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Masthead

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

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EYES OPEN TO PRAISE
Poems

Samuel Menashe

Adam Means Earth

I am the man
Whose name is mud
But what's in a name
To shame the one who knows
Mud does not stain
Clay he's made of
Dust Adam became—
The dust he was—
Was he his name

Adam: from *Adamah*, 'earth' in Hebrew

Reeds Rise From Water

rippling under my eyes
Bulrushes tuft the shore

At every instance I expect
what is hidden everywhere

Manna

for David Curzon

Open your mouth
To feed that flesh
Your teeth have bled
Tongue us out
Bone by bone
Do not allow
Man to be fed
By bread alone

'And he afflicted the and suffered thee to hunger and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord does man life.' –Deuteronomy VIII:3

Paschal Wilderness

Blue funnels the sun
Each unhewn stone
Every derelict stem
Engenders Jerusalem

Stone Would Be Water

Stone would be water
But it cannot undo
Its own hardness
Rocks might run
Wild as torrents
Plunged upon the sky
By cliffs none climb

Who makes fountains
Spring from flint
Who dares tell
One thirsting
There's a well

The Shrine Whose Shape I Am

The shrine whose shape I am
Has a fringe of fire
Flames skirt my skin

There is no Jerusalem but this
Breathed in flesh by shameless love
Built high upon the tides of blood
I believe the Prophets and Blake
And like David I bless myself
With all my might

I know many hills were holy once
But now in the level lands to live
Zion ground down must become marrow
Thus in my bones I am the King's son
And through death's domain I go
Making my own procession

Incense Man

As the tall, turbaned
Black, incense man
Passed the house
I called after him
And ran out to the street
Where at once we smiled
Seeing one another
And without a word
Like a sword that leaps from its lustrous sheath
He was swinging his lamp with abundant grace
To my head and to my heart and to my feet . . .
Self-imparted we swayed
Possessed by that One
Only the living praise

'The dead do not praise Thee.' –Psalm of David

Old As The Hills

The lilt of a slope
Under the city
Flow of the land
With streets in tow
Where houses stand
Row upon row

The Annunciation

She bows her head
Submissive, yet
Her downcast glance
Asks the angel, "Why,
For this romance,
Do I qualify?"

Hallelujah

Eyes open to praise
The play of light
Upon the ceiling—
While still abed raise
The roof this morning
Rejoice as you please
Your Maker who made
This day while you slept,
Who gives grace and ease,
Whose promise is kept.

'Let them sing for joy upon their beds.' –Psalm 149

Promised Land

At the edge
Of a World
Beyond my eyes
Beautiful
I know Exile
Is always
Green with hope—
The river
We cannot cross
Flows forever

Samuel Menashe, Six Poems, *Archipelago*, Vol. 5, No. 2
http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-2/menashe.htm

OTTO LUENING: *No Jerusalem But This* http://dram.nyu.edu/dram/note.cgi?id=8536
(Peters; recording CRI)
The text of the cantata comes from two collections
of Samuel Menashe's work, *The Many Named Beloved* (1961) and *No Jerusalem But This*.

Foreword: *The End*, by Hans Erich Nossack

Joel Agee

> In today's world, personal truth is the only reality. To stand by that truth—to declare it—is revolutionary.
> –Hans Erich Nossack

Half a century ago, when I was fifteen years old, I read a collection of "reports" —that is what they were called on the flyleaf—titled *Interview mit dem Tode*, "An Interview with Death," by an author named Hans Erich Nossack. I was living in Berlin then, surrounded by many ruins left over from World War II. It may be that the knowledge of so much violent death in my neighborhood not long ago was in part what attracted me to that title, even before I discovered how much of the book had to do with the enigma those ruins represented to me.

The reports were unlike anything I would have associated with that word. All but one of them were works of fiction, some of it quite fantastical, and the single piece of reportage proper, titled *Der Untergang*[1]—an account of the destruction of Hamburg by Allied bombers in July, 1943—gave way, intermittently, to passages written in the language of dreams and fairytales. This refusal to limit the meaning of "report" to the transmission of facts was, for me, a revelation almost as startling as the narrator's voice, which was so personal, quiet, and tender, even when speaking about calamity. Although maybe that stillness was itself an after-effect of disaster:

> Already during the night and at daybreak the first refugees had arrived. . . . They brought with them an uncanny silence. No one dared to question these figures seated by the edge of the road. Just wanting to offer them help seemed too loud an action.

[1] The word is commonly translated as "destruction" or "downfall," but its meaning here encompasses total collective ruin, with apocalyptic implications. Hence my choice of "The End" for the English title.

I translated the essay on Hamburg when I was in my early thirties. I was living in New York then. I'm not sure why I took on this task. It was not with the intention of publishing the piece. Probably my motive was to share it with friends and my wife, for no other reason than that I liked it. But I can't help thinking that my returning to Nossack's book at that time, and my choosing to translate that part of it, had something to do with the war in Vietnam, or rather with the language in which that war was discussed: militant language for war and against it, rational language of numbers and quantities, analytical language, newspaper language, speechwriters' language. In that Babel of rhetorics, I must have remembered the windless calm in Nossack's account and opened his book to see how he had managed to speak of his city's ordeal without complaint and without accusation, and yet with an authority that compels a reciprocal calm in the reader.

I did send the manuscript to some publishers a few years later. No one was interested. Previous translations of Nossack's novels, though respectfully reviewed, had reached very few readers, as does most foreign fiction in America—that was one reason. But aside from that, I was told, Americans just weren't prepared to sympathize with a German description of the suffering of Germans in World War II.

Three decades later, in November, 2002, Nossack's name was brought to the attention of American readers when *The New Yorker* published an essay titled "Reflections: A Natural History Of Destruction" by the highly regarded and widely read German novelist W. G. Sebald. The article, based on a series of lectures Sebald had given in Zurich on "Air War And Literature," criticized postwar German literature for consigning to near-total oblivion the horrors inflicted by Allied bombers on the defenseless population of cities like Hamburg and Dresden. "The darkest aspects of the final act of destruction," Sebald wrote, " . . . remained under a kind of taboo like a shameful family secret, a secret that perhaps could not even be privately acknowledged." For nearly four decades after the war, he said, all public discussion of this enormous event was confined to the occasional delicate mention of "the catastrophe." No small part of the blame had to be laid at the doorstep of those whose vocation it should have been to keep the collective memory alive—the writers. There were a few—five, in Sebald's count—who did venture to break the taboo by writing about the bombs and the fires and the degradation of life in the ruins, but even here there was a tendency to gild the unbearable truth with metaphysical musings, Symbolist jargon, romantic grandiosity, or avantgardist language games. Only two authors—Heinrich Böll and Hans Erich Nossack—met Sebald's criteria for a responsible literature in the face of total

destruction, and it is Nossack's short masterpiece, in the main, that is held up in Sebald's essay as a worthy contribution to a "natural history of destruction."[2]

It is worth taking a closer look at Sebald's thesis, because it espouses a program in which Nossack cannot be enlisted without misunderstanding him. "On The Natural History Of Destruction" was the proposed title for a report Solly Zuckerman, a doctor of medicine and zoology who had advised the British government on aerial bombing, had intended to write after visiting the ruined city of Cologne. Apparently he was so overwhelmed by what he had seen that he was unable to deliver the article. "My first view of Cologne," he wrote decades later in his autobiography, "cried out for a more eloquent piece than I could ever have written."[3] Sebald, quoting him, does not speculate as to why the scientifically trained Zuckerman was unable to write an empirical report but proceeds to undertake the task himself: "How ought such a natural history of destruction to begin? With a summary of the technical, organizational, and political prerequisites for carrying out large-scale air raids? With a scientific account of the previously unknown phenomenon of the firestorms? With a pathographical record of typical modes of death, or with behaviorist studies of the instincts of flight and homecoming?"[4]

I don't imagine this is the type of eloquence Solly Zuckerman lacked. More likely he found himself unable to write because what he had to say could not be expressed in dispassionate, "objective" terms. Is it not conceivable that, in the necropolis that had once been Cologne, or more likely when he sat down to write his report in the less severely ruined city of London, the enormity of what he had witnessed rose up in him as an inchoate scream or lament, and that this urgency demanded of him that he speak from the fullness of the heart or not at all? I am guessing, of course. But that Nossack, three months after Hamburg was incinerated, found himself at just such a threshold is not a matter of conjecture:

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[2] After its publication in book form (*Luftkrieg und Literatur*, Carl Hanser Verlag 1999), Sebald's thesis was widely discussed and occasionally contested in Germany, notably by Volker Hage, who demonstrated that substantially more writers than those cited by Sebald had written about the trauma of aerial bombardment. (Volker Hage, *Hamburg 1943. Literarische Zeugnisse zum Feuersturm.* S. Fischer, 2003, and *Zeugen der Zerstörung. Die Literaten und der Luftkrieg. Essays und Gespräche.* S. Fischer, 2003.)

[3] cited in W. G. Sebald, *On The Natural History Of Destruction,* Random House, 2003, p.31

[4] Sebald, *op. cit.,* p. 33. The questioning tone of these sentences suggests ambivalence, perhaps disapproval of what they propose, but with the very next sentence Sebald goes on to praise Nossack for having described the movements of refugees in such a way that they could indeed serve as material for a behaviorist study. This would be unobjectionable if he did not also chide him, in passing, for not adhering consistently to this documentary program. An unstated motif, throughout Sebald's essay, appears to be a polemical claim for his own quasi-documentary esthetic as the only responsible way to contemplate the bitter truth of historical memory.

> "I feel that I have been given a mandate to render an account. Let no one ask me why I presume to speak of a mandate: I cannot answer that. I feel that my mouth would remain closed forever if I did not take care of this first."

This is not the voice of a neutral observer. It is the voice of a witness—not in the usual juridical sense, but in the confessional sense of religious parlance, though he brings no good news and says nothing of God: one who stands surety, with his soul and his life if needs be, for a truth that might otherwise not be believed.

Sebald praises Nossack for being, on the whole, "concerned with plain facts: the season of the year, the weather, . . . the physical and mental condition of refugees from the cities, the burnt-out scenery, chimneys that curiously remain standing, washing put out to dry on a rack outside the kitchen window . . ." etc.[5]

Here, for comparison, is Nossack:

> Why are there no smells on the stairs any longer? Why is there no laundry drying on the rack outside the kitchen window? . . . Wasn't there in every one of these numberless apartments, whose contours were now discernible only in what was left of the walls, a housewife who polished the floors and dusted the furniture day in, day out; who was afraid of her neighbors yet wanted to be envied by them? And why are the chimneys still there, meaningless and without smoke? But there's no stove left. What did we cook for? And no beds either! Why did we sleep? Why did we sustain ourselves? Why did we collect provision and save money? Everything that men have to say about this is a lie. It is not permissible to talk about it except in the language of women.

These are not "plain facts." It is the little word "I" at the start of his record and the presence, throughout, of a vulnerable conscience intent on being true to itself that make all the difference between objective reporting and authentic witness. That facts are nevertheless accounted for by such a witness—scrupulously—is self-evident. Why would he lie or embellish a truth that already exceeds the bounds of imagination? Those who did so in their writing—Sebald cites some egregious examples—were not close enough to the event to be chastened by its sheer horror. But let me not discount the part that imagination plays in Nossack's chronicle. He uses it frequently and freely. There are passages that might be termed mystical or surreal because they depart from the plane of realistic description altogether. These are no less concerned with telling the truth than those that record concrete data and tangible facts. They are attempts at describing an experience for which no

[5] Sebald, *op.cit.*, *p.* 51

ready language exists, because it takes place on the other side of an abyss that divides those who have lost everything from those "who still have a past from which they derive their standard for tomorrow." What comes across to us is an uncanny message of liberation: "We have become present." It appears from Nossack's account that for a brief period many survivors experienced a state of consciousness in which class prejudice and the masks of convention, fear of authority and the very notion of an enemy had fallen away, leaving only the lineaments of an archetypal humanity:

> But the visage of man in those days—who would dare to forget it. The eyes had grown larger and transparent, as they appear in icons. The cold, meanly divisive window glass was shattered, and through the wide openings the infinite behind man wafted unhindered into the endlessness before him and hallowed his countenance for the passage of what is beyond time. Let us cast this visage as a constellation into the sky, to remind us of our last chance before everything turns into a faceless mass.

There are other surprises in Nossack's narrative—the most estranging, perhaps, for a contemporary reader, being the absence of any mention of the Nazis or Germany's guilt in provoking the retribution it was now receiving. I can only guess at the reasons for this. Nossack's contempt for "the authorities," for the state altogether, is too explicitly stated to allow for the explanation that he was motivated by caution. More likely, three months after an event whose violence had made a shambles of every pretension, every noble or ignoble aspiration, indeed every concept of order, his perspective was radically apolitical.

Strange, too, perhaps especially for readers of our time who live in a world of replaceable and disposable goods, is the almost keening tone of long passages of lament over the loss of things, from the most ordinary items of household use to works of art and objects of fine handicraft that "shared their existence" with Nossack and his wife. After all, many people lost children or spouses or friends; what is the loss of even the most treasured object compared to that? But maybe this is not so hard to understand if one tries to imagine the totality of the loss. "Nothing was left, not a single trinket of all the things that we loved and that belonged with us. If there had been such a little something, how we would have caressed it; it would have been imbued with the essence of all the other things." Nothing. This word has a terrible resonance if one conceives it to mean what it does here: the absence of everything familiar, everything we call our own. Everything.

* * *

The impeccable witness to the destruction of Hamburg was an unreliable source of information about his own life—or perhaps I should say: his biography. For he made a distinction between the "statistical," merely factual biography, dependably registered at various government agencies, and the "true" biography—"as 'auto' as possible"—that was his life's work. The conventional biography was that of a coffee merchant and, later, a professional writer of considerable renown, a founding member of three academies and Vice President of a fourth, an active member of the P.E.N. Club, decorated with the Pour le Mérite Medal, the recipient of two of the most coveted literary prizes Germany had to offer—in short, a model citizen. The subject of the "inner" (auto-) biography was a loner who fished at night in the "exterritorial" waters of the imagination, always in search of his own truth—a poet. The poet told some fibs and half-truths about himself—a sterner judge would call them lies—in several letters, a speech, and occasional articles. The voluminous secondary literature that developed around him repeated these self-stylizations and amplified them into something of a myth, with Nossack's tacit compliance. One of that myth's ingredients was a legend according to which the Nazis imposed an edict denying him the right to publish. In fact he applied to them for that right, and they granted it, but then prevented him from publishing a volume of poems on the grounds that there was a shortage of paper. A second legend had it that everything he had written before the fall of Hamburg had been destroyed in the flames, while actually five plays and numerous poems were saved, probably with friends living outside of Hamburg. The motive for these mystifications is not easy to determine: he called himself "the best camouflaged writer in Germany." But for truth of the kind that mattered to Nossack—the personal truth of a conscience engaged in scrupulous self-reckoning—we must turn to his work, not his public persona. Nossack spoke of the bombing of Hamburg as a new beginning for him, both personal and artistic. How could it not have been that? Here we don't need to doubt his word. His earlier dramatic work was under the impress of Strindberg and the mystical expressionist Ernst Barlach, while the novels and stories he wrote afterwards are haunted (cheerfully sometimes) by the lure of a fundamental homelessness and anonymity that are Nossack's point of departure in *Der Untergang*.

After his death in 1978, Nossack's austere, introverted fiction fell into disfavor with an affluent generation that had no memory of the war and no interest in exploring the region Nossack called "the uninsurable." He might well have been forgotten entirely if W. G. Sebald had not championed him and if Germans did not have the laudable custom of commemorating artists and writers of note on the occasion of their hundredth birthday. In January 2001, the month of his centenary, many newspapers carried stories about him, with titles like "Neither Right Nor Left" and "A Courageous And Sober Archeologist Of

Conscience." One writer mournfully identified him with a class of authors young readers discount as the kind "my grandmother used to read." That is of course an assessment that applies equally to Kafka, Musil, and Camus, writers to whom Nossack has been frequently compared. At least two of his early works put him particularly in Camus' company: the still untranslated novel *Spirale*[6] and that luminous first collection of stories, *Interview mit dem Tode*, of which *Der Untergang* is the penultimate chapter.

