ARCHIPELAGO

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Contributors

Ann Barrett <annlmb@buncombe.main.nc.us> is thirty-eight and the mother of five, two Jamaican stepsons and three biracial, cross-cultured children of her own. Her work has appeared in various publications, including but not limited to *Many Mountains Moving, Culturefront, The Caribbean Writer* and *Troika.* Although she has always been a student of most serious intent, she does not have an M.F.A. and is not currently enrolled in any workshops or classes.

Isabel Fargo Cole <isabel@andere-seite.de> grew up in New York, attended the University of Chicago, and has lived in Berlin as a freelance translator since 1995. Forthcoming translations include TWO PRAGUE STORIES by Rainer Maria Rilke (Vitalis-Verlag, Prague, Spring 2002), two excerpts from works by Wolfgang Hilbig and Thomas Lehr in the next issue of the *Chicago Review* and an excerpt from Horst Lange's WAR DIARIES in the next issue of *Two Lines*. At present she is working on a translation of THE GOLEM, by Gustav Meyrink, for Vitalis-Verlag. Her

translation of Christine Wolter, "The Rooms of Memory," appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol. 4, No. 1, and of Annemarie Schwartzenbach, "Lyric Novella," in Vol. 4, No. 4.

Corinna Hasofferett <http://au.geocities.com/masthead_2/us/hsoff.html> is a writer of Hebrew literary fiction and nonfiction and a recipient of the Yaddo and Ledig fellowships. Among her grants and awards are also the 1998/1999/2000 Fine Arts & Literature Grants from the Tel-Aviv Foundation, the Hebrew Writers Association Publication Prize, the Aricha Prize (for "Revelation"), the Institute for Translations of Hebrew Literature Translation Grants, the New Israel Fund Wyner Prize, the Institute for a Better Israel Award, the Israel Foreign Ministry travel grant to Egypt, the BCLA (British Comparative Literature Association) Publication Honor (for "Revelation"), the President of Israel Amos Grant and the recent Ministry of Culture Creativity Grant. In 1975 Corinna Hasofferett initiated and organized for a six-month term bi-weekly meetings and events in the Galilee featuring and attended by Palestinian and Jewish Israeli artists, composers and writers. In 1984, she founded HILAI, The Israeli Center for the Creative Arts. She directed the not-for-profit organization for eleven years, during which it ran two international artists' and writers' colonies in the Galilee and the Negev, and conducted more than five hundred peace-oriented encounters, and events and classes in art, literature, and music. Her work has been published in translation in such literary magazines and journals as *Partisan Review, International Quarterly, Pen Israel Anthology, Jacket, The Richmond Review* <http://www.richmondreview.co.uk/library/Hasofferett01.html>*, Masthead, Patchword, The Alsop Review*, et al. ONCE SHE WAS A CHILD has been translated into English; rights information can be obtained by e-mail <mydream@barak-online.net>. In September 2002 she will read from ONCE SHE WAS A CHILD at the British Association of Slavic and Eastern European Studies, University of Surrey, U.K.

James L. Hicks began his career as a reporter for the *Cleveland Call and Post* in 1935 and later moved on to the *Baltimore Afro-American*. As one of the premier investigative journalists of his generation, Hicks was also the Washington, D.C. bureau chief for the National Negro Press Association, which served more than one hundred newspapers. In 1955, he became executive director of the *New York Amsterdam News*, a position he would hold for the good part of twenty years. As the first black member of the State Department Correspondents Association and the first black reporter cleared to cover the United Nations, Hicks was a pioneer in the field. His coverage of the Till trial ran in dozens of African-American newspapers, and in the piece of investigative journalism (reprinted in this issue) — which ran in four installments in October 1955 — he told about the role he played in discovering the existence of "missing witnesses" to the murder. In these articles — which ran in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *Cleveland Call and Post* and the *Atlanta Daily World* — Hicks argued that the forces of law in Mississippi conspired to prevent the full evidence of the guilt of Milam and Bryant, the known killers of Emmett Till, from surfacing at the trial. The four articles will appear in THE LYNCHING OF EMMETT TILL: A Documentary Narrative, by Christopher Metress (University of Virginia Press <http://www.upress.virginia.edu/>, September 2002).

Kevin McFadden <kjm7a@cms.mail.virginia.edu>, originally from the Cleveland area, received the M.F.A from the University of Virginia, where he began work on an anagrammatic sequence, *Danger Garden*. His poems have appeared in *Poetry, American Letters & Commentary, Seneca Review*, *Ploughshares,* and other literary journals.

Christopher Metress <cpmetres@samford.edu> is Associate Professor of English at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. His essays and reviews on southern literature and culture have appeared in such journals as *Southern Quarterly, Studies in the Novel, South Atlantic Review*, and *Southern Review*. He is currently at work on a study of white southern writers and their responses to the civil rights movement. His THE LYNCHING OF EMMETT TILL: A Documentary Narrative, (University of Virginia Press <http://www.upress.virginia.edu/>) will be out in September 2002.

Ilse Molzahn was born in 1895 on her parents' estate in Kowalewo, Posmania, in what is now Poland. In 1919 she married the expressionist painter Johannes Molzahn, with whom she had two sons. In the mid-twenties she began to publish stories and wrote feuilletons for various newspapers. The Nazi seizure of power had grave consequences for the Molzahns; in Breslau, where Johannes Molzahn had been teaching at the university, they were denounced and their house was searched, prompting them to move to Berlin. Johannes Molzahn's paintings were included in the infamous Nazi exhibition of "Degenerate Art," and in 1938 he emigrated to New York. Ilse Molzahn remained in Berlin, where she traveled in the circles of the "Inner Emigration" – intellectuals who, with varying degrees of openness, opposed the Nazi regime.

In 1936 Ilse Molzahn's first novel, THE BLACK STORK, was published, only to be banned for "slander of the Junkers" and placed on the list of "harmful and undesirable literature." However, under the Nazi regime she did publish two more successful novels, NYMPHS AND SHEPHERDS DANCE NO MORE (1938) and DAUGHTERS OF THE EARTH (1941), apolitical works which, with their superficial resemblance to the Nazi's beloved "*Blut und Boden*" literature, escaped censorship. Both of Molzahn's sons were killed in the Second World War. After the war she wrote mainly journalistic pieces for such newspapers as *Die Zeit*. SNOW LIES IN PARADISE, her last major prose work, was published in 1953. In 1972 THE BLACK STORK was rediscovered; a new edition appeared, and it was made into a television film. Interested American and English publishing houses are invited to contact the rights director of Langen Müller Herbig <f.hoppen@herbig.net>. In 1978 Ilse Molzahn was awarded the Andreas Gryphius Prize. She died in Berlin in 1981.

In 1939 Ilse Molzahn wrote the following self-description: "Born in Kowalewo, registered at the registry office in Margowin [...] as the ninety-ninth birth; it seems to be my fate never to quite make it to a hundred. My mother wept. The doctor was drunk, my father was slightly disappointed that it wasn't a boy, for the toy horse already stood saddled by the cradle. Called Pony and Paninka, sometimes Kater [tom-cat -*tr.*], but tenderly named Katyushek by Pelagia, the cook, the first thing I learned was Prussian commands [...] Later, in school, asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I chose not to give the answer of my friend Janina, who wanted to be a betrothed, looked bashfully out of the window, outside which a light, bright cloud sailed past, and said 'A writer!' This provoked loud and unanimous laughter. Without ever being a betrothed, I married, carefully wished for a girl, it turned out to be a boy – and so forth. Once there was nothing more in particular for me to do, my kind husband gave me a typewriter. On it I learned 'how to write'. But unfortunately not with all ten fingers."

John Palcewski <palcewski@hotmail.com> has been a photojournalist, music/drama critic, magazine editor, literary fiction writer, poet, and fine-arts photographer. His work has been published in the literary and academic press, as well as in major newspapers worldwide via United Press International. After New York, Philadelphia and a number of other large and small cities, he now lives in the villa of a vineyard on Isola d' Ischia, the Bay of Naples, Italy. His fiction and photography can be viewed here. <http://www.red-kitty.com/palcewski>

Svetlana Vasilievna Vasilenko was born in 1956 in the closed military city Kapustin Iar, on the Volga. The city is attached to a cosmodrome built in 1946, and this rocket settlement, the first missile test site acknowledged by the Soviet, provided the setting for most of her stories. She graduated from the Literary Institute in Moscow. Her graduation project, the story "Hunting Saga" (also called "Going After Goat-Antelopes"), made her famous overnight and, critically, was named the best story of the year. Its publication coincided with Brezhnev's death. Her subsequent stories were not published until seven years later, during which time she wrote intensively and compiled collections of women's prose. Though her subsequent novellas and short stories have been translated into various languages, Vasilenko's first sustained appearance in English is SHAMARA AND OTHER STORIES (tr. Andrew Bromfield, et al. Ed. and intro. Helena Goscilo. Northwestern University Press. 2000). Included is her only novel, LITTLE FOOL; nominated for the Booker Prize and recognized by the journal that published it as the best Russian novel of 1998. The novella SHAMARA chronicles a violent love triangle that unfolds in an atmosphere of rivalry, existential despair, and sexual ambiguity. Also included are the short stories "Piggy," "The Gopher," and "Poplar, Poplar's Daughter," as well as "Going after Goat-Antelopes." The Ukranian director Natalia Andreichenko, made a film of SHAMARA, in 1995; it is available with English subtitles.

In 1993, in *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Nadezhda Azhgikhina <http://www.bullatomsci.org/issues/1993/jf93/jf93Azhgikhina.html> wrote about the crisis in Russian high culture after Perestroika and the fall of the Soviet Union: "Not long ago the state of current writing was discussed at a roundtable in the literary department of the weekly *Ogonyok*. The journal staff tossed around theories and opinions about the latest stories and tales of the most interesting writers of the day: women like **Svetlana Vasilenko**, whose provincial protagonists find love amid the mud and slush of everyday life; Valeria Narbikova and her baroque eroticism; Tatyana Tolstaya, now writing her short stories from Princeton; Oleg Yermakov, who writes movingly about an innocent soldier trapped in the cruel Afghan war. And while we were discussing all this, we were bemoaning the current cultural crisis.

"Then somebody remembered that at the end of the last century, the critic Vissarion Belinsky wrote about a crisis in culture-and simultaneously praised the first works of Feodor Dostoevsky and Mikhail Lermontov and wrote about Aleksandr Pushkin and Nikolai Gogol. Writers of the Silver Age, the early twentieth century, also spoke about 'crisis' and called their own period a time of 'decadence.' Crisis was a common theme of the 1920s.

Hence all this talk in the lobbies of journal offices and within the walls of a university – a newly created one at that! – are testimonials to the eternal and tireless work of culture, which continues to develop despite political cataclysms and economic recessions."

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Other News

U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins and Scottish poet Carol Ann Duffy will co-judge the Davoren Hanna Poetry Competition, 2002. Sponsored by Eason Bookshops, Ireland's largest chain of book stores, and The Muse Cafes, and named after the gifted young Dublin poet who died in 1994, the competition offers a first prize of $5000, and second and third prizes of $2000 and $1000 respectively, making it one of the largest such awards in Ireland and the U.K.

The competition is open to published and unpublished poets over the age of 18 writing in English. Entrants may submit as many poems as they wish. The closing date is 31st May 2002; winners will be announced in early August. Entry forms, rules and guide-lines are available for printing on Eason's Web site http://www.eason.ie, or by sending a stamped addressed envelope to Poetry Competition, The Muse Cafe, Eason Bookshop, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1, Ireland.

Nearly six years ago, **David Castleman**, under the nom de plume Gabriel Monteleone Neruda, offered us three tales, which we published in *Archipelago*, Vol. 1, No. 4. Recently, we were informed that one of these tales, "An Evening with Salvador Dali and Dylan Thomas," also appeared (in the same year, and by "Gabriel Monteleone Neruda") in *River King Poetry Supplement*. Shortly thereafter the editor of *River King* learned that *Pudding Magazine: The International Journal of Applied Poetry* had *previously* published the same "Neruda" story. *Subsequently*, the same editor saw "An Evening…", now credited to David Castleman (who is also G. Monteleone N.), in *Archipelago*, as above, and in *Mandrake Poetry Review*. The news came as a surprise to (all of) us, and we at *Archipelago* are glad to acknowledge these other publications and their editorial acuteness. We urge our readers to read them regularly. We also sketch a salute the wily author, despite his bad form (he didn't tell us about the other publications), which we hope won't be repeated by others. We suppose he must be, like so many writers, generally dismayed by the publishing business and sure that all small magazines have different readers. Perhaps they do, but editors read everything. Eventually.

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Letters to the Editor

In our Endnote, "The Bear,"in Vol. 5, no. 4, we described contamination of Alaskan lands by nuclear and biological-weapons testing – carried outchiefly by the military, among other federal agencies. In a footnote, we mentioned a bill now before Congress that would require the military to conform to the same environmental laws as municipalities and ordinary citizens do. We asked the bill's sponsor, Rep. Bob Filner (D-Ca.) if he would explain his bill to our readers, and he sent us this reply. –Ed.

January 29, 2002

To the Editor:

Regarding a comment in your recent Endnotes, "The Bear," may I describe the bill for which I am responsible and believe in strongly, the Military Environmental Responsibility Act (MERA), H.R. 2154? MERA would require the military to comply with the same rules and regulations as the private sector, because, I would argue, military exemptions from requirements and enforcement under environmental, public safety, and worker protection laws harm Americans. At present, those of our citizens living or working on the borders of military bases

have fewer environmental protections than those elsewhere, because the military is not subject to the same environmental laws as municipalities and corporations are.

The problem is well documented. According to the Department of Defense, military installations have created over 27,000 toxic hot spots on 8,500 military properties. Let me cite two instances (among too many): Volatile organic compounds emitted from Tinker Air Force base in Oklahoma caused low birth weights in babies born nearby. At the Massachusetts Military Reservation, burning of artillery propellant was linked to elevated rates of lung cancer in women.

Equal protection under the law for military neighbors, civilian workers, and active duty personnel is a reasonable request, and it deserves support. To that end, MERA would accomplish the simple goal of requiring the military to comply with the same rules and regulations as the private sector.

Clarification and strengthening of waivers of federal sovereign immunity are desperately needed in the Clean Water Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), and Clean Air Act. Military exemptions must be removed from the Oil Pollution Act, Noise Act, the Atomic Energy act, and an laws regulating nuclear activity.

I should point out that, during the present mobilization, my bill will not compromise military readiness. Environmental laws currently include exemptions for the military in the event of "overriding public interest." They have been used only a few times, and the President would retain that authority under MERA.

Even in a loyal Navy town such as San Diego, where my district is located, a large majority of residents strongly support equal regulation of the Navy by environmental and emergency planning laws. In a public opinion poll released by San Diego's Environmental Health Coalition, conducted by the S.D. State Social Science Research Laboratory (April 2000), city residents strongly supported holding the Navy to the same environmental protection laws as other organizations (66%).

An overwhelming 75% said they would support a law requiring the emergency planning zones be created around residential areas near nuclear-powered vessels in San Diego Bay as are required for all commercial nuclear reactors. A majority of respondents who had served in the armed forces (52%) favored such protections, while those who had not served (81%) favored them even more vigorously. I argue that this is evidence of strong support for emergency planning, and, further, that MERA addresses these issues.

The Military Environmental Responsibility Act says clearly that we citizens support our military, but that the armed forces must comply with the same rules and regulations that apply to the public sector. It reminds us/I believe that there is no greater national security interest or mission than the health and safety of our communities.

Sincerely,

Bob Filner <http://www.house.gov/filner>
Member of Congress
(D-Ca.)

Note: On March 30, 2002, the *New York Times* reported that the Pentagon will ask major exemptions from environmental laws. The story, reported by Katharine Q. Seelye, began:

> Washington, March 29 - Concerned that several environmental laws are interfering with the military's ability to train soldiers and develop weapons, the Pentagon is seeking a Congressional exemption from an array of measures that have protected endangered species and their habitats for years.

> A draft of the exemption bill, circulating in the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill, seeks exemptions on national security grounds for bombing ranges, air bases and training grounds from sections of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Noise Control Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act.

We will follow developments.

"They Stand Accused": James L. Hicks's Investigations in Sumner, Mississippi, September 1955

from
THE LYNCHING OF EMMETT TILL
A Documentary Narrative

Christopher Metress

Foreword

On September 24, 1955, an all-white Mississippi jury, after a mere sixty-seven minutes of deliberation, acquitted J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant of the murder of Emmett Till. Till, a fourteen year-old black boy from Chicago, had been visiting for the first time his extended family in the Mississippi Delta. One afternoon, barely a week into his visit, he and several other youths were standing outside a white-owned grocery in the small hamlet of Money. Apparently, Till had been boasting of his friendships with white people up North — in particular his friendships with white girls — and the local kids, looking to call his bluff, dared him to enter the store and flirt with Carolyn Bryant, the white woman and former beauty queen who was working the cash register. Till entered the store, and what he did next is unclear. Some say he "wolf whistled" at Bryant; others say he grabbed her hand and asked her for a date; still others claim he did nothing more than simply say "bye, baby" to her as he left the store. Whatever Till did, it was apparent to all involved that he had done something that made Carolyn Bryant angry or afraid. Till's friends rushed him away from the store as Bryant went to her car to get a gun.

For three days, nothing more happened, and then Roy Bryant — Carolyn's husband — and J.W. Milam — Roy Bryant's step-brother — struck out in the dead of night in search of young Till. They found him where they thought he'd be at two in the morning: asleep in the modest cabin of Mose Wright, his great-uncle. The two men, demanding to see the boy "who'd done the talking," took Till forcibly from the house, and his family never saw him alive again. The next morning, at their behest, the local sheriff searched the county, and when he could not find any trace of Till he questioned and eventually arrested Milam and Bryant on kidnapping charges. When Till's bloated and disfigured corpse surfaced three days later downstream in the Tallahatchie River, Milam and Bryant were quickly re-arrested, this time for murder.

In the weeks leading up to the trial, media coverage was enormous. Influential African American weeklies like the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and the *Baltimore Afro-American* all published loud denunciations of southern injustice and threatened to exert political and economic pressure should Mississippi fail to give Till's case a fair hearing. In response, southern white papers, led by the conservative *Jackson Daily News* and the more moderate *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, insisted that justice would be done and that continued threats from the "liberal press" would threaten rather than secure justice in the case. Eventually, more than seventy newspapers and magazines sent reporters to the trial, and when, against all reasonable evidence, the jury failed to convict Milam and Bryant, the denunciations were swift and strong. While apologist papers in the South argued that justice had had its day in court, African American newspapers and magazines, joined by a chorus of support from the northern white press and liberal political organizations, called for national protests and boycotts.

According to many reporters in attendance, the judicial process had failed Emmett Till, and the real question to come out of the whole trial was whether, without federal intervention, blacks could get justice in Mississippi. For another set of dissenters, however, the trial raised a different set of questions, many of them concerned with the truths of the case. Despite the best efforts of the prosecuting attorneys, the trial seemed to hide more truths than it answered as many competing testimonies were never fully explored or cross-examined. For instance, what really had happened that afternoon in the Bryant grocery? Moreover, how did Milam and Bryant find out about the alleged transgression? Who else besides Milam and Bryant drove out to Mose Wright's cabin that night, and who were the other men spotted with Milam at the barn the next morning? Were there really black men in Milam's pickup that evening? If so, who were they and what had happened to them? Finally, how long did Emmett Till remain alive that night, and exactly when, where, why and how did his murder take place? A handful of investigative reporters understood that the trial did not answer these questions fully and that the truth, more likely than not, had been obscured by the proceedings.

Among the investigative reporters at the trial, none played a more significant role than James L. Hicks. Hicks began his career as a reporter for the *Cleveland Call and Post* in 1935 and later moved on to the *Baltimore Afro-American*. As one of the premier investigative journalists of his generation, Hicks was also the Washington, D.C. bureau chief for the National Negro Press Association, which served more than one hundred newspapers. In 1955, he became executive director of the *New York Amsterdam News*, a position he would hold for the good part of twenty years. As the first black member of the State Department Correspondents Association and the first black reporter cleared to cover the United Nations, Hicks was truly a pioneer in the field. His coverage of the Till trial ran in dozens of African-American newspapers, and in the following piece of investigative journalism — which ran in four installments in October 1955 — he tells about the role he played in discovering the existence of "missing witnesses" to the murder. Hicks's work in this area actually forced a trial recess on Tuesday, September 20, as the prosecution called for time to track down these newly discovered witnesses. In this series of articles — which ran in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *Cleveland Call and Post* and the *Atlanta Daily World* — Hicks argues that the forces of law in Mississippi conspired to prevent the full evidence of Milam and Bryant's guilt from surfacing at the trial. The version reprinted here draws its structure from the installments published in the *Cleveland Call and Post*, which presented the most condensed rendering of Hicks's articles. Passages omitted from the *Cleveland Call and Post* articles, but included in some form or other in either the *Atlanta Daily World* or the *Baltimore Afro-American*, have been inserted throughout and marked by the addition of brackets.

—Christopher Metress

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"They Stand Accused by *C-P* Reporter: Jimmy Hicks Charges Miss. Officials Aided Lynchers"
James L. Hicks, *Cleveland Call and Post*, October 8, 1955

New York, N.Y. — Here for the first time is the true story of what happened in the hectic five-day trial of two white men in Sumner, Mississippi, for the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till of Chicago.

This story has never been written before. I did not write it in Mississippi for fear of bodily harm to myself, and to my colleagues.

No one else has written it because no one else in the capacity of a reporter lived as close to it as I did.

[Looking back on it now, I am ashamed that I did not throw caution to the winds and at least try to get out the story exactly as it was unfolding to me. I'm convinced, however, that if I had tried this, I would not be here in New York to write this.

[I should like also to add that not once in the stories that I did file from Sumner did I tell a lie. The offense, if I committed one, lies in the fact that the stories that I did file did not dig or go far enough into the truth. It just wasn't safe to do so.]

Here in the safety of New York I now charge (as I would have charged in Sumner, Mississippi) that:

Sheriff H. C. Strider frustrated the ends of justice by refusing to take an impartial person to the Charleston jail at Charleston, Miss., and permit them to check on his report that Leroy "Too Tight" Collins [was] not in the Charleston jail.

I further charge, and with the protection of proper law officials will go back to Mississippi and help prove, that Leroy Collins was in the Charleston jail on Friday at the very hour that the case went to the jury.

I charge further that Prosecutors Gerald Chatham and Robert B. Smith were told about this but that they decided that since the sheriff had given his word that Collins was not in the jail, they proceeded to close out the trial without this man whom everyone believes could have positively hung the crime on the two white men and seriously implicated at least one other white man.

I finally charge that if Leroy Collins is brought forward at this date and given all opportunity to talk where he is assured that he is not in any danger, he will be able to tell where Henry Lee Loggins is and that the two of them will prove to be the two colored men who were seen on the truck the night of the murder by Moses Wright and Willie Reed.

Knew Too Much

I believe that Henry Lee Loggins is dead and that he was disposed of because he knew too much about the case.

These are serious charges. But I welcome this opportunity to write down the evidence on which they are based.

This is the fantastic story as lived by this reporter:

Attended Funeral

On the Sunday before the opening of the trial I attended the funeral of "Kid" Townsend, a well[-]liked colored man who has lived in Sumner virtually all his life.

I had been told that a number of white people would attend the funeral and I felt that it would provide at least good pre-trial story for my paper.

[I drove into the churchyard, got out with my notebook in my hand and went into the church passing a number of colored people standing in the churchyard.

[Inside I found the church crowded with no seats and that white people were occupying the two rows on the left side of the church.

[The temperature was about 95 degrees and I decided to stand outside the church and listen to the services after I had been in the church about a half hour. This was easy to do because the church was the typical white-washed wooden structure and the minister who preached was shouting loud enough to be heard from outside.

[My notes, which I shall constantly refer to in this article, show that the preacher's name was the Rev. W. M. King, that there were 175 colored people in the church and 12 whites including five women, four men, and three white children.

[My notes also show that I recorded the sermon as being from "Fourth Chapter, Second Timothy," and beneath I have a quotation read by the minister which said, "I have fought the good fight. I have kept the faith. I have finished my course."]

I was leaning there against the fender of a parked car when a voice behind me said, "Are you down here for the trial?"

Up to this point I did not know a single colored person in Sumner and I had tried in the two days I'd been there from spreading around that I was a reporter.

But as I turned to the voice I decided that it would get out anyway[,] so I turned to the man who addressed me and said, "Yes, I am down on the trial. I'm a reporter."

The man was colored and he said to me, "There's a lady behind this car who would like to talk with you. I think you'd be interested in what she has to say."

[I turned and looked but saw no one. At that moment the man said, "Go behind the car, but don't take out your notebook and write down nothing."

[Now at this point I should like to say to the reader, if this whole thing starts off reading like a cheap and fantastic Hollywood movie script, that is exactly what it is going to read like for the entire five days.

[But I can say also that every word of it is true and it is written exactly the way I lived it.]

I went back of that car and found a woman whom I shall not describe[,] for she told me in the beginning that she was actually endangering her life by talking to me about the trial.

Woman Gives Tip

The woman then told me that a young boy named "Too Tight" was in the truck the night of the murder and that he had suddenly disappeared and no one knew where he was.

She said she did not know "Too Tight's" real name but that she thought she could send me to a place to get all the information I wanted on him "if you aren't afraid to go."

I told her I was not afraid. Then standing and looking off in another direction she said to me[,"] Go to Glendora. That's about seven miles south of here. Be careful and don't let the people know what you are looking for. Don't talk to any white people.

"Go to a place called King's. It's the only colored dance hall in town. Hang around there and find the right people. They will tell you 'Too Tight's' name and what happened to him. But don't,["] she said, "get caught down there after dark."

Then she walked away from the car.

[As he walked away I looked at my watch. It was three o'clock. I reasoned that with any good luck I could drive down there in 20 minutes and spend an hour or so in town and still make it back to my hotel in Mound Bayou by dark.]

So I got in the car and headed immediately for Glendora.

The tavern called King's was easy to find. I just looked for a large group of colored people on a back street and there was King's.

King's Tavern

It was a typical hangout in a typical Mississippi town. The place was filthy and the cotton pickers who were enjoying their Sunday off crowded it to the doors.

At one end of the long hall was what served as a kitchen. Somewhere within the bowels of the place a jukebox was giving out with Rock and Roll blues and in the center of the floor couples were dancing attired in all kinds of clothing. Some of the young women up to 25 years old were dancing barefooted.

[I stood for a long time trying to "case" the place. I had not had a meal since my Mound Bayou breakfast that morning at seven and I was hungry. But I realized that I only had about a

good hour to work in before dark and I wanted to get the most out of my time by circulating through the crowd instead of tying myself to an eating table.

[So I elected to spend my hour or so drinking beer and dancing to see what I could find. I walked over to the kitchen and foolishly asked for a "menu."

[That was a dead giveaway for a stranger and I realized it now. But at the time the words seemed to slip out of my mouth. It seemed that at the time I felt that if I had some reading matter in my hand I could stall a little but until I made up my mind as to what approach to make.]

Spotted As Stranger

When I asked a girl waitress for a menu, a man behind the counter spoke up and said, "We don't have any menu. But we can fix you most anything you want." Then he asked the question I knew was coming.

"Where you from?"

You simply can't escape it in the South. They can spot a stranger a mile away.

I could tell by the authoritative way the man spoke that he must be the owner or manager of the joint, so I answered, "Oh, I'm from up the way a bit" and gradually I drew him into conversation.

After trying to convince him I was merely a drifting guy who had dropped in his place for a beer or two — and convincing myself that I hadn't convinced him of anything — I came at him right down the middle:

"Whatever happened to my boy 'Too Tight'," I said?

The man stopped as if I had hit him in the face. I looked over to my right and some men seated at a table playing "Georgia Skin" dropped their cards and turned to look at me at the mention of the name "Too Tight."

Looking for "Too Tight"

I knew then that I was on the trail of something big.

But I also knew that the man to whom I was talking would not talk to me in the hearing distance of the others[,] so I grabbed him by his arm and moved over in a direction away from the "Skinners" and nearer the kitchen all the while saying "Let's have a beer."

He said nothing until he got me a beer. Then he moved over to me and said, "What do you want with 'Too Tight'[?]"

I told him "Too Tight" was a friend of mine. That we used to gamble together and that I was in his town and decided to look him up.

He looked around and said, ""Too Tight' is in jail."

"In jail," I said. "What have they got Too Tight in jail for? He never bothered anybody."

The man looked at me and said, "See that chick over there," pointing to a girl seated near the wall. "She can tell you about 'Too Tight'."

While I drank my beer, I stood there trying to figure how to best approach the girl who had the key to what I was looking for. She was seated with a big husky guy and the last thing I wanted to do was to become involved with a man for "molesting" his girl friend.

But all around me I noticed that when the other men wanted to dance they didn't ask the women for a dance. They just walk up, grab the woman by the arm and start dancing.

I felt my time was running out and I decided to try the bold approach. So I walked over to where she was seated, grabber her by the hand and said, "Let's dance."

She was up on her feet in a flash and I swirled her out in the middle of the floor into the crowd as fast as I could[,] hoping that the big guy at the table wasn't mad at me.

He's in Jail

She spoke first. And her questions were the usual. "Where are you from?" I told here that I was from up in Sumner and I was looking for my friend "Too Tight."

"Too Tight? she said[.] "He's in jail."

I expressed surprised. "In jail for what" I said. "I don't know," she answered. "They came and for him Monday a week ago."

I let fly then with a barrage of questions[,] determined to get them all in before the dance was over and the big guy came to claim her. I asked her if she had been to see him in hail. She said no.

"You mean to tell me," I said[,] "that your boyfriend has been in jail a week and you haven't been to see him?"

She said[,] "'Too Tight' isn't my boy friend. He lived with us."

I asked her who was "Us" and she said[,] "Me and my husband."

["]Is that your husband over at the table?" I asked. "No," she answered. "He's in jail, too."

"What did they get him for?" I asked. "I don't know," she said. ["]Both of them worked for one of those white men who killed that boy from Chicago and they came and got both of them."

I then asked her what jail they were in and if she had been to see her husband. She said she had not — that she had been even afraid to talk about it to anyone.

I asked her what her name was. She told me. I then asked what her husband's name was. She said "Henry Lee Loggins."

Since the name she gave me did not have Loggins for a last name, I said to her, "I thought you said your name was so and so. Now you tell me your husband's name is Loggins."

"We're not married," she said. "We just lived together."

Then I asked her what to me was the $64 question in Glendora. "What," I said, "is Too Tight's real name? I've known him a long time but all I know is Too Tight."

Gives Mystery Name

She came right down the middle. "His real name is Leroy Collins[,]" she said.

She then told me that Too Tight lived with his grandfather on the Aklet farm near Glendora (about a mile and a half away) but that he stayed in town so much that he had just started living with her and her "husband."

