archipelago

An International Journal of Literature, the Arts, and Opinion

www.archipelago.org

Vol. 7, No. 1 Spring 2003

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German Lessons *and* Killing a Turtle

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White Noise, *from* Mapping the Dark

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Paradise, Last

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

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All submissions on paper must be typed and double-spaced and sent by post with SASE or SAE and International Reply Coupon. An e-mail address is appreciated. No electronic submissions will be considered unless Editor is queried beforehand. and instructions in reply are followed.

Acknowledgements/permissions: Joel Agee's "Killing a Turtle" appeared in *DoubleTake*, Issue 6, Summer 1996; "German Lessons," in *Harper's*, February 2001. / ©2003 Raymond D. Strother, FALLING UP, HOW A REDNECK HELPED INVENT POLITICAL CONSULTING is published by Louisiana State University Press http://www.lsu.edu/lsupress/catalog/Spring2003/books/Strother_Falling_Up.html.

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Contributors

Joel Agee JAGEE@worldnet.att.net is the author of TWELVE YEARS: AN AMERICAN BOYHOOD IN EAST GERMANY (University of Chicago Press, p.b., 2000), a memoir of his life behind the Iron Curtain from ages eight to twenty. His essays and stories have appeared in publications such as *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Best American Essays*. He is also known as a translator of German literary works, among them Rilke's LETTERS ON CÉZANNE (Fromm International Publishing Corporation, 1985) and Elias Canetti's THE SECRET HEART OF THE CLOCK (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989). He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1999 he won the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for his translation of Heinrich von Kleist's PENTHESILEA (HarperCollins, 2000). (See "Passion" http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/endnotes.htm, *Archipelago*, Vol. 3, No. 1.) Joel Agee has just completed a memoir-novel, IN THE HOUSE OF MY FEAR, from which the two stories in this issue are taken. "Killing a Turtle" appeared in *DoubleTake*, Issue 6, Summer 1996; "German Lessons," in *Harper's*, February 2001. His story "The Storm" appeared in Vol. 4, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/agee.htm.

Miriam Ben-Yaacov, a native of South Africa, is a graduate of UNO Writer's Workshop. During her late teens and early twenties she lived in Israel. There she met her husband. They have two sons and have lived in Omaha for the last twenty-three years. Miriam Ben-Yaacov has published fiction and poetry and participated in local and regional readings. Her writing reflects life in the Midwest and her South African and Eastern European Jewish heritage. She is a winner of the Merit Award from the Nebraska Arts Council's Individual Artists Fellowships Program (1997). Miriam Ben-Yaacov also was a Hatha Yoga instructor.

Rosamond Casey rctreehouse@aol.com is an artist and calligrapher. Her mixed media paintings, books and calligraphy have been exhibited or published abroad as well as in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. Most recently, her work was exhibited at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. She is the sole proprietor of Treehouse Book Arts, a school for adults and children in the arts of handmade papermaking, calligraphy and book making, and the current President of the McGuffey Art Center a cooperative arts organization in Charlottesville, Virginia, comprised of 40 artists studios and several public exhibition spaces. Rosamond Casey holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts and Tufts University. She lives with her husband, novelist John Casey, in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Cara Chamberlain coontie@earthlink.net is an instructor at Florida Southern College. Her work has appeared widely and is forthcoming in *The Spoon River Poetry Review, Asheville Poetry Review, Rosebud, The MacGuffin,* and *Albatross*, among others. She was recently nominated for the third time for a Pushcart Prize.

Gu Cheng (1956-1993) was a figurehead of Obscure or "Misty" Chinese poetry, which flourished in the 1980's. He burst onto the Beijing literary scene in 1979 with poems that were affectingly simply and melancholy, willfully naïve, even sentimental, but lurid and strange, like Blake's. He met and befriended Bei Dao, Shu Ting, Yang Lian and others at the underground *Today* magazine. Gu Cheng's later poetry is starkly disillusioned and powerful. In 1998 a film based on his life entitled *The Poet* was released in Hong Kong.

Aaron Crippen acrippen@houston.rr.com is in the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program. For his translations of Gu Cheng he won the 2001 American Translators Association Student Award. In 2001 he also received the PEN Texas Literary Award for Poetry.

Fred Johnston sylfredcar@iolfree.ie was born Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1951. He founded Galway city's annual literature festival and its writers' centre. His poetry, prose and criticism have appeared in the U.S. and U.K. in, among others, *The Sewanee Review, Southern Review, Literary Review (N.Y.), The Sunday Times, The Times Literary Supplement (TLS)*. He is also involved in playing traditional music. He lives in Galway.

Kate Schapira's kjschapira@hotmail.com work has appeared in a number of print and online publications. Her story "Atwater I/i" was recently nominated for a 2003 Pushcart prize, and she is currently in the throes of a novel. She teaches U.S. Women's History at Camp Beacon Women's Correctional Facility, thanks to a grant from the American Association of University Women, and lives in the Hudson Valley.

Raymond D. Strother, except for a brief stint with the Associated Press, has "been involved in political hackdom all my adult life." He began at a firm in Baton Rouge in the 1960s; in 1980, he opened Raymond D. Strother, Ltd., in Washington, D.C. Today he is president of Strother, Duffy, Strother, and lives in Washington and Montana. He is a former president of the American Association of Political Consultants, a former fellow of the John F. Kennedy Institute of Politics at Harvard University, a member of the Louisiana State University Journalism Hall of Fame, the recipient of a Pollie Award (2000) for Best Political Television, and the author of the political novel COTTONWOOD.
His political memoir, FALLING UP HOW A REDNECK HELPED INVENT POLITICAL CONSULTING, has just been published by Louisiana State University Press; for information: http://www.lsu.edu/lsupress/catalog/Spring2003/books/Strother_Falling_Up.html.

Holly Woodward ArtictFox@aol.com was a doctoral fellow for a year at Moscow State University and studied a semester in Saint Petersburg. She serves as an Artist in Education for New Jersey's schools. One of her stories, "The Captive," was nominated for a best of the year anthology; it can be read at *Three Candles* http://www.threecandles.org. Her "Eros and Psyche" appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol. 4, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/woodward.htm. She is working on a novel.

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News of Our Contributors; Notices

Jane Barnes, novelist, scriptwriter, and a director of *Archipelago*, is among the writers in *The Paris Review*'s roundtable (Winter 2003) on crime-writing. In "The Man in the Back Row has a Question" http://www.theparisreview.com/tpr164/mibr1.html, she joins Boris Akunin, Ann Arensberg, David Grand, Chloe Hooper, Jonathan Lethem, Tim Parks, Budd Schulberg, and Paul West, who talk about murder and mayhem in literature.

Christopher Metress is the editor of THE LYNCHING OF EMMETT TILL, A Documentary Narrative (University of Virginia Press http://www.upress.virginia.edu/, 2002). The book was used as a source in the documentary film "The Murder of Emmett Till," by Stanley Nelson, shown on PBS in January. Information about the murder of Emmett Till and the part his death played in the civil rights movement is on PBS's "American Experience" Web site http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till/filmmore/fr.html, which also links to ""They Stand Accused': James L. Hicks's Investigations in Sumner, Mississippi, September 1955," published in *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-1/hicks.htm.

Martin Goodman MJGoodmanUK@aol.com is the editor of a new website, *The Biggest Ideas* http://www.thebiggestideas.com/. James Thornton (author of A FIELD GUIDE TO THE SOUL and the executive director of the Heffter Research Institute http://www.heffter.org) is among the contributors "coming up with one such big idea every two weeks this year. These 25 big ideas are designed to link up into a big picture. Times are threatening in many ways...." Goodman and Thornton hope their series of articles "will set current problems in context, and give us all some sense of how we can address the various responsibilities and privileges of being alive in the present age."

Re-Imagining Ireland http://www.re-imagining-ireland.org/, an international conference and gathering of artists, writers, musicians, actors, filmmakers, journalists, scholars, and talkers will take place in Charlottesville, Virginia, May 7-10, 2003. A huge cast of guests from Ireland and the States will explore Irish identity in a global context. Mary MacAleese, President of Ireland, will give the keynote speech. All information, schedules, and registration forms, are contained on the Web site.

For the third year, **Davoren Hanna Poetry Competition** seeks poets, whose work will be judged this year by Charles Simic and Matthew Sweeny. *The Dubliner* magazine, a sponsor, will publish the winners of the competition in its September issue. Named after Davoren Hanna, the gifted young Dublin poet who died in 1994, the competition is open to both published and unpublished poets over the age of 18. The competition is one of the most valuable in Ireland and the U.K., with a first prize of EUR6,500 and second and third prizes of EUR2,500 and EUR1,250 respectively.

The closing date is 31 May 2003, and entry forms, along with rules and guidelines, are available on Eason Bookshop's Web site http://www.eason.ie or by sending a stamped addressed envelope to The Davoren Hanna Poetry Competition, The Muse Café, Eason Bookshop, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1. Forms will also be available from Eason Bookshops nationwide and in the March, April and May issues of *The Dubliner*.

Last year's competition was won by Kim Addonizio, with James McGonigle taking second prize and Jeff Walt third. For further information contact: Cian Cafferky cian@focusadvertising.ie, Competition Director, Ph (01) 2693322.

More news from Ireland: **Chris Agee**, editor of the fine journal *Irish Pages*, announces the publication of UNFINISHED IRELAND: Essays on Hubert Butler. In October 2000, the **Hubert Butler** Centenary Celebration became the first conference devoted to the life and work of this extraordinary Irish countryman, European and citizen of the world. Out of that remarkable gathering now comes this volume, which brings together, in original or revised form, all nineteen of the talks given at the conference, as well as a selection of historic photographs and two comprehensive bibliographies. The publisher is *Irish Pages*, who believe it is a book that will become the foundation stone for the future study of the life and writing of Hubert Butler.

Contributors are Chris Agee, Neal Ascherson, John Banville, Terence Brown, John Casey, Antony Farrell, Christopher Fitz-Simon, Roy Foster, Joseph Hone, Edna Longley, Tim Robinson and eight others. Price: £10 Sterling/15 Euro/$15US. The volume is in paper and can be ordered from *Irish Pages*,The Linen Hall Library, 17 Donegall Square North, Belfast BT 1 5GB; phone 0044 28 90 641644. In Ireland (North and South), booksellers may also order through Eason's (Tel: 028 90381200 in Belfast, 01 8622111 in Dublin); in Great Britain, through Central Books (0845 4589925).

Hubert Butler's essays "The Artukovitch File" http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-2/butler.htm and "The Subprefect Should Have Held His Tongue" http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-1/butler.htm have appeared in *Archipelago*, as have two of Chris Agee's essays on Butler, "The Balkan Butler," http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-1/agee.htm and "The Stepinac File." http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-1/agee2.htm.

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Letters to the Editor

Living with Guns

To the Editor:
Subject: Your Agenda Belies Your Mission

After reading Mary-Sherman Willis' postscript to "The Fight for Kansas" it was clear that what went before was simply prologue to her anti-self defense stance, and especially her puerile attacks on President Bush, in particular, and those of us who honor the Constitution in its details, in general.

Equally telling was the editor's own bias as exemplified by her thesis on the "Living with Guns" series that "...will contemplate how, historically, philosophically, metaphorically, ethically, and even legally, Americans have allowed ourselves to justify and bear ever more lethal weapons, and how we have lived (and died) with the choice that is perhaps not that of a majority...."

With such a clear statement of purpose it is obvious that the series will be little more than propaganda, preaching to the choir, and massaging the politically correct ego of the editor. Alas, the artsy-fartsy left misses another chance at relevance.

Douglas Rife
Bakersfield, CA

"Living with Guns" appeared in Archipelago, *Vol. 6, Nos. 3/4* http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/livingwithguns-intro.htm. *"The Fight for Kansas" appears in the same issue* http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/willis.htm.

On student strikes against the coming war

March 6, 2003
To the Editor:

Still tacked to the walls at Dawson College [Montreal], red posters in Times New Roman font:

VOTE
YES
TO
STRIKE
AGAINST THE
WAR IN IRAQ
@ GENERAL ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY MARCH 4TH AT 2 P.M.
3RD FLOOR CAFETERIA
THE STRIKE WILL TAKE PLACE MARCH 5TH
Students of DAWSON AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ (DAWI)

While the possibility of a war edges closer in Iraq, the raping of democracy is at Dawson, turning this Montreal cégep into a pulsating toll of misdemeanor. Rape of democracy, believe it. But first let me tell you some definitions of the word: strike (Gage Canadian Dictionary)*:* "Hit (someone or something); deal a blow to: *to strike a person in anger.* Set or be set on fire by hitting or rubbing: *to strike a match.* Cause to impact forcefully (with something): *she struck the cymbal.* Make an attack: *the enemy will strike at dawn!* Of a snake, etc., wound, or try to wound with fangs, claws, or sting. Refuse to work at a factory, business, etc. in order to get better pay or achieve other demands."

These definitions, and the remaining twenty-three, show to organizers of the strike that they misused the word, strike, or that they used it to create a sensation. Encourage students to vote yes to a walkout from classes to go to an anti-war demonstration. Ninety-three percent of Dawson students who voted marked yes on the ballot. But to those who voted yes, **did you strike?** That is the question – against whom?

Strike United States President George Bush Jr.? Not personally, what would that accomplish if they did? Strike Hussein? No. Did they attack a foreign government's foreign policy? Were it that, backed by sound arguments, facts, then I, and everyone else, would hear what all the screaming was about. But no, Dawson Against the War in Iraq (DAWI) students expressing dissent, which was their democratic right hard, won, put to shame.

Shame! Shame, shame, shame on them! Who instead of scathing American foreign policy cried: Don't go to classes! Block Bush! Peace and love NOW! Don't go to class! Protest! Bush is a despot! So is Hussein! *Make love, not war?*

In the days preceding the DAWI campaign, if you can call it that, I was expecting the organizers to show, at the least, propaganda films supporting their angst. Well, one anti-American booth with all to boot, and one tear jerk film about the plight of Iraqi women and children looking disfigured and almost dead. No discussion about the U.N.'s buzzing activities, no rhetoric, no charismatic or other Americans discussing their views on the war, no variety of literature for and against, not one partisan or MP from any of our political parties, provincial or federal, and no debate, in our Plant or Cafeteria. No debate!

Many students, myself among them, were struck by the Dawson Student Union position on the strike. They supported DAWI. Aren't student unions supposed to remain cautious, at least by promoting all views, especially to an issue as hot as American war? Dare I say, referendum?

I was surprised that some members of DAWI struck at Premier Ministre Bernard Landry – his position! Quebec is, has long time been, against fighting wars for Canada! (unless you are a closet federalist) The Parti Québécois is against federal initiatives of any kind! Ever since President Bush launched his campaign, Monsieur Landry remains firm no Quebec offensive in Iraq, and no support to an increase in federal military spending. Then, Jean Chrétien, Canada's Prime Minister, was made to look like an asshole when really he says friendly everyday, as a Liberal, as a Canadian, he's open for debate and for sending peacekeepers, but there will be no military attack in Iraq until it is approved by the United Nations. So. Why bark up the wrong tree unless … breath is worth wasting?

But I digress. The word that DAWI has chosen echoes foul in the hallway now, of victory. This strike, like a scythe, slays me. The day of the protest, DAWI rhetoric criticized some Dawson teachers for being standoffish; worse, cold in a hot bed because they continued to give lectures, homework, and tests. That caused student traffic howl. Protesters felt penalized for *choosing* not to attend class. They lashed out against those teachers who did not cancel classes. (The choice to cancel or teach was given by Dawson Administrators).

But Katherine! Students who **work** to **pay** for their books and tuition fees, and rent, etc. also **pay TAXES** and that tax money pays teachers to do their job: teach. Cégeps are, with few exceptions, publicly funded. We students are the employers; teachers are employees. Employer strikers: does that sound logical to you?

Of those students who voted yes to strike, how many actually went to the demonstration? How many protested? Back further: how many voted out of conscientious objection to a war in Iraq and who just wanted a day off school? Who are anti-American and can't convince me they are? Who weren't sure what they voted for? Each time I visited the polls, students were lined in droves, ready, smiling, more than you'd expect saying, I'LL VOTE YES TO STRIKE if it means I'll have time to smoke a splif, stay home and sleep. I'm not suggesting total apathy amongst voters, neither absolute slack nor stupidity.

What I have witnessed this past week is a raping of democracy. Rape of democracy is when you use a strike and make a joke of it, not showing your convictions. This is a sad time for democracy indeed.

Hats off to Pericles, who, so greatly (I imagine) delivered a speech, written by his beloved Aspasia, about democracy. I read THE HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, by Thucydides, and I share it with you:

> Even those who are most occupied with their own business are extremely well informed on general politics – this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all…. We Athenians, in our own persons, take our decisions on policy or submit them to proper discussions: for we do not think that there is an incompatibility between words and deeds; the worst thing is to rush into action before the consequences have been properly debated.

When the day DAWI starts chatting about complacency with this 'U.S. war on terrorism' or whatever you call it — like, why Germany, France, and Russia want no part in it (because wouldn't they rather keep their loans to Iraq alive and well than have the country obliterated), will the kettle call the teapot black? When Americans of all political stripes get aired on Dawson radio, and in turn, the voices of all the players, watchers and outcasts — when everyone at Dawson is welcome to listen and to speak — then, and only then, will democracy ring in my ear and toward DAWI. Let's rethink democracy before we all get too lazy, tired, forgetful about its meaning. Recall how long it took to get it back.
For commentary,
Tracy Robinson
Montreal, Quebec (Canada)
Tracy Robinson is the author of "What War Is," Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 2* http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/robinson.htm.

The following are representative of the flood of e-mails sent in response to the Editor's appearance at the Virginia Festival of the Book, on the panel "'Patriotism' and the Right of Free Speech in Wartime." The discussion was broadcast on C-Span March 21, ff. Streaming audio of the panel discussion is available at Virginia Festival of the Book http://www.virginia.edu/vfh/audiopanel_03.html (scroll down).

March 21, 2003
To the Editor:

Thanks for doing this. We all need to step up to the plate right now.

I spoke as "the artist" at a public panel discussion about the war. There are many artists making anti-war art work now, but very few who are explaining their thinking at rallies and on panels and at teach-ins. It is a huge mistake for we who are actively engaged with the culture as producers to let the anti-war discourse be controlled by the professional activists. We who work in art and visual culture have an understanding of media, advertising, and the power of images that is quite different than that of the ordinary, non-art informed citizen. We've got to explain our analyses to people who are outside of the art world. So I had to do it because I couldn't find any other artist willing. Plus, I keep thinking about Paul Wellstone these days, and how lucky we who had him as a teacher really were.

Got to get out there and do stuff like speaking in public just to pass on what we all learned from him.

Hope all is well in Charlottesville – and peace,
Dan Wang
Dan Wang's "Rosa's Argument," a collaboration with Alan Sondheim, appeared in Archipelago, Vol. 4, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/rosa-text.htm.

March 22, 2003
To the Editor:

I agree with the views you expressed on C-Span March 22, 2003. The country is going through a period of redefinition, and I fear for the worse. 9/11 has provided the cover needed for a small group of extremely wealthy and powerful individuals to institute changes that would never have gotten through otherwise.

Especially appalling is the concentration of media power. Anyone confined to American television and hometown newspapers as a source of information gets a totally biased and warped view of what is going on in the world. The Pentagon is actually co-opting journalists.

How can a relatively small number of media outlets controlled by giant corporations dependent on other giant corporations for ad revenue give an objective worldview?

The nightly newscast from the 3 major nets features anchors who earn upwards of $20,000,000 a year for their services. What kind of news comes out of their mouths? FOX news is the most egregious example of lying, hypocrisy and propaganda out there.

FOX is a disgrace. It is reminiscent of a Nazi propaganda organ.

Please continue to be a voice for freedom and democracy. I fear voices like yours are slowly dying out. The giant corporations either buy you or cut you out. No one even recognizes or mentions their almost totalitarian grip on the United States and its people. Many of these transnational corporations are larger than most countries, yet answerable only to a handful of people and corrupt beyond belief. Who can stand up to an entity with $45,000,000,000 in cash on its balance sheet and platoons of lawyers and politicians on retainer in every country in the world?
Garland Campbell

March 23, 2003
To the Editor:

Today I happened to catch a program on C-Span in which you participated. I wanted to congratulate you on your urgent remarks regarding America's redefinition as imperium, combining both an extension of power internationally and an intensification of that power domestically. I must admit that I had not heard of Archipelago until seeing you on TV today.

The war on terror – a war without limits – is an example of Carl Schmitt's notion of the state of exception/state of emergency: a situation wherein the sovereign is legally permitted to suspend the law and act beyond the constitution in order to protect it. On the opposite side of the political spectrum from Schmitt, the radical Italian social theorist Giorgio Agamben, author of the *Homo Sacer* series, has traced the ancient theologico-political lines of the state of exception from Roman law through Auschwitz. This project however is always rooted in the present. Such an alternative perspective offers a solid foothold in understanding the logic of the creative-destructive discourse and events that have defined the post-9/11 landscape.
Eugene R. Sheppard
Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish History and Thought
Brandeis University
Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies
Assistant Director of the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry

March 24, 2003
To the Editor:

I'm a librarian and am happy to be introduced to your online journal. I just wanted to thank you for your clear and passionate remarks at the Book Festival last week. I caught it on c-span during a moment of deep despair over what was presented to us on the other channels.

Jane Taylor
Reference Librarian
Edmond, OK

March 21, 2003
To the Editor:

Whether the Iraq invasion goes easy or hard on the Iraqis, or on American and British forces, it is still illegal, still immoral, still dangerous – still wrong. The payback will come in ways we cannot anticipate, any more than we anticipated 9/11 as a result of stationing American troops in Saudi Arabia. It may take the form of terror. It may take the form of mass insurrection. It may take the form of a resumption of the Cold War, with Russia and or China hardening their attitude vis-à-vis the Pax Americana, entering into alliances with other nation-states, and threatening us belligerently with "weapons of mass destruction." Or it may take the form of a collapse of the U.N. and the loss of the precious instruments of international humanitarian law. For the fact is that three fifths of the world now considers the U.S. to be an enemy, bent on extending and consolidating its own wealth through military power. Our alliance with Israel is especially repugnant, and in general our growing disregard for human rights exposes us to charges of practicing the rankest hypocrisy. What baleful precedents do we set in place by this invasion? How do we justify the hundreds, the thousands of burned and maimed and crushed people resulting from our gleeful display of the new Blitzkrieg strategy advanced by the Pentagon – "Shock and Awe"? And how will we ever justify to the people of the world this government's malicious will to arrogate to itself all the powers of life and death?

Andrew L. Wilson
Andrew L. Wilson is editor of Linnaean Street http://home.attbi.com/~andrew-wilson/LS/linnaean1.htm, *and coeditor of* Gargoyle: Arts & Letters on the Web http://www.gargoyledaily.org/.

March 22, 2003
To the Editor:

A friend saw you on a Panel Show on TV, and said I should visit your Web site, as we have similar views. I found your site very interesting. My friend has seen an e-mail exchange between another (Conservative) friend, "Frank, and I," and feels my view was roughly what you were saying on the Panel Show.

It has taken a hundred years of Distorted History to produce an American public that can accept what the Government is doing today. I fear we are lost; how can we change around and bring back the American Constitution to America?

Emmett F. Fields
Bank of Wisdom, LLC

March 23, 2003
To the Editor:

I watched the panel of which you were a member on C-Span yesterday and appreciated your cogent remarks. In particular the concern over losing freedoms in America and the nature of the conflict between Israel and the Arabs. I pulled up your Archipelago WebPage and was introduced to the work of Robert Fisk – a writer of extraordinary talent and objectivity. His stories are a welcome push into reality.

I suspect your social agenda is Liberal. We would part ways in that area.

Also, thank you for the quote from Amira Hass. Journalism's primary mission, at least in the free world, is to, "monitor power and the centres of power." On the Conservative (I hate that word – it no longer describes what I mean), there are litanies of issues that are assiduously avoided in the American press.

Anyway, thank you for the serendipity of Robert Fisk.

Al Cronkrite

Robert Fisk's "The Keys of Palestine" appeared in Archipelago, *Vol. 6, Nos. 3/4* http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/fisk.htm. *An interview with him from Baghdad, March 25, is on* Democracy Now http://www.democracynow.org/fisk.htm.

March 23, 2002
To the Editor:

I had the pleasure this morning of hearing on C-Span – quite by accident – your splendid remarks apparently delivered yesterday at the Virginia Festival of the Book.

Thank you for saying what you did. Expression of such sentiments is unfortunately becoming both increasingly necessary and increasingly rare.

Best regards,
Carl Estabrook www.carlforcongress.org, Visiting Scholar
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dear Prof. Estabrook:

Thank you for your note. I will say more frankly today than, perhaps, on Saturday, that I am afraid for this nation, and for Israel, too.

I do not know if the Democratic Party can recover itself nationally. I worry that the estimable Green Party may weaken it further, while not gaining enough strength itself to be able to reverse our descent into empire. (The Republicans have driven out or aside their moderate wing.) Frankly, I wish we had a politician in either party as worthy as Joschka Fischer. Perhaps we do – perhaps we will see his (probably not her) rise this year?

Yours truly,
Katherine McNamara

Dear Ms. McNamara:

I'm afraid I share some version of your fears.

As a member of the Green party and a Green candidate for Congress in Illinois last year, I agree that there are serious questions about Green party strategy for 2004. It does unfortunately depend on what the Democrats choose to do, and they seem to me to be setting new standards of fecklessness in the current situation.

Local Greens asked me to run for Congress in 2002 because a one-term Republican incumbent was not going to be opposed by the Democrats! As you write, "The system of

redistricting congressional seats is weighted toward the incumbents." Our congressional district (about which the Wall Street Journal editorialized last Election Day) is a flagrant result of what the chief of redistricting for the Republican National Committee called "sweetheart gerrymandering" – Republicans' and Democrats' providing safe seats for one another. I very much hope that the Democrats can nominate a presidential candidate opposed enough to this war that we Greens and others can unite behind him (yes, probably not her) to dismiss Bush-43 as we did Bush-41. But if as seems likely the Democrats nominate a candidate in favor of imperial war, like Lieberman or Kerry, then I think the Greens should seriously consider another independent candidate.

On another note, I read with interest your "A Year in Washington, A Visitation of Ghosts." I agree that "The Vietnam War poisoned my generation, and I think we have not healed from it." It's necessary for us to say where the sickness came from. Bush-41 said the most important effect of the Gulf War was that "The Vietnam Syndrome is dead." I don't think so, although you're undoubtedly right that "all is veiled by propaganda and fear."
Best regards,
Carl Estabrook
Cf. "A Year in Washington," Archipelago *Vol.6, Nos. 3/4* http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/endnotes.htm.

March 23, 2003
To the Editor:

"In the long-run every government is the exact symbol of its people, with their wisdom and unwisdom." (Thomas Carlyle, 1843)

Reckless behavior of legal or illegal residents of the United States, not including criminal behavior ranging from shoplifting to high crimes and misdemeanors in virtually all organizations-corporations, governments, unions, churches, nonprofit organizations, media-in a few words, from the thief stealing from the Girl Scouts' cookie jar to the political payoffs perpetrated by members of our highest government offices, is nothing new. We have more criminals in jail than ever before; we tax ourselves oppressively; we enjoy freedoms but with a growing decline in responsibility for the enjoyment; we allow the government to control more and more of our lives; we pour money into foreign countries recklessly, not demanding strict accountability; we pledge allegiance to the United Nations when it's convenient; we've come to tolerate most anything or anybody as we march toward Balkanization, toward a Disunited States of America.