Nossack's conception of the writer's role was, if anything, bleaker than Camus'. It was that of a combatant in a guerilla war for the preservation of human interiority, a scout who reconnoiters the social landscape and sends out messages to other clandestine resisters. Yet there was in those messages a serenity and even, in his later work, a contentment that seemed to say: "This silence, this emptiness that people dread, it's an openness, one can live in it, it's not so bad." Not that he would say this outright: it would be too loud an assertion and could be misunderstood as mere counsel on how to get by. Still, something like that can be heard, here and there, in the eerie equanimity of the voice that speaks to us from the ruins of Hamburg. Its tone, especially in the concluding pages, bears no relation to what most of us know or can imagine of disaster. It is the voice of a man who has crossed the river Styx and returned from the land of the dead. He would not say this of himself outright either, but I believe it is true. Why else would the last "report" in his "Interview with Death" tell of Orpheus ascending from the Underworld? The poet's steps halt at the threshold of life, he turns around and sees . . . "Eurydice," we are prompted to say, because that's how the story has always been told. But she whom he thinks to behold is Persephone, the Queen of the dead, before whose throne he had sung, and who had interceded for him with Hades, the King, to release the abducted Eurydice. Not that we are permitted to believe that the Queen really followed him. But from now on he will sing of her beauty—under camouflage, to be sure. The living are not to be trusted.

[6] One of five hallucinatory "dreams of an insomniac" that make up the book's spiraling trajectory is the novella-length *Unmögliche Beweisaufnahme*, which was translated into English under the title *The Impossible Proof*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1963. The same publisher put out two other novels by Nossack: *The D'Arthez Case* (1971) and *To The Unknown Hero* (1975).

Joel Agee in *Archipelago:* Chao Khun http://www.archipelago.org/vol8-3/agee.htm; German Lessons http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-1/agee.htm; The Storm http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/agee.htm; Killing a Turtle http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-1/agee2.htm

Hans Erich Nossack, THE END: *Hamburg 1943*.
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HORST LANGE: WAR DIARIES

Translated from the German by Isabel Fargo Cole

Horst Lange: Biography

Horst Lange was born on October 6, 1904, in Liegnitz, Lower Silesia, then a Prussian province (now Legnica in Poland). His father was a vice-sergeant major and regimental chief clerk in the Prussian army. Horst Lange was exposed from an early age to the warm comradeship of military life, as well as to its darker aspects – his father suffered a nervous breakdown on the front in World War One. Lange would later develop his own idiosyncratic brand of pacifism. His deep religious feeling and love of poetry stemmed from his mother and her Polish-speaking, Catholic family. These contradictions shaped Lange's writing: Prussian Protestantism and Polish Catholicism, Germany and "the East," the masculine, regimented world of the army, and the world of feeling, creativity, the metaphysical.

In 1921, he ran away from home to join the Bauhaus school in Weimar, hoping to become a painter. His uncle, who taught architecture there, gave him an office job and introduced him to prominent teachers such as Paul Klee and Walter Gropius. Gropius advised Lange to give up his dream of studying painting, but encouraged the boy's literary talent. Lange returned to Liegnitz to finish school, and began studying art history, literature and theater at the University of Berlin in 1925. He joined the Communist Party briefly, but could not reconcile its ideology with his pacifism. In Berlin he began to publish poems and short stories, making friends with such literary figures as Günter Eich and Martin Raschke, who published the influential magazine *Die Kolonne* and later advanced nonconformist literature in the Nazi period. In 1930, after an interlude spent studying art history in Breslau, he returned to Liegnitz. There he met the poet Oda Schaefer, beginning a creative and emotional partnership that would last more than forty years. They had an open relationship, both pursuing other affairs which often served as inspiration for their writing.

In 1931, the couple moved to Berlin. They made no secret of their antipathy to National Socialism, and in March 1933, after the Nazis' rise to power, their apartment was searched. They had been denounced by their neighbors. Fortunately, the incriminating documents indicating Lange's Communist connections and the stickers with anti-Nazi slogans which the couple distributed after dark were not found. Throughout the war Lange and Oda Schaefer traveled in the circles of what

is broadly referred to as the "Inner Emigration" – intellectuals who, with varying degrees of openness, opposed the Nazi regime. In 1935 the critic and historian Sebastian Haffner encouraged the couple to follow him into emigration, but they chose to remain; Lange felt "tied to the German language."

In 1933, the year of their marriage, Lange began work on his novel *Schwarze Weide* (Black Pasture). Published in the fall of 1937, *Schwarze Weide* was Lange's literary breakthrough, an intricate tale of murder and dark passions rooted in the melancholy landscape of Silesia. Its most sinister character is Smorczak, an innkeeper who heads a religious cult, surrounding himself with fanatical disciples and sowing discord among the villagers. "With a little imagination and logic you can figure out for yourself whom I meant with Smorczak and his sect," Lange wrote to fellow writer Ernst Kreuder in 1938. "Horst Lange gave Smorczak key features of Hitler," Oda Schaefer later wrote. The book was enthusiastically received by such writers as Ernst Jünger, Hermann Hesse, and Gottfried Benn; Sebastian Haffner celebrated Lange as a "writer of European stature." Astonishingly, this enthusiasm was initially shared by the hard-line National Socialist critics; they read *Schwarze Weide* as a brilliantly-written *Heimatroman* and overlooked the allegory. At that time a certain "cultural and journalistic pluralism" and "an almost cosmopolitan mood" still prevailed in Germany. Especially around the time of the 1936 Olympics, the Nazi regime concealed its radical tendencies in an effort to improve its image in the eyes of the world and give Germans a sense of stability and normalcy. Aesthetic modernism was tolerated as long as it remained "apolitical." the summer of 1937 the exhibit "Degenerate Art" heralded a radical shift in cultural policy: an offensive against aesthetic innovation itself. "I remain what I am: a degenerate artist," Lange wrote defiantly to a friend that August. "I won't bow down, and I'll leave the boot-licking to the lackeys."

Lange had a strong supporter in his publisher, Henry Goverts, who was skilled at negotiating with the censors and assisting persecuted writers. Goverts published Lange's second novel, *Die Ulanenpatrouille* (The Lancer Patrol), in 1940 – against great odds. After an excerpt from the novel (a dark love story set during a military maneuver on the Polish border in 1913) was pre-printed in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Lange was accused of "defeatism and ridicule of the Wehrmacht." The novel had been mistaken for an account of the invasion of Poland in 1939. After the error was pointed out to the Propaganda Ministry, the book was cleared for publication. Despite the novel's popularity, the Propaganda Ministry refused to allot the paper for a second edition – a tacit ban. The novel's foreshadowing of military catastrophe had been (correctly) understood as a warning against the impending war.

Lange was subjected to increasingly malicious scrutiny. A confidential report accused a number of writers, including Lange, of "displaying more kinship with the literati of the period before 1933 than with the people's writing of our time," and noted that "unfortunately, they meet with praise and recognition in National Socialist newspapers as well." In 1941, Lange and another Silesian writer, August Scholtis, were viciously attacked in the SS mouthpiece *Die Weltliteratur* in an article called

"Travesties from Silesia": "Here we are completely ensnared in ugliness and baseness. The keys to the human condition are decay, vice, greed, lust… It is this view that calls to mind the problems of Dostoevski, Bernanos, Huysmans, Strindberg, Kafka and others… We are spared nothing as far as murder, sexual insatiability, alcoholism and revolting smut is concerned."

In the meantime, Lange was on the Eastern Front, called up in the spring of 1940. His first function was as a war correspondent. In September 1941 he was posted with a sapper troop "with the special assignment of writing reports on the mood in the sapper troop regarding tactical details, […] reports *not* meant for the press." Soon after, Lange was involved in a brawl between the Luftwaffe and the Wehrmacht in the Polish town of Siedlice. He drew his pistol and tried to fire; fortunately for him, it jammed. He was transferred to a "suicide squad," a sapper battalion in the new offensive against Moscow. This "Operation Typhoon" was repulsed just miles from the Soviet capital. Lange experienced the chaotic German retreat, which many historians consider the actual turning point of the war. After being wounded in one eye on December 9, he was sent back to Berlin in early 1942, with various decorations for valor, including a second class Iron Cross.

The experience was seminal. With his military roots, Lange felt at home in the army. While recognizing the brutal cynicism of the war, he valued soldierly comradeship, self-sacrifice and discipline. And he welcomed the dose of reality. "It is good to be out there and get in touch with the war," he wrote in his diary. This went along with a shift in his literary aesthetic. Rejecting the baroque pathos of his previous works, he strove toward sober clarity. His experiences on the Eastern Front inspired a number of articles and short stories; he even entertained the notion of publishing his diaries. Nineteen forty-four saw the publication of his collection *Die Leuchtkugeln* (The Flares), which the exiled writer Carl Zuckmayer later called "the best and most humane war book from the Second World War." Its three novellas take no overt stand for or against the war as such, but their reticent, melancholy tone and their sympathetic portrayal of Russian civilians puts them far closer to Heinrich Böll's war stories a decade later than to the propaganda literature of the time. The only concrete objection the censors could raise was that one story depicted German soldiers fishing in a river with hand grenades, an activity prohibited by army regulations; the reference was duly omitted, though Lange smuggled it into a newspaper printing of the story. Lange was even commissioned to write a film treatment of the title story.

Lange spent most of the remainder of the war in Berlin, where he was given a military office job, with occasional reserve duties outside Berlin. His head wound kept him from the front; his eye was operated on eleven times and finally removed. According to Oda Schaefer, the couple occasionally hid victims of persecution in their apartment: once the writer Hans Nowak and his Jewish wife, another time the Jewish friend of a friend. Oda Schaefer describes how Lange's quick tongue and fiery temper frequently got him into trouble. An incautious remark in a bar was overheard by a military judge who threatened to arrest him; Lange's friend Erich

Kästner quickly unscrewed the fuses, plunging the bar into darkness and enabling Lange to escape. Yet, as Oda Schaefer points out, Lange could also bluff his way through difficult situations with a show of military bluster. After the attack on *Schwarze Weide* in the SS-run *Weltliteratur*, Lange, fresh from the front, went to the SS headquarters to complain, and so impressed the editor-in-chief with his brashness that he was invited to join the SS. He coolly refused.

Oda Schaefer's son Peter, from a previous marriage, was reported missing in action in 1944. The couple's creative efforts intensified as the situation grew increasingly hopeless. "Oda and I try to outdo each other writing poems," Lange noted in his diary. Lange's "Cantata to Peace" was hectographed and distributed in secret.

In late March, 1945, Lange was transferred to the Mountain Sapper Unit in Bavarian Mittelwald, ostensibly to work on the film version of "Die Leuchtkugeln." The all-important film industry maintained a semblance of function to the bitter end. Thus the couple escaped the bloody fall of Berlin a month later. Mittenwald capitulated peacefully to the Americans.

Horst Lange and Oda Schaefer remained in Bavaria, moving to Munich in 1950. Lange maintained his readership in post-war Germany with new (unexpurgated) editions of *Die Leuchtkugeln* and *Die Ulanenpatrouille*, as well as new short story collections. His major post-war works were the novels *Ein Schwert zwischen uns* (A Sword Between Us, 1952), an indictment of moral corruption and materialism in post-war Germany, and *Verlöschende Feuer* (Dying Fires, 1956) set in Berlin during the air-raids: "The young couple Hans and Blanche are caught in the last phase of the war, doomed like the Russian couple Hans encountered on the front." But Lange, once regarded as one of Germany's most promising young writers, was ultimately marginalized in the post-war literary scene – as one of his eulogists suggested, he dwelt too much on the past for the readers' comfort. Oda Schaefer put it in stronger terms: "Horst Lange really fell in Russia." Lange isolated himself; he regarded the writing of the Adenauer era as a "new Rococo." For years Lange experienced acute neuralgia caused by his head wound, and the pain exacerbated his alcoholism. Ultimately, he suffered most deeply from the loss of his Silesian homeland, now behind the Iron Curtain. On July 6, 1971, he died of a hemorrhage caused by cirrhosis of the liver.

The publication of Lange's war diaries in 1979 was greeted with enthusiasm and sparked new interest in his work; in the 1980s *Schwarze Weide* and *Die Ulanenpatrouille* were reprinted by major publishers. Lange is now recognized as a key figure of the "Inner Emigration."

Isabel Fargo Cole

Diaries
Horst Lange

Berlin, December 28, 1939

The day before yesterday, at night, I experienced something which I am recording only after examining it calmly and clearing up all the details in my own mind:

It was an overwrought day full of memories, like a leave-taking from the past life. Friends came for lunch, we rummaged in old letters, showed around my drawings (from student days), spoke of the dead and the living; that evening we visited other people, along with many strangers, and got to talking of those old things again late at night. I was both exhausted and wide awake, excited and sleepy. I had been drinking the evening before, and this evening we drank again, but not enough to make me drunk.

When we got home (just after midnight, at our friends' I had met someone who was friends with Georg Heym[1] and played tennis with him around 1910 – but we talked about it as if it were yesterday!) I stood at the big window and stared out into the bright moonlight, absent and without a single distinct thought, perhaps a touch of yearning for someone I love. I smoked a cigarette and stared into the white flowing cold light. Snow had fallen that afternoon. The woman – I thought of so vividly loves white, white flowers and white dresses.

As I stood there I gradually felt the boundaries of my self expand and finally, so to speak, dissolve; I was transported from myself without knowing where to. Before I realized it, Oda came up to me and put her hand lightly on my shoulder. This touch pulled me back; I came to myself with an agonized, animal sound, a cry of fear and horror. Afterward I stood at my window for a long time and tried to set out once more on this path of which I had taken only the first few steps. I did not succeed.

The next day I learned that Elisabeth[2] had dreamed of me in the hour of this transport – Oda was included in the magic circle. She was still reading Marcel Proust and had a photograph of Paris lying on her desk. Elisabeth had dreamed of me and of Heym's poem "Longing for Paris" (I gave her that Heym for Christmas without having read it yet).

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[1] Georg Heym (1887-1912). Silesian Expressionist poet.

[2] Elisabeth: Elisabeth Flickenschmidt (1905-1977), actress, worked with Gustaf Gründgens, among others.

At midday today, around the time when Oda's father shot himself 20 years ago, a bud from a camellia I had given her for her birthday fell to the ground with a loud crack. Oda was just speaking of her plans for the future. Twelfth-Night haunting. But where is the horror that lies before us?

In a dugout near Krashneva, September 26, 1941

[…] – Cold, restless night. Poor sleep. The bunkers are supposedly lice-ridden. Already you feel the itching. – Cold, gusts of rain. Big, sailing clouds. Constant hunger. I eat shameless amounts. In the morning our artillery on the neighboring hill shoots pointlessly over our heads at the Russians. – Around midday I go to the abandoned village of Krashneva, where our sappers gut the houses, taking planks and beams to reinforce their bunkers. The dead, ghostly magic of the houses, captivating me. The jumbled relics of past life. A cap still hangs on the peg. A string of beads on the ground. Colorful knitted bands to fasten the bast shoes. Schoolbooks (the same everywhere), family photographs, the parents, sons (trouser creases!) and daughters sit there stiffly, holding their breath in alarm. Icons in the corner, next to them the Communist posters, bright, loud and without an iota of taste. Potted plants. Two dead horses in a stall. A barn full of junk (sign of affluence!). Wild cats darting about and wailing hideously like angry household spirits. Beautiful vessels, the ancient, almost Stone-Age forms of jugs and iron pots. All the houses are missing windowpanes. The winter will snow in, the storm sweep through. – In the house gardens, where beets, cabbage, tomatoes and poppies grow, I look for onions without finding any. Birches everywhere, the village must have had an inviting look, like something described by Gogol or the author of "Adventure of a Hunter."[3] – I go back, look at my watch and feel a bit uneasy. As soon as I'm over the hill and back in our ravine, the Russians shoot several heavy-caliber salvoes at Krashneva and the path I just took – aiming at the German guns that fired this morning. The shrapnel flies all the way to us. Only later do I realize how lucky I was. One becomes so jaded! Now I'm writing, barely able to read it, by the thin light of homemade wax candles. All the beehives are plundered. –

[3] Lange later corrected this to read "Notes of a Hunter," referring to the story collection by Ivan Turgenev rendered in English as "A Sportsman's Notebook" or "Sketches from a Hunter's Album."