I then tried to get real chummy with her. I complimented her on her dancing and her hair and I asked her if I could come back down to Glendora and take her out. Then for the first time I noticed that she was barefooted.

"We'll go to the jail first and see your husband," I said, "and then we can go out and have a few drinks."

She said that would be all right if I got back before ten o'clock that night. I told her then that I didn't mean that I was coming back that same night but that I had planned to come down and pick her up the next day.

Fears Beating

"I can't do that," she said. "I'll be picking cotton all during the day next week."

I told her that we couldn't get into the jail at night and that I'd pay her what she would make picking cotton if she would stay home from work the next day and go to the jail with me.

"I'd like to do it", she said[.] "But I'd get a beating."

I asked her who would beat her and she said that the white man for whom she worked came around and whipped everyone who didn't go out into the cotton fields and pick his cotton. "Even if they are sick, he whips them," she said.

I asked her to come with me while I ate something and she readily consented[,] completely ignoring the big guy at the table where she had been seated. I then found that the menu which was unwritten consisted of chitterlings or beef stew.

I ordered beef stew and sat down with her at a table. As hungry as I was, I couldn't go for the stew[,] so I pushed it away and told her I was about ready to leave. She then showed me where she lived and I promised to come back to Glendora some night. I never went back.

Things simply got too hot.

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"White Reporters Doublecrossed Probers Seeking Lost Witnesses"
James L. Hicks, *Cleveland Call and Post*, October 15, 1955

I got into my rented car with Mississippi tags and headed back from Glendora in the direction of Sumner.

When I reached the little town of Webb about a mile and a half away and almost half way back to Sumner I noticed a dirt road which I reasoned if it were straight would cut across country and hit the highway leading back to Mound Bayou.

I stopped the car, consulted my map, reasoned that I was guessing right and headed down the dirt road to take the short cut.

If I had known then what I know now I would never have taken that dirt road.

Nothing happened to me on it but subsequent events proved what could have happened.

The road led me in back of the state penitentiary at Parchman, Mississippi and I heaved a sigh of relief when I finally came out of its unpaved dust and rejoined the main highway.

Tell Experience

When I arrived back in Mound Bayou, Simeon Booker, Cloytde Murdock and photographer Jackson of the Johnson Publications out of Chicago were anxious to tell me of an experience they had had on their first day at Sumner.

They had gone to Money[,] which is below Glendora[,] and on their way back they too had seen the dirt road and reasoned as I did that it was a short cut.

But somehow as they went down the road they had become turned around and ended up going down a dead end road that led into the fields.

As they approached the dead end they encountered a truck load of white men all armed with shotguns and pistols, driving up the lonely road meeting them. They stopped, turned around and headed back. Upon questioning the presence of the guns they were told that the men were "deer hunting." However, on their arrival back in Mound Bayou they were told that deer hunting season had not yet started in Mississippi.

When I arrived back in Mound Bayou I told Dr. T. R. M. Howard[,] militant leader to the Delta[,] what I had found. I then learned that certain information which tied in beautifully with what I had.

He had been receiving reports for days that there had been two men on the truck with Emmett Till but he had not been able to establish who they were. He also had information on

others such as Willie Reed and Mandy Bradley[,] whom he told me were willing to come forward and testify at the proper time.

Unearth Witnesses

Dr. Howard had given this information to other colored reporters but he had warned them not to publish a word about it until he could round up the witnesses and get them out of danger before stories broke in the press that they had valuable information which could lead to conviction. He impressed upon me and others that once a story got into the papers their lives would not be worth a nickel.

There then began some of the most trying days of my career as a reporter. I knew I was on something big and I wanted to break it with my papers right away.

The question was how to do so without tipping the white people of Mississippi off and thereby exposing myself and the innocent cotton pickers to bodily harm.

I argued that I should break the story. But Dr. Howard and my colleagues argued "How." They warned me that the wires out of Mound Bayou were not safe and they said it would be simply folly to put the story on Western Union and think that it would not get all over town.

All day Monday I worked through the trial almost in a daze, wrestling with whether I should plunge into my story of the two witnesses or hold off a little longer as Dr. Howard and others suggested.

[I filed copy on the testimony of the Rev. Moses Wright and Mrs. Mamie Bradley and let it go at that.]

Tuesday I continued to press for a release of the story. For by this time some of the white reporters had got wind of what we were working on and had asked me if I knew anything of a man named "Too Tight."

In one story I filed through Western Union on Tuesday I alluded strongly to important and new witnesses which might come up in the trial. I came as near as I could to telling my office that something big was about to break without putting any of the witnesses on the spot.

This was the fear which the others had and which I must admit made sense at the time. They knew that Sheriff Strider of Tallahatchie County was a witness for the defense, that he had said he doubted the body was that of Emmett Till and that he had shown hostility to colored people working on the case.

Fear Harm To Witnesses

They felt and I agreed that if Strider learned that we were going to produce some eye witnesses to the murder he would tip off the defense and others working with them and our witnesses would either be spirited away or come to bodily harm.

At first this sounded fantastic to me. To think that one could not trust the Sheriff. But when I looked at the hard cold facts that Strider had said the body was not Till's, that he was a witness against the state and that if "Too Tight" was in the Charleston jail Strider was the man who put him there, I agreed that it did not make sense to tip off Strider.

Then Ruby Hurley[,] NAACP field secretary[,] came to town and in a session in my hotel room which will live long in my memory I told Ruby what my problem was and told her that I could not see how I could sit on the story any longer no matter who was threatened by its publication.

Dr. Howard and my colleagues were all against my filing the story. They kept saying[,] "We don't want to get anybody killed. Wait."

Plan Shift

I put it up squarely to Ruby. She came through like a champion. She said that the evidence which we had was enough to stop the trial and shift it over to Sunflower County. Our witnesses were willing to testify that the crime was committed in Sunflower County instead of Tallahatchie County.

And she pointed out that if the case went to the jury in Tallahatchie County the two men would never have to stand trial again in another county because of double jeopardy. She said it was important that the evidence be made public right away before the case closed and went to the jury.

Ruby won the day on that point. But she stated that the story should be given the widest possible play on the dailies so that the public pressure could help to step in and stop the trial.

That meant that we had to call in white reporters since many of the weekly papers had already gone to the press. But who?

Simeon Booker, a Nieman fellow[,] suggested the name of Clark Porteous of the *Memphis Press Scimitar* who is also a Nieman fellow. I suggested that we add to it John Popham of the *New York Times* who was covering the story for the *Times*.

We agreed that we could call them in on it right away and that we'd have them ask the Sheriff where "Too Tight" was and to notify the Prosecutor and the District Attorney that we had new evidence to produce if they could offer the witnesses protection. We felt that these two men were men we could trust and we ruled out any other whites on the story either because no one in the group knew them well enough—or knew them too well to be trusted.

Makes Error

It was here that Dr. Howard committed what I will always feel was a tactical mistake. He was seated there in my room and suddenly he was going to Memphis to meet Congressman Diggs. Our agreement was sealed that we would notify Porteous and Popham and no one else.

Dr. Howard left. But a few minutes later we got word that Porteous and a "carload of reporters from Clarksdale" were coming down to hear the "story of the new witnesses."

Now we had agreed that no one but Porteous and Popham would be let in on the story but when Porteous arrived he came without Popham and instead had with him two white reporters of the Jackson, Mississippi *Daily News*[,] regarded by many as one of the most inflammatory papers in the state!

It now appears that Dr. Howard, who had been pledging to me secrecy all the time, had suddenly just thrown the whole story to the wolves. I was hurt and I said so. Ruby was shocked and she said so. We then began to wonder what would happen to our witnesses because through our underground with them we had informed them that nothing would appear in the press until they were off the plantation in safe hands.

Spills Beans

When the three white reporters showed up[,] Dr. Howard, who had not gone to Memphis[,] sat down with them in an insurance office in Mound Bayou. Without learning who they were or pledging them to any off the record secrecy he began to tell them every word of the evidence he had and that which we had produced.

Then after telling them all, he told them that they could not break the story until the next afternoon because he first wanted to get the witnesses off the plantation.

This is what he told them:

"Sunday night a Negro came to me with information that the killing of Till may have happened in Sunflower County. I have looked into this. I can produce at least five witnesses at

the proper time who will testify that Till was not killed in Tallahatchie County but killed in Sunflower County about three and a half miles west of Drew in the headquarters shed of the Clint Sheridan Plantation[,] which is managed by Leslie Milan, brother of J. W. Milan, one of the defendants and half brother of Roy Bryant[,] the other defendant.

"Word had been brought to me that within the past eight hours efforts have been made to clean up blood stains on the floor of this shed. I am informed that if you reporters will go with the proper authorities in the morning, you will see some stains and where efforts have been made to remove them.

"I am informed that a 1955 green Chevrolet truck with a white top was seen on the place at 6 a.m. Sunday, August 28, the last time Till was seen alive. There were four white men in the cab and three Negro men in the back. Photos of Till have been identified. He was in the middle in the back.

"There are witnesses who heard the cries of a boy from the shed. They heard blows. They noted that the cries gradually decreased until they were heard no more.

"Later a tractor was moved from the shed. The truck was driven into the shed. The truck came out with a tarpaulin spread over the back. The Negroes who went into the shed were not seen at this time and have not been seen around the plantation since."

Jumps Gun

Porteous readily agreed to keeping the story off the papers until the next day but James Featherstone of the *Jackson Daily News* told Dr. Howard the he could not promise he would not print the story the next day. He said he had been called to come to Mound Bayou for a story, that he had not been told it was off the record and that he was going to print the story as quickly as he could get it in the papers.

This caused everyone in the room to almost faint because they knew what publication of the story would mean to the witnesses like Willie Reed and Mandy Bradley[,] who were at that moment still down on the plantation.

It took everyone in the room begging and pleading with Featherstone not to break the story. He finally agreed on the condition that on the following night when the witnesses were produced in Mound Bayou that no other white reporter be let in on the meeting except the three who were then there.

Dr. Howard, who I'm sure by this time realized his tactical mistake, promised that would be the case.

Scheme Exposed

The next step was to get the witnesses off the plantation and then have the white reporters tell the DA and the prosecutors that we had them and that they were all willing to talk. We broke up the meeting on this note.

But the white reporters went to the authorities either that night or the first thing the next morning because when the trial recessed the next day the prosecutors had informed the judge and the Governor of the State about the new evidence and the trial came to an abrupt recess to allow the prosecutors to talk with the witnesses.

Now during cotton picking time in Mississippi you can't get a cotton picker to leave the plantation during the day unless a white man comes for him. If he does he is subjected to a good whipping.

Ruby Hurley knew this and knowing this she became immediately alarmed that we would not be able to get the witness[es] until that night and that since the prosecution already knew about it the defense would also find out about it and that meant that they were still on the spot.

Still with the idea of saving lives, we huddled together with Miss Hurley in Sumner's only tavern to decide what was the next move.

Ruby said there was only one thing to do. That was to go on the plantation and warn the witnesses to leave at once and come to Mound Bayou as soon as possible. But native Mississippians pointed out the problem of that.

Meant Trouble

They said it meant trouble if any strange colored people showed up on a plantation and then some of the plantation people disappeared. Since we had to go to the plantation of the defendants they considered it double trouble.

But Ruby was insistent and it was finally agreed that Ruby and a reporter, Moses Newsome of Memphis[,] would go out on the plantation to warn the people and set up a meeting place for that night and that we would all then meet in a certain place in Cleveland, Mississippi[,] where we would talk to the witnesses and then bring them to Mound Bayou eight miles away to meet the authorities and the white reporters.

Thus shortly after high noon Ruby and Newsome disguised themselves as sharecroppers (Moses who was 130 pounds went away wearing a size 46 pair of overalls and Ruby wearing a Mother Hubbard dress and a bandana and actually looked for the moment like a sharecropper.)

This may sound fantastic but this is all true and it is the only way the state produced what few witnesses it did produce with the exception of Mose Wright.

They left, borrowed an old battered auto and went out into the plantations.

With the trial recessed we then went back to Mound Bayou. The meeting place with the witnesses was in Cleveland, Mississippi[,] and we were to be there at dark.

When darkness fell I went to the meeting place. There I met a man who is an ardent worker in the NAACP. He told me to park my car and get into his car. Then he drove me to a house which turned out to be the real meeting place.

I later learned that this is the way they do it down there. They announce one place as a site. But when you arrive there it is really not the bonafide place. If you are the right person you are taken from there to the meeting place. If you are not, no one will admit knowing what you are talking about.

Fantastic! It seems that way. But you have to live in Mississippi under the threat of its violence to learn what people like Ruby Hurley and other NAACP leaders have learned.

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"The Mississippi Lynching Story: Luring Terrorized Witnesses from the Plantations Was Toughest Job"
James L. Hicks, *Cleveland Call and Post*, October 22, 1955

When I arrived at the house I found Ruby Hurley and Newsome safe but they had a sad story to tell.

During the afternoon the authorities notified by the white reporters had gone to the plantations ahead of them and questioned the prospective witnesses. This had scared them to death and they felt that we had gone back on our promise to get them out of there before the white people were told.

The result was that they not only clammed up to the whites but they refused to come to the meeting with us.

We didn't know what to do then. A call came from Porteous saying that he was on his way down with the sheriffs in the various counties. A special investigator sent by the Governor and other officials. And we had no witnesses to produce.

We went on, however, to the meeting place with the white authorities and Dr. Howard[,] who met with them[,] told them of how they had jumped the gun and what it meant.

He also pointed out the danger that the witnesses would be in when the story broke and he asked that they be taken off the farms and placed in protective custody. The various sheriffs and county supervisors, all of whom were here, said they did not feel the people involved were in any immediate danger but they said if Dr. Howard thought so they would go get them and bring them to Mound Bayou for safe keeping.

Meet Officials

Thus at about midnight we sat there in an insurance office with the following law officials of Mississippi, T.J. Townsend, prosecutor of Sunflower County, Gwin Cole, who had been flown to the trial that day on orders by Governor Hugh White as soon as the new evidence was presented, Sheriff George Smith of LeFlore County, District Attorney Stannie Senders of Sunflower County and John Ed Cothran, chief deputy of Sunflower County. They said the Governor was interested in the case and they wanted to do anything Dr. Howard and the group suggested.

Dr. Howard insisted that the only thing to do was to go right then and get the people off the plantation. The law officials said they could not force them to leave but that they could take us out and let us talk to them and bring those out who wanted to come.

Things happened fast after that. The various sheriffs said they would get people in their own counties and before one could say Jackie Robinson cars were moving out in all directions.

Visit Plantations

Some key people of Mississippi who were in on the meeting but who still cannot be identified got into cars with the sheriffs. These people were the contact people with the people on the plantations. Various reporters took off after the sheriffs in cars of their own. As for me I started out behind the sheriff who was to bring in Willie Reed.

He went through Mound Bayou like a streak and turned right at the dirt road leading towards Drew. I hit the dirt road behind him as he roared into the cotton fields.

Now it's simply a part of this fantastic story to state that at times on that little dirt road leading out of Mound Bayou I was travelling in the dead of night at times at 70 miles an hour!

It's fantastic but true.

But at that speed I lost the sheriff[,] and a Jackson and Johnson publications photographer who was riding with me and I decided to go on to County Supervisor Townsend's office at Drew where all the witnesses picked up by the various sheriffs were to be brought before being taken to Mound Bayou.

Driving at 75 miles an hour when we hit the paved road leading into Drew we overtook Simeon Booker and Clark Porteous and Featherson [Featherstone]. They too had chased a sheriff and got lost on the Mississippi dirt road. The five of us then went to Townsend's office.

As we arrived there a white woman drove up in a car and a colored man got out. This proved to be Frank Young, one of the key witnesses in the case who never testified. The sheriff in that county had simply called the plantation owner on which Young worked and told her to bring Young in.

Kept Mum

Dr. Howard was to have followed us to Drew to be there when witnesses were questioned but for some reason he was delayed and though Young had talked freely before this, he refused to talk to anyone but Dr. Howard.

We waited a long time and then the white woman who had brought him in grew tired and she took Young back to the plantation, promising to have him in court the next day. Young never took the witness stand. They told me he came to the court and could not find the courthouse and went back. I never did get the straight of this.

One of the sheriffs had taken a colored minister with him to get Mandy Bradley. About two o'clock in the morning they returned without Mandy. Moses Newsome, a reporter who rode in the sheriff's car with the minister and the sheriff[,] said the sheriff had driven to the house, sent the minister in to talk with Mrs. Bradley and see if she would come to Mound Bayou.

She is said to have told him that she would not. That she did not know anything about the case. But later the same woman did testify in the case and has now left Mississippi and is in Chicago. I can only believe that the events of the day and night had frightened her nearly to death.

The various sheriffs talked to other witnesses but were able to get none to come forward that night. Finally in the early hours of the morning we went back to Mound Bayou over the lonely back road.

There is one point which I should mention here that I feel had a direct bearing on my future activities with the trial.

During the meeting at Mound Bayou with the various sheriffs, one of them asked Dr. Howard what were the names of the two men who had been seen on the truck with Emmett Till. At this point Dr. Howard and the sheriffs were in the room together and reporters waiting outside.

Put on Spot

But at this point Dr. Howard in a loud voice called out "Send Jimmy Hicks in here." I went into the room and before all these sheriffs and other officials of Mississippi, many of whom I did not trust, he pointed to me and said: "This is Jimmy Hicks of the Afro American papers. He has talked with the people who know 'Too Tight.' Hicks, what is 'Too Tight's real name and what is the name of the man who was on that truck with him?"

I didn't want to answer. I didn't want to enter into that way whatever. But I couldn't let Dr. Howard down before all those people and I knew I was the only one who had the answer. So I said "'Too Tight's' real name is Leroy Collins and the other man is Henry Lee Loggins."

All their eyes were upon me as I left the room. And I got a funny feeling that the finger might also be on me too.

Watch Story

Back at the Mound Bayou hotel my colleagues were even more insistent that I lighten up on the type of story I was filling though Western Union.

From that point on it seemed that everyone in the courthouse knew what I had written the moment I filed it. I am not accusing Western Union. I do not believe that the operators were willfully letting anyone read my copy.

But the Western Union ticker was set up in the hallway of the courthouse and many of the local people had never seen one work. Those who could not get into the courtroom made it

a habit to crowd around the open phones and the Western Union desk and listen to the reporters call in their stories on special wires set up for them.

It was very easy for them to also look over the shoulder of the Western Union operator and see what he was filing.

The owner of the only colored phone in Sumner told me himself that the white people listened in on everything said on his phones so I ruled that one out with the exception of a few calls to my office during which time I never once said what part I was playing in the trial.

While I was debating on whether to sit down and tell it all an incident happened which caused me to finally agree to file what I was seeing and doing.

I drove to the trial at nine o'clock Wednesday morning and sat through the trial until it recessed at 1:30. Then I started to my car parked in front of the courthouse. As I reached the car with the key in my hand to get a notebook out of the car a white man stepped off the curb and said to me "Boy is this your car[?]" When I answered that it was, he snatched the key from my hand and said[,] "You come with me down to the Mayor's office.

I was never so shocked in my life when I saw his gun [and] I decided that I'd better go along.

Under Arrest

I began walking with the man to the "mayor's office." Neither of us said a word. But oh how I was thinking. I felt at the start that Sheriff Strider[,] whom I simply do not trust[,] had got wind of my activity in tracking down "Too Tight" and I figured that I might be stuck away in some jail and given a good going over until after the trial.

We walked a half block and turned into the office of the *Sumner Sentinel*. Inside the door stood Featherson[,] the Jackson, Mississippi reporter who had worked on the witnesses with us virtually all night the night before.

Featherson said to me[,] "Hi Hicks. How you doing?" I said to him[,] "Not so good. Looks like I'm in trouble."

He said[,] "What's the trouble" and I asked him to ask the deputy who had brought me in. All the deputy would tell him was that Sheriff Strider had ordered him to pick me up.

I'll never forget Featherson. He told the deputy[,] "Look, I'm from Jackson, Mississippi. I know this boy. He's all right. You must have the wrong man. This boy is down here covering the trial." The deputy ignored him.

About that time Simpson, editor of the *Sentinel*[,] came in. And I was glad that he had been the first man I had gone to when I hit town.

Simpson, like Featherson, greeted me warmly and asked me how things were going. I told him that I was under arrest but did not know the charges. Simpson then aggressively demanded of the deputy what he was holding me for. When he refused to tell him he said[,] "Well, by God. Let's get the sheriff over here and see. This man is here to cover the trial. Every reporter speaks highly of him because I checked up on him.["] He then ordered someone in his office to get the sheriff[,] who was in the courthouse across the street.

Newsmen Busy

But instead of the sheriff coming back about 40 newsmen hit the door of the *Sentinel*.

Their nose for news had already sniffed a news story and they were there to check on it and I was glad to see them there.

It was then and only then that the deputy suddenly realized that he knew the charges against me. He said[,] "He's charged with passing a school bus!"

Simpson exploded. "School bus[,]" he said. "For goodness sakes, turn that man loose. You're getting ready to give this town the highest black eye it has ever had."

He then turned to what I later found out was the justice of the peace who tried my case — the linotype operator in Simpson's printing plant!

Simpson suggested to the linotype operator that he dismiss the charges but the linotype operator[,] who was then talking to his boss, said, "This is my case and I'm going to try it."

I saw then that there was a little man who wanted to show his importance and I was so relieved that it was a traffic charge and nothing else that I told Alex Wilson of the *Memphis Tri State Defender* to buzz to the colored press that I was OK and could pay the fine and that I think I'd get off better if they left and made it appear that no one was putting any pressure on the little justice of the peace.

They left (and bless them all for having the courage to come), but some of the white reporters remained and continued to ask questions. One picked up a phone off Simpson's desk, called Memphis and began to dictating the story to his editor. The story later appeared on the center fold of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

With Simpson talking to the JP, he said to me[,] "Come back here, boy." I went. He took me back to a linotype machine, wiped the ink off his hands, got out a law book and began reading a law to me.

When he finished he told me that under that law he could fine me $300 or give me six months in jail. But he said he was going to "give you a break" and dismiss the case. He asked me if I thought that would be a good break. I told him I certainly did. And then he dismissed the case and told me to "tell all those reporters out there that we gave you a break." I told him that I would—and I did.

By this time, however, I was getting the general idea that I was a marked man[,] for during his conversation with me the justice of the peace started telling me where I was staying, what time I got to the trial in the morning, where I parked my car and who I was going to have lunch with that day. (I was going to eat with a local woman who had promised some more information. She did not show up).

I haven't the slightest idea how he learned all this.

➢➢➢➢➢➢

"Jimmy Hicks Tells Inside Story of Infamous Mississippi Lynch Case"
James L. Hicks, *Cleveland Call and Post,* October 22, 1955

The next day Willie Reed, Mandy Bradley and others took the stand and testified. I filed straight copy of their testimony but I was eating my heart out to file copy on the fact that "Too Tight" Leroy Collins was in the Charleston jail, that Sheriff Strider knew he was there and that he would not produce him.

After they testified word came that the prosecution was going to close down its arguments. I couldn't believe it. How could they close without trying to put "Too Tight" on the stand.

I went to the Prosecutor Gerald Chatham and asked if it were true. He said it was. I asked him how about "Too Tight." He said Sheriff Strider told him that "Too Tight" was not in the Charleston jail. He said he couldn't produce him if the sheriff would not produce him.

I asked him what did he think had happened to "Too Tight." He said[,] "I wouldn't like to say."

Witness Seen

That night I received information that there was a person in Charleston who had been to the jail the day before and talked with "Too Tight." The person was at a certain spot[;] an NAACP official was there too and they wanted to know what should be done.

He told the person to be ready to testify the next day. Then we got word to the prosecutors by phone of what we had learned. As tactfully as it could be done it was pointed out that perhaps Sheriff Strider had been mistaken.

But the next morning the prosecution stated again that despite the fact that someone was willing to go to the jail and identify "Too Tight" he could not go there because the sheriff of the jail had already said he was not there.

The case actually went to the jury on that note and to this day no one got a chance to go there and talk to "Too Tight" Collins.

I think he is still there. If he is not there I think Sheriff Strider should be made to tell where he is.

Could Clear Mystery

And I believe if either he or Loggins could be put on a witness stand they would clear up once and for all the mystery of what they were doing on that truck with Emmett Till and what happened to Emmett Till when he was taken into that barn on the night of August 28.

Perhaps the reader will still condemn me for not dashing off reports on the above story day by day and hour by hour as it happened.

I should like to add these additional facts, unrelated as they might seem:

On the night that I filed my first copy from Sumner I was in my hotel room at Mound Bayou rather sure that no one in Sumner knew where I was living.

I got a phone call from Sumner long after midnight. The voice said he was a reporter from Louisiana and that he had met me earlier in the day. When I said I didn't remember him he said it was not important. That what he really called was for me to go to Memphis with him. He said he was working on a new angle on the story and asked me if I wanted to come along.

He said he realized Mound Bayou was not on the road to Memphis but that he was sleepy and would gladly drive out of his way to come by for me if I would agree to go so that I would help him drive back.

I told him that I couldn't possibly break away to go. When I said that he began asking me how long would I be at my hotel in Mound Bayou. I told him that I was just preparing to go south to Greenville and work on a new lead I had found. He said he could reach Sumner in about a half hour and that he wanted to talk to me. I told him I was leaving right away.

Given a Weapon

When the conversation ended and I told some of our group what had transpired a local Mississippian went out to his car, returned to my room and gave me a loaded .38 Smith and Wesson pistol. "Here, boy," he said. "You sleep with this tonight." I did.

About an hour later a carload of people drove up the side of my hotel and knocked on my door.

I lay there with my hand clutching the loaded gun and said nothing. Then they went next door and knocked on the door of Simeon Booker. He did not answer either.

By this time I got up and came to the door. I tested the lock to make sure it was locked and then I began peeping with gun in hand through the three small windows up at the top of the door of my hotel.

Beneath the street light outside I could see a carload of colored people. I was close to them as 30 feet. The light was playing full on the face of a colored woman I had seen before as she sat on the front seat of the car with the door opened.

The man doing the knocking was standing talking with her with his back to me and I could not see his face. I heard him say[,] "He's not in there."

Then the man walked around the other side of the car still with his face from me and went around the motel to the home of Mrs. Anderson[,] who owns the motel. I crossed the room, still with the gun in my hand, and watched him ring the bell until she answered the door.

Then he left after talking with her a moment and came back to the car parked in front of my door. He got into the car from the driver's side and soon they drove south toward Cleveland.

I went back to bed with the gun under my pillow. Then next morning Mrs. Anderson told me that the people had asked her if she had any vacant rooms. What I couldn't understand and still don't was why they knocked on the door of my motel room instead of first going to the office of the motel.

Feared Trap

On another occasion Murray Kempton of the *New York Post* called me in Mound Bayou. I got his message and called him back. He was not in. But as soon as I hung up the phone rang for me. A voice on the other end of the wire in Clarksdale said his name was Ferguson and that he knew I had called Murray a few minutes ago. The voice said he and Murray were good friends and that I could tell him anything that I was going to tell Murray and that he would pass it on to Murray.

I told the voice that he was on the wrong track, that I had not been calling Murray to tell him anything but that I was simply returning a call Murray had put through to me from Clarksdale.

The voice insisted[,] "Come on Hicks. You know plenty. Let me in on it." He gave the impression that he was another newsman. I told him I simply did not have any leads to work on and he finally hung up.

Face Trickster

Then next day in Sumner I told Murray about the incident. We went to James Featherson and accused Featherson of trying to get me to give him some information under his name.

But the last day of the trial Featherson came up to me in Kempton's presence and swore that he had never talked with me by phone. I told Murray that the man on the other end had used the name Ferguson. And in reflection I'm not sure that it was not the voice of Featherson.

Who was it? I haven't the slightest idea.

One more incident. Sheriff Strider gave out press passes which were supposed to enable reporters to use the backstairs which the jury used in getting in and out of the courtroom to avoid going through the crowd.

Barred By Deputy

The day after I gave the sheriff the name of "Too Tight" Collins I started up the back steps to go to the courtroom. A deputy was standing on the narrow stairway and as I approached him with the card in hand he put one foot against the wall of the narrow stairway, leaned against the other and barred the way.

I said[,] "Press" and held the card up higher. He said to me[,] "No niggers are going up this stairway." I bit my tongue, turned around and started for the front stairs where one had to push his way through the hostile crowd.

On the way I met John Popham of the *Times* and I told him what had happened. I also told him what a loaded thing it was to push one's way through the hostile crowd. He suggested that we get together and try to go up.

With Popham leading the way we went back to the stairs. Several white reporters walked on past the deputy before we reached him.

Then Popham walked past him. I followed. But as I put my foot out to mount the first stair, up came the deputy's foot again and barred the way. Popham, who had already passed him turned and said[,] "He's a reporter. He's got a card. The sheriff said the press could go up this way."

The man snarled at me[,] "You're not going up this way. G'roung." He had a gun. I had no choice. I went around.

No action Taken

I know that this information was given to Strider. But we still never were able to use the back steps.

All of these things gradually beat me down at Sumner. A deputy threatened to knock Simeon Booker's "head off" because Booker held up the press card and asked the deputy to help him get through the crowd.

A man who walked up to the press table and called all of us "niggers" was sworn in five minutes later as the bailiff.

Reporter Fired Upon

An English correspondent who talked to a colored woman was later fired at twice the same night be the deputy who arrested me.

A cross was burned fifty yards from the courthouse during the trial. There was no investigation that I heard of.

