals, the business my husband and I started – brought

me stability. Motherhood matured me completely. I came to America those years ago on a business trip, as a happy, well-suited mother, and co-owner of a prosperous, growing computer firm. The poetic, futile experiences of adolescence were replaced by the fulfillment of a grown woman.

However, there are lives existing under our skin that we unknowingly conceive, bear, and nourish with our own blood. Suddenly, uninvited, they spring from our interior, out of unexpected events of our being. The child inside me emerged in the face of this Cassandra growing on the stage. In her image, all the indignation of my estranged infancy and youth spilled out, and I couldn't stop it. All that I could do was to help my own girl, suppressed long ago, to grow and leave me, for the sake of her, and my own, independence, in the interaction that all good mothers and good children have.

For the first time in my life I understand the depth and complexity of the figure of Cassandra, and my attachment to it. She is my own reflection in the lake. I need other components of my torment, too, to recognize my ripe inner self; but Antigone and her peers are not invited to the stage this time. It is not my play; it is the drama of the Trojan War. And Andromache is still to come. In the poem of overlapping cadences, three Yugoslav Cassandras create an elegiac polyphony that disarms me. Drawn by this enchanting picture, willing to give into myself more and more inside, a newborn and maturing Hecuba shivers and weeps helplessly for her unfortunate daughter.

During those days, as the Kosovo drama was unfolding before our eyes, I could not stop thinking about El., one of the three Cassandras. This young woman, an Albanian from Kosovo, was very special to me in many ways. At the initial meeting of the cast, in April, I was immediately caught by her presence. She was sitting behind the table: straight, smiling, and freshly beautiful as a flower: her deep brown eyes sparkled with warmth, her pale blond, shiny hair demurely covered half of her back, her soft bosom and round shoulders were gracefully poised. She had played the role the previous year, and invited to do so, she made a few remarks about this event. She spoke only in English, and her words were balanced and modest. Her happiness at participating again, and her hearty welcome to the newcomers, were frank and encouraging. Her features are seen so rarely in an individual; I could not stop looking at her.

At the rehearsals, El. is a serious worker, respectful and gentle in her behavior toward others. She speaks little but listens attentively. Acting, she is passionate, vigorous, and intuitive. In her fervent eyes, her convulsive movement, the dramatic tone of her voice, you can read the profound pain of the doomed prophetess. Often, without warning, my mind recalls the moment of Cassandra's moving introduction into the performance. The stage is in deep darkness and silence; the audience is breathless in expectation. From the scaffold overhead a sudden light, flame-like, appears and the heavy beat of the Albanian drum, like a deep sob, is sounded. My skin turns to goose-flesh. The short dramatic moment ends; all is calm again. El.'s voice tears the silence. Angel-like, enfolded in a white dress, she furiously runs to the stage and cries out.

"Burn high! Burn strong!
Burn bright! Burn long!"

Always, when I hear the Albanian drum I feel without reason that something true and intimately tragic is about to happen. Now, there is reason. I remember the last time I saw El. We were ordinary people talking in the street. At that time, something terrible was about to happen in Kosovo; we knew it already. Soon afterward, Serbian militias started killing Albanian people. I can't forget her worry-darkened face and her beautiful eyes, that had lost their sparkle. Without her customary smile, this always-kind woman could barely hide her anger. Compassionate, but overwhelmed by emotions of my own, I didn't know what to say: at that moment, words were without meaning.

Now, seeing the seeress Cassandra on stage, her appearance frenzied, her voice piercing, I recognize that El. on the street, and I can't untangle those two images. War will come to Kosovo, men will disappear and be killed, rivers of refugees will flee their homes. I will feel profound shame knowing that El. must witness those occurrences in bottomless terror.

In 1978, my brother was a soldier in the Yugoslav People's Army in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. Full of prejudice that spread from Belgrade across all republics in the federation, we believed Kosovo was a gloomy province full of wild and dangerous inhabitants, especially unfriendly toward Yugoslav soldiers and the state itself. Attacks and accidents that Albanians caused were reported, but we – as I acknowledged later – didn't know the truth about them: who and what provoked them, and how they were provoked.

My family cried over my brother's fate: we were sure that his physical existence would be jeopardized while he was in the service. Leaving our home, my brother wailed painfully in fear. I was panicked. Soon afterward, his letters arrived from Pristina – the phone was not in use at that time so much – and he talked cheerfully about Albanian friends. In time the number of people that he befriended grew, and he visited them in their homes, and they came to see him in his barracks. They spent much time together, and my brother talked about them warmly. I traveled to Pristina to see my brother. Out walking, I would ask bystanders about addresses and experience the deepest kindness. I asked one person for directions, and from all sides around me, people rushed to explain in my own language. And songs and music were coming from every restaurant, people were smiling, waiters were kind. My brother's new friends, after his curfew, took care of my safe return to the hotel and made sure I had everything I needed. Impressed by the unreserved and welcoming attention of my hosts, in which the safety and comfort of the guest was the primary rule, I was never again tricked by the propaganda about the people. And, my brother who cried while leaving home, came back in tears, this time sorry to leave behind his friends in Pristina. Yet, in that street, early in 1998, I couldn't help El. while she talked about Kosovo's difficult situation. I was unable even to help my own memory.

Andromache

S., a radiant young actress from Belgrade, playing one of the Andromaches, genuflects at my knees. She portrays, gracefully and credibly, the noble widow of the Trojan hero, Hector. Mourning her husband, she clasps her young son to herself the more tightly. I hear her claim: to her late husband she gave all her love and care, the soothing power of a loyal wife. She supported and counseled him in days spent on the battlefield, offered him her wisdom, compliance, and the comfort of her soft warm hands. Now the great Greek hero Achilles has killed Hector and humiliated

his dead body. Unprotected and disgraced, Andromache is given as a war prize to Achilles' son. I understand that the happiness and glory of the old days are gone. But so are mine. I hear her woe, and realize: the idea that life is over haunts her. I do not feel anger for this broken, but young and beautiful, woman who turns her tender, weeping eyes on me and begs me to prize her love for and loyalty to Hector, my son. Her appeal for permission to resume her life, for the right to love again, even the enemy and the killer of her husband, does not upset me: but I am supposed to react in furious denial.

S. is a gentle, blond beauty with a delicate profile and slender body. Her talent is genuine. She impersonates Andromache's pain with the soft, clear emotion of afflicted women. Simple in her ordinary life, in her appearance on stage she grows into unexpected greatness. There is the suggestive spell, the flexible movement, the credibility of her personal transformation into the character of Andromache. Her begging for life before the queen who loses everything, most importantly, power over her, doesn't upset me. I am indifferent, stiffened, unshaken.

S. is a true performer who transfixes her audience. But on stage, her professionalism intimidates me, and I can't dominate. I cannot become the strong, selfish, commanding queen; I am too small to demand from my daughter-in-law that she live in the memory of my son. My voice isn't stern. Weakly, I forbid her to find love in her heart for any other man. So many obstacles stop me from transforming myself into Hecuba.

At home I try to build a psychological foundation for my anger toward this Andromache. I visualize the terror of Hecuba's incomprehensible havoc. Her disgraced royalty, patriotism, womanhood, motherhood, do not invoke compassion for the younger woman seeking the future. Andromache is a symbol of the queen's lost golden life and her motherly tragedy. Finally I understand the depth of her struggle to maintain the last shred of power in the inherently antagonistic relationship between mother and daughter-in-law.

With the dignity of the true professional, S. is patient and supportive onstage. Off-, she is generous. She warmly prizes my acting, suggests a way of solving difficulties, and shares my fear. Her advice is offered seriously, and with respect. I am grateful and feel encouraged. The complex emotions of Hecuba toward Andromache are entering the language of my body. My ambivalence toward S. as a woman from Belgrade is melting, too. Belgrade is the capital of Yugoslavia, whose government is the symbol of Bosnia's destruction and my personal devastation. But once Belgrade was the dream city of my youth, when, drawn by its glory and glow, I wanted to live there. I was a high-school student; it was the mid-'60s; but in Sarajevo, we were still recovering from the Second World War. On school trips we went to the capital. There I would visit members of my family in their noble houses with marble entrances. These relatives were perfumed and well dressed and their houses were filled with beautiful furniture. They lavished on me food that I had never seen before. They filled my pockets with so much money, more than I had ever possessed. They dazzled me, and I didn't pay attention to how they pitied me for living in 'backward' Sarajevo. Now I recall how they used words like 'primitive,' 'backward,' 'isolated,' 'Ottoman.' They treated us 'like Turks,' as they said. They meant that we who were Bosnian lived in a land still occupied by the Ottomans, whom they still wanted to expel. This they could never say directly – it was illegal – but they conveyed it with irony and pity. I didn't want to see this; I wanted to admire them, and be like them, and live among them. Outdoors, walking through the city, I saw fine architecture and monuments, the store windows

crowded with designer clothes and the merchandise that I couldn't purchase in Sarajevo. Streets, museums, restaurants, operas, and theaters were crowded with laughing, well-dressed people, happier than those in my native city. It looked as if everyone had rushed outdoors to celebrate life. Drunk on all this glamour, childishly naïve, I didn't ask where the wealth of Belgrade came from; I only wanted, desperately, to share the joy of the city. It was the war which brought me the unasked-for answer: Serbs desired to keep the riches that they collected from the rest of us unjustly, and they couldn't let them go without killing.

When I grew up and went to visit Belgrade, I found refuge in the deep, stony coolness of St. Marko's, a Serbian Orthodox church near the Yugoslav Assembly; I spent hours there in meditation. In those years, too, I sang in a chorus; when we performed in Belgrade, we liked afterward to greet the dawn in the 'singing' restaurants and nightclubs. Besotted by good wine and song, we imagined ourselves embraced by the city, like provincials in literature seduced by the charms of the capital. In those days I didn't suspect that we were second-class people in that Yugoslavia. We paid with our blood and flesh to acknowledge that Serbs were the 'upper race' of society.

And for so long, I was intoxicated by my youthful dream. In 1985, when my then-boyfriend, now my husband, served in the Yugoslav Peoples' Army, I would visit him every month in Belgrade. In summer we strolled through the heavy fragrance of the linden and acacia avenues and spent hours on the shady terraces of the downtown restaurants eating excellent food, drinking cold white Serbian wine, listening to the spirited melancholy of gypsy music. On my own, I spent hours in museums that glorified Serbian tradition. Serbian glorification didn't threaten me; I am part-Serb, and felt pride.

The words of my mother's aunt awoke me. Once I stayed with her for seven days. This Serb woman, daughter of a priest, who once had lived in Sarajevo, dared to say to me, "How can you take for your life's partner a Muslim man?" Then, in a prominent bookshop in the center, right in front of me, a man expressed the hope of revenge "for the Chetniks' loss in the Second World War." In the feverish eyes of this man, I dimly recognized a thirst for the killing of someone who might be close to me. Terrified and sobered, I lost the will to return to Belgrade. I was so happy when my boyfriend was dismissed from the Army sooner than we expected. While the war in Bosnia raged, and afterward, none of those Belgrade relatives I had met in 'happier' times phoned me, nor did I contact them. It seemed that we had parted long ago without knowing it.

In the beginning I was reserved toward S., trying to avoid any communication. She is friendly to everybody and very immediate. She shares her disgust at the bloodshed in Bosnia with the cast. However, she charms me with her persistent warmth, respect and supportiveness. I feel the most comfortable when I act in her proximity. And, as she has given me permission, I yell at her in delirious fury.

Creation of the play goes on. It requires more effort from me: Gradually I become more compassionate and give up my prohibition of love and life to Andromache. I now only ask her to raise her son in the memory of Troy and of Hector, his father. I hope my grandson, as he grows, will rebuild the city and restore its fame. It is hard to comprehend all the turns and variation in the relationship between Andromache and me, amid the shades, moods, and qualities of the character that I represent. However, it goes on quicker and easier that I initially imagined.

Talthybius

Just as Andromache and I, Hecuba, believe that we have solved our domestic disagreement and that we will part in love, with respect and good memories, Talthybius, a Greek herald, comes to claim the life of my grandson. The Greek council has decreed that Andromache's son must die. The baby is to be hurled from the walls of Troy. They fear his revenge when he grows up. This is the most moving part of the play and the climax of all sufferings that are spilled over the stage. It is the moment that, instinctively, I avoided in my initial study of the play; it was too hard to contemplate. It is incomprehensible that somebody, anybody, in any war, could claim the life of a baby. It is incomprehensible, but it is the experience of war, and its picture remains fresh in my memory.

The endless touching by Andromache of her baby son, and S.'s profoundly truthful tears, made me weep. She sobs with a desperation that shatters her last hope for the future. The image of my own son haunted me during those moments. Though escaping the war, he spent an immeasurably sad childhood as I dealt with depression and the hidden desire to die. Can that be true? I cursed the gods, humankind, all wars in the world, and myself. The good thing about Greek gods is that you can curse them. They are vengeful, but their reprisal is explicable and humanlike, and we feel comfortable expecting the familiarity of our punishment. The moment of the child-murder is finally over, and the intensity of my suffering has passed. The wretched, lifeless Andromache leaves the scene. I revere her pain, and S., for her frankness.

D. and Ed., high school students, and I., a young man, carry the role of Talthybius. All three of them are Sarajevans, and each of them spent several dreadful years in the city under siege. After terrifying experiences, they escaped and found refuge in New York. Ed. is a gentle, shy boy, and a little withdrawn. His silky, innocent eyes open wide, he blushes as, as Talthybius, he speaks to the queen. His tremulous voice reveals the bewilderment of a soldier ordered to kill a child, even as, in his humanness, he would like to resist the order. In the ambiguous play between his moral principals and his duty, Ed.'s Talthybius is nervous and hurried, and he doesn't look the queen in the eye.

Off-stage, D. is a serious, quiet teenager. His mother is one of the Hecubas. He is courteous to her and to all the cast. As Talthybius he is humble and polite to Andromache, asking her to understand what must be done, as he tries to persuade her to make this tragic act happen quickly, less painfully.

I don't abhor Talthybius and I don't view him as just killer and foe. The truth is, this is the only humane figure in that parade of greedy, vain and insensible men. There is a quality of true aristocracy in this small peasant: he shows respect and compassion and he has moral principals, characteristics that most of the noble warriors lack. Talthybius is a soldier without a choice who has faced death on the battlefield for ten long years. His is a poor plebian who, I imagine, left his helpless wife and numerous starving children in their modest stone-roofed cottage on the Mediterranean shore. His narrow field, his olive trees, his grapes, his goats and sheep are neglected. The war that he never understood or wanted has brought him nothing more than pain and uncertainty.

The anticipation of the soldier longing for his native village on the Mediterranean, for its salty fragrance, its evocative plants, its pastel colors, its muted sounds, convey me back to my past. Memories of my father's stone house overlooking a small stretch of the Adriatic Sea; the endless blue sky and gray limestone mountains

above it; the Peljesac peninsula a few tens of miles across the water; the sun-bleached, rain-washed pebbled beach shining in the sun: of all my years of the happy life spent there, surface. They are so alive, full of sound. From the terrace, I can see the small boat with my name on it, swinging about on its mooring. There are small, old-fashioned wooden fishing boats, and those of modern synthetic materials. Heavily laden commercial vessels, tourist yachts, and barges travel infrequently in the canal that stretches between Peljesac and me. It is one of the long, hot, breezeless days of an arid summer, full of a bittersweet efflorescence of oleanders, cypresses, mulberries, figs, lemons, oranges, almonds, oaks. With it blend the heavy scents of summer flowers: roses, geraniums, begonias, dahlias. Cactuses are in full bloom. At noon the surface of the Adriatic is motionless, pale blue, polished. Mornings and evenings, mild winds bring tenderly murmuring waves from the sea. Delicately, they touch the edges of the beach. Rare summer storms blow in, lasting only a few hours. Heavy surf breaks on the shore. The storms withdraw as unexpectedly as they come, leaving behind transparent air, smooth sea, intense sunshine.

I can hear the familiar voices of my friends of decades, joking and debating in the yard of a small, old limestone inn with a rusty anchor on the outside wall. The cobbled yard overlooks the lustrous beach. A trellis dense with grapes makes a canopy over the open area, providing cool refuge. There are a few very old olive-oil amphoras, no longer used, and a heavy, white, stone wheel that belonged to the olive press. The yard is a favorite place that holds only a small number of guests. It looks like a stage from antiquity and, in its natural décor, perfectly matches the backdrop of mountains above and the sea a few meters below. It could suit any Greek or Shakespearean tragedy. A villager owns this charming tavern; at least a third of my friends have some more or less close family ties to him.

In this intimate atmosphere, my friends and I spent every available day of summer for decades, talking, joking, singing, playing guitars, eating, and drinking the good, cold house red wine. We came from all over Yugoslavia: Split, Zagreb, Bjelovar, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar. We did not know each other's nationality or religion, and nobody asked. Epicurus and Bacchus were our guides into bohemian life, the enjoyment of good food and drink, sophisticated talk and endless debate, and immense love for the splendor of the Adriatic Sea.

At the main port in the center of the town, in the early evening, retired mariners with their sun-bronzed, wind-scarred faces, gather to talk about their glorious days of sailing. Their wives and sisters, in the short break after an exhausting day of hard labor, gossip under the arches of their houses. Their almond-eyed, long-haired, olive-skinned, tanned, slender, lanky daughters are heading to meet their fiancés, beautiful as gods, in the whispering intimacy of dusky corners. Those dates are secrets known to their parents and brothers, and all villagers, and it stays this way until the first budding of the girls' bellies announces weddings to come.

The delightful summers always end. My friends and I dutifully part, to return to our jobs as lawyers, doctors, engineers, artists, clerks, merchants, teachers. Only seldom, with the kind of luck that only unpredictable fate could cast, I would spent a week or two of autumn there, picking grapes and olives with the villagers. I stayed with my 'aunt,' a native woman who had long ago embraced my family and me as relatives. She always dressed in plain black, in endless mourning for her late husband. Hours before dawn, we would set out to dig potatoes in the steep hills of the Velebit mountain above her house. With her donkey we climbed cautiously in the dark, among the wild roses and blackberries. Just before dawn, we reached her little terrace of stingy soil, and

she began to dig sweet organic vegetables that we would devour at dinner. By six-thirty, she would stop working – I was not skillful enough to help – and we would eat our simple breakfast of goat cheese and whole-wheat bread. A half-hour's rest would bring on a divine state of mind, one of those senses of eternity that overcomes our souls and bodies only exceptionally, if we are fortunate enough – something hovering between dream and reality.

Overwhelmed by tiredness, stroked by the sweetness of sleep, in perfect touch with pure nature, in deep isolation, I desire to float in this half-conscious state forever. When my aunt awakens me, we tend her vineyard for while. As the sun starts its slow trip to the zenith, at the moment that life starts for the other commoners, we head down toward the village. In those days with 'aunt' Jelisava – that was her real name; for me, a sacred name – I would pick ripe, dark-brown, juicy olives in the late afternoons, protected by the generous shade of the olive-trees. We tended her goats, sheep, and chickens. In September, I helped her bring the animals to the deserted beach, where she would bathe them in the smooth, nearly-white sea. We would spend time talking in the wooden pantry with its ancient, smoky fireplace: she would cook in blackened pots. At the table, we would eat the best prosciutto, the freshest seafood, the newest green beans, the tastiest olives; we would drink a glass of her home-made, faintly-pungent wine. On Sundays, this deeply pious Catholic woman would bring me to the church, crowded mostly with elderly villagers in dark clothes. In the coolness and silence of the stone shrine, I prayed with the passion of the sinner distant from, yet longing for, salvation.

During the seasons, I weeded Jelisava's beans, lettuce, cabbage gardens, and flowers around her two stone houses. I washed her dishes, wiped her floors, and cleaned her patio whenever she asked me to. But the most enchanting time was in those autumns when I had her to myself. Then, relaxed and free of guests, she would ask for all the news of my life, commenting on whatever I would say with smiling approval or gentle blame. Honest and unpretentious, she held my heart in her hand.

There on this scrap of Croatian coast I experienced the most lyric and also the most turbulent seasons. How can I then condemn Talthybius, who is longing to return to the familiar and tradition-bound patch of his own universe? I can't, and I don't. And Hecuba, I'm sure, doesn't, either. I hear the queen's resigned voice, desperately confident of Talthybius's compassion, as she pleads to let Andromache be alone with her son for the few remaining moments of the child's life. Now, when he has escaped the death on the battlefield, when this all-too-human being seeks finally to go home to everything he longs for, this Talthybius must commit the crime of child-murder. Caught in inevitability, he must choose. This is, as I observe, a simple choice between life and death. If he, a soldier, doesn't comply with his superior's commands, he must die.

The price that this poor, painstaking, powerless soldier must pay is tremendous. The cost is the murder that he can't bear to commit. All his humanity – his piousness, his fatherhood, and his custom of worshipping royalty – rebels against this act. But he is only a pawn caught in the world of warriors. After this murder, he is never going to be himself again, and anything, even a perfectly arranged and decorated future, is empty scenery. I know that. As I've heard, everything now is different in my little village on the seashore, for the people who do not go there anymore, and those who go, but are changed. They say it is a saddened landscape without the human souls that animated it.

When the child is murdered, Talthybius brings him back on the shield of Hector. Solemnly, he washes the infant's body and digs the grave to bury it in. Isn't that a nobility of grandeur so often peculiar to the commoner in life?

D., Ed., and I., suggesting the victim and murderer bound up in one body, are so natural. Their Talthybius is my favorite character in the play, all apparent contradiction and simple complexity. We, the actresses and actors from former Yugoslavia, have played in a drama that by itself condemned war. The play was meant to reflect the absurdity of the war that afflicted all of us. It brought us away from our families, friends, careers, cultural milieux, affections, the graves of our ancestors. No matter which side of the conflict each of us stood on, none of us wanted this. We all were wounded and deprived of the wholeness that constituted our personalities before.

Any piece played about a war revives painful memories of any of human butchery, whenever and wherever it happened. As I write these lines, the news of contemporary events in Kosovo comes from every medium. The mass execution of men, the rape and killing of women, the slaughtered children, depopulation, burned villages, rivers of refugees leaving their homeland are reported. Women, children, men are crying out from our screens and the photos in newspapers. They are fainting of hunger and exhaustion and dying in front of cameras. Masked men, the same ones that operated in Bosnia in the first half of this decade, are conducting their bloody business now in 1999. NATO keeps bombing Serbian strategic targets for weeks. The world speaks the language of violence.