Bunker. Near Krashneva, September 27, 1941

Cold moonlit night. Thick layer of ice in the washbasin this morning. I go back to the dead village for a little wooden panel with a painting of St. George. A spinning wheel is hidden in a hole in the garden. Will the wheel ever whir again, will a thread leave the spindle? – In our dugout lengths of wonderful hand-woven linen are being used to cover the walls. A little cast-iron stove gives some warmth, bringing hundreds of flies to life. – People are wary when I try to sound them out about their experiences. My task is thankless. There are many new craters at the spot the Russians shot at yesterday. The sight unsettled me. – […]

Forest camp [near Baltutino, Novo Selye], October 1, 1941

Questioned about that fistfight on the night of September 6/7. The matter was passed on to Berlin. In punishment I am relieved of my post (not at all to my regret!). It must have created a big stir. I cannot yet judge what good it may actually bring, but I am convinced that this too harbors a turn for the positive. In the past few days the memory of that weird, wicked night was always with me. Now and then it rose up before me in fractured images. My forebodings grasp what is to come only as the *result* of something bad; never do I grasp the bad thing itself before it actually happens. Premonitions are deceptive. One can rely only on reality and its causality. How often have I realized after the fact that the turn for the bad really depends only on a tiny counterweight that disturbs the order and completely disrupts it when it gets out of hand. I long for a clear and unambiguous *order*, and so far I have not been able to create one, or, when I did gain one for a time, to maintain it. If the consequences of this experience compel me to achieve it by force and to perfect it, I will be grateful, even if this goal can be attained only with difficulties and against great obstacles. In the last few years I have shirked all decisions, in my private life as well. I have always avoided answering for my weaknesses. I welcomed evasions and enjoyed entanglements. The obscurity and vagueness which affected even my way of thinking and expressing myself seemed to be my true element. I missed the turning point which could have brought the possibility of change, or I lacked the concentration to take the necessary steps at the right moment. I was more than happy to let myself be guided by omens which seemed to set my course. The reason was not an inclination toward laziness, but rather a kinship with all that is dark and shadowy. – I always sensed that I could not go on this way without putting myself at great risk in the long run. […] *[Omitted in original.Tr.]* If I ever go home again, a fundamental change must be made. I will have to start all over from the beginning. Even with my writing, where I was often far ahead of myself. For the time

being, if I'm going to be sent back to serve in the company now, I'll be entering an academy of trivial duties. One thing will lead to another, and in the end, without noticing it, I will be utterly changed (this being said and anticipated not in premonition, but by will and intent!). It is not an easy path, but the results can only be all positive or *all* negative. "To be or not to be…!" We shall see. – I am writing this reckoning, which I have done often enough in my mind since leaving Berlin, in our tent, where I spent shivering days and freezing nights. The hours crept by, I waited for a decision and was glad that it came today at long last. Day and night the sky is grey and without light. The only diversion here comes from the Russian planes that attack now and then and are driven away with a great racket. I'll breathe a sigh of relief when I get out of here, however big a mess I end up in. I am grateful for the good time I had in V.[4] It was like a dream or an idyll. I am not curious about the future, but I am prepared to accept and shape it. Ultimately I'm glad to have lost the special status I'd had so far, for now it will really become necessary for me to prove myself. – Never before have I been as alone as I have since the moment I left V.. I must learn to rely upon myself (in the sense of "being reliable"). I am reading Goethe's "Campaign," a great book, a wonderful penchant for order. And now a new chapter begins. I am quite happy, cheerful and relieved.

[…]

Ossowietsche [Ovsishche? Tr.], October 9, 1941

Decampment from the forest yesterday morning. In the end one of the self-built huts went up in flames. Destructive drive of the ordinary man who is only too happy to destroy what he has built when he no longer needs it. This forced vagabondage causes a shift in possession and property. – Drive down the crowded road of approach to Yelnya, which was in German hands once before. Russian positions: nothing but primitive little foxholes. No wiring. The first corpses, lying next to the road. That certain kind of immobility and ultimate paralysis. Bloated faces tinged blue and green. The guns still in their hands. Next to them, slow and indifferent, prisoners repair the road. Slightly cloudy sky, cold wind. The convoy moves along in a cloud of dust, fine brownish meal which gradually powders me all over. Unbroken procession of wagons. Countless regimental dogcarts. The weary, sweet-tempered horses. Here and there sick ones led by the halter, walking skeletons, lame and feeble. – Deep anti-tank ditches outside Yelnya. Dynamited bridges being rebuilt. – The road to Dorogobusch. An utterly razed, burned-out village.

[4] Evidently refers to the village of Vasilikova, where Lange was stationed in late September.

Only a few remnants of fences and garden plants show that houses once stood here. Charred tree stumps. Seen low against the dust-clouded sun, from the back opening of the truck: a landscape like France in 1917. – Bottlenecks in ravines where the convoys pile up. General yelling and cursing. – Short rest in a small village where we're supposed to be quartered at first. Stinking poverty. A coquettish girl in a dirty white dress and felt boots – swaying her hips as she crosses the field, on parade in front of the strange men. – Onward, to the next chance of quarters. A village burns in the valley. Lurid red flames against the yellowed birch forests and the soft October blue. – Time and again prisoners in scattered squads, marching back alone. One man on crutches, struggling along step by step. On the whole my comrades are helpful and unmalicious. – We end up in a school (I am writing these lines on a school desk). Natural history collection. Plunder cravings. An old, untuned grand piano alongside microscopes and electrostatic generators. An unspeakable assortment of junk. In no time everything is straightened up and made habitable. Many little makeshift lights when darkness falls. Rembrandt setting. The big space divided up by many little centers of brightness, the figures between them casting long shadows. – Bad night. Fever and ague. – This morning I was in the big light-blue painted two-story church which was being used for agricultural purposes. Vaults below, a built-in bakery barred off to the outside. Perhaps once inhabited by monks. Upstairs, on the second floor, the church itself. Frieze of stars and angels' heads, barely-recognizable wall paintings. Strange, almost daring structure, commanding the landscape. Crumbling away, defaced, degraded. No bells left in the belfry. Vast panorama of the countryside. Rain- and snow-clouds. Tracks of the vehicles legible on the ground. Forests where there are still scattered Russians (our pickets caught one last night. A shy starved seventeen-year-old. Discussion of his treatment. A bigoted NCO drops the term "master race"). – Big garden with dead fruit trees and plundered beehives. Russian infantry foxholes, some only half-finished. Campfire sites where embers were still glowing when we arrived yesterday. Beautiful, gently sloping forest valley. – Fleeting vision of the idyll which must dwelt in this place earlier, in untroubled times. – Recent realization that the dominant features of Bolshevik propaganda are philistine, on a level with Proletkultur. Without a single flourish of revolutionary élan. The superstition of progress. The delusion of mechanization. The enlightened doll-folk, identically carved and basking in the general good. Mass-produced. – Unfair and irritable because I'm not feeling well. –

Between Spas Demensk and Roslavl, October 11, 1941

Got up at dawn yesterday. It had snowed the night before. Blue-grey morning with brassy yellow light on the horizon. The moon had a huge corona. What a different picture than two days ago on the outward journey, now going back the way we came. A premonition of winter. Bright azure glazed with pink, with dove-grey swaths of haze on the horizon. The road lined by old birches, uphill and down. Out of the truck I'm sitting in, mercilessly jolted, I can see the procession of marching and motorized columns snaking across the low ridges, slow, ponderous. In part our soldiers are appallingly ragged and strangely costumed, mingling with the Russian civilians and prisoners who drive the wagons. The uniformity of the grey, exhausted mass when it has marched past, hardly an individual feature standing out. The same shuffling gait, the same movements. – A village goes up in flames just after we pass through. Cinnabar flames, purple smoke. – Straight through Yelnya, again and again the same scene of destruction. Everything repeats over and over: the stoves left standing, with their glazed tiles. The charred rubble. The caved-in roofs of the little wooden houses, their rafters like dislocated bones. The countless dead horses lining the road (a line of poetry flashes through my mind: "War garlands the roads… with dead goods… the white horse lies becoming like the snow… bleached flesh…"). Various landforms. Treeless plain. Always beneath the thin snow: the red-brown of the loess soil and the unharvested fields. A razed village, nothing left standing but a few outlying sheds and the great ruin of the church. Great clearness, with thin fields of shadow from the first clouds, which are white and massed as if at sea. Villages, villages – in one a crooked little church like a cardboard cutout. Windmills, the glowing, naturally-dyed colors of the women's clothes. Little bunches of refugees, fragile, packed-full carts – right amidst the procession of military vehicles. Little nodes of resistance, tanks riddled with bullets and burned-out cars – seldom, in a very few places. Anti-tank ditches. Positions hardly suggesting serious resistance. – Wide valley with boggy riverbeds and scattered, dried-up, colorless settlements. – Spas Demensk, a large town, rural, low-lying houses, huge craters from aerial bombs. Over and over the calm and completely uninterested attitude of the inhabitants. The youngsters stand in the doorways and gaze after us without the least surprise, without even a stirring of emotion. In Spas Demensk life goes on as if nothing had happened, amidst rubble and craters. – The ceaseless, uninterrupted flow of our reinforcements. The tangible motion and function of the reinforcement machinery, organized down to the last detail. – Onto the tarmac Roslavl – Moscow. North of it our new quarters: a one-story, filthy, bug-infested residential building. Shock and debate among the South Germans at the sight of the vermin. Cold night with a low, burnished moon amidst the blackness. – The prisoners from Vyazma pass this morning: an immeasurable

procession of misery, many civilians, ragged, emaciated, frozen. Dull, defeated. Many old men. Few intelligent faces. A flood of boundless dehumanization. No individuality (like our marching columns yesterday). But the defeated have no backbone left. The pull of fate which the multitudes must follow blind and unresisting.

Spas Demensk; Sunday, October 12, 1941

Marched out yesterday evening. Dusk with prismatic clouds (as if by Feininger,[5] who took his cubism from nature). The dark town, the smell of burning. The ruins. As always. Slept, freezing, in what used to be a shop (with built-in glass cabinets). In front of the building a toppled Lenin monument (with excrement on its head!). Heard by chance that it's Sunday. Rudiments of a Sunday mood. Everything looks different, more amicable, a little bit transfigured. Like childhood. Then on to Vyazma. Curiosity. Calm. – Encounter with a demoted sergeant major. Discussion about justice on earth (as if inspired by Brecht). – Who knows what's now to come? My birth date was written in chalk on the jamb of our last quarters! (Stop heeding omens!) Reserved but not unfriendly parting from the officers. They had a motorcyclist take me to the crossroads. Not without its irony for me.

Vyazma, October 15, 1941

Driving. Driving. Fever. Sickness. Hunger. – Arrived in Yukhnov in the dark on the 12th after a long, torturous journey. En route the same images over and over again: convoys on the move. A prisoner transport led by a Russian first lieutenant in a steel helmet. Downcast. Never lifting their eyes from the ground! Hopeless. With the insignias of all ranks. The many small fires in a prisoners' camp. March light. Patches of snow. Now and then sweeping view of a beautiful landscape. Forests. A big lake with a monastery church. The earth one knows from books. Gradually the sense of the strangeness of these surroundings is vanishing entirely. I notice differences, make out details which never struck me before. The long train of convoys, grinding to a halt at every tricky place. Were dropped off in the darkness. Went on by foot with our heavy packs. The town is supposed to be 4 km away. Completely hopeless. At the last minute a truck takes us to the town in no time. Nocturnal hurly-burly of the communications zone. (Y. taken just 7 days ago!) Virtually sleepless night in primitive quarters. – Spent hours waiting for rations the next morning. –

[5] Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956), artist active in America and Germany, teacher at the Bauhaus school from 1919-1933.

Over and over the same soldier types, the same fatigue and reluctance. Encounter with an SS man who had fought at Yelnya and spoke badly of the Wehrmacht, as if they hadn't acquitted themselves well. – A church, magnificent and almost Asiatic in style, a Soviet star mounted on the tip of its twirled spire – degraded to a granary. Neglect. Ruined houses already covered with grass. All the corners full of smashed household effects. The fury that swept over the town. At midday we go look for a vehicle. – Again and again the ineffectual waiting and waving at the edge of the road. – Encounter with the escort of a transport convoy which is supposed to head for Vyazma on the 14th. Second night in Y., once again without sleep and blessed by rheumatic pains which keep waking me up. – In the morning there's damp snow on the ground. Slow, difficult drive down the muddy road through dense forest. Russian fighter planes sweep down low along the convoy, now and then raining sheaves of machine-gun fire. Toward noon the sun comes through. The sky clears up completely. It still looks like March. The dull birch yellow shines under the snow as if from within. Someone tries to shoot crows. It would all be cheery if I weren't sitting in the front of the truck with an ague, clenching my teeth to keep from losing control of myself. A large monastery church with a relief of the Madonna above the door in contrasting colors. Turned away from earthly things, a touching image. But languid and too much shaped by sentiment to prevail in the face of barbaric reality. – Sometimes these villages make me think of pictures by Marc Chagall. But there are probably no Jews left alive here. – Large market towns on the Oka. The first orderly marching columns come toward us. A radiant sunset glow, heralding the coming frost. – Deep-cut river valley, the water catches the light. Golden glimmer in the darkness. We can go no further, a division is crossing the river towards us. Confusion. Yelling. Horses barely able to pull the heavy guns. – Given shelter for the night by good-natured Silesians. Little hut. The good-natured old woman has papered her living-room in a starwort pattern. House plants. Two enormous enlargements (landowners?) of photos, a proud and thoroughly Slavic lady with "cul de Paris" and a frilly dress, an earnest gentleman in a high collar, dignified and sly. Shades of Turgenev. People from that time all look so tragic, as if concealing a sickness or a vice that eats away at them from within like a cancer. – The friendly old woman heats water so that I can wash (for the first time in 3 days! What kindness! What a blessing!) I leave as if I had been their guest. Ah, the dear Silesians who look as if they couldn't harm a hair on a fly's head and yet are forced to be soldiers. Old men. One of them was shot the night before. The whole area is full of scattered Russians carrying on their partisan operations. – Cold, grey morning. The Russian winter arrives unexpectedly. A snowstorm, growing heavier and denser by the minute. The bitter-cold plain, bare of life. Mounds of dead Russians, snowed over, some with hideous wounds. I see the fabled dead Russian lying in the middle of the road,

flattened by the vehicles. I see a completely charred corpse hanging in the skeleton of a burned-out truck, no longer bearing any resemblance to a human body (recalled a photo showing the charred and petrified corpses excavated in Herculaneum and Pompei which I saw before 1914 and which shocked me deeply at the time!). "Drink, oh eyes…"[6] – Vast processions of prisoners, many women among them. Pictures of misery, stumbling along in the whirling snow. – Slow progress, often stopped for hours (at a destroyed bridge or a stream). – Suddenly the huge factory buildings of Vyazma loom up in the twilight. Intact city with little destroyed. The shops are plundered: beg a piece of bread (have eating nothing but a single slice of bread since 7 this morning!) – I am writing these words in the straggler collecting point. Commotion of men and equipment. Out-of-tune piano. German hits. Sentimentality. Reluctance. Fever. Tomorrow the new troop!

Vyazma, October 17, 1941

Finally met people from my new battalion. Am sitting in the idyllic tranquility of a peasant house in an outlying region of the city, restful after the unspeakable noise, stink and commotion of the straggler collecting point where I spent the last few nights, observing soldier types who resemble the muzhiks in their lousy degeneracy. But then, there were some who put all their energy into keeping clean. The average soldier, especially among the young ones, is unspeakably primitive, crude and uncomradely. Exceptions are rare and heartening. 3 Baltic interpreters I had a long talk with, reminding me vividly of Oda (the infantile tendency common to all Balts: "Bergengruen[7] *may* be a good writer, *but* he has a Jewish wife!") – A simple, good-natured private suddenly seized by a fit of cleanliness when he saw me washing! The non-individual lacks initiative, is seized by the imitative instinct, he wants to blend in, not stand out, he must make noise and have noise around him to prove his own existence, his standards are low and he is calibrated for a very few specialties, certain songs, certain expressions. Questionable camaraderie. Urge to take advantage of the others, egotism, greed, the hankering to play a role. But on the other hand the glaring counterexamples, turned positive. – Several walks through the city. – All the shops plundered. Depressing sights. A striking number of bookshops. A suite of party offices in which senseless havoc had been wreaked. What can't be used is smashed. Two privates take a desk-lamp and an enormous marble inkstand. The saccharine kitsch of the propaganda

[6] Quote from the poem "Abendlied" by Gottfried Keller: "Drink, oh eyes, as much as the lashes will hold, of the world's golden abundance!"