Balkanization might not occur. The drift into chaos might stop, or, we might see the United States crumble from within, aided by outside forces sharing a common hatred for the United States. As we increase respect for group rights, we diminish individual liberty, which promotes the Balkanization of the United States where one shot heard around the world can plunge the world into global warfare.

We expect perfection, but we don't demand perfection from ourselves-thus we condemn this or that government administration or this or that form of capitalism or this or that form of virtually anything or anybody merely because it's our right to protest. Problem is, unprincipled protesting is more destructive than it is constructive. After the gates are stormed, what's next?

Take the anti-Iraqi War protestors. They, through the courts, have enlarged the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances extending beyond civil disobedience to include violence, destruction of property, injury to people or to inconveniences affecting traffic, safety, commerce, and a host of activities not associated with the protestors' rights to peaceably assemble and to petition the

Government. Protesting has become a cottage industry, sponsored by people promoting their causes, their ideologies, enlisting protestors from all ages, all walks of life, all occupations, or from all political or religious (nonreligious) persuasions-"Let's go protest!" becomes something to do, which might be and often is, unprincipled, undisciplined, and done without awareness of the agenda of the promoters who might be using funds from their nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations.

If Karl Marx observed how badly he miscalculated the future of capitalism during his time, he'd be forced to revise his opinion of the bourgeoisie and proletariat dichotomy, of what constitutes wealth-and most assuredly revise his observation that religion is the opiate of the masses. The material wealth created by private ownership of property, capitalism, enforcement of contracts (among other things) has surpassed Marx's most optimistic vision of his idealistic community where no one works, but everyone enjoys prosperity, which is the magnet that draws the feelings of victimized people to unite with and to support the flawed ideology of paradise on earth.

If anything, the United States, enjoying its brief romance with history or destiny, demonstrates that governments, like the humans who discredit them, are works in progress.

When an American student allows herself to be run over and killed by a bulldozer, people who support suicide-homicide bombers murdering innocent bystanders, consider her a martyr. That's berserk freedom of choice. Do you suppose if she'd personally carried out a suicide-homicide attack she'd be enshrined in the Palestinian Martyrs' Hall of Fame or maybe have Saddam Hussein send her family a fat check for her bravery? In the United States heroes trespass in forests where they take up residence in trees, drive spikes into to trees to kill or maim loggers, or throw themselves on a highway to protect a snail darter or a rat.

So as we march into the Iraqi War we're faced with a Mission Impossible: remove Saddam Hussein without killing him, his soldiers, or Iraqis. American or coalition casualties don't matter. Make sure we feed, clothe, and otherwise take care of Iraqis-including repairing their infrastructure, restoring their oil capability, and allowing France, Germany, and Russia free access to Iraq's oil.

Since we've already killed and been killed, the Mission Impossible script is right on, but no matter how well-intentioned or how well we execute the Iraq War operations, we will have failed the World Community. We can apologize to the United Nations, but the U.N. will not accept our arrogant apology.

We deserve whatever disaster falls upon the United States – the big bully who causes the world's problems, stationing troops in 140 or so locations; who bribes nations to go along with us; who gives false hope to suffering nations but sharing only a miniscule amount of our GDP with the Third World; who uses an egregious amount of the world's natural resources while polluting the earth--and as an example of the ultimate insult, proposes to use dolphins to detect mines in Iraqi waters! That's crueler than the proposal to use chickens to detect poison gas to alert our military forces. Karl Marx would love it!

The United States lacks moral authority, having succeeded only because of the ability to exploit people and nations. If we'd listen only to Allah, we'd know right from wrong and not have become criminals.

Jim Skeese

March 25, 2003
To the Editor:
After listening to you at the Virginia Festival of The Book, you have further proven yourself an Anti-American spineless liberal who like all other liberals of late, are simply being ignored and laughed at. Notice your ally Michael Moore being booed off stage Sunday Night at the Oscars when he opened his anti-American mouth and bashed our president and our war efforts. However, as a 29 year old member of the South Carolina State Guard, I will say this: it is heroes like the soldiers in Iraq right now that have spilled their guts in order for you to open your ignorant mouth against the country that they have died to defend their love for. Do us all a favor and leave our beloved nation, we do not want you here.
Victor N. Webster
South Carolina

March 24, 2003
To Katherine McNamara,
I am watching now your C-Span2 appearance from Saturday. You were awesome. I plan to read *Archipelago* now.
Tom Wagner

German Lessons

Joel Agee

Wo gehen wir denn hin? Immer nach Hause.
Where are we going? Always homeward.
— Novalis

There is a German word, a feminine noun, that denotes like no other the welcoming warmth and sheltering intimacy of an origin to which one can return: *"Heimat."* Strangely, it has no English equivalent. "Home" comes close — its German cognate, "Heim," actually forms the root of "Heimat" — but it is too narrow, it usually means an apartment. The "land" in "homeland" makes the image more ample, but too geographic. What the German word means is, simply, the place where one feels at home, and that home need not have political or even physical boundaries. When Elias Canetti, a Sephardic Jew who was born in Bulgaria, studied in Zurich, lived in London, and wrote in German, was asked what he considered his *Heimat,* his reply was: the German language.

I was born in New York City in 1940. When I was a year old, my American mother left my American father and went with me to Mexico. There she married a German expatriate who became, in every sense of the word but the biological, my father. We stayed in Mexico for seven years. In the course of that time, I learned to speak Spanish better than my parents, better than I spoke English. I played with Mexican children in Mexican schools. A Mexican maid, Zita, loved and scolded me like a second mother. I thought of myself as Mexican. Nevertheless, I knew I was a foreigner. No one deliberately made me feel that, but I sensed it nonetheless. I wanted to be like the others. I wanted to sing those proud Mexican songs as if they were about me: "*Soy Mexicano del Norte!"* It seemed to me that talking like a native should be enough to make you the same, but it wasn't. I asked — insisted — on having my hair shorn to make me resemble Mexican street children. It didn't work: the bald head made me a *pelón.* Why didn't they call bald Mexican children *pelónes?* Because a bald Mexican child is Mexican, but a bald gringo is ridiculous. I put on a big sombrero. That covered up the baldness, but it didn't make me Mexican.

When I was eight, my parents took me and my two-year-old brother to the part of

Germany that a year later became the *"Deutsche Demokratische Republik,"* DDR for short. The German kids didn't call me a gringo. They called me an Ami. How to become German? Obviously, I had to learn the language, but would that be enough — since it hadn't been in Mexico? It was enough. *Zum Glück!*

"Glück" is another German word without an exact English equal. Sometimes it means "luck," sometimes "happiness," but there is a third meaning that combines the first two — outer good fortune, inner felicity — and for this plenary good we have no single word. Of course there may not exist in reality such a thing as *"Glück"* in the hermetic sense suggested by that fluting ü embowered among consonants; but it exists in the mind — vaguely where the world utters itself in English, and rather tangibly in German, where that old word, *Glück*, stands waiting like a cage for the soul that would lose itself in it and sing. Beautiful poems have been made of this word, sublime music from the painful joy it encloses.

But I was speaking of *"Heimat,"* which could be defined as the province of *"Glück"* — its source in memory, its goal in longing — and my happy discovery, as a newly arrived immigrant, that in Germany, unlike Mexico, I could be released from the exile of foreignness simply by learning the language.

It really was simple. A tutor apprenticed me in the first fundamentals of syntax and vocabulary, and two or three boys in my village grade school offered themselves as guides to the subtler refinements of pronunciation. But the real teacher was the fluid, breathing, intelligent life of language itself, and the student so swiftly taking increasingly difficult degrees of initiation, all the way up to the heights of poetry, all the way in to the arcane wit of dialect, was not the boy trying to memorize his conjugation tables but a miraculously responsive nervous system alerted by day and by night to the challenge of optimal adaptation: How to fit in, how to be the same as the others, not myself the other, no longer different.

The State, of whose existence I could have no notion yet, had interests remarkably consonant with mine. Through my school, I was offered a virtual certificate of sameness, a blue neckerchief, identical in cut and color with dozens of other blue neckerchiefs worn by children in the village. That was the insigne of the Young Pioneers. Learning to tie the knot was an initiation in itself. And with the honor of membership came a set of statutes that called us — Us! No more lonely I: Us! — to high moral duty: Young Pioneers are *examples* (of maturity, comportment, studiousness, etc.) to other children; Young Pioneers are *hilfsbereit*, ready to help where help is needed. Not *should be,* but *are*. Virtue conferred by the sacred act of induction (a vow? Probably, I don't remember), and repossessed any time you desired by the magical act of knotting your blue neckerchief in front of a mirror.

It is no different with collective identity than with the personal ego: sooner or later you meet with the other, the "We" that is not your own. There were children in the village — the majority, in those early years — who did not join the Young Pioneers. I don't remember any outright animosity, but a difference was noticeable, particularly in the matter of virtue. Young Pioneers don't crack jokes behind the teacher's back. Young Pioneers don't paint obscene symbols on walls. Young Pioneers don't shoot stones with a slingshot. Young Pioneers don't have a whole lot of fun. I realized that after a while.

Those were the infant days of the cold war, when the borders were open and lightly patrolled. The solution was simple: Blur the boundary, have it both ways. Lend those tough kids from across the lake your *Pionierhalstuch* for a face mask in a game of cops and robbers; then wear it to school, feel the thrill of virtue as you salute the rising flag, thumb-tip to forehead, while the national anthem swells your chest beneath the neckerchief's long, slightly smudged, blue ears. How good to be part of a "We," any "We," how painful to be excluded from it. Let "We" span the village, the country, the world! Sometimes, listening to Mozart or Bach, or at Christmas, the idea of limitless, haptic communion with all living beings seemed not just possible but imminent, almost real. I remember coming out of a performance of "The Marriage of Figaro" in Berlin and sustaining the fantasy, for a half hour or so, that if people — all people — really sang their emotions like those characters on the stage, the result would be an enormous chorus in which even the cruelest conflicts would be resolved in harmony.

Once again the State saw eye to eye with my desire. It, too, had a vision of global communion, and this wasn't a dream, but a scientific prediction — so scientific it couldn't be doubted. Some time in the not too distant future there would be a world without strangers, all mankind working together — yes, working, not playing — in peace and amity, united at last under the banner of communism. Until then, though, the world would be sternly divided, not by custom, as Schiller put it in his Ode to Joy, but by grim necessity. All the socialist countries with their wise, humane leaders were threatened without and within. Invisible enemies lived in our midst, Nazis, imperialists, saboteurs and wreckers, spies, bearers of false tales, hired by the West and intent on destroying the hope of humanity, while outside our borders stood armies with rockets and atom bombs poised against us. Only the utmost vigilance could preserve the peace. Fortunately our soldiers and politicians took care of this tough job, leaving us children to the manageable task of being responsibly cheerful, decoratively young — a political function, if the newsreels were any indication — and eventually growing into self-sacrificing defenders of the cause.

With the passage from grade school to high school came another graduation: From the Young Pioneers to their adolescent counterpart, the Free German Youth. I am holding

in my hand a document of my condition at that time, more telling than any memory. It is my *Personalausweis,* the identity book every East German citizen was obliged to carry on his person at all times. The first thing that strikes the eye as one opens the small, dark blue book is a personal message from the State to the bearer:

Citizen of the German Democratic Republic: this passport is your most important document.

There follows a four-point list of instructions concerning its use or misuse. On the inside of the first page, in the upper left corner, is a photograph of my face taken in quarter profile a month after my fifteenth birthday. The two circular metal staples employed to clamp the picture to the page also punched round holes through the paper, like oversized bullets or small cannon balls, one through my right collar-bone and another one grazing my forehead. The upper rim of the seal of the Potsdam District Police raises the letters CHE VOLKS from my left shoulder, and another seal, or possibly the lower rim of the same, marks the back of my head with the characters 1S3, also in high relief. A rectangular stamp, violet, sidles up to the edge of my face to declare me "Valid for 10 years." My lips, near the sharp lower corner of the stamp, are set in a manner that an American friend generously interprets as "defiant": Actually I was pushing forward my lower jaw to counteract the effect of what I considered a weak chin. Defiance can be justly attributed only to a tuft of hair over my right ear that refused to be flattened down with water. The eyes are set on nothing at all, unless it's the opposite page, where my "surname at birth" is neatly spelled out in black ink: *Uhse*. Not true. Besides, my stepfather, Bodo Uhse, had never formally adopted me. And my nationality: *Deutsch* — also not true. By the letter of the law, I should have been registered as a foreigner and given a corresponding document, but my parents asked a highly placed friend to make a semi-legal arrangement on my behalf — to spare me the pain of exclusion, to help me to feel at home.

Stamped on all sides with false legitimations, this face looks sad, guilty, obedient, and absent, a juvenile Adam expelled from the garden. How did it happen? He never even noticed the snake. And no Eve in sight. What was that taste in his mouth? A word, "we." All the new songs had that word in them, none of them had the word "I." He sang them for the love of singing, for the sake of belonging: "*Weil wir jung sind, ist die Welt so schön!*" Imagine singing a song like that, thirty or forty voices strong: "Because we are young, the world is so beautiful!" Because. We. He was lost.

Five years later, my parents divorced, and my mother obtained for me through the American embassy in West Berlin and with the help of an American lawyer a passport that

identified me correctly by my true patronymic and my rightful nationality. This was a very nice ticket to have, it promised swift passage from a messy pattern of officially recorded failure in one Heimat to a perfectly clean slate in another. Amazing privilege! This is what certain gangsters receive in exchange for their testimony against the mob: a little plastic surgery, a wrecked existence swapped for a fictive whole one, a move to some palm-fronded spot where no one knows you, in short, a new destiny and a new self. If only things were that simple.

Somewhere in the archives of the Stasi, the infamous East German secret police, there must still exist a record of the arrest and interrogation of a young man, sometime in the spring of '63, who presented himself to the border authorities at Checkpoint Charlie with two documents of identity, one made out in Potsdam to Joel Uhse, the other in New York to Joel Agee. The suspect's bizarre explanation, first to the guards at Checkpoint Charlie, then, after a grim silent car ride through darkening streets, to professional interrogators at Stasi headquarters — that he was not and had never been a citizen of the DDR, though his *Personalausweis* identified him as such; that the *Personalausweis* was in fact a fraudulent document produced for his convenience and comfort by the DDR government; that he was and had always been an American citizen and had left the DDR with its government's blessings; that he was a film maker on his way from New York to the Leipzig film festival; that his motive in showing the border authorities his spurious *Personalausweis* was simply fear of their finding it on him if he *didn't* show it; that his purpose in bringing it at all was to identify himself to DEFA, the East German film company, as the stepson of the recently deceased winner of the national prize for literature, Bodo Uhse, so that they would equip and finance a film he, the suspect, intended to make about carnival season in the Cuban province of Oriente — all these avowals and sincere protestations only served to heighten his captors' suspicion.

"What agency do you work for?"

"I'm not a spy. If you call Alexander Abusch, the former Minister of Culture, he'll vouch for me, he's known me since I was a child."

"Who sent you?"

"No one sent me. Why don't you call Alexander Abusch?"

"Because we're not stupid."

"Why would a spy show up at your border with two ID's?"

"That's what we're trying to find out."

Two men took turns stirring this thick little dialogue until there was neither spice nor substance left in it. They stared at me with the desperation of boredom and perhaps the

first glimmers of hatred. As for me, I was full of good will toward them. I wasn't worried. We were all socialists here, sharers in a common truth. To pass the time, I observed them for future reference in my journal. There wasn't much to record. They smoked a lot. They wore gray suits. One of them was bald, the other wore two-toned shoes. Above them hung a picture of Walter Ulbricht with an omniscient smile. By the window stood a shelf bearing law books and volumes of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

"Who are you?"

That question took me aback.

"You can't be both these people."

"I'm not. I'm one person. And these are, I mean . . . they're passports. One person, two passports."

I thought I was being helpful. They didn't think so. They looked angry. I pulled myself together, resolved to cooperate in every way.

I remember dreams from that period, nightmares in which I shuttled from one country and language to another, often in a train patrolled by suspicious soldiers. These dreams always ended in my being asked for my papers and not finding them or inadvertently showing the wrong one that made me guilty. Many years later I learned that this is the prototypical dream of exiles, immigrants, and prisoners, and not just prisoners but also released or escaped convicts. The dreamer's position, inside or outside the barrier, seems to make little difference to the psyche as long as the barrier is there. The psyche wants wholeness, not in- or outsideness, and that's why her notions of freedom are different from those of the ego. More particularly, though, my dream was the prototypical East German dream. Here is one example: An old school friend in East Berlin told me in the late Seventies that he had a recurring nightmare in which he found himself strolling on Kurfürstendamm, gazing at shop windows and pretty girls, and suddenly realizing that he had to get back to the other side of the Wall within minutes, or else be found guilty of treason. He runs to the East, but there is the Wall, solid and gateless, the guards in their turrets have already spotted him, the minutes are advancing, he is trapped in the free world when the law, the law of the soul, of the whole dream, says: Get back to the place of your bondage or be exiled forever.

A couple of hours later, my stomach began to grumble, and the bald man introduced a startling new theme.

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes."

"Do you like blood sausage?"

"I've never tried it."

The bald man opened a sandwich tin and handed me half of his sandwich. I took a

bite.

"Not here," the man with the two-toned shoes said sternly. "Out the door, turn left, sit down on the bench at the end of the corridor. Wait there till we call you."

Viewed from the bench where I sat with my sandwich, the corridor proclaimed all the laws of rectilinear perspective: Two rows of receding and converging doors right and left, one row of receding and converging bright neon tubes on the ceiling. Viewed from the brightly lit hallway, on the other hand, my chewing self on the bench was shrouded in darkness, for the two ceiling lights nearest me didn't work. This position afforded me the unique point of view of an unseen observer at Stasi headquarters.

I cite from my notes of the following day:

"Telephones ringing, muffled voices, silence. A door opens, I stop chewing. A man in a green suit steps out, says something over his shoulder, closes the door, takes a few steps in my direction, stops, shakes his head, looks around surreptitiously, takes a notebook out of his breast pocket, scribbles something in it, puts the pen and notebook back in his breast pocket, walks on, stops in front of a room just ten meters away from me, puts his ear to the door, hesitates, knocks.

"*'Herein!'*

"The man in the green suit steps in, closes the door behind him.

"More ringing telephones, mumbling voices, silence. Echoing shouts and the tramping of feet in the stairwell at the far end of the corridor. Four soldiers appear, hustling along a young man whose hands are cuffed behind his back. They shove him into the last room on my right, lock the door, and go back downstairs, laughing.

"Quiet. Telephones, mumbling voices. A familiar door opens. It is the man in the green suit. He walks down the corridor with a jaunty stride, jangling a bunch of keys in his hand, opens the room where the prisoner is, closes the door behind him. A moment later, a short, piercing scream. The door opens, the man in the green suit reappears. He locks the door, puts the keys in his pocket, walks back in my direction, adjusts the fit of his jacket with an athlete's rolling shrug, scrolls the fingers of his right hand in the air, and returns to the office from which he emerged."

And now it is time to introduce another German word: *"Schlüsselerlebnis."* "Key experience" is the best possible translation. It sounds dryly analytical, but in German, the compounding of the two words charges them with the potency of a seed, or a bomb. The idle heiress robbed of her purse, begging for carfare, and spurned by the hard-working poor;

the devout Christian learning that some venerable relic was manufactured in Taiwan; the young child who sees his parents in a grunting, moaning heap on their bed — each of these has had a *Schlüsselerlebnis*.

(I hear my soul-critic's voice protesting, the familiar voice of a contentious reader who knows German as well as I do:

"A scream in the secret police headquarters — if this is a Schlüsselerlebnis, so is my ingrown toenail. It may be unpleasant, but surely not out of the ordinary."

You don't know what faith is, my quarrelsome friend. Faith and loyalty.

"To what? To whom?"

To the man in whose name I had lived for twelve years of my life, and whose grave I had come to visit, my stepfather, Bodo, who wanted his children to be among those who inherit the kingdom of heaven on earth.

"You didn't tell that to the border guards."

It was none of their business. That was between me and Bodo. As I said, I was loyal to him.

"To him and his folly."

His folly, yes. His foolish, generous faith in the perfectibility of man by political arrangement. And that was why I was shocked by the sound of a scream in an East German secret police station.)

I must have sat there for another half hour. I was scared. I had come home through the cellar door and discovered a foul-smelling basement I never knew existed. There were rats in there, snakes. But no animal behaves like this. What should I call them: fascists? Fascists don't read Marx and Lenin. Whatever they were, I no longer felt safe in their company.

At last the man with the two-toned shoes came out to conduct me to my next interrogator, a stocky young man with blond hair and an ironic, not unfriendly expression in his eyes. He asked me to sit down on a chair facing his desk. The man with the two-toned shoes handed him my passports and several typewritten sheets of paper and left the room. The blond man quickly perused the report, compared my face with the two passport pictures, reread the report, shook his head with a snort of derision — was it at me or his colleagues? — and raised his eyes.

"Herr Uhse, Mr. Agee — which should I call you?"

"Agee."

"Pleased to meet you. Geiring."

We shook hands across his desk.

"You want to make a film?"

"Yes. In Cuba."

"You want help from DEFA?"

"Yes, I need it."

"You think they will be interested?"

"I hope so."

"In Carnival?"

"In Cuba."

"Let's say we help you. What would you give us in return?"

"A good film."

"That's not enough."

"A good *socialist* film."

"Films are expensive. This isn't Hollywood, we're talking about a state budget. Money is needed to mend roads, build factories, train teachers. Socialism is not a carnival."

"I know."

"If you did something of genuine, material value for us, we might support your Cuban project. In fact, I can guarantee that."

"What are you thinking of?"

"A show of loyalty. We would ask you to live in West Germany for, say, a few months. You would make contact with certain people there — young, progressive people like yourself — and supply us with regular reports about their activities. We would pay you, naturally — quite well, I might add. You would have a nice apartment."

"That's very interesting," I said. "It's a generous offer. I will think about it. But right now. . . I can't make such a big decision just like that."

"I understand," he said.

"I need time to think, and I'm tired. I need some sleep."

"Of course."

"May I go now?"

"I'll take you to a hotel."

"I already have a hotel."

"Where?"

"On Kurfürstendamm."

He smiled: "No good. We're not finished yet."

"What's lacking?"

"An answer to my proposal, for one. Yes or no? It doesn't have to be now. You can sleep on it."

"Where?"

"I'll find you a room."

He was overestimating his power. Not even a Stasi officer could procure a vacant hotel room in East Berlin, not after midnight and not on the spur of the moment. After five or six tries, Geiring gave up and drove me to the home of an aunt in the country — a picture-book house behind a white lattice fence where a picture-book proletarian couple greeted me with smiles and bows as if a prince had come to honor their dwelling:

"From so far away — America! Can we offer you anything? I'm afraid we don't have much. . . ."

"No, thank you, I just need some sleep."

They guided me upstairs. Geiring waved an ironic bye-bye from below. The guest room: A fat feather blanket on a short bed, flying geese on the wall, lacy curtains, dried flowers in a bowl on the night table.

"Good night."

"Good night."

"If you need anything, just knock."

"Thank you very much."

"You're welcome."

A key turned in the lock.

The first thing I heard after falling asleep was the sound of that key turning in the door again, and a knock. It was Geiring: "Lunch is ready." A light rain was tapping on the tin windowsill. I felt angry, and the thought of my meekness the previous day made me madder. Yes, meekness, not patience — subservient, cowardly meekness. A real DDR-*Untertan* I'd been.[1] Today I would thump the table. Today I would demand my American passport back, yes indeed, and tell them where to deposit the other one.

Geiring, his aunt, and her husband were awaiting me at a festively set table: Roast duck, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, three kinds of vegetables, Soviet champagne.

"To a happy homecoming," Geiring said, lifting his glass. What was this? Flattery? Apology? Seduction? I sat down and joined in the toast. The old couple beamed at me with obsequious malice. The old man in particular sucked his champagne through fluted lips and drank me in with his eyes. Evidently Geiring had told them a few things about me. A familiar of Abusch, and a prisoner in their house! What a day, what a day!

"May I ask you a personal question?" Geiring asked.

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[1] *Untertan*: "Subject," "vassal," "underling." But to catch the proper meaning, add to these English words a gesture of inward and outward stooping expressive of voluntary and even grateful subjection.

"You mean yesterday's questions weren't personal?"

"They were analytical. This one is personal."

I gave him a nod for permission.

"You have lived here for twelve years," he said, "and three years in America. You were born there, but spent your formative years here. Which do you consider your home?"

"There's a saying," I said, "'*Heimat* is where I am needed.'"

"That sounds right," Geiring said.

"But for me," I continued, "*Heimat* is where I'm not made to feel like a stranger."

He nodded thoughtfully.

"So which country is it?"

"Not here," I said.

He didn't ask any further, and no one else spoke either. I watched him eating. He was severing the meat from his drumstick with a fork and knife, never once touching the bone with his fingers. His aunt started fidgeting with her napkin. The old man chewed rapidly with cracking jaws. Outside, birds were singing.

Geiring's aunt started clearing the table. I offered to help. "No, no," she protested, "stay seated, there's more."

"By the way," Geiring said, putting his hand in his breast pocket, "before I forget." And he handed me my passports — both of them.

If this was meant to disarm me, it worked. I took my new-found Yankee defiance and put it in my breast pocket along with the passports.

Geiring's aunt came back with dessert — plum pudding.

"May I ask *you* a personal question?" I asked Geiring.

He looked at me sideways and waited.

"If you were to choose a different line of work, which would it be?"

"Psychology," he said.

"As a therapist?" Now I was being ironic.

"No," he said, sincerely. "As an analyst."

After lunch, Geiring offered to drive me to the city.

"Where do you want to be taken?"

"To the *Dorotheenstädtischer Friedhof.* My stepfather's buried there."

When we reached the graveyard, he gave me a piece of paper with his name and phone number.

"You have three days to respond to my offer."

"And if I don't?"

He smiled ambiguously.

We shook hands in a spirit of frank mutual indifference. I thanked him for the ride.
"Good bye."
"Good bye."
I never saw him again.

A herd of glistening black umbrellas preceded me through the gate to the cemetery. Beneath them, uniforms — a delegation of railroad men come to take leave of a colleague. A gardener showed me the way: "Bodo Uhse? To the left, near Kant and Fichte, ten steps before Brecht."

There it was, a tall, narrow rectangle with his name in tall, narrow capitals. I immediately felt a hot proprietary wrath at whoever had designed the stone, because he, or she, or they, more likely, had known him well but not well enough: these shapes did signal something recognizably his, but it was an aspect of him I had never accepted and wasn't prepared to accept now, something rigid and narrow that wasn't alive but constricting, that throttled the life in him when he still lived. The life, I say, but I don't mean the raw vital urge, I mean something rarer, a vaporous poetic soul-substance that moved in slow, curving, tentative gestures, that veiled itself in cigarette smoke and made his voice trail off to near-inaudibility.