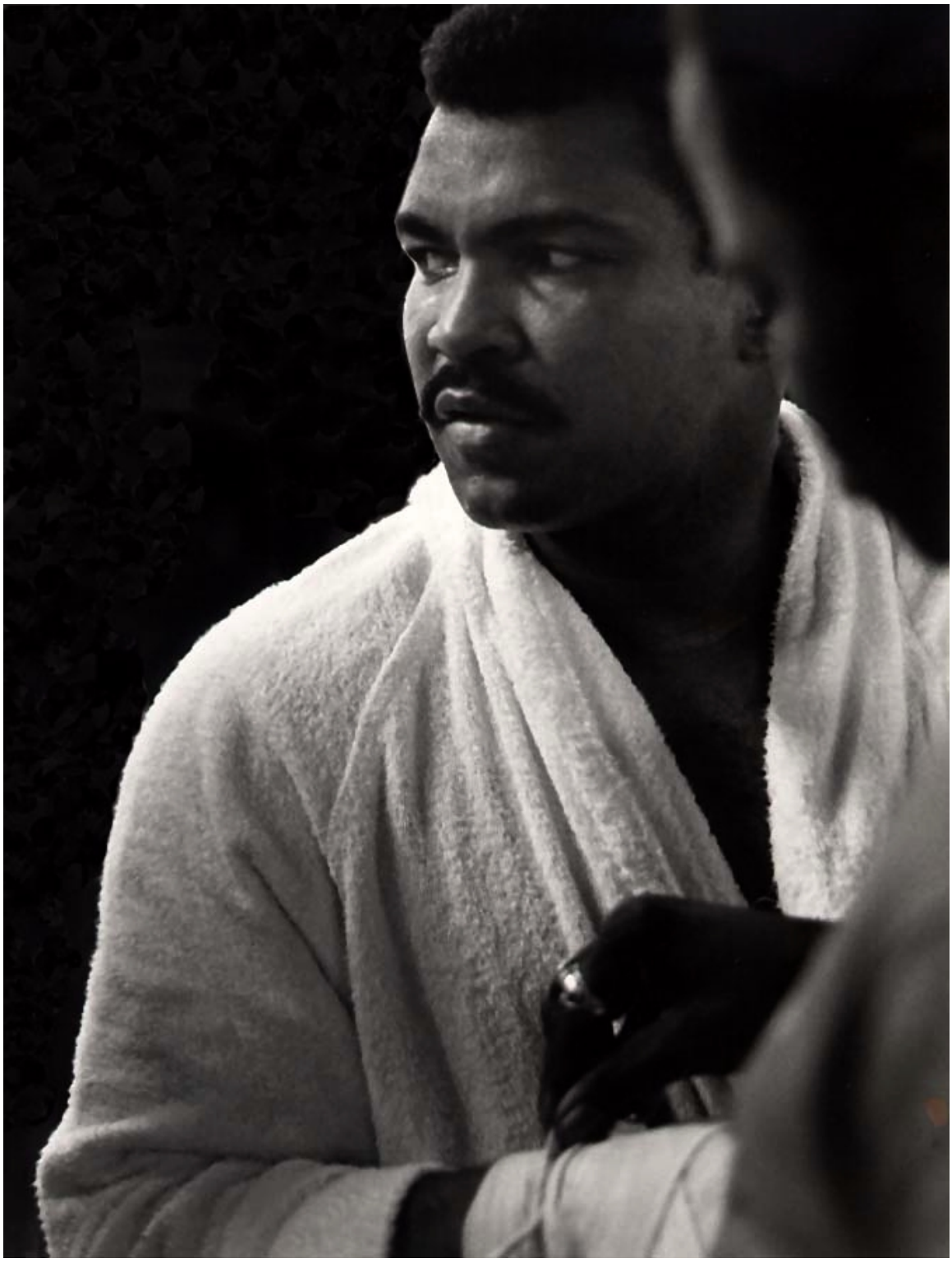
They allotted us chairs at the Jim Crow press table but during the noon recess while we were trying to get our stories filed in a colored restaurant the crowd would come in and take the chairs from our table. I stood up more often than I sat down.

Congressman Diggs and Dr. Howard brought their own chairs to the Jim Crow press table. On the last day of the trial the crowd took them.

This was the trial at Sumner as I lived it. Other colored reporters will verify that portion of my story where our paths crossed, and they crossed often. There are other colored reporters who could possibly tell even more fantastic stories. But they are all true.

TWO PORTRAITS

John Palcewski



Two Portraits by John Palcewski

Her name was Audrey Bradford Stubbs, nicknamed "Brad." She and her husband, Dennis, adopted me as their son when I was in the US Air Force stationed at a SAC base in Amarillo, Texas, in the early 60s.

Over the years I scheduled my magazine photo assignments to include a stopover in Texas so I could visit these dear people, and we remained in close touch for 30 some years, until they died several years ago. The series of images on my Web site was taken on a visit to Cadillac Ranch, outside of Amarillo, in 1980.

Cadillac Ranch was quite famous, a novel sculpture consisting of a bunch of brand new cars buried nose first into the flat plains of the Panhandle. Over decades those cars deteriorated, and they're now a metaphor of what awaits us all.

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This was one of a great number of images I made on assignment for UPI New York at Ali's training camp in Deer Lake, Pa., in early September, 1980. Ali was hoping to regain the WBC World Heavyweight Championship from Larry Holmes, but was subsequently very badly defeated.

On my first day of shooting, it turned out I was the only press photographer there. Ali gave me free access. Actually, he put on a great performance for me, hamming it up shamelessly as I followed him around as he worked out, and I got some fabulous shots.

Later UPI sent a series of five images out on the international wire, whereas they rarely send more than two or three. (This shot of Ali in the white bathrobe was not among them.) It was Ali's sweetness and generosity to me that made the shoot such a success.

"Brad 1" and "Ali" ©John Palcewski <http://www.red-kitty.com/palcewski>

THREE POEMS AND A TRANSLATION

Ann Barrett

Boundaries

Cleveland—home of Republic Steel and Case
Western Reserve—divided by a stretch of
Rapid Transit tracks through flat lands littered
with abandoned buildings, beer bottles and
appliances, the Cuyahoga—
decaying boundary between East and West.

On Saturdays, our pockets heavy with change,
we boarded the train and rode West, Pam and I,
tempted but never daring to cross water
or pass downtown, the Terminal Tower—
a buoy sticking up in an ocean of smog.

Our parents, professionals preferring
the integrated suburbs East of the city—
proof of educated, open-minds—settled
on tree-lined streets and pointed to the naked yards
of our western neighbors, to Nativity scenes
still standing in Spring and said "See?"

Later, smoking pot under the watchful eyes
of Shawn Cassidy and Peter Frampton—posters
pasted on the walls of her attic suite—
Pam made prank calls to Josh, a Jewish boy,
and I confessed a fascination with
steel workers, welders and boys with primed cars.

Jamie was one, his father sole proprietor of
a junkyard just west of the tracks. Jamie—
scrappy and thin but with fingers magic
when caressing the keys of our Steinway
and a smile like a prize lure underwater, shivering.

I married a black man and Pam married Mike,
a blue-collar boy. Weekends, we pack babies in cars
and cross bridges. The river wreathes round the Terminal
and between us, tagging the change—a distance
admitted by fewer visits and manifest in
the loose-fingered way Mike shakes my husband's hand.

Toys Are Us

Wi de ina de same boat—"Toys-R-Us,"
ah so de sign seh . . .
Nuh haffi have no pretty-pretty degree
fi figure hit out, or fi wuk ya, needa.

All mi wan is fi dem fi stop suck een
fi dem mauga belly an squeeze dem selves
ina sum cookie cutta shape
"De Maan" press down pon dem soft, doughy flesh.

Een jus' wind wi up an' set wi loose,
forcing three thirty-five an' lunch-time
cut short an' minute past closing fi talk bout
company policy an' use of de phone.

Mi seh 'im nuh have nuh right to treat dem so.
Hell, dem a 'im very best customah—
spend dem money pon 'im cheap, plastic shit—
baby doll and formula dem *cyan* even afford.

Still, de bwoy dem play de number Friday evening
and de women—Likkle Miss Makeup—beg fi service
from relaxers, fade cream an' hot comb pon Sattaday,
den waste wha' lef' pon 1-800-PSYCHIC.

Dem mek *mi* look bad, mon.

All mi want is fi dem fi pull up dem pant,
trade dem Air-Jordon-state-of-de-art shoe
fi some razor-sharp seam and combat boot—
military starch, like deh G. I. Joe dem—

but when de position open up begging
fi experience, dem jus' a dig in dem tick, rubba heel
an' like de animal wha' dem compared to,
refuse fi move—stupid fool dem.

Dem stand back an' let some high color,
pretty-pretty college bwoy—straight nose, stiff spine—
come an' tek way de job dem can do fi dem self—
dis go ya so an' dat go deh so.

A *wi* walk roun' an' show dem how fi play de game—
bicycle and stroller, big ticket item;
action figure, aisle nine; Sega, aisle two . . .
Mi seh, "Gi mi de money, an' de tikle too."

De day done but 'im hug wi paycheck,
try an' squeeze ten extra minute out of wi—
point 'pon de long, sticky stretch of chewing gum
stuck pon de floor an say, "Do me a favor . . . "

Mi tell 'im, "Wi nuh paid fi clean floor," but dem hop-to—
puppet on a string—looking fi few cent more,
dem line up like domino an' skin a dem teet.
Dem noh understan'—if one go down, dem all go down.

If dem jus' shut dem big, tick lip,
an' keep de system fi dem self, but no, dem jus' play
dat push-button recording, over an' over—

"Yes suh, no suh" an' "Mi do it right away, suh."

Toys Are Us (too)

We're all in the same boat—"Toys-R-Us"—
that's what the sign says.
Don't need no fancy degree to figure it out
or to work here, either.

All I want is for them to stop sucking in
their meager bellies and squeezing themselves
into some cookie cutter shape
"The Man" presses down into their soft, doughy flesh.

He just winds us up and sets us loose,
forcing three thirty-five and lunch-time
cut short and minutes past closing to talk about
company policy and use of the phone.

I say he has no right to treat them that way.
Hell, they're his very best customers—
spend their hard-earned money on his cheap, plastic shit—
baby dolls and formula they *can't* even afford!

Still, the boys play the numbers Friday evening
and the women—Little Miss Make-ups—beg
the services of relaxers, fade creams and hot combs
on Saturday, then waste what's left on 1-800-PSYCHIC.

They make *me* look bad, man.

All I want is for them to pull up their pants
and trade those Air-Jordon-state-of-the-art shoes
for razor-sharp seams and combat boots—
military starch, like the G. I. Joes—

But, when the position opens up begging
for experience, they dig in their thick, rubber heels,
and like the animals they've been likened to,
refuse to move—stupid fools.

They stand back and let some high color,
pretty-pretty college boy—straight nose, stiff spine—
come and take the job they're perfectly able
to do themselves—this goes here and that goes there . . .

Hell, he *needs* us—we teach them boy how to play the game—
bicycle and stroller, big ticket items;
action figures, aisle nine; Sega, aisle two . . .
I say, "Give *me* the money, and the title, too."

We've done our time but he hugs our paychecks,
tries to squeeze ten extra minutes out of us,
points to the long, sticky stretch of chewing gum
stuck on the floor and says, "Do me a favor . . ."

I tell him, "We're not paid to clean floors," but *they* hop-to—
puppets on a string—looking for a few cents more,
they line up like dominos, flashing their teeth.
They don't understand—if one goes down, they all go down.

If they would just shut their big, thick lips
and keep the system to themselves, but *no,* they just play
that push-button recording, over and over—

"Yes Sir, no Sir" and "I'll do it right away, Sir."

My Stepson's Hunger

At night, struggling with the memory of how he came
hanging from his father's hand like a duffel bag,
he creeps through the house searching
the cupboards for something that isn't there,
as if what he craves will reveal itself
in the corners behind cereal boxes and bags
of rice, but food will not satisfy this
hunger—deep, angry growl locked in a knot of
teenage sinew, a pot of simmering broth—
the longing for his mother—spicy,
like acid he cannot digest.

Sure that our drawers hold secrets, he sifts through
collections of pens, paper, a dollar's worth of
change, but what he wants doesn't reside in our house.
Sadness comes in envelopes addressed to others
in a stranger's empty handwriting—bills, business,
a birthday wish from a grandfather that isn't his.

No trace of the lazy loops and letters arching left
he vaguely remembers. This woman, veiled
in folds of distance, possesses the sacred
spaces of our home, haunts his waking moments, plants
me in my place—the target of his rage—his
mother, halfway across the world, silent.
Words written on scraps of notebook paper—crumpled
sheets covered in black—give shape to this thing
that floats, undefined—a cloud of brackish water—
the humidity of held back tears, silent years
gathering in a mass of shame he claims as his own.

Like the necklace he borrows, lifted
from the satin-lined spaces of my jewelry box—
a gift from his father—fine gold chain
too feminine to fit his muscular neck.
A mother's intuition—I know where to look,
finding it wrapped around the chewed end of a pencil,
tucked in the canvas corner of his backpack
among crumbs—remnants that collect
in the lonely recesses of pocket—
a candy wrapper, letters from his girlfriend,
the ragged remains of an apple.

from

THE BLACK STORK

Ilse Molzahn

tr. from the German by Isabel Fargo Cole

The progress of the novel:

At the turn of the 20th century, in Olanowo, a drought-stricken estate in Posmania (now a region of Poland), six-year-old Katharina, or "Cat," spends the most unforgettable year of her childhood. In this struggling, isolated community, she witnesses things which she does not understand, and which no one is willing to explain to her. The adults whose passions, hopes and intrigues wreak such havoc live in a state of repression and denial, concerned only with covering up their feelings and the consequences of their actions.

It is the child who refuses to ignore or forget – yet, bitter irony, it is her own innocent, desperate insistence on the truth which makes the story take its tragic turn.

Cat's father, a former army officer, bought the estate in an effort to improve his social position. The money comes from Cat's mother's family. Now overconfident, now full of rage and despair at the thought of financial ruin, he is determined to make a go of it. Cat idolizes and fears him. Her mother has retreated into icy self-discipline and piety – and expectation. A "little brother" is on his way. Cat is thrilled at the idea – she will finally have a playmate. Her only real companions are the Polish servants, especially the proud, beautiful maid Helene, who gives her the affection her mother withholds.

One day in early spring, the day of another bitter financial argument between Cat's parents, a strange bird appears, a black stork. For Helene it is a terrible omen: the bird of death. But for Cat he is a symbol of freedom, of the unknown. That night, during a storm, Cat hears someone sneak outside. In the servants' quarters, Helene's lamp is burning. Hovering between dream and waking, Cat recalls the strange events of Christmas Eve: late at night, she had gone outside and followed two sets of footprints, seeing visions of stars and white-robed angels which turned out to be her two favorite pines. And beneath the pines she had heard two voices, whispering, panting, making inexplicable noises. Terrified, she had run back to the house, where Helene, in a torn dress, appeared a few minutes later to take her to bed.

The morning after this dream/memory, Helene is busy cleaning the house; Mother is writing to her parents to ask for money. Hungry for attention, Cat asks Helene why her light was on last night – was she "reading novels" again? And didn't Father go down to see whose light was burning? Now Cat has Mother's attention as well. She orders Cat to tell everything she saw. Frightened, Cat tells everything – including the "dream." Helene faints, Mother sends Cat outside in a cold fury. There she sees a sight which brings the whole estate to a standstill: the white storks, the

"luck-bringers," are returning. But in their nest is the black stork. Cat, afraid for him, tries to frighten him off. After all, Father, who loves rare things, is also planning to "bag" him. The "battle of the storks" begins. The laborers gather to watch the spectacle, and attempt to break up the battling birds. Then Father neatly picks off the black stork with his rifle. For one brief moment Cat strokes the feathers of the beautiful corpse.

Helene is dismissed from the household and returns to her father, the overseer: a bully who takes his whip to bed with him. He announces proudly that he has given Helene, the "slut," a proper beating. That evening Mother is "sick," and Father rides off with Maryam, the coachman, to fetch the doctor from Marowin. Cat eats supper in the kitchen with the servants, who can talk of nothing but Helene. Only Tetzlaff defends her. The women recall her torn dress on Christmas Eve, and how Kascha, the cook, told her: "If your mother knew about that, she'd hang herself from the transom all over again."

The next day Mother is up again; in the evening Maryan and Father return without the doctor. In the kitchen, Cat hears Maryan tell the story of their night journey: Father, ecstatic at the thought of a son, an heir, whips on the horses. They find the doctor drunk; he had spent three days at the bedside of a woman in labor, and in the end the child was stillborn. He has lost all faith in himself. Finally they ride off, but the doctor insists at stopping at a friend's estate in Smardse. He declares himself unable to handle another birth today. Father gives in; at Smardse there is drinking, dancing. Father broods about Helene. He had taken her in out of pity after her mother's suicide, knowing that she refused to go back to her father's house. She began to attract him, flirt with him – yet, he insists, he never touched her. And that recent stormy night he had gone out with the full intent to take advantage of her "offer" but, looking back at the house, saw Cat at the window, like his "conscience incarnate," and he "renounced the girl." (This proves, says Maryan, that Helene is innocent. But Kascha insists that the girl is pregnant.) A stern, one-armed servant-woman appears to put an end to the increasingly dissolute festivities. She is known as "the Stag." Her master, Kitzing, shot her in the arm by accident; when blood poisoning set in, it was amputated. By this point the doctor is too far gone to be of any use; it is morning, and Father and Maryan return to Olanowo without him. It was a false alarm, anyway; the child has not yet arrived.

Father stuffs the black stork and hangs him from the ceiling in the dining room. A mysterious old man comes to examine the estate and talk with Father. One night Cat is woken by cries and sees the doctor arriving. Cat dreams of Helene, of the black stork; when she wakes up, a nurse tells her that she has a little sister. The laborers Pawelik and Pawelitzka had also had a child that night. Cat is delighted by both babies. Maryan lets her ride in the carriage, she picks flowers, dawdles, realizes she is late and is afraid to go home. Instead, she goes to Pawelitzka. The house is empty; the baby is laid out in a coffin. Cat runs home in terror. Furious, her father beats her; the nurse intervenes. Kascha comforts her, informs her indifferently that Pawelik's child died of convulsions – "but they'll have another one all right!"

Cat's maternal grandparents and Aunt Ella arrive for an extended visit. They are shocked (Aunt Ella is amused) to discover what a tomboy Cat has become. They have never approved of Cat's father, who is from a peasant family; he in turn sees himself as rescuing the family from feebleness and degeneracy. Aunt Ella is flighty, eccentric, with an often cruel sense of humor – but her parents admire her as "artistic."

Later that spring Cat encounters Helene again at last – on her way to the smith to have an inside lock made for her bedroom door. At night an "animal" comes into Helene's room and slinks around her bed. It is clear (though not to Cat) that this "animal" is Helene's father. In two weeks Helene will leave to work for Baron Kellenrab, Cat's Uncle Mak. Cat's father has arranged it for her. That evening a violent thunderstorm strikes. A few minutes of hail destroy the crops. Cat's father confesses that he is no longer insured; he had no money to pay the premium.

One day the adults begin to gossip about Helene again. Something has happened, Cat realizes. She goes in search of her. In the garden she finds a rusty pair of scissors which her mother had accused Helene of stealing. So, finding Helene in the barn, apparently ill, Cat gives her the scissors. Terrified by Helene's strange groans, she runs away again. At lunch a servant bursts into the dining room: Helene is bleeding to death! Cat is hustled off to her room. Soon, though, the whole family sets out for a Midsummer's Day picnic in the woods. From the carriage, Cat sees Helene being taken to the hospital. In an awkward mood, the family arrives at the appointed picnic spot. Cat finds herself surrounded by strange children and elegant adults. Gossip about Helene circulates. Aunt Ella flirts excessively. Kitzing arrives; the party grows wilder. Cat feels ill-at-ease, remembering Maryan's tale. The Midsummer's Eve bonfires are lit. A strange man seizes Cat; he makes her leap over the bonfire with him, and she is not afraid. It is Uncle Mak. Later that night he gives her a ring, promises to visit.

Cat suddenly begins to outgrow her clothes. And she is in love. When she is big, she thinks, she will marry Uncle Mak. A postcard arrives for Cat – from "Helene." Cat, overjoyed, can't understand why the adults are so appalled. After all, Helene is in the hospital, getting better. That afternoon a gendarme arrives, takes notes; Cat's father will have to testify in court. Cat is mystified; when pressed, her mother finally tells her the truth: Helene is dead.

Several days later Cat learns further details from a conversation between Kascha and Maryam. The village priest refuses to give Helene a Christian burial; Helene's devastated father must go from door to door seeking volunteers, Maryan and Tetzlaff among them, to bury Helene in an out-of-the-way corner of the graveyard. The gendarme wants to know who fathered Helene's child, and whether it was really dead at birth, as Helene insisted. She was found in the barn with the dead child, half dead herself from loss of blood. The scissors with which Helene cut the umbilical cord were rusty; that was what Helene died of: "the filth got into her blood." Hearing this, Cat faints.

Cat begins to hear the "death-watch" ticking in the house. She feels weak and sick; she is growing too fast, the adults say, becoming anemic. She is taken to the doctor, who pronounces her healthy. He takes her to the graveyard to look for Helene's grave. Cat tells him about the scissors; he assures her that Helene's death is not her fault. Helene often spoke of Cat and wrote her a postcard from the hospital. He admired Helene, encouraged her; she seemed to be recovering, and suddenly she was dead. She simply had no will to live. Here in the graveyard the doctor is surrounded by the people whose deaths he could not prevent. With Cat he wanders among the graves, but is unable to find Helene's. It doesn't matter, he tells Cat. Helene is no longer there; she has flown away. And Cat feels comforted for the first time.

The overseer is a ghost of his former self, no longer feared or respected. The estate is in rapid decline, infested by a plague of mice. Cat's father is often "sick" –

suffering from depressions which turn him into a "stranger." The mysterious old man appears again to look over the estate. A cat is found strangled in front of the overseer's house. At last Uncle Mak makes his long-awaited visit; some gaiety returns to the house. But he, too, seems haunted.

The weather grows cold, and Cat's winter coat no longer fits her. She recalls the beginning of spring, the black stork. "Since he fell from the sky into our dust," she realizes, "nothing has gone well for us anymore." A strange voice comes from Aunt Ella's lips, telling the tale of the black stork, the Battle of the Storks, as a timeless legend. The black stork is a proud, free being, hated and condemned to death as a symbol of otherness and change.

The overseer gives his notice. Cat's relatives depart. Her father, too, goes "on a trip." Cat's mother takes charge of Olanowo, does her best to maintain her composure, pooh-poohs the stories of ghosts, apparitions. The overseer's corpse is found in the carp pond.

A governess arrives for Cat, Fräulein Elze, a young woman who writes love letters at night. Cat chafes under the new discipline, and is unable to "become friends" with the lonely Elze. Again and again Cat hears Helene's voice: "Don't tell, Cat." News comes that Uncle Mak is about to get married to a duchess. Cat is devastated – and so is Elze. She gives notice. Father is also displeased. Mak, it seems, had been having an affair with his housekeeper, an admirable woman who was the life and soul of the whole estate, and now he has thrown her over for a duchess. Without her, he is sure to come to ruin.

Father is forced to sell Olanowo – to a Commission which will tear it down to build a railway and a road for "the automobile, which has a future." The day of departure comes. The family has little to take with it; the furniture has been sold with the house. But the black stork is gone. Cat searches all over for it. Looking out the window, she sees the stork flying away, dwindling to a black fleck in the sky. The black stork has flown away. After an exhausting journey by carriage and railway, Cat and her parents arrive in the city:

It is already dark when we arrive in the city. Without a hat I stand among the many people, without a hat I stand in the glittering city. A thousand lights blind me. White moons hang between high, dark houses. I look for a piece of sky and cannot find it. The noise makes me fearful and small.

All the people wear hats on their heads. All the children walk solemnly in hats. Only I stand there with my uncovered hair. The air tugs at it, tears it this way and that. I do not know which way to look. And I am ashamed, so ashamed!!...

Holy Night

My mother is gone. The stairs which groaned under her weary steps are quiet. Now I hear the wind in the dormers. It tugs at the sacks of dried herbs which Kascha gathers and uses to cure all illnesses. They dance around the uprights, pattering and rustling. Or is it mice nibbling at the sunflower seeds?

My room smells like Mother. There is a hollow in the covers where her belly rested. A mountain bears down on me, and I can't sleep. I try to think about this and that, but I get mixed up. And then the storm comes bellowing like a blindfolded bull.

His hooves paw our shingles, his breath spits around the gables, he butts the firs with his horns until they yammer and moan.

Now he tears snorting across the yard. Thunders against the stable doors, runs into the wooden carts, truly blind.

The cowshed is astir. Chains tauten and rattle as if at the snapping point.

And now he pounces on our house again. The floorboards quiver, bending to footsteps and springing back. Someone is sneaking across the attic.

I sit up. Who is that?

Now the footsteps reach my door; they pause there for a minute and move on. The stairs creak, and Diana, keeping watch inside the door, moves back and forth. I clearly hear her whimper and pad to and fro on the flagstones, scrabbling with her claws when she slips. She skips around someone she knows, is glad to see.

Now the front door opens quietly. A whistle. And then footsteps wander off around the house.

For a moment the storm lets up. I jump out of bed and go to the window. Dry woodbine tendrils menace, hinder my gaze. Outside is night. I see nothing, no one. And yet there is one light – shining from a window in the servants' quarters. It's Helene's window. Helene's light is burning; is she reading novels again?

No, she doesn't read novels. Everyone laughed the time my mother took Helene to task about it. My mother insisted that one of her books was missing, and that Helene had taken the book to read at night and ruin her eyes.

Kascha split her sides laughing when she heard that, and afterward she said to Josefa that Helene has better things to do at night than pore over books.

But my mother stuck to her opinion. Why else would Helen keep her lamp burning half the night?...

The storm gains force again. A strange whistling picks up above the roof. It soughs under my door, lashes my bare feet. I crawl back into bed, reassured by Helene's light.

Her light glimmers cheerfully across to me, banishing all the ghosts. Tendrils and leaves, tossing tree tops, and fanning fir boughs seem to bend before it.

I blink a little bit longer and fall asleep. I dream that Helene's light has turned into many lights. I hear my mother's voice saying softly: "Today is Christmas."

No mountain crushes me now. I feel light and glad. The bells shake on the harness, and I am sitting in a sleigh, tucked into a deep foot-muff lined with fur.

We glide through night. I feel bumps and swaying and sometimes my mother's warm knees. We scud through the snow as if flying straight into the sky.

Then there is a jolt, and we come to a stop. Bells peal just above my muffled head. A rasping voice descends into the cold cave where they lead me, and I hear what my mother has told so much, so often, the story of the Christ Child born in the stable.

The word dies away. A crowd of people stands like a wall. Choirs sing high above me. I try to climb up onto the bench where I sit, but my mother pushes me back forcefully. She sings so loud in my ears that I stop moving, intimidated. Here and there I glimpse a familiar face. I nod to them, but no one returns my greeting. Far away from me stands a tree, festooned with many lights.

My mother called it "Holy Night." Once a year. Then I'm allowed to stay up late. The doors to the great hall are opened ceremoniously. At the very back stands the Christmas tree, studded with burning candles and hung with silver threads. Our laborers crowd in the doorway, singing Christmas carols and shuffling their feet. Presents lie beneath the tree. For me. All for me? I start to cry. They're new, and so beautiful! I'm afraid to touch them. Cautiously I reach out my hands. But no matter what I touch, it doesn't move. However much I push, turn, rock, it remains what it is, dull dead stuff.

Now my father sits down at the piano and plays "The Tyroleans are Merry." He hammers it out with one thumb, pleased.

My mother reads letters which make her smile. Now and then she tries something on, a pair of gloves, a dress. Then she says, "Just look what a fine tree we have this year." She says that every year. The same words always. Everyone looks at the tree, gazing into its burning candles, at its silver balls, and they make reverent faces.

But still! I don't think the tree is real.

I know the forester brought it several days ago, giving it a good shake to keep the snow out of the house. But next to the "giants" it's only a dwarf, even if it touches the ceiling in here.

I walk around it, feel its branches. Yes, they are real. They're as fresh and green as the sofa where my mother sits reading. Its needles are very strong. As strong as my father's thumb, still skipping across the keys. —

Suddenly Helene is kneeling next to me. She picks up a wooly sheep in her red hands and puts it on her lap. She gazes at it in wonder, petting it – a sheep with legs of wood.

Silly Helene! Doesn't she see that the whole sheep is a fake? "Do you want it, Helene? Here, take it!"

Oh, no! Helene turns red, gathers up the fabric she was given, and disappears.

One by one they all disappear, we are left alone.

I still hear their footsteps and their voices outside.

All at once the hall is vast and empty.

The candles are still burning on the Christmas tree, but it's much darker now. Their colorful kerchiefs have vanished, and with them everything familiar and bright. Only my mother is left, in her black silk dress.

But isn't there a glimmer in the gap of the shutters? A mysterious white light spills into the candles' yellow glow. I look through a chink and see icicles. Outside there is a shimmering and glittering, a billowing up like smoke.

Or are white hands waving to me? Is it the snow, or are those the angels my mother said would come in the Holy Night? I feel drawn outdoors. No one sees me slip out the door. The hall is dark and cold, but I don't feel the chill. The door to the terrace is easy to find. I press down the handle; the door is ajar.

Who opened it, now, in the middle of winter?

Light streams in on its narrow path. Arcs of snow-dust spray across the threshold and lie in fine wrinkles on the flagstones.

Then white light engulfs me and makes me close my eyes. When I open them again, footprints cross the snow-drifted steps down to the garden.

Steps which never halted, feet which sank deeper and deeper but always hastened on.

The full moon is mirrored in the glittering, firmly-printed soles. And straight across the garden, from the side where the yard is, comes another pair of shoes, meeting the one which came from the house.

In places the footprints are drifted over, elsewhere they seem all the clearer.

Two and two, here they met. But where did they go?

Carefully I step into the footprints, here fleeting, there distinct. Clamber into deep prints, stretching my legs to match their span. I plunge up to my knees in the deep snow. Follow strange tracks which cross snowdrifts boldly, as if driven to go on and on, forward march! Ice-cold water trickles into my stockings. My heart is ice-cold too. As if at a warning voice, as if Helene were there, scolding me for getting my stockings wet. But I am drawn on irresistibly, it is too late to turn back.

All at once I feel a shove. Someone shakes me violently. I turn around, frightened, but no one is there. I am all alone. No angels soar above the shimmering expanse. There is nothing but snow, and from it, freezing, muffled in white cloaks, rise my "giants," the two firs. Flaming lights hover above their tips. Many, many stars burn unmoving at their heads. The sky holds them in its blue mouth. I am lifted up to the sky, and it sucks me in as well. The stars burn very close. Golden eyes, they seem to me, and my lashes stroke them gently. Wide wings enfold me. Two angels stand before our house, smiling.

Wrapped in heavy cloaks, they touch with the tips of their wings and fix their unblinking gaze upon me.

Angels! My mother knew it. They crossed the terrace ahead of me. They glided down the steps into the snow and broke a path for me.

They have appeared to me to tell me the secret of this night, the secret I haven't grasped yet.

They sing. Everything is filled with it. The snow begins to burn. Sheaves of fire seem to shoot up about me. One flame pierces me and kindles me from head to toe. In my frigid face my eyes stare like balls of ice. I am blinded, and snow-dust sprays sharp needles. Still I smile: Angels! Angels!...

I reach for their trains. I grope for their wings, blunder against branches and pricking needles. A solid mass of snow tumbles down upon me.

I rub my eyes. Feel two warm drops on my fingers. I look at them in surprise and shake them off. What was I thinking? Those are the giants, not angels! Shivering, I crawl under the sheltering canopy of their branches. Their darkness encloses me, but it is not comforting. The familiar boughs stare strangely. There is a creaking and rustling in the night of the boughs. It closes in upon me, eerie and immense. A strange breath mingles with the scent of the pine needles. I listen and hear whispering. I am afraid to move. Soon it will clutch my shoulders and press me to the ground. I want to get up, run away, but my limbs seem spellbound. I can no longer move, and only one cry escapes my throat: "Mother! Mother!"...

The cry hovers in my room. It came from me, but I don't know that. I am awake and alone. I am lying in bed, not under the firs. No one is wandering about anymore. The wind howls as if it might tear the house apart. My body is hot, and my hair clings damply to my temples.