[7] Werner Bergengruen (1892-1964), popular writer associated with the Inner Emigration, acquainted with Lange.

posters. Tendency toward bourgeois idealization and movie magic. Voroshilov[8] as a Cossak hetman, posed on horseback in a pompous uniform. Attempt on Lenin's life in the style of a broadsheet. Big wall maps with schematic depictions of the victory and spread of the Revolution. This primitivity can't be beaten. It shades into ingenuousness, but is not without an undertone of danger. Menace still tangible everywhere. – Just now a big discussion of Russia's political future among the comrades. Conflicting opinions. No agreement can be reached. One considers the Russians animals. Another has high hopes for the country's socialist future. A great confusion on the whole. Intelligent young sculptor with an evidently Marxist past. Extremely shrewd views. – Vyazma is a city divided by hills, with many churches, some appallingly run down. Old cathedral with many onion domes and cupolas. Standing apart, on a high hill, surrounded by walls, cloistered. I climb the hill through snow in which there is barely a footprint. An officer crosses my path, looks at me in astonishment. The city sprawls below. The river black in the white valley patterned by fences, trees and houses. Desolation, solitude, emptiness, decay. The jackdaws circle the towers, screeching. Somewhere the wind rattles a loose sheet of tin. I enter the dark, empty halls. Some of the windows are boarded up. It is twilight here, utterly dead. There are a few patches of snow on the wooden floor which the rulers built over the flagstones to make a cellar for grain storage. Two machines with incomprehensible uses stand about looking like banal torture instruments. The wind plays with a piece of paper attached to one of them. Sacks piled up in a corner. An insult to the grandeur of the room. Wooden barriers built down the middle. Rags. A filthy soldier's cap. A big, empty wooden frame. The stone holy-water font. On the cupolas, angels, God the Father and God the Son smiling down in forgiving clemency, enthroned. Angels hovering in a circle above the filth. The chain on which the candelabra hung, torn down. – Amidst the emptiness the vision of Russian Easter, with many lights, choirs, gold and luster and the song: "Christ is risen!" The brotherly embraces. The kisses. – I cannot resist the temptation to cry "Hallelujah" aloud, modulating. The echo drives me out. – A vast flock of crows over the city, screeching as they approach. The colors of the houses, set off by the snow. Dull ochre, blue and green. Sleds with wounded Russians. Bled dry, green-pale, starved. Wounded Germans with bullet-riddled tunics, vigorous, cheerful, almost beaming. The convoys, unending, uninterrupted. – Stalin monuments on huge pedestals, pale grey concrete, bombastic. As if

[8] Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov (1881-1969), Soviet People's Commissar 1925-1940, 1941 commander-in-chief of the North-West (Leningrad) Front.

cast from a mold, lifeless. Different, more primitive and crude than Breker,[9] yet reminiscent. On a domed building the meaningful juxtaposition 1812-1912. Probably the town hall. – Begged for food, begged for tea. Comradeship is rare. – The young sculptor believes in socialism and is convinced that we will bring it to the world. The helplessness of reconstructing an old conviction in new forms. Dependency on a once-adopted doctrine. – Tomorrow I will join my unit, whose special mission is to mop up the surrounding woods. Who knows what awaits me. I am prepared for the worst, but quite calm and composed. Where will my guardian angel lead me? Or is he no longer there? – I will write farewell letters and seal them, but not send them yet. –

Berlin, February 4, 1945

Suicide epidemic. A dreadful case involving relatives of a girl who lives in our house. Young SS man poisons himself along with his wife.[10] Psychological breakdown after being in Breslau with the Russians already at the Oder line. Resistance simply gives way. The nihilism that is left is too much for weak natures. Makeshift fortifications are being thrown up around Berlin, hastily and haphazardly. These defenses are worth next to nothing. –

I am reading the stories and short prose of Kafka. With a few exceptions, like "An Imperial Message" and "Up in the Gallery" (a piece which made a profound and unforgettable impression on me when I heard it in Berlin in 1926 in the quarters of what was then the Sezession on the Kurfürstendamm, read by an uncommonly fascinating Jewish performer – so profound that even now I hear his voice in my ears as I read), these works have an atmosphere like that of Chagall's paintings, sometimes even suggesting Kubin.[11] It strikes me as if Kafka wrote these works not in German but in a completely different language. For the most part they are ethereally abstract and utterly fleshless and without

[9] Arno Breker (1900-1991), sculptor, most prominent representative of the heroic style favored by the Nazis. Stalin greatly admired his work, and Foreign Affairs Commissar Molotov attempted to convince him to visit the Soviet Union after the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact in 1939.

[10] In her memoirs, Oda Schaefer mentions the incident as well: "A relative of Frau K., who lives in our house, arrives from Breslau. He is a young SS man who must have experienced terrible things and has every reason to fear the Russians' advance. […] One day Frau K. comes into the air-raid cellar, tearful: he took his own life, along with his wife and child. Despite the large dose of sleeping tablets he turned on the gas as well. They lay next to each other on a mattress in the kitchen. Horst and I think of the actor Joachim Gottschalk, who departed this life in the same fashion along with his Jewish wife, and of the writer Jochen Klepper, who also had a Jewish wife and chose this way out, and when we are alone we say: 'Now the tables are turned!" (Oda Schaefer, *Auch wenn Du träumst, gehen die Uhren*, p. 313)

[11] Alfred Kubin (1877-1959), Austrian artist noted for his dark, surreal drawings and etchings; wrote one novel, "Die andere Seite" (The Other Side) which became a classic of fantastic literature; acquainted with Lange, illustrated his story "Das Irrlicht" (The Will-o'-the-Wisp) in 1942.

smell or taste. A story like "The Metamorphosis" has all the dislocated and exaggerated consistency of madness. It's a cold, pitilessly rarified climate, now a frenzy of words and images, now an extremely logical train of thought, always a quarter or eighth tone above or below the normal scale. Admirable in its implacable logic, but alien and completely antipathetic to me. You behold this world as if a hand had set overly strong spectacles on your nose. After a while it hurts, crippling not only the eye, but the ear as well. – The girl in the empty flat. The restlessness of youth. The disappointment at having to live this way. The longing for splendor and warmth. "But I so love to dance!" Rubble all around. The expectancy that something more might come after all. At the end all soft and tender and nuptial!

Berlin, February 5, 1945

First time back in service again – once the distorted and tenuous sense of reality spreads to the military phase, there is no more hope for the external, tactical developments. Any layman can see from the position of the battlefront on the situation map that there can be no more miracles. But the lie carries the day. Even when cold, clear, cool calculation is called for. – Training with bazookas and other weapons, confined to general catchphrases and the assembly and disassembly of the new-type mechanisms. A sorry sight: sergeants and non-commissioned officers are incapable of using or even understanding a machine gun or submachine gun. Cynicism instead of cool-headedness: "When you're lying on Potsdamer Platz and five T 34s[12] come rolling around the corner..." – Just now I heard that the only way to get coffins for the two who killed themselves the other day was to hand over two pouches of tobacco as baksheesh! And the dead couldn't be buried in their clothes "due to the fabric shortage." – An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth! The stories of the Jews! –

Berlin, February 6, 1945

In the city: scenes like 1918.[13] Laughable makeshift barricades and tank traps scraped together by Volkssturm[14] men using junk and the rubble of the bombed houses.

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[12] The standard Soviet tank, introduced in 1941 and superior to any of the Germans' tanks at that time.

[13] Lange appears to be referring to the street-fighting between socialist revolutionaries (Spartakists) and conservative forces which took place in 1918 after the German surrender in World War One.

[14] "People's Militia," a territorial militia constituted in September 1944. All men between the ages of 16 and 60 capable of bearing arms were compelled to serve in the Volksturm; weapons and training were woefully inadequate and morale was extremely poor.

Elderly men (Spartakist lookalikes!) carrying rusty guns on strings, barrel-down. Still, enormously proud of their ridiculous peashooters! – The first signs of the front: filthy soldiers, fantastically draped in camouflage shirts, scarves and other odds and ends; wounded men with blood-soaked bandages; dented, mud-spattered vehicles; refugees with suitcases and bundles (one man with a spent, grey-green face had a mandolin in an imitation leather case – I wouldn't have been surprised to see his wife carrying a birdcage). The confusion in the subway: frightened, peaked, high-strung women anticipating the heralded air raid (which then didn't come), flighty, ungoverned movements, lips ready to release hysterical laughter. A witless arrogant old Baltic woman with a true monstrosity of a hat (purple ostrich feathers bobbing coquettishly to the side)! –A caricature in the style of Friedrich Kayssler[15] (there's always a distinct vein of bigotry in such faces, with their pronounced stage physiognomies whose beauty only conceals the inner void which doesn't even trouble them because they are completely unaware of it). – And a dull, damp, hazy sky over the dying city. But the bushes already have plump buds and will let nothing stop them from blooming!

Berlin, February 8, 1945

Hermann Sch., who used to live in our house, returned from a week in Düsseldorf. Described the disintegration of all bourgeois life patterns. Basement existences beneath the rubble of the houses, complete suspension of all the basic bourgeois principles of property, morals, and the personal separation of the individual from the collective – parties, lots of alcohol, erotic debauchery, rubble and collapse not just on the surface. Could report no sign of a turning point which might lead to a new order. Politically: hopes for a new separatism (Rheinbund[16] renaissance!). A notion which doubtless has a certain charm for the Rhinelanders, but is otherwise nothing but sheer, sinister reactionary thinking.

Maria Wimmer's[17] farewell visit; she came from Hamburg to see her friends one more time. Farewell, farewell – it adds up! One knows nothing. One can only hope and believe and cling to one's faith. When a person must live without a future, it is as if he were snatched from the air and placed in an alien, poisonous element which cripples all his vital expression and drags him down to a more primitive level where he can only vegetate, with bent back and cowed soul, unable to stand upright and grow.

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[15] Friedrich Kayssler (1874-1945), actor and writer.

[16] Rheinbund, alliance among princes in Southern and Western German princes 1658-68, aimed primarily against Austria. From 1806-1813 the term was revived by a confederation of German princes under Napoleon's protection.

[17] Maria Wimmer (1915 -), actress

Berlin, February 10, 1945

A walk through the ravaged center of the city, from the Bülowstrasse subway station to the Scherlhaus and back again. Indescribable scenes of destruction. Barricades on the Potsdam Bridge and on Potsdamer Platz. Gaping craters in the streets. Smashed, burned-out tram cars. Now the city is dying, past salvation. The words of the porter at the completely demolished Scherlhaus to a weeping woman: "Hey, be glad he ended up in a mass grave. At least he ain't alone there." – Fallen angel on Kochstrasse. It had plunged from a cornice with the palm branch of peace in its hand and lay bedded on the rubble, gazing blind and stony at the sky. – Mannish woman driving a tractor across Leipziger Platz, towing a heavy gun. Hungarian soldiers busy digging, country boys with plenty of discipline in them yet, more than the listless German soldiers.

Yesterday, in the military bulletin: fighting on the eastern edge of Liegnitz. I try to picture what it is like, can't manage. Everything in me balks at the thought that the frenzy of war has been unleashed in the place where I grew up. My imagination rebels. I can't get my mind around it. Pfaffendorf and Kunitz and Gross-Beckern and Jeschkendorf... I don't understand it!

Berlin, February 11, 1945

The military dispatch reports that Liegnitz is in Russian hands. In the afternoon someone calls to tell me. It was to be expected, once the Russians had their bridgehead at Steinau. But still I can't reconcile myself. Something in me revolts against it. Now I vividly see the deserted city before me, with the foreign, plundering troops. But when it comes to picturing devastations, fires and ruins, my imagination fails me. I never particularly loved the city, but it always embodied inviolability, permanence and absoluteness for me. Now that too is gone. One loses one's origins, one loses one's childhood, in the end one is naked and defenseless. The umbilical cord is severed. The flow of blood and nourishment is cut off. The bitter years of complete and utter isolation begin. –

Visited Caspar Neher[18] in the afternoon, very emotional conversation about the real and true foundations of artistic endeavor in these times. Again and again one meets people who have left pessimism far behind them and come to the same conclusions as oneself.

[18] Caspar Neher (1897-1962), stage designer, friend of Bertolt Brecht. Designed the sets for Brecht's "Threepenny Opera" (1928) and "Mahagonny" (1930).

And that gives solace and new nourishment for one's own overwrought courage, which easily degenerates into a paroxysm.

Radio proclamation that deserters are not to be given food or shelter. Something that should go without saying is made into a major act by an official announcement, and weariness cannot be abolished with punishments and force. Shameless and foolish and, worst of all, completely lacking in sound instinct!

Berlin, February 16, 1945

An authentic story from the last attack on Berlin, in which Freisler, the president of the People's Court, was killed. During a letup in the air raid a Luftwaffe surgeon major, whose name is known to my source, is summoned from a bunker to the People's Court, where several severely wounded people are being pulled from the rubble and laid out side by side. He asks who they are and is told that one of them is Freisler. The surgeon major turns white as a sheet and says that this must be divine justice; two days ago Freisler sentenced his brother to death. With that he turns to go. The story sounds contrived, but when I made this objection, the man who told it to me took the words out of my mouth and swore that he heard it in the same form from an eyewitness. –

From an article "The Opportunity of the Hour" by Helmuth Sündermann in the Völkischer Beobachter from February 10, 1945:

> Germany's fate depends on the enemy biting on granite from now on. He will flood back to the East in disarray, he will board his ships back to America in bitter disappointment once he has been convincingly and inexorably taught that he can neither conquer Germany nor exterminate the German people.
>
> **To teach the enemy this historic lesson, thus deciding the war – this year let that be the supreme law of our national being, the iron necessity which fills every soldier, every Volkssturm man and, in their own way, every woman and child as well! Whatever we must endure and sacrifice – and be it our life itself – we would lose it in any case if we did not stand firm. Recently, when sentencing a coward, the Gauleiter of a front Gau[19] coined this phrase: "He who fears death in honor will die it in shame." Let us remember that these words are equally true in a historical sense, in the life of an entire people!**

[19] The *Gau* was the regional organizational unit of the NSDAP; each *Gau* was headed by a *Gauleiter*.

One of the many conflicting stories about the Russian invasion in the east and the confrontation with the enemy all fear the most: during the fighting – German infantry against Russian tanks – the women go to the market with their shopping bags. They negate the war, for them it no longer exists – they go on upholding their old order. – A story expressing more hope than reality! –

Visit from Lichter.[20] Long conversations about our future, painting, the new things to come. He expressed a thought emblematic of the artist's attitude toward reality. Only now that his homeland is occupied by the Russians and lost to him, he said, is he able to paint pictures which show the true face of Upper Silesia – only in recollection does a landscape otherwise disfigured, so to speak, by habituation reveal its true face. It is the same process I first went through when writing *Black Pasture*. It delights me to see all the problems which I once solved for myself recurring with the same intensity in a younger man.

Finished the Kafka book with extreme, growing reluctance. A story like "In the Penal Colony" is the excremental product of a sick imagination. Sadism made into metaphysics. Casuistic psychology building up a perpetual, utterly irresolvable tension. Compulsive spectacles with distorting lenses. Literary psychosis. Nervous degeneration. A world without order. The corset of an eternal torment cutting off your breath. I find it all completely "contre coeur"!

On the irony of our situation: just now, on a Berlin radio station, a comic operetta by Lehar with the following words sung by choirs: "... our homeland is in peril, our homeland is in need..." And that with the Russians outside Cottbus!