As I write, it looks as if the war is escalating. Mobilization of American reservists, more than thirty-thousand, is said to be possible. How much more of this will satisfy the madman in Belgrade who understands only the language of violence? This is the same man who killed my soul, my eyes, my ears when he dismembered Yugoslavia and committed genocide on the Bosnian people.

I ask myself: how many wars will happen before it is understood that they are designed to kill and destroy us. No one is ever made happy, neither killer nor victim. Eventually, all of us lose our hearts and dignity. Once more I do not want to see many of the Yugoslavs who take part in the play, especially those from Serbia. I cannot help taking sides in the newest war: I support the bombing of Belgrade. My human nature prevents me from forgetting Sarajevo. I do not know what my Serbian fellow cast-members feel now. If they perceive this war in Milosevic's "Yugoslavia" differently than I, I don't blame them. It even can be normal; what's normal in the stirring Balkans nobody knows. Whatever it is, I do not want to meet or discuss these new events with the Serbian players. I do not want to feel angry or guilty. But, it's apparent that the madman from Belgrade has succeeded in his goal: I have finally parted from the people that once I loved deeply. In my torment, I accepted that the hatred could be an option or a solution, and God knows I didn't want this, ever. That was his goal: Rip up everything that was Yugoslavia, and, ironically, portray himself as its savior.

Performance

The night before the first performance is suffocating. Sleep doesn't come, and unbearable fear tears up my hard-won, still-fragile confidence in acting. I believe that something unknown and horrible must happen while I perform, that would leave an everlasting mark of shame on me and that I simply couldn't survive, as if I would immediately die on the stage. The director has decided that we must use our scripts and read our lines from them, as often as possible, to gain more self-assurance on the

stage. I do not care for the effect that reading can have on the audience anymore, but the prospect of help from the script doesn't comfort me, either. The only thought I have is, how to survive the following three nights of performance. Some disgraceful voice inside me advises me to escape without taking part in the play. Another, loyal to the director and the cast, strongly orders me to stay with the project till the end. Both suggestions are terrifying, but I know I won't give up. Only, I do not know how to handle my body and my soul in the theatre. I feel I am dissolving.

Suddenly, sleep comes, only to be interrupted in the next moment by my piercing cry. In my dream, my Serb Orthodox great-grandmother, clad in her black robe, small, slim, 84 years old the last time I saw her, is strangling me. I remember my great-grandmother as a martyr of loyalty to her deceased husband, my great-grandfather, a Serb Orthodox priest and intellectual of his time, to whom she bore fourteen children. He died in the First World War, and my great-grandmother, in her everlasting mourning, never again wore any color but black. The rest of her life was dedicated only to her children and her household. To live that way was the duty of the priest's widow, and she quietly complied. As a young child I would visit her with my parents on the holy days of her confession. In the old-fashioned manner, my mother would make me kiss my great grandmother's dry hand, ropy with veins, smelling of mold, and I didn't like it. However, the abundance of delicacies served at her house – some of them specialties only served at the Orthodox holidays, that I truly miss now, such as cooked wheat mixed with ground oats and sugar – attracted me. I was only six or seven, and in Bosnia we were not rich. There was always a shortage of food then.

I enjoyed these clan-like gatherings of my great-grandmother's children, their spouses, their children, and grandchildren, all of them descendants of a once highly-regarded Serb family from Eastern Herzegovina. This wing of my relatives had had the centuries'-old tradition of living in common extended households, before they emigrated to Sarajevo. As a law student, later, I even learned about these relatives from a scholarly book in my program. The text discussed them as an example of people organized historically in family units known as *zadruga*, in which all male members across several generations, with their wives and children, stayed to live and work together, helping each other. At our gatherings, stories were told about the resistance my relatives had shown in the past, first against the Turks, then against the Austrians. These stories fascinated me.

Now under the new government of Bosnia, certain officials and citizens so often criticize these fighters from our history as enemies of the state. I will never understand how the intruders and occupiers, as the Turks and Austrians in reality were, no matter to what extent they improved my homeland, could be treated as friends; and those who in the history fought against them, as enemies. No matter what they say, I will always be proud of these my ancestors. Yet certainly, after the war in my homeland, I remain confused about the historical facts, their accuracy, their political and ethical evaluation, and the constant, sudden shifts in their interpretation.

Now, in my dream, my great-grandmother is strangling me. She comes smiling from behind my back, tightening her dry hands, cold as the frost, around my neck. I awake sweating and weeping. Does it mean that my Serb tradition is haunting me and I collapse in my guilt? Or this is an immature and unfinished Hecuba in me – a dark wailing silhouette – disguised in the mask and garments of my great-grandparent who appears to punish me for my dilettantism? Most likely, both of these are so.

The first performance has begun, with the scene of the sleeping queen and women lying around her, also in sleep. I am sitting in the middle of the stage, but I don't know how I've got there. I do not want to know if anybody I invited is in the audience. The girls in the chorus have started to speak their dreams about Troy's beauty, one by one, smoothly; but I do not hear them. My heartbeat is louder than their voices. Four times I interrupt, correctly, their lines, in a trembling voice. This is all right. Hecuba should tremble.

Poseidon in his two person enters and stands above Hecuba, and speaks tenderly to her, with sorrow and compassion. He is sorry for the city, his favorite, and for its queen. Briefly, he touches her face. "Don't wake up, Lady," he says. My mind is now attentive, my ears are open. I hear the awakened queen shout in disbelief and desperation before the wrecked Troy, and she speaks in my own voice. The three Hecubas interrupt each other in Serbo-Croatian and English. There are no emotions in me except fear, but everything I do is so far correct, without visible mistakes; only, I should be louder.

The three Cassandras are introduced to the stage. They are marvelous in their confidence and white dresses: they alone: in contrast to the entire cast in black cloth. El. is beautiful, suggestive, and touching in her pain. And the music – the Albanian drum – fits the scene of suffering. I feel my spirit lift and respond to the situation. My heart splinters on Andromache's profound sorrow as she parts with her baby son, who is about to be hurled from the wall. This is such an unbearable tragedy. And the play is going on, and it is finished before I'm even aware of it. I hear the applause growing louder, and people are rising to salute us. The cast stands in the middle of the stage, and we embrace each other. It is an exaltation of success. In the hall, some unknown men and women are greeting me. They say: "That's *you*. You are like everybody's mother on the stage." I see tears in some eyes. I'm exhausted and happy, and the night brings deep and undisturbed sleep at home.

The second performance brings me an unexpected joy. Refreshed and "experienced," I act fluently. The effort now is less self-conscious. Our scripts, bound in gleaming black, add to our elegance on stage. We speak our lines in an harmonious flow of feeling. We complement and emphasize each others' expressions. I feel emotions breaking from the heart of each person on the stage and streaming into the river of our common longing. Gradually, it becomes a symphony of our unutterable pain and love for the homeland that we left behind in quarrel and dread. I feel how our sentiment elevates us all. The silent audience watches and listens as one open heart.

My favorite part is nearing. It comes almost at the end. First N. speaks in English; then, I repeat the lines in Serbo-Croatian. This is an elegy for Troy in ashes and its vanished, glittering beauty. With profound love and longing, crucified between everything that I had, or believed I had; all these places that I loved so much and believed I belonged to – Sarajevo, Brist, Bobovac, Belgrade – I utter my part of the text. I cannot stop weeping. My face is soaked in tears, and I do not worry about my sobbing voice. My heart does its work following its own rules. Immediately afterward, the three Hecubas sing an old Bosnian love ballad. This is a favorite of my late uncle, who for years sang folk melodies as a radio singer, and its sad, gentle chant touches everybody's hearts. At first the three of us sound insecure, but then our voices grow more and more expressive. We cry. At this moment the three Hecubas become one personality of complete sadness. The cast weeps with us. We are one soul. No one can take this moment of reunion from us. Yes, the people in the production were right: the play has

served as a healing treatment, because all of us, in front of each other, have acknowledged how much in common we have and that can't be changed.

The last scene is the culmination of our painful recognition of belonging to the same origin. The enslaved crew of Trojans is leaving for their destination, and the Hecubas bring stones to put in the center of the stage as the pledge of our intention to come back to our homeland. We are shivering with uncontrollable sobs. The actresses and actors cannot stop their loud weeping. Sharp, loud applause interrupts us. We bow before the compassionate audience and then embrace each other, weeping and laughing. We have been happy at least for the length of this dreamscape *The Trojan Women* has brought to us.

Afterward, I didn't stop crying for days. I knew that never could this miraculous reunion between us, the cast members, be repeated. I felt empty and alone, more than before. And then, in a few days, I realized I was cured of so many pains that the war had brought me, so many prejudices that I had born afterward, and all the vanities that had made me so angry at the first rehearsal. My meeting with the Yugoslav cast was an irreplaceable wealth and the necessary condition of my personal growth, and this is the response to your question about my acting.

See also:
"'Hecuba,' Writing from New York," *Archipelago*, Vol. 1, No. 3
Hubert Butler, "The Artukovitch File," Vol. 1, No. 2

ALL SOULS' DAY IN VIENNA

HALOTTAK NAPJA BÉCSBEN

Sándor Kányádi

tr. from the Hungarian
by Paul Sohar

They will braid you too some day
in a wreath with pomp replete
but the world will feel as cold and
strange as this vienna street
like a tram you'll go off wheeling
leaving curled-up rails behind

the sidewalks will be lined
with dandelions' rind

and you'll have walked through not a single mind

In the church of the augustine order
whitewashed stucco studded with stained glass
with my back against a pillar I was
listening to mozart's requiem mass

For the truest orphan's bred
lacking even his own dead
vinegar's his tears and wine
his candle can but soot design
hangs out all day by himself
with a flower in his belt
for the truest orphan's bred
lacking even his own dead

The weather was fit for the end of the world
down to the graveyard the sky was then hurled
the road and the roadside ditch were one big race
the pall bearers could not see each other's face
sloshed by the flood they were losing their hold
no one could see it but the tale is still told
and the tombs turned into barks to piers bound
tossing their dancing rumps up and around
all mouse-holes gurgled like throats with a cough

and that's how the coffin then could've sailed off

from the danube to the sea
to the oceans' waves
from the danube to the sea
to the oceans' waves

floats off a pine coffin
to the oceans' waves
floats off a pine coffin
with music for its sails

Get out of here you pudgy redhead jerk
kicked her heels the bratty chorus girl
and wolfgang amadeus mozart
from the humiliation even redder now
slunk out of the dressing room
the gnädige frau had tired of waiting
the coach was soon to return
the czech doorman was bowing to the cobble stones
as wolfgang amadeus mozart
stumbled out to the street
just in time to catch a glimpse
of the naked stars as they started to bathe
in waves of music surging up there
and wolfgang amadeus mozart
dabbed his damp forehead and chin
and set out on foot for home

From the danube to the sea
to the oceans' waves
floats off a pine coffin
with music for its sails

Does indeed god like it when
the neutered sing his praises
all neutral voices neutrum
neutrum neutru-u-um

It is said and even recorded in the histoire de la
musique encyclopédie de la pléiade but also
in kolozsvár at number ten vasile alecsandri street
my friend dr rudi schuller will happily translate
into hungarian german or romanian for those who
don't speak french the part about the grand
travelers les grands voyageurs who claimed
that the inhabitants of the most godforsaken
les plus lointaines civilizations who were totally
indifferent to the tom-toms of neighboring tribes
would perk up their ears only on hearing

mozart's music

Inside whitewashed churches
a prayer very white
hey-ho ring a chord

inside a blackened church
a prayer very black
hey-ho ring a chord

inside whitewashed churches
a prayer very black
hey-ho ring a chord

inside a blackened church
a prayer very white
hey-ho ring a chord
it too may be granted
by our great goodlord

With gaggling geese
quacking ducks
lice-ridden chickens
scab covered piglets
from a shared little yard
filthy little brats
conceived in boozy haze
in a mob are gaping
at the sky of planes streaking
faster than the speed of sound

land you world
stop your flight
let us catch up with you now

In the church of the augustine order
whitewashed stucco studded with stained glass
with my back against a pillar I was
listening to mozart's requiem mass

Dies irae dies illa
a wooden fork can turn a killer
paint your eyebrows in sin's villa

dig it out fire shovel it back
dig it out fire shovel it back
dig it out fire shovel it back

should that morning ever break

the sky will be a burning lake
on their feet the trees will bake

fires we have all admired
towns in flaming dances mired
and of hell's chic we are tired

dig it out fire shovel it back
dig it out fire shovel it back
dig it out fire shovel it back

a judge's the only missing player
as sins inside sins new sins bear
who knows how we will then fare

our atonement might betray
some ancient sins on judgement day
forcing us again to pay

dig it out fire shovel it back
dig it out fire shovel it back
dig it out fire shovel it back

look how doubt grabs each throat
can we truly trust the hope
that none escapes the whipping rope

On june second nineteen-forty-four
the carpet bombing of nagyvarad left a
mother's four fair children under the debris
two four six eight
years old they were when killed
tells the story my wife every year
when she tears that day's leaf off the calendar
this is her poem of peace

who fears hell for that — the one
who lost or the one who won?

sin is finish and square one

I'm now getting used to seeing that
the hand can not stir easily to touch
forgetting its own merry shake
and the gaze had better not see much

the words at first appear so harmless
but then the sentence starts to scratch
hinting at a red alarm with

trouble enough for all of us to catch

brother come and let's embrace
just once more now let's shake hands
before I fall flat on my face
before you fall flat on your face

My good king my avatar
who were born in kolozsvár
I offer you my candle's flame
it's for you my flower's tame

in hell and heaven a word-feeder
be for us our interceder

My good king my sire
should high heaven's choir
allow you to be heard
please put in a word

for us to have this grand
protocol here banned
things are getting worse
surely for its curse

protect us with your cloak
in our fear we choke
on our tongues we maim
to our own big shame

Küküllö-angara
maros-mississippi
küküllö-angara
maros-mississippi

headed for home I am — but he
doesn't believe his own ditty
headed for home I am — but he
doesn't believe his own ditty

crumbling to dust like sifting snow
that's how we live like dusting snow
from szabofalva to san francisco
from szabofalva to san francisco

Lord whoever you are or are not
don't leave us here alone to rot
on your door there is a scrape there
on tiny wings a timid prayer

in baby's whine but not inane
praise be to your holy name

What's so wrong with our name
why be shocked so red with shame
who can say we have transgressed
any more than the best of the best

maybe we should arm the lungs
with the ancient prophets' tongues
all we give is a still nod
daring not dispute with god

beat it bartók beat the drum
your tails to fire will succumb
the thatch and hut in flames are furled
fire eats the whole damned world

I was thirty eight years old when
kristina the almost naked fair
maid from steyrmark invited me for a glass
of whisky to the corner of singerstrasse
I'm poor my dear and a foreigner
macht nichts she said it's all souls' day
we finished off two shots each
and susanna the pretty german girl
lives in vienna on tiefengrab street
was für ein gedicht
vier jahrhunderte alt
in her cheeks red roses bloom

her coral lips forever doom
a knight who breathes in her perfume
to seek her in every hotel room

but it's in vain though that they seek her
yes I would be your susanna free of charge
but it's a time of mourning all souls' day
there's no need to go into more details
she gave me a kiss a real smacker
saying it was enough to leave two schillings
on the cloak room counter.

So in the church of the augustine order
whitewashed stucco studded with stained glass
with my back against a pillar I was
listening to mozart's requiem mass

Indeed our farm was no big deal

not even god could make us kneel
by hook or crook we managed fine
complaining was not our line
and our prayers we declared
just from the reaper to be spared

Remember me too if you do
the shirt on my back is a soggy mess
like on the fugitive lajos kossuth
when he applied to the turks
the shirt on my back is a soggy mess
I ad-libbed such a fine speech
with my bad foot firmly planted in the door
so that he could not slam it in my face
for then the long vigil would have been for nothing
the morning star
had still been up in the sky
when I parked myself in his doorway
lest I miss him again today
the shirt on my back is a soggy mess
like on poor old lajos kossuth
one hand on the door latch and the other
was clutching my stick as tightly as all the swallowed
words were my throat
I had to be diplomatic
otherwise I was not to achieve my objective
and my small stack of hay might rot
like it did last year that wretched
little hay I cut in the commons
in the commons like earlier as the one third
that the sexton used to provide
from the village on account of emergency
tolling of the bells that used to go along
with one's share of wheat
the shirt on my back is a soggy mess
while I ask the engineer sir
would he let me have a rig
the harvest is on
all the hands are out in the field
the rig's idle
the horses are fed for nothing in return
it's for the public good that the small
stack of wretched hay should be brought under a roof
only one-third is mine
one-third
we'll see about it by noon or so
hey-you-hey hey-you-hey
he swished the words towards me
by noon or so

how well the stick would have swished in reply
but then there goes the objective and the small stack
of wretched hay hey-you-hey the shirt on my back
was ready to be wrung
like the one on the poor fugitive lajos kossuth
let it burn down where it is
or rot there till judgment day

and now it's not his feet
that bring him but his stick
well over seventy
browbeaten down into the dirt
my dear old dad

Please remember him thus
it was for him you came among us
don't forget him our jesus

let him come to a good end

but ask him about it first before
you have the angels blow the horn

On the rims of bright brass flowers
grow the drops of diamond dew
slapping cherubs on the fanny
the conductor gives their cue

The mass and myth just keep on gurgling
the soprano loves her trills
their unearthly balm in me
sweet serenity instills

The corn meal's steaming halo
to fill the night can still grow

whispers the milk
rustles the milk
splashes the milk
the velvety
and the sweet

that's all we need
something to eat
that's all we need
for salvation
it can't be beat

The mass and myth just keep on churning

the distant chatter of crock pots
and clay pitchers can be heard
the milk is dreaming of cows chewing
sleeping in a
pot of curd

Tu esti vapaie fara grai
de dincolo de matca mumii
past the blessed mother's womb
you're the wordless flame who whips
a blaze of itself with the wings
of the angels of apocalypse

Let me have the strength to stay here
and feel my endless blessing's fizz
where the night is painted black by
murderous futilities

what a hundred eyes are blind to
for none around me has a tip
that to my nest a firefly
rescues me from death's tight grip

They will braid you too some day
in a wreath with pomp replete
but the world will feel as cold
and strange as this vienna street
wie die glocken ihren schall verloren
forget your joy you will so soon

Willy-nilly we must stop
here the sky has turned to tar
something up there casts a dark
shadow on our guiding star

even though there's not one cloud
to the skyless sky now sewn
the moon when rises will be starless
as it plows the darkness all alone

cliffs and towers will be falling
voiceless in each other's arms
smooth and happy will become
all the wrinkles of the farms

whoever started all this mess
will see it through its final phase
under our careless feet we
feel the ocean's rounded face

Like the bell its ringing
I fast forget my joy

drop off more wine ye angels on my doorstep
with this world I'm set to part
and beam up to those who are free

After all this nothing else can follow
save a levitation as beggarly
as that of an hydrogen atom
but even then I may be pestered by the fear
that they could decide to confiscate
the one electron left to us
which today
still grants us hope projected
into the next few billion years
and faith in resurrection even
or whatever other myths one hears

Notes:

The funeral in the rainstorm describes one version of how Mozart's body was buried and lost in a paupers' grave.

The "good king" referred to in the text is Matthias Corvinus of the Hunyadi family who ruled between 1458 and 1490 over the last flowering of Hungary before the Turkish invasion.

Kolozsvár is the largest city and cultural center of Transylvania.

The fugitive Lajos Kossuth was the head of the revolutionary government in the 1848-1849 unsuccessful war against the Hapsburg rule.

The two lines in Romanian starting with "Tu esti..." are quoted from Ioan Alexandru and are freely translated in the following two lines of the poem.

PRELUDE TO PHOTOGRAPHY AND THEN SOME

Stella Snead

To have a passion either for something or a person is essential to a good life; at least one passion for a period, a thing, an activity, perhaps a belief, preferably not religious. Perhaps two passions are better than one. Some of us have more – several, even; some have none. These I would say are the unfortunate ones, yet they get along; some are charming. In this piece I am writing about myself as a photographer, but I think there is a need to go back to the beginning.

But where, exactly, is that? Presumably birth. For myself, I'd like to start at age 26. I don't believe my childhood fascinated me very much, and my early youth was for the most part wasted between frivolity and boredom. My background was vegetarianism, which led to good health and being a nudist. There was also Noel Coward from my early teens, which did help, rather. I was attracted to the sophisticated ease of his way of being, the wit and general amusement he depended on to make life flow. To be thus was not a very commendable ambition, but perhaps that was about all I had. I did not want to serve yet, I wanted very much to be happy. I learned – oh so much later – that happiness is a by-product of loving, at least of being kind, perhaps even serving or doing good. Remember, please, that I dislike most obvious do-gooders and I suspect I dislike self-sacrifice. I was a slow developer and I had only one artist friend. We went to islands in southern Europe together.

In May 1936, it was Tenerife in the Canary Islands, which are daringly out in the Atlantic, and belonged then to Spain. We stayed in the tiny port of Oratava, surrounded by banana plantations and beaches of black sand, lava dust from the splendidly symmetrical volcano which graced the center of the island. We had access to a private garden where my friend was painting flowers, using oils. I watched her closely one day and had a strong and immediate conviction that I could do this, at least I could do what she was doing – applying the oil paint neatly with a brush and it stayed where she put it, quietly, obediently. Sometimes she merged the colors on the canvas, or left them hard-edged; she could also remove them with a knife and do something different. There was time to think and decide.

My immediate need was to be home and to be alone with paints, without a thought of tuition. I painted in my bedroom for the rest of the summer, six small flower paintings. Now only one remains, of red begonias and their leaves. If I look at it, it is with wonder – how could I have done it? I had no background in the arts, no knowledge, went rarely to museums. As autumn approached I had three choices. My painter friend was to be lent a house in Tangier where I could join her, or I could stay at home and paint, or I could study with the French painter, Amédée Ozenfant, who was coming from Paris to open a school in London. Of course I had not heard of him, but the idea of one teacher and a small number of students appealed to me far more than one of the big schools, so I chose this, rather tentatively, for one semester. I then heard that Ozenfant was a friend and colleague of Léger, that they had taught at the Académie Moderne in Paris, that le Corbusier had built Ozenfant a house and that together they had started the Purist Movement in the '20s.