(Why didn't they use his signature? Because you cannot even recognize it as such, let alone read his name in it, because it looks like a polygraph or seismograph registering God knows what secret disturbances, because the public needs clarity and information, not riddles. But riddles can be deciphered, and if you read this scrawl in the symbolic language of forms, you can see, first of all, how he joined his given and his family name in a single burst of up- and downward pulsations, as if to belie the cut he made between his family and himself at the age of seventeen; how the first steep Gothic stab at heaven is followed by an immediate dive back to earth; a modest bourgeois elevation then, followed by another, notably shorter flight, and another vertical descent; the line stops a little above the median, as if to avoid touching earth so soon again, lifts itself feebly, sinks, picks itself up, relaxes briefly, and soars up once more, but lower than the second flight and less than half the height of the first; plunges down far beneath the median, down, down with a will, as far down as the line soared up in its first sweep, and forms a decisive, curiously angular loop at the bottom, as if to anchor its transcendence there since it cannot do so on top; flies upward again, a long, razor-straight line, up, up, but coming as it does from far below, it rises only a little beyond the median, violently drops again to the furthest bottom, leaps up a last time, just barely reaching the middle plane, bends, and expires in a soft downward curl with just the subtlest intimation of another ascent before vanishing altogether. As a graphic

sign, it is elegant, beautifully balanced. How much more of his nervous, unhappy spirit it carries than those eight solemn letters.)[2]

In front of the stone stood a rusty tin can half full of rainwater. I, too, just stood there getting wet, feeling the sorrow of Bodo's absence and thinking that this was something I had felt even when he was near me during his lifetime. And then memories started to rise up. I could see Bodo as I had seen him on this same path just four years before, walking slowly next to me, one hand holding the other behind his back, his face relaxed, almost smiling. He had come here often, and now he had brought me with him, either with didactic purpose or, more probably, to share with me his pleasure in silently communing with the illustrious dead. But I had just wanted to get away, his reverence irritated me, I would much rather read the poets and thinkers than muse on their tombstones. And now, with a blunt ache I remembered a moment when I was sitting alone in the back of our car, I was twelve or thirteen, Bodo was sitting in the front next to Jochen, our driver. It must have been on the tree-lined street that led in a two-and-a-half-hour detour alongside the border from our village to Berlin. The car had slowed down. It was drizzling, just as it was now in front of his grave. We were passing a crew of workers repairing a road. They had put down their tools and were on their way to a nearby barracks, maybe to get out of the rain. One of them was a boy a year or two older than I was, he was walking side by side with a man who had laid an arm around the boy's back and a hand on his shoulder. The man was old enough to be the boy's father, but they looked like friends. It went through my heart like a stab. As I said, my stepfather was absent much of the time, not just from me but from himself. And now that absence was stamped with the seal of eternity.

I walked on. When I came to Brecht's grave, I stopped. On the broad horizontal slab lay some fifty long-stemmed carnations in a heap — a disproportionate amount, it seemed to me, for a champion of the dispossessed. I took one of Brecht's carnations, went back to Bodo's grave, and put the flower in his rusty tin can.

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[2] A German critic described Bodo's literary style as "alternately cool and passionate, controlled and impetuous, simple-minded and sophisticated, sensitive and brutal, dry and sensual. Every sort of contradiction besets his work, polar tensions which, frequently, he can neither overcome nor elucidate. But there is one thing one always senses — the suffering of this man who [in his novel *Leutnant Bertram*] wrote: 'These days it is a curse to be German.' Marcel Reich-Ranicki, DEUTSCHE LITERATUR IN OST UND WEST, p. 445, Munich, 1963.

KILLING A TURTLE

Joel Agee

A friend of my mother's introduced me to the folk singer and photographer John Cohen, who was planning to make a documentary film about Kentucky country musicians and needed an assistant. I said I wanted the job, he said "you got it." I said I had no experience with a movie camera, he said "I don't either." In fact he didn't have a camera.

We borrowed a 16-mm. Bolex from a friend of his. He showed us how to mount it on the tripod, load it, wind it, use it. We should give the machine a trial run, though, he said, just to make sure it was in working order. The trial run took place on top of a second friend's house. We were going to film the roofs of the Village, the sky, the pigeons, each other. But a third friend of John's dropped by, a folksinger named Bob Dylan who was all excited about some new songs he had written, and we ended up making a fifteen-minute film of him. I recognized him immediately: "I saw you at the Gaslight Cafe," I said.

"I saw you too," he said. "You walked out on me. You and your girl."

"It wasn't because of you," I said.

"I didn't think so," he said.

John Cohen was the filmmaker and I was the assistant. Throughout our work in Kentucky, he rarely let me use the camera. But on that roof, he let me do the shooting. After all, it was just a trial run.

Because we didn't have any sound equipment, Bob Dylan could pretend to do virtuoso runs up and down the neck of his guitar. Then he sang one of his new songs, something involving a request for a pillow from the woman who had locked him out of her room.

"It's rock-'n-roll!" John said.

"Yeh. Do you like it?"

"You've got something there. Keep it up."

"I will."

Memory is fickle, and maybe snobbish, and fame is a glue that makes time stick fast for a while. Why else would a relatively banal moment like this one continue to burn as

clear as yesterday while the entire month I spent in Kentucky, in circumstances as strange to me and as interesting as any I have encountered since, lies largely submerged in oblivion, with just a few details rising through the mist like fragments of a dream? But as I jot down these fragments, I see others coming up with them: The tiny village of Daisy, some twenty wooden houses scattered in a valley among rugged hills, and the long, haggard face of one of its denizens, Roscoe Holcomb, looking old in his early sixties, with thin sad lips and creased cheeks, deep-set puzzled pale blue eyes shaded by a wide-brimmed hat, bony hands plucking the banjo strings, singing with a high reedy voice:

"Uhcross the Rocky Maa-oon-taaaaaaaaains . . .
Ah've traaaaaaaa-veled fur'n'wide. . . ."

An alien sound interferes, it's Chubby Checker on the radio, Roscoe's daughter is dancing the twist and maybe protesting against the folkways we're here to record. Roscoe quietly puts down the banjo and looks out over the hills, as he often does, sometimes for hours. There is time in those hills, he told us that: "Waaay back inna ole Pro-high-bition days you could hear the sound of banjers comin down, clangity-clang, from all over dem hee-ills." And now I see the spirit moving like a whirlwind through a dark pinewood church, moving the women especially, "Jesus!" "Oh Jesus!", one of them driven up and off her bench so suddenly she drops her one-year-old — *clunk!* — on the wooden floor: *"waaaaa!"*, to be picked up by another woman, because the mother is hopping up and down with flat feet tight together raising her face and stretching her arms to heaven and letting out strangely sexual yelps and squeals and then dropping to her knees in a puddle of sunlight with her arms thrown out from her sides, her head thrown back, her long blond hair spread over her shoulders, and immediately several women swoop in to stroke her hair, stroke, stroke, urging her deeper into ecstasy, while in front of the altar one of the five musicians, the guitarist, goes into a different kind of seizure, he's strumming away with his eyes rolled up and his whole body vibrating vertically, very fast, so that his shoes rattle against the floor like a jackhammer, and then I notice he's slowly sliding across the platform until he's facing the altar and has his back turned on the congregation. I see Roscoe again, in his garden, stalking one of his chickens with a rifle and shooting it inexpertly in the side and then whacking its head on a rock a few times, while John Cohen and Roscoe's wife and a neighbor watch, laughing and clapping their hands. And now I realize why John urged me to read Isaac Babel's short stories and especially the one called "My First Goose," in which a bookish young Jew conscripted to a Red Army detachment of Cossacks proves his mettle by brutalizing a blind old woman and crushing a goose's head with his heel, and why John told me a couple of times that "we'll make a man of action out of you." That was his fantasy for himself, going South with a banjo and telling the folks there his name was Cone ("no

definitely not Coon, no *sir*, it's Cone as in pine-cone, yup") was as close an equivalent as could be found, in American terms, to Isaac Babel's riding with the Cossacks, and if I flinched at the sight of our dinner still half alive, mangled and fluttering in the bushes, it was because I was still, like the young Babel, content to live with "winter in the heart," ignorant of the inseparable beauty and cruelty of life. Of course John didn't say this outright, but for several days after the chicken episode all our talk took place in the nimbus of some such meaning. For example, I had brought with me a book of poems by Yeats and read out loud to John one evening that tremendous poem, "The Second Coming." There was one phrase in particular that struck me: ". . .and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned." I said I imagined the image had come to Yeats from the common practice, among country people, of drowning kittens in a sack weighted with stones. John shrugged and said: "Maybe. But the poem isn't about pity. The point of view is cosmic, not human. It's the icy lake, not the kittens. And that's something country people know in their bones." It was the shrug that bothered me. I finally told him that I didn't believe in the virtue of blood and cathartic violence. I was quivering with anger, but I spoke with an air of philosophic dispassion. Consequently, the heat of our disagreement simmered on, unacknowledged and unabated, until it manifested itself, not as an argument but in a ghastly and, as it were, illustrative event.

We went to visit the Carsons, a family of musicians. Mr. Carson, a miner, was late coming home from work. We waited for him. John chatted with Mrs. Carson while she peeled potatoes. A five-year-old girl stood half hidden behind her, staring alternately at me and at John, the expression on her face constantly shifting from a look of wide open astonishment to a faint and quickly suppressed tickle of amusement, which, I noticed, overcame her especially at moments when I spoke, I suppose because of my unfamiliar accent. Another daughter, approximately my age, sat shucking corn and partaking in her mother's conversation with smiles and nods of her head. A third girl, fourteen or fifteen years old, tall and slender, with carrot-red hair reaching down to her waist, appeared briefly at the edge of the kitchen from behind the doorpost and watched me as I loaded the camera. When I looked at her, she withdrew — slowly, as if to hide the very movement of her disappearance. After a while, half her body and face emerged again, and this time I avoided looking at her. With Mrs. Carson's permission, I took a few preliminary shots of the house and the garden, the chickens, the tethered goat with its legs splayed the better to tear up dry clumps of grass at the foot of the porch, and an old dog twisted in furious battle with the fleas at the root of his tail. Presently Mr. Carson could be heard roaring up the hill and with a bump through the creek we had stopped at on our drive up, and then we saw him in a battered jeep, waving his hat as he pulled up. He was still in his work clothes and

his face and hands were streaked with soot, he hadn't washed up too good, he said, so he couldn't shake hands just yet, but he would be right out, and while he went into the kitchen his wife said, smiling, that sometimes her husband came home looking just like a nigger. Then, by the time he'd come out washed and combed wearing a clean cotton shirt and a fresh pair of frayed overalls and had shaken our hands and admired the camera and chatted with John and played on John's banjo and listened to John playing, the light had gotten too dark for shooting and John asked if we could come back, maybe Sunday after church, and make pictures of all of them singing, and Mr. Carson said that would be just fine, and for now, he hoped we could stay for dinner because he'd brought something special, a big surprise for the kids, but it would take some work to prepare it and then a good long time of cooking. John said he was sorry but we were expected for dinner at the Holcombs', but he'd sure like to see what the big surprise was. I started packing up the gear while Mr. Carson went down to his jeep and lifted a pile of rags off the back seat and, with an effortful squatting heave, lifted a large object and turned and walked toward us with bent knees pressing it against his waist, a giant snapping turtle, upside down, legs walking the air in slow motion, the gray serpentine head swiveling slowly from side to side. He put the turtle on its back on a table next to the porch and said to his youngest daughter, who was still hiding behind her mother, "Emily, go tell America to come on out." And while Emily went inside, he went into a shed in the back of the house and came out with a hammer and a handful of nails and laid them next to the turtle, which was still steadily moving its feet, and pulled out a jackknife and opened it and put it next to the hammer and nails, and said, looking at John, that he hoped we didn't mind if he just got to work on the turtle, and John said that was no problem at all, we'd be leaving soon anyhow, and picked up his banjo, and started playing a cheerful, here-we-sit-on-the-porch sort of tune. Emily came out with her older sister. All I remember now of her appearance is that her skin was of that creamiest white that makes the lips look painted, and that her eyes were wide-set and of gentle expression and ferociously blue, but what I thought then was: I can see why she hides herself, she's dangerous to look at.

"Girl," Mr. Carson said, "it ain't polite, hidin back there when folks come and visit."

She bowed her head.

"You remember Mr. Cone?"

"I sure do," she said, smiling at John and nodding hello. John nodded and smiled back, still playing his tune. Then she came over to me, and as we shook hands, she made a slight dipping movement, a remnant or intimation of a curtsy, and in that moment I heard Mr. Carson pounding in his first nail. I pressed the girl's hand and held her eyes with mine, and then my chest began to ache as if some sharp thing was being driven into me, and there

was no telling, later, when I thought back on it, whether it was the sight of her or the thought of the mute agony on the table that made me feel that way, or some unimaginable amalgam of these, but the frightening notion was there right away, that if I had to stay here another day, I would fall in love with this girl. "Joel," I said, "my name's Joel." "My name's America," she said, and "pleased to meet you," she added, and began to blush. I released her hand, I'd held it much too long, and for a moment the only sounds were those of John's quiet playing and of the corn dropping softly into the pot between the oldest girl's feet, and of Mrs. Carson's knife carving the peel off the potatoes, but then came the pounding of the hammer again, and I decided to turn and look.

Emily was standing by the table, next to her father. The turtle was still upside down, its hind legs steadily walking — or, who knows, in a turtle's measure, maybe scampering, racing. Mr. Carson was pressing one hand against the gray under-shell and with the other pulling the turtle's left front leg out of its socket and over the rim of the shell and forcing it all the way down to the table. Then he set a nail against the foot and took the hammer and drove the nail through the foot into the table. The other front foot was already nailed down and grotesquely elongated. The neck, too, was pulled long and taut like a rubber rope and held fast by a nail just below the jaw, which was mouthing the air in a sideward scissoring motion. Mr. Carson picked up the knife and stepped around the table and bent over the turtle, blocking my sight. What I saw was the child, who was standing opposite. I looked at John, who was still plunking away at his ditty, and realized he couldn't see what Mr. Carson was doing, though he might well have imagined it, if he wished to. What he couldn't imagine, what I could not imagine either, though I was looking into her face, was what was happening to Emily. But it froze the blood in my veins to see the signs of it: her shoulders hunched almost up to her ears, her mouth open, the corners of her lips pulled way down, her arms cramped to her sides, her fingers splayed. She didn't look human. A demon? No. If I were to paint a soul at the gate of hell, that is how I would picture it: right on the threshold, looking down, with nothing to hold her. Ten feet away, her two sisters, her mother, and John, like the rustic extras in a Brueghel landscape. But there is another figure in this tableau. Of course I can't see him. It's me. I am just looking. Everything in me has turned cold, and in that coldness, there is no pity, no pain, only the prayer for an end.

Mapping the Dark

A Museum of Ambient Disorders

Rosamond Casey

Mapping the Dark: A Museum of Ambient Disorders originated as a gallery installation by the artist, Rosamond Casey, at the McGuffey Art Center in Charlottesville, Virginia in March, 2003. The artist has created ten works of visual fiction, which are 'collaborations' with imaginary characters. The works are psychological portraits that begin with the 'art' or visual material her characters have left behind as a residue of a peculiar turn of mind: a worry, a craving, a secret wish or loss.

A Museum of Ambient Disorders is a collection of a collection of books, photographs, collages, sculptures, and paintings. Each piece suggests, through narrative clues and the urgency of the character's mark, the conditions which have driven each individual to produce the work exhibited. The artist plays the role of collector and curator in addition to straddling the line between self and other.

Placed around the gallery space are small black and white photographs alluding to the characters. The viewer is invited to draw connections between the artwork and the elusive identities in the photographs and to examine the possibility of relationships between characters.

In addition to the individual works, the artist has produced a limited first edition of 15 leather-bound clamshell boxes each containing ten volumes, which fold out into a narrative display of each character's work.

The boxed version of A Museum of Ambient Disorders is bound in cow leather and black Japanese silk. The interior contains ten 5″x 8″ volumes bound with black roofing-rubber covers that are stamped in gold with each work's title. The title appears again on each spine engraved in a gold metallic strip. Gold eyelets at the top and bottom foredge of each booklet secure a black elastic band that closes the book around its contents. The contents consist of a 7- panel accordion digital photographic presentation of the roughly 100 images that make up the Museum of Ambient Disorders.

WHITE NOISE

Photo Rosamond Casey

When Harold learned that he'd be deaf before
the year was out, the 62 year-old Water
Resource Engineer started collecting the sounds
of his life in bottles, passing them through
the air, labeling them and sealing
them up with corks
for later use.

For the complete piece, see *Archipelago* on-line.

PARADISE, LAST

Holly Woodward

Varlam Shalamov spent seventeen years as a prisoner of conscience in Siberian work camps. At twenty-one, while a law student in Moscow, he was arrested and sentenced to hard labor in Siberia "until war's end." After that, the soviet state sentenced him to ten more years for calling the Nobel Laureate Ivan Bunin a classic author. After Stalin's death, Solzhenitsyn asked Shalamov to co-author a history of the gulag, but the long years of physical abuse and grueling work in sub-zero temperatures without enough food left him too weak for the vast project.

Still, Varlam Shalamov encompasses vast territory in the shortest of his stories. In "Iagody" (Berries), a Siberian labor camp prisoner describes how two guards beat him for falling exhausted in the snow.

"Now do you understand?" the guard, Seroshapka, asks the bleeding man.

"I understand," he answers, and walks silently back to camp.

The next morning, the brutal guard escorts him with other inmates to a field whose trees they've already felled and orders them to dig up frozen roots for fuel. Seroshapka marks with dry grass hung on branches the boundaries beyond which prisoners may not set foot. When an inmate strays beyond the markers, the guards are supposed to fire a warning shot into the air; if it goes unheeded, they may shoot the transgressor.

The narrator and the inmate by his side pick withered, frozen berries. His partner, Rybakov, saves them to exchange with the guards' cook for bread. The narrator savors each shriveled fruit as he picks it.

At the end of the dark winter afternoon, the pair stray toward the grass markers. The narrator notices them overhead and turns back, warning his friend. Rybakov moves to gather a large cluster of fruit just beyond the invisible line and Seroshapka shoots him in the back, then fires at the sky so it seems to the others, out of sight but within earshot, that he had first given fair warning.

"Rybakov looked strangely small as he lay among the hummocks. They sky, mountains, and river were enormous, and God only knew how many people could be killed and buried in the hummocks," Shalamov writes.

Seroshapka calmly orders the rest to march back to camp. He hits the narrator's back with his rifle, saying, "I wanted you, but you wouldn't cross the line, you bastard."

Shalamov's "Berries" echoes Chekhov's story, "Gooseberries," in which a character says that if he could have a small plot of land with berries, he would be happy. Chekhov's line is a response to Tolstoy's statement that all a person needs is six feet of earth — for his grave. In Shalamov's tale, the small field of berries becomes a man's grave because he desired some of the fruit. The prisoners in this story need just a bit more than allowed by the regime that is burying them alive. The privileged Russians in Chekhov's nineteenth century tale yearned for a simple life close to nature, gathering berries; the Siberian inmates in Shalamov's fiction live that way, but the authorities succeed in twisting the small wish into a vast nightmare.

The Russian revolutionaries who overthrew the czar at first strove for utopia. Then the soviets under Stalin's reign of terror sent prisoners into one last, unspoiled land and forced them to ruin it. Countless thousands in heavily guarded camps starved to death while food grew in profusion just outside the barbed wire.

All limits imposed by the camps were as senseless as the grass markers in this story. Who could have escaped Kolyma? It was a prison the size of Western Europe, guarded on the north by the Arctic Circle, on the east by the Pacific, and on the southwest by mountain ranges.

As this story shows, the regime was not concerned with keeping bodies from littering the pristine snow. The guards in "Berries" rule a reverse Eden: a small, circumscribed place in which political prisoners, as punishment for not being criminal, had to fell trees. They did not have the right to fall, as we see at the start. The guards decided when they should drop dead.

What separated the guards from their charges? In the picture Shalamov gives, the prisoners of conscience are condemned for what they supposedly know (though little of it proves helpful in their circumstances) while the guards seem blissfully indifferent to the pain their cruelty causes. The narrator tells us all the guards' names, but the guards call inmates by derogatory epithets only. Shalamov's narrator is never addressed, so he seems an anonymous Everyman. Prisoners and guards are intimate strangers, witnessing each other's lives and deaths.

From all accounts, the gulag staff hated the intellectual prisoners more than the hardened convicts; both guards and criminals blamed the intelligentsia for fomenting the revolution that led to a brutal totalitarian regime. The young, conscripted guards were prisoners of the system, too; their jobs were a rare opportunity to escape a meager rural

subsistence, and it seemed to them that the intelligentsia of Moscow and Leningrad had long enjoyed greater privilege and luxury. Political prisoners far outnumbered criminals, who served shorter sentences, but the guards encouraged the most violent convicts to dominate the prisoners of conscience. Were the guards a little afraid, as the innocent had some reason to rebel?

Tolstoy, Chekhov and Shalamov's writings about desire and land are palimpsests on the story of Eden. Both Genesis and "Berries" chronicle two figures ordered to stay within a small plot on threat of death. The first trespassers in each tale are condemned before even hearing the warning: God never warns Eve directly; before creating Eve, God tells Adam not to eat the fruit. And Shalamov's guard fails to fire a warning shot.

In "Berries," the guard is arbitrary, terse, murderous, and emotionally distant. The coldness of his heart is much more deadly than the Siberian climate, which still allows life and beauty. Seroshapka has only one job, to make sure no prisoners escape. The inmates build a fire for him — only guards were allowed fire, Shalamov says. At the start of the piece, the fallen narrator looks up at his "rosy-cheeked, healthy, well-dressed full" tormentor. To starved, wounded prisoners like the narrator, this armed guard would seem as unassailable as if he were the angel at Eden's gate. Seroshapka (whose name suggests "sulfur-capped") sets up boundaries that he admits at the end are meant to tempt the narrator to take the forbidden, fatal fruit.

Does cowardice, broken spirit, survival instinct or wisdom keep him from succumbing to the temptation? Shalamov doesn't say — and does it matter? In a police state, fear can seem preferable to intellect, which may be a potentially fatal burden, like all contraband. The narrator clearly wants us to feel that he is more dead at heart than the man killed while reaching out with desire for something that lived and gave life. The survivor here is a shadow figure, separated from his partner by a thin line.

Like Adam and Eve, soviet prisoners of conscience were condemned for their knowledge — but who can help knowing what's in plain sight? Why such a high price for what we seem made to gather? In this Siberian story, following one's nature, obeying one's survival instincts, is a capital crime. Gathering fruit seems such an innocuous act, but the transgression is punishable by death in Genesis, too. Does desire so frighten the powers that be, however great? Is it because desire is endless? In Shalamov´s story, the narrator eats the fruit, but his friend is executed. This small flicker of human nature was the tip of the iceberg that frightened soviet authorities. Nature's vast, cold landscape dwarfed the great gulag system. But Shalamov's vision shows that one does not have to construct a new

Eden, one has only to let down one's guard and take away the imaginary line that forbids entry.

Prisoners repeatedly carved one word into walls of the gulag: "Why?"

No one ever seems to have carved an answer.

Primo Levi writes in SURVIVAL AT AUSCHWITZ of his first day at the German camp. After a number is tattooed on his arm, he walks to the barracks, where the guards "severely forbid touching or sitting on the bunks for no apparent reason but cruelty…. Tormented by parching thirst from the journey, I eyed a fine icicle outside the window, within hand's reach." Here there's no tempting fruit — only a knife of ice, the one thing growing in the concentration camp. "I broke off the icicle but at once a large, heavy guard prowling outside brutally snatched it away from me. 'Why?' I asked him. 'There is no why here,' he replied."

Though perhaps only the dead could answer, Levi and Shalamov keep asking.

Stalin's regime tried to destroy the Russian Orthodox church and appropriate its power. He sought to erase the past and start from scratch, rewriting history with himself as god. Whole bureaucracies worked to eliminate the executed from historical records. Secret offices erased their images from photos. Sometimes their shadows remain on the white ground, like this shadowy narrator in the Siberian field.

What becomes of this totalitarian attempt to rewrite history through force? The same old story repeats itself until it falls apart and all the players are dead. The guard´s second gunshot, fired to deceive listeners, echoes the soviet campaign to revise truth with bullets.

Iagoda, whose name means "berry," was Stalin's chief of secret police for many years. He oversaw the arrest, torture, exile and execution of thousands of Russian intellectuals. Iagoda experimented with various means of murder and torture; poison was his favorite hobby. In the late thirties, he fell into the machinations of his own brutal system. Iagoda was imprisoned, tortured into confession, and finally shot against a wall in his chief prison.

Though gulag prisoners harvested graphite and lumber to supply the government with writing materials, inmates were forbidden to write. Some carved messages into the trees they felled. Downstream, women searched the logs for news.

In the story "Graphite," Shalamov tells us that camp authorities used only graphite to record the names of the dead. As graphite has disintegrated to the point where it cannot

break down any further, the records will last forever. And in their frozen mass graves, so will the pencil-thin bodies with their nametags of graphite on wood.

The mineral's name comes from the Greek word "to write." Shalamov says, "Graphite is carbon that has been subject to enormous pressure for millions of years … that might have become coal or diamonds. Instead, it has become something more precious, a pencil that can record all it has seen." He notes the paradoxical hardness and softness of the strange substance.

Shalamov writes later in the same piece, "Paper is one of the transformations of a tree … like diamonds or graphite." Paper and pencil both come from the wood the author was forced to cut down. Through them he records some of what soviets destroyed in Kolyma.

"Berries" begins with a rifle butt held to the narrator's head as the guards try to communicate through the silent language of blows. The story ends with a gun barrel in his back. Rybakov is murdered because he has hope and tries to provide for his future; his death suggests there's no future in hope. But the survival of Shalamov's works tells another story. His writing begins and ends with words quietly inscribed on the page. Like the small wires that tie penciled names to the bodies of his dead comrades, Shalamov's short works document lives that the soviets tried to erase.

N.B.: The quotations here are from John Glad's translations. He has published two volumes of Shalamov's stories: GRAPHITE, in which "Berries" appears, and KOLYMA TALES, published by Norton in 1981 and 1980, respectively.

fiction

SISTERLY LOVE

Miriam Ben-Yaacov

Chaia smiled when Dov entered their apartment and tossed a newspaper to her. He knew she longed for news of events in Europe.

She leaned against the Moroccan scatter cushions. Her feet, tanned under her leather-thonged sandals, lay crossed on the Bedouin rug. The stray cat she befriended curled against her legs.

Outside date tree fronds brushed against each other, like venetian blinds disturbed by wind, more rustle than metallic sound.

Chaia and Dov embraced, made love even before Dov washed or ate. After, as they lounged on the coil mattress, Chaia turned troubled eyes on Dov.

"Do you love me?" she asked peeling oranges and feeding him.

"'Course I do," smiling, he gathered her to him.