[20] Alfred Lichter (1917 - ??), illustrator, illustrated Lange's novel fragment "Das Lied des Pirols" (The Song of the Pirol, 1946).

SAILING FOR HOME

Theo Dorgan

A crew of four, including the relatively inexperienced author, are bringing a seventy foot steel schooner, Spirt of Oysterhaven*, home from Antigua to Kinsale, in the south of Ireland, via Horta in the Azores. From the author's log-book....*

1

A ship at sea needs to be entirely self-sufficient. This may seem obvious, but to someone like me, still learning the ropes, it's a vast subject for contemplation. Consider the vessel first. The hull must be sound, all seacocks, inlets and outlets checked. The standing rigging must be checked, the wire or stainless steel rods that hold up the masts. The forces in play when sails are up are awesome forces, especially on this big schooner. We are wire-rigged, so the integrity of the rig depends not just on the structural strength of masts, booms and related fittings but on the absence of fatigue in the stays that hold the assemblage together. You check for signs of rust or abrasion where the wires are bonded to the hull through deck fittings – water can collect in the collars called swages where the wire finishes on a turn. One wire parting under pressure can bring the whole rig down, and in the middle of the ocean that could mean losing a mast, perhaps both masts; in dirty weather, with mast or spar banging into the sides in heavy seas, this could mean breaching the water-tight integrity of the hull itself. The hatches must be checked for water-tightness, as must the ports along both sides of the hull and in the two deckhouses. The washboards have to be fitted at the top of the companionway: these will keep water out if waves are breaking into the cockpit. So, test them for fit, then store them somewhere instantly accessible. Water making its way in, tons of it in a matter of seconds, especially through a hatch in heavy seas or if she rolls over when broached, can sink a boat in minutes

The sails have to be inspected for chafe, tears, holes, missing stitches. The headboard – the aluminium plate at the top of the sail where the halyard is attached that will pull the sail

up – must be checked. The roller drum on the furling genoa must be checked, perhaps hosed out with fresh water. The running rigging must be gone over, the ropes, *sheets* in shipboard parlance, that run back from the sails to the cockpit winches must be checked carefully for signs of wear, replaced if necessary. The winches themselves must be checked, the drums spun to ensure they are running freely. The liferaft must be examined. The gas bottles in their stainless steel cage on deck at the foot of the foremast must have the regulators checked.

Check the electricals, the instruments – log, speed, depth, GPS, radar – and the instrument panel itself. The compass was swung before she left Ireland last autumn, that is to say examined for deviation, so that doesn't have to be done, but we'll do it anyway.

Check the gas pipe run to the cooker, the sea cocks, the internal lights, the nav lights and steaming lights, the deck lights, especially where wiring runs emerge through the deck. Check the water tanks and diesel tanks, the toilets, basins and showers in the heads forward and aft, the medical kit, the pots and pans, the crockery and the cutlery.

If anything is missing once we're at sea we must improvise from what we do have, or do without. If anything breaks, we must fix it. If anything falls overboard, we cannot replace it unless we are carrying spares. So the spares must be checked, but you can't carry a spare for everything.

As usual in human affairs, there is the imponderable gap between what would be ideal and what we're going to decide we'll probably get away with. Ultimately it's the skipper's call…

2

Checking the log and the nav information before going on watch becomes an element in the waking-up process, a way-station between bunk and deck. It prepares you for the information the offgoing watch will want to pass on – heading, weather patterns, handling and so on. This is all the more important when, as will happen today or at the latest tomorrow, we change over to single watches. With two up, one can always pop below to scan the previous situation and retrieve useful information about, for instance, a rising or falling curve of barometric pressure. On a lone watch, you may need to hold all this in your

head for four hours. There is a further, psychological, aspect to all this. The *body* experiences the ocean as trackless: there are no landmarks to orient yourself by (if you discount the stars, which are in any case experienced as unfixed); everything outside the boat is unstable, in flux, disorienting. We have a profound need to situate ourselves, a need unconsciously satisfied on the small scale by the sailor's habit of constantly reaching to touch things. On the larger scale, the vectors of heading and speed, our position relative to the nearest landmass, our plotted position on the gridded globe, all these, when computed and shown as an 'x' on the chart, bring peace of mind. At the back of your head, always, is the simple question: if anything goes wrong, how will they know where to send help? The mundane questions also need answering: Where the hell are we? Where are we going? How are we doing?

We are doing very well, considering. Charlotte is murmuring with Zaf as Simon and I join them for tea on deck in the tropical night. The land smells are long gone, there is the fresh-washed cleanliness of salt in the backdraft from the sails, a sense of expansiveness in the starry night. We can see quite well, all the way out to a clear horizon all around. The moon astern is high now and there is a broad path of silver on the sea behind us. For a long time after the others have gone below Charlotte and I are companionably silent. From time to time we discuss small changes to the sail trim – we bring in the main a little, let the genoa out full as the wind falls back a knot or two. The aim is to sail her with maximum efficiency always, to keep the slot between the two sails as clear as possible so that the wind coming off the genoa flows cleanly over the taut belly of the main. In this wind we could run up the foresail as well, but we decide to leave it until the next watch change.

Charlotte is really quite ill, it takes a lot out of her to be on deck at all; but she takes her turn at the wheel, never complains, rarely adverts to how she's feeling. It's a curious thing but I've never yet been seasick, no matter how rough the conditions. This is all the more odd since, like most of my brothers (but not my sisters), I suffer from a nervous stomach, am a finicky eater with an uncertain appetite. It's not unusual for even the most hardened sailors to suffer from *mal de mer*; I am always touched by the tact with which the unafflicted deal with sufferers. I had thought there would be a certain amount of covert scorn for such signs of weakness – of the kind, say, that hardened drinkers display for the capacity-impaired – but unobtrusive sympathetic concern has been the style always, at least on this boat. Seasickness can be dangerous: the sufferer can become disoriented, weak and inattentive, a situation that may be compounded by the side-effects of some of the prescription or over-the-counter medicines commonly used to combat the condition.

Anytime I've felt slightly queasy I've used a pebble held by an elastic band to the inside of the wrist, about two fingers back from the fold line, and this seems to work. Can't remember now where I heard of this, a remedy probably derived from acupressure.

Taking turns to relieve each other at the wheel, each of us more or less lost in thought, we make on through the night as so many have done before us, watching the compass, watching the stars, drifting in and out of awareness of where we are. And so the night passes.

It is broad daylight when I come on deck again. Simon grins and gestures around him: 'Vaast ocean, Mon.' And it is. A long, low swell, cobalt blue, a thin transparent lacing of bubbles on each crest; a hard glare off the water, little sound except for the swish of the bow-wave running alongside, the occasional creak of the mainsheet running from the boom overhead to the track behind the wheel. The wind's in the east, as is the mid-morning sun, so there's no shade on deck and it is hot. We are careful always of the sun, even in northern waters. It's surprising how quickly you can get burned, even on an overcast day off the Irish coast. Lip protector, suncream of at least factor 15, a hat, preferably wide-brimmed, long sleeves and long light trousers are the order of the day. Secretly, of course, we all covet that crinkle-eyed hardy sailor look, so the long tropical days are a negotiation between vanity and prudence…

3

My notebook at 18.00 records we are loping north, a long undulant dip and rise, sun to port, six widths above the horizon, low clouds all around the horizon, small puffies overhead, the light all around us the kind of bleached purple fuzzy grey that one gets off the Irish coast at the end of a perfect summer's day.

Off watch, not needed in the galley yet, I spread the chart out on the saloon table. Simon has marked in our latest position, and I am musing over it when I see the notation 'Nares Abyssal Plain'. What? I look more closely. Over there to starboard are depths of 6,340 metres. The vast ocean suddenly acquires a third dimension: down. A long way down. Christ, we are sailing over Switzerland! There are huge mountains down there, we are passing between two of them even now. The hull of *Spirit* is 6mm steel. Good steel, sound

steel, well cared for, impeccably maintained. But, 6mm? There's a lightless chasm down there (I look at my feet, at the cabin sole), *down* taking on a tolling, plangent resonance. Down. Down. I bolt up for air, grabbing the *Atlantic Pilot* as I pass the nav station.

There are small traces of cirrus far off to the west, heralding perhaps a change in the weather. It's just about dark as I begin my first solo watch. From now on it will be two hours on, six hours off for everyone. The next watch, Zaf in my case, is the standby watch, meaning the first person to call if you think a sail change is needed, if there's a ship about whose behaviour you're not sure of… It's a good system, it means that everyone gets some guaranteed sleep, a full six hours if nothing untoward crops up. Whatever his place on the roster, the skipper always gets called if the ship is even remotely threatened

Tonight I'm listening to Furtwangler conducting Beethoven and Brahms, Vienna 1943. I remember the cold, crisp day I bought these CDs, an afternoon in Vienna last November, Paula back in the hotel going over poems for her reading that night. I remember thinking it would be strange listening to this, imagining the audience at the performance where it was recorded, the black uniforms of the SS, the women in furs, the complacency and brute indifference to the human context, the contrast between the darkness of spirit everywhere in the wartime city and the beauty of the music. It never occurred to me I would be listening to this recording in the middle of the ocean. The soundscape is beautiful, but there's a rip of pain in there too, thinking of those souls who were as moved by this music as I am now, before people sitting in that very audience the night of the recording took a hand in their murder.

The sky is full of stars, there are curious mist wisps racing around the boat, close in, catching the green, red, green, red of the running lights as we rock on.

By now we're over 500 miles from Antigua. Our official port of refuge (where we run for if we get into trouble) at this point is Hamilton, Bermuda, more or less due north. Just before coming on watch I got through to Paula, gave her our position. Her response was succinct: you stay out of that Bermuda Triangle! Don't want to think about that just now, plenty of food for thought in the depths immediately beneath us. I think of that ship in Heaney's wonderful poem, in the clear air over Clonmacnoise church, dropping anchor in the sanctuary. I think of the Saint on the altar, watching a crewman shinny down to free the hook, remarking that these cannot breathe our air. From nearer to home, there's the story of

St. Finbarr, patron saint of my native Cork, and his encounter with another monk, Scoithín. Finbarr, rowing across the lake at Gougane Barra, meets Scoithín walking toward him. 'What are you doing, walking on the lake?' 'What are *you* doing, rowing across this meadow?' Finbarr leans over the gunwale, scoops out a redgold salmon, holds it thrashing in the air. Scoithín bends down, plucks the red flower, scoithín, from the grasses at his feet. Each regards the other thoughtfully, then after an exchange of benedictions, Scoithín goes on his way, Finbarr rows on. And that, the Annals tell us, is how St. Scoithín got his name. Now, out here on the water, my own thinking re-arranged, I observe that it was the boatman who named the landsman, and therefore the water is granted the prior or superior reality. Out here on Planet Water that seems perfectly right and natural to me…

4

The long swell has been building steadily all day, to the point where, near sunset, we estimate the wave height at three metres or so. Zaf is looking thoughtfully back in the direction of Bermuda, and I know what he's thinking. There must have been a bit of a blow back there, perhaps west or north-west of the island. We're getting steady winds all day, 10 to 15 knots most of the time, and *Spirit* is averaging 5 to 6 knots over the ground, a good pace all things considered. We put the engine on when the sun goes down, the green and red running lights up forward become slowly more distinct as darkness comes over us and we forge on into the night. The engine is a kind of heartbeat after dark, as comforting in its own way as the safety umbilical we clip on automatically when we come on deck after dark.

I had the wheel at sunset while Charlotte and Simon went forward to bring in the cruising chute. It's lore if not law (Oliver's remembered phrase) to reduce sail before dark – this reduces the likelihood of anyone having to go on deck at night if the wind gets up.

Simon and Charlotte clip on the combined lifejacket and lifeline we all wear, snap shackles on to the webbing straps, the jack stays, that run stem to stern along the side-decks. I watch them go forward at a half run, position themselves at the rail, wait without turning around or speaking for me to slack off the cruising-chute sheet where it's cleated off at the winch. There's a short length of line fixed to another cleat beside the wheel; I tie the free end to the wheel rim to hold her steady, move to the winch, press the flat of my left palm to the coils of line on the winch, to hold them, undo the free end of the sheet. Then, keeping the tension on the sheet, I carefully take a few turns off the winch drum until there's only one

left, then take the strain, feel the chute pull away from me slightly. Now I let it off, slowly, slowly, the chute pulls away up and forward, then begins to collapse, losing its shape, spilling wind and power until its clew comes fluttering down to where Simon, one elbow hooked in the shrouds, begins to gather in the sail. He undoes the bowline in the clew, ties the sheet around the nearest stanchion with a quick hitch. I pull in a little slack on the winch, for the sake of tidiness, then go back to my station at the wheel. Charlotte, on the halyard at the foremast, gives Simon slack progressively as he gathers the pink and blue cloth to him in armfuls now, then she lets the halyard and the peak of the sail come floating down to the deck. She unshackles the halyard, clips it to the frame around the gas bottles, then both of them bundle the sail in to its sailbag, Charlotte holding the neck open, Simon plunging the material in, making sure that tack, peak and clew are at the top for the next time the bag is opened. Finished, they lash the bag to the bottle frame, trail their lines back to the cockpit, swing in, unclip and settle there for a moment to catch their breath. The whole operation has taken about five minutes, and what I notice when we're done is that nobody needed to talk, we all three of us knew what was to be done, and then just did it. This is only as it should be, but silence is more often a feature of work done after dark than it is of work done in broad daylight…

5

We plan to leave [Horta] at 13.00, but succumb to the lure of one last lunch in Peter's. The unfortunate skipper of the English boat beside us is in danger of apoplexy. What do we mean we're not heading out after all? It's damned awkward, don't we know? Yes, yes, says the imperturbable Zaf, we won't be long now. And off we go to the pub. It's surprising how many people we have come to know. Somehow the quick lunch we'd envisaged stretches into a long afternoon of leavetaking; the Mate next door is beginning to wonder if he's going to need the cardiac ambulance for his skipper when, finally, we find ourselves at our stations. Taff is ready to slip our bowline, the Smiling Policeman is standing by, somebody from the marina staff is patiently stationed at our sternline.

Zaf sniffs the wind. You know, he says, we could sail her off the wall. We think about this for a minute, gauging the north-west breeze. Someone ahead of us has slipped their moorings, is footling about off the dock; the Pico ferry is coming up outside the wall, preparing to turn in; the big English boat has moved out into the centre of the harbour – it's

getting very crowded out there. Tell you what, says Zaf to our assembled crew, we'll motor out to the middle, then as I bring her head around we'll run up sail, OK?

There's a tension in the air now, a tension we mask as best we can in a barrage of farewells, jokes and insults. We suddenly want to leave Horta in some style, and there are a lot of people around.

Let go aft. Let go for'ard. We're drifting away from the wall, we're moving ahead at low speed, the dock and its knot of waving figures is moving away from us. Charlotte musters us forward then the bow is coming around, I haul on the main, putting everything into it, winch it desperately the last two metres and make fast. Simon has the staysail up, Charlotte and I get the foremain rattling to the top of the mast in no time and then we are heeling over, catching the wind, gathering speed. Along the wall to our left people are climbing up and cheering, waving, cheering again, a long line of people. We feel like mighty seadogs altogether, doing our best to hide it but delighted with ourselves, delighted with Zaf, delighted with this lovely, lovely boat. We must make a brave sight as we thunder away down the harbour, the only boat this week to make out under sail. OK, OK, says Zaf, get the fenders in and stowed, lively now – but Zaf is the best-pleased of us all, one hand on the wheel, the other waving his cap at the fading cheers, the dwindling figures on the long wall.

Spirit puts her head down and comes up in a burst of spray, shaking off the torpor of land, coming alive again in her proper element. Me, too. All of us. We look at each other covertly as we scurry about doing small bits of necessary work and we are asking: You, too? Do you feel it too?