The Ozenfant Academy of Fine Art opened in London in mid-September 1936. When I came, there was at first just one other student in the nicely spacious studio; she was Leonora Carrington at 19, beautiful, her eyes intense and mischievous. Ozenfant spoke only French and looked to be about 50. What people! I had never met anyone like them. Other students soon joined us. On the back wall was an immense mural-sized painting on which Ozenfant was working. I was doubtful if I liked it. The main thing was that I was enthralled by where I was, by meeting so many people in the arts and to have found myself a passion at last. This was my first passion, and it took a strong hold. I knew without question what I wanted to do.

Ozenfant's method of teaching suited me; it involved working slowly, being meticulous and thinking. In those first weeks most of us drew from the model who took the same pose for two weeks, our double-elephant sized paper stretched neatly onto a board. We gathered in a group around each student for the daily criticisms, which were translated by a striking-looking woman in her 30s, who was also a student. These criticisms could spread into talks on a wide range of subjects; this seemed to me very much what tuition should be. I was never bored, though I was often shy, as I felt I knew so little. But I was catching up; doors were opening on all sides; I began to see myself as an artist with a leaning towards surrealism.

We students often spent Saturdays in the museums, for me a continual revelation. At first I was most attracted to Gauguin and Le Douanier Rousseau. Around this time I decided to do a painting at home, not having the assurance to do it with others looking on. It was of a woman, naked, sitting cross-legged on the ground with a smooth cat on either side of her a short distance away, across the foreground curved a snake. In the background Rousseau took over – fat, highly indented leaves, lianas, a few small shapes like hot peppers. When I brought it to the studio there was a hush at first, then Ozenfant kissed me. I felt I'd be a painter for the rest of my life.

Suddenly it was 1939: events and decisions were shooting in from all sides and lives were changing. In Europe, War was upon us. I had long wanted to go to America. Ozenfant decided to move the school to New York. I left mother and lover and immigrated with four trunks, mostly filled with books and reproductions of Europe's works of art, for I rather extravagantly believed if Hitler won the only hope for civilization to continue was in America. I worked with Ozenfant for another two years, making it five years in all. From the spring of '41 I was on my own, though I cannot say that I settled down, as I spent time both in New York or among European refugee friends in Hollywood, and I explored what was in between mostly by bus. I was captivated by the size of the country, the width of the skies, the straightness of the roads. There was still a kind of frontier excitement in the West. I was particularly enthralled by the Southwest. I learned that parts of it were still to be explored; there were canyons unvisited, perhaps natural rock bridges still to be seen for the first time, those white patches on maps still to be filled in; and this was the '40s. It blew my mind that this could be in the same country as New York. Southern Utah and Northern Arizona has been called "standing up country," and the rocks do just that, rear up in amazing shapes from the desert floor or form the canyon walls. And here in New York we have the skyscrapers, which have always seemed appropriate buildings to me, and when the streets are narrow they make another style of canyon. Therefore I feel at home in both places, as do certain falcons and red-tailed hawks who now live atop the heights of the city.

I lived in Taos, New Mexico, for nearly four years in the late '40s, and probably did much of my best painting there. It was a new kind of life for one who had always lived in cities. This tiny town, dominated by its scenery, was placed in an arrangement of sagebrush plane and mountains so satisfyingly right that it brought both serenity and excitement. I was content in my two-room adobe house, content not to have a car; with one the spell might have been broken, as it would have been impossible not to wander too far and too often. Exploring could be done later, and was. Here, at home, first and foremost was the magic and wonder of painting. Often, I would see my paintings whole, just there before me; then I would do them with varying degrees of effort, sometimes with exhilaration, sometimes in despair.

Outside happenings were different and diverting. Christmases at the pueblo just five miles out of town, the adobe houses stacked to five stories, where we watched the processions and massed dances of the Indians. Then there were remarkable natural phenomena, the displays in the sky such as double rainbows, clouds imitating the flat-topped mesas, shooting stars, sometimes showers of them, a moonbow, black skies heralding storms: but more sun than anywhere else I had lived. As a painter I was somewhat isolated from the resident artists, who were moving headlong into abstraction; but, still, there were warm and lively friendships even if there was no surrealist group to join. This seemed to be a repeating pattern for me; perhaps I had more talent for being an outsider than a joiner, but should I worry, I hardly could when the urge to go my own way was pushing so firmly and spontaneously.

Showing distance in my paintings became a need, creating a place where the viewer or I myself could be; they also hinted of the unbounded beyond. This was one of the characteristics of surrealism I responded to: this, and its surprise, its daring, its humor. But there was some outside interest in my work, evidenced by the fact that I had eleven solo shows between 1941 and 1950. As far as I can recollect each show came about through my own peddling efforts. The last of these, in May 1950, was to be in London's leading surrealist gallery.

Although I was sad to leave the beauties of Taos, I had confidence that I had worked well there, had a chance to become established as a painter and be sought after, even. Things happened differently. My father had bad mental troubles, some of which I may have inherited; but I knew very little of him, as my mother and I left him when I was five, never to see him again. Depressions fell on me, some of them without any obvious outside cause. This one was long and hard, and I was in smithereens. Where had all confidence gone? I couldn't face going to London for my exhibition. I tried to get back to painting – puny they were, their centers often blank, with awkward, angular, spiky shapes around the edges. My center was equally empty. After two and a half years I began to emerge, thinking that somehow the vacuum would be filled. It was not a zooming up, but rather a quiet creeping from under the long stifling depression.

Some time in 1952 came an invitation to India, a place to which I had never thought of going, from a young American I had known in Taos, Didi, who had married an Indian and was now living joint-family in a small town, 115 miles from Bombay. (It is a traditional custom that the wife joins her husband's family; hence the term "joint-family.") I went by ship in November '52. It was as if in one leap I landed into the midst of traditional India. No Western hotels or Indian sophisticates intervened. I was excited and intensely occupied, absorbing it all in ravenous gulps. It was several weeks before I realized that India itself was generously filling my vacuum

with its sights, its people, its ways of being, its unselfconscious beauty, even its ugliness. It no longer mattered that I was not painting; there were other ways of filling a life.

Although I was feeling more comfortable and healthy again inside myself, I was quite unclear about what, exactly, I would do instead of painting. At this point I was riveted by India, learning its ropes, one might say. One of the chief events of this summer of 1953 was the birth of Didi's second child, a boy, who was born in the bungalow. I was in the next room. A few days after his birth came his naming ceremony – he was to be called Rahoul. Mixing a Christian custom with theirs, I was invited to be Rahoul's godmother.

The plan had been to stay six months. I decided I couldn't leave. Just that. How could I leave such a place? I had been doing much lone traveling on the grand old British trains, then still in general use, with nights in bungalows built for the British civil servants or in station waiting rooms – it was only five years after India was given Independence. I went north, south, east and west with never a moments loneliness, and then back for intervals of rest with the ever-hospitable family; they, and particularly Didi, were like a wondrous open window or mirror by which to watch and study the intricacies of India.

Finally, I left, in February 1954; by then I had been fifteen months in India. Why did I leave? Certainly I loved India; but I was perfectly happy living in New York: I loved it, too. Then, I had no thought of living in India. This came later, on the third visit, in 1958. I returned via England to the States, feeling like a happy nomad, footloose, slowly planning a return to India, this time overland, on the surmise that if there were roads there were probably buses. It seemed to me the most intriguing and desirable project, and for much of the next two years I avidly read books by earlier travelers to the Middle East, Persia and Afghanistan. It was important not to hurry, to move at whim, have surprises, make detours, have no deadlines. I've always liked the idea of traveling without reservations. No companion was available to join me but I felt perfectly capable and even glad to be going alone. If you are happy with your own company and not given to loneliness easily, there are plenty of good reasons to travel alone. First, you can do what you like, and at your speed; you are more exposed to the outside world: it's just you and it. If it's kind, this is well worthwhile; more people talk to you, for, in many countries, the first thing they want to know is, why you are alone? Certainly, in India it's best to have a husband and children. Should you have neither, they look sad; so I did a certain amount of inventing – five sons was a winner.

But right now I have just flown from London to Istanbul, which seemed to me a suitable taking off place for this overland venture. As it was pre-hippie time, I was the only Westerner on every bus (about fifty of them in all) but one. At 46, with grey hair, I felt both guarded and privileged, sat up front, was well looked after by a series of drivers and their mates. Thus, in this haphazard way I passed through Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and, again, into India. My motto for the Mid-East, and especially Afghanistan, was, "be a man, whatever you are." It was a freedom journey, guided by reading I had done. I knew a little something about each country. I moved or stayed at whim; I missed things, discovered others, some of them dazzling surprises. I seldom hurried, meandered rather. Buses would break down in the wilderness, be late, so deposit me in a strange town in the middle of the night, always; but always a helpful person would appear, carry my luggage to a full hotel, where I would sleep on the floor of the office or wherever (in the courtyard). I loved it

all and never felt endangered, for these were the beloved '50s, the last good decade to travel, as I have often said.

And so it went on for about four months, unbounded by reservations, dates or deadlines, a kind of heaven, and no one knew where I was. It was perhaps the most stimulating form of contentment I had ever known.

I have neglected to say I was accompanied by a camera, a moderately-priced 35 mm, not automatic, with which I took quite a lot of mediocre pictures, for the record. This time I stayed in India about six months, did my first trek in the Himalayan foothills, and walked into Nepal, on what had been until so recently the only way to go. Only since 1951 was it possible to fly; now (1956) they were building a road, as well.

Also I had my first trekking experience, walking in the Himalayan foothills (Chamba) from village to village with a coolie as guide and carrier of my two sausages of luggage. It was autumn, the time of change from summer to winter pastures. The men danced in an open space beside each village temple, wearing fine white wool, belted jackets and turbans, while the women watched from balconies and hillsides, a wonderfully picturesque scene.

As I found out later, my photography was beginning to improve. Perhaps it was that I was getting used to it all, this business of handling a camera, knowing that if I stopped to clean a filter or to try on a local garment, usually a man's in an open shop, it was likely that the traffic would stop too. I was also beginning to look more closely and eagerly at the small, still things: the bark of trees, the patterns made by algae on stagnant water, the flowers shopkeepers wove together to decorate women's hair. There was so much that was new and strange and fascinating to look at in the details of India. I decided that if I was a photographer at all, I was very definitely a still photographer, though I kept right on taking people and their activities. There was every kind of person, from the very poor to the exceedingly wealthy, from nomadic tribals to aristocrats in their opulent palaces, some who owned a hundred elephants and their own private railways. There was still space and serenity and a reassuring feeling of gentleness among most people. This was surprising, and to be treasured, when one thought of the violence that had taken place in 1947, less than ten years before, with the partition of India.

Slowly I had realized that not being able to paint was a release into the abundance of big travel; this and a new carefree confidence urged me to go further east to Burma, Thailand, Cambodia. There were marvels of architecture and sculpture in each country, but it was in Cambodia that I lingered longest, taking more photographs than ever before: for here are the ruins of Angkor, the astonishing Khmer civilization which emerged in the 6th century. Slowly and intensely it bloomed and blazed to its apogee in the 12th century when Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom became its center and its masterpieces. Around these, the present Angkor complex of temples, walls and reservoirs spreads for thirty square miles. Outside and beyond, regardless of the horror Cambodia has had to endure, there may still be hidden and crumbling relics of the Khmer genius. If I may quote the first sentence of the chapter on Angkor in my book RUINS IN JUNGLES (1962): "Here without a doubt is the most stupendous collection of ruins in the world; and they stand surrounded and often enveloped by the most vigorous and splendid jungle in all Asia."

After this effulgence, the Khmers lasted, with dwindling stamina, for another two centuries, and then it was as if they evaporated. The only power remaining was the jungle itself, until a French naturalist came along and reported his amazing find in 1861. He was not believed; but rather quickly other Frenchmen came and confirmed

the discovery, and their experts began the tremendous task of clearing and stabilizing, and – here is the wonder – not clearing in some cases, e.g., the temple of Ta Prohm with the great trees astride it, holding it up.

Here I have to reluctantly change the subject, jump over Japan from where I took ship to San Francisco and then a bus to Taos, New Mexico, where awaited another and quite different kind of revelation – I saw darkroom work for the first time. A friend there was the photographer who used to photograph our paintings in the '40s, and here she was printing one of my negatives. I watched in the dark with only a dim safelight as a sheet of photographic paper was slipped into the first tray of liquid. What a way for anything to reveal itself, with such a deliberate yet haunting slowness. I was hooked from that moment. I knew I had a new passion. I must be a photographer and do my own printing, but without knowing the chemistry, so that it would always be miraculous. When a revelation comes, no matter how late, it's best it be total, not come by halves or dribbles. It took me longer to become aware that one of the great things about photography is that it goes well with travel. They are buddies, one might say. It took me longer still to understand how and why all this came about. My not being able to paint was not the tragedy I had thought but a release, a wide open invitation into big travel together with the extreme fascination of a confined space, the darkroom. During that whole winter I repeated the magic rituals almost daily – often while singing for joy.

With perfect ease the idea came to do a book on "Ruins in Jungle." Most of the search for such ruins was done in the British Museum Reading Room, as this most impressive library was then called. On my first entrance, I stood stockstill, amazed by the huge dome and radiating arrangement of the seating below. It was all so thoroughly absorbing that my manuscript of the overland bus journey lay forgotten. Then came second visits to Southeast Asian countries, of course including Cambodia, where, with the help of Bernard Groslier, then the Khmer temple's most devoted conservator, I visited two of the outlying ruins beyond Angkor, little known and in deep jungle. Then from Asia I took a flying leap to the Mayan ruins in Central America; Palenque, in Mexico, now mostly cleared, but then the jungle hugging it closely; and Tikal, in Guatemala, where, in 1959, archeologists had only been working for two years. It was the ideal site, findable by small plane and only partly cleared. This jungle was vastly different, the birds extraordinary, and there could be jaguar instead of tiger and leopard.

On my third visit to India, 1958-59, via Samarkand, then in Russian Uzbekistan, and, again, Afghanistan, I was definitely dedicated to photography; but so far I had only set up one temporary darkroom, in a house I had been lent in London. On arrival in India, I learned that my friend Didi and her husband were to leave the joint family after eight years, had bought land near the beach at Juhu, on the edge of Bombay, and were building a house. "Oh do tack a darkroom onto your house," I said jokingly. More seriously, Didi said, "But wouldn't you like a house? I'll design it, there's a plot of land available." Believe it or not, that same evening we were designing my house. It all seemed so easy. The difficulties came later, and were as yet unknown. I continued with my ruins in jungle. It was a project beyond compare, resplendent and daring, like nothing I had ever done before.

I still lived nomadically between London and New York and wherever the desired ruins were. Didi called me to come back to India, and I did. The roof was on,

but otherwise the house was far from ready; and Didi had another baby in the midst of it all. Finally, I moved in, in early 1960. My birthday coincided with the house-warming party. To entertain us my bearer (servant) jumped through a flaming hoop in the garden. What an unpredictable thing: to have a house in India.

And with an air conditioned darkroom: I hadn't felt so settled since birth. Juhu was 16 miles from the center of Bombay. At least I had a car, but no telephone for three years. It was considered that I needed five servants – a cook who also did the marketing; a bearer who served drinks and food, cleaned house and did my washing and ironing. They lived in. Then came a sweeper, a custom from the old days of no plumbing: she appeared once a day to take the garbage to the main road for collection; a gardener; and a watchman to guard the house at night. It proved not too many, for I had plenty of visitors as well as all kinds of servant problems over the first years. Eventually all got adjusted, including myself, to the change from being carefree visitor to a householder. For instance, when a coconut fell through the roof, making a hole, I had to find a way to get it mended. A routine soon established itself. Weekends were social; bathing was year round, only slightly curtailed by the roughness of the sea during monsoon. One day a week I spent in town, the rest in the darkroom, from early morning till 5 or 6 pm, with, often, a walk on the beach at sunset; occasionally a dinner party, and sometimes a late night nude swim, especially if the sea was phosphoresent. Such magical pleasures seemed close at hand in India. There was also the green flash to be seen as the setting sun dipped into the watery horizon. The beach, though near a seething city, was never over-crowded, and it was safe both night and day.

It must have been towards the end of the 1950s that a friend who had studied history of Indian art at Oxford suggested we do a book together about Animals in Indian Sculpture. What an appealing idea! I was hooked, and immediately, with a strong urge, I searched for and photographed the animals depicted in every temple or museum I visited. This friend and I worked well together, until she gave up when no publisher was found; but I went on and on, with other scholarly writers, new arrangements of the photographs, sometimes a publisher, even. All this lasted, with hopes and disappointments, for 26 years: until, suddenly, it all came together. George Michell, an Australian scholar much involved with India, said that these, my photos, must be shown to Wendy Doniger, America's foremost Sanskrit scholar. It was close to Christmas; still, I sent the bulky photographic dummy, fearing that if it were lost I really would not be able to go on. Very quickly, the highly enthusiastic response came back. It was warm, positive and funny, a treasure of Christmas present. About a year later, the University of Chicago Press brought out the book with 78 photographs under a new title, ANIMALS IN FOUR WORLDS, with fine texts by Wendy and George. They both most generously arranged that my name be larger than theirs on the cover – they must have done this for I most certainly did not. But I liked it, after those 26 years! A splendid talk by Dr. Doniger and a book signing reception took place at the Asia Society in New York city in October 1989; a year later came another book signing party in London. This was my seventh book, and I see I have jumped to 1990, so let us return to the '60s, that decade when I had my house in India though often I was elsewhere.

After a visit to London, in 1963, I made a wide detour on returning to India, going via Egypt to see the ancient temple of Abu Simbal, which was about to be moved so as not to be submerged by the waters of the Aswan Dam. It was an exciting time for the archeologists making their last discoveries before the flood, and sad for the many people who had to move. I stayed in Wadi Halfa, at the same hotel as my parents, some

years before I was born, when they cruised a thousand miles up the Nile. This whole town, including its minaret, was soon to be under water.

Next, I went to a peaceful and very lovely Ethiopia where the air smelt of eucalyptus, where the people were varied and often beautiful, from the Christians of Addis Ababa to the tribals and Muslims of Harar. Then by air to Aden, to board the ship from England that carried my new enlarger, a Leitz Fotomat from Germany. Back home, the new enlarger and the size of my darkroom inspired my printing. I found I could make 20 x 30-inch prints if I so desired. As my dryer was not that big, I looked for a solution and found a very Indian one: have the mosquito nets put up over the beds; lay the prints on top under the ceiling fans; when still slightly damp, remove prints to glass-topped dining table; cover them with paper or cardboard with books on top so that they dry flat. It worked.

By this time my subject matter was almost everything, but was tending more and more towards details and patterns, such as were always there waiting to be found by alert looking. I soon became a student of the beach two minutes from my door. Its contours could change with the tides. Each time the water receded, the wonders at one's feet became compelling in their astonishing variety. There are certain rules that hold in some of nature's escapades. For example, if you look down on an estuary soon after a plane takes off, you realize that the patterns you have seen laid large down there, you can see again on an untrampled beach, a microcosmic replica thereof in the space of a few inches. In each case, these particular patterns stem from a mingling of sand/mud and water. But beaches, having their own distinctive kinds of wildlife, can show us patterns very much their own. For instance a small white crab does a completely unconscious pattern-making-job by spewing out tiny pellets of sand as waste in any and every direction (as shown in my book BEACH PATTERNS). During the 1960s, I had exhibitions of large blow-ups of beach formations in New York and Bombay. Sales were good, and I had the satisfaction of feeling I was showing people something they had not noticed before. Along side of these, I have made collections of industrial and architectural patterns, cut vegetables, patterns for selling, and an especially large group of details that say "India" to anyone who knows the country well. Some of these I put into an album labelled "Indications of India." This attracted Chatto and Windus, the publishers, of London, but they wanted a more comprehensive book on India. I invited Ramor Godden to do the writing, which resulted not only in an excellent text but in the Viking Press of New York joining the project. SHIVA'S PIGEONS appeared rather quietly in 1972, but it is my best produced book – by photogravure in Japan.

While working, ideas popped up: and both of these happened during the drowning monsoons. To employ the rainy hours indoors I started doing photo-collage, i.e., choosing a sizable background photograph and sticking cut out bits from others thereon. This brought my photography into surrealism, which pleased me. Rather quickly, I had enough for an exhibition in Bombay, and it was a near sellout. Next, I put together a nonsense book, CAN DROWNING BE FUN? This was a mixture of straight and collaged photographs, with a short text pertaining to each page, by myself. A publisher was certainly not immediately found; in fact, some were a trifle hostile. In the meantime, a gallery in Rome gave me show of the prints hung separately on the walls. It was not until much later, when I was back living in New York, that an avant-garde book designer decided that her first venture into publishing should be this book.

It appeared in 1992, with a book-signing and display at Printed Matter, a shop in New York's SoHo specializing in artist's books – such a good looking small book and worth waiting for.

Now back once more to the last years at my house in Juhu. I had achieved the bliss of having good servants. This may sound an extravagant statement but it was true – at weekends I could say, "Ten for lunch, we'll have Indian food; eight for dinner, Western food." During the week, the same smoothness prevailed. I had no domestic work, so time in the darkroom was seldom interrupted. A pleasant addition to the household was a friend from England with a job in Bombay, who came to occupy my guestroom. She could use my car most days for the trip back and forth to the city, to be greeted by the bearer on her return with a cup of tea to unwind with, and would join me around 8 pm for our evening drink. Dinner was when we chose to call for it.