I was dreaming, and can't find the dream's end again. Outside day is slowly breaking. An alarm clock will clatter, and Helene will get out of bed. Will the storks come today?

In the air is a rushing like wings... No, I can't tell it to anyone! This is what happened in the Holy Night:

I sat beneath the giants and heard voices. They whispered nearby, but I couldn't understand a word. Once there was a laugh, but someone put a hand on top of the laughter. And I heard a sighing, but it was not the wind.

And suddenly there was a cry: "No, no — no!"

And another voice gasped against it: "Yes — yes — yeesss!"

And then I heard gusts of breath like the wind, whispering like leaves in summer, moans and cries like small children or night birds. A whimpering like a dog. And then all that came was a single, round sound like an "Oh!" with the breath knocked out of it. And now it was quiet...

Now I heard my heart. It knocked my chest to pieces like a hammer. But I couldn't cry out. Only my teeth chattered. I wanted to flee, jump up, but I couldn't move. I grabbed the giants to shake them, but they were immovable, fixed and iron-hard.

Then I scrambled up and ran straight into the mountain of snow. I pushed forward blindly. Sobs tore my lips apart, and my mouth filled with snow. The tears froze on my face. The front door was still open. The wisps of snow had become little waves, reaching far down the vestibule. I trampled them with my heavy shoes.

At the door to the hall I came to my senses again. My mother was sitting in the same place. She gazed into the tree. Now almost all the candles were burned out.

"What were you doing hanging about the kitchen again? What a horrid child you are! Off to bed with you, it's late... Why hasn't Helene come yet? And," my mother asks, "was Helene in the kitchen?"

"Yes," I say quietly, "Helene's in the kitchen, I'm sure, I'll go get her."

"No, stay here!" says my mother, "who knows what kind of visitors they have today." And she gets up.

But there is Helene – just as the last candle guttered on the Christmas tree.

"Come to bed, Cat!" she says.

We go up the stairs together as always.

As Helene opens the door to my room, I see a big rip under her arm. Her chemise gleams white beneath the black fabric.

"Helene, your Sunday dress is torn!"

But that makes her angry.

"Nonsense!" she says, immediately reaching for the spot. "That's nothing. It's just a split seam. Just don't talk about it. It'll be fine in the morning..."

I slip into bed and fall asleep at once...

Svetlana Vasilievna Vasilenko

from ONCE SHE WAS A CHILD

Corinna Hasofferett

Author's note: ONCE SHE WAS A CHILD tells the universal story of childhood in times of upheaval, as conveyed by some of the most extraordinary international woman writers. Done mostly on location, these intimate encounters mirror a rainbow of human existence shaped by injustice, turmoil and struggle, and still victorious: six year-old Russian Svetlana Vasilenko awaiting death while caught between the Powers dueling with nuclear bombs; the little Italian child Dacia Maraini starved in a Japanese concentration camp; twelve-year-old. Belgian Amélie Nothomb, reading by candle light in a Bangladeshi lepers' house; five-year-old Leena Lander living in the Finnish prison for delinquent boys where her father worked as a supervisor, contemplating in fear and horror her sexually mangled doll found thrown in the forest; the Israeli Esterl Ettinger yearning for grandparents murdered in the Holocaust; eight-year-old Palestinian Anissa Darwish torn by war from the Malkha village of her sweet childhood – all and each of the writers in this book map the way to survival and hope.

They ask us also to take a second look at our own life, and, well informed, to make sure the right decisions are taken in all that concerns this precious little world.

As a literary form, ONCE SHE WAS A CHILD is a hybrid: it owns the genes of literary fiction, with its attention to language, ambiguities and symbols, carved out by the author's mostly invisible questions, and editing; and it carries the genes of narrative nonfiction as those are real life stories of real, and most impressive persons, showing how gloriously they've survived Evil. Glimpses from The Past, of childhood recollections, set, like pearls on a string, with my journal as the connecting thread or background. The reader is invited to absorb. At the end of the book s/he'll discover in a separate section, as an addendum, how far they've reached in The Present. *–C.H.*

Tel-Aviv, 12 January 2001

I am working on the conversation with Svetlana, and in my ears her melancholy voice keeps echoing, "Each moment we don't know, now, at this very second, the 'blow' will come."

In a duet with my radio, here, now.

The day before yesterday they announced that Saddam Hussein had pledged not to attack Israel.

Yesterday came an Iraqi denial. "We were not exchanging messages with Israel."

The United States announced that it would not attack Iraq before the end of the Winter Olympics, on February 22.

The United States will not attack before Parents' Day at the university of the Clintons' daughter, on March first, says the radio.

Svetlana arrived at Yaddo, an artist colony in Upstate New York, a few days before I left it.

In Israel I asked Victor, a friend who came several times especially from Jerusalem and translated word for word from the Russian of our conversation. When we finished, he said, "My wife had been the victim of an atomic accident, before she was even born."

November 25, 1998

Russia is helping Iran build atomic reactors.

Back in February Victor had said:

"My wife was born in 1958. I found out about her problem right when we met, in the beginning of the Eighties. I found out that she was suffering from glandular enlargement. The symptoms of the disease were that she would get tired very quickly and have headaches. After a medical checkup, they suggested an operation to remove the gland. In the course of treating her, the doctors, who looked into her life history, said that most probably it was a result of the fact that her mother had been pregnant with her after an explosion which took place in 1957 near them, in a town which was then called Cheliabinsk 65, and today has a more civilian name, Sneginsk. The place is in the Ural Mountains. Northeast Russia.

"They built a center for nuclear research there, and that's where the explosion occurred.

"This town was fenced in and under strict guard, like Svetlana's.

"My wife wasn't living inside the military town but in a village a few dozens kilometers away.

"From the rumors I learned that radioactive water had gathered in containers above the allowed ceiling allowed, exploded and poured out into the area, and permeated into the lakes and rivers in the neighborhood. There were many lakes there, and streams and rivers.

"They didn't make any official announcement, but they evacuated all those who lived in a radius of five, ten kilometers. They built new villages for them and destroyed the old ones.

"The main problem, as I see it, is that this radiation spread in the water, through the streams and the lakes – because the lakes there are connected to each other, that's how nature is over there, a very beautiful area, lakes, thick forests...

"They lived in the village until she was fifteen – then her father got an appointment in the county town, managing the milk industry there.

"He told me that he'd even spoken with the members of the committee which had been set up to deal with the problem. They'd set up several committees there, a military one, a government one, and many senior officials came to the area – it was the first radioactive disaster in Russia on such a scale. In 1957.

"And even he didn't know exactly, they didn't know the real dangers. No one explained to people what radiation was, what it meant, what radiation absorption was.

"They didn't explain it to the inhabitants."

"But all their food, the animals –"

"Exactly: cows, milk, grass, food for the cows – the whole environment there was highly contaminated, and is still contaminated today, as far as I know.

"Her father was responsible for the milk. I believe they inspected the milk secretly so that even he and the locals didn't know, it was known only to the scientists, who had been signed to secrecy, and to party members.

"The actual fact that there had been an explosion was known more or less the whole time, but they started writing about it intensively and openly only after Gurbachev came to power and the freedom of speech over there developed a little, and especially after the Chernobyl disaster.

"Chernobyl was in May 1986.

"After the Chernobyl disaster there was a great rise in awareness in Russia of the nuclear problem and many residents in many counties woke up and started looking around them, what's

this atomic station over here and what's this factory over there, and what kind of material is being buried here.

"People started to open their eyes a little."

The Good, The Bad, and the Beautiful

Yesterday I told you about 1962 and about the Caribbean Crisis.

I was six at the time.

There was a quarrel between Kennedy and Khrushchev, the atomic quarrel which could have resulted in the end of the world. Kennedy gave Khrushchev an ultimatum, to get the missiles out of Cuba within an allotted time.

And in our town, because it was a missile town, and it concerned all of us, our fathers and our mothers and us children – everyone really, at work, at home, in kindergarten, everyone was talking about it. Will there be war or not. Many officers used to come to our house, because we had a television set, and my mother was known for her hospitality, and they talked about these problems at the table. They sat around the table, and we children played next to them.

Then father disappeared. By then he had already been sleeping at the launching site. All the officers were sleeping there. It was already a state of emergency.

For a week we didn't know what was going on.

One day, when I was in kindergarten, they came to us and said, "Take the children to the steppe because the ultimatum is about to expire tonight and we can expect a 'blow'."

At our place it was nighttime, and for the Americans it was daytime.

My father was a senior lieutenant at the time, or a captain. Not long ago he said to me – before that he had been unable to say it – a little while before his death we talked and he told me that he had sat in the bunker, and I asked him what he had been doing at that moment, and he replied that he had been waiting for the order to push the button.

That is, he could have blown up...

He wasn't alone there, he was with his friends, the same friends who used to visit our house, and I asked what they had been doing then and what they had been thinking, what they had been talking about. He thought for a moment and then said,

"We were playing cards."

It must have been because... In Chekhov's plays officers play cards before shooting.

Before a duel?

Or before shooting themselves...

Sounds like something out of ANNA KARENINA .

It's very important that you mention ANNA KARENINA, this is also an important memory...

Immediately, they took us in military buses to the steppe, and the whole night we sat with our kindergarten teachers. These women didn't conceal what was waiting for us, because they were worried for themselves**;** they were no Janusz Korczaks, they cried, they were worried, they remembered their own children... It was like the night before the gallows.

If it were possible to ask the grown-ups who were with us...

It's one thing to sit at home, and another to be in the steppe and wait –

this moment,

now,

every moment after moment you may be dead.

They gave us, as on New Year's Eve, the best chocolate candy there was at the time, in pretty cellophane wrappers.

We ate the candy and played with the cellophane wrappers.

And I think – I may be making this up – there were also mandarin oranges.

It was the first time I felt a fear of death.

My memory is not very good, I usually remember only flashes, but here I even remember how I was afraid of death. I remember how the time dragged, I remember how we played, I remember pictures of people sitting, as if it's all in a flashback in the cinema. I remember who was sitting there, I remember we didn't sleep all night and we sat and waited for the sunrise, and how when it started clearing and the sky became very gray and then brighter and brighter, we realized we'd been saved. There was a joy that surrounded us all.

Khrushchev had been thinking throughout that night, and to this day no one knows what happened, but he withdrew the missiles.

We didn't hear it on the radio nor did anybody bother to inform us that they were taking the missiles out of Cuba.

And then they came to take us. But I don't remember that. I remember only that it became bright and we were glad.

We sat in a circle. I don't remember what we talked about, but we talked about games – what games we would have been able to play if there had been light –

How, if we had been in kindergarten at sleeping time, we would have talked about ghosts –

Now it comes into my head that my father played the game "Preference," with cards, and we children talked about games...

I, then and since then, have pulled away from collective joy. I thought about death, how it comes, what it would be like.

We didn't believe in God, we didn't have that kind of education, therefore I made it up then and there – What will we turn into? What kind of molecules?

I thought, Where will I disappear to? How can that be?

And that became my thought in life.

At the age of six you knew about molecules?!

We knew a lot, because with our fathers it was 'a new cult,' of physicists. A friend of my father's, **U**ncle Pasha, he told us, for instance, about Einstein's theory, about the planet Mars, about the cosmos. We lived in a military town, and so we knew a lot. Often Korolev would visit us; he was the chief designer who sent everybody out to space, astronauts came to our house, Tereshkova came.

I remember that we didn't know that Korolev was the chief designer. He used to live next door to us, also in a Finnish cabin. we called him Uncle Serioza, and he would drive us in his vehicle... Only later I found out that Uncle Serioza was the one in charge of everything.

But already then you could feel that he was something – all the astronauts, Tereshkova, they were all around him.

Across from our house lived another Svetlana, who was much older than me, married, and her husband was in the astronauts' unit. They would sit at her house, one had already been in space, one was just getting ready to go. We saw and knew. So the word 'molecule'... *(laughs)*

We children, we all wanted to be astronauts ourselves. I dreamt about Tereshkova, I dreamt of being a cosmonaut like her.

I remember the steppe when it was already daylight. It was very gray. The sky must not have been clean, there were clouds, because when it became light, everything looked gray.

Sometimes when I go fishing at the same exact place where we were, when at night I sit there holding a rod, because for fishing you have to go early in the morning, then I see this grayness. And when I'm there I always think how it was that night.

And then?

Then the fish come...

Sometimes you stayed the night at kindergarten?

Yes, often, because everyone worked in shifts. It was a twenty-four-hour-kindergarten and the parents could take their children home whenever they wanted.

What happened the day after the false alarm, in the family, among the children, the teachers, the grown-ups, your father?

I don't remember – as I said – what happened at the kindergarten when we returned. As of that moment I don't remember.

And your father and mother, they didn't speak about it? The children didn't become unruly? You weren't asked how you felt?

Maybe it was a kind of shock.

They didn't have psychologists to take care of the children?

With psychology at the time it wasn't so... Freud wasn't allowed and psychology doesn't have the same role it has in the West.

Women come to each other to tell things.

You don't remember hearing such conversations? They didn't talk about it?

It was as if everyone had forgotten... There was a lot of talk and preparations for the next war...

I remember the Caribbean Crisis, but when I was ten, father left us, and then we went to see him in the hospital and he said goodbye, I don't remember that. Mother tells me that I cried terribly, that I jumped on him and said, "Daddy don't leave!" but I don't remember. It's just Mother telling me.

Whereas the Caribbean Crisis, which is like an abstract term for many people... I spoke with many people, they don't remember it at all...

Father left the year they entered Czechoslovakia.

I simply remember things by political moments. Because it concerned the life of the military town.

In a military town such political events concerned the families directly. For example in 1968 some of my friends' fathers... In 1968, when they entered Czechoslovakia, I simply remember that the whole town was shaking. I remember a picture – a boy came over, a friend of mine, Yury Kahuyev. He was all covered with white anti-mosquito lotion, there were lots of mosquitoes there, and he was shouting at me – "They sent the army into Czechoslovakia!"

I mean, we lived it.

I was twelve then.

At the time part of the army went to Czechoslovakia and part was fighting the locusts.

And who took care of the missiles?

The worst drunks, the worst soldiers, the most indolent of the officers – they were sent to fight against the field-mice, against the locusts. Soldiers as well as officers.

I remember my father's friend, Uncle Pasha, who had become a drunk: he wrote me a few dozens pages about how he fought the locusts, and this description is maybe one of the best pages in world literature...

It's like something from the Bible.

Are there still missiles there now?
Yes. Now the Americans live there and they are supervising the disarmament.

What's important about ANNA KARENINA?
There were two books that my mother loved – ANNA KARENINA, and THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE-DAME. We always read the books out loud. I remember that I was very young – five, six – and that she was reading in the book as if it were about her own love.
A similar history to ANNA KARENINA. Military people, uniforms.
That was the book I was read out loud in the evenings. She would read and cry, because it resembled her own life.
And my father resembled Vronsky very much, according to the description. Robust, average height. Mother was tall and thin, like Anna Karenina.
Karenina's husband, Karenin, resembled a wicked neighbor of ours very much. He was also a moralist.
And my mother was always doing 'bad deeds.'

Indeed I wanted to focus on your childhood.
Oh. Where should I begin?
Nine months before you were born –
I can, why not...
One night –
I can begin even before that.

I was born in this military town in the region of Astrakhan, called Kapustin Iar, near Stalingrad – nowadays, Volgograd.
The town had been built right after the war by Korolev. He sent Gagarin first into space. From this town they launched a first satellite and a second satellite, and it was a secret town. There in the steppe there were the most scary missiles.
My parents came to build this town. They had lived before in different places – Father had lived in St. Petersburg – then Leningrad, and my mother came from the city of Lugansk, in the Ukraine.
My mother finished college in construction, and Dad finished the military college for gunners and went on to study at the military academy for gunners. They were young but had already gone through the war. Dad was at the siege in Leningrad and Mom was in the Romanian prison as a prisoner of war.
When they met, Dad was a first lieutenant and Mom was an engineer.
They went out together for a long time. Back then, it was a most puritanical period. Although my mother had already reached thirty.
At a certain moment, Dad started noticing Mom's friend. They all used to go and dance at the Officers' Club. There were pretty dances, they danced the waltz... I've been to the Officers' Club and seen it.
My mother's friend was an excellent dancer.
My mother was shy and always stood by the wall.
My father was considered the most handsome and the most amusing and the most educated and the most urbane.
He was friends with sons of generals, and they said to my father, why do you make friends with a country girl?
That's what they thought about my mother.

He still continued going out with my mother. But at the same time he had a woman with whom he went as a man. My mother knew about it and was very afraid that one time he would stay with that woman.

After the war many of my mother's female friends didn't have partners.

The town was built partly of small wooden houses with gardens, built mostly by German prisoners of war, and in another part they started a modern construction of apartment houses. My mother lived in a small house, she had a room there.

One time Dad came to Mom and said that he was going to the birthday party of that friend of hers, and Mom said that she wouldn't let him go, and so he stayed at her place, and that's how I was conceived.

And my mother became pregnant with me. In the spring of 1955.

I was born out of a great love.

Mom and Dad were unmarried, and there were many things against my birth. In 1955 there was still a law that prohibited abortions. This law was abolished in autumn 1955. If it had been abolished a little sooner, I wouldn't have been born.

As it was, the whole town was against it. In their opinion it wasn't good. It wasn't right.

The moral views back then were... *(laughs)*

Russia is a country of peasants.

Friends of my mom's 'wrote' – letters informing about her – to Dad's commanders. Then my mother's brother came, he returned from military service in the Russian navy, and took my mother to my grandmother to perform an illegal abortion. My mother ran away and gave birth to me.

Later on this uncle became my godfather.

My parents didn't marry but lived together for ten years.

I had a brother who was almost born, but my mother didn't dare have him. Her female friends pressured her to perform an abortion. She was already in the seventh month.

He was born alive but died immediately.

I wrote about it in one of my stories.

All her life my mother has remembered my brother. And so have I.

I was five then.

I remember we ran to see her at the hospital. The town was at the top of a hill, surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, and it was forbidden to enter; entry was only allowed by special permits. At the foot of the hill there was an old Cossack village, and inside the village there was a hospital, and I remember that a friend of Mom's called Liza came to me and said that I had a brother, and I remember that we ran for a long time and it was very hot, we ran and ran, and they told us...

The town was young and it didn't have some important things, it didn't have a maternity hospital. In my passport it says that I was born not in the military town, but in the village.

Mom's female friends started persuading her to get rid of the baby because she'd already given birth to me and caused a scandal in the town. It was immoral...

An officer was not allowed to get a divorce and if he did, they would 'write' against him, and he could be demoted.

My dad never wanted to marry Mom. He lived in our house, acknowledged me, and educated me.

He told me, "I've always loved her, she was the only one, but I would never have married her." He thought himself far above my mother, saw his love for her as a misfortune.

Because he had fallen in love with a creature inferior to him.

I understand that it may have been the influence of Russian literature, as if Dad were a feudal lord who couldn't marry a peasant girl. When I visited my relatives in Leningrad they treated me just that way – like a girl who was born to a feudal lord, out of wedlock.

When I was born, Dad wrote a note to Mom: "Our daughter is as precious as gold"; but beforehand, he had told my mom that he would marry her only if she had a son.

And it was a girl.

Supposedly, if I had been a boy, I would have been considered a continuation of the roots, but since it was a girl – it's like nothing.

I've always known about the note.

When I was born, a postcard of congratulation immediately arrived from my grandmother in Leningrad. She actually acknowledged me and loved me very much. At first I was named Larisa, and the card said, "Congratulations on the birth of Larisa." It had angels above a baby's bed.

I still keep it.

Dad gave me the name Svetlana, in honor of Svetlana, Stalin's daughter. Dad was an officer and must have liked Stalin. I'd never asked him if he had named me in honor of her. In 1956, after the Twentieth Assembly, and Krushchev's speech, it was perhaps even a call of defiance. The officers didn't like Khrushchev that much. The military didn't like Khrushchev.

So because of the abortion of the son, your mom lost the chance to marry your dad?

Mom thinks that.

How did she have the abortion?

I know she swallowed some kind of pills. Which stop the pregnancy, cause an abortion.

In the hospital. It was legal.

The doctors gave her the pills? In the seventh month?!

Yes.

It was a military town with a structure of its own: "A woman has already given birth to one child without a husband, and now she intends to have another one? Maybe she's stupid? Such idiots must have an abortion, why should she give birth? And she's poor, she has nothing."

But your dad lived with your mom, didn't he?

They considered her a single woman.

Mom saw the child when it came out, saw how he breathed twice.

They didn't put him in an incubator?

They must have not managed to in time...

Does your father have a version of his own?

My father is dead now, but when I visited him in Riga a few years ago, I asked him, and he answered me, that all his life he had loved only my mother. And I think this is true. I remember how they loved each other. They were the legendary couple in our town...

The end of the relationship was tragic...

As a child, did you feel that people, or at school, treated you differently because you were not a 'legitimate' child?

There was something like that. But because I studied hard and was an excellent student, a kind of an exemplary girl, and I studied with children from single-parent families, they were drawn to me and I was drawn to them, we had the same fate –

One time the teachers told me not to befriend these kids.

Because they weren't good students?

They didn't study well. There is this Russian proverb, that the apple falls near the tree. That children from mothers who behave in such immoral ways, who give birth to children without husbands, and then have men come to them – that is, they continue their immoral lives – that also their children are stamped with an immoral strain of behavior. These kids didn't study well, they were unruly, and I was different.

Although the line of destiny was the same line.

On the street I lived in I was often told that I was a daughter without a father.

By children as well as by their parents.

Dad had already left by then. At some point he started living separately, and would only visit us.

We had a neighbor who always used to bother my mother. He wrote letters to her bosses, to her managers – that men were coming to her. She lived alone, and of course she would have men over from time to time. He often told me, in the kitchen, that I was the result of a single-parent family.

The house was divided into two parts – a small part which was ours, and a big part which was his. And a shared kitchen.

He had a wife and a daughter who was my friend, a little younger than me, and we are still friends to this day.

He actually educated me through his attitude. He always told me, "You will be a whore just like your mom."

So I didn't have contacts with boys.

In first grade I didn't study very well. He said: "This one will always be backwards." That's why I wanted to be a good student.

He killed a dog of mine which I loved very much, 'Alpha' – so I got another dog.

It was a constant struggle.

I was eight. At that moment I wanted to poison his rooster. As a revenge. With my friend, Natasha, we made this mixture of tobacco and a few other disgusting things, and some pills. He had a big and handsome rooster, with a large tail, and that rooster was so proud. I remember how we tried to poison him, and he walked around the tub and looked at us, and didn't try to taste from the tub. So this feeling of a murderer...

When the rooster didn't drink from the mixture, I was on the one hand disappointed, on the other hand glad. He was too handsome a rooster to kill. It was too unjustified.

We went away from the kitchen, and I gave a hard blow to his daughter, Nadia. I went into the room, she was alone, I was disappointed, and I hit her. To this day she remembers it and asks me, "What was it, what was it," and I don't tell her.

With Natasha, at the age of eight, we wanted to start a business. We bought some inkwells, we collected chicken feathers, we cut them in the shape of pens, and we wanted to sell them on the streets – pen and inkwell. We wanted to start a business and buy a piano. When the neighbor saw many inkwells under the oven, he called the police and said, "I don't know what is going on, but maybe they are stealing."

The policeman, whose family name was Onopenko, was short and liked women, and he said, "Maria, sit quietly with your daughter because your neighbor will eat you."

Was he scary?

No... He was an urban policeman.

But to this day I never deal with business...

The peak of the struggle was when the neighbor told Natasha's mother – she was my only and best friend – not to let us be friends.

He told her, "You have a girl who is becoming a young woman, and she is visiting a house in which lives a woman who is visited by all kinds of men."

We kept on being friends, secretly.

What was your relationship with your father after he left?

We visited him often, more than he visited us. He moved to a different communal apartment. When we came over to see him, we saw how the others were sitting in the kitchen. It was also a family of friends – Uncle Zania, Aunt Ira, and my friend, Yula, with whom I studied at school. Uncle Zania was a military man as well.

Dad had his own room there. Back then everybody lived in communal apartments. There was a problem with housing. They built very slowly.

At some point Aunt Ira fell in love with my father. She only told us that later on, but my mother knew everything by then. Dad must have also been attracted to her. He told Mom later that he almost married her, but because of his friend, he stopped himself.

Ira and her husband lived very badly.

Once, Mom saw the way Ira handed my father a towel, and for her, she remembers to this day, that was the cruelest sight, it caused much jealousy.

I visited there often because I was friends with Yula, I would sit there for hours, and I didn't sense anything. To tell you the truth, I didn't love him that much in my childhood.

When he left, I started loving him.

Because he made my mother suffer, I thought that she loved him more than she loved me.

Towards the end, he would often come home drunk. On the eighth of March, for her birthday, he would toss her a bottle of perfume, "Krasnaya Moskva" – Red Moscow – and leave. I remember that once the perfume bottle broke, and Mom ran after him with me, and I remembered his back and for a long time I couldn't remember his face. If I didn't look at pictures, I would remember only the back.

Why did you run after him?

To bring him back.

She thinks that if she had been proud, he would have respected her.

Suddenly a person appeared for Mom. He was very young and handsome, an officer in the army. He was also called Uncle Serioza. He was ten years younger than she. He loved her very much. He lived in Sebastopol, on the Crimean peninsula, and he would come over from there to visit. I liked him very much and wanted him to be my father. Because by that time I didn't like Dad at all.

When my mother and Uncle Serioza decided to get married, my father started visiting.

Until he overcame him and mother turned down Uncle Serioza, and Uncle Serioza left and went back to Sebastopol.

Mom said that even in the Romanian prison she hadn't been so tormented as she was by Dad.

This torment went on for ten years. When he left, I felt relieved. Even though for my birthdays he would find me presents that no other kid in town got. For example a doll, he called her Svetlana, and she was my size. I had never seen anything like it.

He must have bought the presents in Leningrad or somewhere else, and brought them over, and waited until my birthday in January. Everybody envied me for having such an extraordinary father.

When he left, I was denied this prestige...

When did you meet him?

I would often go to his mother, my grandmother, and I visited his brothers and sisters. Each one of them treated me differently. One sister simply hated me. She actually resembles me very much, the same face –

but him I only saw when I was seventeen. I went then to apply to the Institute of High Education in Moscow. When I wasn't accepted in Moscow, I went to visit him in Riga. He didn't know I was coming. The door was open, and I saw, sitting in the room, a simply handsome man who I could have loved. I mean, I looked at him as a man and not as a father.

He was glad to see me, but we had this tradition of saying horrible things to each other, and he said, "Your mother was much more beautiful at your age than you are now." It almost made me cry. Because at that age you always think about your external appearance.

Then came his wife, Aunt Katia, and she gave us some food. We went to the zoo and bought some beer there and sat in a pine forest like the one here, and drank beer.

I told him I didn't know what to do if I wasn't accepted at the university. He said I would stay with them and work, and study in Riga.

I didn't like Riga at all. I went to Leningrad, to Moscow, and I met Dad only when I came to visit my friends in Riga.

When I had my wedding, he didn't show up. He sent some money, and that hurt me. I wanted to see him at the wedding. And when I had a son, he also reacted with indifference. We had this sort of relationship... Of a grown daughter and...

Once my son went to Riga without me. Until then they hadn't seen each other. When my son was ten, he and my husband went to Riga.

There they fell in love with each other, my son and my dad. My son remembers it as a wondrous episode in his life.

I can't imagine my father being open. He's always been closed.

Are you his only child?

Yes.

Such a character. When I saw him for the last time, he met me not at home but on the street. When he saw me, he started crying, and jumped on my neck, and hugged me so much that I thought that maybe he really loved me.

But when we arrived at his apartment, we quarreled immediately.

We drank a little, and he told me he'd read one of my stories – "Going After Goat-Antelopes."

He said, "You write so cleverly... Strange, where did you learn it? You grew up only with Mom, you were without a father."

Again I could hardly restrain myself from crying.

I told him, "Walk me home." I had to leave by then**,** I was there for two days of work.

He said, "No."

Even his wife said, "Walk her home."

And he wouldn't.

For two years I didn't write to him and I didn't call him. I was hurt, and that's how we parted.

For two years I didn't see him. Then at some moment at the end of July, I was vacationing in Yalta, and I really wanted to call him, I really did. I was standing with a friend, she was smoking, and I said to her, "Luba, I want to call Dad so much, but I don't know the reason... We don't usually call each other just like that. There has to be a reason."

She says, "Call without a reason."

I said, "I can't."

I waited for a reason. The 25th of October was his birthday, and I called him. And they told me he had died on the 29th of July. He'd had an operation.

Maybe he had been thinking about me then...

From Yalta I went to see Mom and she asked, "How's Dad? Are you two in touch?"

I said, "Mom, I haven't been in touch with him for two years now."

She looked at me and said, "You know, I think he's already dead."

That was on the sixth of August. I had just arrived and she was busy putting up some wallpaper. She just looked at me and said, "You know, I think he's not alive anymore." Said she had dreamt this.

When I come to Kapustin Iar, I always visit Aunt Ira. And she also asked, "How's your dad?"

She loved him very much, remember I told you that?

I said I hadn't seen him in a long time, hadn't heard for a long time, and she suddenly cried. She asked, "Is he even alive?" By that time many of their friends had died. They must have absorbed radiation, they all died early.

I said, "Aunt Ira, I don't know. He's probably alive. Because if he'd died, they would have told me."

She looked at me and cried.

It was a common feeling for everyone. I had a feeling, Mom did, and Aunt Ira. It was such a strange situation.

They didn't even operate on him. He died from the anesthesia.

There was this sort of history: his friend – Belinov – was a big missile designer, they were all in the same shift, I don't remember what year. Mom told me that: Belinov was the commander and Dad had a lower rank and they all went out to the conduct the experiment. There was an explosion there. After that they demoted Belinov. He went from major general to lieutenant.

And all these friends, sooner or later...

It was not far from the town we lived in.

In general the rate of death was high. Many of my friends are already dead. Children of my friends are dying. Of leukemia. I, for instance, for a long time thought I wouldn't have children. Even before the marriage, I told my husband:

"Be prepared, we might not have children."

-tr. from the Hebrew by Michal Sapir

Notes:

Svetlana Vasilenko <contributors> is the author of SHAMARA AND OTHER STORIES. "Though her subsequent novellas and short stories have been translated into various languages, this book marks Vasilenko's first sustained appearance in English." Svetlana Vasilenko was born in 1956 in a small closed military town, Kapustin Yar, on the Volga, attached to a cosmodrome built in 1946; "this rocket settlement provided the setting for most of her stories."

Yuri Gagarin <http://www.pbs.org/redfiles/rao/gallery/gagarin/>: "On April 12, 1961 the first earthling escaped the gravity well of planet earth. In the spaceship Vostok 1, Senior Lieutenant Yuri Alexeyevich Gagarin orbited earth one time at an altitude of 187 3/4 miles (302 kilometers) for 108 minutes at 18,000 miles an hour. He was the first man to see that the earth was indeed round, indeed mostly water, and indeed magnificent." This is part of PBS's Russian Archives Online.