6

Driving on Munster from the sea, from the south, our Munster of Gaelic and English, of plain and hill farm, mountain and sea, of snug towns and confident cities, I am gripped in a kind of vision, a disjointed and over-heated scrambling of sense and sight and sound. What I have seen and what I have heard, what I have read and what has been sung. Hartnett's sweet province of plenty and heartbreak, of ruin and peasant, of famine and greed, of great houses and fallen lords, of hazel grove, pasture, moorland and bog. Munster where Spenser, that epic idiot as Curtis brands him, fell on the oak woods like a storm, a province raped to build the warships of a nascent empire. Munster of swordsmen fleeing to

exile, to die in the service of foreign kings. Munster of famine ships making west out of Queenstown, their holds crammed with destitute labourers, singers and servant girls, thieves, teachers, farmers and craftsmen, new-wrenched into exile from a land where soldiers rode escort to grain and cattle and hides bound eastward for Bristol and London. Munster where Spanish traders shipped wines and silk from the south, where Viking invaders found refuge and founded cities. Munster whose poor shipped out in the British Navy, died in red uniforms in desert and jungle and mountain far from home. Munster whose educated sons officered regiments and commanded districts in the ranks of Empire. Munster whose desperate sons and daughters would battle the Empire in their native hills. Munster whose Fusiliers fell in their thousands, like scythed grain in the harvest of the Somme.

Coming up on Cork from the sea, crossing the tracks of so many ships: the great grain traders from Australia; Barbary pirates from Algeria in 1642, led in by native pilots to Baltimore, which they would sack and leave in flames, carrying off, some say, more than 700 souls; coasters and traders with coal and grain and wine and cloths and beer and butter and timber and manufactures, heading east and west in a scurry of commerce; great trans-Atlantic liners, *Titanic*, Queenstown her last port of call, *Lusitania* bound for her fiery rendezvous off the Old Head of Kinsale; the French fleet bearing Theobald Wolfe Tone to Bantry; the fast ships out of France and Spain carrying boys to the seminaries of the Catholic South, bearing priests north again, years later, to a forbidden native country; my own native city which in 1919 sold the first agricultural machinery into Soviet Russia, from the factories of Henry Ford, himself the great-grandson of a woman of the lanes; Cork of the great harbour, Cork of the merchants and canny dockworkers, Cork of the troopships, Rebel Cork, Cork of the martyred Lord Mayor; stone quays from which tens of thousands sailed into loneliness and dispossession, quays known to sailors of every nationality under the sun; my waterborne city built on a marsh, her motto 'Statio Bene Fide Carinis' – A Harbour Good and Safe for Ships; Cork with her tower of Shandon topped by a golden salmon, Cork with her back to a sufficient province, her many faces turned always to the south and to the sea…

7

It's time to go in. We've made some leeway in this north-westerly, we've drifted from under the black and white banded tower of the Old Head lighthouse. We'll have to tack, says Zaf, and we do, leaving the Bullman buoy to starboard, then we come about and begin the

long run in under main, foresail and genoa, as much sail as we need, more than enough to make a brave show, and we want to make a brave show, by God, we want to stomp in there as gallant as can be. Charles Fort ahead, the great stone bastions pale in the sun. Green everywhere to left and right, such rich and lustrous colours, such rich land. Such a strong fort. 1601, I think, the Spanish force under Don Juan del Aquila making in, O'Neill and O'Donnell camped to the north of the town, suddenly it's that classroom again and time is thickening around me. I shake it off, punch redial on the phone, Paula is shouting "We see you, we see you," and we whip out the binoculars, we see them, waving madly, a boat coming out gives us a cheer and we cheer back and then we are under the walls, they're cheering us from the walls and we're cheering back, I can see Paula, phone to her ear and now she can see me, I go forward waving her blue scarf, we're nearly hoarse now on board and then we're past, they're scrambling to the cars, we're in the inner basin, we run the genoa in, we haul the sails down, stow them, tip the fenders over. Kinsale is humming, traffic noise, voices calling here and there, a coaster at the deepwater pier unloading grain, a trip boat going out, trawlers manoeuvring. Zaf throttles back, starts a long glide in to the dock. Everyone's down at the water's edge, Oliver brandishing champagne: we can see the gold foil on the bottleneck. I keep seeing Paula's eyes.

There's a moment, a moment only, when the crew is tumbled together aft. We stand just there and look at each other, and then Zaf says, Well done everybody, well done. We did it, eh?

Everything is fragile and solid all at once, we've been together for so long, and now at the end we are breaking apart; without fuss or time for reflection, we have ceased to be a crew.

The starboard side touches, the merest kiss of the fenders. The lines go arcing through the air. Oliver, Tom O'Leary and the harbourmaster make us fast.

Simon has got the ladder down, now everyone scrambles aboard. Everyone's talking, embracing and shaking hands at once. Oliver pops the champagne, happier than I've ever seen him, Curtis has a grin on him that could give him lockjaw, my sister Martina pops up, we're mugging for photos with Charlotte's Rasta wig, people we half know are appearing on the dock, and I have Paula in my arms, speechless with happiness, when Simon calls through a momentary silence: Hey Dorgan, what do you say? *Abair rud éigin*, say something.

I look at him, trusty Sweeney, at Anne hand in hand with her husband, at Charlotte raucous with sunny happiness, at Zaf, my teacher, my friend. At Oliver, remembering Biscay. I feel 4,000 miles of water and light and weather inside me, the great weight and curve of the Atlantic, and then I say the only possible thing to say, the bronzed faces of my fellow-crew shining before me: Comrades, that is a vast ocean! Here's to the ship that brought us home!

I hold Paula close. I look down at her feet then and she puts her arms around my neck, she sings in my ear softly, "Oh what will you bring me from beyond the sea…"

Theo Dorgan in *Archipelago*: Twentieth Century Irish Language Poetry, in *An Leabhar Mòr / The Great Book of Gaelic* http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-3/anleabharmor.htm

MARGAREE

Photographs of Cape Breton

George C. Thomas

The Margaree River forms a gentle, winding valley on the north side of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, and flows in to the shallow Gulf of St. Lawrence. This river valley, which is famed for its unspoiled, natural beauty, is populated along its lower thirty miles by families whose ancestors emigrated generations ago from France, Ireland, Scotland, and England.

When the long Canadian winter fades, men work the surrounding forests and the fertile valley pastures, and they fish the clear river and the ever-changing sea. With spring's long anticipated arrival, lumber and pulpwood are cut and hauled to mills, while hers of cattle and flocks of sheep with frisky, new-born lambs graze on seaside slopes and intervales. Men again ten their gaspereaux traps along the river, and fishermen head out for plentiful lobsters as well as cod, hake and mackerel. In summer and fall a steady stream of tourists passes along through this scenic landscape on the Cabot Trail, as persistent salmon anglers migrate to their favored pebbled pools on the Margaree River. But when the harsh, cold winter once more closes in, outdoor work ceases as deep snows fill the forests and the "big ice" drifts south from the Arctic to cover and still the sea.

In 1971, my wife, Lynn Zimmerman, and I moved from Boston to Margaree, where I eagerly listened to my neighbors' nostalgic, mirthful tales of blacksmiths, moonshiners and Mounties, of dauntless schooner captains, mail-sleigh drivers, and farmers who once drove ox teams. Observing the modern, rural communities along the valley, I realized that the last vestiges of a passing lifestyle were vanishing. That earlier way of life appealed very much to me. It spoke of a less complex world, a conserver society, and a way of life which emphasized hard work, intimacy with the earth and nature, and attitudes of pride, independence, and self-sufficiency.

The digitized images that follow are of prints that form the nucleus of a large body of negatives and transparencies made in Cape Breton between 1971 and 1979. Photographing and editing are highly selective and personal processes, and these images, from the book *Margaree, Photographs of Cape Breton*, which I have chosen to publish, represent my own perspective of Margaree. In part, this work is my visual tribute in praise of a once prevalent way of life.

photo George C. Thomas

photo George C. Thomas

photo George C. Thomas

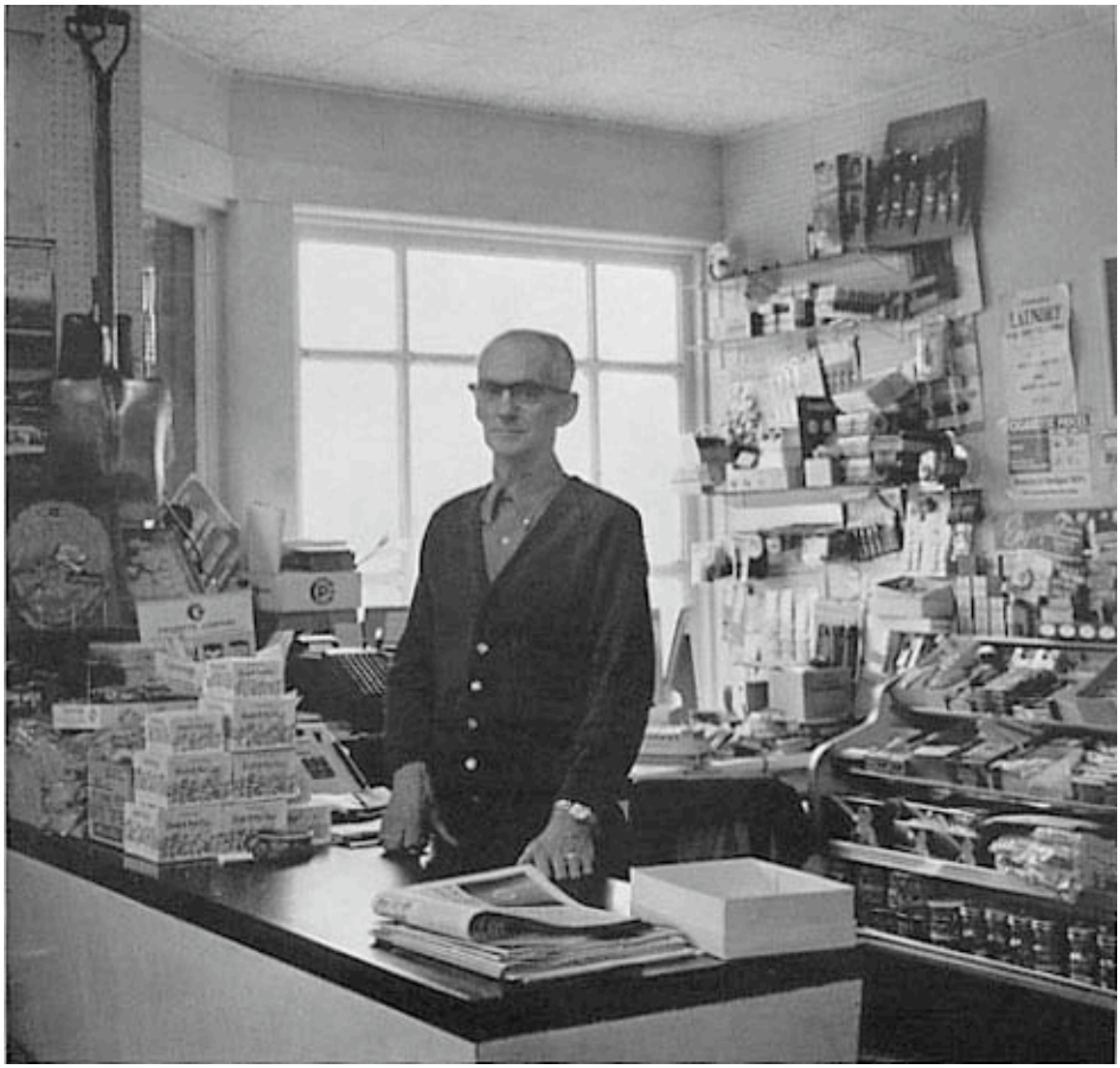

photo George C. Thomas

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photo George C. Thomas

THE GILLETTE

Abdón Ubídia

Translated from the Spanish by Nathan Horowitz

One

The man is sitting in front of the typewriter. Distractedly, he observes the keys, the springs, the sheet metal, that inextricable mechanism that can be seen in the intervals between the types. Sometimes his gaze rests on the ribbon, which he bought a week ago and which still stains the pages with an energetic, oily blue-black. He remains immobile while through his brain circulate furtive forms, vague ideas, imprecisions, which make him unaware of what he's taking in with his eyes in his useless inventory of the icy baroquism of that old Remington, tall and black, like a machine that might have some purpose at a funeral, like a schematic instrument of evil. Something in his chest prevents him from working, or even adopting the proper posture of someone concentrating on work. His ideas are not organizing themselves in his head and he's not doing much to organize them. It must be the theme of the story which is the problem. The theme of the story is death. The story which has asserted itself refers to the gradual decline of man who, little by little, because of a stupid flair for self-destruction, sets about undoing everything he has been and done in his life: his work, his relationships with friends and family, and lastly, his relationship with another character, Veronica, to whom he assigned in his world the role of nucleus, of organizing principle, around whom everything else articulated itself. Once everything that makes up his professional and personal life is destroyed, the protagonist's suicide is nothing but an afterthought. And that's the story. The man is almost finished with it. Only the last part remains to be written, the scene of the suicide. The man knows it by heart and could write it with his eyes closed. Nevertheless, he doesn't do it, because, now that he thinks about it, he has a slight headache, a gentle hammering in the brain that extends the back of the eyes. He must need another pair of glasses. He should go to the ophthalmologist. But everything feels impossible now. The business of getting a new pair of glasses seems as far-off and difficult

as working at the typewriter. He won't go to the ophthalmologist. He won't write either. Once, in these circumstances, he would have feared a night of insomnia, the inevitable punishment for a day of lost work. This time he's not afraid of it. The man passes his hand across his face, across the back of his neck. Suddenly he makes an involuntary movement and knocks the pencil that he uses to underline things off the desk. He picks it up, examines it. He discovers that the point has broken off. He looks for the Gillette. It's atop the very old, illustrated Larousse. He takes the Gillette and whittles a new point for the pencil. He puts down the pencil, put the Gillette on the Larousse and begins to write. But again, that inertia, that sense that it's meaningless, stops him from tapping the machine's keys. He lets his eyes dart around the walls of the room. But the Gillette is gleaming atop the illustrated Larousse. The gleam annoys him. He looks back at the ridiculous form of the Gillette: a weathered surface, two shiny parallels, and in the center something like a frightful mouth with half its teeth smashed out. He picks up the blade and hides it among the dictionary's pages. He opens one of the drawers of his desk and places the Larousse there. But he thinks that that's not the solution and opens the drawer and then the Larousse and searches for the Gillette. He picks it up carefully between finger and thumb, carries it to the window and throws it out onto the street. He breathes deeply, looks at his watch and sits back down in front of the typewriter, which he sometimes thinks of as his loom because he has imagined that the written pages that emerge from the top are a kind of cloth. Presently he discovers the open drawer of the desk. Inside it, wrapped in shadows, as if lurking there, is the old German Luger, loaded, ready to shoot. He quickly closes the drawer and involuntarily glances at the bottle of pills he left on the bookshelf jammed with disordered books. Wanting to make a joke, he wonders to himself how he could have remained so long in such a dangerous place without realizing it. The man gets up again, puts on his jacket, and goes out on the street. He's abandoned that story that's never going to end, at least not the way he planned it. He advances rapidly down the sidewalk. It's important that he advance rapidly, pushing his way between the passersby.

Two

Now, from the other side of the avenue, the man sees her pass through the green-painted doorway and walk up the cobblestone-painted alley. Without knowing it, she approaches him. She has her eyes lowered and her arms crossed over a pair of books, like a high school girl. The man has been waiting for her for an hour without daring to enter and look for her in that strange institute where there is nothing but a library and some enormous

rooms with archives that no one consults. He says to himself that it's a good omen that no one else was waiting for her to get out of work. He says to himself that the summer wind, the blue sky and the midday sun are even better omens. Also, in that part of the city, there's still enough silence and solitude to talk without interruption. Suddenly she discovers him, too late to avoid him. The man imagines what the woman must be thinking: that if she could tear up one of the cobblestones, she wouldn't think twice about throwing it at him. The woman has turned away her face with its expression of a frightened little girl so that she can't hear what the man has not yet begun to say—nor will he, because he has not taken the precaution of choosing his opening words, the appropriate and precise language to initiate his discourse. They walk in silence on the sidewalk, which is almost white with so much light. She acts like she doesn't know him. He isn't sure whether to take her by the arm, or once and for all to embrace her and kiss her desperately.

"We can talk, right?" he says.