But by the end of the '60s, the over-building at Juhu had begun. Two rather high apartment buildings had gone up near my house, one of them blocking the view of nothing but sky and palm trees from a high window in my living room. There were other reasons to make me think of leaving – the heat and the damp of the monsoon, which together made up three quarters of the year. And then, I did not want to be one of the "stayers-on," those who had spent so long in India as to lose connections elsewhere. I had not, London and New York still seemed open to me, but I hesitated until the end of 1970, when I was in New York, and found an apartment on a 21st floor, with a spacious view of midtown Manhattan and a terrace. As well, the layout was almost as if made for me. There was a suitable space to be curtained off for a darkroom. India is seductive and hard to leave, but I had a place. Even though it had only one room instead of being a house, I knew I could manage. The stimulants of New York beckoned. I paid several months' rent in advance, returned to India, spent a charming Christmas like no other in the villages and deserts of Kutch, which the three of us, my teenaged godson, Rahoul, my English friend June, fortyish, and myself at 60, were discovering for the first time. Then came packing and leaving, being in London, a visit to Spain, while my heavy luggage came by ship, reaching New York in March 1971. Thirty or more crates were delivered to 21 B, my apartment, fortunately empty except for one green padded rocking chair. I managed to open a crate a day by myself and, sometimes, for a change, looked around in thrift and antique shops shop for furniture. I put up bookshelves and dense black curtains for the darkroom. By May, everything was more or less together, and I started printing. As well, I acquired window boxes and pots so the terrace could be filled with flowers and herbs. Visitors began coming and I began to cook, wishing I had learned more about Indian cooking while there.

Of course I missed India, but I knew I was far from finished with it. All through the '70s, I went back. on extended visits and assignments. There is just no end to India. A Buddhist area beyond Kashmir, beyond the Himalayas, known as Ladakh, opened to the outside world in 1975. I went with Indian friends in a hired jeep with driver. We were two days on the then-recently-made road through a starkly beautiful high desert of purple, grey and greenish rock. Leh, the capital, at 11,500 ft, is still a small town of serene and friendly people. The women's special-occasion headgear is spectacular. There is a panel covered with turquoise going backwards from forehead to waist; on each side flair large "ears" of black karakul. Then, there are cocked hats, often worn lopsided, by both sexes. The many monasteries are intact, and one hopes they will always be protected by India from what is happening to Tibet at the merciless hands of the Chinese.

I only saw my house once again in the early 1970s, just for a weekend, with my cook still there and as good as ever. Now I never hear a good thing about Juhu, the beach being dirty and unsafe. Of the three houses Didi designed, only mine is still left, crushed between highrises. I don't want to see it. My last assignment, in 1979, was hard work but gorgeous: driving, often without roads, to countless villages in search of folk textiles, embroideries, hand printing, tie and dye work in northwest India, including Rajasthan – the true richness of India. The would-be publisher went bankrupt, but we had series of exhibitions, mainly in London. Then came my very last time in India, in February 1983. "Let's go to Ladakkh in winter," I said, learning that it was now full of tourists in summer. You fly in, and see K2, the world's second highest peak. In Ladakh there is so little precipitation, snow a mere sprinkle, that the roads were open. There were hardly any foreigners, just us and the Ladakhis, seeing several special dancing festivals. The hotel living and dining room were warmed by roaring stoves and the bedrooms were usually freezing – we only took baths if our wood stove, lit each morning by little boys, kept alight and the hot water came at the same time. Otherwise, we kept warm by uphill walking at 12,000 ft. to monasteries without roads and many steps to climb; once we reached them, to be greeted by Tibetan tea, the greatest. In any case, the sun shone every day, and we were very happy.

An exhibition of Stella Snead's oil paintings opens on January 13, 2000, at
Galérie Minsky
Arlette Souhami, Director
40, rue de l'Université
Paris 72007
Tel: O11/33 1-55-35-09-00
Fax: 011/33 1-55-35-09-01

Several works by Stella Snead are shown in an exhibition,
Les Femmes dans le Surréalisme
November 17 to December 14, 1999
La Galérie, 9, rue Guénégaud,
Paris 75006
Tel: 011/33-1-4354-8585
Fax: 011/33-1-4633-0469
Published in connection with the exhibition is
Colvile, Georgiana, SCANDALEUSEMENT D'ELLES: Trent-Quatre Femmes Surréalistes, (Jean-Michel Place, Paris), 1999

Books by Stella Snead:
DROWNING CAN BE FUN? A Nonsense Book (Pont La Vue Press, New York, 1992)
ANIMALS IN FOUR WORLDS: SCULPTURES FROM INDIA, texts by Wendy Doniger and George Michell (University of Chicago Press, 1989)
BEACH PATTERNS (Clarkson Potter, 1975)
SHIVA'S PIGEONS, text by Rumer Godden (Chatto and Windus, London/Viking Press, NY, 1972)
CHILDREN OF INDIA (Lothrop, Lee & Shephard, NY, 1971)
THE TALKATIVE BEASTS (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1969)
SEVEN SEVEN (Folder Editions, NY, 1965)
RUINS IN JUNGLE (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1962

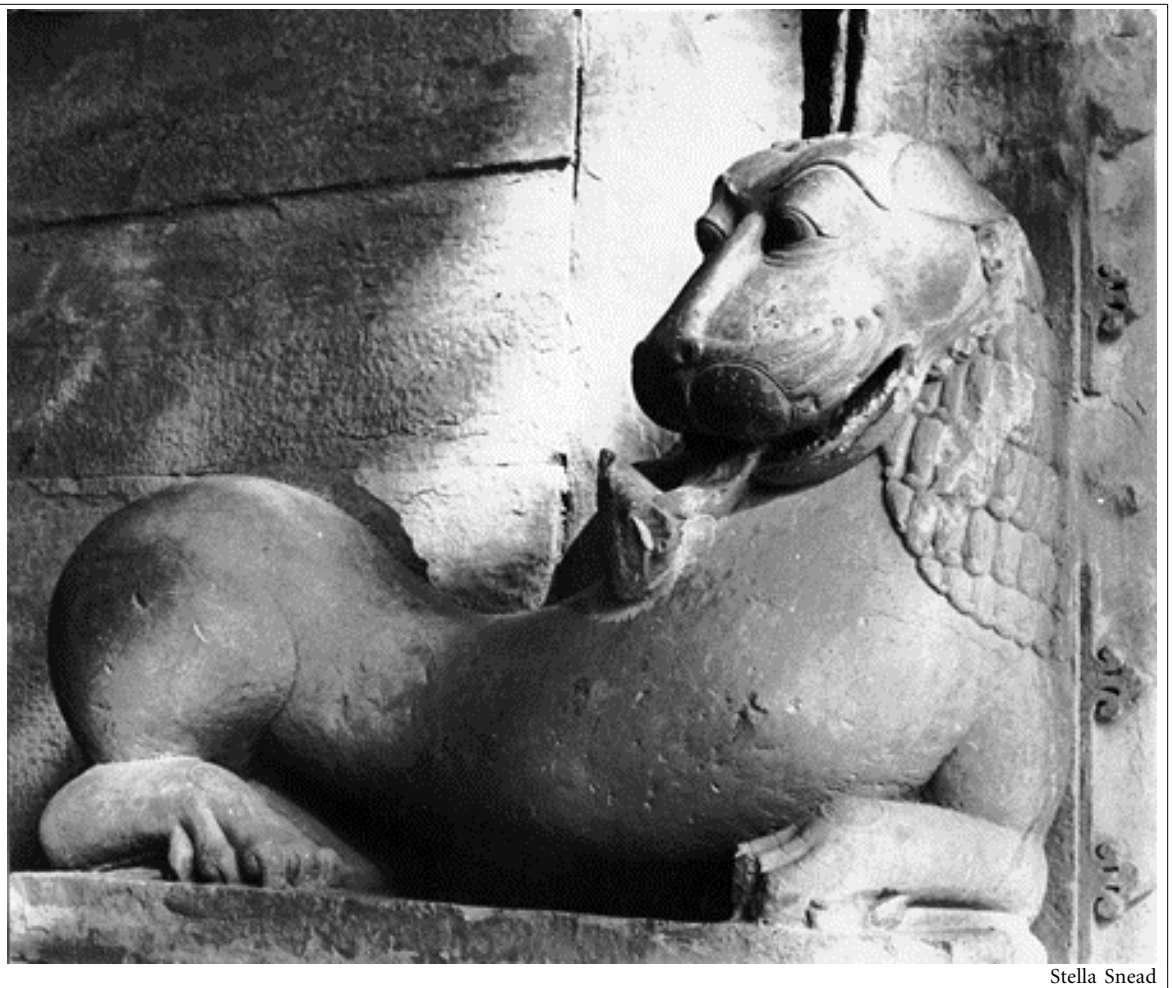
PHOTOGRAPHS OF INDIA

Stella Snead

Stella Snead

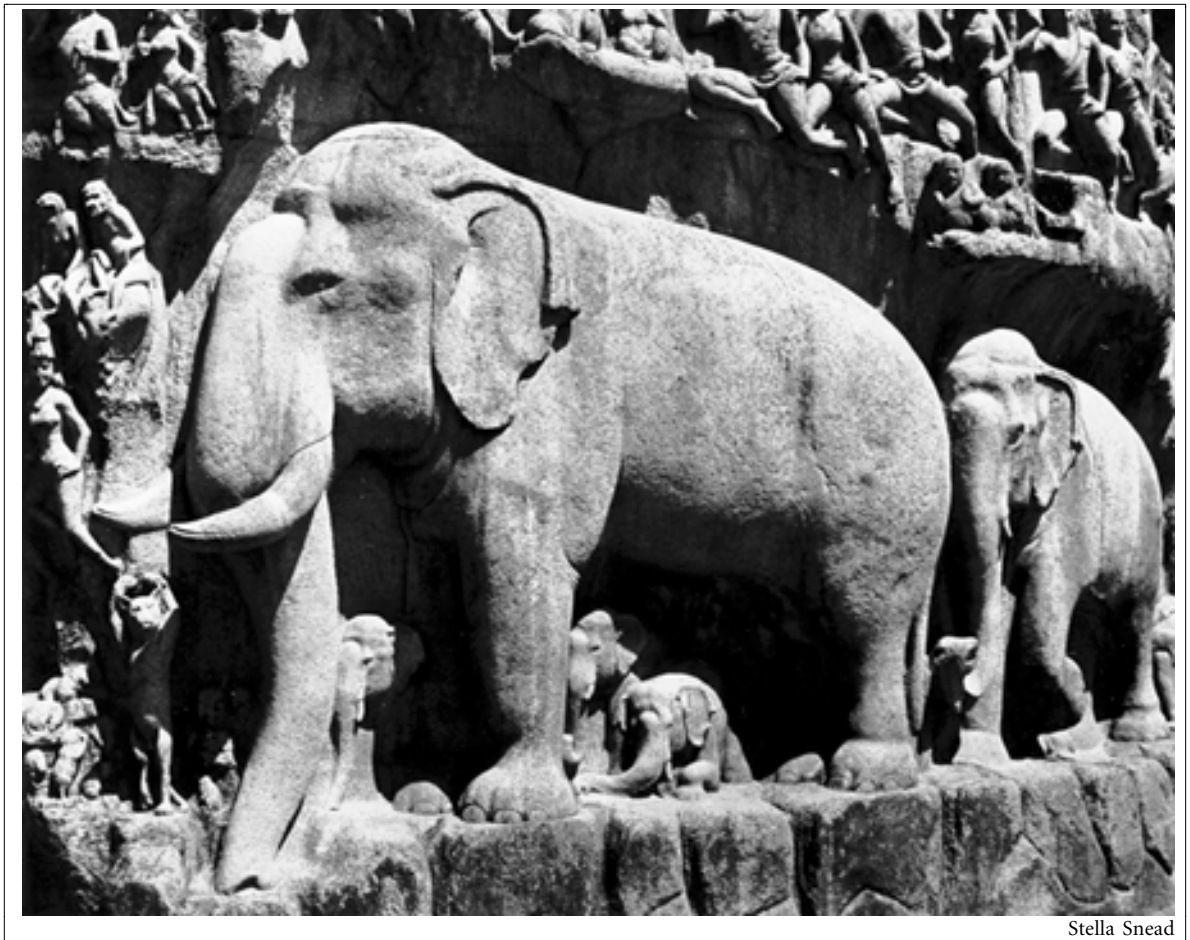
Elephant and Lotuses
(Plate 39, AFW)
sandstone
Sanchi, Central India
Shunga period, 2nd C. B.C.

A number of the images in this portfolio appear in ANIMALS IN FOUR WORLDS: SCULPTURES FROM INDIA, photographs Stella Snead; texts Wendy Doniger and George Michell (University of Chicago Press, 1989), abbreviated as AFW; with quotations.
Photographs for digitizing and some captions courtesy of Stella Snead.



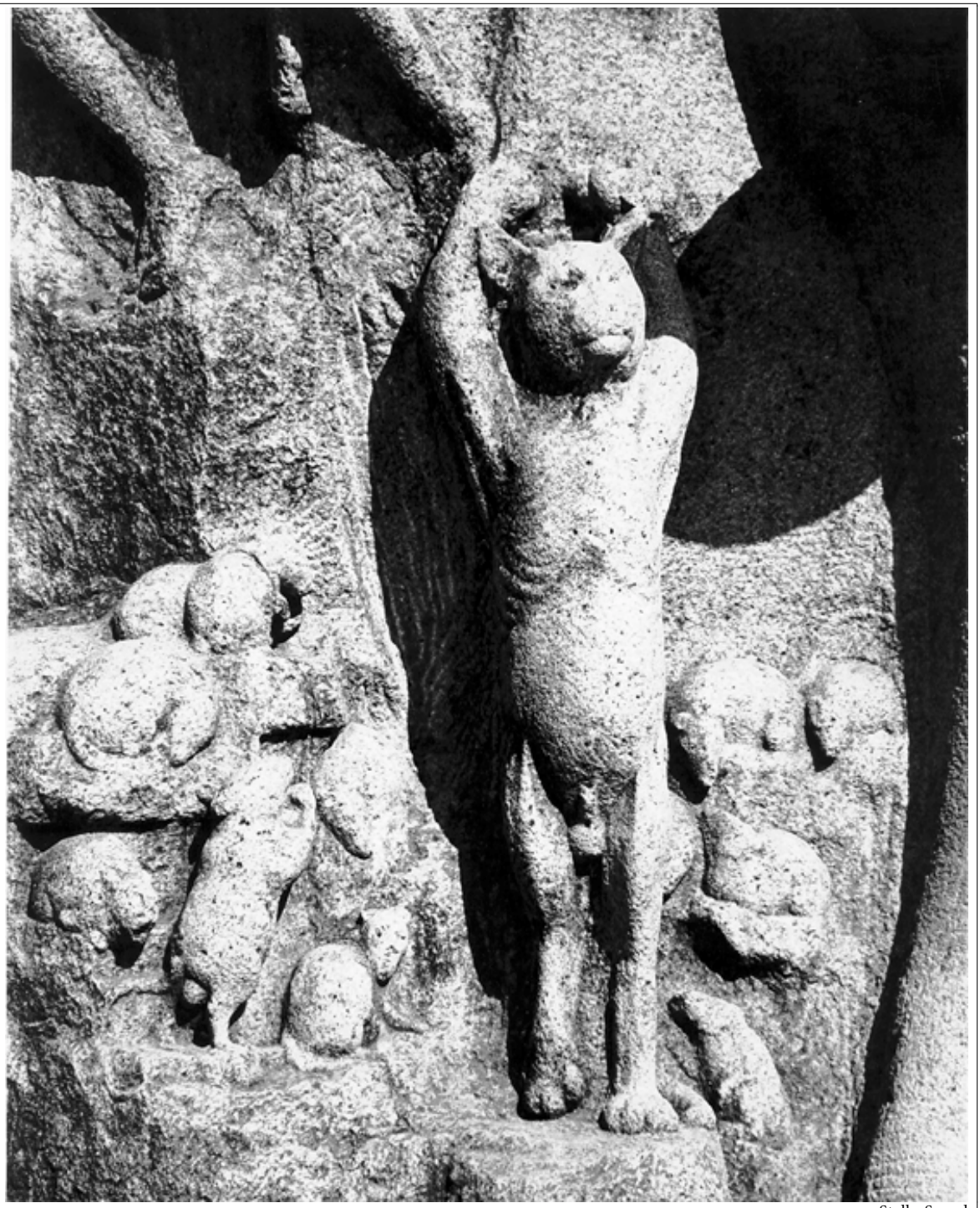
Stella Snead

Guardian Lion
(Plate 53, AFW)
sculpture, sandstone
Shuania, Central India.
Kacchapaghata period, 11th C.
CentralArchaelogical Museum, Gwalior



Stella Snead

Elephants
(Plate 41)
granite
Arjuna's Penance
Mamallapuram, Southern India
Pallava period, 7th C.

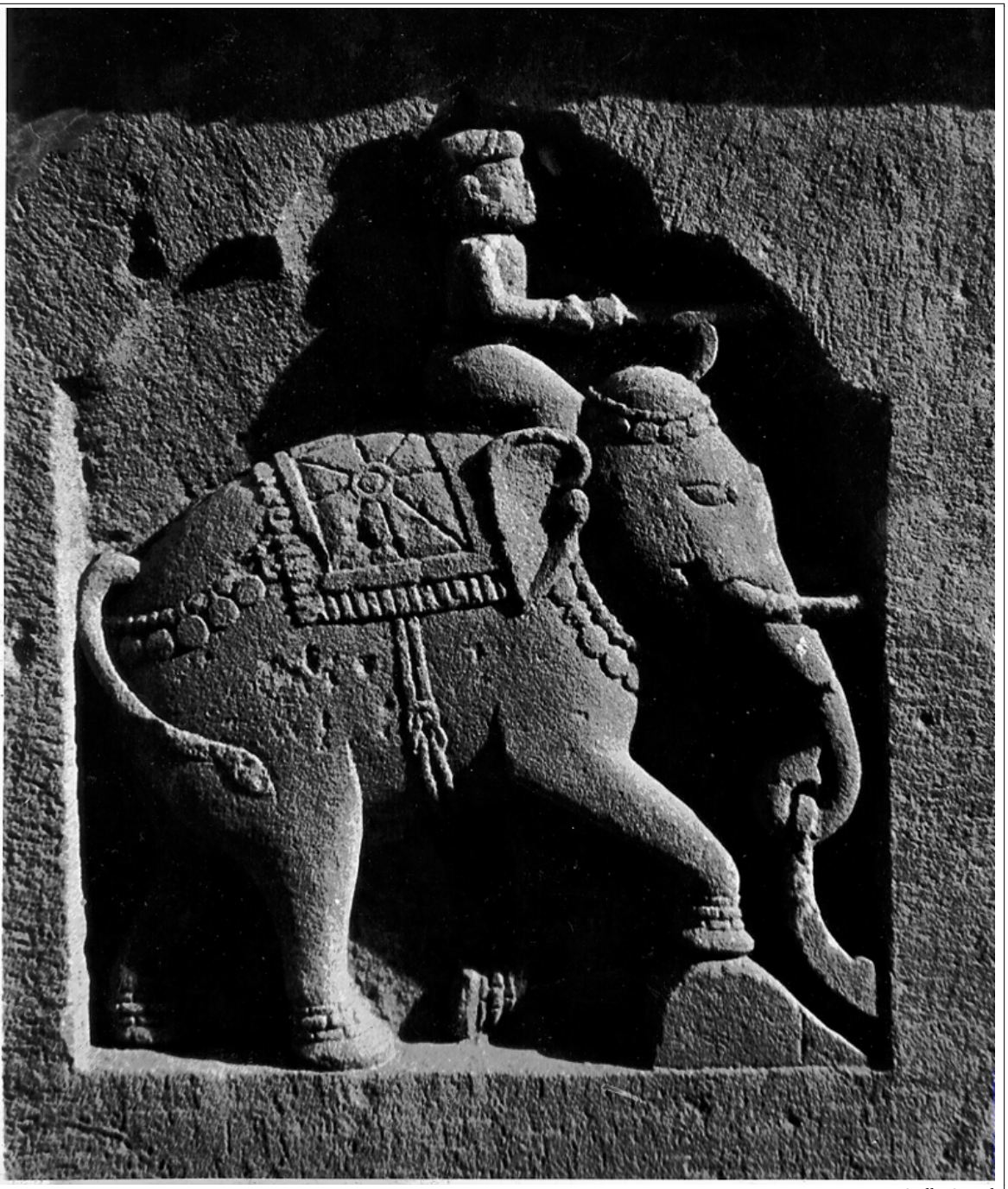


Stella Snead

"Mock Ascetic Cat"
(Plate 48, AFW)
Cat and mice, granite
Arjuna's Penance
Mamallapuram, Southern India
Pallava period, 7th C.

Stella Snead

Cow Feeding Calf
(Plate 74, AFW)
sandstone
Agroha, Western India
Chauhan period, 10th C.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Stella Snead

Man Riding Elephant
Lodobara
near Jaiselmer, Rajasthan

Stella Snead

Winged Lions
Sandstone
Sanchi, Central India
Shunga period, 2nd C. B.C.