Sergey Pavlovich Korolov <http://www.odessit.com/namegal/english/korolev.htm> (1906-1966) , Soviet designer of guided missiles, rockets, and spacecraft. "During World War II Korolyov was held under technical arrest but spent the years designing and testing liquid-fuel rocket boosters for military aircraft. After the war he modified the German V-2 missile, increasing its range to about 426 miles (685 km). He also supervised the test firing of captured V-2 missiles at the Kapustin Yar proving ground in 1947. In 1953 he began to develop the series of ballistic missiles that led to the Soviet Union's first intercontinental ballistic missile. Essentially apolitical, he did not join the Communist Party until after Stalin's death in 1953.

"Korolyov was placed in charge of systems engineering for Soviet launch vehicles and spacecraft; he directed the design, testing, construction, and launching of the Vostok, Voskhod, and Soyuz manned spacecraft as well as of the unmanned spacecraft in the Cosmos, Molniya, and Zond series. He was the guiding genius behind the Soviet spaceflight program until his death, and he was buried in the Kremlin wall on Red Square. In accordance with the Soviet government's space policies, his identity and role in his nation's space program were not publicly revealed until after his death."

See also <http://www1.umn.edu/scitech/assign/space/vostok_missions.html>: "Sergey Korolyov was one of the founders of Moscow Group for the Study of Reactive Motion and participated in the Soviet Union's first launch of a liquid-propellant rocket in 1933.…

"Around 1958, Korolev argued for the pursuit of manned space flight instead of military reconnaissance satellites. After a lengthy and dangerous debate, he obtained approval for the development of the Vostok project provided the launch vehicle could also be used for military purposes."

Here <http://www.space.com/news/spacehistory/yuris_night_review_010413.html> is information about Korolev and Gagarin

Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova,
<http://www.nasm.si.edu/nasm/aero/women_aviators/valentina_tereshkova.htm> (1937-), Soviet cosmonaut. "She was the first woman to orbit the earth, in *Vostok 6* on June 16-19, 1963. She left the Soviet space program soon after and married cosmonaut Andriyan Nikolayev. She was president of the Committee of Soviet Women (1968-86) and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1971)."

Kasputin Iar: "One of three launch sites operated by the USSR between 1966 and 1987." Here <http://www.fas.org/spp/guide/russia/facility/kapustin_yar.htm> are located aerial views. "Kapustin Yar <http://home.attbi.com/~rusaerog/centers/KapustinYar.html> was the Soviet's first acknowledged missile test site. The site was previously an artillery range. First rocket test was on Oct. 18, 1947 and the initial program of 11 V-2 launches ended Nov. 13 the same year." Here <http://www.concentric.net/~agzak/kapyar.html> is a map of and information about Kapustin Yar. This site is part of RussianSpaceWeb.com <http://www.russianspaceweb.com/>, designed by Anatoly Zak.

Here <http://www.ciaonet.org/srchfrm.html> is a huge searchable resource regarding the Caribbean Missile Crisis – Columbia University Press' CIAIO, for subscribers, but with free trial period.

Here <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/forrel/cuba/cubamenu.htm> is the remarkable collection of documents of the the Avalon Project at the Yale Law School, "Foreign Relations of the United States : 1961-1963 Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath."

Here <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq90-1.htm> is the Naval Historical Center's record of the role of the U.S. Navy in the Cuban Missile Crisis, with links. This site is maintained by the Department of the Navy.

This site <http://www.friends-partners.org/mwade/astros/terhkova.htm> is interesting as it reveals the real status of women in USSR even in this instance.

Eight Anagrams in the Manner of OuLiPo

Kevin McFadden

Variations Against the Credo of Raving Saviors

To be great is to be misunderstood.
I bet it's true, Emerson. Too bad. God's
too big to estimate, dress unrobed.
Greatness is to dote, bob, dim out, re-
store, ebb, a too-odd gesture in mist,
to grab onto tidbits (seed, ore, muse)
and gibber. O tides, O meteors, *totus
orbis, mein Gott, déesse*, art, O doubt,
Tao, dross, bromides, bite tongue! Et
tu, Emerson? So it's great to be odd, bi-
odegrade into ribs, testtubes. Moo
to be tiger misunderstood, O beast,
O song mistreated. So be it. But doer,
deed are one big orbit. Toss utmost
reason out, it'd better be good. (Miss
most, but so?) A desire to be God inert,
to be *soirée* absurd, totems doting
in sedate bedroom grottoes. But is
it great to be *so* misunderstood, be
moot? outside sense? to brag dirt? be
modest bores? to diatribe tongues
tied? Dog mottoes, rabbit neuroses:
sit, be obedient, taste good. Rumors
run aside doom, boost getters, bite
gottens. Bid me adieu. Boots resort
to ties, bodies but to Emerson. Drag
mud in. Obsess. Edit rot. To be great
is not "odd I," "obstruse me." To be great
is to resent to be misread, but good.

Variations on a Coin's Flip Side

In God we trust.
Wind gust tore
dirt, new gusto,
wet grit, sound.
Dust grew into
stud, grew into
student. "I grow
rust," God went. "I
wrote its dung
tune, word gist."
During set two,
unit two, dregs
went turgid. So
we grind stout.
Twist or nudge,
endow, tug, stir,
now sit, trudge
its rug. We don't
trust gin, do we?
Trust wine. God,
true swig, don't
grind us to wet
guts, not weird
strong wit due
west. I do grunt
its grunt. We do.
Worst tune—dig?
We dug. Snort it,
we'd string out.
Strung, we do it.
We trust doing.

Variations from the Nth World Up

Our cares are non-mighty I utter theirs are real.
Our anthems are coy ring trite theirs are a rule.
Our hymns are ocean-grit errata theirs lie true.
Our sutra gem-rare their chants are elite irony.
Our charm attires are tiny are gone theirs lure.
Our terms irritate theirs are Herculean agony.
Our ires are ethnic organs theirs rarely mutate.
Our nothings are eerie tar theirs ultra creamy.
Our tears are thorny urine theirs relate magic.
Our games are corny hint theirs are true retail.
Our canyon a rash rut theirs e'er err legitimate.
Our grins are arch yet no theirs laureate merit.
Our true achings are Troy-men their era is later.
Our chains are grey theirs turn Rome retaliate.
Our canons are grim they lie theirs are true art.
Our myths are ignorance, theirs are literature.

Variations on Having Done It Again

I like drama eaten in.
Lake air. I need a mint.
I like a dinner, a tame

Ariel diet, a.k.a., in men.
I like a dent, a marine
mania. I drink eel tea,

mandarin tea, i.e., like
karate, a lime, dine-in
linen. I take Madeira.

Make it adrenaline. I,
real Medea, I, anti-kin:
alienate me. I drink a

martini. A keen Delia
(I mean Ideal). Ink tear
in a tinker. A made-lie

in a limeade. In a trek,
a dreamlike tie-in, an
entree. I'm Kali. Naiad

(I mean Diana) reel kit.
Like in Ariadne. Mate
like a tread-in (I mean

meat) inner Aïda, like
a like. (I mean trade-in.)
I like a maiden rent, a

Lear kinda matinee. (I
mean real kinda.) I tie
inner kite, I, dame a la

Iliad. Tie an arm, knee.
Tie ankle. I marinade
And I eat men like air.

Variations Along the Slippery Slope (Etymological Ridge)

DANGER: torture-wheel from God
Geometer. DANGER: world of hurt,
of grudge, rant, theorem. Lord, we
err, the twofold garden/morgue.

Deer regret word-of-mouth, lang-
uage of Grendel, rod, term, worth,
the deferred growl or moan, gut-
felt word. DANGER: rogue mother

tongue, the germ-drawl of order,
lewd tome. DANGER: error fought
(wrought) from degenerate lord.
We get our danger from the lord.

Variations as a Toast in a French Coat

Mistletoe. A sinus and nose nag.
Annual toast, send sense. I go (I'm
me) I toast angels and eons in us:
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?
Minnesota, I guess. A stolen and
osseous Atlantis. Endgame Inn,
instantaneous end-image, loss
antenna. Sing adieu, Moses. Lost-
soul Dante. Miss Antigone. Sean
and Susie someone. Titan's lang-
uage. Edison. Samson. Sin-latent
Genesis to sin-stale Adam. Noun-
noise, damnation (*see* LAST SUNG
LATIN MASS), sunset gone, Oneida
gone. Santa: issue a Milton, send
Aeneas on, omit guns, send a list-
less Auden again soon. Smitten
Stein. Amos and Longinus. Tease
out a sage, Mann's sin. Send Eliot
(Ness, I nag). Sad Montale, Suetoni-
us, stem to Galen, Adonis, insane
Mendel's ingenious oats. Santa:
send Sienna's saint, a mute logo
to emulate, snag Donne as is, sin-
gle out a Sistine Madonna, sens-
ual Sistine son. Send a montage:
Montaigne, Antaeus' solidness,
Anansi legends, stem to Ausoni-
us so eminent, lend Asia at song
in T'ang sunset, do see Mona Lisa,
Statius, no-sin Magdalene, nose
Douglass to a saint seen in men,
mingle Issa, Onan, snout-teased
Tantalus, Minos seeing sad eon
alongside eon. Santa: semi-stun
us, send Gaia most salient, neon
sign, Masada's sentinel, one out-
side time, St. Anne, a saloon-sung
sonata, Eumenides slogan (isn't
it a silent one?), sun gases, monad
magnitude session. Noel, Santa:
send genuine stamina, toss Lao
Tsu in, Nemesis, steal Onondaga

nation's dismal tongue, sense a
sentiment, a Delia, Sassoon gun-
stung, Miss Aïda, not seen, alone,
netted Massai, sanguine Solon.
Santa: sling in Dumas, see to one
Degas, note Nin, toss in a Samuel
Adams, Einstein. Stone us, Logan
assassinated line ("Not one"), mug
us at Mingo no less. Santa: I need
Amadeus, Seton, St. Agnes in lion
den, Sousa: glisten a Minnesota
sleet. Santa: I go (I'm us), send *Anon*
anon, send a testimonial guess,
a suit-design salesman—not one,
nine, I assume—sane, old, tan togs.
Santa: loan sense, I mistongued:
les neiges d'antan is moot, a sun-
melted season, guano stain, sin
in sunglasses, an emotion date
to designate man's soul insane,
an egotism-laden onus I assent
to, insulted, amen. Sing a season,
Santa: guise me, dissonant, lone,
guise me in stone so natal sand
don't assuage me, insolent, asin-
ine dementia. Santa: gloss us on
d'antan (angel's noose, semi-suit)
gloss us on *dementia* (insane at
a mass dialogue; tennis, no nets)
gloss us on *Santa* (eminent idea)
gloss us on *Satan* (main Eden tie).
"It is lonesome," Santa sang—nude
and insistent, Moses analogue
sans Mount Sinai, a nestled ego—
""Tis a delusion, man's tense agon,
antagonism's sundial." See note.
Santa: send someone, a linguist,
menial assistant, endogenous
stooge, send an amanuensis til
a muse nods, intense. Nostalgia
is a tan suit, a lessened gnomon,
man's odious tangential sense.
Nostalgia is a—no, needn't mess, u-
nison is an utmost agenda, else
salad sonnets, a genuine moist
intention, sensual massage. Do,
Santa, not send Emanuel (go Isis)
send a missile, Santa, no tongue.
Nostalgia is no Eden. Same nuts

(sound) same senile antagonist
(us). Nostalgia's a dense mention,
snail message. Toast innuendo,
toast noun amnesia, slid genes.
Santa: use a slim notion, e.g., send
data to lessen insomnia, genus
ingenious, antedate man's loss
at lingo, denouement. Assassin
saint, send us a neat neologism.

Variations on a Flight for Peace Comes Dropping Slow

Swing low, o airline ad.
Wow, Iona isle, darling
soil. Wow, an ideal ring,
gloriana isle. Window /
aisle. Inward, I glow on,
aerial. Wow, Innis Gold.
Wow, Innis Idol aglare.
I saw wild onion, large
long rows, awe inlaid. I
own a wild region, sail,
wallow, reign, I, Adonis
alias Lord Ego. Win-win,
win-lose or again wild
Darwinian will. Goose
gander. I sow. I nail. Low,
swing low, o ideal rain.
Wade low, original sin.
IRA island, woolen wig.
Asinine goodwill war.
Wow, a land is religion.
Wow, idle slogan in air.
Wow, Ireland is a lingo.
Wingward, solo, alien, I...
I will arise and go now.

Variations as a Heart Leaps Up

The Child is the Father of the Man.
Hot-hand, hit-fit, fetal schemer, he
hatcheted his mother. Half feint,
half hint-craft, O she teethed him.
Teased. Her fifth month ache: hilt
from inside. Hatchet heft. Health
is detachment. Hah! Flee! Thrift, Ho-
ratio! He fends the hatch, left him-
self. Anthem chief, he that'd hit or
meet his end, he hath filth or fact
on his fire, he that'd fetch Hamlet,
thrash deft men. Hail to the chief.
The fatal hitch? Other men fed his
childish hate often. Harem-theft,
life-shift, he hadn't a mother. Etch
that on his arm. He'd felt the chief
ache. His men he fed rot, that filth
fathers hid: them that leech info
letch; them that fish info adhere.
He, the off mind, he that cries *Halt!*
Thief, thief! He hath clad mentors,
hath hitmen, fear-clothes he'd fit.
The Child is a Father then, of Them.

A Conversation about Schocken Books (Part III)

ARTHUR SAMUELSON
and the Editor of *Archipelago*

"Behind the paradox of being a Jewish publisher in America is the paradox of being Jewish in America. We want a Jewish bookshelf in every bookstore in America. We don't want our books on it. We want a Jewish community, but we don't want to be ghettoized. The paradox is that if you want to reach the Jews, you can't reach them as Jews."–*Arthur Samuelson*

Since 1997, I have been asking notable book people about the business of publishing and the remarkable, disturbing alteration we have seen in its structure in the last decade or so. Generously, they have told me how they entered the book trade; spoken about writers they've published – and declined to publish; described the (changing) class structure of their domain; talked straight about money, commerce, and corporate capitalism; described their way of practicing responsible publishing. They have taken us into the precarious business of selling books, and have traced the advent and threat/promise of electronic publishing. Without exception they have been serious readers, usually of more than one language. They have recognized that times have changed. They have observed with wary friendliness the generations coming up. They have spoken out of the old values and honorable traditions of book-publishing. They, and I, have wondered whether these can still exist in corporate publishing. Several eminent editors recently published books doubting it. It's been difficult not to agree.

Several issues ago, I thought it was time to look closely at a single publishing company, one that had played a significant role in European and American Jewish – and non-Jewish – culture and thought. I would follow its fortunes from the days of its cultivated founder, through his death and the sale of his company to a privately-owned corporation, to its being re-organized as a small sub-division of a gigantic media conglomerate. Its existence is full of twists and ironies, of displacement across continents, its founder's intention revered but re-interpreted in a new time. Its story is corporate but, also, is composed of the intersection of enlightened personalities and the works of great writers with the most awful events of the twentieth century. Following it, I would examine the play of high culture with corporate mind-sets and see how it worked.

These new conversations have appeared across three numbers of this journal. The present installment culminates this entire series. It has been my hope that it will serve as an opening into an institutional memory contrasting itself with the current corporate structure, reflecting on glories of its own, revealing what remains constant amid the flux. The people speaking here are strong-minded characters engaged with their historical circumstances. Out of that engagement have appeared, and continue to be published, a number of books that we can say, rightly, belong to literature.

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Schocken Books: A Brief History of a Publishing Company

See also Parts I and II

Salman Schocken, a German Jewish magnate and philanthropist, established the Schocken Verlag in Berlin, in 1931. During the seven years his company existed – was allowed to exist – in Weimar, then Nazi, Germany, it published 225 titles of classic Hebrew works important to the cultivated, assimilated Jews of its founder's class and generation. Owner of a chain of department stores, Schocken was a man of wealth and leisure who devoted himself to collecting fine art and literature. While re-investigating his Jewish roots – he was "greatly influenced" by the TALES OF RABBI NACHMAN OF BRATZLAW, translated by Martin Buber, whose friend he was – he became convinced that the great works of sacred and secular Hebrew writing should be translated into German and published for the sake of his fellow believers.

In 1934, Salman Schocken emigrated to Palestine, while Lambert Schneider, his managing editor, and Moritz Spitzer, editor-in-chief, remained in Berlin, operating the company by virtue of an active exchange of letters with him. In Palestine, Schocken established the Schocken Publishing House, Ltd., under the direction of his son Gerschom. In 1940, Schocken and his family, except for that son, took ship for the United States, where he immediately joined the widening circle of brilliant German Jewish refugees adding their luster to American cultural and intellectual life. Five years later, enlisting Hannah Arendt and Nahum Glatzer as editors, he founded Schocken Books in New York.

Salman Schocken died in 1959. The firm continued under the direction of his son Theodore and son-in-law, Herzl Rome, until the younger Schocken also died, in 1975. The heirs managed to continue publishing for some years, until they, too, began to age. When the company's revenues went into decline, they let it be known that Schocken Books was for sale. André Schiffrin, managing director of Pantheon Books, an imprint of Random House, Inc., was especially interested and in 1987, persuaded Random House to buy Schocken Books and place it under his direction. Random House, Inc., which included Random House, Knopf, and Pantheon, was by then owned by Advance Publications, a privately-held corporation of the Newhouse family, which also owned Condé Nast, the magazine publishing company.

The Newhouse family was particularly concerned by the rate of return on their investment, which it considered inadequate.* In 1989, when "the first waves of change swept

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* André Schiffrin, who moved to acquire Schocken Books, has written a widely-remarked-upon polemic on the enormous changes in the book business. In the following passage he describes his acquisition of Schocken Books as a hoped-for outlet for pressure from the Newhouse family to increase return on investment:

> For a while, I thought we might be able to break out of the trap of Newhouse's profit expectations by expanding Pantheon through acquisitions…. If we could find the right firm, however, and could integrate it successfully, Pantheon might make more money. I was therefore very interested when, in 1987, I was approached by lawyers asking if we would take on Schocken Books….
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> Schocken had never been very profitable and had been maintained by the family's holdings in real estate, just as the original Schocken had been subsidized by a department store in Berlin. The purchase price, by Newhouse standards, was small, and I felt it was important to provide a safe haven for the company. I insisted to Newhouse's people that such a deal would make sense and, after months of detailed investigation, an agreement was made. It later struck me as ironic that a purchase that entailed so little risk should have been made with such care, while the far more dubious purchase of Crown was made so peremptorily.
>
> With the financial pressures from Newhouse intensifying, the thought of relaunching Schocken gave me a new lease on life. We decided not merely to reissue the old books, but to deal with them in a manner

over the place," Random House, Inc., (or "Big Random," the publishing imprint being "Little Random") was organized as follows. The president of "big" Random House was Robert Bernstein. The directors of the various imprints reported directly and separately to him. (Robert Gottlieb, editor-in-chief of Knopf, had left for the *New Yorker* in early 1987, following the firing of William Shawn – *The New Yorker* is also owned by Advance Publications – and been replaced by Sonny Mehta, publisher of Pan, in London. At that time, Knopf, Pantheon, and "little" Random House were separate entities within "big" Random House.) In 1989, S.I. Newhouse fired Robert Bernstein and brought in a new CEO, Alberto Vitale, from the Bertelsmann-owned Bantam Books, part of Bantam-Doubleday-Dell.

During the early- to mid-'90s, Vitale reorganized "big" Random House. He neatly tri-sected the trade division. Having consisted of between eleven and sixteen imprints, it was now re-arranged into three groups: the Knopf Group, the Random Group, and the Crown Group. The Knopf Group, under the aegis of Sonny Mehta; included Alfred A. Knopf, Pantheon, Schocken, Vintage, and several smaller imprints. The editorial directors of Pantheon, Schocken, and Vintage would thus report to Sonny Mehta, president of the Knopf Group, rather than directly to the president of the corporation, Alberto Vitale. In 1998, when S.I. Newhouse sold Random House, Inc., to Bertelsmann Gmbh., that structure was kept in place. (Later, Anchor Books and Everyman's Library, which had been part of Doubleday, also owned by Bertelsmann, were moved into the Knopf Group.) The fourth, separate division of Bertelsmann in the U.S. is the Bantam-Doubleday-Westside Group.

Thus is Random House, Inc., now organized, or was, at the time of this writing.

Following André Schiffrin as editor-in-chief of Pantheon/Schocken was Fred Jordan, who remained in place until 1993, when Arthur Samuelson became editorial director of Schocken Books. Samuelson proposed an ambitious plan to refresh the backlist, commission new translations, and publicize Schocken books "in a kind of quasi-commercial mode." During that time, Dan Frank, formerly an editor at Viking, then at Pantheon, was named as his counterpart at Pantheon, and the two imprints worked separately. In 1999, Arthur Samuelson left Schocken and was replaced by Altie Karper and Susan Ralston, as co-directors. Having come from inside the Knopf Group, these newest directors wove their operation back into the workings of Pantheon and Knopf, warding off functional isolation of their small imprint within the conglomerate.

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worthy of their importance. New translations of Kafka's work were commissioned, under the editorship of Mark Anderson of Columbia University's German department. Previously untranslated material from Kafka's *oeuvre* was included. We took on a series of books, some dealing with Israel and Eastern Europe, and others on the history of World War II. Schocken's excellent list on the Holocaust was brought back into print, though I was shocked to hear from one of Random House's (Jewish) vice-presidents, Bruce Harris, that he wished "we would stop hitting him over the head with all these Holocaust titles" because they were not going to make enough money.

By the fall of 1989, our joint list [Pantheon/Schocken] had grown substantially, and I was proud of the books we had added to the imprint. But because we wanted to remain faithful to the company's history and its authors, the possibility of quick profits was ruled out. In the first years our investment lost money, since the repackaging of the list and the retranslation of Kafka were expensive undertakings.

In the end what appeared at first to be a temporary solution to Pantheon's problems with Random House became, in fact, the source of additional pressure on an already strained relationship.

-André Schiffrin, THE BUSINESS OF BOOKS: How International Conglomerates Took Over Publishing and Changed the Way We Read (London and New York: Verso, 2000, pp. 85-87)

In the first of these conversations devoted to the history and presence of Schocken Books, I spoke with Altie Karper, then managing editor of Schocken Books and Pantheon, now sole director of Schocken. The second was with Susan Ralston, then editorial director of Schocken and a senior editor at Alfred A. Knopf. She has since retired. This third, last talk is with Arthur Samuelson, the former editorial director of Schocken Books, who left the company in 1999, intending to organize a multi-media company devoted to the subject of food, with his wife, Molly O'Neill, former food writer for the *New York Times*. We talked in May 2001, in his comfortable loft on the West Side. Our conversation lasted about three hours and covered the diverse subjects of Salman Schocken and the history of his company, Jewish identity in the present time, electronic publishing in the present and the future, translation and its possibilities, the job of the "niche publisher" as Samuelson had tried to practice it. What follows is an excerpt that will give readers quite another perspective on the evolution of Schocken Books as a corporate entity, but also, an un-corporate – but cooperative – view of how small publishing *might* be able to work around conglomeration. Arthur Samuelson's view of the situation is that of the former insider, or, critical, knowing, combative, defensive, retrospective, and – perhaps – idealistic, but not impossible.

He began by asking me about *Archipelago* and how I had come to found it; this of course led into a lively discussion about the promise of electronic production and dissemination, the Web, and printing-on-demand, for the future of the book industry.

Electronic publishing and the 19th century distribution system

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: I think that the electronics is going to change everything, it's going to change relationships between everybody.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: It's already done it.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: I guess what I am saying is that we are at the very beginning of a change no less significant than the changes that followed the invention of the printing press. Today the publishing industry is a slave to an inefficient distribution system.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Would you describe what you mean?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: It's a 19th century system. They call it the "carriage trade" for a reason. You can make an argument that the system of distribution of books in America today is designed to prevent the distribution of books. It's this huge sieve that…

KATHERINE McNAMARA: …that funnels down to…

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: …that funnels down to a bookseller, not the individual customer or book buyer. Now, part of what the Internet allows you to do is to redefine who the customer is, and that means a completely different relationship with the public than you have now. The tremendous need for capital of this inefficient distribution system means that what are essentially ancillary functions of publishing come to dominate it: printing, manufacturing, warehousing. In other words, the weakness in the system dominates it. What determines the difference between publishers is not necessarily that one publishes better books than another, it's the distribution system. I think the Web can return publishing to its core functions, which are editorial, rights, and publicity. Editorially, companies are weak because they're dependent on agents, and whoever controls product controls price. It's a very simple economic principle.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Say more about the dependence on agents, will you?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Because their time is so filled with the mechanics of publishing and distribution, few editors have the time to find and nurture talent; therefore, they have to depend on literary agents. I don't have much experience personally, because I spent much of my career in "niche" publishing, where direct relationships with authors was everything, and I had

the time to cultivate those relationships, to find my own writers and help develop them. It was a collaboration. I shared the publishing gamble with the writer, and I didn't pay big advances. I was known as a cheapskate. But I was able to nurture long careers and help create books that earned handsome royalties for the writer and neat profits for the house. One of the biggest books I ever published, I paid $2500 for, and made many millions of dollars.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: What was the book?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: It's called WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE [by Harold Kushner]. And I did that when I was first at Schocken.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: When did you first go to Schocken?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: 1979, 1980. It was my first publishing job. I was fortunate to be hired as an editor there. I had been involved with political things here and in Israel, involved in selling difficult political ideas. In those days, to talk about having a Palestinian state next to Israel was not a comfortable position to take. It was more comfortable in Israel, where there were many people willing to consider it, including generals and people in government, but here it was much more difficult. There was a kind of "Israel right or wrong" mentality.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Has that changed?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Everything has changed. But in those days, to take a position different from the government of Israel was considered heretical. Ironically, going from selling difficult political ideas to selling books was a lot easier. But when I left Schocken and went to Simon & Schuster, I'd had this big home run. I'd been in publishing maybe six months when I found that book. I knew that book would become a best seller. I didn't know enough to see any reason that the book *couldn't* be a best seller.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: All the things you know now that tell you…?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: This is a profession where one of the most important things you need to do is protect yourself from experience. What you don't know can help you. It can help you a great deal. Schocken had never had a best seller. I got people to see that it could happen. In fact, Schocken didn't want to publish that book. They were embarrassed by it, because they thought it was not intellectual enough.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Whom did you have to convince at Schocken? Who was in charge then?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Well, Peter Bedrich was there, and Chava Schocken – Chava Glazer – who was the sister of Ted Schocken, Salman Schocken's son. Everybody is dead now, except Peter and David Rome, Chava's son, either of whom can tell you about the family and what it was like. In fact, Peter worked with Ted. The Random House part of Schocken's history is the smallest part, and perhaps the least interesting part of its story. Random House has functioned as a responsible steward, and I would describe much of my work the same way, sustaining but not expanding Schocken.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: I spent hours in the Schocken/Pantheon library looking at titles, and noted how many of the newer titles I didn't recognize.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: There are not many books on that list now that could not have been published elsewhere, I think. More importantly, if you look at the most important Jewish books that were published in the last fifty years, you won't find many that came from Schocken. although many found their final resting place there, on the backlist. One of the things that has happened in the last several decades is that Jewish books are no longer "ghettoized." I do not think that there is a single publisher that does not have some on their list. I'd like to think that I might have put one or two on the list, but there are a number of other publishers that have published very fine Jewish books.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: In the last fifty years, you say?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yes.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Since 1950. Just at the time Ted Schocken said they were starting to cut back the list.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Well, they needed to protect the Jewish books by bringing in other kinds of things, but what also began to happen was that non-Jewish, ah, regular publishers began publishing Jewish books.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: So, what books would you…

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: …say were the most important Jewish books in this period? I'd say Isaac Bashevis Singer, who was not published by Schocken, along with a few other great Jewish novelists.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Aaron Appelfeld was published there.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yes, I brought him to Schocken. I brought [Elie] Wiesel to Schocken. But we didn't discover Appelfeld. I picked up Appelfeld from Random House, which had overpaid for a book and, not knowing what to do with it, just wanted to cut its losses. I bought the contract for half the price they'd paid, and at that price, I could afford to give the book the attention it needed to be published successfully.

You know, the biggest problem in book publishing is, if everybody did what they were supposed to do, nobody could do their job. There are just too many books being published. That's because of the needs of this distribution system: you've got to keep feeding this machine. I was lucky at Schocken that I had a backlist. I was lucky at Schocken that I knew that backlist intimately and I could revive it. I mean, we repackaged it, we changed titles, we did all sorts of things to try to give it new life. The backlist could support the house, so I wasn't under any pressure in terms of P&Ls *[profit and loss statements]*, I had a kind of cushion. We were profitable. I increased our profitability significantly. Random House wanted me to publish more books. I would have preferred to publish fewer books and to put more effort into their development.

The agenda

KATHERINE McNAMARA: So you were interested in keeping Schocken fairly small, in hand?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: I came from small-end print publishing. My skills have always been not at working inside a building, but outside of that building. Schocken within Random House was an imprint that was backlist-oriented in a frontlist house. It was niche-oriented, in a general-interest house. And so, whatever I did that would require the assistance of the organization would always be limited by the fact that, in sales, when my books were measured against a mass-market standard, and despite the fact that they made money, the number of books sold would always look insignificant in comparison. But that's where I came from, making things happen, that was my job. As a niche publisher, I could make things happen that the larger organization could not make happen. When we published the Bible in its new translation [THE SCHOCKEN BIBLE, tr. from the Hebrew by Edward Fox], it closed many circles: it closed a personal circle for me, because I had acquired that book when I was there in 1980; it closed the circle for Schocken, because they'd published the Buber-Rosenzweig translation in Germany. I think it may be one of the more important Jewish books to be published, to take the Bible back, for the Jews, to Hebrew, to show that English was not the language of the Bible. I published that volume as if I were conducting a political campaign. I co-published it with one of the largest evangelical publishers, which shocked a lot of people and turned the publication into a national, interfaith event, a big deal, teaching both Jews and Christians about their Bible. We were invited to the White House to present a Schocken Bible to Mrs. Clinton and created an event, "Bible Live," at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. People at Random House thought it was insane to do it at a cathedral: why not at a synagogue?

KATHERINE McNAMARA: David Marks, in his new novel [THIS IS NOT A NOVEL], writes that the word synagogue is Greek, and meant a Christian gathering.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Hm. Do you think if we dig deep enough we'll find that the word cathedral means Jewish gathering? Anyway, I know that, because the Bible belonged to everybody, it had the potential of reaching an extremely wide audience and, in doing so, re-educating Jews about their own literature.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: That seems to me very like the situation of Salman Schocken in Berlin, in the late '20s and early '30s.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yes, he had an agenda and so did I, and it was all I thought about. We got five thousand people to come out to that cathedral, everybody from Jesse Jackson to James Earl Jones. We turned it into an enormous celebration – I mean you could see the tapes someday, it was on CBS – five thousand people, black, white, Christian, Jewish, acknowledging Hanukkah and the release of this translation!