She speeds up. She recalls, without sorrow, her final resolution: that relationship ended exactly three months ago. Ended forever. Of course, in the first days that followed the breakup, she was afraid of finding him waiting for her outside the institute or at her mother's house, and she feared every telephone call that she answered, and every doorbell ring and knock on the door of the office or of her mother's house. Then, only a few of his words would have been enough to make her crumble. And there wouldn't have been just a few words, but lots of them. A real avalanche—just like the one that would cover her in an instant if she let him speak now. He was a man of words. He was made of them. They didn't cost him anything. And he spewed them out with shocking irresponsibility. In those early days of tears and remorse, maybe she could have heard him and gone back with him. Today, though, she feels strong and free. "Speak, you idiot, I'm not going to listen," she says to herself, her mouth clamped shut with indignation. He follows her in silence, looking at the cement of the sidewalk as if searching for something.

"Talk, then," she says, almost in a sigh.

He sees he has won his first victory. She hasn't stopped at the bus stop, but continues walking with that too-distant, too-frozen attitude too deliberate to be real. And she's even letting him talk. This is the moment to insist. But now something strange happens. The words slow down and get tangled up in each other in his head. And he doesn't manage to untangle them. Actually, he doesn't know what to say to her. To ask her, just like that, to come back and live with him after three months of total silence seems ridiculous. Also, it doesn't occur to him to promise her anything in return for getting back together with him. And he wouldn't know where to start with the useless, tasteless, obviously lying offers that would soon seem to her like an interminable litany: he won't get drunk, he won't make

passes at her friends, he won't ridicule the concept of domestic life or reject its material aspects, he won't hate her mother just for being conservative, he won't demand that she read things she doesn't like; he will be tolerant and understanding, he will only say what is necessary to say, without excessive theorizing; he will overcome, once and for all, his manic depression—cultivated and periodically indulged in, like a vice—: he will try to become more stable, et cetera, et cetera. The man knows that this isn't his style. He has learned to avoid simplicity and directness, which feel to him like meager abbreviations that never communicate anything. That's why he needs the circumlocutions of literature. Furthermore, he doesn't really want to promise anything. Because he doesn't really want to change. On the contrary, he wants to remain that half-real, half-imaginary character which is his self. And he wants to justify that self, to explain it; although, now that he thinks of it, he's not eager to do that now. Because she knows all about it. He's explained it to her many times in many ways. It's not worth insisting on, especially not now. So, confronted by the sudden and somewhat unfamiliar need to be sincere, he prefers to remain silent, pursuing her wordlessly like a flustered adolescent. One of his beloved Malcolm Lowry quotes comes to his mind like divine assistance: "Who was she to judge who he had been before she came along?" It seems to him an important phrase, the most respectable of the various justifications he imagines. That quote safeguards his difficult, rebellious way of being. It's not necessary to speak it aloud. It would require a prologue that doesn't occur to him now. And there's nothing for him to do but to repeat it to himself like a prayer. Because the quotations he has consciously or unconsciously picked up from books, and which from time to time, and without his calling them, enter his mind, are, without doubt, the prayers of the personal religion to which he frenetically adheres: language, the dubious path of art, which he sometimes describes as his "stingy, egotistical, perfect alibi."

"I wanted to see you," he says.

"After three months," she thinks. She doesn't say it out loud so he doesn't think she's blaming him. The woman has made her first mistake: instead of stopping at the bus stop, she's kept going. She doesn't know why but it seems foolish to turn around and go back to it. That would be like advertising the fact that she's flustered. She decides to continue on to the next corner. Behind her, she hears and feels the bus coming. Now she sees it surge by, packed with people heading toward the south of the city. She watches it disappear down the deserted avenue. The houses here seem empty, though there must be some people inside. As they walk, she looks at the small, lovingly-cultivated gardens. Geraniums. Shrubs. Sometimes a dog barks at them from behind a fence. The cool, quick, playful summer wind lifts up papers and dry leaves, and makes a noise like a river in the trees. The sky is blue. There's not a single cloud, and the sun burns with all its power. It's the

dry season in the Andes: a fearsome sun, with a brisk wind to appease it. She thinks that without the imbecile who walks with her in calculated silence, cunningly pretending he didn't know what he was going to say to her, she would have wanted to walk a bit before catching the bus anyway, to forget about the darkness and the chilly dampness of her office.

"Has anything occurred to you?" she says indifferently.

He thinks he understands her new plan. She won't flee now. She walks slowly at his side and speaks to him with that smooth, calm voice, because she's told herself that it's better not to run away, not to provoke a confrontation, the dramatic, total rupture of two people who hate each other. It's better to stay in neutral territory, to be accommodating, and to tolerate him like a casual acquaintance, nothing more. Which is exactly what he will never accept. So he moves his hand toward her. He tries gently to take her arm. She turns her face to him. She looks at him, hard, strange, as if uncomprehending. He understands: she's on her guard. She's defending herself with her gaze, wanting to emphasize her distance. The man withdraws his hand. He does not insist. He consents to give her time. And to yield the point to her; in his own way, to be accommodating. But it's only a tactic. He will insist again, once, several times, as many times as may be necessary.

"I wanted to see you," he repeats, wanting to go back in time and erase his last gesture like someone retracing his steps after a wrong turn.

"Has anything occurred to you?" she would have repeated with the same indifference in her voice to close the circle and disarm him again. But she doesn't say anything. She begins to get disgusted with herself. Very much despite herself, she feels wooed, courted. Very much despite herself, she feels herself playing the game. Again she wants to run away. She looks again and there's no bus anywhere around. A ramshackle truck laden with bricks appears. She represses the impulse to lift her arm and signal the driver to stop and pick her up. The truck goes away. The distance to the next corner seems endless. Really, it's a very long block. Two or three times longer than an ordinary one. At the end, above the irregular, compact profile of the city, above the sudden blue of the mountains, rises the perfect, brilliant snow-covered cone of the volcano, luminous in the deep sky. She would have preferred a winter landscape, gray and rainy, better for reinforcing irreversible decisions. The sun begins to suffocate her. She wants to take off her jacket. But her arms are bare and the man might take it as a provocation. He always said he liked her arms, her skin, her smooth shoulders. He's too dirty-minded not to think of it as a provocation. Now she wants to hate him. She needs an immediate reason to hate him. She observes that they have just passed some gardens, where bougainvilleas and roses protruded between the bars of fences as if offering themselves to the passersby. The man doesn't notice things like that. Of course he doesn't. He's not the type who gives flowers. Or perfume. He used to say that

perfume was a slow-acting toxin. And that cut flowers reminded him of funerals, and that he felt it was better to leave the flowers on their plants, appreciate them there, share the world with them without mutual aggressions. That statement about his feelings was only partly true. Like everything about him. Except, of course, his total lack of courtesy, of politeness, which was completely true. He never gave her a special surprise gift. Except once when he bought her a watch. He must have done it by mistake. He was personally involved in all the other attentions he paid to her. He took her out to eat, took her dancing, took her to films, things like that. Sometimes to the point of exhaustion and even when she didn't want to go.

At last they reach the other corner. They stop. The man vainly attempts again to take her arm. It's barely a gesture at all. The man feels he has suddenly lost his sense of reality. Now that he should talk, he doesn't talk. Now that he should insist, he doesn't insist. The concrete situation altogether escapes him. He's only able to grasp (to appreciate, as if it were a dream) what he sees before him: the two of them, together, in silence, on a random corner of a deserted street on a fantastic midday of sun and wind. The past is only a vague suspicion and the future seems harmless. So why talk. It occurs to him that sometimes, that precise kind of interruption of action comes over him. Especially when the most prudent thing he can do is wait. And in that moment he is waiting, wisely, patiently, for the confused set of reactions that must be occurring inside her to calm down and cease, and then his timetable and her timetable will synchronize. That's why he's surprised to see the bus stopping at the corner. That's why it seems unjust that the woman says "Goodbye" and begins to get on the bus. So there's nothing to do but hold her back by force, and say to her in an actually violent tone of voice, "Stay here, we have to talk!" And it doesn't matter to him that on the other side of the half-pulled down bus windows, the people first look at them with surprise and then burst out in a single enormous laugh while the driver swears and accelerates. The man realizes he has committed his first error. The woman's face is burning. Behind the lenses of her glasses, her eyes fill with tears. She's furious. As if from far away, the man hears her say, "What do you want from me!" She frees herself from his grip and backs away. It's not only anger she feels, but fear, too. She doesn't know what to do. She turns around and starts walking back the way they came. She draws away. He follows her. He stammers an apology that she doesn't hear. He decides to shut up. They walk. Suddenly the woman stops, leans against the stone wall, covers her face with her hands and cries piteously. A fast whirlwind passes close to them, carrying with it a spiral of dust, leaves and papers. Very far down the street, a fruit vendor pushes his cart. The man leans toward the woman, takes off her glasses and helps her dry her eyes. She permits this, but when he tries to kiss her, she avoids him without ceasing to cry. He caresses her hair. The woman permits it but only for a moment. The man resolves to wait. The papers the whirlwind has flung up are white against the

intense blue of the sky. High above and off to one side are two kites, one yellow, the other red. The strings are invisible, but he sees their long tails made with rags. The skeletons of some other kites are tangled in power lines. He takes her gently by the arm, he pushes her gently, obliging her to walk. She lets herself be guided without offering any resistance. Soon they cross a street that intersects the avenue. The woman has stopped crying. She sobs from time to time. Her eyelids are a bit swollen and her eyes are red. He thinks this is a shame. She has begun to speak. She repeats, again and again, in a faltering voice, the many reasons why she will never go back to him. He listens to her, unconvinced. It seems to him that she is exaggerating and that she is coming out with some gratuitous slanders. He prefers not to contradict her. He sees that the woman is trying to convince herself with her reasons. When of her reproaches there remain only her lowered gaze, lost in the pavement, and some uncontrolled sobs, the man doesn't hesitate to whisper to her: "I won't let you leave me ever again." It's an affectionate phrase meant to invalidate everything she's said. But it's true: he won't let her leave him again.

The sun at 1:30 p.m. is like a mad fire. The little whirlwinds, and the gusts that come down from the heights and the snowcapped peaks, can do nothing to cool the baking earth. Now the real heat begins. The two of them are lucky to run across a little restaurant in that part of the city. Red-striped white cloths cover the tables. Behind the counter, the owner—almost round, dark-skinned, her cheekbones enormous—doesn't stop looking at them, stony, indifferent, immobile like an idol. The man devours his sandwich and calmly sips his beer. She doesn't want to eat. And her bottle of cola is untouched in front of her. Uncomfortable on the stool with its unequal legs, her jacket folded on her lap, she observes the man out of the corner of her eye. She's surprised to realize that she has forgiven him. She finds that in the lethargy of the afternoon, she has even begun to reproach herself for her own insecurities, her capricious, spoiled-little-girl character. It's the furious light and the crackling joy of the dry season that are to blame for this. Now only a bit of dignity and self-respect keep her apparently firm in her original decision never to go back to the man, who, for his part, looks at her from the other side of the table with optimism and tranquility that sink her, disquiet her. Yes, the weather is to blame. Without its splendor, she wouldn't have remembered the damp cold of her office, or the silence and darkness she had carried within her for three months—the void left by a love, a habit, that had been, and then was no longer. She thinks the man must have felt the same way, and that's why he's come looking for her. She reflects that love is like a secret dance requiring distances and pauses: the ritual of two people who search for each other without knowing it, and come together and draw apart and come together again. She thinks fearfully that the reencounter is imminent. She finds it hard to keep herself incredulous and distant. Although in a way, the man helps her to

keep resisting, by appearing too confident and optimistic.

At that exact moment, the man is remembering a phrase he found in a book and adopted as a personal definition: "I'm an uneasy mix of external timidity and internal arrogance." That was from Raymond Chandler. But the man believes that if he had not read the phrase, he would have written it himself. Under normal circumstances it applies to his own way of being. Now, however, the equation has been reversed. Now, on the outside he makes a show of his nonchalance, while on the inside, he's shaken by the fear of losing her, of having lost her already. Curiously, three months earlier, at the time of the breakup, the quotation seemed to help him find the stoicism and resignation he needed at the natural demise of a much-loved phase of his life. The breakup was hard, but he pretended to accept it, like an inconvenient and unforeseen pain that comes from outside. Like an accident in which no one is at fault. He found within himself the arrogance or shamelessness he needed to pretend things were normal: he ignored the void that grew within him: he had short-term sexual encounters, he drank, he started a publishing company, and he made progress in the writing of that short story which, at a certain hour of that very morning, he had abandoned, leaving it trapped in his old Remington typewriter. In writing the story, he had taken certain personality traits of the woman (who from the other side of the café table eyes him mistrustfully, like a prisoner planning her escape), and used them to create the female character, whom he had baptized Veronica, a name that did not evoke anything special to him. Moved by that same absence of inhibition, he had written in a version of himself as the male character, who has to leave Veronica to be faithful to a vision which has captivated him for a long time—the temptation of disgrace. The writing of the story went along smoothly until very near the end. To be precise, until its author became revolted by the conclusion he had foreseen, which was, ironically, the very idea that breathed life into the story and made it possible. In the scene in question, the main character, whose voluntary wanderings through the regions of misfortune have enclosed him in ever-narrowing circles, is sitting in front of a mirror holding a Gillette blade between his finger and thumb. The basic elements of the scene are clearly described: the main character; his reflection in the mirror; the Gillette; the jugular vein under threat from the Gillette: any sudden movement or decision in that last circle will be purely instinctive: life, or death; either the distance will be maintained between the character and his reflection in the mirror, or both of them will fall into the same shadow. Of course, certain external components of the story are not written into it. In the first place, the fact that the scene had taken place in reality, ten years before, and its tragic end shocked and saddened the city (which puts the author in a difficult position: how can we use other people's tragedies for artistic purposes without profaning or falsifying them?). And in the second place, the fact that when sitting down to finish writing the story, the man had, like a

painter posing a model, left a Gillette blade atop his Larousse dictionary.

The interruption of the story happened surprisingly, almost fantastically: when the man needed to pick up the razor blade to sharpen the point of the pencil with which he underlined the words he would have to change, a kind of short circuit came over him, a superimposition of imaginary and real, past and present. The fictional character facing the mirror, the author facing the page (another mirror), and the man who committed suicide ten years earlier, all coincided at a single point. For an instant, the imaginary was real, the present was the past, and the future didn't exist. And at the center of it all, like an axis, the calm, pure, splendid form of the razor blade halfway to its destination. The writer looked death in the eye, pausing on the threshold of absolute zero. And like the character in his story, his only possible response was purely instinctive. So after his initial bewilderment, all he could think of was getting out of there, running away from the freezing shadowland that was trying to draw him in. He made his way back along the path he had taken to get to that point. He threw the Gillette away, stopped trying to write the story, abandoned the dark, nicotine-saturated apartment in which the fogs of the rainy season seemed to linger still, and went to look for her.

In the café, the woman is looking at him strangely. The man's face has darkened. His mind is somewhere else. The woman doesn't trust that expression. The man recovers from his momentary mental flight. He gets up. He goes to the counter and pays the bill. He returns to her. "Let's go," he says quietly. She follows him. They walk toward the avenue. The man has decided not to insist.

Nevertheless, he insists.