Stella Snead

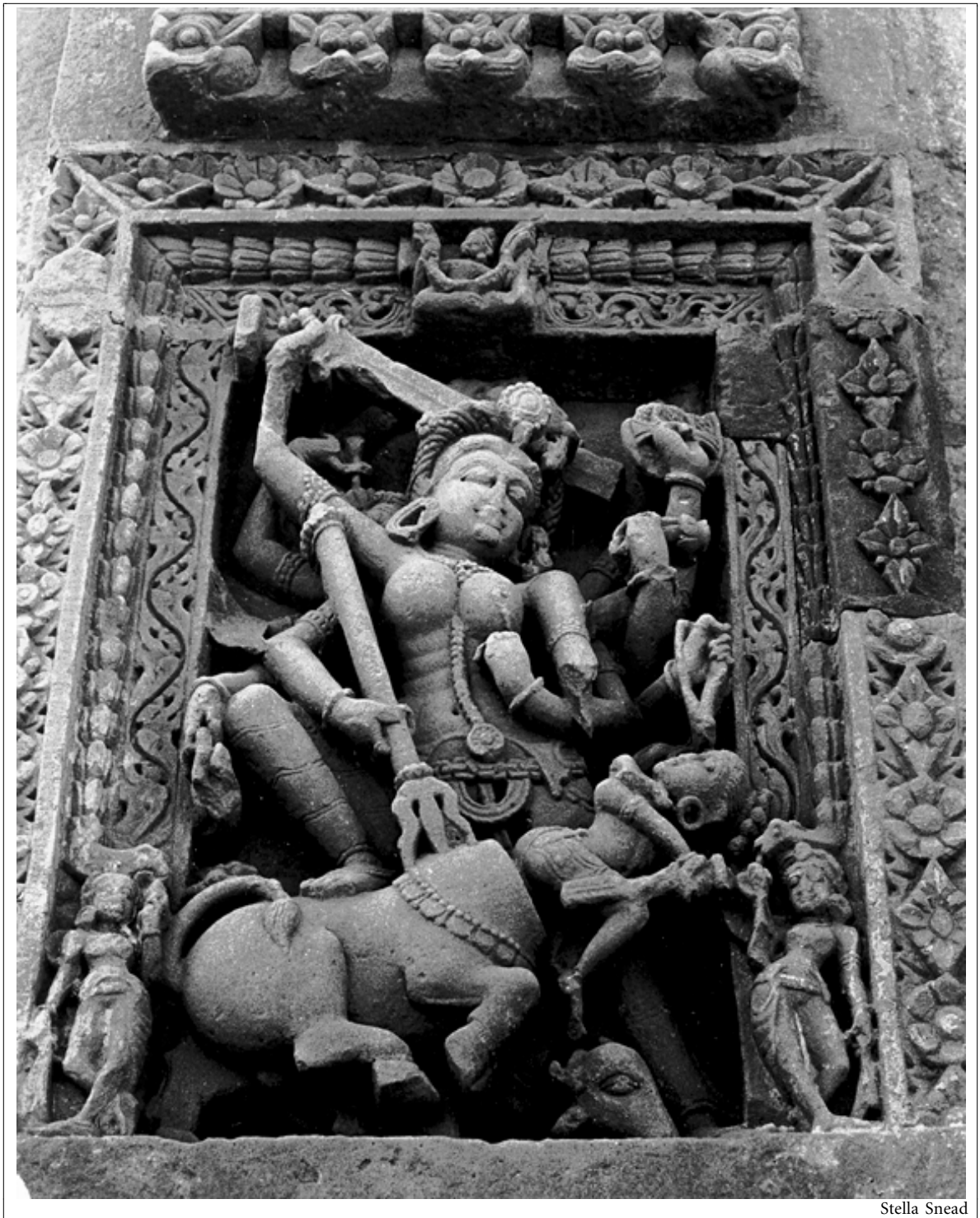
Rat Eating Laddoos
(Plate 60, AWF)
Sandstone
Khajuraho, Central India
Chandella period. 11th C.
Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho

Stella Snead

Varaha
Mahakuta, Deccan
7th C.

Stella Snead

Shiva and Parvati on Flying Nandi
(Plate 134, AFW)
sandstone
Dashavatara temple, Deogarh, Central India
Gupta period, 5th C.



Stella Snead

Durga Killing Buffalo Demon
(Plate 146, AWF)
sandstone
Sarya temple 3, Osian, Western India
Pratihara period, 9th C.

Stella Snead

The Buddha's Departure
Gandhara
Indian Museum, Calcutta

See also:
Archipelago, Vol. 1, No. 2, "Early Cabbage"
Vol. 3, No. 1:
Stella Snead, Paintings,
"Early Childhood and Before"
"Chronology of a Painter"
Kirin Naryaan, "Stella in Bombay"
Pavel Zoubok, "The Fantastic Journey *of* Stella Snead"
The complete portfolio appears in Archipelago on line.

THERE'S A SMALL HÔTEL: JUNIPER HALL
The Home Away from Home of Talleyrand & Mme. de Staël

George Rafael

A few years ago I found myself by chance spending Christmas Eve in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Because of ground delays in London, my New York-bound flight had to stop there – the crew needed a break; rules (good ones too) – as Halifax was as far as they were prepared to fly. This detour turned out to be quite fortuitous. After a visit to the well-tended cemetery where the victims of the Titanic are buried, I wandered through the windswept Old Town and discovered a wonderful antiquarian bookstore, one of the best I've ever seen, and there came across an elusive volume: Duff Cooper's TALLEYRAND.

For anyone interested in the French Revolution, in diplomacy, or wishing to bask in the vulpine cunning and licence of Napoleon's foreign minister, Cooper's biography provides pure reading pleasure. A passage starting the third chapter especially piqued my curiosity: "On the road that runs from Leatherhead to Dorking there stands an eighteenth-century residence which, although it has undergone considerable alterations, still bears the name of Juniper Hall. Here, in the summer of 1792, was formed the nucleus of a small society of French refugees. The Constitutionals – those members of the aristocracy who if they had not welcomed the Revolution had at least tried to make the best of it, and who, only after the fall of the monarchy and under the shadow of the Terror, abandoned their country in order to save their lives, found at Juniper Hall a brief haven of refuge."

Another little teaser in the same chapter, concerning Fanny Burney and her sister Susanna Phillips's visits there, perfectly encapsulates the collision of English manners with French savoir faire: "Prim little creatures, they had wandered out of the sedate drawing rooms of Sense and Sensibility and were in danger of losing themselves in the elegantly disordered alcoves of Les Liasons Dangereuses."

Well, with that invitation to the minuet, I just had to find the place, no easy task as it turned out. It took months of research. None of my friends had heard of the place and what references I could find in Pevsner's Surrey guide (architect: Couse, Kenton; student of Robert Adam; some work at High Wycombe) were rather dry and unilluminating. An historian acquaintance who lives in Kensington Square, next to a house bearing a National Heritage blue plaque with Talleyrand's name on it, had heard of it and put me on to the Field Studies Council (a semi-autonomous governmental body that specialises in the preservation of flora and fauna); they had an open weekend and in the company of a rambling friend, I was off.

Juniper Hall itself, a slightly derelict Hanoverian pile tucked away at the bottom of Boxhill, would be easy to miss if you were hurrying along; England is, after all, dotted with far statelier homes. That would be unfortunate, for Juniper Hall is not simply a house with a history, it is a house with a past. Among those who lit up its drawing room (which is still kept in a style that somewhat approximates the period, the fixtures and details relatively unchanged) are the Comte de Jaucourt, a distinguished former deputy and constitutionalist; his lover, the Comtesse de la Châtre, who was not

a lady "whose austerity was oppressive"; Lally Tollendal, "large, fat, with a great head, small nose, immense cheeks," wrote Susanna Phillips, "un trés honnête garçon," as Talleyrand said of him, "et rien de plus"; his lover, the Princesse d'Hénin, a former lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, and the doyenne of Parisian society; General Alexandre d'Arblay, Lafayette's chief of staff, a "true militaire, franc et loyal," as Mrs. Phillips described him; Louis de Narbonne, a grand seigneur, handsome, witty, rakish, rumoured to be Louis XV's bastard (he probably was); and, finally, the lodestars of the constellation, Baronne de Staël-Holstein (née Necker), the first woman of European letters, a feminist avant la lettre, and the Bishop d'Autun, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, the courtier's courtier, a diplomatist and intriguer without equal.

A stellar gathering by any standards, of whose charm, intelligence, and lineage there could be, as the genteel English phrase goes, no question. They easily bowled the local bien pensants like the Locks of Norbury Park and the Burneys for a duck. "There can be nothing imagined more charming, more fascinating than this colony"; "a society of incontestable superiority"; "these people of a thousand"; "they are a marvellous set for excess of agreeability"; "English has nothing to do with elegance such as theirs."

Likewise, the huntin' and fishin' and shootin' fraternity of Surrey had never seen anything like this fine feathered bunch. They were frankly indifferent if not suspicious; wasn't Talleyrand the devil incarnate himself? (Horace Walpole, hardly the huntin' and fishin' type, described him as "that viper who has cast his skin.") Even Miss Burney was prejudiced against him at first, writing: "Monsieur de Talleyrand opened last night with infinite wit and capacity. Madame de Staël whispered to me: 'How do you like him?' 'Not very much,' I answered. 'Oh, I assure you,' cried she, 'he is the best of men.' I was happy not to agree." She soon changed her tune, however, saying a few days later: "It is inconceivable what a convert M. de Talleyrand has made of me. I think him now one of the finest members and one of the most charming of this exquisite set."

Miss Burney's relations with the displaced chatelaine of Juniper Hall were more telling, though – the two came from entirely different worlds. On the Continent Mme. de Staël, who studied under Goethe and Schiller at Weimar, was an author to be reckoned with, her study of Rousseau, which appeared in 1788 when she was only 22, having established her reputation overnight; Burney, whose novels-of-manners anticipate Jane Austen, depended on a small allowance provided her as a lady in waiting to George III's queen. Mme. de Staël was an aristocrat who once said, "mankind begins at baron"; Burney came from a family old as the hills and infinitely more respectable. Although plain, if not downright ugly, Mme. de Staël's dark, slightly protruded eyes revealed her true character, overflowing as they did with a brilliance and passionate nature she readily displayed in the drawing rooms of Paris, "a torrent of words," according to Byron; in an age renowned for conversation, for esprit (best captured recently in the film *Ridicule*), she was exceptional, fascinating, the first among equals. Fanny Burney had also shined, and in her London days she had been the darling of Dr. Johnson and hobnobbed with Sheridan, Burke and Garrick; now she was demure, a spinster, seemingly content to gaze in wonder at these proud peacocks, all the while long noting their every word and action.

Overwhelmed to find one civilised Anglaise, Mme. de Staël proceeded to shower great admiration and affection on the author of EVELINA and CECELIA (her own novels were yet to come), attracted as she was to excellence in all forms; despite her grande dame airs, aristocracy of the intellect took precedence over all else, and she cultivated Fanny diligently. She begged her to spend "a large week" at Juniper Hall. Fanny

welcomed the younger, maturer woman's attentions, was indeed swept off her feet by her fellow author and bluestocking. And why not? Days passed at Juniper Hall seemed idyllic, spent in good food and conversation, charades and bridge, and readings. Mme. de Staël read from her work-in-progress, DE L'INFLUENCE DES PASSIONS SUR LE BONHEUR DES INDIVIDUS ET DES NATIONS (which was finished there), or Voltaire's TANCRÈDE.

There was also the occasion of Lally Tollendal's after dinner reading of his tragedy, LA MORT DE STRAFFORD. As usual, it had been a wonderful if frugal repast but, at the end of it, M. d'Arblay had vanished. "He was sent for after coffee several times that the tragedy might be begun; and at last Madame de Staël impatiently proposed beginning without him: 'Mais cela lui fera de la peine,' said M. de Talleyrant good-naturedly, and as she persisted, he rose up and limped out of the room to fetch him; he succeeded in bringing him."

Most odd how someone so veddy English as Fanny Burney should miss an instance of ironic courtesy, a species of humour at which Talleyrand excelled. In fact, she was blind to countless nuances all around her, connections that were right under her very nose, such as Mme. de Staël's tempestuous affair with Narbonne. Her father, the teacher and historian of music Dr. Burney, was not so unaware of these soundings, writing: "Madame de Staël has been accused of partiality to M. de Narbonne – but perhaps all may be Jacobinical malignity." Though shocked, Miss Burney clung to her impressions, writing back, "I do firmly believe it a gross calumny. She loves him even tenderly, but so openly, so simply, so unaffectedly, and with such utter freedom from all coquetry, that, if they were two men or two women, the affection could not, I think, be more obviously undesigning. She is very plain, he is very handsome; her intellectual endowments must be with him her sole attraction. She seems equally attached to M. de Talleyrand. Indeed I think you could not spend a day with them and not see that their commerce is that of pure but exalted and most elegant friendship. I would, nevertheless, give the world to avoid being a guest under their roof, now I have heard even the shadow of such a rumour."

(Mme. de Staël had been equally attached to M. de Talleyrand, writing years later that "the three men I loved most in my youth were N[arbonne], T[alleyrand], and M[ontmorency].")

From that moment on, Fanny Burney made her excuses, avoiding "our Juniperians," especially Mme. de Staël. Mme. de Staël was confused and hurt by Miss Burney's sudden aloofness. She was also frankly irritated by Fanny's prudery. Calling on her one day, she was told by Susanna Phillips that Dr. Burney could not spare Fanny, to which she responded, "Is a woman a minor for ever in your country? It seems to me your sister is like a girl of fourteen."

Fanny Burney had another consideration in mind when she dropped Mme. de Staël, Talleyrand and Co. – she and d'Arblay had fallen in love. Not only was he a single man not in possession of a good fortune, but with the Jacobin Terror threatening to spill across the borders and perhaps the Channel, all French aliens were suspected of being fifth columnists. Moreover, she had her position to consider, the pension she received from the Royal Family. She had to steer clear of them and it was only after the most delicate negotiations with her father and Royal intermediaries that she and d'Arblay were able to marry in the little Norman church of Mickleham.

Still, her behaviour is in cold contrast to Mme. de Staël's, who constantly, and often recklessly, risked her life attempting to save friends from the tumbrels. But then she, like Talleyrand, thrilled to intrigue. When Napoleon asked him whether Mme. de

Staël was a good friend, he replied, "She is such a good friend that she would throw all her acquaintances into the water for the pleasure of fishing them out again."

Then suddenly, almost as soon as it had started, it all ended, with the côterie dispersed. Talleyrand, expelled for subversion, bought a passage on the *William Penn* to America with Mme. de Staël's money (in transit he met Benedict Arnold!). A true Machiavel, he was never at a loss, never missed the main chance, going from strength to strength, stealthily engineering Napoleon's rise to the head of the Directory and later, after his fall from grace with the jumped-up Corsican, outmaneuvering Castlereagh, Metternich and the allies at the Congress of Vienna, in the end having obtained what he'd always wanted for France, a constitutional monarchy. He eventually wound up as Louis-Philippe's Ambassador to the Court of St James, and lived long and well enough to witness another uprising, in 1830, observing that "those who did not live before the Revolution can never know how sweet life could be." Upon hearing of Talleyrand's death, a diplomat was reported to have said, "What did he mean by that?"

With a new swain in tow, Mme. de Staël managed to return to her native Geneva, rejoining her dull Swedish husband, Baron de Staël; her ardour for Narbonne had cooled (Narbonne, who became Napoleon's aide de campe, was killed at the Siege of Torgau in Saxony). Talleyrand proved not to be a good friend, undercutting her with Napoleon. For much of the rest of her "miserable gypsy life" she was on the move, from Russia, to Sweden, to London, finally returning to France after Waterloo (her greatest novel, CORINNE, and the seminal work, DE L'ALLEMAGNE [1813], which was greatly responsible for introducing German literature and philosophy to the French intelligentsia, much the way Voltaire's LETTRES PHILOSOPHIQUES had done for England, appeared in exile). The satisfaction of outfoxing Napoleon's policemen and prosecutors was short-lived – the hounding, the itinerant way of life had broken her health and she died much too young at 50. "She is a woman by herself," said Byron, "and she has done more than all the rest of them together, intellectually – she ought to have been a man."

Fanny Burney, newly married at 41, would live happily ever after. While she never saw Mme. de Staël again, she looked back on those Juniper Hall days with fondness, writing, "Ah what days were those of conversational perfection, of wit, gaiety, repartee, information, badinage and eloquence." More in character was her tidy little comment on finding a cache of Mme. de Staël's letters to Narbonne which her husband had kept for his old comrade: "Lettres brûlantes à brûler – a fine moral lesson too."

Though Jonathan Miller has said that "the English would wade through a lake of pus to get to a country house," few bother to make the pilgrimage to Juniper Hall today. Talleyrand and Mme. de Staël are barely remembered now or, rather, their significance is underplayed; Fanny Burney, naturally, has a devoted following, and half the roads and lanes in the area seem to be named after her and her relatives. Cooper's book is sadly out of print, and to those who might recollect his name or subject matter, France means hols in Dordogne, the Revolution New Labour. It's somehow fitting that the only hint of Juniper Hall's past is a plain brown, hard to read plaque on the gateway which was donated by the European Union's cultural commission in 1992.

SMALL FRY

D.F. Lewis

The magic times always seemed to be saved for a Sunday, when Father took us for views. His old jalopy took the steep winding roads in its stride. Up a Welsh hill, with our breath snatched away, we gazed awestruck at the way God was able to make things so really big and high, as if He were showing off for the benefit of us small fry.

Sometimes, Father took us to the caves instead, but on those trips Aunt Gwenda had to come, too, because she disliked heights – or so she maintained. The fact that she preferred dark places below ground to wide airy spaces mystified us underlings. I suspected Father was rather fond of Aunt Gwenda. Mother did not have any say as to who came on those outings. She usually sat in the back of the car and knitted shawls. It had been quite a while since she filled the front passenger-seat and map-read us through the valleys. Something to do with safety-belts.

One Sunday in particular, Aunt Gwenda was away in South Wales for the duration, undertaking one of her famous excursions along the Gower Coast. They were famous to us little ones, in any event, if not to anybody beyond our circle. She spoke about little else to us small tots. During her absence this time, we took the opportunity to visit one of the least accessible viewpoints, where one could often look down at light aircraft following the valley below. The road merely took Father's jalopy three-quarters of the way up. The rest was on foot. Mother stayed in the back seat, wielding her crochet hook as if she wanted eyes for bait. But that was Father's turn of phrase. Not mine. He was a strange cove, if that is not an even stranger expression to use about one's Dad. From him I inherited the everpresent search for the exact words to describe things. Language for him was the placing of idiosyncratic and little used words upon a potter's wheel and moulding them beyond their meanings. Only hindsight and maturity has given me that angle upon my own father. He could have summed it up much better himself, however.

In many ways, this was his story, with more bearing on him than on the likes of us next generation. I merely tried to follow his ways of thinking and of expressing himself, inevitably mixed with my own clumsinesses and false perspectives. But, there was little I could do about that, even if it was important to scry the smoke that choked memories of those of us too young to care. Through a filial filter faintly.

Yet how could I speak for so many? Several tongues into one – only Red Indians with their finger-lollipop whooping and pow-wows and smoke signals could untangle the mixed messages. And when we reached the viewpoint that particular Sunday, out of breath and excited, we tried to read the thousand chimneys of the town below us. There, an old lady scrimping on the fuel, the smoke so thin. Here, a fat man puffing on his pipe. There, a rich man browning ten bob notes upon the forking tongues of flame. Here, a musician belching strings of black notes from his smokestack for the crows to croak and screech. There, a bonfire on the allotments – with the war-dance of tiny people around its conflagration.

Father laughed at us little ones' amateurish attempts to create sense out of randomness. Then he stated: "People think they're sane – but seen from this distance,

you know the truth of it." His voice, with a tantalising Welsh lilt, was far-away, as if he were talking to himself. Though, he knew we listened.

Aunt Gwenda, if she had been present, would have said something cutting in reply. We kept dumb and continued to scry the smoke.

We did not always visit natural attractions, however. Yet no tourist gathering-spots (ancient or otherwise) seemed to carry the same enjoyment as our hill journeys. The untidy crowds of ordinary folk at official "sights" were ever eager for information that they didn't know they wanted; the surly admission lady who doled out endless spools of tickets from behind a bevy of pot plants; other peoples' children who started off interested but ended up fractious: all conspired against my love of mystery. Except, of course, on that day when we visited St. David's Cathedral.

I had managed to shake off my companions, having spotted an interesting gargoyle from what seemed a mile off – and, indeed, there were some inscrutable specimens of gargoyle on various corners which, I was convinced, none of the tourists proper could even see, least of all appreciate. One had real tears. Then I actually saw figures emerging from previously empty walls, with stone bones, but not really stone at all. Small and impish and, yes, demonic. A few with vestiges of wings on their heads where hair should have been. They gaped and mouthed silently at individuals that they seemed to have picked out from the oblivious tourists. Somewhat like holograms, too. Holograms of grey stone. Eventually, a childish, or rather elfin, simian-like creature hopped up to me. It smiled slowly, as if it knew smiles were attractive to small people like me, giving the impression that it had never formed a smile before – forcing out a grunt which sounded more obscene than anything I had ever heard then (or since). It lingered in my vicinity for a few extra seconds when the others of its kind had vanished. I realised that it had fallen in love with me: I could actually watch the beat of its bleeding heart, the only thing which was not stone nor hologram-like. When my companions (Dad and some lesser known family members) emerged from their dose of history, they scratched their heads, trying to find one of their party whom they fleetingly believed they were about to leave behind. A young girl among them shed real tears as the others broke faith and ambled off into the blinding daylight. I made a painstaking smile and forthwith melted back into the stone – waiting to shed unfathomability upon another unsuspecting clutch of visitors.

All part of my confused sub-teenage thinking, no doubt: believing I was someone else. Through a two-way mirror looking-glassly.

Whatever the case, I have forgotten to tell about Dorothy Danks, Les, Stan, Todd and Jojo – people Aunt Gwenda and Mother knew, although Mother never let their names pass her lips. There was a difference between being mealy-mouthed and forgetful, and Mother was the latter. Aunt Gwenda simply referred to them in passing, as if it were her duty to give an airing to skeletons in her cupboard rather than allow them to moulder and fester with their flesh grown back on like corpses.

We did meet Todd, at least once. He said he was a businessman from Cardiff – except the glint in his eyes and the slope of his nose made us youngsters see him more as an itinerant salesman of romany mien than a big shot who lorded it about in an office. Aunt Gwenda allowed his arm to slither round her shoulder, whilst Mother winced and tut-tutted. Father scowled. We children laughed, more in an act of defiance at the grown-ups' seriousness than there being anything at which to laugh. We knew there would be no excursions that weekend, high or low.

We once met Dorothy Danks, too, although we did not know it was her at the time. She did a Variety act with balloons and even dressed in stage sequins on quite ordinary evenings. When she bustled into the room one Christmas Eve, armed with presents for people she had not met before, I noticed that Todd (who was as surprised at her abrupt arrival as anyone) withdrew into himself like a tortoise, making undergrunts instead of the outrageous statements that were usually his wont. Her dress was brilliant, more showy than the Christmas decorations, and I found her gushing manner overbearing. Still, the presents were quite nice. How she knew I wanted a model lorry that carried logs was a mystery. I had told no one. Apparently, Jojo was the parrot that she used in her act. Her stage name was Dorothy Danks, but we were told to call her Aunt Violet. But whose sister she was to warrant the epithet Aunt was again a mystery. Before balloons, she performed an act, she told told us, with smoke: sculpting it into ephemeral shapes that made audiences gasp. Of course, such Variety turns became old hat. It was good to know that I was involved with people active at the closing edge of such an era of showmanship. Made me feel more loyalty to the past that to the present.

The future was indeed a no man's land for most of us, in any event. The wars intervened. Nobody predicted the outcome, of course. I was the only one among us left to remember Mother and Father, Aunt Gwenda, Dorothy Danks &c. We never met Les and Stan. Who they were and where they fitted in were more mysteries. With all the various mysteries, my whole childhood seemed one long mystery. But that was far from the case. Life was relatively straightforward, everything, that was, except the matters of which I have spoken.