Chaia and Dov were married three years. Theirs was a happy marriage. They had met in the condoctoria where Chaia worked as a waitress. Midmorning, on his way to work, Dov stopped there for breakfast. It was quiet at that hour, the rush over. Chaia would pour herself a cup of coffee and sit with him while he ate his pastry.

"Wait!" she said, untangling herself from Dov's limbs and picking up the letter from her sister, Sarah. She glanced at the picture of Sarah that was stuck in the corner of the mirror. Sarah was three years younger than Chaia, smaller and more delicately boned, but with the same lean, long-limbed look.

"I love my sister very much. I want her to come to Palestine."

"I know," Dov replied.

The wind-chime's tone melded with children's laughter. Two orange branches stuck in a milk bottle sat on the windowsill. Orange blossom perfume, sweet, mingled with the salt air.

"Time's running out," Chaia said.

While serving pastries at the condoctoria, Chaia had mulled over ways to get Sarah out of Poland. Slowly a plan took shape. She was embarrassed, did not believe her plan could work, yet she had to try.

Now was the time to share her plan with Dov. She took a deep breath. "If Sarah marries a Palestinian Jew, she can come," she said.

"So?"

"Divorce me. Travel to Poland. My parents will send the money. They've never met you. They won't know you are the fictitious groom. We'll say you are your cousin, same name, everything. Marry Sarah. Bring her to Palestine. Divorce her. Marry me again."

"What if I fall for her?"

"How could you even think of that?" The brown specks in Chaia's eyes flashed burnt sienna, the color of her long hair, now unbraided. The color of the clusters of freckles on her nose, cheekbones, and scattered around her shoulder blades.

"Don't be so serious," Dov said as he picked up a fallen leaf. He brushed it across Chaia's forehead, down her nose, over her mouth and chin, stopping at her breasts. "Who'd kiss your freckles then?" he asked.

Turkish coffee bubbled in the copper finjan. Small coffee cups waited on the bronze circular tray. Two rolls, butter, and halvah sat on a plate.

Chaia did not know what made Dov agree. Was it adventure-lust? Curiosity about her sister? or the trip and meeting her parents?

The trip held many dangers, but Chaia overlooked them. Her main concern was to salvage whomever she could of her family from the crazy maelstrom that was Europe in the 1930s.

The divorce proceedings went smoothly. Dov was subdued. Chaia, busy buying gifts for her parents, was unaware of his thoughts and did not notice the change in his behavior.

She bought a daily prayer book bound in silver plate and ornamented with agates and silver scrolls for her father, and a necklace of tiny, intricate, silver medallions, in the Yemenite style, for her mother. For Sarah she bought a blue caftan with embroidery around the neckline and cuffs.

Dov traveled by boat to Istanbul, Turkey, and then walked or rode trains through Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia into Poland.

Chaia knew when the mailman came because the old woman that lived in the apartment above hers always watched for him. When she saw him approaching she shuffled to the mailboxes. Chaia followed the sound of her cane tapping on the steps.

Like Chaia, the old woman lived for the letters the mailman drew from his mailbag. The old woman's children lived in Vilnius, Lithuania.

"Why do you live so far from your children?" Chaia asked her.

"It's tradition in my family. My parents, my grandparents before them, all, when they got old, they came to the Holy Land to die and be buried here. This apartment's belonged to my family for eight generations. When I die, it will go to my firstborn child."

"Aren't you lonely?" Chaia asked.

"My husband, may his soul rest in peace, died six months ago. One day, God willing, I will not wake up. I'll join him. I wish for it to come soon," she said.

She peered through her glasses at Chaia. "You're husband, I don't see him a long time. Such a handsome young fellow, such nice, even teeth."

Chaia pottered with the basil she grew in ceramic containers.

The old woman leaned closer. "I don't hear so well," she said.

"I sent him to bring my sister," Chaia said. "We divorced so he could marry her and bring her as his wife. That way the British will allow her to enter Palestine."

The old woman's face darkened. "Hitler's making everybody crazy!" she spat, then turned and peck, pecked her way to her apartment.

Chaia's parents, in their letters, wrote how wonderful Dov's cousin was, how safe they felt letting their youngest, their last daughter, travel with him to Palestine. They added that they would not mind if this turned into a real marriage.

Dov rarely wrote to her. Chaia did not think this unusual. She knew her parents would think it strange that her husband's cousin wrote her letters. The few letters he wrote were strained, distant.

"It's good to meet your parents," Dov wrote. "The shtetl is different from Palestine. I like walking with your father. I am introduced as the new son-in-law, cousin to Chaia's husband.

"People laugh, Chaiale, they make jokes about two cousins with the same name marrying two sisters." Chaia turned the page. "The wedding will be in ten days. Immediately after, Sarah and I leave for Israel."

Chaia looked at the date stamped on the envelope. May 11, 1935. That meant Dov and Sarah would be married on the 21st, the day she and Dov had exchanged rings.

"Dov, have you forgotten? Couldn't you delay the wedding a day or two?" Chaia cried as she crumpled onto their bed.

"Not once does he write that he misses me," she whispered.

She forced herself to make plans. "The journey back to Palestine lasts two months. They'll arrive during July." She missed Dov. Not only was he her lover, he was her confidante and friend. She had acquaintances yes, people she knew from Poland or met through her work. But she felt reserved with them. With *Dov* she shared every thought, every detail of her life.

She searched the marketplace for sturdy fabric. She wanted to use this fabric to separate their bed from Sarah's sleeping area. She made pastries and did ironing for the potter who lived next door. The pots he gave her in payment she filled with seeds; basil, parsley, mint, tomato, and two small trees, one a lemon tree, the other a bayleaf tree.

She hoped that in a year or two she and Dov would be able to move into a house. "If we live on a communal farm, a moshav, I can stay home, look after chickens, sell eggs, and grow vegetables. We can start a family," Chaia thought. "As soon as Dov returns, we'll try for children."

"Sarah won't mind helping with the baby. Ah! Sarah! What will Sarah do?"

Chaia smiled. "She can take my job as waitress. Or perhaps she can join a kibbutz. Whatever makes her happy. Please God, she should find such a nice, such a good man as I have."

Sometimes Chaia sat on the stone steps at the entrance to the apartments while waiting for the mailman. One day, as she sat on the steps crocheting, the old woman who lived upstairs hobbled up.

"What are you doing?" the old woman asked.

"I am crocheting a baby jacket," Chaia said.

The old woman grabbed the ball of wool from Chaia. "It is forbidden to prepare anything before the baby is born, never mind conceived. You will call Ha-ayin ha-ra, the evil eye."

The time for Dov's return was nearing. Chaia was excited. Her regulars at the condoctoria asked, "A new lover perhaps? A baby on the way?"

Chaia did not know when Dov and Sarah were coming or on which boat they were traveling. She rushed home from work, hoping they had come. When she found the apartment empty, she would be sad, say, "What matters another day, another week in the long run."

She walked along the seashore, walked till the sun set, then turned towards home. She returned home exhausted and slept till first light.

The first week of July passed. Then, a Thursday, she remembered it was Thursday, because on Thursdays the cheesecakes and apple strudel were baked for the Sabbath trade. She bought a burnt cheesecake and a few apples home for supper.

She remembered the sun was bright, not hot, the sea, azure, calm. The street vendors' wagons were piled high with bananas. Sheaves of drying dates lay alongside, then prickly pears, and pyramids of red pomegranates. She fished in her pocket for a coin, paid the fruit vendor for a pomegranate and bit it open, sucked the pips into her mouth, sucked the blood-juice dry as she walked to the old Arab apartment house where she lived.

She wiped her hands on her apron then opened the door. "Strange that it opened without being unlocked," she thought. "I must be more careful next time."

As soon as she opened the door she knew Dov and Sarah were there. It was not only the smell of the finjan on the burner; it was the smell of bodies in the sterile apartment. The cat was sitting on the window ledge, its tail flicking.

She should have realized something was wrong. They were sitting too close together, and on the bed, her bed. She was happy to see them and did not notice that Dov moved slowly to embrace her, that Sarah turned her face when they hugged.

Chaia held Dov's hand as she walked around Sarah. "My little sister has blossomed. What a beautiful woman you've become, even more beautiful that I anticipated."

Again she hugged Sarah. "Won't you cause a stir among the young men," she said.

Sarah blushed.

"What? Shy? You?"

¶

Chaia shuddered when she woke from her reverie.

That very afternoon, as she walked out the makolet with her basket of groceries, something caught her eye. She looked and saw Dov and Sarah crossing the street.

Dov's body had filled out. Gray flecked his temples. Sarah walked with a stooped rounded back.

Then, just as quickly they were gone.

"They're dead! Dead to you! You mourned for them twenty years ago," Chaia sobbed. "All you saw were ghosts, ghosts of two people you once loved."

Her voice grew harsh, angry. "How dare they come to my neighborhood," she muttered to herself as she slammed the groceries on the kitchen table. She could barely breathe. Her temples and the back of her head pounded like the pumping piston of the drills used to search for water in the Negev. She cursed this chance meeting that brought back painful memories. She could not stand to be inside. She grabbed a shawl, hid her head and shoulders beneath it and rushed out, forgetting to close the door, forgetting to switch off the burner on which the water boiled for her tea .

She did not hear the terse radio announcement. "America, France, and England order the Israeli Army to stop pursuing the fleeing remnants of the Egyptian Army." It was 1957, the last days of the Sinai War, nine years after the Balfour Declaration, after the establishment of a Jewish State in British Mandated Palestine.

She walked up and down the streets of Bnei-Brak, bumping into people, not apologizing, just trying to stop the searing in her chest.

The people of Bnei-Brak knew she stayed alone and that she worked at the Osem factory. "She must be from the camps," the people said. "Israel's filled with half-crazies. Who wouldn't be crazy if you saw your family cremated, your baby thrown against a wall."

"One can see she'd been a beautiful woman. Perhaps they used her to pleasure the German soldiers," another said. "She looks old, but that doesn't mean much. When one has experienced such strange times as those in the camps anything is possible."

"Imagine," a matron said in Yiddish, "They sold their bodies for a cigarette, traded lives for a potato. See, children, what comes when one interferes with the wishes of God. Hebrew is a holy tongue, to be used in prayer, not everyday talk." She looked at her two young boys. Both had blonde earlocks and a black skullcap atop their short hair.

The matron straightened her wig, "This madness of coming to Palestine, making it the State of Israel, that's not Hashem's way. He in his own time, blessed be He, will do what is right. See this madwoman walking the street as if possessed by demons. That's what happens to people who interfere with Hashem's plan."

Chaia's mind was burning.

Long after the lights had gone out in the windows and the shutters were drawn, Chaia turned towards her apartment.

Her footsteps echoed above the mewing of the alley cats.

The moonlight was strong enough to show her the way up the stairs to the second floor.

She saw the kettle melted into the burner. Enough registered for her to turn the gas main off. She curled up on her bed and fell into sleep.

Even in her sleep the ghosts would not leave. "Rabenu sel Olam, God of the Universe," she moaned, "why did they come? I never wanted to see them again." She shook. "All I wanted was to save my sister."

"It cost me. It cost me my husband, my dreams, my sanity."

Her body ached from hours of walking. Her chest felt as if it would crack every time she took a breath. But her mind, the one thing she wanted numb, was clear.

The first days after Dov returned with Sarah replayed in Chaia's mind no matter how hard she tried to crush the memory.

She remembered their first night back. She remembered Dov's lovemaking. She remembered urging him to be quieter, saying, "Sarah will hear."

Her family was worldly, not like the ultra-orthodox for which lovemaking was allowed only with the mission of begetting another soul. Still, the modesty of tradition clung to her.

The next morning Dov said to Chaia, "I'll show Sarah Jaffa and Tel Aviv. In a week or so, I'll go back to work."

Sarah did not stir from her bed. Happy to have both Dov and Sarah safe in Palestine, Chaia left for work.

She rushed home at the end of the day and was disappointed to find the apartment empty.

She prepared supper. "Sarah will get used to Mediterranean food," she thought as she cut tomatoes, cucumbers, green peppers and an onion into small cubes, then tossed all in olive oil.

She was putting green olives and cottage cheese on the table when she heard Dov and Sarah laughing at the door. She opened the door and found them kissing. She sprang back, bewildered. Two seagulls circled in the blue air. Far off, a sailboat could be seen.

Dov came to her, rubbed her shoulders, her arms. "Jealous, are we?" he asked. Sounds from the old Jaffa harbor mingled in the cool of early evening.

Chaia was silent during supper. She answered tersely when asked a question.

Dov became angry. "What's with you?" he shouted. "She's my wife. It was your idea. You're the one who wanted the divorce. You're the one who said I should marry her."

"Only to bring her out of Nazi Europe," Chaia said softly.

All the while, Sarah was silent.

Dov wanted to make light of the situation. He made jokes and encouraged the sisters to sing together. But Chaia and Sarah were quiet.

Chaia drank too much wine. She dozed. Dov spoke to her softly, gently, "Come Chaiale. Come to bed." He carried her to their bed. She nuzzled close. Her head fit snugly under his square jaw. Her arms twined around his neck.

The next night, again Chaia drank too much wine. She dozed in her seat. She woke to find the scented candle blown out. She remembered hearing whispering from Sarah's bed. She remembered lying still, pretending to be asleep, when Dov, towards dawn, came to their bed. She rose early and walked the streets till it was time to go to work.

That evening Chaia walked like a drugged person to her apartment. The cobbled streets of Old Jaffa did not excite her as they had before. She bumped into a clay urn of geraniums that stood between her and her neighbors front door. She broke some geraniums as she looked for her front door key.

Dov opened the front door, his face wreathed in smiles. Sarah was busy in her corner. Chaia brushed past Dov. She fed the cat and watered the plants.

Sarah was quiet. "Not even an apology or an explanation," Chaia thought.

Dov tried to cuddle Chaia, to kiss her. She slipped out from under his arms and fled to the door. But Dov was quicker. He barred the door.

"We have to talk," he said, the playfulness gone.

They sat on the low cushions. Chaia, as was her habit when nervous, played with the fringe of the Bedouin carpet. Sarah stroked the cat.

"I have a solution," Dov said. The sisters looked at him. "It has been done before. Our forefathers had many wives. Remember, Jacob worked for seven years for Rachel but was tricked by her father into taking Leah in marriage. He worked another seven years for Rachel."

"Why not Chaia?" Sarah asked. "You are all the family I have. Who knows what will become of Mamma and Papa?

Chaia looked from one to the other. "Could this be my husband and my sister?" she wondered. She shivered, reached for the bottle of wine and hugged it to herself.

That night Dov tried to get both sisters in the same bed. When he saw Chaia was not willing he went to Sarah's bed.

Chaia did not remember how long they lived like that. She had become the outsider.

What was worse was that her menses were late. The one thing she had dreamed of, had wished for, the one thing that was to make her life perfect now seemed like a nightmare. "I can't be pregnant! Not from two nights," she thought.

The nausea started. Sarah found Chaia retching. She called Dov. Both were concerned.

"It must have been the lebenia that made my tummy turn," Chaia lied.

Dov and Sarah soon forgot that Chaia was not feeling well. They were excited about hitchhiking to Haifa for the weekend. They would stop at Kibbutz Maagan Michael on their way.

"Remember my friend Rueven, Chaia, the one who joined Maagan Michael?"

From Maagan Michael they would go to the Roman amphitheater in Caesaria. Dov wanted to show Sarah his favorite place.

"That unfeeling inhumane bastard!" Chaia cried. "How could he!" Caesaria was where they had first made love and where they had spoken of marriage.

Chaia remembered that during that time she came home as late as possible. It was dangerous to walk alone after dark. Arabs were angry because Jews were entering Palestine.

Two Halutzim had been attacked. The newspapers and the radio were full of cautions. Yet Dov and Sarah did not notice that Chaia came home late at night – just to sleep. They did not notice that she had lost weight and that her cheeks were sunken and her skin drawn tight.

Chaia remembered that she was feverish during that time. "I'd rather die than tell them that I am pregnant," she said. Already her stomach was protruding. Soon Dov and Sarah would be able to guess.

She wore loose caftans and long shawls. Only at the condoctoria where she worked did people notice her pregnancy and her feverishness.

Her customers knew her husband had gone to fetch her sister and had returned.

"We're happy to hear that everything worked out well," they said. "It's a pity you look so pale, so thin," they said.

"Yes," Chaia lied, trying to smile. "It's the nausea."

Chaia looked for work far from Jaffa. She had heard that in Bnei-Brak a small factory, Osem, was looking for people to make noodles. She interviewed with one of the brothers who owned Osem. It was agreed that she would start work the following Sunday.

After working at Osem a few days, Chaia searched for a place to live. She knew questions would be asked of a single pregnant woman. She concealed her protruding abdomen and was able to rent a room in an apartment a few blocks from Osem.

Before her move to Bnei-Brak, Chaia spent her free time at the condoctoria. She could not bear to be with Dov and Sarah. She preferred to lie to her former employers, to say that Dov was working late and rather than spend her time alone in the apartment she would help them.

She had told her employers and customers that Dov made good money and since he was concerned about her health, especially with the baby coming, they had decided that she should stop working.

The day before Sukkoth, she walked up the cobbled stairway to her apartment for the last time. She was thankful that Dov and Sarah were not home.

She had prearranged with a porter to move her belongings. He helped her bring her mattress down. The down comforter and pillow that her mother had given her when she left Poland for Palestine, she hugged close to her body as she walked to the porters' three-wheeled bicycle"Are Mamma and Papa still living?" she wondered. Hitler had invaded Poland.

Chaia put her clothes in a clean sheet and tied it in a knot. She took two candles, some matches, and two oranges from the bowl on the windowsill. She sobbed as she stroked the cat goodbye.

The porter let her sit on her mattress as he cycled to Bnei-Brak.

Chaia woke from her reverie, "How many years ago was that?" she asked. She did not know.

She remembered being gaunt and malnourished. She remembered that except for the protuberance at her abdomen, she had no flesh, and that her bones showed through her skin.

She remembered how she became frantic when she felt the baby move or when she saw the outline of a heel or a hand. She loved and hated this child.

"I gave it up for adoption," she thought.

Yet, a door in her mind opened.

She had hidden the pregnancy well. No one knew, or if they suspected, they did not ask.

A detached mocking voice throbbed in her head. "One day the pains started. You went to work, remember?"

Chaia remembered sweat pouring from her body, drenching her clothes. When her fellow workers saw her bent over in pain, they tried to help her.

She pushed them aside. "I ate green apricots," she said. They nodded, apricot sickness was common in the late spring.

"Go home. Rest. Drink lots of fluid," one of the owners said.

Chaia was bent over. Her left hand clutched the edge of the table. She waved her refusal with the other. She was in too much agony to talk.

"I'll keep your job," he assured her. He motioned to another woman who worked with Chaia. "Tovia, take her home. See if you can make her comfortable."

Chaia remembered walking, cramping, contracting, home.

"Maybe I take you to the hospital," Tovia said. "This is more than apricot sickness."

"I live with my sister and her husband," Chaia lied. "My sister's a nurse. She'll take care of me."

Chaia dropped her shawl to hide the blood that was starting to drip. Her dress, soaked in her perspiration, hid her water as it broke and streamed down her thighs. Each step got harder. The birth opening widened. The child was pushing. With each contraction it jammed its head further forward. Only by sheer will did Chaia reach her apartment.

She closed the door and fell onto the floor. The child, insistent, pushed his way out. Chaia woke to a wail. She lifted the child from her mangled skirt. "A boy!" she whispered.

She wiped his nostrils, his eyes and mouth, and put him to her breast.

She covered the child with a clean part of her skirt and her shawl. She remembered nausea, pain, dullness, jumbled together. She remembered moving the child to her other breast, then cupping him close to her body as she dragged herself across the floor to her box of belongings and pulled out a towel with which to cover him.

She fainted. Later – she did not know how much later – she became aware of the moon shinning through the window. She saw the child's head on her breast and remembered that she had given birth. She held the child close. She did not notice that the child was cold.

Again she lost consciousness. When she became aware of her surroundings the following day her throat was seared with thirst.

Memory of the child had been erased. All Chaia remembered was that there had been a time when she was very sick.

"What became of the child?" she now asked.

The voice in her head banged against her skill. "It died. That's what it did. And you – on the second night – without giving him a name, took his corpse into the orange grove behind the apartments."

"No!" she screamed.

"Yes, you did. You took a small bundle and a spade."

"Where would I find a spade?"

"You broke the lock on your neighbor's storeroom."

"I was weak. I had no strength."

"To break the lock. To find the spade, the devil gave you strength."

"Rabenu shel Olam," Chaia moaned.

"You dug a grave. You buried the dead child."

"No!" Chaia shrieked. "No! Surely I was mad."

"Yes," the voice mocked. "You slept in your filth for days. When your strength returned, you drank water, you cleaned the mess. The clothes and afterbirth you were too weak to bury. You hid them under some fallen branches in the orange grove."

"Stop!" Chaia begged as she covered her ears.

She rocked back and forth. "It must be true. All these years I blocked all memory of the child. Now these two, Dov and Sarah, they come to my neighborhood. They dig up the memory of the child."

Feverishly Chaia lifted the lid of the wooden crate in which she kept her belongings. At the bottom she found, hidden, in a white linen tablecloth from her hope chest, the baby garments the old woman had warned her against making. Two knitted jackets, a cap, booties, and some diapers.

She put the tiny pile on the floor in the middle of her room. She found the memorial candle she kept for her parents. Not knowing the date of their death, she had randomly chosen June 13th as their memorial day. Each year, on the eve of that day, she would light a candle for them.

"Dear Lord," she muttered. "I did not even name him. Abraham. Yes, Abraham be his name."

She lit the candle and started praying. "Magnified and sanctified be the glory of God…." She stuck another match and dropped it on the baby clothes, then pressed them to her breast without pausing as she recited the prayers for the dead.

Four Poems

Gu Cheng

Tr. from the Chinese by Aaron Crippen

The Return

don't go to sleep, don't
Dear, the road is long yet
don't go too near
the forest's enticements, don't lose hope

write the address
in snowmelt on your hand
or lean on my shoulder
as we pass the hazy morning

lifting the transparent storm curtain
we'll arrive at where we are from
a green disk of land
around an old pagoda

there I will guard
your weary dreams
and drive off the flocks of nights
leaving only bronze drums, and the sun

as beyond the pagoda
tiny waves quietly
crawl up the beach
and draw back trembling

It Was a Loess Road in Winter

It was a loess road in winter,
lined with stones.
The dust lay at rest in the indifferent sun,
keeping warm in winter's cold.
Tired of walking,
you said: "Don't see that empty house.
Maybe it's gone. Let's sit a while
on this embankment."

I knew the dried grass on this embankment.
With their broken blades offering
all that they had, their feelings,
they said to me:
"In the night, everything can change.
The gentlest breeze can turn into a beast,
loosing howl after wild howl."
They said: "Don't sit too long."
But you were sleeping
lightly against my shoulder.
Your brown hair spread across my chest
so placidly,
too tired even to stir in the breeze.
And the sun couldn't wait.
As its sympathetic eye dimmed
I lost the language to wake you.

It was a loess road in winter.
Night was growing in the shadows.
The first star didn't cry;
it held back golden tears.
Lightly you leaned on my shoulder,
in the warmth of my breathing.
Your lips quivered, talking in a dream.
I know, you were asking your mama's forgiveness.

–October 1981

Sleeping Soundly in Daytime

people sleep lightly in the dark of night
and sleep soundly in daytime

lids drooping they smile
turn their faces and go
parasols turn too
flowers bloom skirts
lax lovers
lie on green sofas in a daze
fat babies and mothers sleep on stones
dusty boys draw up their legs
mumbling that they want to go see the black bear
old men ream tobacco pipes
opening their mouths painfully wide

the sun too sleeps soundly
breathing among pale blue flames
motionless as they flicker
the clouds are asbestos
the lead is brand new
silver distorted pain
glitters in each grain of sand

and the night hasn't moved
in the photo studio
a wind coolly blows
behind smiles of every dimension
a wind coolly blows
the dust is getting sleepy
the camera's empty magazine is empty

Summer Outside the Pane

the crying lasted long through the night
when the sun rose
the raindrops glittered
before steaming away
I didn't wipe the glass
I knew that the sky was blue
and the trees were out there, comparing their hair
clacking their castanets
pretending to be huge predatory insects

it all is so distant

once we were weak as morning cicadas
with wet wings
the leaves were thick, we were young
knowing nothing, not wanting to know
knowing only that dreams could drift
and lead us to the day
clouds could walk in the wind
lakewater could gather light
into a glinting mirror
we looked at the green green leaves

I still don't want to know
haven't wiped the glass
ink-green waves of summer rise and fall
oars knock
fish split the shining current
a red-swimsuit laughter keeps fading
it all is so distant
that summer still lingers
the crying has stopped

To read these poems in Chinese, go to Archipelago on-line.

Birds

Cara Chamberlain

With sheet, wool blanket, and goosedown quilt, I should be warm when I'm in bed, but dragging over the fields and burrowing along my spine there's the usual mist. Or there's a bat glancing off the window. Or could there possibly be a man — some unusual off-season guest — discovering a loose board in the corridor?

But I won't be nervous.

I'll remember trees tonight. I'll think of nothing but leathery leaves, smooth orange bark. Madrones grew thick in the yard where I used to live. They were shiny in the rain, cool and quiet and never bare, though gigantic drifts surrounded them, decades of leaves that had fallen unnoticeably.

Inevitably, I'll end up thinking about goats. Castoffs. High-scented, rough furred animals — sin personified. In the lane near my former house, neighbors kept a tethered goat. If I happened to wander by, I fed him handfuls of grass or clover that grew beyond the circle his rope held him in. After months, he seemed to expect me, and I could even touch his horns and the short coarse fur between them. But his eyes remained cold, dark as tea, with gold seams and rectangular pupils. As he shook his head and looked sideways at me, his whole body trembled with pent-up violence or lust, or both.

Or I'll think of birds. When I came here and began collecting birds, I had no idea things would turn out the way they have. I watched my pets die, first the budgies, then the cockatiels, the parrots, the canaries. I never wanted to get up in the morning, but lay for an hour in bed, wondering which ones would have succumbed since I'd last been awake. I found them — toes curled, eyes drying — wrapped them in newspaper, and hid them in the woods. I have one mynah still — ironically, the most exotic has survived longest. With its orange crest and shining eyes, it seems more alert than anyone I know. It has outsmarted drafty rooms, bad water, pesticides in the seed.

My husband's hotel is a tough place. I like the country better, my old house by the goat or my old campsites near the river. One summer I lived in a tube tent by the Hoopa Reservation. It was a good spot sheltered by oaks and redwoods. The orange plastic I slept in repelled the slugs but nothing else — mosquitoes, spiders, and salamanders. Ospreys used

to perch over the Mad River before blasting down onto a salmon or trout. At night, I used to undress, wade with off-balance steps over the pebbles of the bed, and stand in a backwash, shivering and hoping to be wild, totally free, up to my waist, moonlit circles growing outward until they were engulfed by the main current. But such uninhibited behavior is easy to effect when there's nobody who could possibly be watching. Oh, I was never out of control. I never really left the suburbs that early defined me. Try as I might, I always knew where the headlights were bound to hit, where the E & O Lanes crowd went to relieve themselves on league nights when the bathroom was full.