A lot of this has to do with making a virtue out of necessity. If we didn't do it this way, the book wouldn't work. There was no other way. I needed something that was going to make this translation stand out above everything else. I knew that once I had done that on the outside, my people inside would take interest, but until then, they wouldn't – they couldn't, they had too much to do to notice another Bible. One of the advantages I had was that Schocken gave me connections throughout the world. I had people for whom this book was *not* a commodity. Really, all I had to do as the publisher was to work that advantage. If you are a general interest publisher – and I've done that too, I worked at Simon & Schuster, I worked at HarperCollins – you simply cannot afford to develop the depth of relationships you develop as a niche publisher. As a niche publisher you are, often, selling an idea, not a commodity so, people will help you. The other advantage of niche publishing is that everything you do is, by definition, connected to everything else you do. It's all the same niche, and therefore each publication feeds the other. One of the problems in general trade publishing is that there is no institutional memory, and what is best remembered are mistakes, and the aversion to repeating them.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Right. It's like television.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: They will tell you, "We tried this once before and it didn't work." There simply isn't time to think about why it didn't work – whether it was the wrong time, whether the idea was implemented incorrectly, or whether, in fact, the idea is simply wrong.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Or even if they know *what* they tried and *what* didn't work…

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: In some publishing houses I've worked in – this is not true at Random House – there is the idea that every book is guilty until proven innocent. And that is *not true*. That is one of the things special about the Knopf Group: there is a willingness to risk failure. Every book is a challenge, and identifying the obstacles to marketing a book is not the same thing as having a marketing plan. Identifying the obstacles is the first step; then you've got to do something about those obstacles. In the case of what I did, the obstacles were so apparent that I used to joke that my job was made easy by the fact that it was so hard. I could also use books strategically.

Another thing: behind the paradox of being a Jewish publisher in America is the paradox of being Jewish in America. We want a Jewish bookshelf in every bookstore in America. We don't want our books on it. We want a Jewish community, but we don't want to be ghettoized. The irony is, if I were to publish a book at Schocken, and Knopf published the same book, we would do it in exactly the opposite fashion. They would figure that it's a Jewish book, they would target it to the Jewish audience. I would figure I've got to get it out of the

Jewish ghetto, so how do I do that? How do I make it bigger than that? How do I get it out of that category? And that's the advantage of a category publisher.

The disadvantage of general-interest publishers is that all they can think of is categories. The paradox is that if you want to reach the Jews, you can't reach them as Jews.

If WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPENED TO GOOD PEOPLE had come to me when I was a general-interest publisher, I would have to have seen it as a sort of Jewish self-help book. But it came to me when I was a niche publisher and therefore, I published it as a book for everybody and put together a range of quotes to prove it, from Art Linkletter to Archibald McLeish, and from every different religion. We had a whole array of quotes, because I had this theory of publishing, of promotion, that I call cognitive dissonance. You have to overcome people's natural reluctance to do anything for your book. The first thing you need is for them to listen. And the way you do that is to confuse them. Having Archibald McLeish and Art Linkletter is confusing if you think WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE is a Jewish book. That is when they start listening.

The entire effort of publishing is knocking down a series of dominos. Each line of dominoes speaks to the line in front of it; each word is a knock-down. The hardest dominoes to knock down are your colleagues. But they speak to people in front of them, who will speak to people in front of *them*, so, knocking down the collegial dominoes, getting the internal buzz going, is essential. It's the hardest thing to do, but it is the most important; nothing happens until you've done that. The easiest domino is the customer. But you've got to go through rows and rows of dominos before you get to the customer. You've got to create a tremendous amount of energy to overcome the resistance, because everybody is confronted by thousands of people saying the same kinds of things to get their attention. I've worked as the marketing director in a bookstore. I've sat with buyers, and I've sat with the salesmen, and I've seen them come in and sell. If you've got a catalog with three hundred books, and if you give every book one minute of presentation, that's five hours, and nobody's got five hours. So the triage is committed within the publishing company.

Jujitsu publishing

KATHERINE McNAMARA: I was in my local bookshop when the rep from the company that distributes my publisher's list called in. I introduced myself, but if I hadn't, I doubt my book would have been mentioned. He had a very thick catalog, and he represented perhaps a dozen publishers.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: You're probably right, it boils down to time, not necessarily the merits of any individual book. When I first started in book publishing, I had this idea, this naïve idea, that salesmen were like knights. They would go out and do battle for you, they'd go out into the market place and champion your books.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Don't you think they were that, when they had only one line to represent?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: They may have been, I don't know; but I know that I came to look at it differently. I figured out that instead of making it possible for them to do their jobs, that is, by writing great catalog copy, creating a must-have look in a cover, I had to make it impossible for them *not* to do their jobs. And the way I did that was by making things happen, first outside the house, then inside the house. I had to create a situation in which the bookseller asked the salesman about my books. I used quotes, editorial mention, buzz; I sold foreign and serial rights; basically, I did everything. I was a one-man operation, and I really liked it. Yes, I had the Pantheon people to help me; but the fact is that, measured against what they had to do, I was insignificant. So I made a virtue out of necessity. I felt free to do whatever I could,

whatever I wanted, and nobody got in my way, because nobody had time to care. At least, nobody had time to care as much as I did.

. And so, for me, publishing is by itself a kind of organic enterprise. For me, buying and selling both come from the same impulse. My job as a publisher and editor is not to know what you want to read. My job as a publisher is to tell you what I've read and why I like it. And that means I need to understand myself as a reader. One of the great pleasures of book publishing is that, no matter how good you are, you're going to fail eighty percent of the time. And I think that's a great opportunity to learn things. You don't learn a lot from the books that succeed. They make you think you're smart, they make you feel good about yourself, but you don't learn a lot from that, you learn a lot more from the books that fail. In a certain way, they're more valuable to you because of what you've learned from them.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: How do you mean, fail? Critically? In terms of sales?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Either, or both. When I was at Simon & Schuster, I started doing a mental retroactive profit-and-loss: "What did I do? What worked? What didn't work? What can I get from this to take some place else?" Every book was a learning experience in publishing well, or publishing badly.

Marketing people and sales people can't think of it quite like that. For them, it's an assembly line; and for me, it's a garden. The list is something I'm growing, and if this crop didn't come up right, then I've got another one in the ground, and I've got to learn from what didn't work and try and make this one work. And again, because I've been a niche publisher, I can take everything I have and apply it to everything else, so that if one book really succeeds, I can then take advantage of the new doors that have opened up, and then try to bring other things though that door. It was, in a way, jujitsu: I tried to use the strength that came from our weakness. I did some things that I could never have done at a general-interest imprint.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: For example?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: The way I published the Bible: I let my captive audience help me build a bigger and bigger audience, which is exactly what the Internet can, in theory, do for any publisher. What I started to say in the beginning was that most of publishing today is determined *not* by the economics of book publishing, but by the economics of an old-fashioned distribution system. The Internet is going to change this distribution system. It's not going to change if we've assimilated Amazon as just another book store, just another customer, but if we recognize the revolution that has already begun. Soon, Amazon – heck, any bookstore – will be able to manufacture its own books.

The future is rivers, not oceans

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Six years ago, in Paris, I met Odile Hellier of the Village Voice Bookshop. She introduced me to a stringer for the *Financial Times* who had something to say she thought would interest me. What he told me was, there was a machine and it made books. You booted up a disk in one end; a book came out the other! A paperback book! He said to Odile, "You know, in x number of years, this machine is going to be in your shop. This is how you're going to sell books." Odile was skeptical. But that's what you're saying too: the print-on-demand machine will change things.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Absolutely, a bookseller will be able to replenish her inventory overnight. And that's going to change everything. What it means is that you no longer need this huge distribution apparatus. It means that publishing gets thrown back to its beginnings, but also onto what has become its weakest foot, discovering and nurturing talent. I am not sure big institutions will be able to meet this challenge, as it is all about individual taste, not monolithic taste. It's all about thousands of small niche markets, not a giant monolithic market. Corporate

publishing as we know it, I think, is going to disappear. And it's going to disappear in one of two ways. The first is, the playing field will be leveled because the cost of distribution is no longer going to be so high, which will remove the advantage that big publishing houses have had. The second is, these companies are themselves a part of larger media conglomerates, which need to reinvent themselves, need to be reinvented. I think the whole concept of intellectual property and its exploitation could be changed, to where a book is no longer something in and of itself. It may be part of something larger.

That's the thing that excited me and that I'm still thinking a great deal about. These large publishing houses — Bertelsmann is like the world's largest aircraft carrier. It's a very powerful ship and it takes enormous amounts of energy from the people who run it and keep the ship going. But what if there's not going to be an ocean? What if it's going to be rivers?

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Or what if they even have to make a little bit of a turn? Not easy.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Well, there's that, but its one thing to steer a big boat and another thing altogether to turn a big boat into a flotilla of little boats. If the future is rivers, not an ocean, you need thousands of tiny river boats, not a gigantic aircraft carrier.

We have less and less of a reading public, less and less of a culture. Period.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: And that speaks to a third aspect: the changes that have happened in the reading public. The real weakness in the publishing industry is not from the corporate side. The real weakness comes from the culture. We have less and less of a reading public, less and less of a culture. Period. And I happen to think that actually this is a great time to be a writer. If anybody has something to say, he can get heard. There's more and more product, but less and less that has any value, and anybody, now, who has something to say can easily rise above that noise.

This is an issue that also concerns me, and it's been drawing me more and more towards education. I'm much more interested in education now than I am in now in book publishing.

Listen, the Web has no front door

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Education: what do you mean by that?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: People wanting to learn. Wanting to learn new things.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: So you are becoming a teacher, let's say?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: No, I mean as a business. Education is selling information. Our whole notion of education can also change as a result of the Internet and of all these cultural forces. I think that the Internet is still, despite the financial bubble that burst, the most radical, revolutionary tool in our, in our lifetime. It is a tool that if you pick up, changes you.

I'll give you another example of something at Schocken. I was very excited about the Internet for Schocken. Schocken was a company that had, could have, a relationship with individual customers. People would call me up and complain if a book was out of print. There were people out there who felt they owned me. As annoying as that was, it was a great asset. And so, the Internet: in the old days of Schocken, in the '30s, they actually published a magazine, they published a little quarterly.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Oh, did they?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: They published a little journal that Martin Buber edited. In those days book publishers often published little magazines. There was *Scribner's*, *Harper's*. They all had these little, intimate connections. That's not financially feasible, now; but the Internet makes it financially feasible. So I make the argument: Schocken and Random House are

spending millions of dollars on, essentially, a vanity Web site. It was, basically, promoting books in a new way that is exactly the same way as before, and costing millions of dollars. I went to them and said, "Look, Schocken has the grass-roots audience that each part of Random House needs, so why don't you make us the prototype for Random House's Web site." They laughed. There were big issues Random House had to confront when it was doing a Web site. One of them was that Random House itself isn't one house, it's one roof over many little houses.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: "A house of many mansions"?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Mansions, rooms, whatever we call them, each aspect of the company sees itself as a world unto itself. And so, when you put yourself up on the Web as "Random House," you have to decide if you are going to present yourself as one, all-inclusive thing, or as a series of discrete imprints. You have to decide if consumers want to be dazzled by the full range of the possibilities within Random House, or if they want an intimate connection with like-minded people.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: You've asked an interesting question. What do you think these consumers – do you mean readers? – care about?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: This is really an interesting question, because booksellers care about the imprint. Consumers don't care about the imprint. So here's the big issue: if the Internet is a consumer tool; and if consumers don't care about the imprint, what they care about is the subject areas; then, we should put out a Web site that is subject-oriented. It doesn't matter what the imprint was. But who's going to do it? So the Web site was run from the chairman's office.

There were limited resources, limited...

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Your chairman then being Alberto Vitale, the man who thought that by the year 2000 and something, books would be finished: we all were going to be reading electronic texts at a glowing podium.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yes. It was run from his office. – The thing is that Random House, to use another metaphor, has a very small federal government. It's very big on states' rights but has a very small federal government. This is the pre-Bertelsmann Random House; I don't know how it works now. But, the Web is a federal program. But the "federal government" has no resources. In the end, each imprint began to compete for those small resources and, eventually, began to do their own stuff. Sheer economics forced us all to focus on the booksellers rather than the individual customers. On top of that, Alberto refused to let us sell books on-line, because a manufacturer does not compete with his retail customers. So we spent a lot of money without selling a book. That kind of math doesn't work in publishing any more.

So I said, "Look, for me this is a great tool to reach my audience. If I can build a cyber sandbox for my existing audience, I will expand my audience. There are search engines, there are thousands of people looking for particular playgrounds, and my books can act like little corners in a very particular playground."

This is where I first started thinking about publishing in a completely different fashion: I need an audience; I have programming. We can put these two pieces together. I can use the Web. I said, "Let me go up as a Web site that is not commercially-focused. It's educationally focused. Let me go up, and I will treat it like a magazine. I will find people all over the country or the world to make this their playground. If they want to build a section on "women and Judaism," I'll find the people who are interested in that area, and they will build. And along the way, we will use our *books* as programming The viewers will be exposed to our ethos, maybe to our advertising, or maybe not; but just having them play in our sites is really important. But that means thinking about ourselves completely differently."

Now, nobody in Random House was going to touch this, because it meant giving away parts of books, giving away what we made our living from, and it also meant beginning to think of ourselves differently, beginning to imagine new ways of making money – and the truth is, all of us barely had enough time or enough money to do what we were already doing, forget adding a whole other aspect.

I figured, Okay, how can I do this cheaply and well? I found a kid. The great thing about the Internet is that the gap between the professional and the amateur is about six months. I found a kid who designed some really nice Web sites and I hired him for a thousand dollars to sort of create this prototype for me. As an experiment. When we looked at it together, we were all flummoxed. I couldn't go up as an individual imprint on the Random House site, because the decision had been made not to feature individual imprints – but I couldn't go up as Schocken.com because I was part of Random House! I pointed out that it doesn't matter, the Web has no front door, I could put up links. But the dilemma was too freighted, too complex. In the end, I had to figure out a way to use the Web to benefit Schocken by making alliances outside of Random House.

I found other Jewish Web sites and non-Jewish Web sites that needed programming, and I created it from our backlist books. See, for me, the whole concept of "frontlist" and "backlist" is a retail concept. It has nothing to do with the way readers think about books. It's the way stores think about books. Once you get out of that mindset, once you no longer have to think in those terms, you're free to do all sorts of cool things that you couldn't do before. I treated my backlist and my frontlist evenly, because everything I sold was an opportunity to sell something else. Frontlist opened the door to backlist. Backlist opened the door to frontlist. I entered into alliances with several web companies. In a perfect world, they would have charged me for the advertising they were giving me, and I would have charged them for the intellectual content I was giving them. But, since this was a new world and nobody knew who the buyer and seller was, and neither of us had any money, we both helped each other. And so I began experimenting with the Web to do these kinds of things, things that allowed me to bypass the dilemma of corporate identity and to stop competing for scarce resources. So that, when I published THE MONK AND THE PHILOSOPHER…

KATHERINE McNAMARA: The book by Jean-Claud Revel and his son…

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yeah. By that time, I had a relationship with the Internet that allowed me to turn a commodity – the book – into an idea – insert here what the "idea" is – which in turn allowed me to sell more books. I really like selling books. I never lost money for anybody I ever worked for. I do not believe there is this sort of divide between good books and profitability. I believe that you can make money selling good books.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Well, does that depend, say, on how much overhead you have to support?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: It depends on a lot of factors, but I'm saying that there's no *physiological* divide, you know, an unchangeable thing. I have been very successful publishing books that other people might not have thought of as commercial, by treating them as commercial books. Sometimes the fact that a book is not commercial *makes* it commercial. All right? The Bible is a really good example. I was able to create all of these coalitions and alliances and get us into places we'd never thought we could go before, because I wasn't selling a book, I was selling the Bible. And there were a lot of people who wanted to help me.

When we published Kafka in new translations, it was the same thing. A lot of people wanted to help me. What we did with Jean-Claud Ravel and his son was this. I went to *Harper's* magazine and said, "Let's create a traveling road show at the universities." *Harper's* was looking for ways to reach into that audience, and I worked with them to create a tour of, I think, sixteen universities. At each of those universities, five or six organizations came together

to sponsor the event. So, as a result, maybe 50,000 pieces of mail went out to support this book, none of which came from me, none of which cost me anything. All of which helped me, helped *Harper's*, and helped the local organizations. The universities had an audience. I had a product. *Harper's* was interested in reaching that audience. They could use my product to reach that audience. By doing it, they were helping me expose the book to a good audience. This synergy worked really, really well. It was a non-traditional kind of publicity promotion. It wasn't something that a publicist would be able to pull off. There was nobody within Random House who really knew the universities, who could call up and say, "How would you like to do this program?" Because I was niche publisher, I had those connections. That's the thing about niche publishing: you have to spend your time figuring out how to turn apparent disadvantage into advantage, not trying to figure out how to do what general interest publishers do. If you're playing on their ground, you're weak. But if you play on *your* ground, you're stronger than they are. The Web is a constantly expanding conglomerate of tiny niches. No part of the publishing industry is better suited to take advantage of what it offers than niche publishers.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Let me ask you this then. Do you think that a niche publisher, on his or her own, can do what you're talking about doing?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Depends on what the niche is. Jewish books have a lower ceiling than, let's say, food does. Food is a really interesting category. I've spent a lot of time on food the last couple of years. We all eat. We all have varying degrees of information about food and various degrees of interest in it, and so it's a niche category that can support enormous sales as well as consistent small sales. If you look at the way cookbooks are published within large publishing houses, you'll see they're published like niche books. Simon & Schuster has a publicity department that only works on cookbooks; HarperCollins may have one, also. That's an example of a niche that has a very high ceiling.

Look, I knew the numbers at Schocken. When I worked at Schocken in 1988, I knew that list intimately, because I had read most of those books. When I came back in 1995, many of those books were still there. Not all of them; a lot of the list had been trimmed down. But many of them were, and I can tell you that the numbers had not changed much. In other words, the books published by Schocken as an independent publisher with a commissioned sales force, sold in about the same numbers under big Random House. Random House increased Schocken's reach, but the Random House sales force had a lot more books than Schocken's to sell. I cannot say that, if a Jewish book was published by Random House, it wouldn't have been done better than if I had published it at Schocken. I *can* say, with relative certainty, that we would publish the book differently and would keep it in print and selling longer. Our advantage was *the way* in which we might publish that book. At least that was my philosophy. Could it be done independently? I don't think there's a need for Schocken, independently. When Schocken was started, there were not many publishers of Jewish books. Now, the university presses publish Jewish books. Some of the most important Jewish scholarship in this century has been published by the big university presses.

Who needs Schocken Books?

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Is there a need, then, for Schocken to exist besides, let's say, for Bertelsmann's prestige?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: I don't think Bertelsmann needs prestige. It has plenty of prestigious imprints. I think that, like being Jewish, Schocken needs to be reinvented every generation. As I said to you before, I believe you can only reach people where they live. The majority of the American Jews of my generation don't live in a ghetto called Jewtown. They

live someplace else, My job has been to expand, not contract the category. And, as I said, it's a kind of a dialectical thing – we want the category and then we want to be out of it.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Right.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: But being Jewish means something different to kids in their twenties or thirties today, and will mean something different, again, to my daughter, who is ten. My generation is no longer necessarily the core audience for this subject area.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: What generation is that audience?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: The people who are the age you were when you read Kafka or Buber for the first time.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: If you mean me, I was in high school when I read Kafka – my parents gave me AMERIKA for Christmas! – and an undergraduate when I read Buber. I read Buber seriously and wrote papers about his teaching. And when I was in grad school, in the late '60s and early '70s, a great many books on my shelf were Schocken books. It's an interesting question, though, because I'm not Jewish, you see, and at the time, I had no idea Schocken was a "Jewish" publisher. I just knew they published books I wanted, even needed, to read.

Those were the years, as I've learned, when the editorial agenda was to expand the list. – In fact, let me quote a passage from Ted Schocken's little essay about Schocken's 25th anniversary. He was talking about their publishing program and why they expanded it. "A major part of the program is played by the Jewish paperback," he wrote. He goes on, "The ambition to put Jewish books of high intellectual caliber into the hands of the young Jewish reader, which played such an important part in our traditional program, is being largely fulfilled through the Schocken paperbacks. The young American Jew arriving for the first time on the college campus finds the Schocken paperbacks in his university bookstore and is assigned by professors in a variety of courses – sociology, history, literature, comparative religion. Thus convinced that they have general acceptance, he often 'discovers' the Jewish books, which in the past his parents or his rabbi had tried in vain to interest him in."

I love this because those books reached me, too, and many other readers like me. So, if Ted Schocken was reinventing the list in order to reach more Jewish university students, a most honorable desire, perhaps one unexpected result was that that list was "reinventing" readers like me, too. But the purpose of Schocken books, after all, is to publish books of Jewish interest – and that means something different, now.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Of course, this constant re-invention is not exclusive to Jewish publishing, or even niche publishing. Just as my generation of Jews only felt comfortable within a larger context, lots of particular readers needed to feel part of a whole, rather than isolated. Sonny recognized this and turned Knopf into what Random House was. Dan Frank *[editorial director of Pantheon Books]* recognized this and turned Pantheon into what Knopf was. Inevitably, the demands of the audience gradually change the identity of any publisher.

What we are seeing now is that technology can also change a publisher's identity. I suspect that the need to be part of a larger something is giving way to a need to feel connected to something smaller and particular. This is part a cultural reaction to the largeness and complexity of life. It is partly a possibility afforded by new media.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: I think you are saying something like this: that any publishing concern must inevitably re-think its purpose. I mean, the people in charge, whoever sets the agenda, have to understand their reason for existence – but also, they have to know *how* to stay in existence.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: These changes are cyclical, but they are constant. Look at what happened between Basic Books and HarperCollins. The more successful Basic became, the more it began to publish books like HarperCollins, and the less reason there was for Basic Books to exist. The reason for Basic Books to exist was to publish books that Harper couldn't do. You

look at what happened to HarperSan Francisco. HarperSan Francisco owned religion! They owned religion, but then they began living off it. They began by publishing religion. Then religion became hot: all of a sudden, anybody could publish it, including HarperCollins. Once you become that kind of publisher, what do we need you for? And so, I thought I needed a reason for Schocken to exist, and that was to be this: not that the books that we published would be different, but that *the way we published those books* would be different. That the whole could become greater than the sum of its parts. That's not an American style of publishing, it's a European style of publishing and, really, what Pantheon represented under André *[Schiffrin, formerly director of Pantheon Books]*.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Was André Schiffrin there when you were?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: André bought Schocken. Schocken was actually bought for Random House by Pantheon. That closed a personal circle, for André, whose father had been involved in publishing Kafka. *[Jacques Schiffrin had been an editor at Kurt Wolff Verlag, one of Kafka's original publishers, then at Pantheon, when Kurt Wolff opened that publishing house in New York, in 1940.]*

KATHERINE McNAMARA: When Kurt Wolff published Kafka; then the rights went to Schocken Verlag.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: At the time, André was also looking for a paperback line to be an alternative to Vintage. But that's a question you'll have to ask him: what his agenda was. *[See endnote.]* But he bought Schocken, and then he was gone; and I'm not quite sure anybody knew what to do with it, then. I tried to give it a reason to exist. As long as you're making money you are free to figure out the larger, deeper cultural purpose of the enterprise. No one is going to stop you.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: You mean, nobody else in the company?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yes. When Bertelsmann bought us, a lot of people joked that I was the safest person in Random House, because they wouldn't dare upset the Jews. I found that personally insulting, to tell you the truth. That's like living on the reservation. If Schocken can't make money for them, then there is no reason for it to exist as a business. Very simple. I wanted to play by the same rules as everybody else. I don't believe in affirmative action – at least, I don't want it for myself. And certainly not affirmative action that's fueled by guilt. I have no problems with Schocken's being owned by a German company. I have no problems with that German company's being a large holder of American publishing. We have been a large holder of European and other worldly and cultural resources for a long time. We're the last ones to talk about cultural hegemony. The fact is that Germans care more about books than Americans do.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: That's what Marion Boyars said, too. *[See Vol. 1, No. 3.]*

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: They do care about them more. When people talk about Bertelsmann buying Random House, I think they are more interested in the merger between Doubleday and Random House. Doubleday had basically been taken over by Bantam. Bertelsmann was run by mass-market people. The sensibility of the company was dominated by them. Random House was run by hardcover people. The real importance of that merger was that you now had mass-market people running hardcover people, in a way that those hardcover people had never been run before. The systems they put in place come from mass marketing. The sensibility comes from there. I imagine that that changes things for the publishers of hardcover books.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: For all of them, or at Random specifically?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: All of them. All of them. It's another sensibility – another philosophy of publishing. It's not that we didn't have mass-market lists within Random House – we had two.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: But mass-market was subordinate?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: No. It wasn't subordinate, it was an accompaniment. I would say they probably felt they were under the thumb of hardcover publishers. People calling the shots were the people who cared about hardcover books

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Those were *books*, after all.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Well. Also, it was their P&L that won. That may not be the case anymore. As I said earlier, there were many houses under this one roof. It's not just that they've added more rooms: it's that some people on the top floor weren't there before. As far as Schocken is concerned, I said to myself that if the reason to exist is to publish Jewish books, well, that's not a reason to exist. There is no publisher that doesn't publish Jewish books. If the reason to exist is to publish intellectual books, maybe that's not a good enough reason, either. I don't think guilt or nostalgia are good enough reasons, either. The only reason to exist is because you can do something better than someone else. But as I said to you before, I take that all as a metaphor: it's like being Jewish in America. One of the great things about living in this time is that you can take on this identity, you can take it off.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: And it doesn't sound like it's a clearly defined identity, always.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: No, you have to constantly reinvent it. And that, personally, is what makes it interesting to me. On one hand, it creates tremendous freedom; on the other, it creates tremendous pressure to reinvent constantly. That can be very healthy, but it means you've got to stay alive. To stay alive, you have to *be* alive. And what I tried to bring into Schocken was some of that liveliness. "If there's a reason to be Jewish, it had better be interesting, because if it's not interesting, well, peoples come and peoples go. There are many peoples that can't trace themselves back as far as the Jews can. When you reach a point where there's no reason to be Jewish anymore, where enough people don't want to be, or it doesn't mean anything to them, there won't be Jews. That's evolution. I mean, it's not worth preserving just for its own sake." Those were the thoughts that went through my head when I ran Schocken.

They are not exactly publishing thoughts, and they're probably not the kind of things that concern my colleagues at other imprints. But that's part of what makes Schocken so interesting. It wasn't just about publishing books and making money.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: As I listen to you I think of something Michael Bessie *[see Vol. 1, No. 4]* told me. I didn't understand why Atheneum had been shut down after Simon & Schuster bought it. Lee *[*Goerner, *last editor and publisher of Atheneum]* and I didn't talk about publishing. Afterward, I asked Michael, "What did it mean when they said Atheneum wasn't making enough return on investment?" He said simply, "You know, perhaps Lee acted like an owner rather than an employee." At last, I understood, sort of. The editor was an employee of a gigantic, many-layered conglomerate that had no interest in his values and accomplishment. What did the conglomerate have to do with literature, except to make publishing it more difficult? As a writer, I still think that; but as a publisher, you seem to see it differently.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: As I said, I think that the divide between Art and Commerce is a false one, or can be a false one. I think that fine work can be profitable. It is true that really fine publishing is idiosyncratic, and when it works commercially, it tends to be because there is a strong entrepreneurial sense of ownership on the part of the editor or publisher. There is an obvious conflict between feeling like an entrepreneur and feeling like an employee, but from that tension great opportunities do arise. I mean, Random House hired me because they didn't know what to do with Schocken, and it was so small that it wasn't really all that interesting. To me, it was a great opportunity that just fell into my hands. The paradox is, the more successful I became, the more interested they got.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: And then they...

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: …learned a lot about the power of niche publishing. Did that mean that the larger corporation became more interfering? As I became more successful, did I also have to jump over more hurdles? Not really. I suppose that, ultimately, any large business becomes conservative about anything that is a profit center. Perhaps it could have become more difficult to reinvent Schocken. But that wasn't my experience, nor was it why I left. Ultimately, I found that I'd done what I'd set out to do and had been changed by that experience, had become, increasingly, less interested in the art of words and ideas, and more interested in marketing and business as an art form. I felt far more burdened by Schocken's constituents and its history, by my own sense of responsibility to each of those things, than I ever did by Knopf or by Random House. As I said, one of the most stunning things about an imprint like Schocken is that its readers really feel that they own it.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Which is right, isn't it, because you're in service to readers.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Okay, I had this opportunity to be a publisher, and in that there is a little bit of leading and a little bit of following.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Yes?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: And I could see myself connected to a larger culture and a larger content. I'm not sure my colleagues in general publishing have that. You know, money can be incredibly liberating. You know what Marx said about how under capitalism everything melts into air. Well, one of the great advantages of modern commercial publishing is that it frees us from all those things of tradition, it frees you from all those higher demands; that, ultimately, it's about making money. If you can sell poetry and make money, that's fine! If you can do that, it opens up all sorts of things. I used to make a joke that André saw himself as being like a European socialist political party and would never publish something he couldn't agree with personally. That's a very European concept of publishing – and it's very non-American. I've published lots of books I didn't agree with, but, nonetheless, they reflected something that interested me. There is a lot of freedom in just being expected to make money. You don't get held back by all these other things you know.

I'll never forget the conversation that I had with Mrs. Glazer who was, as I said, a living Schocken. They, the Schockens, were, sort of, all hung up on what Salman Schocken had done, and on reputation, and on "what good does it mean?", and all of this stuff. So, when I came with a book that I thought could sell millions of copies, they weren't sure they wanted to publish it, because they thought it might, somehow, damage the reputation of the house.

I said: "Mrs. Glazer, how do you think your father would feel if we managed to put a rabbi on the bestseller list?" I mean, I didn't want to make the obvious argument, which was, "If we make millions of dollars selling this book, just think of all the other books that we can publish that may not be able to make that kind of money."

Somehow, that argument didn't seem like it would be successful. But what *might* work was putting it in terms of her father, and what her father had all the time stood for. What he was most interested in showing was what the Jews had to offer the world. Teaching the Jews what the Jews had to offer the world. And, in its own way, in its own modest way, WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE did that. It touched people in many ways. Not only did it reach more people than any book we published, but it also touched them more deeply. Twenty years later, that book still is one of the top-selling religious books, and that's entirely due to the book itself. As the publisher, we're like parents, you know: we can give the book a start, we can give it good genes and good nutrition, we can give it a good environment, but then it's on its own. Finally, that will determine how it's going to make its way in the world. And that prevailed: the book did enormously well.