Les and Stan were indeed mysteries. Yet they were known by both Todd and Dorothy Danks – and went on to be reasonably important in television.

Television was then a phenomenon of the future, so should not have come within the ambit of my memoirs. How I knew all this, I have forgotten. And mysteries were really memories that had gone wrong. Not mysteries at all, really. Simply fallibility. Through a mental muslin dimly.

And as the years stretched on into war, we continued to scry the smoke where we were able.

That Christmas, we all played Blindman's Buff in the parlour. I say "all", but Todd stayed upstairs where it sounded as if he were playing Blindman's Buff on his own, barging into furniture and floundering from wall to wall. Mother and Father did not play, either, but watched the rest of us, Aunt Gwenda and Dorothy Danks included, playing the fool as we dressed each other in blindfolds and mimicked ancient mummers that were said to haunt the ground floor. Sometimes we garbed each other in fancy-dress, despite the embarrassments. Mother clicked her knitting-needles. Father called out encouragements and sometimes assisted us younger ones with calls of "hot" and "cold" when we were seeking things in the room or upon each other's persons.

One Easter, some of us nippers had grown up and left home. However, there were sufficient left for there to be giggles and sobs, shouts and whinges, throughout the day. Mother had now been accepted by all and sundry as congenitally senile. If this fact had been realised years before, it would have saved a lot of unnecessary heartache. Todd had not visited us for ages, so it was a great surprise when Nancy (one of us younger set) claimed to have spotted his face at the kitchen window. There one second,

gone the next, I think was the trite expression she employed. But being one of the youngest, nobody believed Nancy, least of all criticised her use of English.

Aunt Gwenda was said to be away in Llanelli with a fellow called Asa Toth, although I myself suspected she was in the small aeroplane that buzzed our house every Sunday morning. However, Father had intimated to those of us teenagers able to understand him that Aunt Gwenda had forgotten about our family altogether. She had evidently also forgotten about Jojo the parrot who now had pride of place in our parlour (left by her on one of her last visits – as a final keepsake, as it turned out). There was not much call for Variety acts in her vein any more. Most of the newer breed of artist were soon to appear on black and white television (under the aegis of Les and Stan, no doubt).

In our parlour, there was a log-burning stove: made of black metal, with a raised Celtic design on the front depicting a deer and penitent male youth entwined with foliage. There were knobs, twiddles, rods and hinged openings on the side which amused me to think were the valves of a musical instrument, the medium of smoke pre-empting that of sound. Jojo often made squawking noises when people were prodding and poking at the stove, as if he were annoyed with either the irritating racket or the surplus smoke in the parlour thus engendered. But, today, he was screeching fit to raise his great grandfather from his resting-place amid the Pieces of Eight, buried beneath the silky sands of some Pacific Shangri-La. I followed the angle of what I took to be Jojo's gaze towards the net-choked window, where the street lamp was still weaker than the seeping light of dusk. There I made out the muzzy outline of a head. It could have been anybody, but it could not be Aunt Gwenda, nor was it Mother, as I knew she was safely ensconced in her truckle in the master bedroom. But since my mind was racing with what Nancy had told the rest of us striplings earlier, I convinced myself it was Todd – complete with bow-tie and shifty dusky face. The face grimaced and mouthed a message, as if it were initiating a romantic liaison with me or conducting pre-elopement arrangements. I tossed my head in a haughty manner and scuttled from the parlour amid the flurry of my skirts.

Mother had knocked on the ceiling: a massive pounding that betokened a need for company or cough medicine. So I took the opportunity to scurry up the steep stairs and, hearing a wireless in another room giving forth with the shipping forecast, I was thankful that at least our family had eschewed television and were satisfied with the small mercies of sound without pictures. The trouble was that the announcer sounded tipsy. That was quite tasteless, especially in view of him warning of force-niners. But why was a wireless a wireless. It had nothing but wires, it seemed to me. I found Mother covered in something from which selective memory thankfully later protected me. Probably one of a new lot of little ones trying to cuddle her.

Nancy grew up into a beautiful woman – whilst I was put out to pasture, not exactly a spinster, more a mother without children or wife without husband. Yet they were all there, despite being less than ghosts. I read somewhere in a newspaper of Dorothy Danks. She became an impresario. Mother died, of course. In subsequent nightmares of mine, she had climbed to the roof, choked on chimney smoke and skewered herself on the TV aerial – as a goggled pilot tried to rescue her by chopper. Aunt Gwenda married Asa Toth in Swansea. Father went to join them. Various siblings and cousins of mine fought in the odd continental war – and I burnt unread newspapers on bonfires in the back garden of our home. In that way, I could never follow the trends of such wars nor hear about the deaths of people I loved. Yet I did try

to scry, I really did try to scry, through a TV smokescreen squarely or, since the excursions of Aunt Gwenda were to be emulated, if not believed, a Phileas Fogg roundly.

But, now, amid my curdled thoughts that age has brought me, I often wonder whether what I saw that day in Mother's bedroom covering her was not a child, indeed, no small fry at all. A dark spirit floating down ... or an evil gargoylic hologram stiffening back to stone ... or a new variety trick? In hindsight, her dear sweet head, beginning with the mouth, did doubtless strain to blow the first pink party balloon, a long vein-knotted one. The first of many. Through a medusa wirelessly.

LIVE AT STORYVILLE

Leonce Gaiter

> *"From Storyville, the voice of Billie Holiday. Good evening everyone, this is John McClellan, speaking to you from George Wein's Storyville at the Copley Square Hotel in Boston. Tonight we bring you the songs of Lady Day — Billie Holiday, accompanied by Carl Drinkert at the piano, Jimmy Wood on bass, and Peter Lippman at the drums. As usual we try to bring you the artists who appear at Storyville at their natural, relaxed best. In fact, as much as possible, unaware of the broadcast in progress. So there'll be no fancy introductions or fanfares, just music. Wherever you are with your radio, we hope you'll imagine that you've just stepped into Storyville, you've been seated at a table, and now you're ready to listen to Billie Holiday."*

I hadn't seen her in a couple of years. I had heard nothing but trouble about her. I didn't know she'd be playing here.

A spotlight shot down on a microphone, barely throwing light on the other musicians. The stage looked black and empty.

"...And now ladies and gentlemen," the announcer said, "the very wonderful Lady Day, Miss Billie Holiday."

I headed to the men's room. I had already set up the colognes, the towels, the combs. I checked myself in the mirror, and saw what I expected. There were lines on my face from the drinking days and what hair was left was gray. I took my seat. The show had just started. Nobody'd be coming in here for a while. You had to give them time to get some liquor down. When someone good played, I propped the door open, just a bit, so I could listen.

The piano started out alone, some lonesome chords."*Away from the city that hurts and mocks..."* I knew this one. She had always had a way with those first words. *"I'm standing alone, by the desolate docks."* It was almost as if she spoke them, not really singing, just saying it. She sounded rougher now, but not bad. She'd sounded better a couple of years ago, but hell, I *looked* better a couple of years ago. I didn't hear her complaining.

In those first few lines, she still had that girlish sound in her voice, like a little girl who had seen too much and done too much and still couldn't figure out why so much of it turned out wrong. I wondered what kind of thoughts it took to make sounds like that. I'd done just about everything she had; and I was sitting in a toilet in George Wein's Storyville. She was on the stage. I wanted to sneak out to see if she looked as bad as I had heard she did.

"In the still and the chill of the night."

It was so offhand, but you got cold when she said it, like a wind was blowing with no one around. I guessed you had to be innocent, way deep down, to sound like that. Maybe that was it. I sure as hell wasn't innocent. You had to do what came along,

not even think if it was right or wrong. I had always known what I was doing. I had known it was good, or known it was no good; and I'd done it anyway. I had always known.

"I see the horizon
"The great unknown
"My heart has an ache
"It's as heavy as stone
"Will the dawn comin' on make it light?"

"Will the dawn comin' on make it light?" I liked that one. You didn't know if she was talking about her heart or the sky.

The door creaked open. If they came this early they were probably drunk, drunk enough to leak all over the floor. I'd have to wipe it up. I stood slowly, a bit stooped. I looked older like that. They liked me old. I got bigger tips that way.

"How you doin', sir?" I said.

"Hm," the man barely replied.

A lot of them wouldn't talk, but this one looked mad, like he'd been dragged here. He wore a good suit, the kind you saw in windows but would never be able to buy — blue — bright, like the ones in the big, color movies. He wore fine shoes, too. His hair was a little gray, just enough to show. My gray made me look scraggly. Gray hair made this one look even richer.

The band had kicked in but the door was closed, so I couldn't hear her sing. When he left I would listen some more.

The man left the stall still tucking himself in. Great big ol' thing too, wavin' it around like a whip. I stood ready with a clean white towel.

"Enjoyin' the show, sir?" Great big white man. Stood about a half a foot taller than me.

The man looked at himself in the mirror as he washed his hands. He made faces, puffing out his cheeks, moving his lips around to look at his teeth, tilting his head back to see the chin. What was he looking for?

He finally noticed my face next to his in the mirror. He stopped making faces.

"Let's just say," the man finally answered, taking the towel I offered and drying his hands, "it's not what I would have wanted to see."

"Where are you?
"Have you forgotten?
"Will you return?"

"You don't like jazz music?"

"Some. Not this."

"She's almost a legend."

"That's what my wife says. She's been reading about her. I say she just can't sing anymore."

"Had a hard life, I hear."

"I'm not paying good money to hear her hard life."

He handed back the towel, then dropped some change in the tip glass.

"Thank you, sir. Have a good evening."

I put the towel in the hamper. Two quarters in the tip jar. Not bad. I walked into the stall. That man could have been wearing dollar bills, but his eyes were just too red. And yep, he had sprayed all over the place.

I wiped it up, went back to the sink, wiped it clean, wiped the splashed water drops from the shiny white tiles.

I put my prop back in the door and took a seat. I sat still to listen.

"I cover the waterfront

"I'm watching the sea..."

She sounded so different now. Two years ago she had been here. Just two years ago.

§

Lester Young and Ben Webster, those guys were swing, mellow, like they had some hurt way deep down, but they didn't think too much about it. It was just living to them. When I got back from the war, though, it had all changed.

Back in '41, a friend of mine in Chicago was glad they'd bombed Pearl Harbor. He thought black folks needed a war. "Good for the colored man," he said. "If the whites've got to fight wid 'im, can't look down his nose if he wanna keep on livin'." That sounded fine and dandy but I didn't want to fight next to anyone. I didn't want to fight, and I didn't want to die.

I joined up though, right in '42. That was all anyone was doing. I had been working since I was 16, nothing big, no plans. The jobs just kept a roof over my head and food in my mouth. This, this war, fighting off the Germans and the Japs, I really thought it might get the whole world somewhere if it came out right. I figured the only way I'd get a piece of it, a piece of the good — when it was over — was if I joined up. Leaving wouldn't matter. The only thing I'd miss would be the music. Me? No one would miss me.

§

I was young and alone, working when I could, lining up for food in '30 like everyone else. I used to walk by this bright shiny club and saw all these fine colored folks going inside. Pretty women. I had never seen jewels before, but these women had them, and I knew they were real. I could just tell. The men's hair was shiny as their shoes. Some drove up in big, long cars. I started hanging around, just to watch the shining people come and go, just to know that there were folks as pretty as all that.

The big, mean-looking man at the door kept me at a distance. One night he yelled, "Come here, boy." I was scared, but I went. "There's a man inside," he said. "He's right by the curtains in a white jacket and black bow tie. Go run this paper to him."

I took the folded note and backed into the club, keeping an eye on the doorman, just in case. Once inside, I turned around and got struck blind by the lights. It was like a room full of Christmas trees. The music was loud. Musicians sat on the stage holding bright horns and big fiddles, and one man stood in a pool of light and played sounds so big and round and sweet you knew that if you tasted 'em, you'd never go hungry again.

I just stood there and listened to that great big sound and saw all the shining lights and knew that this was as close to home as I would ever come. When the song ended, a yellow-skinned man in a big white suit walked up to the microphone and thanked Johnny Hodges on the saxophone.

I remembered the paper in my hand. I found the man in a bow tie. He looked at me funny, so I held the paper way out toward him to let him know I had a reason to be there. The man opened the paper and read it and then looked at me.

"You eat today?" the man asked.

I shook my head up and down. Then side to side. I was still hungry. I had stood in line that afternoon and got a little before they ran out, but I was still hungry.

"Go on straight back there. Lenny." He called to a man passing by. "Tell Ellis to get this boy some food and then get him doin' somethin'."

They needed someone to bus tables and double up on the washing. That's how I started back in 1930. All through the depression I worked that club — door, bouncer, waiter, maitre d'. Soon, those fine people treated me like I was one of them. The same ones came night after night. The place was like home and they treated me like family. Mostly we talked about the music — who was on the stand and how the sounds compared to the last time they came through — who had the sweetest horn or the most thumpin' bass. Often, we just stood and listened. Duke Ellington played there. Count Basie came through. Art Tatum played the piano late one night and scooted over and taught me how to pluck a little tune. I had a drink with Louis Armstrong. Billie Holiday.

§

Shipping out in 1942, there were all these guys with wives and kids, or mothers, fathers, sisters, cousins, dogs — all these folks crying and carrying on, seeing them off.

I wanted the music there. I wanted Lester out there and Duke and Cootie Williams in their fine suits with their shiny gold horns or at the piano, saying goodbye to me. That's the way it should have been.

They shipped me off to the Pacific. I knew there would be real fighting. I had heard of soft duty where you clipped newspaper stories or stapled things all day. I knew this wasn't one of those. Some of the guys I knew looked forward to it. They sounded like they wanted to kill something — anything. Others kept their mouths shut. That's what I did.

I never would have imagined it. I didn't know anyplace could be that green, or that thick, or wet, or hot. I had never seen someplace I didn't belong to so much. There weren't even paths to walk on. The dirt and the bugs owned the whole thing. The thick trees and bushes grew up from the ground and different ones hung down from the trees to meet them, so thick they were like green air that you couldn't breathe.

It was so wet, everything gave off steam. The air was so thick you felt yourself moving through it, like you should push it aside to make the going easier. They told me in school about prehistoric times, and how all the animals and dinosaurs ruled the earth before any men set foot on it. They were here. There were things I had never seen before, bugs and such flying around that got in your mouth and your eyes, like they attacked you 'cause they wanted you out, or just wanted to touch you and find out what you were.

I was wet from the day I set foot on that island until the day I left. You dripped sweat in your eyes and couldn't see. Nothing ever dried. Everyone smelled. The clothes on you, your hair, sometimes even your skin, mildewed, the smell so bad it made you sick. But you couldn't get away, not from yourself, not from your own flesh. The stench went with you everywhere.

Some of them almost killed each other before they ever saw a Japanese. Early on, two men got picked off by snipers, and everyone got scared, and tense. People barely spoke to each other. Mean fights broke out. They had been marching along, and one

man just fell, like a puppet that had its strings cut. Then another. I hadn't heard a thing. No gunshots. Nothing. Those men died.

After you watch a couple of folks die, you get scared. You think you know what's going to happen. They tell you what will happen. You think you can imagine what it's like, but you can't. You don't know what it's like. To see a hole in a person, something just rip through his body like it was paper. You expect him to keep on walking, like he ripped a shirt or something. Then you see the blood, and if the hole's big enough, you see what's inside him start leaking out. Sometimes they just look surprised, like it didn't even hurt. They look down at themselves like they were looking at someone elses' blood and bones. Then it hits them, like they're gasping for air all of a sudden.

I had seen some of them start screaming. Not screaming at anything or anyone, just sounds, screaming, so loud and so hard you didn't think they would ever stop, like they would just stand there with blood pouring out of them, eyes as big as suns, screaming. When they get that bad, they don't stop until some guys wrestle them to the ground and a medic shoots them full of something.

Some start running, leaking blood behind them like a hose, an arm half dangling off, running and running and you have to chase them down because they'd run until they just couldn't run anymore, or until they died. And, like those first with the sniper, some just die. Quickly, looking like something blew up right inside them, tearing them apart and throwing little pieces all over.

When you've seen that, when you have gotten their blood on you, when you can still smell it or hear the screaming in your head even though it's stopped, when you stumble on a body that blew up in that heat, like someone pumped air into it until it busted open, and you watch the plants and the bugs crawling all over it, eating it, living on it, then you get scared. When people get scared they act crazy. I saw men ready to kill each other over shoelaces. I thought some of them just went plumb crazy. Like the ones who climbed up on a pile of Jap bodies, all smelling up to high heaven in that heat, things already eating them to the bone. They crawled up on that pile and opened up the dead bodies' mouths and used their knives to knock the gold fillings out. They cut off fingers to take gold rings, and I knew they'd just lost their minds.

I got scared, too. But I took the music with me. I'd sit there smelling myself and dripping sweat that wouldn't dry, still as a stone and just as quiet, holding a gun in my hand that always seemed like it was just plopped there, like magic, one second ago it wasn't there and now it was and I didn't know what I was supposed to do with it. I sat there in that jungle with the music. "Creole Love Call," Cootie Williams' horn riding over all the brass, like a wily drunk walking on velvet, the beat in my head like Jimmy Blanton sat right there thumping it. I didn't face guns I couldn't see. If I walked through that tangle of green I would see a clearing with a bandstand and a full brass orchestra playing just for me, Duke Ellington in a white suit in front of it, his whole body bouncing up and down, his toe tapping to the music he coaxed out of them. That got me through a couple of months out there.

Over time, though, the music changed. There wasn't the full band any more. It was just one. Ben Webster maybe, playing that big horn so pretty it made you sigh. Ben Webster out there like he was lost. Marching along, staring at some man's sweat-stained back, I tried to bring the whole band back again. Only one or two made it. Duke for a minute, at the piano, but like a ghost, not all there. Then he would disappear.

Soon, the music stopped altogether. Some guys carried crosses around their necks. They rubbed them for luck. One guy had a baseball card in his pocket all the

time. He almost killed some joker he thought had taken it. He died. Shrapnel got him. No one said it but they all thought it was because of the card. After that, no one told anyone else about their charms. They kept them secret. I felt safe because mine was in my head. No one could take that away. I never dreamt it would leave me — lost — like I dropped it somewhere in that jungle and couldn't find it again.

When that stuff chewed through me I wished it was there. I wanted it more than I wanted the pain to go away. It wasn't even pain any more, it hurt so bad. It was like my legs were on fire. I didn't want to be like those others. I didn't want to be a screamer, and I couldn't be a runner. I wanted the music so I wouldn't have to hear the ringing in my ears. I heard the blood rushing through my veins as clearly as water through a faucet. I didn't want to hear the dirt and leaves and sticks crack underfoot as soldiers ran toward me. I couldn't really hear their voices. It was just the little things I heard, the blood in my ears, and fatigues rustling, scissors cutting the cloth from me, the clanking and jangling of canteens and guns.

I passed out then, and had no dreams.

§

Waking up, I didn't open my eyes. They felt like they had been glued shut, like it would take all my strength to raise my eyelids. So I just lay there, staring at the nothing in my head. My hands tingled. I was lying down. I knew that. The last thing I remembered was walking in that jungle. Now I was lying down with my eyes shut. When I finally forced them open, I didn't see much more than I had with them closed.

It was night, dark out. I saw little lights here and there. I was inside and I wasn't hot. I wasn't wet like I had been for months. It smelled clean here.

Light streamed from a doorway, and I knew I had to be in a hospital. I knew a nurse when I saw one. I hadn't seen a woman in a long time, but I hadn't forgotten what one looked like. And this was one, wearing a little white hat. She said something to me. I didn't understand. I heard the words, sort of, but it was muddled. I could hear her, but it was as if she spoke the words backwards, and I had to make them straight again.

I was tired. I wanted to go to sleep and not sit here and figure out what this nurse was saying. That's what I did. I closed my eyes and slept.

When I woke up again it was day. I remembered I was in a hospital. I moved my head without even thinking about it and saw a bunch of other beds to my right and left, and in front. Another nurse came up to me. It might have been the same one.

"Lie still," she said, and felt my wrist and wrapped something around my arm. Later, I thought I should have asked why I was there, but I didn't. I was just glad to be cool, and I knew I could sleep if I wanted to. No one would kill me if I slept.

A man came by and lifted up my eyelids and shone a light in my eyes. They pulled and tugged at me for a while and then they left me alone. I was glad. I didn't want anyone bothering me. I wanted to lie still, like I was, like I was half-asleep and nothing could bother me. I breathed deeply, and closed my eyes.

Next time I woke up someone was poking at me. A nurse and a doctor stood over me, talking at me.

"We want you to swallow this."

They put something in my mouth. One of them held my head up while they put a glass to my mouth. I drank the water, and felt some of it spill on my chin and neck. Then they laid my head back down.

"Are you hungry?" the man asked.

I just looked at him. Hunger never crossed my mind. I felt like all that was behind me, like I didn't get hungry any more. All I did was lie here. I opened my mouth and it felt like it had been shut for a long time. I swallowed and licked my lips.

"No..," I said.

"You should try to eat something," the man said. "We'll bring you some soup."

"Where is this hospital?" I asked.

"Hawaii," the nurse answered.

"How'd I get all the way here," I said, not expecting an answer.

"How's the leg feel?" the doctor asked.

I hadn't thought about it since the pain stopped. I turned my attention down there for the first time. "Kinda tingles," I answered.

"Just rest," the doctor said. "We'll bring you some soup." He left. The nurse fluffed some pillows under my head.

"What am I in here for?" I looked right at her. She looked surprised. She stopped what she was doing. She was surprised for a minute and looked me in the eye. Then, as if she remembered she couldn't do that, that it wasn't allowed, she went on with what she was doing.

"They had to take your leg," she said, still tucking in my sheets, not looking at me.

"You rest now," she said, and walked away.

She had said "They had to take your leg." Take it where? I could feel it down there. It was sort of numb like the rest of me, but I could feel it.

I smiled. "They had to take your leg," she said.