Then I kept birds.

They used to pace on their wooden perches. They dabbled with their beaks as they drank from plastic cups of water. They sat on my hand, feet clutched around my finger. As they preened and shook, I felt them almost ready to fly. So light. So uncertain. I never determined what killed them. Maybe pulp-mill smoke is a quiet assassin. Breezes from the sewage pond are thick. And, of course, the hotel's old beds, silverfish, marked linens, and bleached towels render this a place where no one should linger. Even the food we eat smells of mothballs, though I've scrubbed and never keep naphtha myself. The true problem may simply be that birds are delicate, unable even to inhale without succumbing to the fumes of domestic work — Ajax, chlorine bleach, Teflon pans.

Now, when I close my eyes, I press every thought back, back. Only uninterpreted, mute images will translate me to sleep. The suffering, peeling, sacrificial madrone. The lascivious goat. I return to the cool horn, the coarse fur. The dying birds. And these notes I write in private, tucking them into the cheap TV console, are food for our silverfish, aren't they?

"Hey, Val!" My husband rings me up. "I need some help down here."

I leave my flannel nightgown on, just tuck it down inside my jeans, and throw a wool sweater over the top. Hall lights in cheap plastic sconces bend paisley red carpet into strange relief. The paisleys' gold outlines appear raised above the floor as I negotiate my way to the ice machine (still stocked and running well, though the vending machine lights are flashing "use exact change" and I suppose that means I'll have to call up Shirl and get her to fill the bins).

"So, what's up?" I ask my husband when I make it down.

He just rolls his eyes and points out into the lobby.

Twenty people, it seems, are rifling through the postcards in the carousels that squeal as they turn. A short man with tiny feet and hands — not a dwarf, but just so small and perfect and, well, like a bird — is admiring the Sasquatch card.

"What the hell—" I start.

"I don't get it either," my husband whispers. "They just pulled up in a van and I guess I ought to wait on them. Do you think they want to stay here?"

"Well, this looks like a hotel."

He shakes his head. Stubs out his cigarette. "We've only got the two rooms clean."

Is it an accusation? I study him, but he's gathering pens and registration cards, and I decide it's just a statement of fact. As such, I agree. But "I never thought—" I begin, in spite of myself, to blurt out the tortured self-defense.

"Who would?" my husband smiles grimly and goes out to meet the crowd.

I hang back behind him. I try not to look too fascinated by the birdman who seems to have decided to buy a Redwood Highway card instead of the Sasquatch. The opened door brought in stirrings of night air that are fighting right now with old cigarette smoke and burned coffee smells. I haven't breathed real air since last Tuesday when I walked along the sidewalk with the linen cart down to the laundry. Only two rooms overlooking the pool I find it necessary to keep up. And then I pray for no visitors.

Every single one of those tourists is staring at us. Tourists? I can't tell. They look a little odd—

"Third Degree Burn," the small man says as my husband takes his place behind the desk. His companions look up. They're not quite young — some wear sharp crew cuts and that Seattle look of ten years ago.

"Excuse me?" my husband says.

"We're a group. Alternative percussive neo-traditionalist multi-transformational cult-goth world rock."

"Oh." My husband can't think of anything to say. He stopped listening to music back in the days of Donna Summer, I believe.

"We're on our way to Yreka. But we have a night to kill. Do you need an act?"

I have to chuckle. My husband and I are an act.

"Well . . ." My husband looks at me, as tethered, in his way, as the goat I used to feed.

I shrug.

"The thing is . . ." my husband explains, "we don't really have any— " he heaves a deep sigh. "Nobody is staying here just right now."

"Cool," a middle-aged woman with torn pants and a diamond in her left nostril emits brightly.

"Yeah," says the small guy, their leader, I judge. "Can we just set up by your pool and play for ourselves? And you, of course?"

My husband glances at me. I shrug again. He stares at our rusty credit card machine — the old kind that slides over raised plastic letters and numbers.

"What harm can it do?" he asks.

I have this documented. It is true.

Sometimes I suspect that I'm a tourist who has not yet packed up for home, the only genuine tourist our hotel has ever seen. At least for the last five years. But realistically, does any tourist try to keep birds?

"So that's it," my husband said as he dismissed me and lit another cigarette. Outside, the musicians were unloading their van.

I didn't stay to watch them haul their sound equipment around the corner and down the hall. I did climb back upstairs and observe from my bedroom window. Here, on the second floor, there's a view of the heated swimming pool and the redwood coast, and I decide now to wait for my husband to give up on the night desk. Who else will come? No one. I know a few things.

My husband turns the back lights on, and the pool becomes an ambitious projector of diamonds, circles, little reflective disks wavering and bounding on the balcony walls. Third Degree Burn is setting up the usual guitars, drums, amplifiers. But there's a recorder duet practicing over by the dressing room and a gemshornist at work beside the "No Lifeguard on Duty" sign. A woman with a psaltery settles herself in a nearly sprung chaise longue. She's wearing a long black cape and must tilt her head a little backward to see anything because her hair drips in her eyes. Her lips and nails are painted black. Every so often her tongue flicks out in concentration, and the split tips of it coil. I'd heard of piercing before but not of snake-emulating cuts.

They ease into playing — the guitarist plucks gently and then piccolos flutter over what will become a steady tribal percussion. Finally, the little man is singing, growling, humming. If there are words, they don't burrow in through the glass. (Try as hard as I can, the window's stuck.) He bobs his head, clasps his hands behind his back, and struts poolside.

"God!" I jump straight up.

"Sorry," my husband says. His hands are cold on my neck. "I didn't mean to scare you."

"You didn't," I say, catching my breath. I pretend to watch the band intently for a few minutes. "Look at that vampire-snake woman." I point out the psaltery player.

"I've heard of people like this." He sucks in his breath.

Faces bent over strings and plastic drum heads, they're folding with the music, contorting themselves with harmony and beat.

"Here!" My husband grunts and manages to push the window up. The music isn't measurably louder, though. And the man isn't actually singing words, just senseless monosyllables, "Ma, Na, Fa, La." Like mist, music cruises along, spreading under my clothes, making my skin unbearably painful. When my husband touches my arm, it stings.

"Shall I, shall I—" he stops to gulp air, "shall I kiss you?"

And it's out before I can stop it, the question. "Why start now?"

He breathes on my hair, wraps his arms around me. His heart dips and jumps.

I pretend to be unmoved. I'm always unmoved. But I'm leaning toward the music, toward him.

Nothing happens.

Actually, I'm not exactly sure when they pack up and leave, but the music succumbs to Northcoast despair. One minute they're chanting *a capella* — the next minute they're gone. My husband drops his arms.

"Well, that was something," he says.

I've learned words, memorized them, held them as my only lasting possessions. They have never simply bloomed into thoughts. I traipse heavily through my consciously acquired vocabulary: lassitude, insomnia, succumbing. I used to fear the hotel's gravitation, its vampire greed for words, the way it devoured knowledge and rationality, returning to the tranquility that many people came here for when the town first became "cool." While the cutting edge soon went dull, I've learned to welcome its blank visions just prior to sleep.

I wasn't in bed, though, or unconscious when the new guests came — the Earth First! representative/anti-mining fanatic back from a tour of Nevada's little towns, the lecturer on California Indian religions, the country and western singer/Elvis impersonator with a bootless saloon gig in town. No, I registered each one while my husband was out buying linen in Eureka.

"Three guests!" he exclaimed upon his triumphant return. Triumphant because he'd also happened to find the latest Third Degree Burn CD at the County Emporium. A new habit in the making, I suppose.

Now, mist hugs the window glass. Where no one can hear — far away from the Inn, over the wood-pulp mills, the highway, and warehouses, and deep in the giant trees — a spotted owl barks. By the gravel river, one man from the E & O bar has come out to stalk raccoons. His rifle turns cold in his hands. The beer in his gut grows icy. Currents in the water play back the starlight with anemic shimmering. I'm guessing about that. It looks

good on paper. Maybe no one has left the E & O. The crowd is enthralled by the bartender's stories: "The best Japanese sabers are the ones you get by luck. Like this guy in Redding says to me . . . "

It's not that I don't like my husband. He's okay. He's fine. It's not as if he put a rope around my neck and dragged me here. It's not as if I'm tethered. I agreed to help build his as yet unrealized real estate empire. I could only camp and dream and write so long. But I insisted on the birds. I keep (kept) them because I like(d) their black claws and feet, the way their beaks heft(ed) their bodies up the rungs of their cages, the neat savagery they use(d) to eat an orange, the worm-like tongue that holds(held) straight out when they squawk(ed) or pant(ed), that bare space around their eyes, the beat and force of their weightless bodies as they struggle(d) in my unyielding hands.

Pacing its cage, the mynah looks at me with a shining eye. Oh, I'd release it, now. But if I did, I'd never see it again. And so I hesitate.

My husband allows his cigarette to burn in the ashtray. He's giving up one habit, anyway. Pulling himself together for a long life. No one else is going to check in tonight, what with the mist thickening into rain. This is how he stands now — back to the front door, hands in his pockets, lower lip thrust out. He's reading our check-out rules for the two hundred and twenty millionth time. And not really making sense of them. I just know. He's buzzcut his hair and it sticks up harsh and, well . . . and goat-like. His tether is long, but he's pacing in a circle nonetheless.

The mynah races the perimeter of its cage, jumps to the perch. "Ma, Na, Fa, La," it croons. With its beak, it opens the door — a trick it learned weeks ago, but which I've never seen until now. It prowls my night table, turning to peck at the lighted dial of a broken alarm clock.

My husband is listening to the boards that move in the hotel. They all do to one extent or another, and he knows individual creakings by heart. He can hear me now get up and go toward the window dotted with oblique splotches of rain. He can hear the sash he loosened the night of our concert as it opens with a grinding of wood on wood. He can hear rain on the one madrone tree I coax along. He knows I'm lifting the screen. He even knows that I know. Still, he will not be in time.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Fred Johnston

". . .but I had more to do than spend all day resuscitating fishwhen I had meals to prepare for humans."
Bernadette Mulligan, FULL MILITARY HONOURS

It took all day.

Even when it was over, nothing *felt* over.

When she'd given back the key, crossed the dead gravel space under the gashed children's slide and the destroyed swings and handed the key to a man who stepped up from a table where they were playing poker, asked her if she could read the sign, look, *there,* on the wall, and that all complaints had to be made directly to City Hall; even when she'd told him she wasn't making a complaint but handing back her key and they kept on playing with their blue overalled backs to her, the stale tea and cigarettes ooze of the place; it was a moment or two before this humped snarling rat of a man got up and approached her; even with the door of that dead flat locked permanently and the silent breathless dusty space inside no longer hers or her son's or anybody's, she felt the unsettling push of great earth-deep machines, cogs, ratchets, pistons.

The Corporation man, who lacked good manners, any kind of grace, eyed her up and down, took the key.

"Right."

That was all he said. He went back to his poker game, pocketing the key. Maybe he'd slip a relative in to the flat before it was cold. He had the face for it, a world-meanness.

Some of them were sniggering and looking at her legs even though she was wearing jeans. Behind her, over the blocks of flats, a broken exhaust made a car engine sound like a tractor. The walls of the structures had once been white; salt in the wind had streaked them red and pink, you could step on a needle here or there in the wrecked thin grass, young lads were thugs. TV dishes sat out like mouths over the balconies, you could hear daytime programmes and the odd blue movie groan sweep down from the windows.

When Darren screwed her he kept one hand lightly pressed over her mouth because her gasp and shout embarrassed him, he thought everyone had an ear to the thin walls, he

always bit his tongue when he came, trying to keep himself noiseless. You could hear the beatings scrabbling up from the floor downstairs too, your one screaming and the dog yapping and his swearing. It was not like in films or in books. The misery up here was what your imagination did with scraps of this and that. You couldn't get this second-hand, like going to the Simon Shop and taking it off a hanger, no.

Someone's rubbish spun upwards in a sort of widening visual poetry, like a piece of metal sculpture she'd seen in school, pages from men's magazines with busty girls nude and some of the pages brownly stained as they lifted off into the air off the gravel and round and round as she walked away. She grabbed the buggy handles and pushed and Jackie twitched a little and squealed and they moved off. The child's nose was running, the sun was hot, there was dust and dirty magazines in the air, there was the smell of hot engine oil and food frying and the teenagers moping, trying to look cool and hard and looking silly in baggy trousers and turned-round cheap baseball caps spitting all the time from their throats to look harder and menacing as they'd seen someone do in a Yank film or on TV. Or outside a betting-office. Or in a pub.

She folded the buggy while the taxi-driver held Jackie, who protested and flapped her thick short legs in her fat, hot nappy. Everything else had gone ahead, there was nothing but her and the folded buggy in the car's boot and her daughter smelling now in the heat of the taxi and the radio playing, a programme host making his voice drop, drop until it was the same level and tone as the woman caller whose real mother she'd just met for the very first time. *And how did you feel?*

Sometimes radio or TV or newspaper people had visited the flats, but they'd never interviewed her and they'd avoided the middle-aged man living alone in the top flat who listened to Classical music and wrote book reviews on the side with his dole and poetry too, and they'd interviewed always and always the family on the opposite side of the playground, she was piggishly fat and he was always having Court orders against him to stay away but she'd always take him back and they with their six kids, two of them someone else's, not his, were celebrities because they knew how to suffer well on camera and in front of tape-recorders.

And still she would read that other man's book reviews every Saturday in a national newspaper and see his poems, some of which she'd cut out and kept, meaning to frame someday, and no one ever bothered to interview him about the place or her, whose boyfriend, Jackie's father, was a soldier doing his duty serving his country. There was, she knew, the life you lived and the life the TV wanted to see and they were different.

The taxi drove down the long road she'd walked up often with Jackie when she was even younger and couldn't even fit in a buggy and she was aware of Jackie's smell and the

smell of her own clothes which most of the time was cigarettes, the flat had been small and one window was jammed shut and the Corporation had told her they weren't responsible for damage done by herself in the flat but she hadn't, the window had just jammed and they wouldn't fix it and she hadn't the money and neither had Darren. The Corpo, she'd been told by older women, will not do *a thing* for you. You have to take that from the first.

It was true. They had no respect for people in the flats. They were all related, that's how they got and kept their jobs. The town thought it was big and sophisticated and growing because the Dublin papers said so, but it was really still a village and everyone lived up your arse, knew your business.

The taxi turned where the thatched cottages used to be, thatch yellow in the summer sun and the whitewash white and refreshing and they'd put slate roofs on because, someone had written to the paper, a preservation order couldn't be put on them and then next thing the two lovely houses were gone, demolished over a weekend. There were letters in the local paper, but the Corporation only pretended to be angry and no one was ever prosecuted.

Now blocky, shoe-boxy structures were going up, grey breeze-block by breeze-block, ask the students any kind of rent they'll pay it. And the Roumanians and Nigerians and Indians and all the rest will pay what they're asked. There were politicians in this town owned flats and nothing was ever said. There were buildings went up, her Dad said, that defied every regulation you could think of, look at the height of some of them, and one or two of those responsible got roof apartments out of it, they could investigate themselves and find nothing all they liked. *Every cat dog and divil knows.*

Her Mam said you couldn't go around accusing people just like that and her Dad said what about that man who was after the young lads and everyone knew about that and half the town knew who he was too and the police said in the papers they'd looked and wouldn't be prosecuting, well known he wasn't working class, some big knob. Her Mam laughed shyly and her Dad was annoyed at himself for saying something that might be construed as funny and therefore ruining his point.

Her Mam always reflected in the light from the kitchen window, the radio always on. Her Dad with a newspaper, her brothers washed, shaved, out, gone hours ago. But now her Dad would be at the house, and he was, with her brother James, the only one on the dole, thank God, and the taxi had taken the short cut by the hospital instead of going down the West where the out-of-towners, *hippies* had taken over the pubs, her Dad declared. No one from the town ever goes there, which wasn't true. But her Dad used a different map when he talked about the town. Older, from the time he was born.

The taxi drew up, there they were. Furniture, what there was of it, bits of this and that, like objects blown into her life rather than purchased; her Dad panting and acting like a boss of something, James in tight white vest showing off his unworked muscles to God knew who, the houses small and bright and white and red-roofed in the grey light. The woman at the door greeted her reluctantly, you could smell that, the hesitation, then the anger for no reason at all, the voice.

"Just sign your name *here*, if you please."

And she signed her name on the clipboard sheet, saw the other names, scrawls, one or two who couldn't write. One hand on the pen, the other wrapped around Jackie, under her arse, the smell of her hot and horrible.

"Follow me."

The woman was as old as her Mam, better dressed, a suit of blue, heels that *clack-clacked* as the sun went in and out bitterly; the sound of a chair scraping concrete, James swearing, the removal van like a snarling animal, the engine still on, the driver doing nothing. The woman moved fat-arsed up the concrete cream pathway, still dry cement and filler in the small garden, in through the gleaming blue door, pushing, the door didn't fit properly. Inside the house the bareness and the cold and the smell of concrete and the empty space of the rooms stopped her breath like a sad pollen. She wanted to put Jackie down somewhere on the floor, clean her up, nappies in her bag, but the woman kept walking full of her impatience, moving from room to empty room, making her anxious, filling the little house with authority and threat and danger, no welcome, she wouldn't rise to that.

"Here's a tenant's handbook. No lodgers, no late-night parties, no parking caravans or anything else out in the garden, no pets, you are not allowed to renovate or build on extensions without first notifying us first. All complaints about structural work must be made before the end of . . . . ."

Resenting, resenting, the woman could hardly hold herself back, contain herself; where did she come from that this is power to her, me standing here with a filthy baby and wanting to change her nappie, my new house? When the woman moved away, sleek her car and silvery blue, the air remained full of her, of her hard words and the sound of her voice, a landlady's voice, pisses perfume, penny looking down on a halfpenny.

"I know your one's brother," her Dad said, passing with armfuls of chair. "A docker. Drinks his wage-packet."

Carrying, trailing this listed information like a victory banner after him as he walked hunched up the path into the house, struggling to angle the chair around the door, she looked at her nails on her free hand, red-painted from something or somewhere, chipped,

and she was biting them like when she was a kid in school she'd pick her nose from nerves. What her Dad was saying was *don't worry*.

She changed Jackie's nappy on the concrete chilled floor of the empty sitting-room, James looking down screwing up his face, the smell of her for the size of her, he said. *Here,* and she handed him the full hot nappy like a soggy bag of chips to get rid of. He swore at her but not angrily and disappeared with it.

Then there was laughter outside. The street was hers, she owned it now, no one else there, she the first in a house. The rows of new white houses squatted innocent and fragile on the big green space where the circus every Summer used to draw in, their fat coloured trucks and a marquee every year. Where the old woman half mad had gone to feed the lions and here arm chewed off. A court-case, all the town sitting in the galleries.

Hot hard high weeds lingered at the side nearest the dual carriageway, the roundabout where the cars went too fast and getting across with a buggy would be impossible, she'd said so on the first trip out here, her Mam saying if you turn this house down you'll never get another, they'll put you down the *list*.

And the houses, she had to admit, looked nice. Bits of gardens, full of rocks and occasional grass, you could bend down and pick up a piece of broken crockery, as if in some of those television *Geographic* films, you were excavating a Roman villa in Spain. New houses, the fields upturned, meant rats but they'd go away if they existed at all, but it was normal, said her father. A rat won't do you any harm, scared of humans.

She took out smaller things that she could handle with one eye on Jackie and put them about, no nails in the walls, the woman had said but how else would you hang a picture? She took out a silly fat glass rainbow-coloured fish that Darren had won at the amusements when she was just pregnant last year by throwing three small footballs into a bucket and they stayed there. She put the mouth-open ugly thing and heavy too up on the little cement-dusted shelf above the fireplace, a great thing to have, a real fire. When she opened a window, double-glazed, the lock stiff, strange-feeling in her hand, she inhaled the earthy sexual tang of tall damp grass.

The rooms still wore emptiness like a shawl, mourning old women cluttered together, but they brightened up with a few chairs and a bed inside them. Jackie crawled and grunted. Her Dad came in, James came in, going and coming with boxes and items of furniture, you never could tell when they'd come in handy, everything. She tried turning on the electric cooker after her Dad had connected it to the electric, wouldn't work so he tried again and *Be careful*! she shouted at him where he was especially in behind the cooker amid the wires with his pliers. Jackie she had to keep an eye on too. When they left, the sound of

the rooms moving in and out breathing like an infant finding its lungs was a whisper like rain in her ears but it wasn't and she thought she was hearing things.

They left. She made tea and toast and sat watching the grainy snow-falling TV screen, she'd have to get an aerial, I'll fix you up with something James had said but he was always promising and she didn't want to be caught for a licence she couldn't afford Court. She liked *Coronation Street*. Even through the blizzard of a million million waves and bands and broadcasts and interference she could make out Ken Barlow. The colour came and went, mostly she watched in black-and-white. Jackie howled, teething. Darren arrived when it was dark. She could hear his voice out in the street shouting and laughing the way he does at the other lads, his mates in the Army. An engine roared, got angry, moved away. She heard Darren's anxious little pawing at the door. She opened it, Jackie in her arms and he was all kissing them both. She backed into the hall, they said ordinary things. She steadied herself, nervous.

She had Jackie twisting still in her arms when Darren came and kissed her again a long time this time leaning down to her as she carried, leaning back, the sack-weight of Jackie, always on the same cheek for a long one, moving all the time she smelled his soldiery uniformy smell and sweat and the leather smell of his boots well-shined. He took Jackie from her and the child mewed and pawed him. He played with his daughter like any man, *wuzzle-wuzzle,* nuzzling her fat belly, making her giggle no teeth coming yet but on the way, a sound that made the house safe.

Darren looked like a child, a wee baby, his fuzz not a proper moustache yet at all. When he put Jackie down he seemed to unloosen a greater weight than what she weighed, a little bundle of fun, God love her. Darren seemed to not know himself for a moment and he was looking around a lot, what's he looking for, it's his new home, ours. Holding Jackie up too high to the ceiling and he'd been all smiles but not now all of a sudden like when you remember something you wish you'd forget. She made him tea but he'd brought beer.

He click-popped a tin open and drank loudly, gulping. He sat down on one of the erratically-placed armchairs. He wasn't hungry, he'd eaten in the barracks, he told her this while he opened his uniform collar and slipped off his big black boots. He looked around the room; *what do you think?* He smiled, smiled. Now we're all moved in, he said and smiled around and around, looking at the unpainted unpapered walls, at the open window.

She could see he was happy to be here, better than the flat and so long it took to get the Corporation to move them with the child and all.

I should have been here, he said, but you know I was working. I should have helped you shift things and move in.

I managed and now it's done, she said. Her finality maybe confidence too unsettled him. He turned away from her, cradling his beer, a big baby man in a funny outfit all greeny-brown. She felt enormous, big in the head and heart.

The TV was too loud, he turned down the sound of *Questions & Answers,* though he appeared to be, open-legged, staring at it. The room, the house, was getting colder. She turned on all the rings on the electric cooker and a stodgy heat filled the place, uncomfortable, airless. Darren told her he'd go out for fire in a minute but he had something to tell her first, so sit down.

She took up Jackie so's she wouldn't ramble off just like that, the size of her and all that energy to burn. Were we all like that? Darren switched the TV off. The silence was horrible, ice-cold like a chilly beer in your throat. She lighted a cigarette. I'll have one, might as well, said Darren. I don't like smoking in front of her, said Darren. Well, she said and said nothing. He told her he'd been called up for Bosnia. Or Serbia. One of them. Jugoslavia anyway.

"Probably Bosnia," she said for no reason in the wide world, she knew nothing about politics but she'd watched the news on TV a couple of times and knew the Army sent men out there and what happened. Now into her head came a tune she'd heard years ago by *ABBA*.

"Well," said Darren, and his voice might as well have come out of the television for all she knew: " I don't know. Maybe I'm not even supposed to *say* where."

"When are you off?"

Jackie squealed under her feet, she'd put her down again, the weight of the *babóg* with her big creamy plucks and hardly a hair on her head, her Dad and Mam both agreed she looked the spit of Darren. The man upstairs in the flats had written a poem for her about Jackie when she was born and framed it and that was nice of him but where'd she put it?

Darren was not enjoying his cigarette, he slurped his beer to drown the smoke, he coughed anyway.

"Will I see if I can run a bath for you with hot water?" she said, remembering that now, now in this empty new house she had a comfortable bathroom and hot water all the time if she wanted it, all she'd to do was press a switch and when the red light came on the water was heating up automatically.

"Have you the video on?"

"It's not tuned," she told him. And there'd be nothing worth taping anyway with the reception the way it was but maybe he could go out and get a film?

But Darren seemed, suddenly, to be made of cardboard, like a big cardboard soldier advertising a war movie outside the cinema when there was one on. She could see how he

swam in a fragile kettle of greyish light, like a ghost might. Ghost stories of old houses in the dark alone. The sky outside and through the open window, which she'd better remember to close before they went to bed, you never knew what was out there her Dad had warned her, had turned a sour milky white and the orange lights of the city played up against it. It would be easy to be afraid out here if you let yourself.

"My Mam always told me never marry a soldier," she said. She waited for Darren to laugh but he didn't, old joke.

"Well, you're moved in here and it's way better than the flat," he said. "Better for Jackie, too."

There seemed to be no point at which their thoughts or words could touch. They both seemed to be talking to two other people, people who were not there but were there at the same time but in a manner of speaking were insubstantial as shadows on a wall.

She told him they were the only people moved into the estate, the very first. She told him about the woman and her arrogance and her husband on the docks. But Darren was far away. It was like you are when you have an argument and are not just ready for making up, the strange heat in the air between you.

"We should think about getting married when I get back."

"Well, you know I'm ready for it if you are," she said. She had the distinct feeling she'd said this before and he'd said what he'd said before.

"Now we've a decent place to live and all," Darren said. Farther away and farther he sailed off through the blue darkening room. "I'm away in two weeks. Me and the lads, you know them, you've met them out with me."

"These are the lads you used to go out with and cancel meeting me for," she said. The room pushed in on top of her. She smiled in the dark, she wondered if he could see her smiling, the memory of a light little thing like that but she'd cried then, and what they'd argued about before Jackie came along, she'd felt so neglected and he had his soldier mates after all.

"Now, it wasn't like that," Darren said. "You know."

"You look after yourself, wherever they send you" she said, when they'd had another little necessary silence.

"You can't kill a bad thing," Darren said. He was talking, it was as if, to the blind TV set.

"I'm going to start a photograph album," she said. "When you're away. We've taken millions of photographs and they're all over the place, God knows where."

Darren stood up. Shadow on his crotch. Army trousers, all pockets and baggy. He looked into the wall, the grey undecorated plaster. Will you miss me, he asked her? She couldn't tell if he was joking, Darren was never sloppy.

"Of course I will," she said. She would feel alone and weak for a while and she'd go to Mam's or her own parents almost every day or they'd come for her, she would be swallowed up, she would be back in the womb of them all. She said what she knew reassured him.

But thinking about him not there, not even a few miles away in the big stone-gated ugly barracks where at least if you went mad you could go and see him for two minutes made her feel a bit sick, like when you're going to faint but you don't.

"You'll not go off with some *fancyman* when my back's turned?"