Again, the paradox: I'm sure I couldn't have made that book successful at Simon & Schuster, because they would have categorized it. They would have seen it as a "Jewish" book. They would not have believed me when I said it could become a bestseller, because they knew what bestsellers were, and I didn't. And so, my great advantage at Schocken was that I could put intense energy into a book. I worked on creating a market for that book for about a year before we published it. I could do that at Schocken even when it was part of Random House. At Random House, nobody begins working on a book until three months before it's published.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: A book has a "publishing cycle," doesn't it.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Yes, because they're working on a cycle. It's like a conveyor belt: the needs of distribution. I could start working on a book a year before it was published, and I could continue working on it a year after it was published, because I didn't have that many books to work on. It's not that I am better than anybody else, it's that I had the opportunity to give the books the attention they required to be successful.

What I enjoyed about publishing was coming home at the end of the day and telling my wife, "I made something happen today. I did something." The needs of distribution make it so that publishers are looking for books that need the least amount of help. That come pre-sold – that's the best, the ones they don't have to do anything for; they'll throw the most resources behind those. When I was at Simon & Schuster, I told Dick Snyder *[former publisher of Simon & Schuster, then Golden Books]* once, "Look, you have your most expensive people in publicity working on books we know are going to be bestsellers. You have your least experienced people working on the books that need the most help. Why not reverse that? Why not put the junior people on the big books and put the senior people on the little books."

KATHERINE McNAMARA: I can imagine his response.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: He thought that was really funny. Impractical, but a point to be taken. There isn't anyone in publishing who is not trying to figure out what comes next, particularly the potential of technology.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: It seemed obvious, early, that publishers didn't know the technology of computers or what they did and could do. The language about computers – "download, "interface" – is only a referential language. And if you learn it secondhand and try to use it, you sound phony, because you are speaking this jargon and you don't know what it means. They talked about what they *didn't* know, in a language they didn't understand. It was it was the language of fear that they used. They used a jargon, but the animation of it was fear.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Well.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Whereas, if you come in underneath the conventions, not with a lot of money but with an idea, then you can figure out a way to make it happen.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: I've tried and wasn't successful.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Well, not yet.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: That's true, none of this is going to go away. Gradually, gradually, we are all figuring out how to make it work, how to make it profitable, or even just sustainable. The entire world is under that pressure right now, not just the publishing industry.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: The difficulty, too, is that when you're rushing forward, that's just when you need to stop and learn this stuff.

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Well, that's why innovation so often comes from outside, has to be done outside. Corporations like General Electric, and others: what they do is set up companies outside for precisely that purpose. But book publishers haven't done that yet. Let me put it this way: it may be that the problem in traditional book publishing is *not* that they are being run like businesses whereas publishing is maybe not a business. The problem may be that they are not being run *enough* like businesses, like traditional businesses. It may be that publishers can learn from the software industry, which is also another form of intellectual property that

invented its own distribution system, that invented its relationship to its customers. There may be all sorts of new things to learn. Other manufacturers threatened or challenged by technological change have adapted different kinds of strategies, as well.

On Reading

KATHERINE McNAMARA: You spent some time working on developing a Web site and company with your wife, Molly O'Neill, the former food-writer for the *Times,* and you've been away from book publishing for a little while. In this new sort of life, what are you reading?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: Publishers should give editors sabbaticals every seven years, so they can read. I'm reading now, but what I learned was, I had to learn to read all over again. In publishing, you read differently – you don't read, in a way; you're scanning, you're reading for something; you're looking for what you can get out of the book. But in reading, the book takes you. It takes you to places you've never been. You give yourself to the book. In publishing, I rarely read for fun. Then, when I started to read again, I realized I had forgotten how.

KATHERINE McNAMARA: How did you start again?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON: I read Hebrew.I am fluent but I read it more slowly than English. I had to teach my eyes to slow down to read, and reading Hebrew was a good way to do that..

KATHERINE McNAMARA: Do you know Milosz's poem about reading the Gospels in Greek? These lines: "…it is proper that we move our finger / Along letters more enduring than those carved in stone, / And that, slowly pronouncing each syllable, / We discover the true dignity of speech." Perhaps this is the true nature of reading, a kind of recollection?

ARTHUR SAMUELSON That is very nicely said.

Afterward

In late February of this year, in New York,. I was informed that Altie Karper was now the sole director of Schocken Books. Susan Ralston officially had retired though would serve as the consulting editor of books for which she had been responsible. At Random House, corporate managers were trying to cut costs – by reducing the editorial staff, the heart of the enterprise! Certain senior editors and members of related departments had been invited to limit their working week to four days, with attendant reduction in salary – while, I gathered, not likely having to do less work, given the nature of their task. Some of them had taken retirement instead. My source was not an official spokesperson. Therefore, and yet again, I caught the haze of dismay, anger, and a kind of resignation circulating through the book-filled offices. I note that Bertelsmann has announced it is going to become a publicly-held corporation. *-KM*

The series of conversations about Schocken Books is made possible by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy <http://www.virginia.edu/vfh>.

Authors and Books Mentioned (published by Schocken Books, unless otherwise noted):

Aharon Appelfeld, THE CONVERSION, THE IRON TRACKS, THE RETREAT, UNTO THE SOUL
Martin Buber, TALES OF THE HASIDIM; ON JUDAISM
(with Franz Rosenzweig) DIE SCHRIFT DIE FUNF BÜCHEN DER WEISUNG (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1925); (with F.R.) DIE SCHRIFT (Berlin: Schocken Verlag: 1936)
Everett Fox, tr., THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES: The Schocken Bible, Vol. I.
Franz Kafka, AMERIKA, THE CASTLE (tr. Mark Harmon), THE METAMORPHOSIS,
IN THE PENAL COLONY, AND OTHER STORIES, THE SONS, THE TRIAL (tr. Breon Mitchell)
Harold Kushner, WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE
David Marks, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL (Counterpoint)
Jean-François Revel and Matthieu Ricard, THE MONK AND THE PHILOSOPHER
Isaac Bashevis Singer, IN MY FATHER'S COURT (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
André Schiffrin, THE BUSINESS OF BOOKS: How International Conglomerates Took Over Publishing and Changed the Way We Read (Verso)
Elie Wiesel, THE LANGUAGE OF LIFE, THE ACCIDENT, ALL RIVERS RUN TO THE SEA,
AND THE SEA IS NEVER FULL, A BEGGER IN JERUSALEM, *et alia*

Related links:

Schocken Books http://www.randomhouse.com/schocken/

On the Schocken Bible and Everett Fox; regarding his translation
<http://www.jhom.com/torah_portion/portion_Schocken/Schocken2.html>

Schocken Books Teachers Guide to THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES, tr. Edward Fox
<http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/bible.html>

A Kafka For The 21st Century by Arthur Samuelson, publisher, Schocken Books
<http://www.jhom.com/bookshelf/kafka/intro.html?&printable=true>

Kafka: the new translations <http://www.jhom.com/bookshelf/kafka/index.html>: "On the occasion of the publication by Schocken Books of a new translation based on the restored text of THE CASTLE, PEN … sponsored an evening of tribute, reflection, and re-examination of the work of Franz Kafka. The evening, directed by Tom Palumbo, took place on Thursday, March 26, 1998, 8:00 p.m. in The Town Hall, New York City." *Jewish Heritage Online Magazine* broadcasts recordings of that evening.

See also:

A Conversation with Marion Boyars, *Archipelago*, Vol. 1 No. 3
A Conversation with Cornelia and Michael Bessie, Vol. 1 No. 4 *and* Vol. 2, No. 1
A Conversation with William Strachan, Vol. 2, No. 4
A Conversation with Samuel H. Vaughan, Vol. 3, No. 2
Reminiscence: Lee Goerner (1947-1995), Vol. 3, No. 3
A Conversation with Odile Hellier, Vol. 4, No. 1
A Conversation with Calvin Reid about Electronic Publishing, Vol. 4, No. 4
A Conversation with Altie Karper about Schocken Books, Vol. 5, No. 2
A Conversation with Susan Ralston about Schocken Books, Vol. 5, No. 3

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America, it seems to me, has as little resistance to an idea or a mass emotion as isolated communities have to measles and whooping cough. From outside, it is as if you are watching one violent storm after another sweep across a landscape of extremes. Their Cold War was colder than anywhere else in the West, with the intemperate execution of the Rosenbergs, and grotesqueries of the McCarthy trials. In the Seventies, Black Power, militant feminism, the Weathermen—all flourished….

Everything is taken to extremes. We all know this, but the fact is seldom taken in to account when we try to understand what is going on.

—Doris Lessing, in "What We Think of America," *Granta* Spring 2002

Charlottesville-The University of Virginia Center for Governmental Studies kicks off the National Symposium on Wartime Politics with *a pair of exciting events* on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2002: a keynote address by Senator John Warner (R-VA), the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee; and a panel discussion about the role of partisanship during times of war, which features several of America's *top political insiders*. Both events will be held on the Grounds of the University of Virginia….

—Press release [emphasis added]

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THE COLOSSUS

Goya and the Women

The rain has been lovely in Washington, because so welcome in this drought, though toward evening the wet flowering trees look a bit frayed. Yesterday I went down to the National Gallery, to look at Goya's pictures of women, many of which were loaned by the Prado. I had seen them once before but, for the moment separated from the enormous collection of his work in Madrid, these paintings were what I wanted to view on a spring day. Almost at once I was again aware of the accuracy of his gaze and yet its sympathetic tenderness toward persons of all classes, which many have remarked on; equally, his biting depiction of their follies.

But there were surprises. A little picture of the Duchess of Alba teasing "La Beata," a prim upper servant of the household. You don't see the Alba's face, only a mass of long curly hair and a supple body in action, so luscious and so intimately drawn that you think she could indeed be the unclothed and the clothed maja, though that association is no longer officially accepted.

In their own gallery are the "gentlemen's paintings," of which kind Goya was considered a master, meant for viewing in the private rooms of aristocrats. The few exhibited are very beautiful. "El Sueño" is nearly as lovely as the great majas, though not a complex work: a young woman lies sleeping, her head turned aside on the pillow in shadow, but her bosom, which is just lovely, is raised. It is meant to capture the eye of the beholder; it is swathed in some soft gauzy fabric that would draw his hand toward it. On the opposite wall, side by side, are the two paintings of the maja, naked (not nude) and clothed. It is entertaining to think of that high-spirited duchess portrayed as a sort of street-gypsy. The woman is delicious, whoever she might be. Unclothed, her skin translucent, her limbs rounded, perfectly formed, inviting possession, she is self-possessed. Clothed in her semi-transparent little Empire dress and tiny

court shoes, her face more vibrantly colored, she is no less desirable. You believe that if she chose to speak nothing stupid, but perhaps something quite mockingly amusing, could come out of that pretty little mouth.

Further on are rooms of album prints, including impressions from "Los Caprichos," 1799. "An advertisement: The author has selected from a multitude of stupidities and errors common to every civil society … material deemed fit for ridicule and at the same time to exercise the author's imagination." Much that is merry, but also disgraceful and degenerate, appears before us – the procuresses, the girls and men of all classes making the eternal bargain of flesh for money. Goya sees everything and draws it. The images beginning in dreams. "The Follies of Women." He cannot help looking, simultaneously drawing: eye connects directly to hand, even while the heart is appalled. Now, a few prints from the grueling "The Disasters of War: " "They did not want this." "Nor did they." "Nor did they." – Women resisting the French soldiers who will rape them.

In 1808, Goya had the terrible good luck of disaster, when Napoleon invaded Spain. His frightening paintings "The Second of May" and "The Third of May" record summary executions of Madrileños by the victorious French. Then followed The Disasters, the engravings of atrocities of that savage war. The war lasted five years. The return of a reactionary monarchy quashed the liberals, whose resistance to Napoleon had inspired the popular rising. Later, a three-year interlude of liberalism ended with more repression. In 1823, Goya left for Bordeaux, old and blind, and kept working. He drew "social outcasts, cripples and beggars …[which] might even reflect the helplessness which Goya himself felt as an old and deaf man in a strange country." How did his mind survive what he had seen?

I could love the exhibit because the big pictures were beautiful and full of daily life and there was peace in them; the ordinary and extraordinary horrors appeared in miniature, in the album prints. Behind them hovered a memory of the Black Paintings of his old age, the album of The Disasters, and "The Colossus." Above a wide plain across which stream tiny wagons full of frantic refugees and herds of panicked animals stands a monstrous figure, brutish and shaggy, grasping tiny bodies in his huge fist. His back is turned indifferently to the viewer. (He is a precursor of the terrifying "Saturn Devouring His Children.") I used to have a cheap print of that painting and I used to look at it with something like wonder. *That* was War! War filled the mind and evacuated life, it scattered people ahead of it in pure terror, it plucked its victims at random. It was immense and terrifying. Goya had seen its image, and painted it so; that was what caused my wonder.

The Hungarian novelist Lajos Zilahy wrote in CENTURY IN SCARLET the following: "It was de la Tour du Pin, one of Talleyrand's secretaries, who called the Napoleonic wars, not without justice, the Third World War. The first occurred in the fourth century B.C., when … Alexander (the Great) conquered the then-known world. The second was fought nearly a millennium later, when Attila, king of the Huns, lost the bloodiest battle of history on the wide Catalonian plain. Here the united Western armies beat the hordes of barbaric tribes from Asia." The passage would strike the Hungarian ear with a certain irony; not, perhaps, ours. We have little idea of this history.

In the gallery, serenity, and its shadow. How does the mind bear the shadow? By *making*. Goya made these pictures.

The West Building is traversed by a long, high-vaulted corridor off which open room after room of marvels, and which is modulated by small, round atria where discreet pairs and trios of seats are arranged for those wishing to pause. Regularly, musicians play. In one of the atria is a vibrant display of potted Karume azaleas from a collection left to the National Gallery on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary. This was a charming sight. Spent blossoms had fallen to the marble floor around the pots, a small, unexpected dishevelment. Although the number of

tourists is said to be low since September, I saw many people that day from many nations and our own, adults and small children, and again marveled at how this was open to us, all and any, without fee. As for security, at each entry stood two guards behind a table. I entered by the west door. A woman guard examined my bag by using a dowel to poke gently, briefly among the contents. She paid no attention to my cell phone. I did not mention the small dictating machine in my coat pocket. In one of the rooms another guard politely asked me to carry my bag, a small backpack, over one shoulder to avoid impeding the flow of the crowd.

What did Heisenberg say? What did Bohr hear?
How does science enter the imagination?

In early March I was in Washington to attend a symposium at the Smithsonian, "Copenhagen Interpretation: Science and History on Stage." Here is the situation. In September 1941, the German physicist Werner Heisenberg went to Copenhagen to talk to his revered master and colleague Niels Bohr. Denmark had been invaded by the Germans; Heisenberg was director of the German atomic program. Bohr and his wife, Margarethe, were safe though under constant watch by the Gestapo (as was Heisenberg), while his Institute continued in operation. The two colleagues had done great work together in the late twenties, years that have been called the golden age of physics: the discovery of quantum mechanics, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Bohr's principle of complementarity; and there was an intimacy between them. It was said that at one time they could finish each other's sentences. Both had won the Nobel.

At some point during Heisenberg's week in Copenhagen, the two men met in private. Apparently the meeting was very brief; Bohr cut it short and came away furious. By 1943, he and his son Aage (also a physicist, and would himself win the Nobel) had escaped; gone to London, where Bohr tried to persuade Churchill (who would have none of it) to encourage the Allied effort to build an atomic bomb; and come then to America, where in Los Alamos Bohr convinced his colleagues that the Germans were building an atomic bomb, and that the Americans *must* build one first. As they did: and used it.

This is a fascinating and deeply disturbing history. The Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory is a momentous event in our understanding of the structure of the universe on the smallest scales. The discovery of atomic fission intersected with a terrible war and therein lay the crux of a great moral dilemma. The meeting between Bohr and Heisenberg remains a subject of speculation because they are dead and neither ever was able to describe clearly what caused the bitter rift between them. Exactly what Heisenberg told Bohr, and what Bohr heard, are still not agreed upon by scholars. Here enters the writer and his imagination – along with the journalist, the historian, the physicist, the stage director, and the reader.

The English novelist Michael Frayn wrote a play, "Copenhagen," re-imagining that meeting of Bohr and Heisenberg in September 1941. The play opened in London several years ago to respectful but not overwhelming reviews. When it was brought to New York, however, "Copenhagen" captured high interest at once: enthusiastic reviews, dissenting essays, public symposia; in 2000 it won a Tony Award. I saw it performed in New York; I was, and remain, enthralled by the play and its repercussions, the incident that inspired it, and *its* repercussions. There is, too, fact of the atomic bomb.

By August 6, 1945, the Germans had capitulated. Their atomic scientists, including Heisenberg, had been brought to England and were interned at Farm Hall, a safe house used by British intelligence, where for six months their conversations were secretly recorded by their British Army hosts. In the transcripts of those conversations,[1] we read that Heisenberg and his

[1] The Farm Hall transcripts were declassified by the British government in 1992. The originals in German have been lost; what remains are the translations made at that time.

colleagues had just listened to the B.B.C. report of the bombing of Hiroshima and were utterly amazed and disbelieving. And they are aghast. How could the Americans have enriched enough of the rare isotope uranium-235 to make a fission bomb? How could they have used so "inhuman" a weapon? Heisenberg had roughly calculated the necessary "critical mass" early on and determined that the Germans could never manufacture enough U^{235} to make a fission bomb – ten tons were needed, he had told his colleagues. He refused to believe what he heard and suggested the bomb was a huge chemical – not fission – reaction. Within a week he saw the basis of his mistake, worked backward from the correct answer, and gave his colleagues a "brilliant" lecture on the proper calculation.

So: the Germans had not had an atomic-bomb program.

Then what exactly had Bohr believed? What had Heisenberg told him in Copenhagen?

No one knows what they said to each other. Thus, the speculation of the play: the conversation imagined from each of their points of view: the uncertainty principle as Frayn's dramatic conceit.

As I understand the history, the central question is, Had Heisenberg calculated the critical mass accurately? If he had not, he was a "second-rater," as one of the German physicists said bitterly on August 7. But if he *had* calculated it accurately, as he should have done, when had he done it? And why had he not told his colleagues the correct number?

Had Bohr asked him about the calculation? What had he replied?

The question of the critical mass has both technical and moral importance. Technically, it seems that Heisenberg's reported calculation determined that ten tons of uranium were needed to produce the required critical mass of fissionable material.[2] (Fewer than ten kilograms were needed for making a bomb, as was reported in Washington in March 1941.) In effect, Heisenberg and the German physicists followed the wrong path of discovery. The moral question is, Why? Were they simply doing the wrong physics; or, were they – especially Heisenberg – deliberately retarding the fission program in order not to give Hitler an atomic bomb?

It has been asserted – not too strong a word – that Heisenberg intentionally redirected the German program toward building a nuclear reactor and away from a bomb, not only for technical reasons, or because a bomb-building program would take longer than the war would last, but (in the physicist Jonothan Logan's skeptical words) "as a conscious, principled choice." Logan disagrees vehemently that this was so. The writer Thomas Powers, whose book HEISENBERG'S WAR, The Secret History of the German Bomb, has caused him to be a vocal participant in the continuing discussion, believes that Heisenberg *did* retard the effort out of conscious principle. He argues that

> one thing is clear: Heisenberg's remark to Hahn at Farm Hall after the war that the German scientists 'did not want [Hitler] to win' would be strongly supported by evidence that he and his colleagues had actively tried to impede the bomb program in its early stages. Heisenberg's visit to Bohr in September 1941 is thus no minor detail—what he said then might confirm, or undermine, his later claim that the Germans lacked single-minded zeal for success. The intense feelings aroused by this matter go beyond the point in question—why the Germans did what they did—to focus on a sensitive moral question: If German scientists were at the least reluctant and perhaps even refused to build a bomb for Hitler, how would Allied scientists justify the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima? (*New York Review of Books*, March 28)

[2] The calculation was "informal" according to the physicist and geneticist Jonothan Logan. See his article "The Critical Mass," *The American Scientist*, May-June 1996, based on the Farm Hall transcripts.

The symposium I attended at the Smithsonian – latest of many convoked by the intense discussion arising from Frayn's play – was organized by Brian Schwartz, a physicist at the Graduate Center, NYU, and co-hosted by an old colleague of mine from graduate school, Arthur Molella, founding director of the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation.[3] The meeting coincided with the run of "Copenhagen" at the Kennedy Center and (explained the well-produced program booklet, which contained two essays by Frayn), was meant to explore "the science and history surrounding the play and its protagonists, as well as offering a glimpse of the issues involved in presenting science and history as drama."[4]

Copenhagen enters the conversation

It happened I had with me two sets of somewhat blurred (because several times reproduced) copies of documents referred to as the Farm Hall transcripts, translations made of the recorded conversations of the ten German physicists who had worked on the Nazis' "uranium project." The man who had interned them was Samuel Goudsmit, a Dutch physicist who had escaped the Nazis and become head of the Allied "Alsos" mission to uncover the progress of the German atomic fission program. That program was by then directed by Walther Gerlach, a physicist and member of the Nazi party. From documents recovered by the Allies from Gerlach's institute, Goudsmit discerned that the German physicists, because of "some important technical errors, according to Logan, "had abandoned their initial goal of atomic bombs."

Why I had these transcripts is another story. At a party in mid-February, the novelist John Casey asked if I knew anything about a "random walk." I said I thought I didn't. Casey explained that, as best he understood, it had to do with calculating the critical mass at which uranium-235 would be fissionable.[5] I mentioned "Copenhagen." Instantly, he produced a packet of papers: two thick, legal-sized sheaves marked "Top Secret," a letter (to and from persons he didn't know) talking about Heisenberg and his stated unwillingness to become involved in building an atomic bomb, and an article by Jonothan Logan in *The American Scientist*, about Fermi, Heisenberg, and the calculation of the critical mass of fissionable material required for an atomic reaction.

I asked John Casey where he had gotten these papers. Some years ago, he said, he had been moving furniture in Cambridge, Mass., with another man, and they had gotten to talking. It turned out the other man was a physicist and historian of science and was working on a book. He wanted to find out if non-scientists could understand its subject. He said to Casey, "You'd be just the guy, because you read a lot but don't know much about science." He gave the Casey the Farm Hall transcripts, the letter, and the article about the critical mass, of which

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[3] For the program of the Smithsonian symposium, see <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/nml/artsci/program.htm>; for further information, write Brian Schwartz <bschwartz@gc.cuny.edu>.

[4] Such symposia have been and will be organized around the country as various touring productions of the play appear. In the March 28 issue of the *New York Review of Books* were essays by Michael Frayn, author of the play, and Thomas Powers (author of HEISENBERG'S WAR; THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE GERMAN BOMB), explaining – yet again – how each man reads a set of newly-released papers from Bohr's archive, compared to what he infers from earlier documentation. The next issue brought sharp rebuttals from Gerald Holton, a distinguished historian of science, and Jonothan Logan, the physicist. In February, when the Bohr papers were released by the Bohr Archive <http://www.nba.nbi.dk>, several stories appeared in the *New York Times*, followed by letters to the editor on the subject.

[5] To estimate the critical mass, or "threshold amount" of fissionable material required for an atomic reaction, a "random walk" is used as a "simple model of neutron diffusion and multiplication in a chain reaction…. A random walk is an elementary representation of a diffusion process, adequate for the purpose at hand." It seems that Heisenberg used this method to estimate the amount of enriched uranium necessary for fission. Logan, *op.cit.*

he happened to be the author, and asked, "Are there any bits of science you don't get?" Casey read the transcripts. It was clear to him that Heisenberg had *not* calculated the critical mass, but was brilliant enough to be able to figure it out, without experimentation, within a week. But Logan's article was more difficult to follow. "I had a vague idea of what a random walk was," he told me, "and when I explained it to him, he said, 'Oh, dear.'"

"Why don't you take this pile and see what you make of it," John Casey proposed and handed the papers to me.

It had been a very long time since I had read any history of twentieth century science, and the reading was slow-going, technically – physics has changed completely since I was a student – but, as Casey had promised, wholly absorbing dramatically.

A week later, in Washington, I had dinner with two old friends, both of whom were in the history of science. One was Arthur Molella, of the Smithsonian. "Gents," I said, "you won't believe what I've brought: two of the Farm Hall transcripts." Arthur Molella replied, "Did you know we're sponsoring a symposium on 'Copenhagen'?"

It also happens that one of my brothers is an astrophysicist. The evening of the symposium he arrived at my house, coming to give a talk at the University of Virginia. I handed over the transcripts, the article, and the letter, which contained an excerpt of an interview Heisenberg gave in 1967,[6] opening a conversation that went on for days. My brother found

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[6] ATOMIC BOMB SCIENTISTS' MEMOIRS, 1939-1945, ed. Joseph J. Ermenc. (Westport, Conn.: Meckler Corp., 1989), pp. 31-34, as quoted in the letter:

> Preface: The interviews collected in this volume represent part of an effort to enhance the quality of courses in the history and philosophy of technological innovation for liberal arts students at Dartmouth College.
>
> These courses, begun in 1962, were directed toward abating the deplorable state of technological illiteracy that is part and parcel of most liberal arts education.
>
> With Werner Heisenberg: at his summer home in Urfeld-am-Walchensee, in southern Bavaria, Aug. 29, 1967.
>
> ERMENC: After '42 some of you in Germany began to think of the development of the uranium reactor as being very important in postwar development as a source of energy. Was this a driving force at that time or was it still in the curiosity stage?
>
> HEISENBERG: We knew such a chain reaction could be made. Therefore we could plan to use this reaction for power plants for submarines and other applications.
>
> We felt that this was now a very important development in technics, engineering, economics and so on. Whatever the outcome of the War, we felt that we should be in this development after the War. We felt this was really a nice task which we could do during the War.
>
> We didn't know what you people would do but we felt it was quite possible that during the War the Americans also would say that atomic bombs are not interesting because they can't be ready before the end of the War, and that working on energy production would be a very interesting development for peaceful use. The explosive side of the problem could be done after the War when one had more time.
>
> ERMENCH: I suppose that at this time talking about post-war development and nuclear power wasn't a very effective argument for supporting wartime science?
>
> HEISENBERG: Yes, but why not?
>
> Apparently, in your country, one didn't think of a quick end of the War.
>
> I must say I always felt that the War would end earlier than it actually did. I also was convinced that Germany would lose the War and so the problem of the War didn't interest me too much any more. I was interested in what came afterwards.
>
> But in your country, apparently one had the impression that one still could use the bombs during the War. This did not work out for the War between your country and Germany, but it did work out with Japan. This is a point which I also made in the interview with *Der Spiegel*.

Jonothan Logan's article convincing. That he hadn't done the calculation correctly was bad – although (my brother hazarded) if you don't *want* to do something, for whatever reason known or unknown to yourself, you will find a way not to do it. The Germans had expelled or frightened off nearly all their best scientists because they were Jews or had Jewish "blood," and they had gone to America, then to Los Alamos to join the Manhattan Project. The American government had backed the scientists to the hilt, as it were; while the German government had not trusted their atomic scientists and never given them adequate resources. So my brother suggested.

He had not yet seen the play but thought the transcripts alone would make an excellent script. "Why don't you publish them?" he suggested

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The decision of our government not to make bombs was a very sensible decision. It would have been sensible even for your government because you would have won the War against Germany earlier if you had made no atomic bombs. There's no doubt about that because then you would have put this whole effort into airplanes and tanks and whatever else, and the War would have been ended earlier. This may not be true for Japan since the war against Japan was a different matter. But speaking only for the War against Germany I think this is a fact.

I can also understand that during war one argues in different ways. One wants to be as strong as possible at the end of the war. One can very well argue for trying such a thing. But we felt there was a fifty-fifty chance that during the War these things could not be developed any way and we would leave it for a later time.

ERMENC: I think Irving mentioned that at the meeting, when you and Weizsacker were asked how much you would need to continue your work, you mentioned a sum which the officials thought was ridiculously low. In consequence they said that this work could not be important because it doesn't cost much. Is that correct?

HEISENBERG: This is perfectly correct. Yes. It was mainly Speer who reacted this way.

This was of course a very clear intention of ours. We had to avoid being committed to make a big effort making atomic bombs. What we wanted was to get just enough money to go on with our reactor project, but not more than that. We were very much afraid that otherwise someone would say, "Now let's go for the atomic bomb."

Also I read in *Der Spiegel*—you really should read these editions of *Der Spiegel*—an interview they had with Speer.

You know he has been released from Spandau. He is now an old man.

He was asked by the *Der Spiegel* people:

"You took part in this meeting when the physicists told you about the probabilities of atomic bombs. What was your reaction?"

He said,

"We listened when they told us that in principle atomic bombs could be made, but they also emphasized that it would take a number of years; certainly not before five years or so. So I felt["]—I think he expressed it in a funny way—["]there was not much music in the thing. Therefore, I didn't report the whole thing to the Fuehrer until two weeks later or so and then in a very casual way because I did not want the Fuehrer to get so interested that he would order great efforts immediately to make the atomic bomb."

Speer felt it was better that the whole thing should be dropped, and the Fuehrer also reacted that way.

This side of the problem clearly worked out as we had hoped it would. We definitely did not want to get into this bomb business.

I wouldn't like to idealize this; we did this also for our personal safety. We thought that the probability that this would lead to atomic bombs during the War was nearly zero. If we had done otherwise, and if many thousand people had been put to work on it and then if nothing had been developed, this could have had extremely disagreeable consequences for us.

In fact, the transcripts have been available for some time,[7] although reading the pages of files marked TOP SECRET adds to one's sense of immediacy and the human scale of the event. These were men, after all, using their minds to produce a physical action that would cause, in Bohr's words, "a far deeper interference with the course of natural events than anything before." What follows is a short excerpt from August 6-7, 1945, in the hours after the German physicists have listened to the radio report of the bomb. I have included little of their technical discussions, which nonetheless are absorbing, and convincing, reading for those such as my brother.

Time, Place, Actors

Time: August 6-7, 1945. Germany had capitulated. America has just dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. *Place:* Farm Hall, a country house in England. *Characters:* a group "Aryan" German physicists, all of whom worked on the "uranium" project for the German, i.e., Nazi, government, and a commentator, the "I," provisionally identified as a member of British intelligence.

Werner HEISENBERG former pupil and colleague of Niels Bohr; Nobel Laureate in physics
Carl Friedrich von WEIZSÄCKER pupil (with Wirtz), then colleague, of Heisenberg (he accompanied Heisenberg to Copenhagen in 1941 to visit Bohr); son of the Nazi foreign minister
Walther GERLACH head of the Uranium project when Germany capitulated to the Allies
Otto HAHN who (with Fritz Strassmann) discovered fission (1939); a chemist by training, he received the Nobel Prize for his role in the discovery of nuclear fission
Karl WIRTZ pupil, then colleague, of Heisenberg
Max von LAUE won the Nobel Prize in physics for his discovery of the diffraction of x-rays by crystals
Paul HARTECK physical chemist
Erich BAGGE physicist
Kurt DIEBNER physicist
Horst KORSHING physicist

TOP SECRET

Capt. Davis for Gen. Groves.
Ref. F. H. 4.