"Well bring it back goddammit. I'll have a hell of a time tryin' to walk without it." I smiled. I wondered how much of one I had left. I wondered what happened to it. I should have asked them what day it was and what had happened. It got shot off, or blown off, but I didn't remember. That was good. It must have hurt like hell and I didn't remember. I'd have a little less leg. Maybe it was a small price to pay for not remembering them blowing it off, or sawing it off in the middle of a jungle. I wondered if I screamed. Probably screamed my head off. I had never even broken a bone, not even a little finger. I had never been in the hospital, no operation, nothing. I had never had any real pain. I wondered what it felt like.

They worried about me at that hospital. They kept waiting for me to react, to cry or yell, because they had to "take my leg." I never did. I never wanted to. They had me thinking I would. I even waited for it. I watched myself, just like they watched me. But it never happened. Even when I could sit up, and look down and see that the knee wasn't there anymore, just a stump with bandages on it, it still didn't hit me. The music had returned.

Lying there in that quiet room, like from a distance I heard "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue." And ever since then, it had been there. I asked them for a radio but I had to be quiet in the ward. Most of the guys in there were missing something, arms or legs. A white boy near me always wanted to talk. He had the damndest way of talking when the music was just hitting its stride, when I could hear Duke's little "Ha!" prodding the rhythm section and Harry Carney wailing. I ignored him.

"You always look like you're thinkin' about somethin.' What you thinkin'?"

The boy couldn't have been more than 18. They had cut off his arm. Not just his arm. They took most of the shoulder with it. It was like his neck went straight down into his side. "You thinkin' about your girl or somethin'?"

He had this great big smile on his face, like some puppydog. If he had had a tail, it would have been wagging.

My first thought was, what the fuck business is it of yours? I looked at that great big grin and couldn't say it.

"Music," I said. "Thinkin' about music."

"OH WOW!" he said. "I *knew* it was like that. What kind? What kinda music?"

"Jazz music."

He pounded his fist on the bed and threw his head. This boy was crazy.

"I *LOVE* jazz," he shouted. He started wiggling his feet to some beat in his head and thumping his hand on the pillow.

"Bix and Benny."

Just like I'd thought. White guys. "No man. I'm talking Ellington, Billie Holiday, Art Tatum."

"Yeah, I heard some o' that. But Bix man..."

White folks cracked me up. They wanted *everything*. "You ain't heard enough of it," I told him. "I've heard things that'll put your stuff to shame."

"Like what!?" the boy said, like a challenge.

It was a simple question. I spent the next three years answering.

They let me get up pretty soon for physical therapy. It turned out this boy hadn't cried for his arm either. Doctors had us both talk to other doctors about it, about missing something, about knowing you would never get it back. We knew all that. It didn't matter. It was gone.

We got our hands on a radio, and listened. I hadn't heard new sounds in quite a while. The music was harder, faster. We got in trouble for playing it loud. I made the boy listen to Billie sing, and Ella. Oh, what Ella could do. We listened to broadcasts of "Jazz at the Philharmonic." Jazz at the Philharmonic. Wasn't that something. At the Philharmonic! They played symphonies there. And now they played jazz.

I taught that boy to listen. Taught him to listen to every note, and then to listen again to hear everything the drummer did, and then the bass, and then what the background horns played. They had to teach the boy to use his left hand. He had always been right handed. He didn't have much strength in his left hand. They taught him to move again since so much of him was missing. He was just a kid. He got mad, didn't stick with things, didn't have a lot of patience.

I told the boy to think about the music when he got mad. We heard Ben Webster's horn on the radio. You couldn't be mad when you heard Ben Webster's horn. That helped a little. Crutches were nothing. Crutches were easy. I could dance on them pretty soon. The one thing I couldn't get used to was looking at it. The other leg looked worse really. It was chewed up, full of scars. That didn't bother me. But looking at that stump, feeling the scarred skin on it, smooth, like brown glass, that bothered me. I always kept it covered. I put something like a sock on it and only took it off when I had to, and then I never looked at it.

They treated us well, war wounded and all. They gave us money when it was time to go, and helped us find some jobs. Everyone just thought of me and the boy together now. He had gotten pretty good with his other hand. He had learned a lot from the music. He started moving differently. He didn't talk so fast. It sunk in. The slow swing saxophone sunk in. He still got crazy when he wanted to; but there was something else now, that the music taught him, about not taking it all too hard. Knowing it was just living. Maybe he just got a few years older in a couple months; I don't know.

Since we were always together, they asked us both where we wanted to live. The boy looked at me. I let him say it. You could see he was just busting to say it. "New York!" He yelled it. "New York! New York! NEW YORK!" He was bouncing up and down. When he was like that, he drained everything out of you. He was so excited, you just smiled a little. He took all your excitement and spread it around like you would never have dared. I didn't mind, though. He did it for the both of us.

We got jobs in a factory outside Manhattan. We hit town, and put our stuff in a bus station locker. We didn't even think about a place to stay. The first thing we did was check out some clubs. We got on the subway to Harlem and started hopping from club to club — one black man without a leg and a white one missing his arm and some of his side. We must have looked the pair.

We heard all kinds of stuff up there, not the clean stuff, like on the records, but real blowing, real blues, people yelling back up at the stage, urging the players on. The boy was right up there with them too, pumping his one arm up in the air, pounding it on the tables. We had good times.

We found ourselves a little apartment near the job site. The work wasn't bad, in a shipping department, a lot of numbers and counts; things got lost or delayed, rush orders came in. I didn't mind it.

The boy worked on the scheduling, but it wasn't working out. He didn't pay enough attention to it. He got all excited when someone complained or something didn't go right, or someone asked for something special. He shouldn't have been working with details and people.

He kept saying we should move to Manhattan and work in clubs. No club was going to hire us, though. One leg and one arm? People didn't want to see that. They came to forget about all that.

I thought it might have been worth losing that leg for the one night in 1943. Carnegie Hall. I thought jazz at the Philharmonic was something. This was Duke Ellington at *Carnegie Hall*. I had been working a lot, not keeping up with what was going on, and by the time I knew, the show was sold out. Me and the boy went down there that night anyway. I told the girl at the window that we were veterans. I poured it on. We had lost our limbs, and all we wanted was to be inside there and hear Duke Ellington at Carnegie Hall. That would make it better.

She let us in. We had to stand, but she let us in. Didn't charge us a dime either. And inside, there he was again, in that big suit, and all of the players sitting there, just like I had pictured them back in that foul jungle, only this time it was for real. I would finally hear the concert that disappeared when I had needed it so badly. It was as if all of this was just for me, so I could take the music back inside myself. Yes, I heard it again, it played in my head when I needed it, but it hadn't been the same since before the war. Everything outside looked so different that the music didn't sound the same. This would bring back the pretty people I saw in that bright, shiny club. The drinks with Louis Armstrong.

Duke played something called "Black, Brown and Beige," and it was about colored people, about all different kinds of them and how they came here and how they lived. There was one part that Ben Webster played. I had never heard anything like it. God, what he played. It was so beautiful it hurt to hear it. The kind of hurt you want to remember. That day was like an end for me. I read a review in the paper the next morning and it made me think the writer had been somewhere else. The paper said it didn't work, that it didn't hold together, that Ellington should play dance tunes. It made me mad. It was as if they were talking about me, like they were saying

bad things about something *I had* done. That music was all of me, and they were saying bad things about it.

I never heard that song again. Duke never played it. I listened for it, waited for a record, but it never came. I thought that song took all the music that had come before and rolled into one long, lovely thing. No one could do more with it. They didn't understand.

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After about a year, they fired the boy. They finally got sick of him and didn't care that he was a wounded veteran. He started working hotels, little dives. He moved out. He said it was easier if he lived at the places he worked in.

I still went to Manhattan with him on weekends. We heard different sounds now. The music seemed like nothing but notes, just sounds put together. Little blurps and blasts on a fast beat. The boy went crazy for that stuff. We hit a club on 42nd street. These guys played like they were crazy. They didn't try to sound like voices at all. It wasn't like Ben Webster singing a song. These guys wrote stuff you couldn't figure. It didn't have the sass anymore. It didn't have the swing. It wasn't stuff that taught you how to move and how to live. This was more like they had given up on all that. If it hadn't worked, if all the swing and joy hadn't kept people from getting their arms and legs blown off, well, so be it. They would just take things as they were. They would go from there and see what came next. Since I wasn't too crazy about that music, the boy would go out by himself. We stopped seeing so much of each other. I didn't know why. It just happened.

The boy started looking bad. He had dark circles under his eyes. He lost weight. There were stories that those Be-Bop musicians, that they all shot dope, that the dope made them play like that. I didn't believe it. That stuff had always been around, and nobody played like that before. Folks who knew the boy brought back stories. They said he took a lot of stuff. I didn't want to know about it. They said I should talk to him, straighten him out. I never did. It was none of my business. The boy was grown. He could do what he wanted.

We hadn't seen each other in a couple of months when I got a call from the Army. It didn't surprise me. It didn't surprise me any more than when they said I didn't have a leg. I took to wondering what would surprise me. I wanted to get mad, or sad or something but like the other times, I just couldn't. It was just something else. It just happened.

It was just living.

The Army took care of the arrangements. They said the boy didn't have any family. I didn't know. We'd never talked about it. Mainly we talked about the music.

They buried him at Arlington National Cemetery. I didn't go. I knew the Army would give it the works, even if no one was there. The guys in their uniforms with the shiny buttons and swords would stand at attention. They would parade. They'd put up a little white stone, with a little American flag next to it. I had seen it in pictures. That was all you could want.

In 1950, I got myself a fake leg. I didn't even limp that much on it. Most people never knew about it. After I got the leg, I got more work in clubs. It was all different now. The music was different, and you didn't have the regulars like you did before. You didn't have the same people around you all the time. It wasn't like it used to be.

First I moved from the door to waiting tables, but still, there were too many people, and I didn't want to deal with all those people. I went back to the kitchen but I didn't want to wash dishes all the time either. I had my benefits. I didn't need much. I came up to Boston and took this job in George Wein's Storyville.

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Two years ago she would have sung the song playfully. "Too Marvelous For Words." All those words just tripped off her tongue back then and she made you smile. Now, she sounded old. That voice cracked and she seemed to have a hard time getting the words out. There was nothing playful left in her; she was just going through the motions. She only did a few songs. Right before one song she talked to the piano player. You could barely make it out. The words were drawled. She was probably messed up. You could hear a death rattle in her. And you know, she sounded like that was just fine with her. Like there was nothing left to live for anyhow.

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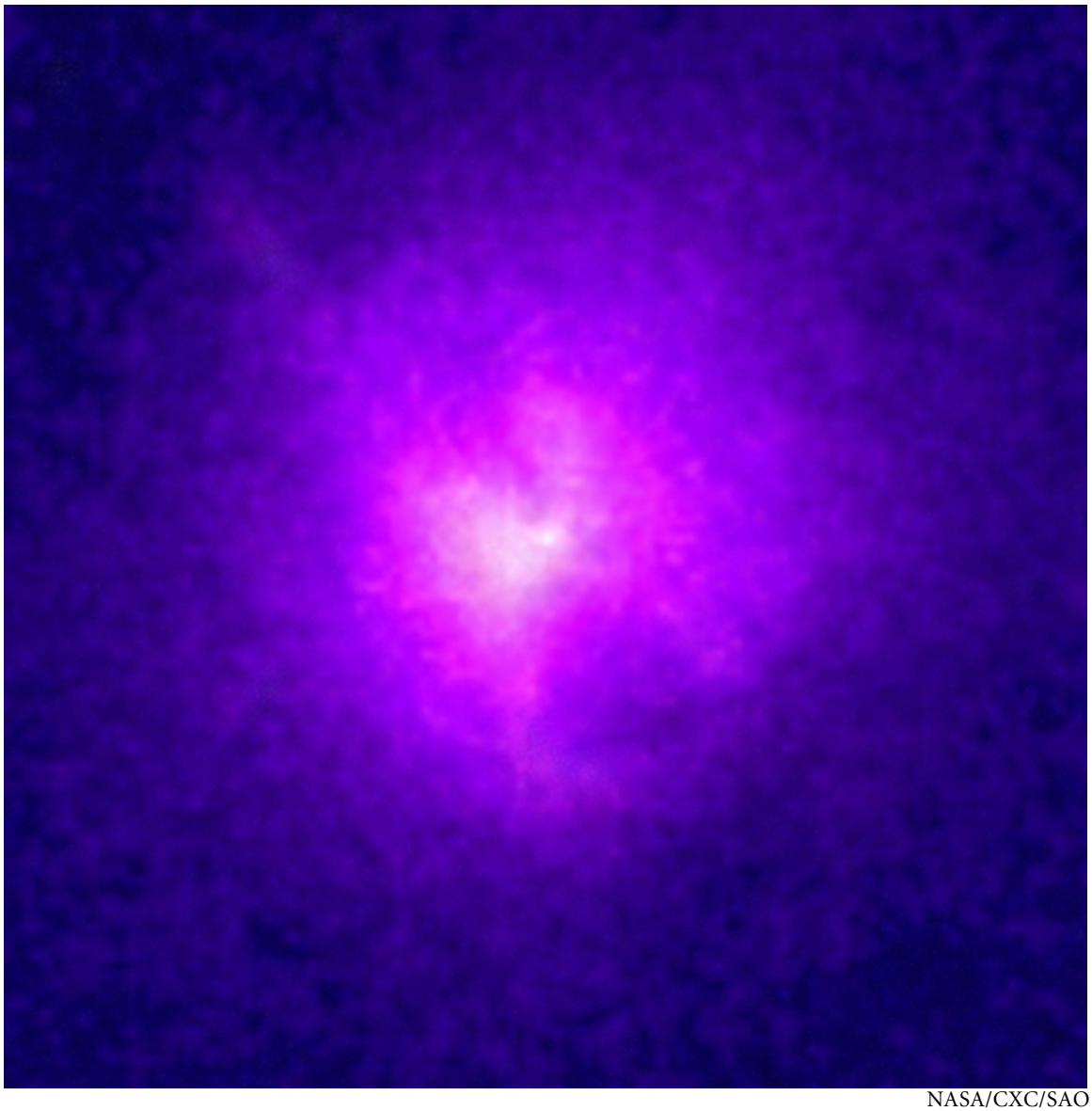
She died a couple of years later.



NASA/CXC/SAO

Hydra A: A cluster of Galaxies in the Constellation Hydra

"The Chandra X-ray image of Hydra A, a galaxy cluster 840 million light years from Earth, shows strands of 35-40 million degree gas embedded in a large cloud of equally hot gas that is several million light years across. Also a bright white wedge of hot multimillion degree gas is seen pushing into the heart of the cluster. As the largest gravitationally bound objects in the universe, galaxy clusters provide crucial clues for understanding the origin and fate of the universe."

http://xrtpub.harvard.edu/photo/0087/index.html and http://chandra.nasa.gov/chandra.html

……..
And yet the world is different from what it seems to be
and we are other than how we see ourselves in our ravings.
People therefore preserve silent integrity
thus earning the respect of their relatives and neighbors.

The purpose of poetry is to remind us
how difficult it is to remain one person,
for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors,
and invisible guests come in and out at will.
……..

Czeslaw Milosz
from "Ars Poetica?"
tr. the author *and* Robert Hass

&&&&&&

THE DOUBLE

Four years ago I spent the new year in Vienna as the guest of an Argentine novelist whom I had known in New York. She lived now on Dorotheergasse, near the Hofburg, in one direction, and in the other, the Graben, the old shopping center of the city. On the second of January I had just come in from the Café Bräunerhof, around the corner, where I had drunk tea, let my boots dry, read *The Guardian* and the *International Herald Tribune*, regarded faces, reflected on literature, travel, death, life, slush in the streets, etc., paid the bill; and then had walked home, where I was hoping some of the cigarette smoke clinging to my hair and sweater would dissipate.

I had been comfortable in the café. The expressions of the Viennese were placid or brutal, their bodies large, heavy, nearly familiar; nearly like Americans'; but these faces held an ancient, civilized knowledge of good and evil. Americans don't know this, I thought; we are not civilized in this sense; we are something else.

As I hung up my coat, though, I glanced at my face in the mirror and realized that, although I am usually taken to be European, I probably looked most nearly Viennese, or Germanic, like my mother's forebears. The novelist said I looked perhaps Hungarian. I was addressed in German, not English, until I spoke. I felt as though I had begun to uncover something I had long known, but not been conscious of knowing.

The next day, January 3, I walked to the Stefansdom, the Cathedral of St. Stephen. This enthralling church, its architecture principally of the flamboyant gothic, was surely the ancient heart of the city beating still. Embedded in the wall near the sanctuary is a Turkish cannonball shot in 1683, during the Siege of Vienna. I looked at it curiously. How could I understand the terror and hatred Western Europe had once felt for the Muslim Turks? How could I comprehend how deeply those emotions were still felt and acted upon in the former lands of the old Empire?

Inside, the baroque interior was decorated – every surface covered! – with carvings of saints in prayer, alert sprites and small animals whisking about, all characters who might once have dwelt in the forests surrounding the city. From angle and niche peered lively stone or lindenwood faces, as if amused by and pitying what

they saw in us who entered their domain. Here is what I saw: beggars at the church doors. They sat patiently on the cold ground with heads bent, eyes lowered. They impersonated penitents, or grieving angels. Their hands were held open in supplication. I wondered: do they pray for themselves who must beg, or for us who are too rich?

Around the perimeter of the cathedral were a number of chapels. The spirit of them was devout but somehow not heavy. Their lightness – legerity – was of a different order than I had noticed further west in Europe, less cynical, closer to the dark wild past of the Holy Roman Empire. Perhaps I thought this, too, because I observed so many women wrapped in superb fur coats. How practical fur was here, as fur had also been when I lived in Alaska; but these skins were not tribal furs in the Alaskan manner; they had been fashioned with the artful mix of civilization and savagery – city and forest being the roots of these fraught words – that I felt living in this cold air. A new savagery had come with the triumph of capitalism, for, visibly, there was great wealth in this city. As for myself, I wore a stone-marten hat made for me long before in Alaska by the woman who had trapped the skins; for the first time, I didn't feel out of place wearing it. I noticed that the fur liked the cold air very much.

That night we wanted to attend a concert in a tiny hall, the Sala Terrena, in the Deutschordens building. Before lunch I went to buy tickets. The building was the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights, the terrifying invaders of Orthodox lands from Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*; I could not help recalling the great Battle on the Ice, or the spectral monk madly playing the organ at the pre-dawn Mass before battle. To the Sala was attached the small Church of St. Elisabeth, and various apartments. In one of them Mozart had been lodged by his patron Colleredo, Archbishop of Salzburg, until Colleredo insulted Mozart by speaking to him as if to a servant, and Mozart resigned from his service, thus becoming the first modern composer to free-lance. He was, actually, physically insulted, being kicked from behind by Colleredo's chamberlain. The Sala held perhaps sixty people seated on small gilt chairs, under a ceiling vaulted, whitewashed, and painted entirely with charming Baroque motifs. There were two ranks of seats, indistinguishable to my eye: the first two rows were first-class and cost about $10 more than the seats I bought, which were in the next four or five rows. The point was display, I supposed: if not of precedence by rank, then by money.

Later on I went to the Kunsthistorisches Museum. I got there by walking from the Café Bräunerhof where I ate lunch, around the corner to the Hofburg, the old imperial palace which also held the Spanische Reitshule, the imperial treasury, the Augustinerkirche (where, I suddenly remembered, I had gone to hear a Mozart Mass twenty-five years before, and then to see a performance at the Riding School), and the various museums. The splendor of the Hofburg affected me as grand, indeed imperial, and yet intimate, with nothing of *la gloire*. I did not think it marked by vanity, unless I could not distinguish it from my own, nor irony; it seemed, rather, practical, the working-place of bureaucrats and administrators. The Austro-Hungarian empire had contained so many nations, not overseas but within riding distance; its frontiers were hundreds, not thousands, of land-miles from the dual capitals, Vienna and Budapest. This had given it a different character than the other great colonial empires. I thought it more nearly resembled our own expansion, though so much smaller in scale. Because I had lived on the Alaskan frontier I found myself thinking again about frontiers, but as borders between nations, not our North American *open spaces*, as they were thought to be, empty and ripe for conquest.

In the Kunsthistorisches Museum I spent several hours in the galleries of the German, Dutch, and Northern European painters; I wanted to see the Breughels. Instead, I stumbled upon a painting that nearly left me weak and was the astonishment of the afternoon.

This was Rogier van der Weyden's Crucifixion triptych. I had seen it reproduced but never could have imagined its depth of feeling, its pity. I felt, that day, that I had never seen painted such wrenching emotion as must have been felt by the Virgin, St. John, the Marys, Joseph of Arimathea. Veronica holding the veil with the face of Christ stared with a look of such deep sadness, yet clarity and lack of delusion, that her eyes went through me like knives. Each of these persons was emotionally true: the Virgin in her grief an old woman clinging to the cross: the terrible, unremediable grief of a mother losing her son; the discreet gaze of one of the Marys, turned away from the awful sight of both mother and son, allowing them privacy, but with heavy heart; the weeping of the other Mary; the elder's knowing sadness of Joseph of Arimathea; the youthful shock and curiosity (and tenderness toward the Virgin) of St. John; the lovely maidenliness and pure grief of Veronica. And Christ on the cross, dead. This was the human side of the crucifixion: a little family and group of friends suffering beyond belief at the torture and death of their son, kinsman, friend, at the hands (as one knew) of an imperial power.

Recovering somewhat, I continued through the galleries. I gazed at "Hunters in Winter" by Pieter Breughel the Elder, about which Randall Jarrell had written a poem. I looked at the Durers, and at the Holbein portraits of English people – it seemed to me I had seen those very faces in London. I heard an English woman say of Cranach's portrait of Judith with the severed head of Holofernes: "Not his best. He doesn't convince us. He's done better." The Rembrandt portraits were lovely: three of himself, one of his wife, Saskia, one of his son Titus reading, one of a husband and an accompanying one of his wife: the two aging people looking sideways at each other with amusement, long-enjoyed pleasure, real liking.

When I left, about 5:30, it was dark and snowing gently. I stood at the top of the steps to enjoy the panorama of the Hofburg, and beyond, the fairy-like illumination of the Rathhaus with its graceful spires.