She felt, but she couldn't see his face in the flicking dark, the scared little boy's twitch in his voice. Not jealousy, Darren would never be jealous, he never cared what she did really, he was not possessive and thank God she'd heard of girls beaten for looking at a bloke. She grabbed Jackie up again in her arms, the suspicious hot waft of the child, was she filthy again? She saw Darren in the dark or the shape of him which is not the same.

"Soon as you're in that lorry I'll be out clubbing."

Now this didn't mean anything neither good nor bad but it was what they said and was necessary for saying, you know anyway the way men are, some men anyway, soldiers or no soldiers. Like kids. She wouldn't do the dirt on him lonely and all as she'd be now and then anyway and she knew from the other girls that in any case when you brought a man back for a quick whatever-it-was and he heard the nipper squalling in the next room it put him off his stroke, off like a rocket, *Bye-bye.* Thought you meant to trap him. Cruel, some of the girls were, about men and the world. Just because bad things had happened to them.

She was building herself up with daft thoughts about maybe just once someone I fancied, but you wouldn't bring him back here where Darren was everywhere, in the walls and all. Or Jackie'd see. But she wasn't, deep down anyway, that type of girl. A kiss and cuddle was nothing and meant nothing, killed the night. Nothing else, definitely. Darren the only one. Whether he was here or not. But, then again, he'd never been away before. Even though the girls all said he would be from the start, being a soldier.

"You think of some awful things," she told him now, scolded him. She touched his shoulder, the rough army cloth, the smell of his beery breath. She thought again about the poem in its frame for Jackie, where it was.

"Well, it's just like when we all heard this morning, it was a bit of a shock," Darren said. "The lads, like. Out of the blue."

"I'm going to start a garden," she said. I've never had a garden in my life and now I'm going to go mad out there, think of what it'll look like."

She saw Darren's face turn in the dark, turn slowly like it was on rollers and carved out of stone, turn towards where a few stars had made their way through the pink yellow clouds in the high distance. The tin can in his hand was like something he was about to throw through the window but it was double-glazed and nothing was made of real glass anymore.

"They massacre whole villages and put them in deep holes," Darren said. "It's worse than the North." Darren laying down a hard masculine emphasis on the three-syllabled word, *massacre*, a word that seemed to crack and fade at the end.

"But you won't be near any of them," she said. She studied his profile, black like you'd cut out of black paper in school. "We're a neutral country. You're just there to keep the peace."

Darren shrugged; a small distant mountain, a cliff, trembling in the dark. Doesn't matter, the certain horror and his own fear, she couldn't understand. For the lads to talk about, nervous cracking jokes, some of them never away from home, not far anyway.

Silence swept around them both like dust, like when you opened a door and dust and dry earth came in. She felt it fill her eyes. Darren's head, a roundy black bubble in the shadowy room, like an ornament or funny cuddly cushion bought as a present, what people think you like.

The sky broke apart and more stars fell through. It was hot and uncomfortable in the rooms now. She went out and turned off the cooker. She leaned over and closed the window, turned its funny-feeling lock. She closed the world out and the three of them in. Darren turned around and said with a breath that he wished they had candles, a bare light-bulb which was what they had hanging from the ceiling until she went out and bought a few shades wasn't very nice.

There were things you could do with a house like this, he said, beats the flat, Jesus. He seemed to be talking to someone else in the room she couldn't see. *Someone who understood him better than she did.* The heat died in the rooms, withdrew, she'd put up curtains, got them cheap, Darren's Mam was good at doing things like curtains.

"I must buy some incense too," she said. The smell of it, nice. Places far away, not here.

She imagined cold dark light all over them, the three of them painted in it, looking like corpses. Jackie should be in her bed, she'd make up the cot in the same room as she'd sleep with Darren and don't try anything in case you wake her. Darren leaned over suddenly and switched the TV back on. Silver light exploded in the room.

She walked out of the glaring room, felt the blast of cold noisy light on her back, her shadow imprinted on the wall in front of her; a quivering image, black on white.

(for Nuala and John)

Tierra del Fuego by Bus
Postcards

Kate Schapira

The singing stops at the border, forcing you to wrap your feet in torn sweaters: all this after fording the Rio Negro, the Rio Mayo, the Santa Cruz and Gallegos and Coig. Clouds are prayer during the day, even in an access of vomiting. Hot air from the straining engine farts and gusts the length of the seats, length of the Argentine, the silver country. Not mountains, but rocks. Not spouting, but marooned: the very last map before the index.

The camera by your side takes pictures accidentally: the past, a clear green snapshot, bristles with air traffic control towers like the Sagrada Familia (on another trip, with its own curses). Your seatmate tells you how he woke up twenty years ago and couldn't move the pinky of his left hand; flamenco possibilities clicked and flounced away from him, reduced him to gutted chords in one-stool bars. You can't see out the window. Exhaustion collapses the unavoidable eyelid, a sty on the corner from systemic toxins, expiration dates.

A drop of infected sweat; a day; a sulfur bubble popping in the brain. There's no way out of these wrappings and the smell of a municipal kitchen. A mark itches like an inoculation on your ankle, but you haven't been in the jungle, nothing is eating your heart out. Not the difference between knowing and not knowing; not the difference between someone you know instantly and someone you've known for years. Your blood is warm if thin. Your fellow passengers have such reasons; you dare not say you were sent. You've put on a little weight around the hips.

Sound of a rifle cocked in your skeleton: another border? You thought it was over. You will melt and rearrange, you'll do anything. Sweat collects in the fingers of your gloves, the wool, the leather. A shudder and reshuffle of papers, of government photographs, of power. The driver's hands dig grimly in his pockets, a lesser uniform. Everyone changes, oldest to youngest at metamorphic attention; it's the only way to survive the malicious blast of their regard. It doesn't matter that you're from the North. If you wet yourself… They hand your papers back. You will bark from your throat, from your chest. You will flip through hoops.

At Cerro Sombrero, San Sebastian, and Ushuaia you stopped to take on gas and water. There's been more backseat pissing in cans than you like to think about. In each village, two tides: the urgent, running for cantina toilets or latrines behind rusty fences and sideways roof steel, squatting in the shallowest alleys. Ad the curious; the adults know better, but children surge, and dogs. People on buses have coins sometimes and morsels, wedges of toilet paper, loose pockets. In this way you experience the sea before you reach it.

You're on the bus because you are in exile. Or because you've heard tales of the Underwater Mother and the cracked conch shell, of fingers into flippers. Or because your heart is broken. Or because you are in exile. Or because you wanted to see the island chains, so much less land than water, like uninhabited canoes. Or because you needed a change. Or because you didn't believe in the rifles, the pistol barrels. Or because you wanted to take pictures, but the pictures wouldn't come. Or because you're special; chosen. Or because you are in exile.

Fire: you expected plate tectonics, volcanic action, even adventure. Across from you an old man scratches himself through his pocket. And are those boys in love? People on the bus are the same, not explosive, no one has died or been born; only their smells are concentrated. The drivers' eyes are red as if from smoke, but there's nothing to burn here, not a stick, alive or dead. The occasional shell, cracked under the pressure of legend. The occasional diaper, balled up and taped like a time bomb. You expected land.

The Estrecho de Le Maire is anticipated. The Estrecho de Magallanes was a hundred years ago. You still don't understand the way things, specifically places, are named here. Someone has a secret hoard of chocolate and peanuts at the last minute; there's almost a revolution. No rocks, at least from the window, are taller than an eleven-year-old left behind. You look for the Sea People, or what's left of them, but nothing moves except the bus itself, not even shadows. The cold sinks fangs. Once, nothing could have induced you to huddle with these people.

The drivers take it in shifts. You would welcome incineration. Flies alight in their dirty way until you notice them, but there are no more borders, no woven shawls and spices, no wide hats. Whenever you ask Who owns this land, you must also ask Who covets it; and the same with water, although the idea of owning an ocean, or part of an ocean, is new. You are out of film and buying power, fresh out of record-keeping.

It's an impossibility; the green and yellow of the bus in all this gray, which is also purple. There are no lights, no sleep. This is the end of the trip, the horn you winded, the choice you made: beyond is only Antarctica and the undersea kingdoms of the credulous, the patient, and the hopeful. If you knew how cold-blooded they were, you would fall off the edge of the earth; it's not always the guilty who hit the volcano running.

FALLING UP
How a Redneck Helped Invent Political Consulting

Remarks given on March 20, 2003, at the Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville

Raymond D. Strother

I grew up in a lower middle class house where politics mattered to our lives. People like my family had no other place to turn. I remember as a very small child praying at night to Harry Truman. My father taught me that you had to stand on the picket line against the clubs of the Texas Ranger thugs and you had to get involved in politics — because people like us had no other choice.

So I became a political consultant. It was a calling like the ministry.

This book is about my own personal evolutionary struggle to understand what I do and the larger consequences of our profession on democracy.

This book is not about redemption, but the struggle for redemption.

This book is about corruption and its insidious consequences.

This book is about the evolution of political consulting — the Darwinian struggle for success.

This book is about the beauty and gore of politics.

This book is about a lot of things that are not necessarily about me.

But let me start with corruption. As I say in my book….

Ancient warriors often point to a week of a month on a small island or bloody battlefield where they fought as twenty-year-olds as the most important moment of their lives. Louisiana was my foxhole and I wear the scars on my soul, though I left there in 1980 to move to D.C.

Corruption is an insidious thing. It is a cancer that lives and grows within us without notice. I learned political consulting in Louisiana, perhaps the most corrupt place in America. But strangely enough, most of the people there are not corrupt. They are as good as people everywhere.

But, unlike the analogy about pregnancy, there are shades of gray in corruption. Corruption can become part of the air you breathe. Like in a society of racists, one can become desensitized to racism and its language — one can be desensitized to corruption. In

Louisiana a public official who is only slightly corrupt can be known as a reformer. The good and decent people laugh and tell stories about the corruption of their public officials. But by laughing at corruption these good people are promoting it — condoning it — and perpetuating it. I learned political consulting in Louisiana as one would learn to read Braille: by touching and running my hands over its surface and making value judgments. There were no role models to lean on, no university interested in helping guide me in political consulting. I was the child learning not to touch the hot stove by being burned. And I was burned again and again as I made my rulebook of what a political consultant does — and more importantly — does not do. On page 57 in my book I write out my first rules.

No drinking with clients.

No going to whorehouses with clients.

No live television.

Carefully inspect every garment worn by a candidate before the camera is turned on.

In the Soviet Republics children were taught that capitalism was a form of crime and was a corrupt system that preyed on others, and its foundation was personal greed. Therefore, when they awoke one day and were told they lived in a free market, they became criminals — as they were taught in school. Now they are sorting it out.

All it took to become a consultant was a sign on the door and a business card. There were abuses and some people gravitated to the profession looking for quick bucks. There are still some abuses. But we are getting our sea legs. Young consultants have older consultants as role models who live and do business by the rules. The American Association of Political Consultants is finally becoming a professional organization that exerts peer pressure on consultants and rewards them for good work.

Now there are universities that train students and make ethical conduct and professional standards part of the curriculum. Their students are working their way into the fabric of consulting, and the business is getting better. Just last week, at George Washington University, there was yet another conference on the consideration of ethics.

Once the newly elected Congressman and former Governor of Louisiana turned to a young reporter as they drove down a desolate road lined with shotgun shacks with junked cars in the front yard, bent basketball goals nailed to pine trees, and decorated with leaking sofas on the front porch, "Son, you see the people who live in these houses? They're good people, honest people. You know why? They never been tempted."

But there are other temptations in consulting that are beginning to corrupt the system.

Because of the stardom of consultants and the use of public opinion polls we have developed a seamless campaign that begins the day after the election. The consultants no longer stop on the steps of the capitol but follow the public official into the offices. We are becoming a democracy run by public opinion polls. Statistical studies are replacing leadership. I had a candidate who screamed at me, "If you knew that vote on X was going to hurt my re-election, you should have called and warned me." I explained that I don't get involved in government.

When I was new to the business, in the late 60s and early 70s, I had to beg candidates to hire pollsters. The science was suspect. Candidates just didn't believe that reliable information could be obtained when fewer than a thousand of their constituents were interviewed. When pollsters *were* hired, they were considered tail fins on a '57 Cadillac — a nice decoration with questionable function.

Now, pollsters are usually hired first and they control the message and the issues in the campaign. It is all out of balance.

Bill Clinton was an admitted student of polling. He even polled where to vacation. Now George Bush's chief aid is a political consultant who stays in constant touch with pollsters.

WWII would have been lost if Roosevelt had relied on polls when he started lend lease and slowly moved this country to aid the allies.

Polling is good. Both Republicans and Democrats have great pollsters. Thus they both get the same information — and they both move toward the poll numbers like magnets. Why do you think the Republicans opposed the Department of Education for so long, and now are the defenders? Or Social Security? Or why did the Democrats support the war votes? Why did some Democrats vote for the tax cut? Polling.

My chief product, political television, is less effective than it was ten years ago. There are several reasons.

—Other alternative entertainment media.

—Knee jerk skepticism spawned by consultants who have become media stars.

—The control of pollsters. They have taken the heart out of political communication.

Things have changed. Some for the better, some not.

Senator John Stennis was a gentleman of the old school. His gentility, however, was not simply a matter of standing for women or tipping one's hat. His was a style found today only in period movies and in the memory cupboards of ancient park-bench nappers.

But more than a gentle anachronism, he was a monument to a Senate of yesterday, a Senate closer to the House of Lords than to the casual gathering of sometimes mean-spirited breast-beaters and dwarves whose informality is accepted in Washington today.

I met Senator Stennis by accident one day during a friendly, nonbusiness lunch with Senator Russell Long in his Capitol hide-away just off the majestic dome. A white-coated waiter served us from a cart while we talked about our mutual interests and campaigns. The chance meeting with Stennis would fine-tune my appreciation of the Senate as an institution and wrench the old Mississippi senator out of a comfortable past.

He pushed through the door without knocking. "I'm so sorry for the intrusion, Senator Long. I didn't know you had company. I have a small, private matter of state to discuss with you, but it can wait until another time. Please pardon me, sir." He turned to leave.

"Come in, Senator." Long rose from the table. "Come meet my friend Ray Strother. If you run for reelection, you may need his help." Long winked at me. It was common knowledge that the courtly gentleman was not going to run again. He was a frail, small man with thin hair swept straight back. He wore suspenders — he called them braces — and a suit coat that was never removed in the presence of others. To appear without a coat, or even wearing a coat that did not match his trousers, would have been akin to appearing naked. His speech was from another era, closer to the nineteenth than the twentieth century. Born August 3, 1901, he retained the manners of those who raised him and those who taught him in a more formal time at the University of Virginia.

He shook my hand as I stood to greet him. "I've heard your name, sir, tell me what it is you do, sir, that might help me in my reelection, if I decided to run for reelection, of course." And then he winked at Long. There were a lot of signals flying around the room.

The old senator had reasons to retire and, as it turned out, reasons to stay. When he was seventy, a thug had shot him in the stomach outside his D.C. home. A man of iron constitution, he recovered, but his health was never quite the same. He could have retired with grace. But the Senate was his entire existence. His wife had recently died, and he mourned her deeply. His was a solitary and lonely life that found meaning only in the corridors of the Capitol.

His colleagues didn't think he had the stamina for a modern campaign. In 1980 the Democrats had lost control of the Senate in a reaction to run-away inflation, an oil shortage, and American citizens being held hostage by a mob in Iran. Most working Americans thought the Democratic Party had let them down. Ronald Reagan, though he disagreed with labor unions and most Democratic Party beliefs and institutions, won convincingly and dragged into office such unlikely senators as Jeremiah Denton in Alabama,

Paula Hawkins in Florida, and Matt Mattingly in Georgia. Because of their success at electing such unelectables, the 1982 Republican professional wolf pack was confident, well funded, and eager to pick off weakened Democrats like Stennis. If they could win with people like Denton and Hawkins, they were sure they could defeat the tiny man from Mississippi with a good candidate. They had an attractive prospect, Haley Barbour. Politics had become a bloody business, and the hardened veterans on the Hill didn't think Stennis was up to the race. Politics had changed, they told each other, and this eighty-year-old man lived in another day.

"What is it you do, sir?" Stennis asked as I sat with Senator Long at that lunch table. It seemed an easy question, but I was stunned. I had never been asked in exactly that context. Often candidates wanted to know if I used film or videotape, or if I specialized in one particular medium. What I do is make television commercials. No, what I do is communicate a campaign message. No, what I do is give a campaign direction and coordination. No, what I do is bring to bear years of experience in two hundred campaigns to help you win. What I do is meet with pollsters and drink with mail consultants. For God's sake, everyone knows what I do. How could I have so much trouble explaining it?

The size of the old senator's question stunned me, and I rambled and stumbled through an answer about film, opinion polls, phone banks, and the marriage of technologies. … Senator Stennis nodded pleasantly, but I had made little impression. He had worked in the Senate for thirty-seven years without campaign technology or experts. He had served his state well and had been returned again and again to office without heated opposition. In his previous campaign he had spent only about $5,000. He was truly one of the Senate's prized institutions. He was a legend.

The simple fact that Senator Stennis had to ask "What is it you do, sir?" was testimony to how truly old-school he was.

"So you take pictures?" he finally concluded after I had rambled on for several minutes trying to answer his question….

"I guess I am a sort of photographer," I agreed.

"So you have me walk up and down in front of the Capitol and you take my picture?" I was stunned by the innocence of the question.

"Well, I guess so, Senator."

"Well, then, what do you do with those pictures?"

"I put them on television, Senator."

"Well, I've never had much luck with that. I've sent those films home, but I'm not sure they ever ran them."

He was referring to the public-service tapes that senators make in an effort to communicate with their electorate. They are offered to television stations for discretionary use in public-service time, usually late at night or early on Sunday mornings.

"Senator, we pay them to run the pictures." I had fallen into his idiom.

"Well," he said, shaking his head with some enthusiasm. "You pay them. That changes things, doesn't it? We need to have a meeting, sir."

A few days after this meeting I received a telephone call from one of Stennis's staff members asking if I would be in my office to receive a call from the senator at 11 A.M. I confirmed I would wait for the call. She then asked if I would be available for a meeting with the senator in his office at 2 P.M. I said I would hold open that time. I confirmed to the staff member. However, about an hour later my phone rang again.

"Mr. Strother, this is Senator John Stennis. You may remember me. I met you with Senator Russell Long a few days ago."

"I remember you well, Senator." Needless to say, I was puzzled.

"I was wondering if we might not get together this afternoon about two o'clock."

I confirmed again and later walked across the Capitol grounds to the Russell Office Building. I arrived about ten minutes early. An elderly secretary hurried to meet me.

"Are you Mr. Strother?"

"I am."

"I'm so sorry, the senator forgot. He went to his apartment to take a nap."

I soon forgot about it. I had more work than Morgan and I could handle anyway. I was in West Texas with Senator Lloyd Bentsen shooting film when he asked me about Stennis's campaign. I said that I knew nothing about it.

Bentsen looked puzzled. "You're not doing his campaign?"

"No, sir. I only met him one time. We never even talked about it."

Bentsen shook his head, obviously confused. "What would it take for him to contract you?"

"Same as you, Senator, a handshake."

A few days later I received a call from Stennis asking me to come immediately to his office. He was sitting behind a large desk. He rose and extended his hand.

"A firm handshake, sir," he said with some enthusiasm. "Now how's my campaign coming?"

Thus we began. During long afternoons spent sitting at the large table in his office, I explained phone banks and he gave me insight in to the Senate of yesterday. If Jimmie Davis had shown me yesterday's campaigning, Stennis gave me a feel for the dignity and tradition

of a Senate that was quickly fading as blow-dried pretenders performed under the glare of television lights.

"Wood is nice," he told me one day as he rubbed his hand across his old table (which had once been Harry Truman's). "New wood is beautiful, but it is the old wood that gets luster through years of hand-rubbing that seems to give it surfaces under the surfaces."

One decision I made was to limit the number of technicians exposed to Senator Stennis. He was looking to me to do whatever vague things were necessary for victory and had difficulty understanding that there were some specialties I lacked. The Washington pollster Peter Hart and I became his campaign contacts. Peter used poll numbers to gently help the senator make campaign decisions. Until a confrontation near the end of the campaign, Peter, a complete gentleman himself, behaved like a grandson talking to the parent of his parents….

I kept running into the traditions of the old Senate. When we filmed in Washington, I arranged for several senators to give testimony to Stennis's place and importance in the Senate. I called and scheduled Senators Bentsen, Texas; Johnston, Louisiana; Nunn, Georgia; Long Louisiana; and DeConcini, Arizona. At our morning meeting as I explained our afternoon shooting schedule, I saw Stennis glower and draw himself erect.

"Sir, who called those senators?"

I was astonished and didn't understand his anger or body language. There had been no problem scheduling the senators. Stennis was loved by all.

"I did, Senator."

"No, no, no, no. You can't do that. You can't call those senators direct. That, sir, is senator-to-senator business. Now you go sit down at that typewriter and make a list of senators you want, and I'll take care of it."

I typed out the list, and he folded it and put it in his coat pocket. That was the last I saw of it, but I spent the afternoon interviewing senators.

I grew to love this man and much of what he represented. There were times when I felt I was degrading him to bring him into modern politics. He had no understanding of the great demand of money in modern campaigns. We were asking him to raise two million dollars, when in the past he had spent about $5,000 per election. He would just wring his hands, and I would report to Senators Bentsen and Long, who were looking out after his welfare. They helped raise money. Finally, in desperation, I reminded the old senator that he was chairman of Armed Services and had spent billions of dollars with the defense industry. What about LTV? I asked him. What about McDonnell Douglas?

"Would that be proper?" he asked. I was glib with my answer in 1982, but that question has bothered me for years since. Is it proper for a public official to take money from companies and institutions over which he or she holds great power? Is it proper for state treasurers to collect campaign money from banks? Is it proper that fundraising must start for the reelection campaign the day after the election? Who gets first call on a public official's time, the person who votes and writes a note or the person who raises $100,000? The answers are obvious and an insult to democracy.

Long before the Senate tied itself in knots over the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill in 2001, Senator Stennis had put his finger on something that none of the reformers in modern politics wanted to touch: It is not only bad form to take money from industries regulated by Congress, it's an inherent conflict of interest. What Congress has done over the years is to practically legalize bribery.

In a way, Senator Stennis's naïveté about campaign financing mirrored the old-fashioned attitudes he had held through much of his career about race. When John Stennis started out in politics, Mississippi was a one-party state, as was most of the Deep South. The Mississippi Democratic Party of his youth was all white. Blacks, for obvious reasons, had tended since the time of Lincoln to lean Republican. But across the South, and most especially in Mississippi, blacks were simply discouraged — either by odious legal means such as "poll taxes" or, if that didn't work, by threats of violence — from voting at all. If candidates like Stennis could avoid a Democratic primary, they didn't nee to raise money for general elections against Republicans. Their victories were assured.

Historical ironies abound, of course, and not the least in Mississippi. All over the country, blacks left the Republican Party in droves during the Great Depression, settling their hopes on the same man my father put his trust in: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This occurred despite the fact that most of the legendary segregationists in American politics, such as George Wallace, Orval Faubus, and Strom Thurmond, began their public lives — and, in some cases ended them — in the Democratic Party. Mississippi itself boasted, if that is the word, some of the most virulent racists in American politics, all of them Democrats. Their number included Theodore G. Bilbo, who frequently compared blacks to monkeys, and Ross Barnett, the hapless racists who served as governor when the University of Mississippi was integrated at the point of U.S. army bayonets.

In 1948, when thirty-seven-year-old Hubert H. Humphrey, then mayor of Minneapolis, electrified the Democratic National Convention with an appeal to the party to "get out of the shadow of states' rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights," Strom Thurmond led southerners on a walk right out of the convention. John Stennis, who'd replaced Bilbo in the Senate the year before, went with him — along

with the entire white establishment of Mississippi. (Louisiana's senator Russell Long refused to participate in the walkout; he stayed and tried to hold the party together so that it would not be split on racial lines.) In 1964 and 1965, Stennis and Mississippi's other senator, fellow Democrat James O. Eastland, were key participants in the filibusters that delayed and threatened passage of the Voting Rights Act and other landmark civil rights legislation pushed by LBJ, Hubert Humphrey, and the national Democrats.

While all this was going on, the modern version of the Republican Party in Mississippi was gaining a foothold, led by a Barry Goldwater conservative named Clark Reed. His appeal was not to disenfranchised blacks, but to conservative *whites* who felt the national Democratic Party had turned too liberal. One of the issues it had gone liberal on, of course, was race. And so, in the 1970s and 1980s, a historical shift appeared. In Mississippi and all across the South, whites began drifting to the Republican Party in national elections, while retaining their fealty to old Democratic Party warhorses like John Stennis in statewide and local contests.

It may be unfair to say that Republicans in Mississippi today are racists, even if they've inherited — or courted — the racist vote and profited from it. However, without the friction between the races, the Republicans would not have come so quickly to prominence. Certainly Senator Trent Lott makes no overt appeals on the race issue; nor did Haley Barbour, the young Reaganite tapped to run against Stennis in 1982. But one thing is sure, and it's something that, when I think about it, allows me to admire John Stennis to this day. In June of that year, 1982, the Voting Rights Act came under consideration in the Senate for its periodic renewal. Of the southerners who fought against the law in 1965, three were still in office. Two of them, Stennis and Russell Long, were clients of mine. The third was Strom Thurmond himself. When it came time to report the bill to the floor, all three voted Aye.

Days later, after our conversation about fundraising, Senator Stennis called me over to his office. He said he had a surprise. He reached into his desk drawer and handed me a check from LTV. I was astonished. It was for $100. But he was proud and I didn't have the heart to explain. His honor would not allow him to beg. Later, other senators did the dirty work for him and raised more than a million dollars for his campaign.

&&&&&&&

I am powerful, I am omnipotent, I am a hero, I am gigantic, I am colossal.

Esarhaddon[1]
King of Assyria, c. 670 B.C.E.

All of us have heard this term "preventive war" since the earliest days of Hitler. I recall that is about the first time I heard it. In this day and time … I don't believe there is such a thing; and, frankly, I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953,
upon being presented with plans to wage preventive war
to disarm Stalin's Soviet Union.

&&&&&&&

Patriotism and the Right of Free Speech During Wartime

Katherine McNamara

This is a remarkable, sobering moment in our nation's history, and the world's. When the President gave his ultimatum to Saddam Hussein the night of March 17, I thought, "This is what it is to be a citizen of the empire."[2] For, America is now an empire, so the New York Times has told us, and we ought to "get used to it." But I don't think I will get used to it. Last September, in publishing his strategy for national security,[3] the President signaled that he meant to prosecute a new kind of war in American history (new, that is, since the Indian wars[4]) when he announced a doctrine of preventive first-strike[5]; that is, authority to make preventive war against any possible threat to (in the words of a *Times* reporter) this nation's "enlightened domination of the world."[6]

Now this nation is at war: not the metaphorical "war on terror," but the traditional business of killing. This is the president's new war of prevention. Hundreds of thousands of troops in the awesome, disciplined, professional force that is the American military are in Iraq, where they are searching for, intending to destroy the rule and perhaps lives of, three men – Saddam Hussein and his two sons – and the ring of guards complicit in their despotic regime. My heart is low. We hear of the growing number of deaths among the American and British forces, the civilian casualties on all sides, and even the dead Iraqi soldiers. I wish

they were not there. I wish they were not fighting. I hope beyond reason that no more people will die. Whatever the rationale for this war, now that we are in it, I hope we will win honorably. I wish our military people would return home as soon as a just peace can be established; but I fear this won't happen for a very long time.