To: Mr. M. PERRIN and Lt. Cdr. WELSH.
From: Major T.H. RITTNER.

OPERATON "EPSILON"
(6-7th August, 1945)

I. Preamble.

[7] They were declassified in 1992, and are available in two separate editions: HITLER'S URANIUM CLUB: THE SECRET RECORDINGS AT FARM HALL, intr. David Cassidy, notes and essay Jeremy Bernstein, Copernicus Books, 2001; and OPERATION EPSILON: THE FARM HALL TRANSCRIPTS, intr. Thomas Frank, University of California Press, 1993. The American copy of the transcripts, originally sent to Gen. Leslie R. Groves, head of the Manhattan Project, are now located in National Archives II, College Park, Maryland, in Record Group 77, Manhattan Engineer District.

1. This report covers the first reactions of the guests to the news that an atomic bomb had been perfected and used by the Allies.
2. The guests were completely staggered by the news. At first they refused to believe it and felt that it was bluff on our part, to induce the Japanese to surrender. After hearing the official announcement they realised that it was a fact. Their first reaction, which I believe was genuine, was an expression of horror that we should have used this invention for destruction.
…….

II.6th August, 1945.

1. Shortly before dinner on the 6th August I informed Professor HAHN that an announcement had been made by the B.B.C. that an atomic bomb had been dropped. Hahn was completely shattered by the news and said that he felt personally responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, as it was his original discovery which had made the bomb possible. He told me that he had originally contemplated suicide when he realised the terrible potentialities of his discovery and he felt that now these had been realised and he was to blame. With the help of considerable alcoholic stimulant he was calmed down and we went down to dinner where he announced the news to the assembled guests.

2. As was to be expected, the announcement was greeted with incredulity. The following is a transcription of the conversation during dinner.

HAHN: They can only have done that if they have uranium isotope separation.
WIRTZ: They have it too.
HAHN: I remember SEGRE's, DUNNING's and my assistant GROSSE's work; they had separated a fraction of a milligramme before the [obscured by UK declassification stamp]….
LAUE: 235?
HAHN: Yes, 235.
HARTECK: That's not absolutely necessary. If they let a uranium engine run, they separate '93.'
HAHN: For that they must have an engine which can make sufficient quantities of '93' to be weighed.
GERLACH: If they want to get that, they must use a whole ton.
HAHN: An extremely complicated business, for '93' they must have an engine which will run for a long time. If the Americans have a uranium bomb then you're all second-raters. Poor old HEISENBERG.
LAUE: The innocent!
HEISENBERG: Did they use the word uranium in connection with this atomic bomb?
ALL: No.
HEISENBERG: Then it's got nothing to do with atoms, but the equivalent of 20,000 tons of high explosive is terrific.
WEIZSACKER: It corresponds exactly to the factor 10^4.
GERLACH: Would it be possible that they have got an engine running fairly well, that they have had it long enough to separate '93'.
HAHN: I don't believe it.
HEISENBERG: All I can suggest is that some dilettante in AMERICA who knows very little about it has bluffed them in saying "If you drop this it has the equivalent of 20,000 tons of high explosive" and in reality it doesn't work at all.
HAHN: At any rate Heisenberg you're just second-raters and you may just as well pack up.

HEISENBERG: I quite agree.
HAHN: They are fifty years further advanced than we.
HEISENBERG: I don't believe a word of the whole thing. They must have spent the whole of their £500,000,000 in separating isotopes; and then it's possible.
WEIZSACKER: If it's easy and the Allies know it's easy, then they know that we will soon find out how to do it if we go on working.
HAHN: I didn't think it would be possible for another twenty years.
WEIZSACKER: I don't think it has anything to do with uranium.
HAHN: It must have been a comparatively small atomic bomb – a hand one.
HEISENBERG: I am willing to believe that it is a high pressure bomb and I don't believe that it has anything to do with uranium but that it is a chemical thing where they have enormously increased the speed of the reaction and enormously increased the whole explosion.

……

HARTECK: Who is to blame.
(?) VOICE: Hahn is to blame.
WEIZSACKER: I think it's dreadful of the Americans to have done it. I think it is madness on their part.
HEISENBERG: One can't say that. One could equally well say "That's the quickest way of ending the war["].
HAHN: That's what consoles me.
HEISENBERG: I still don't believe a word about the bomb but I may be wrong. I consider it perfectly possible that they have about ten tons of enriched uranium, but not that they can have ten tons of pure U. 235.
HAHN: I thought that one needed only very little 235.
HEISENBERG: If they only enrich it slightly, they can build an engine with will go but with that they can't make an explosive which will —
HAHN: But if they have, let us say, 30 kilogrammes of pure 235, couldn't they make a bomb with it?
HEISENBERG: But it still wouldn't go off, as the mean free path is still too big.[8]
HAHN: But tell me why you used to tell me that one needed 50 kilogrammes of 235 in order to do anything. Now you say one needs two tons.
HEISENBERG: I wouldn't like to commit myself for the moment, but it is certainly a fact that the mean free paths are pretty big.

……

HAHN: I was consoled when, I believe it was WEIZSACKER said that there was now this uranium – 23 – minutes [sic]– I found that in my institute too, this absorbing body which made the thing impossible consoled me because when they said at one time one could make bombs, I was shattered.
WEIZSACKER: I would say that, at the rate we were going, we would not have succeeded during this war.
HAHN: Yes.

[8] The mean free path is the average distance between collisions of neutrons in subatomic space; it is measured in centimeters, and an accurate calculation reveals the "critical mass," or "threshold amount" of fissionable material required for an atomic reaction, according to Logan, *op. cit.* –ed.

WEIZSACKER: It is very cold comfort to think that one is personally in a position to do what other people would be able to do one day.
HAHN: Once I wanted to suggest that all uranium should be sunk to the bottom of the ocean. I always thought that one could only make a bomb of such a size that a whole province would be blown up.
HEISENBERG: If it has been done with uranium 235 then we should be able to work it out properly. It just depends upon whether it is done with 50, 500, or 5,000 kilogrammes and we don't know the order of magnitude. We can assume that they have some method of separating isotopes of which we have no idea.

……

3. All the guests assembled to hear the official announcement at 9 o'clock. They were completely stunned when they realised that the news was genuine. They were left alone on the assumption that they would discuss the position and the following remarks were made.: -

HARTECK: They have managed it either with mass-spectrographs on a large scale or else they have been successful with a photo-chemical process.
WIRTZ: Well, I would say photo-chemistry or diffusion. Ordinary diffusion. They irradiate it with a particular wave-length. – (all talking together).
HARTECK: Or using mass-spectrographs in enormous quantities. It is perhaps possible for a mass-spectrograph to make one milligramme in one day – say of '235'. They could make quite a cheap mass-spectrograph which, in very large quantities, might cost a hundred dollars. You could do it with a hundred thousand mass-spectrographs.
HEISENBERG: Yes, of course, if you do it like that; and they seem to have worked on that scale. 180,000 people were working on it.
HARTECK: Which is a hundred times more than we had.
BAGGE: GOUDSMIT led us up the garden path.
HEISENBERG: Yes, he did that very cleverly.
HAHN: CHADWICK and COCKCROFT.
HARTECK: And SIMON too. He is the low temperature man.
KORSHING: That shows at any rate that the Americans are capable of real cooperation on a tremendous scale. That would have been impossible in Germany. Each one said that the other was unimportant.
GERLACH: You really can't say that as far as the uranium group is concerned. You can't imagine any greater cooperation and trust than there was in that group. You can't say that any one of them said that the other was unimportant.
KORSHING: Not officially of course.
GERLACH: (Shouting). Not unofficially either. Don't contradict me. There are far too many other people here who know.
HAHN: Of course we were unable to work on that scale.
HEISENBERG: One can say that the first time large funds were made available in Germany was in the spring of 1942 after that meeting with RUST when we convinced him that we had absolutely definite proof that it could be done.
BAGGE: It wasn't much earlier here either.
HARTECK: We really knew earlier that it could be done if we could get enough material. Take the heavy water. There were three methods, the most expensive of which cost 2 marks per gramme and the cheapest perhaps 50 pfennigs. And then they kept on arguing as to what

to do because no one was prepared to spend 10 millions if it could be done for three millions.
HEISENBERG: On the other hand, the whole heavy water business which I did everything I could to further cannot produce an explosive.
HARTECK: Not until the engine is running.
HAHN: They seem to have made an explosive before making the engine and now they say: "in future we will build engines".
HARTECK: If it is a fact that an explosive can be produced either by means of the mass spectrograph we would never have done it as we could never have employed 56,000 workmen. For instance, when we considered the CLUSIUS-LINDE business combined with our exchange cycle we would have needed to employ 50 workmen continuously in order to produce two tons a year. If we wanted to make ten tons we would have had to employ 250 men. We couldn't do that.
WEIZSACKER: How many people were working on V 1 and V 2?
DIEBNER: Thousands worked on that.
HEISENBERG: We wouldn't have had the moral courage to recommend to the Government in the spring of 1942 that they should employ 120,000 men just for building the thing up.
WEIZSACKER: I believe the reason we didn't do it was because all the physicists didn't want to do it, on principle. If we had all wanted Germany to win the war we would have succeeded.
HAHN: I don't believe that but I am thankful we didn't succeed.
HARTECK: Considering the figures involved I think it must have been mass-spectrographs. If they had had some other good method they wouldn't have needed to spend so much. One wouldn't have needed so many men.
WIRTZ: Assuming it was the CLUSIUS method they would never have been able to do anything with gas at high temperatures.
HARTECK: When one thinks how long it took for us to get the nickel separating tube [—] I believe it took nine months.
KORSHING: It was never done with spectrographs.
HEISENBERG: I must say I think your theory is right and that it is spectrographs.
WIRTZ: I am prepared to bet that it isn't.
HEISENBERG: What would one want 60,000 men for?
KORSHING: You try and vaporise one ton of uranium.
HARTECK: You only need ten men for that. I was amazed at what I saw at I. G. [Farben?-ed.]
HEISENBERG: It is possible that the war will be over tomorrow.
HARTECK: The following day we will go home.
KORSHING: We will never go home again.
HARTECK: If we had worked on an even larger scale we would have been killed by the 'Secret Service'. Let's be glad that we are still alive. Let us celebrate this evening in that spirit.
DIEBNER: Professor GERLACH would be an Obergruppenfuhrer and would be sitting in Luxembourg as a war criminal.
KORSHING: If one hasn't got the courage, it is better to give up straightaway.
GERLACH: Don't always make such aggressive remarks.
KORSHING: The Americans could do it better than we could, that's clear.
(GERLACH leaves the room.)

HEISENBERG: The point is that the whole structure of the relationship between the scientist and the state in Germany was such that although we were not 100% anxious to do it, on the other hand we were so little trusted by the state that even if we had wanted to do it it would not have been easy to get it through.
DIEBNER: Because the official people were only interested in immediate results. They didn't want to work on a long-term policy as America did.
WEIZSACKER: Even if we had got everything that we wanted, it is by no means certain whether we would have got as far as the Americans and the English have now. It is not a question that we were very nearly as far as they were but it is a fact that we were all convinced that the thing could not be completed during this war.
HEISENBERG: Well, that's not quite right. I would say that I was absolutely convinced of the possibility of our making an uranium engine but I never thought that we would make a bomb and at the bottom of my heart I was really glad that it was to be an engine and not a bomb. I must admit that.
WEIZSACKER: If you had wanted to make a bomb we would probably have concentrated more on the Spartan of isotopes and less on heavy water.
(HAHN leaves the room.)
WEIZSACKER: If we had started this business soon enough we could have got somewhere. If they were able to complete it in the summer of 1945, we might have had the luck to complete it in the winter 1944/45.
WIRTZ: The result would have been that we would have obliterated LONDON but would still not have conquered the world, and then they would have dropped them on us.
WEIZSACKER: I don't think we ought to make excuses now because we did not succeed. If we had put the same energy into it as the Americans and wanted it as they did, it is quite certain that we would not have succeeded as they would have smashed up the factories.
DIEBNER: Of course they were watching us all the time.
WEIZSACKER: One can say it might have been a much greater tragedy for the world if Germany had done the uranium bomb. Just imagine, if we had destroyed LONDON with uranium bombs it would not have ended the war, and when the war did end, it is still doubtful whether it would have been a good thing.
WIRTZ: We hadn't got enough uranium.
WEIZSACKER: We would have had to equip long distance aircraft with uranium engines to carry out airborne landings in the CONGO or NORTH WEST CANADA. We would have had to have held these areas by military force and produce the stuff from mines. That would have been impossible.
HARTECK: The uranium content in the stone at the radium mines near GASTEIN was said to be so great that the question of price does not come into it.
BAGGE: There must be enormous quantities of uranium in UPPER SILESIA. Mining experts have told me that.
DIEBNER: Those are quite small quantities.
HARTECK: If they have done it with mass-spectrographs, we cannot be blamed. We couldn't do that. But if they have done it through a trick, that would annoy me.
HEISENBERG: I think we ought to avoid squabbling amongst ourselves concerning a lost cause. In addition, we must not make things too difficult for HAHN.
HARTECK: We have probably considered a lot of things which the others cannot do and could use.
WEIZSACKER: It is a frightful position for Hahn. He really did do it.
HEISENBERG: Yes. (Pause) About a year ago, I heard from SEGNER (?) [sic] from the Foreign Office that the Americans had threatened to drop a uranium bomb on Dresden if

we didn't surrender soon. At that time I was asked whether I thought it possible, and, with complete conviction, I replied: 'No'.
WIRTZ: I think it characteristic that the Germans made the discovery and didn't use it, whereas the Americans have used it. I must say I didn't think the Americans would dare to use it.

4. HAHN and LAUE discussed the situation together. HAHN described the news as a tremendous achievement without parallel in history and LAUE expressed the hope of speedy release from detention in the light of these new events.

5. When GERLACH left the room he went straight to his bedroom where he was heard to be sobbing. VON LAUE and HARTECK went up to see him and tried to comfort him. He appeared to consider himself in the position of a defeated General, the only alternative open to whom is to shoot himself. Fortunately he had no weapon and he was eventually sufficiently calmed by his colleagues. In the course of conversation with VON LAUE and HARTECK, he made the following remarks: -

GERLACH: When I took this thing over, I talked it over with HEISENBERG and HAHN, and I said to my wife: "The war is lost and the result will be that as soon as the enemy enter the country I shall be arrested and taken away". I only did it because I said to myself, this is a German affair and we must see that German physics are [obscured by UK "Declassified" stamp] …. moment thought of a bomb but I said to myself: "If HAHN has made this discovery, let us at least be the first to make use of it". When we get back to Germany we will have a dreadful time. We will be looked upon as the ones who have sabotaged everything. We won't remain alive long there. You can be certain that there are many people in Germany who say that it is our fault. Please leave me alone.

6. A little later, HAHN went up to comfort GERLACH when the following conversation ensued: -

HAHN: Are you upset because we did not make the uranium bomb? I thank God on my bended knees that we did not make an uranium bomb. Or are you depressed because the Americans could do it better than we could?
GERLACH: Yes.
HAHN: Surely you are not in favour of such an inhuman weapon as this uranium bomb.
GERLACH: No. We never worked on the bomb. I didn't believe that it would go so quickly. But I did think that we should do everything to make the sources of energy and exploit the possibilities for the future. When the first result, that the concentration was very increased with the cube method, appeared, I spoke to SPEER's right hand man, as SPEER was not available at the time, and Oberst GEIST first, and later SAUCKEL at WEIMAR asked me: "What do you want to do with these things?", I replied: "In my opinion the politician who is in possession of such an engine can achieve anything he wants". About ten days or a fortnight before the final capitulation, GEIST replied: "Unfortunately we have not got such a politician".
HAHN: I am thankful that we were not the first to drop the uranium bomb.
GERLACH: You cannot prevent its development. I was afraid to think of the bomb, but I did think of it as a thing of the future, and that the man who could threaten the use of the bomb would be able to achieve anything. That is exactly what I told GEIST, SAUCKEL and MURR. HEISENBERG was there at STUTTGART at the time.

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7. HAHN and HEISENBERG discussed the matter alone together. HAHN explained to HEISENBERG that he was himself very upset about the whole thing. He said he could not really understand why GERLACH had taken it so badly. HEISENBERG said he could understand it because GERLACH was the only one of them who had really wanted at German victory, because although he realised the crimes of the Nazis and disapproved of them, he could not get away from the fact that he was working for GERMANY. HAHN replied that he too loved his country and that, strange as it might appear, it was for this reason that he had hoped for her defeat. HEISENBERG went on to say that he thought the possession of the uranium bomb would strengthen the position of the Americans vis-à-vis the Russians. They continued to discuss the same theme as before that they had never wanted to work on a bomb and had been pleased when it was decided to concentrate everything on the engine. HEISENBERG stated that the people in Germany might say that they should have forced the authorities to put the necessary means at their disposal and to release 100,000 men in order to make the bomb and he feels himself that had they been in the same moral position as the Americans and had said to themselves that nothing mattered except that HITLER should win the war, they might have succeeded, whereas in fact they did not want him to win. HAHN admitted however that he had never thought that a German defeat would produce such terrible tragedy for his country. They then went on to discuss the feelings of the British and American scientists who had perfected the bomb and HEISENBERG said he felt it was a different matter in their case as they considered HITLER a criminal. They both hoped that the new discovery would in the long run be a benefit to mankind. HEISENBERG went on to speculate on the uses to which AMERICA would put the new discovery and wondered whether they would use it to obtain control of RUSSIA or wait until STALIN had copied it. They went on to wonder how many bombs existed.

These few pages surely should do little more than encourage an interested reader to seek out the complete transcripts. They are raw material. They are essential reading; they are almost thrilling, in a faintly horrifying way. Bit by bit, in the symposia, the scholarly and popular books, the stream of papers, the long discussions public and private, the historical picture is gradually being drawn, even in such detail as to cause the picture to blur.

Because of the controversy Frayn's play has excited, a series of drafts of a letter written in 1957 by Niels Bohr to Werner Heisenberg have now been published.[9] It seems that Bohr took stern issue with Heisenberg's stated memory of their meeting in September 1941. Bohr never sent the letter, if indeed he wrote a final draft. Upon his death, in 1962, the drafts were sealed in his archive, not to be made public until fifty years later. Now, the Bohr Archive, under the direction of Finn Asrud and with the co-operation of the Bohr family, has released the seven drafts for public reading. When this development was announced – with some fanfare – in the *New York Times*,[10] it brought a series of critical exchanges to the Letters page, including one

[9] The Bohr Archive has published the drafts at <http://www.nba.nbi.dk> in facsimile, in Danish, and in English translation.

[10] "New Twist on Physicist's Role in Nazi Bomb," New York Times, Feb. 7, 2002. The article by James Glanz puts the conflict between the two men, and their later memories of it, in emphatic terms, writing: "The leader of Hitler's atomic bomb program, Werner Heisenberg, portrayed himself after World War II as a kind of scientific resistance hero who sabotaged Hitler's efforts to build a nuclear weapon." He goes on to quote Bohr as having "said that under his beloved protégé [Heisenberg], 'everything was being done in Germany to develop atomic

from Heisenberg's son, Jochen Heisenberg, a physicist living in this country, who wrote: "I am disturbed by the article's suggestive tone. One example: labeling Heisenberg 'the leader of Hitler's atomic bomb program' suggests his sympathy for the Nazis and that there was indeed such a bomb program. Neither one of those implications is true, not before the Niels Bohr letters nor after."[11]

Much of the controversy depends on the words one uses to describe what happened. Scientists look at the documents, the transcripts, and follow the calculations. As I read it, they seem to agree that Heisenberg miscalculated the critical mass and that his unwillingness to go on with a bomb-building program came from his belief that the German scientists could not succeed before the war ended, for lack of resources. As for his supposed moral reservations, opinion varies, often hotly. Similarly among historians of science: they take other positions, often strongly opposed to each other; the historian Gerald Holton, for instance, hold that there was a German atomic-bomb program. Journalists like Powers tend to take a more essayist or psychological approach, making inferences and suppositions to build their theses. Powers continues to defend his position, that Heisenberg's was a principled refusal to build the bomb, although his case is weakened if not undermined by the fact that he wrote his book before the Farm Hall transcripts were declassified. Jochen Heisenberg, a physicist, continues to deny that there was a program to build a bomb.

This difference in use of the language and kind of knowledge employed begs the question all over again: How *does* science enter the artistic imagination?

For myself, I do note several things to think more about. One is Hahn's appalled question, "Surely you are not in favour of such an inhuman weapon as this uranium bomb?" He, a chemist, was the co-discoverer of fission, and expressed moral horror at the knowledge of possibility that came from his discovery. Yet he and his colleagues were German, although not Nazi, scientists. When they talked about hundreds, and thousands, and hundreds of thousands of workers in German factories and research areas, they meant slave workers. When they talked about "Aryans" they meant that their colleagues the Jewish scientists had fled or been expelled from Germany. Those scientists went to America, as did Bohr, where they worked on the Manhattan Project. They – and Bohr, and Fermi, who escaped from Fascist Italy, and their American and British colleagues – were the scientists whose invention, we should remember, caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and terrible long-term wounds. They had enough resources to complete the task they had thought was necessary, because they believed the Germans too were building the bomb. They worked against Hitler; for many of them, that must have been justification enough.

In the last panel of the Smithsonian symposium, devoted to "Copenhagen" as a dramatic construction, Elizabeth Ireland McCann, the producer who brought the play to New York, was asked why it had received such strong attention in there, rather than in London. She guessed, Because we don't often get to see a theater of ideas rather than mediocre entertainment, and are hungry for it. We are interested in history, particularly history we don't know. And we are still uneasy as citizens about the role our country has played in the development and use of the atomic bomb.

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weapons.'" Prof. Gerald Holton, a distinguished historian of science at Harvard, agrees: "That such an atomic weapons program was in progress has no longer been in doubt since the release of the Farm Hall papers, and because even C.F. v. Weizäcker agreed it was the purpose of the team's work…" ("Notes on Comparing the Documents of Heisenberg and Bohr Concerning their Encounter in 1941," distributed at the Smithsonian symposium, March 2, 2002.)

[11] The letter is dated Feb. 13, 2002; I do not know the date of publication.

Targets

History has its own fascination, as does the great pleasure of listening to learned people such as the physicist and Nobel laureate Jerome I. Friedman, of MIT, speak on physics "from the Bohr atom to Quarks," or the astonishingly young Danish physicist Lene Vesergaard Hau describe with great excitement and justified pride her truly marvelous experiments in *stopping light!* At the Smithsonian symposium the auditorium was packed; an over-flow room was set up with video coverage. That keen interest surely reveals how enduring is the historical interest and moral concern of many thoughtful people.

Sitting next to me was a woman from the Energy Department, co-sponsor of the symposium, herself a Russian specialist who works in "nuclear cities." I mentioned that I was about to publish Corinna Hasofferett's conversation with Svetlana Vasilievna Vasilenko, the Russian writer who grew up in Kasputin Iar, a closed military enclave that was the first (1946) Soviet missile test site. My new acquaintance knew well the history of the closed cities, whereas this history was new to me. Our conversation about nuclear cities has begun.

In how many minds, in how many places, in how many kinds of thoughtful endeavor, is this topic urgent again? What is the nature of this endless war, that it echoes down the corridors of memory; of so many minds across the archipelago of thinking people?

I now live part-time in Washington. I travel often to New York. Both cities are said to be targets of these unidentified terrorists by whom we are menaced. Should I feel this nameless dread with which we are meant to be afflicted? I am more afraid of fear, which is contagious and mind-numbing.

For these notes I set myself a task, to write about what has been on my mind in the weeks after the Pentagon's "Nuclear Posture Review" was leaked to the media by this administration. We have now learned that the American President is thinking seriously about the possibility of using what the military calls, astonishingly, tactical nuclear weapons against any of seven countries listed in the review. How are we expected to live with this idea? Why does this possibility seem to me more blameworthy than that of attack by the (very real) enemies who threaten us? Are nuclear weapons even more horrifying than biological weapons? I don't yet know the answer to my questions.

I am deeply uneasy, and I am not soothed by the Administration's explanation that such a review is part of normal procedure. Why, then, did they leak it, rather than either keeping it internal *or* releasing it formally? Certainly one accepts that civilian and military strategists must consider every weapon – yet, even biological weapons? – in its arsenal; particularly now, when Americans cannot deny that we in the Western nations have genuine enemies willing to kill civilians because they/we are "infidels." Even so, is it truly imaginable that an American force would use – again – a nuclear weapon? The President and his cohort believe intensely that they have the *right* to govern; to govern by their own rules; and they are remaking terribly important rules by which this nation is governed. Their expansion of executive and legal powers, without clear recourse; their unwillingness to share information, necessary to our democracy; and their determination to involve this nation in a long, formless "war" – it looks like real war but has not been formally declared by Congress – for which they are unwilling to make an accounting: this is a watershed in our history. The Republicans since Nixon have not been shy about circumventing the Constitution; their arrogation of power continues and, if not opposed, will, I fear, become unalterable. In that case, we Americans will no longer know ourselves as the people we were before the presidential election of 2000. Perhaps this is already true.

—KM

(First of two parts)

Reading:

ATOMIC BOMB SCIENTISTS' MEMOIRS, 1939-1945. Ed. Joseph J. Ermenc. (Westport, Conn.: Meckler Corp., 1989)
Bohr Archive <http://www.nba.nbi.dk>
"Copenhagen Interpretation: Science and History on Stage." Smithsonian symposium program <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/nml/artsci/program.htm>
Michael Frayn, "Copenhagen Revisited," *New York Review of Books*, March 28, 2002
James Glanz, "New Twist on Physicist's Role in Nazi Bomb," *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 2002, and Letters, *New York Times*, subsq.
GOYA: The Disasters of War. Selected Prints from the Collection of the Arthur Ross Foundation. (New York: The Spanish Institute, November 17, 1984-January 6, 1985)
HITLER'S URANIUM CLUB: THE SECRET RECORDINGS AT FARM HALL. Intr. David Cassidy; notes and essay Jeremy Bernstein. (New York: Copernicus Books, 2001)
Gerald Holton, "Notes on Comparing the Documents of Heisenberg and Bohr Concerning Their Encounter in 1941," distributed at the Smithsonian symposium, March 2, 2002. Letter, "'Copenhagen': An Exchange," *New York Review of Books*, April 11, 2002
Jonothan Logan, "The Critical Mass," *The American Scientist*, May-June 1996. Letter, "'Copenhagen': An Exchange," *New York Review of Books*, April 11, 2002
Christina Hofferett, "Svetlana Vasilievna Vasilenko," *Archipelago*, Vol 6, No. 1 Spring 2002
OPERATION EPSILON: THE FARM HALL TRANSCRIPTS. Intr. Thomas Frank. (University of California Press, 1993)
Thomas Powers, HEISENBERG'S WAR, The Secret History of the German Bomb. (New York: Knopf, 1993)
"What Bohr Remembered," *New York Review of Books*, March 28, 2002. Letter, "'Copenhagen': An Exchange," *New York Review of Books,* April 11, 2002
Lajos Zilahy, A CENTURY IN SCARLET. (Great Britain: Prion Books, 2000)

Previous Endnotes:

The Bear, *Archipelago*, Vol. 5, No. 4
Sasha Choi Goes Home, Vol. 5, No. 3
Sasha Choi in America, Vol. 5, No. 2
A Local Habitation and A Name, Vol. 5, No. 1
The Blank Page, Vol. 4, No. 4
The Poem of the Grand Inquisitor, Vol. 4, No. 3
On the Marionette Theater, Vol. 4, Nos. 1/2
The Double, Vol. 3, No. 4
Folly, Love, St. Augustine, 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
The Devil's Dictionary; Economics for Poets, Vol. 1, No. 3
Hecuba in New York; Déformation Professionnelle, Vol. 1, No. 2
Art, Capitalist Relations, and Publishing on the Web, Vol. 1, No. 1

Recommended Reading

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> Reading and writing change people and change societies. It is not always easy to see how nor to trace out the subtle map of cause and effect that links such changes to their context. But we should make an effort to do so. There is an important, unanswerable question here. Is it a matter of co-incidence that the poets who invented Eros, making of him a divinity and a literary obsession, were also the first authors in our tradition to leave us their poems in written form? To put the questions more pungently, what is erotic about alphabetization? This may seem not so much an unanswerable as a foolish question, at first, but let us look closer into the selves of the first writers. Selves are crucial to writers.
>
> Anne Carson
> *from* "Losing the Edge,"
> EROS THE BITTERSWEET

&&&&&&&

Mary-Sherman Willis <cswillis@bellatlantic.net>*, a poet and a city gardener, whose poems will appear in our next issue, writes:*

From 1996 until recently, Dennis Nurkse was the poet laureate of Brooklyn. Like Brooklyn's most famous poet, he is an American writing poetry about America. But unlike that notorious yawper, Nurkse's poems make you go quiet to listen. His spare lines, absent of rhetorical folderol and loaded with story, lift off over the terrain he likes to revisit: war and a post-war childhood, immigration and assimilation (his father, Estonian; mother, French), being a worker in the modern age, marriage and parenthood, divorce. His poems are textured with the blue-collar grit of his adopted borough. A while ago he said, "I'm a lyric poet. When it's consistent with the nature of a group of individual poems, I order then in narrative, sometimes novelistic sequences. My work is engaged with contemporary history. I admire Walter Benjamin's remark, to articulate the past historically…is to seize hold of a memory as it wells up at a moment of danger."

His six books of poems are published under "**D. Nurkse**." The most recent is THE RULES OF PARADISE. I'm particularly fond of the fourth, VOICES OVER WATER. It tells of an Estonian couple who emigrate to Canada in the early part of the 20th century. It is heartbreakingly lyrical, its imagery out of fairy tales. Here, in the voice of the wife, is "The Oak Bed":

> The wedding sheet frayed under us
> so I cut it in four and sewed it back
> with the unworn edges at the center,
> and when that center became transparent
> I cut on the diagonal and sewed it back
> matching worn cloth with worn cloth
> until I had a mackerel sky of diamond rags,
> degrees of use, and still each night
> we'd sit at the edge of the mattress
> trembling with exhaustion and at last turn
> as if unwed, to that silence between us.

In September, Knopf will publish his seventh collection, THE FALL. I look forward to it.

D. Nurkse, **SHADOW WARS** (Hanging Loose Press, 1988), **ISOLATION IN ACTION** (State Street Press, 1988), **Staggered Lights** (Owl Creek Press, 1990); **VOICES OVER WATER** (Four Way Books 1998); **LEAVING XAIA** (Four Way Books, 2000), **THE RULES OF PARADISE** (Four Way Books, 2001); **THE FALL: POEMS** (Knopf, September 2002).

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