At midnight we returned from the concert at the Deutschordenhaus, given by a young cellist and a guitar player. On their program was the Schubert sonata, which, with Rostropovich performing, I had listened to on tape often during the last week of the old year. The cellist, a Bulgarian "just beginning his international career," didn't play the piece well; he hadn't thought it through and wasn't agile enough. Nonetheless, the duo received much applause. It is good to encourage the young; but he needed a master teacher and more focus, I thought. Ah, but the tiny room was the oldest concert hall in Vienna, dating from the 13th century.

About the cellist: he looked very much like F., the Indian man I had lived with in Alaska. My friend the novelist noticed it too, although she didn't know about my old lover: she noticed the Tatar or Mongol cast of the Bulgarian's face. Perhaps he had the same 'heart' as F., and a similar lack of discipline.

January 6, Three Kings Day, was a holiday, but because it was the first Saturday of the month the stores were open. Commercial laws were restrictive. Stores closed at 6 p.m. on weekdays and noon on most Saturdays. I wanted to go out and have coffee. At 11 o'clock, I went to Mass at the Augustinerkirche. The women were splendid in their furs.

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On January 7 I met my double, my Other. She was as if a relative from the old world. I stared; she looked away, then back, intently, recognizing what I knew. We looked alike, but as cousins might: she had pantherine eyes, gray-green to my green, and a narrower nose, and was slenderer and taller than I. Her hair, rinsed with a subtle henna, was otherwise nearly as dark as mine; we both had fine skin and high cheekbones, though hers were more nearly Mongol. Each of us was surprised, then pleased, thrilled, and finally, (I at least) disquieted. Her name was Hanne B. She was a translator of Spanish poetry and a professional guide to the monuments of the city. The Argentine novelist had arranged the meeting. Hanne offered to take us through the Habsburg crypts.

We met at the Kapuzinerkirche, the church of the Capuchins, mendicant friars whose austerity of life and design had led the Emperor Matthias and Empress Anne in the 16th century to choose it for the family's burial-place. Hanne spoke to the priest at the guichet with precise deference, as this was not a regular tour-day. She told him she had just got back from Berlin, where she had seen the Hohenzollern crypts. She had found them completely different than the Habsburgs': imperial, Protestant, martial, arrogant.

In the crypts the earliest sarcophagi, made of iron, resembled covered bathtubs and were crowded into lanes in a space that was a bit like an attic or storage room. Hanne was professional and a little impatient when I interrupted with question or comment, for we had only an hour or so, and she had a great deal to tell us.

Let me tell of what I saw on that tour, for its spirit colors this narrative. The history of war, art, displacement, aggrandizement adorned the tombs, and yet they conveyed the obligation of service. Hanne spoke with depth and passion about that ancient dynasty, the Bemburg-Habsburg, with whom she felt, clearly, a profound connection. Somehow – because she was my double? – I felt her passion stirring in myself. The modesty, the humility, even of the baroque and rococo sarcophagi, moved me. It was not my passion, no: a delicate, surprising, not quite welcome, empathy with hers. Yet she was correct, in the European sense: self-contained, courteous. There was an air about her of convent-school decorum; and she was chic. Hers was a Catholic modesty. We do not see it often, here, and may not know what it means when we do see it. But I recognized it, and wondered. I was immensely curious about her. We would have only a little time together; even so, I found myself waiting patiently, as though I knew I would learn more about her. It would be like going back into dreams.

I dreamt about her in half-waking dreams. She had lived in Latin America in the early '70s; this I knew, or suspected. She had had a lover, the man of her life, but left him and returned to Europe; was I told this or did I imagine it? She had written dark, beautiful poems – did I dream of them? – but then had stopped writing, and now worked only as a translator and guide.

We saw each other again, several times, for coffee at the Café Central or the Café Tyroler or a meal at a *stube*. She would never speak of the poems, although, gradually, I understood that she knew that I knew about them. Did I wish to see them? Had I hoped for new work, for the chance to reintroduce her in English? Yes; then, no. How can I say this: the poems no longer mattered? It is not true, exactly; but something else became more important.

During the tour of the Habsburg crypts she told us a curious legend. When an emperor or empress died, the heart was placed in a casket and removed to the Augustinerkirche, while the remaining viscera were buried in the crypt of the

Stefansdom. The body then was dressed in robes and laid in a coffin covered with flowers; the coffin was displayed in the Assumption Chapel in the Hofburg, where the public came to pay its respects.

The state funeral was conducted at the Stefansdom. At the door the coffin was met by the Father Superior, who asked: "Who art thou? Who asks to be admitted here?" Came the reply, in the voice of the High Chamberlain: "I am His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary." "I know him not. Who asks to be admitted here?" "I am the Emperor Franz-Joseph, Apostolic King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, King of Jerusalem, Prince of Transylvania, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cracow, Duke of Lorraine." "I know him not. Who asks to be admitted here?" The High Chamberlain knelt and said humbly: "I am Franz-Joseph, a poor sinner, and I implore the Mercy of Our Lord God." "Then thou mayst enter."

Though the story may have been one such as Joseph Roth might have written, Hanne narrated it with simple credence. She wished to believe. I think she felt pity for the poor sinner; pity and another emotion, whose depth and meaning I could not then gauge.

She was not the same age as I, perhaps ten years younger, yet nothing about her seemed particularly young or old, but separate.

In the Stefensdom, about 6 p.m., the cathedral was half-lit, like a glade in a great forest. Again, I felt the rustle of savagery underneath civilization. Hanne said the Habsburgs had looked death in the eye; it was part of life.

After I left Vienna, we corresponded for a while. I had supposed more or less correctly about her life; she confirmed my guesses with pleased surprise. There had been poems once, but none for some time. The same was true for me. She felt herself responsible for several people who were not well, and her letters grew sadder, briefer, less frequent. Since then, much has happened; I've aged; surely we no longer resemble each other. From the Argentine novelist I've heard she is happy and successful in her work.

In the memory of my imagination, she is one of four women meeting for coffee on a cold afternoon. They are walking into the Café Schwartzenburg. One is Karin, an American married to a French interpreter, who has lived in Vienna for two decades and is a writer and arts organizer. She is blonde, with strong teeth and a clear, smiling Dutch face under a velvet bonnet. The next is Vicky, the Argentine novelist, with golden curls and kohl-rimmed eyes; she is swathed in black like a woman in purdah and wears a small black pillbox with a black shawl pulled over it against the wind. Hanne resembles a young woman of the Wiener Werkstatte with her geometric haircut (like mine) and a beret pulled on as a cloche: dark, mysterious, aggressive and nun-like at the same time. Finally, there is me; but I cannot see myself so easily now. We might in our variety have looked like women of the old Empire; we are part of the new multicultural turbocapitalist world.

-KM

See also:

"Folly, Love, St. Augustine," *Archipelago*, Vol. 3, No. 3
"On Memory," Vol. 3, No. 2
"Passion," Vol. 3, No. 1
"A Flea," Vol. 2, No. 4
"On Love," Vol. 2, No. 3
"Fantastic Design, with Nooses," Vol. 2, No. 1
"Kundera's Music Teacher," Vol. 1, No. 4

Recommended Reading

> The combination of these two facts – the longing in the depth of the heart for absolute good, and the power, though only latent, of directing attention and love to a reality beyond the world and of receiving good from it – constitutes a link which attaches every man without exception to that other reality. Whoever recognizes that reality recognizes that link. Because of it, he holds every human being without any exception as something sacred to which he is bound to show respect. This is the only possible motive for universal respect towards all human beings.
>
> Simone Weil
> "Draft for A Statement of Human Obligations"
> SIMONE WEIL, AN ANTHOLOGY ed. Sian Miles

Our Contributing Editor suggests books for reflective reading at the turn of the century:

Kathy Callaway (HEART OF THE GARFISH [**U. of Pittsburgh**]; THE BLOODROOT FLOWER [**Knopf**]; **"Little String Game" and "Estonian Letters,"** ***Archipelago***):

At a recent conference on her work at Columbia University in New York, **Simone Weil** came under fire for her "hostility towards Judaism" (*see* "Simone Weil's Mixed Legacy," *The New York Times* , Nov. 20 1999). A noted professor of Jewish history remarked that she was "an anti-Semite whose views were an 'unpardonable perfidy to some.'" Another worried that she had too rosy a view of the ancient Greeks, and "even her admirers…speak of her as a kind of 'mad virtuoso.'" Weil is an easy target, but she is not to be tossed aside quite so easily. How quick we were, in another direction not long ago, to turn away with a shudder from the supposed suicide of Primo Levi, throwing into the closet a life's searing work on the Holocaust and quickly shutting the door.

Joseph Brodsky once remarked, "The difference between the European and the American is that the American is incapable of holding two opposing ideas in his head at the same time. The European, historically speaking, has been forced to." Twice in the Baltics I have lived surrounded by the troubled results of half a century of Soviet domination, rather to be expected; but right underneath this was lodged all that had not been dealt with from WWII, a dark, confused matrix of contradictions only now beginning to rise to the psychological surface. The War ended for them only a year or two ago, they will tell you. Tempers on the subject of who did what to whom are running very high, and though their governments have made the right genuflection to the Knesset, the average person cannot speak at all of WWII, or of the Holocaust in particular, and does not ever want to think about it. (Germany, compelled to think about it, is – ironically, perhaps – 50 years ahead of such places in healing the national psyche).

Weil did not live to see the end of the war, but a mind so concerned with the mainsprings of human morality cannot be said to harbor a private agenda to do with anti-Semitism or ethical irresponsibility. What we have in Simone Weil's work is everything she thought, her entire development minutely catalogued. If some of it disturbs us, it might help to remember that this is not a writer capable of self-censorship for history's sake. Here is a thinker whose every waking moment was dedicated to examining the very reasons for man' s continuing injustice, starting with

her own mind and her own actions. Relentlessly she documented painful self-discoveries. These led her to a classic remedy, one with timeless and universal application. Visionaries have no defense. They do not calculate. In another 200 years no one will care about the handful of statements which we do not like, and all her other, stunning insights into human morality, or lack of it, will still apply.

I discovered Simone Weil quite by chance in 1987, in Fargo, North Dakota, and found her just in time. Some years later I was in the Baltics: a real lesson for Liberals and Leftists to undergo. It is she I intend to read again to help me understand the damage I saw. Although she was deeply and passionately involved in Communist causes in the 1930s, I now want to know what she thought about Marxism by the time of her death in l943. I trust her ruthless self-honesty: she never did things by half-measure, never hesitated to put into action her own conclusions. Did she already guess what Marxism might lead to? Would she have said, like Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the founders of the Indian state, when asked in an interview why he had renounced the Communism of his youth: "Because it did not, for me, answer the question: Why should a man be good?"?

Simone Weil, OEUVRES COMPLÈTES (Editions Gallimard, available from Blackwell's, U.K.). Her complete works have never been published in English. **GRAVITY AND GRACE** (Univ. of Nebraska; Routledge & Kegan Paul). **WAITING FOR GOD** (HarperPerennial). **THE NEED FOR ROOTS** (Routledge). **SIMONE WEIL, AN ANTHOLOGY**, ed. Sian Miles (Grove Press; Weidenfeld & Nicolson): this book contains much of GRAVITY AND GRACE and, importantly, "The Iliad or The Poem of Force," and "Analysis of Oppression," part of her course on Marxism given to a miners' study group in 1934; "Prerequisite to Dignity of Labour," on factory work, 1941; and "Draft for A Statement of Human Obligations." **OPPRESSION AND LIBERTY** (U. of Massachusetts Press.

Out of print but essential: **THE NOTEBOOKS OF SIMONE WEIL**, 2 volumes, tr. Arthur Wills (Routledge, l956; G.P. Putnam' s, l956). **FIRST AND LAST NOTEBOOKS** (Oxford U. Press, 1970). **SELECTED ESSAYS, 1934-43** (Oxford, 1962). **SIMONE WEIL SEVENTY LETTERS** (Oxford, 1965). The definitive biography: **Simone Pétrement, SIMONE WEIL, A LIFE.** A memoir by a close friend, a peasant-farmer, **Gustav Thibon, SIMONE WEIL AS WE KNEW HER** A good, careful study, **E.W.F. Tomlin, SIMONE WEIL** (Yale Univ. Press, 1954).

See also:
"Estonian Letters," *Archipelago*, Vol. 1, No. 1
"Little String Game," Vol. 1, No. 2
"Folly, Love, St. Augustine," Vol. 3, No. 3
Blackwell's <http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

Interesting Sites and Resources

Marvels

CHANDRA <http://xrtpub.harvard.edu/index.html> is the X-ray telescope sent recently by NASA into deep Space. It sends back astounding images, which can be seen on and downloaded from this site. For instance, EO102-72 is a "supernova remnant in the Small Magellanic Cloud, a satellite galaxy of the Milky Way. This galaxy is 190,000 light years from Earth. E0102 -72, which is approximately a thousand years old, is believed to have resulted from the explosion of a massive star. Stretching across forty light years of space, the multi-million degree source resembles a flaming cosmic wheel." In this issue of *Archipelago*, see one of these images.

Independent Presses

Back in Print <http://www.backinprint.com> A brilliant idea: through the agency of the Authors Guild, books gone out of print are made available to readers by way of print-on-demand, with book orders filled on-line, by toll-free phone, or through Shakespeare & Co., NYC. In this set-up, authors establish the price; titles available are varied and often surprising.

Catbird Press <www.catbirdpress.com> publishes, among other notable books, a number by Czech writers in translation, including THE POEMS OF JAROSLAV SEIFERT; a garland of these poems appeared in Archipelago Vol. 2, No. 3. DAYLIGHT IN NIGHTCLUB INFERNO offers Czech fiction from the "post-Kundera generation," including work by Daniela Fischerová. Her "A Letter to President Eisenhower," appears in Vol. 3, No. 1, from FINGERS POINTING SOMEWHERE ELSE, just published. Robert Wechsler, publisher of Catbird, has written an interesting book-length essay, WITHOUT A STAGE; THE ART OF LITERARY TRANSLATION; worth reading.

The Lilliput Press <http://indigo.ie/~lilliput> is an Irish publisher founded in 1984 by Antony Farrell. Some 150 titles have appeared under its imprint: art and architecture, autobiography and memoir, biography and history, ecology and environmentalism, essays and literary criticism, philosophy, current affairs and popular culture, fiction, drama and poetry – all broadly focused on Irish themes. Since 1985 they have brought out four volumes of the essays of the late Hubert Butler. Hubert Butler's "The Artukovitch File" appears, with their permission, in Archipelago, Vol. 1, No. 2.

McPherson & Co <www.mcphersonco.com> publishes such writers as the fascinating Mary Butts (THE TAVERNER NOVELS), Anna Maria Ortese (A MUSIC BEHIND THE WALL, Selected Stories Vol. 2), and the performance artist Carolee Schneeman. A beautiful story by Ortese, "The Great Street," appeared in our inaugural issue, and the writer's testament, "Where Time Is Another," appeared in Vol. 2 No. 4.

Online Originals <www.onlineoriginals.com> is an internet publisher of literature who take the position, one we find ourselves much in agreement with, that "Conventional book publishing has changed dramatically in recent years. Most of the world's publishers are now owned by a handful of media conglomerates, ruled in turn by their finance and marketing departments. To guarantee high profits, they tend to accept manuscripts only by only celebrity writers whose output conforms to the conventional mainstream market. ... We believe that the Internet is the way forward for all kinds of publishing. But for the benefit of our authors, we do not prevent them also publishing printed versions of their works at a later date." They deliver "book-like" texts by e-mail.

Station Hill Press <www.stationhill.org> is a non-profit publisher run by the poet George Quasha. They publish writers of serious and surrealist bent, as well as very fine poetry and fiction. Among their writers are Maurice Blanchot and Spencer Holst (whose "The Zebra Storyteller" appeared in Vol. 3, No. 1). María Negroni, whose work appeared in Vol. 1, No. 1 and Vol. 2, No. 4, is the author of a beautiful work in poetry and prose, ISLANDIA, which they will publish this year, using print-on-demand; a noteworthy work of literature brought out by an interesting development in publishing technology.

Salmon Poetry <http://www.salmonpoetry.com> lives in County Clare, Ireland. The editor, Jessie Lendennie, is pleased to publish not only her countrymen, including, she tells us, the largest list of women poets of any Irish publisher, but also Alaskan poets, among whom are several old friends of ours. She wrote to say she liked our "The Repetition of Their Days," Vol. 2, No.3.

Sun & Moon Press <www.sunmoon.com> is a fine, serious, literary press with a long backlist. They publish classics as well as contemporary fiction and poetry; writers and poets such as Arkadii Dragomoschenko (astonishing Russian poet), Paul Celan, Harry Matthews, Djuna Barnes, Paul Auster, Russell Banks. They will publish Maria Negroni's LA JAULA BAJO EL TRAPO/CAGE UNDER COVER, tr. Anne Twitty, in a Spanish-English edition; a selection appeared in Archipelago, Vol. 2, No. 4.

Turtle Point Press <http://www.turtlepoint.com> This intelligent press, led by Jonathon Rabinowitz, Helen Marx, and Jeanette Watson, is reviving several books by the marvelous Iris Origo, including her LEOPARDI: A STUDY IN SOLITUDE. Another necessary book published here is Hannah Green's profound THE DEAD OF THE HOUSE. Jeanette Watson's Books & Co. News is posted, as well. (An excerpt from Lynne Tillman's BOOKSTORE, about Watson and Books & Co., once one of the cultural resources of Manhattan, appears in Vol. 3, No. 3.)

Fine Arts

iola <http://www.artnetweb.com/iola/home.html>. This perfectly eccentric site is like the dinner party of artists, thinkers, above all, talkers you want regularly to be invited to. Its host-redactor is Robbin Murphy, who is worth looking up. Of particular delight: The Little Window.

Kamera – <http://www.kamera.co.uk> came to us via the *Richmond Review* and is its pictorial mirror-image. Lively, hip, devoted to the cinematic arts, with features and reviews of movies and exhibits currently on in Britain.

Octavo <www.octavo.com> is a digital publisher committed to conserving books, manuscripts, and antiquarian printed materials via digital tools and formats. They make original works available to readers and book lovers through partnerships with libraries, individuals and institutions. As a sample, they offer a PDF download of William Shakespeare Poems. We are always pleased when web publishers use PDF files, as we do for our Download edition.

Work in Regress <http://members.aol.com/perkons23> This vertiginous site is by Peteris Cedrins, author of "The Penetralium," an excerpt of which appears in *Archipelago,* Vol. 3, No. 3. Here also are two images of dark, thrilling paintings by Inguna Liepa; descent into the psyche.

Literary Reviews

The Barcelona Review <http://www.barcelonareview.com>, Jill Adams, Editor. A fine, multi-lingual (English, Castilian, Catalan) offering published in Catalonia by a multi-national group. Intelligent editing; interesting reading of younger writers from Europe and America.

Big Bridge <www.bigbridge.org> Edited by Michael Rothenberg, editor of OVERTIME, selected poems of Philip Whalen (Penguin, 1999), and Wanda Phipps, who bring an open-armed, '60s generosity to this "webzine." "We think walls are good for keeping out the cold and rain," they write: "They're useless in the creation and propagation of art." Big Bridge Press publishes chapbooks and handsome botannica.

The Cortland Review <http://www.cortlandreview.com> Established in 1997, this publication offers such poets as Charles Simic, Robert Pinsky, Henry Taylor, Mark Doty, Robert Creeley, Mark Jarman, Lloyd Schwartz, Neal Bowers, R.T. Smith, John Kinsella. All poetry and most fiction appear in Real Audio format. They publish in February, May, August, and November, with Monthly features.

George Meyers Jr.'s LitKit <http://www.georgejr.com> bills itself as a "non-commercial zine and archive" and "a larkabout for readers with brains, and for writers with lightbulbs blazing in their heads." That's close enough; it's an experience.

The Hungarian Quarterly, <http://www.hu.net/hungq> the respected literary journal, offers an essay by Sándor Kányádi in No. 152, Winter 1998 (linked from the cover page) An essay about Kányádi and poems by him, translated by Adam Makkai and Bruce Berlind, appear in No. 138, Summer 1995. Kányádi's great poem "All Soul's Day in Vienna" appears in this issue of *Archipelago*.

Jacket <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au> was founded and is edited by John Tranter, a Australian poet whose work is published often in the *TLS*. "For more than thirty years he has been at the forefront of the new poetry, questioning and extending its procedures." In this quarterly literary journal he publishes the work of other writers generously. A new collection of his that should be read, LATE NIGHT RADIO, is published by Polygon & Edinburgh University Press. It can be ordered there (tel. 0131 650 8436), or through Columbia University Press <http://www.cc.columbia.edu/cu/cup>.

London Review of Books <http://www.lrb.co.uk> One of the few reviews we read cover to cover; published on paper every two weeks and worth subscribing to. The on-line edition offers a generous selection, including a recent review by Iain Sinclair of James Sallis <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v21/n06/sinc2106.htm>, a writer we've admired for some years. Among Sallis' talents are a series of superb novels passing as detective stories: THE LONG-LEGGED FLY, BLACK HORNET, MOTH, EYE OF THE CRICKET. He also translated Raymond Queneau's ST. GLINGLIN.

The Richmond Review <www.demon.co.uk/review> received approving notice (along with *Archipelago*) in the *TLS*. Its staff is drawn from about twenty-five young persons-about-London-publishing. The founding editor, Steven Kelly, is the author of THE WAR ARTIST, a chilling moral thriller about a man called Charles Monk, an artist who "only during wartime feels truly alive." It was just published in the U.K. by Simon & Schuster.

Render <http://www.hhrf.org/korunk/render/render07.htm> Anthology of Korunk, Journal of Culture, History, and Theory, offers a poem by Sándor Kányádi.

Renditions < http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/renditions> A magazine of translation, from the University of Hong Kong, Centre for Translation <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct>, edited by Eva Hung, whose poems appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol 3, No. 2.

An introduction to Simone Weil, who was the subject of "Endnotes" Vol. 3, No. 3, and this issue's Recommended Reading, appears on Rivertext, with links and bibliographic information. <http://www.rivertext.com/simone_weil.shtml>

Zimmerzine <http://www.nhi.clara.net/zimzine.htm>, edited by Martin Grampound, is an 'e-zine' with a flashy cover opening onto serious literature, including two poems by Sándor Kányádi, translated by Paul Sohar, at <http://www.nhi.clara.net/z59.htm>. Kányádi's great poem "All Soul's Day in Vienna" also translated by Sohar, appears in this issue of *Archipelago*.