The President tells us that this "homeland" of ours, too, is now a battlefield, because of the September attacks. Recently, I learned that journalists, or at least the Pentagon, now refer to the "battlespace," rather than battlefield, because of such changes as satellite up-links and the twenty-four hour news cycle. During the first days, my ear on the battlespace was turned for the most part to NPR's respectful special coverage. But on Thursday, March 19, I happened to hear on CBC's streaming audio an interview with a Liberal M.P., Mr. John Godfrey. The interlocutor asked his opinion about Canada's position on the war, which has been to stay at a distance, and whether Canada should question the United States more boldly. Mr. Godfrey replied – I believe I quote him accurately – "A redefinition of America is going on. We should wait for it to settle down: don't provoke – or go too close."

A redefinition of America is going on. This country seems to me as divided as before the Civil War. The matters at issue are not bondage and rebellion, however, but what kind of nation we have become: how we should conduct ourselves in the world, and how we should treat our people at home. Our country has amassed an astonishing military power, unknown in human history, and has decided to use that power as its principle instrument of foreign policy. And so, refusing to heed the council of so many of its old allies, unwilling to remain within those mutual associations it had carefully built over the last half-century, it has unleashed its might to provoke "shock and awe" over Baghdad. But we had already known shock and awe, here at home, on September 11, 2001. Is this, now, to be the nature of war?

In this new kind of war, in this battlespace, we look first to history to find the grounds for the right of free speech.[7] Yet, I am not confidant that legal precedent is our only guide. I must ask why our basic rights were changed after the September attacks, and who has agreed to this.[8] I would consider several, to me more disturbing, developments as leading to the present moment.

For, I see the President's war[9] as an instrument of his politics, and I suggest that not only the current ground and air war against Iraq, but also the so-called war on terror be understood as part of the redefinition of America remarked on by Mr. Godfrey. I do not believe that we have settled on a new definition of ourselves yet, however. I believe – perhaps desperately, perhaps defiantly – that the political process is still in operation, and that "empire" may not become our permanent condition.

If it is not, if we are to recover ourselves, we citizens ought to insist firmly that our public officials offer satisfactory answers to a series of questions. Among them would be these:

Once the war on Iraq is over – but how will we know when it is over? – *must the nation accept the permanent condition of a "war on terror"?* Since the end of the Cold War, presidents have come to use the military as the prime instrument of American power. Our troops are deployed in more than one hundred countries, engaged in disarming minefields, fighting drug traffickers, bringing disaster relief, and a multitude of peace-keeping or protective tasks, as well as invading Iraq. Dana Priest, of the *Washington Post*, writes: "When the fighting stops in Iraq, the U.S. military – 22-year old infantry soldiers – will again be given the lead in rebuilding civil society there, a mission that could easily take more than 10 years."[10] It is the military which now imposes our national will, or that of our President, on the rest of the world. Will this practice continue with the consent of the governed?

An extension of military dominance is the missile defense program,[11] which is to be operational within two years. Ostensibly, it is being assembled for our protection against "rogue" states like North Korea. More important, however, it is meant to achieve the "weaponization" of space, dominated by this enlightened nation. *Will we desist from this course of aggression?*

And our domestic safety is to be secured by every-growing secrecy[12] of government, restriction of information, hiding of documents from public view, including increasing the difficulty of FOIA searches, classification of documents, and extending the length of time documents are left classified from public knowledge. *Will our civil liberties continue being limited and reduced?*

Are we to live in a permanent state of "war"? Have we the governed consented to this? Who benefits from this?

In that light, I am going to watch what happens on a number of fronts, including:

1. The USA PATRIOT Act. Senator Russ Feingold's (D-Wis) lone voice against the passage of that too-quickly enacted law remains available on *Archipelago*.[13] I will follow the progress of H.R. 1157, The Freedom to Read Protection Act, introduced on March 6, which allows us some slightly increased protections against F.B.I. Under the PATRIOT Act, the F.B.I. is allowed to search bookstore and library records with a warrant obtained from the secret FISA court "without even the need to show probable cause of criminal activity or an individual's connection to a foreign power," writes Pat Schroeder, President of the Association of American Publishers. "Librarians and booksellers cannot reveal the fact that such a warrant exists and so they cannot defend their right to disseminate, and the right of their patrons to receive, constitutionally-protected materials."[14]

Given the very troubling provisions of the Act, this is the least of it.

Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA, 1978)[15] after the excesses of Federal spying on domestic political groups in the years of the Vietnam war and civil rights movement. Its purpose was to allow gathering of counterintelligence information, not to bring criminal prosecutions. Under the guidance of a team of lawyers from the Justice Department, the F.B.I. would conduct surveillance. But the Act quietly instituted a new judicial layer, by creating a special – that is, secret – court of sitting federal judges who would approve FISA wiretaps in the same way regular judges approve criminal wiretaps.

For the following twenty-four years, the F.B.I. always got its approval of secret wiretaps (perhaps 10,000, rather than the few hundred each year, as was originally supposed), until last May, when the secret FISA court – for the first time, apparently – refused Ashcroft's request, saying the F.B.I. evidence was defective. The public did not learn about this until August, when the *Washington Post* published the story.[16]

The Patriot Act authorizes the reduction of – to the point of nearly eliminating – standard Fourth Amendment protections of any persons subject to criminal investigations, allowing the government to use the less stringent presumptions of intelligence while investigating American citizens.

I will also watch as an increasing number of municipalities[17] take a public stand against the PATRIOT Act. Will that change, now? Let us see.

2. Language and propaganda (the underbelly of language). We have many sources of direct, reliable information now, because of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Regularly, I read or listen to the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post, Ha'aretz,* the *International Herald Tribune, The Guardian,* the CBC, BBC World Service, and other sources.[18] I read blogs – web logs; a very fine one is run by Helena Cobban, at Just World News.[19] I receive and send information and opinion by e-mail. If I remain eternally vigilant, I may be among those who continue to secure our liberty.

But let me note how vigilant we must remain, with one not untypical example, from a White House briefing by Ari Fleischer on March 20. "Mr. Fleischer disputed the view of Europeans and others who argue that the pending invasion is a violation of the United Nations Charter. He cited three Security Council resolutions that he said provided all of the authorization Mr. Bush needed. But he also likened the current preparations to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, arguing that just as President John F. Kennedy imposed a quarantine around Cuba – 'an act of war,' Mr. Fleischer said – to force Havana to remove nuclear Missiles, Mr. Bush is acting to protect the United States from a threat that it would never see coming."[20]

I do not know if the assembled reporters gasped at the untruth of Mr. Fleischer's statement. I gasp at it, and correct him: a quarantine is *specifically not* an act of war. That is why President Kennedy did not impose a blockade, which is such an act.

3. How the post-war reconstruction is managed, particularly in regard to the contracts already let to Halliburton, Bechtel and other trans-national corporations.[21] (That the Vice-President came to office from Halliburton should have, I would have thought, raised questions before the President began the war.) As I write, it appears that this government intends to continue on its present course, insisting, as Secretary Powell has done to Congress, that the coalition forces – that is America, Britain, and Australia, the three combatants – would remain in control of Iraq post-war. How, and whether, the other members of the United Nations could provide humanitarian assistance and development is unclear. It looks to have become a question, in lesser part, of the distribution of power and the spoils; and, in greater part, of responsibility for the destruction of the country and death and wounding of its citizens.

Compared to the humanitarian crisis, this next point seems almost trivial. The reconstruction of Iraq is related, directly and indirectly, to our energy policies, as well, because of the role those transnational companies play in oil development. The matter will turn on whether our government will allow Iraq, the nation, to control its oil fields.

A few other questions:

4. Who was responsible for bugging the headquarters of the European Union,[22] in particular, the offices of the French and German representatives? This was revealed during the week before the war was started, but no responsible party has been found or, at least, named.

5. How the Air Force reports on the recurring incidence of rape of young women at the Academy, and the recurring non-prosecution of culprits.[23]

6. Cyberwar. After the September attacks, the Administration and Congress, concerned that computers and the Internet are vulnerable to both espionage and crime, organized various commissions to protect and defend aggressively what they often call "cyberspace." In February of this year, according to the *Times*, "President Bush has signed a secret order allowing the government to develop guidelines under which the United States could launch cyber-attacks against foreign computer systems…. The United States has never conducted a large-scale cyber-attack, but officials said last month that the unfolding cyber-strategy plan made it more clear than ever that the Defense Department can wage cyber warfare if the nation is attacked."[24]

James Gilmore III, director of the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (known as the Gilmore

Commission) and formerly, Republican governor of Virginia, was interviewed on NPR on March 20. He suggested that we ought to keep two things in mind at the same time: the importance of our civil liberties, and the need for security. He noted that people tend to be more vigilant about liberties when they feel more secure; and suggested that we should recollect that risk is part of life; that we live with a new sort of risk; but that we are an "individualistic, liberty-loving people and would not give up our liberties easily." He fudged when asked whether the Administration is (as many people think, said his questioner) working to limit our civil rights.

I note that on March 27, al-Jazeera's Web site was hacked by a group calling itself Patriot Freedom Cyber Force Militia."[25] I draw no conclusions (nor do I mean to imply even faintly that the Gilmore Commission is involved in cyberwarfare) but, being in the business myself, I remain attentive to the breadth of possibility.

My last but most important question is, *How will our political speech be limited?*

Our genius as a nation is that we are a secular polity formed by a marvelous Constitution, in which the ever-larger inclusion of citizenship has been fought for and won over the last 225 years. Our civil rights, too, have been fought for and won. Are they permanent, however? Although he denied having done so, Robert McNamara had commissioned the writing of a secret history of the Vietnam War. Are secret histories being written now, I wonder; have they been written; and will the Administration's doctrine of secrecy require another Daniel Ellsberg to bring them to light?

But so much of what lies before us is not secret. The respectable media have reported on when the American drive toward war began; who the advisors responsible for planning it are; and why they thought it necessary to do so. For this very reason, I am deeply concerned about the continued, well-organized expansion of government secrecy, such as the executive order that will keep presidential papers hidden for decades from public scrutiny; and the authority allowing the F.B.I. to examine our most intimate records, without our knowing, on the merest suspicion of some vague possible threat from someone we once sat next to on an airplane; and the rule that authorizes the Immigration and Naturalization Service to track our movements even beyond our borders. A sample of recent headlines tells more of this troubling story:

"U.S. to Make Airlines Give Data on Americans Going Overseas"

"U.S. Hopes to Check Computers Globally"

"How a Deal Creating an Independent Commission on Sept. 11 Came Undone"

"Grounded: The Government's Air Passenger Blacklist"

"Government intercepts, confiscates AP reporters' package – Federal officials opened a package mailed between two reporters and illegally turned the contents over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation"

"Tucson Citizen photographer arrested while shooting campus protest"

"Leaked Bill would increase terrorism action secrecy"[26]

Last November, according to the *Post*, "a new Pentagon research office began designing a global computer-surveillance system to give U.S. counterterrorism officials access to personal information in government and commercial databases around the world." The director of this office, John H. Poindexter, had the weird, shocking authority to collect every electronic record about every American citizen – and, it seems, citizens of other nations, into a national database. Let us not forget: this is the same Admiral Poindexter who was convicted of crimes in the anti-constitutional Iran-Contra arms sales of the Reagan administration.[27]

We are watching our civil rights vanish before our eyes, in the name of an impossible goal of "security." Surely, Americans can learn to live with greater risk at home without redefining their nation into the imperial, and frightening, governor of the world.[28] Yet at this moment, the accumulated power of the presidency looks monolithic, while the opposition absents itself from the fray. I live in hope that it is still possible to make the political process work for those of us who were in the majority in 2000, and a hair's breadth away from it in 2002. America is riven by at least two (opposing) theories of power and governance: a doctrine of unilateral power, against a belief in shared sovreignty and multilateral alliances. These political ideas animate our people domestically as well as internationally, and neither side, however bitterly opposed to the other, can claim to love this nation more. No one of us is less a patriot than any other fellow citizen, though our differences be sharp and seem nearly insoluble.

The Israeli journalist Amira Hass, daughter of European Jews who escaped the Holocaust and found refuge in Palestine, now reports from Ramallah. Her colleague Robert Fisk writes about her: ""There is a misconception that journalists can be objective…. Palestinians tell me I'm objective. I think this is important because I'm an Israeli. But being fair and being objective are not the same thing. What journalism is really about – it's to monitor power and the centres of power.""

I am not a journalist, but I think she is right.

Notes

[1] *See* Leo Tolstoy, "Esarhaddon, King of Assyria," from STORIES GIVEN TO AID THE PERSECUTED JEWS, at "Leo Tolstoy: Twenty-three Tales" http://www.ccel.org/t/tolstoy/23_tales/htm/ix.htm#ix.

[2] *See* President Says Saddam Hussein must leave Iraq within 48 Hours, March 17, 2003 http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html; "Iraq Ultimatum," *Slate*, September 9, 2002 Philip H. Gordon, Martin S. Indyk, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, Brookings Institution http://www.brook.edu/views/op-ed/ohanlon/20020909.htm; John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy* http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue_novdec_2002/gaddis.html; Michael Ignatieff, "The Burden," *New York Times Magazine*, January 5, 2003 http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/05/magazine/05EMPIRE.html?pagewanted=print&position=top.

[3] National Security Strategy of the United States http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

The President's Introduction to the National Security Strategy, September 2003 http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssintro.html, in which he announced America's doctrine of preventive strikes: "And, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, *America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.*" (Ital. added)

> ……..
>
> The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. We will build defenses against ballistic missiles and other means of delivery. We will cooperate with other nations to deny, contain, and curtail our enemies' efforts to acquire dangerous technologies. And, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.
>
> As we defend the peace, we will also take advantage of an historic opportunity to preserve the peace. Today, the international community has the best chance since the rise of the nation-state in the seventeenth century to build a world where great powers compete in peace instead of continually prepare for war. Today, the world's great powers find ourselves on the same side— united by common dangers of terrorist violence and chaos. The United States will build on these common interests to promote global security. We are also increasingly united by common values. Russia is in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future and a partner in the war on terror. Chinese leaders are discovering that economic freedom is the only source of national wealth. In time, they will find that social and political freedom is the only source of national greatness. America will encourage the advancement of democracy and economic openness in both nations, because

> these are the best foundations for domestic stability and international order. We will strongly resist aggression from other great powers—even as we welcome their peaceful pursuit of prosperity, trade, and cultural advancement….

See also, "Chronology: The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine," *Frontline* http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/cron.html.

[4] A correspondent reminded me that the Mexican War also was a war of aggression. Lincoln spoke out against it in congress and Grant, in his memoirs, said that he thought it was the most unjust war ever waged by a powerful nation against a lesser one.

[5] "Preventive" has become the commonly-used term to describe this President's doctrine, although "pre-emptive" appeared in early reports; the two words have different meanings in international law. See, for instance, Mike Allen and Barton Gellman, "Preemptive Strikes Part of U.S. Strategic Doctrine," *Washington Post*, Dec. 10, 2002.

> A Bush administration strategy announced yesterday calls for the preemptive use of military and covert force before an enemy unleashes weapons of mass destruction, and underscores the United States's willingness to retaliate with nuclear weapons for chemical or biological attacks on U.S. soil or against American troops overseas.
>
> The strategy introduces a more aggressive approach to combating weapons of mass destruction, and it comes as the nation prepares for a possible war with Iraq…. (continued http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A36819-2002Dec10&notFound=true)

See also, David E. Sanger, "U.S. Issues Warning to Foes in Arms Plan," *New York Times*, December 11, 2002.

See also, Jon Bonne, "Is a U.S. war against Iraq illegal?" http://www.msnbc.com/news/887480.asp?0ev=CB20 MSNBC.com, March 20, 2003.

[6] Todd S. Purdom, "The Brains Behind Bush's War," New York Times, February 1, 2003 http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/01/arts/01HAWK.html?ex=1045114481&ei=1&en=eaf41cc64419cc22 .

[7] A thoughtful, scholarly discussion of the legal precedents of restrictions on, and freedom of, speech during wartime occurred at the Virginia Festival of the Book, March 21, 2003. Profs. Henry Abraham, Barbara Perry, and Robert O'Neil offered contrasting perspectives on the past and present right of free speech in wartime. Their discussion is available on streaming audio at VaBook http://www.virginia.edu/vfh/audiopanel_03.html, part 1 (scroll down). This writer was the fourth member of the panel and was asked to offer a current perspective as publisher and editor; those remarks, an earlier version of the present essay, and discussion and questions among the panel, are available on part 2.

[8] Among many articles warning about an increase in government secrecy and intrusion into citizens' affairs was William Safire's column, "You Are A Suspect," *New York Times*, November 14, 2002, which reads, in part:

> If the Homeland Security Act is not amended before passage, here is what will happen to you:
>
> Every purchase you make with a credit card, every magazine subscription you buy and medical prescription you fill, every Web site you visit and e-mail you send or receive, every academic grade you receive, every bank deposit you make, every trip you book and every event you attend — all these transactions and communications will go into what the Defense Department describes as "a virtual, centralized grand database."
>
> To this computerized dossier on your private life from commercial sources, add every piece of information that government has about you — passport application, driver's license and bridge toll records, judicial and divorce records, complaints from nosy neighbors to the F.B.I., your lifetime paper trail plus the latest hidden camera surveillance — and you have the supersnoop's dream: a "Total Information Awareness" about every U.S. citizen.
>
> This is not some far-out Orwellian scenario. It is what will happen to your personal freedom in the next few weeks if John Poindexter gets the unprecedented power he seeks….
>
> This ring-knocking master of deceit is back again with a plan even more scandalous than Iran-contra. He heads the "Information Awareness Office" in the otherwise excellent Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which spawned the Internet and stealth aircraft technology. Poindexter is now realizing his 20-year dream: getting the "data-mining" power to snoop on every public and private act of every American.
>
> Even the hastily passed U.S.A. Patriot Act, which widened the scope of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and weakened 15 privacy laws, raised requirements for the government to report secret eavesdropping to Congress and the courts. But Poindexter's assault on individual privacy rides roughshod over such oversight. (continued http://www.indybay.org/news/2002/11/1543008.php)

See also, Adam Clymer, "Government Openness at Issue as Bush Holds Onto Records," *New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/03/politics/03SECR.html, January 3, 2003.

[9] The President Addresses the Nation, March 19, 2003: the opening of hostilities http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html.

[10] WashingtonPost.com Live OnLine http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/liveonline/03/special/world/sp_world_priest021003.htm. Dana Priest, THE MISSION: WAGING WAR AND KEEPING PEACE WITH AMERICA'S MILITARY. New York: Norton, 2003.

[11] *See,* Eric Schmitt, "Bush Ordering Limited Missile Shield," *New York Times*, December 18, 2002:

> WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 - After nearly two decades of debate over the wisdom and utility of trying to intercept missiles fired at the United States, President Bush today

> ordered the Pentagon to field a modest antimissile system within two years. If it works, it could intercept a limited attack from a state like North Korea.
>
> Mr. Bush's decision marked a major turning point in a debate that has consumed Washington and defense organizations since Ronald Reagan first announced plans for a far more ambitious space-based missile shield. A year ago, Mr. Bush withdrew from a treaty signed in 1972 with the Soviet Union that banned such systems; his action today marked the first time the United States had actually moved to field such a system, even though its capabilities are far more limited than proponents once hoped, and its reliability is still in doubt…. (continued http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/19/international/europe/19MISS.html?ex=1041305487&ei=1&en=07de7fcdfc742149)

See also, Michael Wines, "Moscow Miffed Over Missile Shield but Others Merely Shrug," *New York Times*, December 19, 2002:

> MOSCOW, Dec. 18 - Russia warned today that President Bush's order to field a limited missile-defense system in 2004 had pushed the venture into "a destabilizing new phase," but here, as in many places, weary shrugs were the dominant response to the American decision, which had long been considered inevitable…. (continued http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/19/international/europe/19MISS.html?ex=1041305487&ei=1&en=07de7fcdfc742149)

Also, "Opposition Unlikely for Missile Defense," *New York Times*, December 18, 2002 http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-Missile-Defense.html?ex=1041305671&ei=1&en=435a686c1b25b5bd.

Also, Katherine McNamara, "The Bear," *Archipelago,* Vol. 5, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-4/endnotes.htm.

[12] *See,* for example, Adam Clymer, "U.S. Ready to Rescind Clinton Order on Government Secrets," *New York Times*, March 21, 2003:

> WASHINGTON, March 20 - Making it easier for government agencies to keep documents secret, the Bush administration plans to revoke an order issued by President Bill Clinton that among other provisions said information should not be classified if there was "significant doubt" as to whether its release would damage national security.
>
> The new policy is outlined in a draft executive order being circulated among federal agencies. A final version is expected to be adopted before April 17, when the last elements of the Clinton order would take effect, requiring automatic declassification of most documents 25 or more years old. Under the draft, such automatic declassification would be postponed until Dec. 31, 2006…. (continued http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/21/politics/21SECR.html?ex=1049251016&ei=1&en=c68f8a3f90a448b7)

See also, NCH WASHINGTON UPDATE (Vol. 9, #13; 27 March 2003) by Bruce Craig <rbcraig@historycoalition.org> National Coalition for History (NCH) http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~nch:

> BUSH ISSUES NEW SECRECY EXECUTIVE ORDER On 25 March 2003 President George W. Bush signed a 31-page Executive Order "Further Amendment to Executive Order 12958, As Amended, Classified National Security Information" (EO 13291) replacing the soon-to-expire Clinton-era E.O. relating to the automatic declassification of federal government documents after 25 years. With a handful of exceptions, the new EO closely corresponds to a draft obtained by the National Coalition for History and distributed via the Internet earlier in March (See "Draft Executive Order Replacing EO 12958 Circulates" — NCH WASHINGTON UPDATE, Vol. 9, #11; 13 March 2003).
>
> The announcement of the president's signing the EO appears to have been carefully orchestrated by the White House to minimize public attention to the new order. One press insider characterized the strategy employed by the White House as "advance damage control." The administration tactic managed to short circuit a repeat of the public relations disaster that followed the release of the Presidential Records Act EO in 2001. (continued http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-NCH&month=0303&week=d&msg=XBNYlhIlp1aaZO9AP%2b4eQQ&user=&pw=)

See also, "Leahy introduces 'Restore FOIA' bill to amend Homeland law. A bill to curb the Homeland Security Act provision criminalizing disclosure of some business-submitted information was introduced in the U.S. Senate Wednesday.

"March 13, 2003 — Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) introduced the 'Restoration of Freedom of Information Act' today to combat requirements for secrecy in legislation establishing the Department of Homeland Security, which Congress passed in November." (continued http://www.rcfp.org/news/2003/0313homela.html)

Also, Senator Robert Byrd's Web site http://byrd.senate.gov/byrd_newsroom/byrd_news_march/news_2003_march/news_2003_march_6.html.

Also, Adam Clymer, "Government Openness at Issue as Bush Holds Onto Records," *New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/03/politics/03SECR.html, January 3, 2003.

[13] Senator Russell Feingold, "On Opposing the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act," *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/feingold.htm

See also, Senator Feingold, "'Confused Justifications and Vague Proposals': Why I Oppose Bush's Iraq War Resolution," *Counterpunch* http://www.counterpunch.org/feingold1010.html, October 10, 2002

[14] Association of American Publishers http://www.publishers.org/index.cfm and AAP Freedom to Read Committee http://www.publishers.org/about/divisioninfo.cfm?CommitteesID=4.

See also, Association of American University Publishers http://aaupnet.org/ and Books for Understanding the United States at War http://aaupnet.org/news/bfu/war.html.

Also, American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/.

Also, American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, "Saunders Seeks Change in USA PATRIOT Act to Protect Bookstore Privacy" http://www.abffe.org/.

[15] The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA, 1978): The passage following is from "America's Secret Court," by Paul DeRienzo and Joan Moossy. The article is undated but was written before the September 2001 attacks, and the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act (see Senator Russell Feingold's speech, cited above) and the recent Homeland Security Act. These laws have only increased the intrusive powers of the Federal government. The passage offers some background.

> The roots of FISA lie in the social upheavals that convulsed the country in the 1960s and '70s. During that time, countless citizens were drawn into a plethora of political-activist groups, from the civil-rights movement to anti-war organizations. Demonstrations and riots rocked cities and college campuses as Americans began to question seriously the government's war in Vietnam. The federal government moved quickly to stanch the tide of opposition and social change through a program of dirty tricks and unprecedented violations of personal rights and privacy, often justified as necessary for national security.
>
> The government's abuse of the Constitution eventually reached its height with the Watergate break-in and subsequent scandal that resulted in the near-impeachment and consequent resignation of President Nixon, who had ordered break-ins, known as black-bag jobs, against his Democratic opponents in the 1972 election. To defend his actions, Nixon argued that the president has an "inherent authority" as chief executive to suspend the Constitution in an emergency. Abraham Lincoln had limited habeas-corpus rights during the Civil War, and Franklin Roosevelt had interned thousands of Japanese-Americans in camps after Pearl Harbor.
>
> Public outrage over Nixon's abuses led to a 1976 investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Testimony before the committee, which was headed by Senator Frank Church of Idaho, revealed that the nation's intelligence agencies had consistently ignored and violated the Constitution for more than a quarter century. Among other abuses, the FBI was held responsible for the infamous COINTELPRO counterintelligence program that targeted those whom Hoover and Nixon perceived as political enemies: the Black Panther party, the American Indian Movement, and a host of popular leaders, including the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. To Senator Church, all this was "one of the sordid episodes in the history of American law enforcement."
>
> The findings of the Church Committee clearly established that there needed to be strict separation of federal domestic law enforcement from the government's counterintelligence activities. Ever since passage of the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1968, electronic surveillance in criminal investigations has required a warrant signed by a judge. But the '68 law had left open an exception in cases of national security, a loophole exploited by Nixon and his cronies. As designed ten years later, the primary purpose of FISA was to gather counterintelligence information, not to make criminal prosecutions. Surveillance would be conducted under the guidance of the Justice Department, employing a team of lawyers to work with the attorney general and the FBI An innovation proposed by then Attorney General Griffin Bell

> created a special court of sitting federal judges who would approve FISA wiretaps the same way judges approve criminal wiretaps.
>
> The main targets of FISA were supposed to be foreign intelligence agents working as part of their country's diplomatic missions in the United States. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has yet to hear a FISA case, lower courts have ruled that "once surveillance becomes primarily a criminal investigation ... individual privacy interests come to the fore and government foreign-policy concerns recede." Yet the fact that evidence acquired from a FISA surveillance can be used to make a criminal prosecution has led some critics to charge that the FBI is taking advantage of the law to make arrests…. (continued in six parts http://pdr.autono.net)

See also, Eric Lichtblau with Adam Liptak, "On Terror and Spying, Ashcroft Expands Reach," *New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/15/politics/15ASHC.html?ex=1048736950&ei=1&en=f08d5e8cf7fb1684, March 15, 2003.

[16] Dan Eggen and Susan Schmidt "Secret Court Rebuffs Ashcroft, Justice Dept. Chided On Misinformation," *Washington Post* http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51220-2002Aug22.html, August 23, 2002.

[17] *See,* "Cities Say No to Federal Snooping (December 19, 2002) 'Fearing that the Patriot Act will curtail Americans' civil rights, municipalities across the country are passing resolutions to repudiate the legislation and protect their residents from a perceived abuse of authority by the federal government.'" American Library Association, USA PATRIOT Act http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/usapatriotact.html

[18] *See,* the *New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com, the *Washington Post* http://www.washingtonpost.com/, *Ha'aretz* http://www.haaretzdaily.com/, the *International Herald Tribune* http://www.iht.com/, *The Guardian* http://www.guardian.co.uk/, the CBC http://www.cbc.ca/news/, BBC World Service http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/index.shtml.

[19] Helena Cobban's Just World News http://www.justworld.blogspot.com/; war blogs http://www.warblogs.cc/; "Where's Raed," Salam Pax's blog from Baghdad http://www.dearraed.blogspot.com. In addition, although hardly a blog, is George Loper's excellent Web site in Charlottesville, Va., designed as a medium of community discussion on-line http://www.loper.org/~george.

[20] *See,* John Kifner, "Intense Bombardment of Baghdad Lasts About 10 Minutes," *New York Times*, March 20, 2003.

See also, the official White House press briefing log, March 19,2003 http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-6.html

> Q: Ari, going back to this idea of this being the first preemptive or preventive war. What are other countries to make of this? What about other countries who might seize on this and take their own preemptive action?
>
> MR. FLEISCHER: Well, again, I harken back to what I said about the Cuban missile crisis. And you will have different historians come to different conclusions about

different events, but, certainly, in the Cuban missile crisis the United States was not attacked; the United States imposed a quarantine or an embargo, which, as I indicated earlier, people can call an act of war. That has been one of the ways people have looked at it.

[21] A report on Halliburton KBR's long-term employment in the rebuilding of Afghanistan, by Jordan Green, "The Influence of big energy corporations in the Bush administration is no secret," Institute for Southern Studies Report, was posted Feb. 1, 2002, on Institute for Southern Studies http://www.southernstudies.org. (The report is no longer posted, but may be available by subscription). Green writes,

> Last December [2001], the US Department of Defense made a no-cap, cost-plus-award contract to Halliburton KBR's Government Operations division. The Dallas-based company is contracted to build forward operating bases to support troop deployments for the next nine years wherever the President chooses to take the anti-terrorism war….
>
> The Pentagon posts all contract announcements exceeding $5 million on its Website, but in Halliburton's case declined to disclose the estimated value of the award. A spokesperson for Halliburton gave $2.5 billion as the amount the company earned from base support services in the 1990s, acknowledging that the contract value alone could exceed that number assuming that the scope of US military actions widens in the next decade.
>
> Though the Pentagon may be wary of admitting its favor towards Halliburton, the British Ministry of Defence showed no such reticence. In the third week of December 2001, the Defence Ministry awarded Halliburton's subsidiary Brown & Root Services $418 million to supply large tank transporters, capable of carrying tanks to the front lines at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour….
>
> Halliburton has close contacts with the Bush family. Aside from Cheney, there is Lawrence Eagleburger, a Halliburton director and former deputy secretary of defense under Bush Sr. during the Gulf War.
>
> In its earlier incarnation as Brown & Root Services, the company sponsored Texan and future president Lyndon Johnson's stolen election to the US Senate in 1948, building the state's spectacular political-industrial muscle.
>
> As the number-one field services company in the world, Halliburton had an active interest in position itself to exploit the newly-opened oil and gas fields in adjoining Uzbekistan, where the US Army's 10th Mountain Division already occupies a base.
>
> The Bush Administration's chief corporate interest is in advancing the fortunes of the energy industry. National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice is a former board member of Chevron, which has been operating the Tengiz oil fields in neighboring Kazakhstan through the past decade. Commerce Secretary Don Evans is the former chairman of the Denver-based oil firm Tom Brown Inc. Houston-based Enron, whose phenomenal implosion has recently brought critical attention, was the single biggest contributor to the Bush campaign last year….

However, cause-and-effect relationships ought not be supposed, as Lawrence Eagleburger (and his former colleague Gen. Brent Scowcroft) publicly expressed serious doubts about undertaking war with Iraq. *See* War with Iraq: Scowcroft and Eagleburger Speak at Miller Center Sponsored Forum http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-Bush-Cyber-War.html?ex=1045641476&ei=1&en=6d372e0c1444bfbe.

On the other hand, see Pratap Chatterjee, "Halliburton Makes a Killing on Iraq War;

Cheney's Former Company Profits from Supporting Troops
http://www.corpwatch.org/issues/PID.jsp?articleid=6008," *CorpWatch,* March 20, 2003.

[22] "Bugging devices found at EU," BBC News http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2864063.stm

[23] Robert Gehrke, "Air Force Secretary Reports 54 Cases of Rape, Assault," *Washington Post* http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/qp-dyn/A5240-2003Mar6?language=printer (AP), March 6, 2003.

Also, continued coverage of the Academy, and matters concerning women and the military http://www.feminist.org/news/newsbyte/news_results.asp?Body=air+force&Submit2=Go

Also, "The War Against Women," *New York Times* Editorial
http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/12/opinion/12SUN1.html?ex=1043642275&ei=1&en=6e03fbb823d74c2a, January 12, 2003.

[24] *See,* National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace http://www.whitehouse.gov/pcipb/ September 2002

See also, "Bush Signs Directive on Cyber Attacks," (AP), *New York Times*, February 7, 2003.

> WASHINGTON (AP) – President Bush has signed a secret order allowing the government to develop guidelines under which the United States could launch cyber-attacks against foreign computer systems, administration officials said Friday.
>
> The United States has never conducted a large-scale cyber-attack, but officials said last month that the unfolding cyber-strategy plan made it more clear than ever that the Defense Department can wage cyber warfare if the nation is attacked. (continued http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-Bush-Cyber-War.html?ex=1045641476&ei=1&en=6d372e0c1444bfbe)

Also, Bradley Graham, "Bush Orders Guidelines for Cyber-Warfare," *Washington Post*, February 6,2003.

> President Bush has signed a secret directive ordering the government to develop, for the first time, national-level guidance for determining when and how the United States would launch cyber-attacks against enemy computer networks, according to administration officials.
>
> Similar to strategic doctrine that has guided the use of nuclear weapons since World War II, the cyber-warfare guidance would establish the rules under which the United States would penetrate and disrupt foreign computer systems.

> The United States has never conducted a large-scale, strategic cyber-attack, according to several senior officials. But the Pentagon has stepped up development of cyber-weapons…. (continued http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A38110-2003Feb6.html)

Also, FindLawForum (CNN), "We don't need a new secret 'cyber-court' for hackers." http://www.cnn.com/2001/LAW/10/columns/fl.ramasastry.cybercourt.10.25/

Also, "Gilmore Commission critical of Bush cybersecurity plan," Computerworld.com http://www.computerworld.com/securitytopics/security/story/0,10801,76827,00.html

[25] *See,* "Hackers bring down al-Jazeera news site" http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/story605.html

[26] Links to headlines:

"U.S. to Make Airlines Give Data on Americans Going Overseas" http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/04/politics/04TRAV.html?ex=1042692148&ei=1&en=c9c0ae8e843f24cf

"U.S. Hopes to Check Computers Globally" http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A40942-2002Nov11&notFound=true

"How a Deal Creating an Independent Commission on Sept. 11 Came Undone" http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/02/politics/02COMM.html

"Grounded: The Government's Air Passenger Blacklist" http://listarchives.his.com/water-l/msg02310.html

"Government intercepts, confiscates AP reporters' package – Federal officials opened a package mailed between two reporters and illegally turned the contents over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation" http://www.rcfp.org/news/2003/0313custom.html

"Tucson Citizen photographer arrested while shooting campus protest" http://www.rcfp.org/

"Leaked Bill would increase terrorism action secrecy" (the so-called "Patriot II" Bill) http://www.rcfp.org/news/2003/0220patriot2.html

[27] *See* Arthur L. Limon, "Hostile Witnesses," *The Washington Post*, August 16,1998.

> The Iran-contra scandal burst upon the scene in November 1986 when it was first reported in a Lebanese newspaper that President Ronald Reagan had approved the sale of missiles to Iran in exchange for American hostages in Lebanon. Later, Justice Department lawyers found evidence that proceeds from the arms sales had been diverted to illegally fund the contra anticommunist guerrillas in Nicaragua in circumvention of the Boland Amendment banning U.S. aid to the rebels. It was an audacious, covert scheme – known by its participants as "the Enterprise" – carried out largely by a small group of top administration officials and private operators without the knowledge of Congress. And when it began to unravel, the foremost question congressional investigators faced was the classic one echoing from the days of Watergate: What did the president know and when did he know it?

> Arthur L. Liman, a renowned New York corporate lawyer who had been involved in many big-time cases, was brought in as chief counsel for the Senate special committee set up to investigate. Liman helped conduct 40 days of controversial public hearings that made Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North a household name but were inconclusive about Reagan's role. Liman's memoirs, which are being published posthumously next month, recall those days when a president's fate hung in the balance.
>
> Liman died last year before Whitewater metamorphosed into Monicagate, but he almost certainly would have stuck to the view expressed in his memoirs that the high crimes and misdemeanors alleged in Iran-contra posed a far more serious threat to American democracy and our system of checks and balances. Even Watergate – a bungled burglary followed by a White House-orchestrated cover-up – was less threatening, Liman argued. He saw Iran-contra as a deliberate effort to conduct foreign policy in secret by using a private organization motivated by profit and accountable to no one. Whitewater, by contrast, involved mainly pre-presidential financial activities that posed no constitutional issue or question of presidential accountability, according to Liman, who said the country could not afford to incapacitate a president by a drawn-out investigation that questioned his legitimacy…. (continued http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/irancontra/contra1.htm)

See also, Iran Contra Alumni in Bush Government (AP) http://www.drugwar.com/pbushirancontra.shtm, March 13, 2002.

[28] See Ian Bruce's brilliant Flash movie, "Technical Difficulties," on MoveOn.org http://www.moveon.org/technicaldifficulties/.

Other sites of interest:

Robert Fisk, "The Keys of Palestine," *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, Nos. 3/4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/fisk.htm. An interview with Fisk from Baghdad, March 25, is on Democracy Now http://www.democracynow.org/fisk.htm.

"'Patriotism' and the Right of Free Speech in Wartime." A panel discussion broadcast on C-Span March 21, 2003, with Profs. Henry Abraham, Barbara Perry, and Robert O'Neil, and Katherine McNamara, Editor and Publisher of *Archipelago*. Streaming audio of the panel discussion is available at Virginia Festival of the Book http://www.virginia.edu/vfh/audiopanel_03.html (scroll down).

Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression http://www.tjcenter.org/

"Weapons of Mass Instruction" children's book list http://www.sol-plus.net/peace.htm

Republican National Committee http://www.rnc.org/

Democratic National Committee http://www.democrats.org/

Cato Institute, March 17, 2003 http://www.cato.org/dispatch/03-17-03d.html

United States at the United Nations: official Web site http://www.un.int/usa/

Previous Endnotes:
A Year in Washington http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/endnotes.htm
Lies Damned Lies; The Colossus (2) http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/endnotes.htm
The Colossus http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-1/endnotes.htm
The Bear http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-4/endnotes.htm
Sasha Choi Goes Home http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-3/endnotes.htm
Sasha Choi in America http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-2/endnotes.htm
A Local Habitation and A Name http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-1/endnotes.htm
The Blank Page, Vol. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/endnotes.htm
The Poem of the Grand Inquisitor http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/endnotes.htm
On the Marionette Theater http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-1/endnotes.htm
The Double http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-4/endnotes.htm
Folly, Love, St. Augustine http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-3/endnotes.htm
On Memory http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-2/endnotes.htm
Passion http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/endnotes.htm
A Flea http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-4/endnotes.htm
On Love http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-3/endnotes.htm
Fantastic Design, with Nooses http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-1/endnotes.htm
Kundera's Music Teacher http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-4/endnotes.htm
The Devil's Dictionary; Economics for Poets http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-3/endnotes.htm
Hecuba in New York; Déformation Professionnelle http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-2/endnotes.htm
Art, Capitalist Relations, and Publishing on the Web http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-1/endnotes.htm

An Interview with Moshe Benarroch

Karen Alkalay-Gut

Moshe Benarroch was born in Tetuan, Morocco, in 1959. He moved to Israel as an adolescent. Moshe Benarroch lives in Jerusalem and writes in Hebrew, English, and Spanish. His twelve books (nine are in Hebrew, three in English and one in Spanish) show the influence of such varied writers as Charles Bukowski, Alan Ginsberg, Edmond Jabès, Vicente Huidobro, and Pablo Neruda. Seeing him as an integral part of Hebrew Literature, Natan Zach has written, "Moshe Benarroch is one the best Israeli poets writing today"; while Xulio Valcarcel in Spain perceives him as a Moroccan poet: "Moshe Benarroch transforms permanent exile, the impossibility to adapt and the eternal escape, into his vital poetics." These and other paradoxes in Benarroch's writing make talking to him an exploration of the secrets of the basic nature of poetry.

The interview was conducted by e-mail.-Ed.

ALKALAY-GUT: Why did you start writing in English?

BENARROCH: I am happy to start by answering this question. I always hope someone will ask it in an interview and you are the first.

I don't have a very clear answer. The fact is that I wrote my first poem in a language foreign to me, when I was fifteen years old. For four years, I kept writing poems in English. The first poems I published were translations in Hebrew of poems I had written in English. Then I switched to writing in Hebrew, and then I came back.

My mother tongue is Spanish, so this language should have been the most obvious choice. But I never learned Spanish formally. Is that an excuse? I don't know. I went to a school in Morocco where the teaching language was French, the Alliance Française. Spanish wasn't even a second language, or a third. As a matter of fact, we learned English, Hebrew and Arabic, but not Spanish. This is a strange fact, since this was the mother tongue of all the pupils and most of the teachers. When I started writing, I had been in Israel for three years, so I could have started writing in Hebrew. My Hebrew was pretty good already. I spoke quite well soon after we came, thanks to Mr. Cohen, my Hebrew teacher in Morocco. Mr. Cohen gave us lessons in Modern Hebrew; he had been in Israel and knew Modern Hebrew very well. We also had classes where we studied Biblical Hebrew.

Then, there was French, and in spite of the fact that this was the language I knew better than others, I don't think it was a real option. I don't know why, but it is still the most foreign of the languages I speak.

At the time I was listening, as I do today, to singer-songwriters. I listened to Bob Dylan, Jackson Browne, Gordon Lightfoot, and their words were very important to me, so I started writing poems that were essentially lyrics. Mostly, these were love songs — unanswered love, adolescent love.

According to an Edgar Cayce study of astrology, in another incarnation I had lived once in Texas. This makes sense, too; maybe that's where my English comes from. In 1990, a friend from Japan told me that every singer I liked had to do with Austin: they were either born there or lived there a long time.

For all I know, I am explaining too much, because this is still a mystery to me.

ALKALAY-GUT: Does English help you to feel connected, or separated, or both?

BENARROCH: I started writing in 1975; my first book appeared in 1994; and during that time I tried all the publishers in Israel with my poetry and prose. Nothing. All this, in spite of the fact that my writing appeared regularly in the best magazines in the country, and even in some newspapers. In 1994, I published THE IMMIGRANT'S LAMENT (recently published in English by WPC), and I had the illusion of success at last. But very soon I understood that this book had become a curiosity of how "the Moroccans wail all the time." A small publisher in Israel published it. Then I tried the big ones again with my novels and poems. Nothing. In 1997, I published a book of prose, which included five novellas. It was the work of five years, and my expectations were very high. This book proved to be my worst seller; it went completely unnoticed, and I was desperate.

I understood I had to do something. What that something was I didn't know at all, but I felt something had to be done. At the time I thought of switching languages again, emigrating to France and writing in French. I didn't think of using Spanish at the time. And then I discovered the poetry world of the Internet.

I decided to translate some of my poems from Hebrew to English. I translated fourteen poems and sent them to Internet sites. I sent the same poems to between twenty and forty e-zines and (some) printed magazines. Some poems in the past had been accepted, but I'd been use to lots of rejection; I had an idea that I was in a war — I was a guerilla campaigning against the big army of the editors. To my surprise, my poems were, very suddenly, everywhere. All the sites accepted them — one was on ten sites (that was "The Bread and the Dream," a poem I was never able to publish in Israel). I started translating more. I even had the guts to translate the "Self Portrait of the Poet in Family Mirror," a ten-page poem. I then met Klaus Gerken, editor of *Ygdrasil*, and he published it. Indeed, he encouraged me to translate more poems, including my other long poem, "The Immigrant's Lament." The response was huge: I was receiving e-mails from readers, other e-zines were asking for more poems. In the meantime, here in Israel it was more of the same, and much more of the same. Soon, I remembered —that once I wrote in English. Instead of writing in Hebrew, then translating into English, I wrote poems in English. In fact, I have written only two poems in Hebrew since March 1998. My poetry has been written in Spanish and English (I still write all the prose in Hebrew).

So, we go back to your question. I feel that English has opened a door to the world, to the outside world. I found readers. I don't feel like an outsider in English, although it is a language I have never lived in. It takes me some time to get used to speaking fluently — I need to be two, three days in London or New York, and then I am completely fluent. English is for me the written word; I read in English a lot — I listen to music sung in English; I answer many emails in English every day. I think that English is part of me, I believe I write in a sort of international English. It's a new language, a sort of Esperanto,

closer to the American idiom than the British one; still I don't write either English or American. (The French write in their books; "*traduit de l'Américain*" when they publish an American book, — not one from England. I think they have a point).

English today opens doors to the whole world. Many people from other parts of the globe have read my poems in English. Thirteen have been translated into Urdu, and have been published by Dunyazad in Pakistan.

I think in English, for example now when I am writing this. I dream in English. But I also think in other languages, and dream in them, too.

ALKALAY-GUT: So there is no emotional attachment to English? It is just a more effective means of communication?

BENARROCH: I wouldn't say that there is no emotional attachment to writing in English. It's different than writing in Spanish, but maybe not that different than writing in Hebrew. There is one mother tongue, and it is physically placed in a different place in our brains than other tongues we learn. English is not my mother tongue, but probably some of the most important poems and novels I read are written in English. I wouldn't be me without "Howl" and "Kaddish" by Ginsberg, or without Bukowski, or without Burroughs's NAKED LUNCH, without Whitman, Dickinson, Kurt Vonnegut, Brautigan and many others. It is emotional, but in a different way.

English is a more effective way of communication. I am not sure it's the same for every poet in the world. It has brought me hundreds, maybe thousands of readers, people who cared enough to send me e-mails and buy my books. I am forever thankful for that. I was invited to a poetry festival for the first time in the U.S.

ALKALAY-GUT: Do you think that your success in English is due to the backwardness of Israeli literature and literary criticism?

BENARROCH: My non-success in Israel is due to the fact that I was born in Morocco, have a very Moroccan-Jewish name, and am not ashamed to say it and place myself where I like. You cannot be an important writer or poet if you are from Morocco. You can be some kind of clown playing by the rules, which means writing what I call Kouskous poetry, a kind of ethnic literature that shows how the Sephardim are primitive and the occidental culture is the peak of humanity. Even then you will not be able to be as important as Amos Oz, as an example, but you will be able to get your place in that niche. Because since my early childhood I have never been able to shut my mouth, because I say what I think, I don't think I will ever fit into that niche.

About literary criticism in Israel: it is an extinct form, or almost. There is no literary criticism in Israel today. The situation today is that the big publishers and Steimatzky [major Israeli bookseller] decide which books are good books, and which aren't. Their only criteria are how much they sell and which kind of books they want to promote. The media just follow what they impose on us as the next best seller. Many of these books are not bad books, and the Israeli reader is not a bad reader, but the choice he is offered is limited these days by commercial parameters.

The situation of poetry is even worse — it is almost extinguished. Very few poetry books are seen in bookstores, and they sell very badly.

ALKALAY-GUT: Do you think that you are part of the English-speaking culture, or is it just a linguistic choice you have made?

BENARROCH: I guess I am sitting on a fence everywhere. Am I part of the Hebrew-speaking writers' community? Maybe this community does not think so, since the Hebrew writers association did not accept me as a member. There still exists the Zionist approach, as though you have to detach yourself from anything coming from your Diaspora, and write only in Hebrew. When I tell Israeli poets that I write in other languages, they either don't hear, or they tell me that I went back to the Galut (Diaspora). I believe I am part of an international community writing in English as a second language, as the international language that English has become. I don't feel that I am part of American or British poetry. As for the Spanish, they call me a Sephardi poet, which also means I am some sort of ghost coming from the past. In Spain the Sephardi adjective is positive, in Israel it is negative.

Tamazgha, my lost country

Tamazgha, land of the free people,
Kahena El Dahyan, my queen mother
jew and woman
who fought the arab invasion
in the eighth century
My Amazigh name, Arous, Benarrous, Benarroch
lost in centuries of wars
intolerance
in my country
where christians, jews and pagans
lived and believed by each other

Rise my Amazigh people
from the ruins of Rome
the intolerance of Islam
the decay of Europe

Rise my Amazigh people
and teach tolerance to this world
where the forgotten are the right
where the lost stone
leads the light

Rise Kahena, Queen of jews and Amazighs
Raise for your memory
this new world in this new millennium
demands justice for all that is called past.

Amazigh means Berbers, who are the majority of people in Morocco and in the Maghreb. They are more than 50% of Moroccan population (some say 70%); yet their language is forbidden. The name of the Maghreb in Tamazigh (the Amazigh language) is Tamazgha, which means *the land of the free people*. Before the Arab conquest of Morocco, there was complete tolerance of any cult in the country. Many Amazigh tribes converted to Judaism and Christianity (St. Augustine was an Amazigh), and probably all the Jews from Morocco and Spain are of Amazigh descent.

Kahena was the legendary Amazigh queen. She was a Jew, and she stood off the Arabs for years. They had to bring all their soldiers from Byzantium to defeat her.

Talk about Eurocentricism and tolerance, feminism: you've got it all here. But this is a real thing: in Algeria, the Arabs are destroying the Amazigh people. Much of what is going on there nobody understands; some Amazighs in Algeria are still pagan and not circumcised, especially in the remote zones of Kabilie. You can read more about this fascinating topic on-line. [See Related Sites, below.]

ALKALAY-GUT: But you dream about other languages and places, don't you? Could you explain this? And then, does the strangeness of the English language help you identify with the remoteness of this nation?

BENARROCH: There are quite a few questions here.

I do dream in languages no one speaks, and no one ever spoke. I wrote a poem about a dead poet: they find his body was made of words, of poems in all known languages; then they find this poem in an unknown language no one understands; but everyone who hears it, cries. I have no idea how the Amazigh language sounds. This is a most interesting thing because, while searching for Moroccan names, I found that more than 2/3 of them are Amazigh names — including my name, which originally was Benarous or Benaros; the meaning is "sour." So when I found about the Amazigh (better known as the Berbers, although this is not their name, but the way they are called —it means "barbarian"), I felt I found the missing link of Sephardic Jewish history. I don't count myself as a specialist of Amazigh culture, although I can see where the Spain of the three religions comes from: it's from the Amazigh people. They had this tradition in them already!

Back to languages: I find that many Jews in Morocco have family names in a language they have forgotten. This is amazing.

But more than that, it is that some Jews from the Atlas and other remote areas in Morocco spoke the Amazigh language; and maybe some old Moroccans in Israel still do. They were called *Schleuchs*, but Schleuch (Tachlehit) is a version of Amazigh, the closest one to Hebrew.

Are the Amazigh a remote people? Is their tradition foreign to me? How could that be? I met them everyday in Morocco; they are everywhere. It is said that, some years ago, it was an offense to call an Amazigh an Arab. But after 1956 and Moroccan independence, there began a complete Arab oppression (at the same time it began in Egypt under Nasser. This is told in a book by Leila Ahmet, A BORDER PASSAGE, in which she speaks about the making of an Arab, or how the Egyptians were convinced to think as Arabs), and people stopped speaking about being Amazigh.

The Internet is bringing all these injustices to the ground. The Amazighs are the natives of the Maghreb. All the Jews in Morocco are descendants of Amazigh tribes, and since these were the same Jews that emigrated into Spain since the 8th century, all the Jews from Spain are Amazigh, too.

I think that this idea brought me a broader view of my history. I had read, long ago, that for many years, many Jews lived from commerce between Arabs and Amazighs, because they would not buy and sell to each other. Since the 17th century the monarch has been Arab, while most of the citizens of Morocco are not.

I couldn't think of writing this poem in any other language than English. Why? I need a few years to really understand that. But, socially speaking, I don't think anyone in Israel would understand what I am talking about. This comes after many years of trying to understand the Maghreb, and the relation between Jews and Muslims in this country. Here in Israel I have this feeling that I still have to explain that Jews from Arab countries are real Jews, and that they have a history, a culture, and not only exotic food, to offer.

My friend Ruth Knafo Setton, a writer born in Morocco and living in the U.S., told me that she sent one of her stories to a magazine and received a letter from the editor telling her that she was a good writer, but that she should write about "real Jews." The idea was that "real" Jews are only the Jews from Europe. It is like this everywhere in the world, but, strangely, it also exits in Israel, where the Sephardic Jews were a majority ten years ago, and are still more than 40% of the population. (The change happened because a million Jews came from Russia.) This concept is shared both by Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Israel.

When I say that all the Moroccan Jews are Amazigh, and when I say that I am Sephardi, or a Moroccan, or a Jew, and Israeli, etc., I am not talking about identity. I don't say: this is my identity. I don't like the word "identity"; in the languages I know, it comes from the root "identical." An erroneous concept of history begins, because no one person is like any other person. We should be talking about something else. In Hebrew I would say "Shayakhut," or "pertenencia" in Spanish; I should find a more precise word in English than "belonging," "being part of a group." You can be part of many groups, just as you can have more than one nationality. Multiculturalism should mean people who have more than one culture. I feel that — having been born in the northernmost city of Africa, the last before Europe starts, being a Jew, speaking four languages, and having my history — I belong to one hundred cultures. I fit into all of them; and at the same time, I don't fit in any of them, because, too often, people try to pigeonhole me, or define me. This happens in Israel, surely; but less often in big cities, in cities with people from many countries — New York, Paris, London, or Barcelona, where I am just one more of those rare people coming from everywhere and from nowhere.

Let me add something about this interview, something I told you outside of our e-mails: it is that I am indeed happy to get your questions, because these are the questions that matter to me. Each time I am interviewed by an Israeli, in many ways I am not answering his or her questions. In my mind, I am telling myself "NO! not again!" I mean, not again this bullshit; not again, "When did you learn about European culture?" or, "Do you feel oppressed?" and questions like that. So, thanks for your blessed questions.

Moshe Benarroch's poems appeared in Archipelago, *Vol. 1, No. 2* http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-1/fivepoems.htm

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