That's when the miracle happens. He feels her press against him gently, take refuge in him, come to his side as if arriving from very far away. And he receives her and protects her. And the silence breaks like a bottle full of words that no one knew were inside; and he talks, and she talks, and he tells her, and she tells him. And they make promises to each other that they'll break later. And at that moment, the man senses the energy of the dry season, and the blinding afternoon sun, and he knows that the friendly wind that plays with the two of them is the same as the one that, a little way ahead, lifts up a yellowed scrap of old newspaper, spectacularly useless, which seems a metaphor for what's happening inside him; meanwhile, the woman—without being able to suppress a few sobs (because she is a woman)—is feeling half-happy, half-guilty, and thinking she's doing the stupidest thing she's ever done in her life, and only an idiot could get back together with a man so difficult and so strange, eccentric is the word, who will never resign himself to accepting the simple, straightforward things of the world, because he will always be suspicious of them, analyzing and interpreting them, in search of hidden meanings and motivations, when all he ends up

doing is confusing and tangling up everything. This is what the woman is thinking, when with surprise, she finds that these kinds of thoughts aren't very important to her, and when they reach the avenue and the man hails the taxi that happens to be there and the taxi stops in front of them, she finds that they're even less important, and even less when he kisses her and loves her, while the taxi flies down streets and avenues toward that working class neighborhood that she hasn't seen in three months but which she knows like the back of her hand, and while the man, for his part, too, is making discoveries, such as that if literature has been useful to him at all, it is because it shows him the interior of life as if it were an exterior—that is, objectively—, and now it shows him that up until that morning, he had not been able to introduce into his recent adventures the elements of reason, lucidity or judgment; judgment of his own errors and weaknesses, which, in slightly different forms, were also the errors and weaknesses of his character, and among which could be included forgetfulness and carelessness with respect to his obligations toward the surrounding reality—other people's reality, everyone's; the reality which he is at this moment watching out the window of the taxi, that whole luminous, contradictory vastness that flows before his eyes in splendor and infamy, and which—because he chose to be a writer of stories—claims him as its spokesman, demanding that he decode it and name it. This he thinks, along with various internal negotiations and amendments concerned with the woman, and he thinks many other things, pulled as always in the sharp zigzag movements that characterize his ideations and don't let him linger on a memory or a joy as long as he'd like, but drag him from one side to another, keeping him permanently unsettled inside, which is, more or less, his way of life, his style, which in the future he will somehow have to control, so that what he has been able to rebuild on this day might not fall to pieces again.

The familiar space of the neighborhood encloses them. The taxi stops. They get out. She looks at the old building, at the windows of the apartment on the second floor. He goes to open the building's front door, but first, turns his head to look around. By chance, he locates the tenuous metallic reflection a few meters away. Leaving the key in the lock, he picks up the now-inoffensive Gillette. The woman, watching, tells herself it's crazy to move back in with a man who's so crazy that he picks up razor blades off the sidewalk and puts them in the breast pocket of his shirt. For his part, he only smiles. Soon enough, he'll explain it all to her. He doesn't want to waste time now on confusing explanations. The man has always believed that happiness and sadness, independent of the events that provoke them, are not emotions that can last a long time. Now, as he ascends the steep wooden staircase, he knows that it's not worth the trouble to jeopardize his current happiness with useless invocations. He should, instead, seek to benefit from his favorable position. As he will doubtless benefit from the dry season itself. All the signs point to it. The intense wind that

blows and whistles under the door, seeming to offer him advice. The woman at his side who kisses him and loves him. The sudden illumination that has left in his mind the perfect tone that he needs to finish the story he's writing. And now that the breakthrough has taken place, love will come, and after that, a friendly evening with yellows and scarlets that will smolder in the sky and paint pink and violet on the snowcapped peaks and blue on the green mountains, and after the evening will come the night, which will be brisk and starry, or perhaps with an enormous moon that will light up even the farthest reaches of the Andes, and he will see it all with new eyes, or with the eyes of one who, by a lucky chance, has saved his own life.

"The Gillette" appeared in BAJO EL MISMO EXTRAÑO CIELO / Under the Same Strange Sky
(Bogotá: Circulo de lectores, 1979)

TALL, SLIM & ERECT
Portraits of the Presidents

Alex Forman

I sometimes, in my sprightly moments, consider myself...as the dictator at the head of a commonwealth. In this little state I can discover all the great geniuses, all the surprising actions and revolutions of the great world in miniature.
–John Adams

One day in summer, I ran across a small wooden box at a flea market. It was filled with 2-inch tall plastic figurines of the American Presidents, from Washington to Nixon. They had been collected individually, hand painted, and lovingly stored together by some unknown person (showing the simple craze of the collector). One thing that struck me about these souvenir objects—my "'models"'—was how even in miniature, their gestures belied attitudes of entitlement; their poses, perfect public bearing. Intended to glorify the men, they symbolize the way that presidents lose their individuality as they become defined by an institution. James Madison was five foot two inches, our shortest president. Lincoln was six foot four, our tallest. But both men, here, are two-inches tall.

Restoring these miniatures to life-size, I explore multiple representations of our national leaders: they are portrayed variously as stately and vulnerable, humane and even otherworldly. In an uncanny way, they are a reflection on how the masculine image of the president is recorded and reproduced. There is a kind of cross between the pained humanity of the person and being stuck on these pedestals. This tension exists in the work. By looking at the imperfections of being in miniature it brings to bear the humanity of these figures. With my prints, I seek to re-humanize the figures. I have shot them in natural light, in abstracted, individual settings, using a view camera and Polaroid p/n film. I then scan the negatives, enlarge them, and make digital prints using carbon pigment on watercolor paper.

Through my research — I've drawn on biographies, letters, medical histories, and children's books — I've sought to locate the men in their individual, personal drama. Some were outstanding statesmen. Some overcame weakness — from illiteracy to incestual love to chronic diarrhea. Others were terribly miscast. I am drawn to the details that reveal personal traits and character: two of our presidents were illiterate until their wives taught them how to read (A. Johnson and Fillmore); Hayes had an unnatural affection for his sister, Fanny; three

of our presidents were considered homosexual (Lincoln, Arthur, Buchanan); most of our presidents have been distantly related; and just two were actually born in log cabins.

Surprisingly often we get a big man just when we need one. – Carl Sandburg

Looking at the detailed miniature, values become condensed and enriched. Moments of wonder also occur. Madison winks. Wilson doubles over in laughter. As I enlarge the images, the figures fill with life but also take on aspects of the grotesque. We distort these men by attributing greatness to them that is an exaggeration of their natural state. It is an unnerving reflection on our society and culture, the role of masculinity and of the presidency itself.

I have named this project *Tall, Slim & Erect* after a phrase that appears constantly in the descriptions of presidents: "tall, slim and of erect carriage."

—Alex Forman

TALL, SLIM & ERECT http://tallslimerect.com was on view at David Krut Projects http://www.davidkrut.com/resources/i_newyork.asp, New York, October 29-December 18, 2004.

MARTIN VAN BUREN, 8th, 1881-85

Van Buren was the first of only five Presidents not of British descent.

So skilled was he in political manipulation that he earned the nickname, the 'Little Magician.'

He served Jackson as Secretary of State, Vice President, phrasemaker, and confidant. Their relationship was so close that a tired Jackson once considered resigning from the Presidency during his second term, permitting Van Buren to replace him. In short, there would have been no President Jackson, as we know him, without Martin Van Buren. [1a]

His soldierly posture and immaculate grooming made Martin Van Buren appear taller than his 5 feet 6 inches. [1b]

> Old Tip he wears a homespun suit,
> –He has no ruffled shirt – wirt, wirt;
> But Mat he has the golden pate,
> –And he's a little squirt – wirt, wirt. [2]

When Van Buren was President the city of Washington had a population of about forty thousand. Pigs and chickens roamed the streets at will; slaves were sold openly; the terrain was swampy,

malaria-ridden and crisscrossed by cowpaths and open sewers. Elegant [Van Buren] rolled around Washington in a magnificent olive-green coach with silver-mounted harness and liveried footmen. [3]

d. July 29, 1862 (Kinderhook, NY), of Asthma.

1 The American Heritage Book of the Presidents and Famous Americans. 12-volume edition. NewYork: Dell Publishing Co., 1967. [a]p. 249;
[b]p. 258.

2 James, Marquis. Andrew Jackson: Portrait of a President. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1937. [a]p.450

3 Durant, John and Alice. Pictorial History of the American Presidents. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1955. p.72

photo and text © Alex Forman

POLK, 11th, 1845-49

American Historian Carl R. Fish said of James K. Polk : *He was the least conspicuous man who had ever been nominated for President.* [1]

As for the Mexican war, Polk was both vilified as an imperialist and hailed as a patriot. In a house resolution, the war was branded as "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President." Abraham Lincoln, then a young congressman from Illinois voted in favor of this resolution. [2]

The halls of Montezuma were invaded on September 14, 1847. They got their revenge on Polk, who suffered from chronic diarrhea throughout his term in office and died of it three months out of office.

Polk explained his hand-shaking technique in his diary. He explained that a man should : *shake and not be shaken, grip and not be gripped, taking care always to squeeze the hand of his adversary as hard as he squeezed him.... I could generally anticipate when I was to have a strong grip, and that when I observed a strong man approaching I generally took advantage of him by being a little quicker than he was and seizing him by the tips of his*

fingers, giving him a hearty shake, and thus preventing him from getting a full grip upon me. [3]

d. June 15, 1849. Polk left most of his estate to his wife with the request that she free their slaves upon her death.

1 Durant, John and Alice. Pictorial History of the American Presidents. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1955.p. 83

2 Durant, John and Alice. Pictorial History of the American Presidents. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1955. p. 85

3 http://www.doctorzebra.com/prez/z_x11shake_g.htm

PIERCE, 14th, 1853-57

Of medium height, slim and erect, [1a] Franklin Pierce was the most unambitious man ever to run for office. [1b]

Nathaniel Hawthorn, his lifelong friend, said of Pierce: *I have come seriously to the conclusion that he has in him many of the chief elements of a great ruler. His talents are administrative, he has a subtle faculty of making affairs roll onward according to his will, and of influencing their course without showing any trace of his action...He is deep, deep, deep.* [2a]

Two months before his inauguration, Pierce and his wife were in a train that derailed and toppled over an embankment. They sustained slight physical injuries but their son was practically decapitated in front of their eyes. He was their third son to die. The Pierces were wracked with guilt. Mrs. Pierce decided that God had taken their son so her husband would have no family distractions while President. Pierce believed it was punishment for his sins. [2b]

Pierce was the first president to commit his inaugural speech to memory.

Pierce was an alcoholic, as everyone close to him was well aware; a fondness for drink was not something to hide in those times. [3] At the end of his term, when asked what a President should do after leaving office, he sighed: *There's nothing left...but to get drunk.* [2b]

His wife died and the next spring he and Hawthorne went off together on a trip to the White Mountains—an attempt to restore the writer's health. But Hawthorne died one night in a bedroom adjoining Pierce's. At Hawthorne's funeral the former President was pointedly snubbed by the New England literati and was not included among the pallbearers. A broken man, Pierce himself died on October 8, 1969. [3] He was 64.

1 Durant, John and Alice. Pictorial History of the American Presidents. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1955. [a]p. 100; [b]p. 101

2 The American Heritage Book of the Presidents and Famous Americans. 12-volume edition. NewYork: Dell Publishing Co., 1967. [a]p. 367; [b]p.370

3 http://www.doctorzebra.com/prez/g14.htm

4 MacMahon, Edward B. and Curry, Leonard. Medical Cover-Ups in the White House. Washington, DC: Farragut, 1987. p. 19

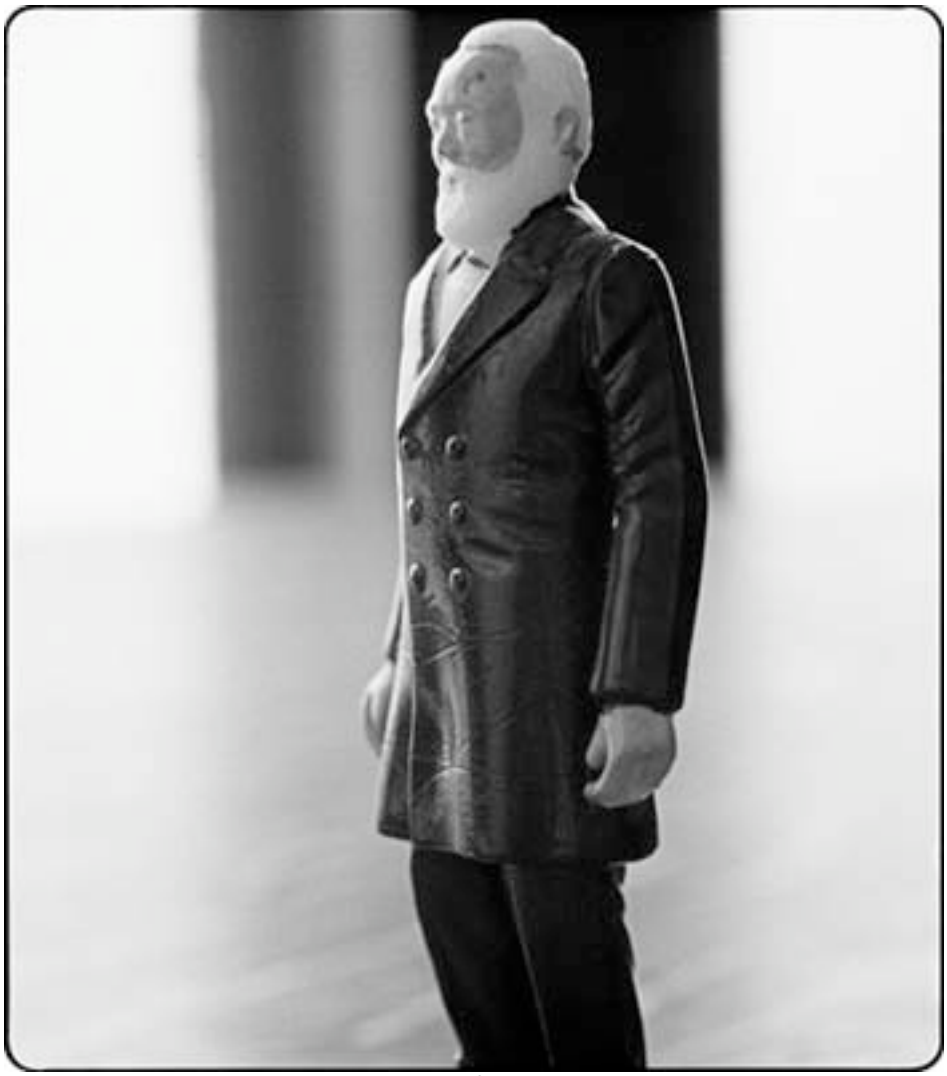

photo and text © Alex Forman

GARFIELD, 20th, 1881

James A Garfield was one of the few scholarly men of the Presidency. A lover of poetry and the classics, he wrote passable verse and could read and write in Latin and Greek. (He used to entertain his friends by simultaneously writing Latin with one hand and Greek with the other.) [1]

Garfield was elected president at age 49. He was six feet in height and weighed 185 pounds, and was characterized as 'very strong, atheletic and energetic.' [2]

On July 2, 1881, Leon F. Guiteau fired two bullets from his Bulldog .44 at Garfield. One caused a superficial arm wound. The other entered in the right posterior thorax, fractured rib 11, traveled leftward and anteriorly into the L1 vertebral body, then lodged about 2.5 inches to the left of the spine, below the inferior border of the pancreas. (President Garfield's spine is held by the National Museum of Health and Medicine and apparently shows the path of the bullet.) The whereabouts of this second bullet was a mystery until the autopsy, despite even the efforts of Alexander Graham Bell who used his newly invented 'induction balance,' better known now as a metal detector, to attempt locating the bullet. [3]

For some period after the shooting, Garfield was fed rectally. [3] It is likely that he died of malnutrition.

Garfield's original wound was 3.5 inches long, and ended with the bullet lodged in a harmless part of the abdomen. The wound was probed by the fingers of numerous physicians during the rest of Garfield's life so that, by the time of his death, the wound track was 20 inches long and oozing pus. [3]

Garfield's medical bill was $18,500. [3]

At his trial, the assassin Guiteau admitted shooting the President, but denied killing him. Instead, he claimed that Garfield's physicians killed him. Guiteau was executed because his defense was not strong enough.

1 Durant, John and Alice. Pictorial History of the American Presidents. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1955. p.168

2 Deppisch, LM. Homeopathic medicine and presidential health: homeopathic influences upon two Ohio presidents. Pharos. Fall 1997;60:5-10.

3 http://www.doctorzebra.com/prez/g20.htm#zree3

McKINLEY, 25th, 1897-1901

"William McKinley, the third martyred President within a space of thirty-six years, was the last Civil War veteran to become president." [1a]

McKinley was shot in the abdomen by anarchist Leon F. Czolgosz who said, "I didn't believe one man should have so much service and another man should have none."

McKinley told me [Chicagoan H.H. Kohlsaat] that they were trying to force him into declaring war with Spain. As he said this, he broke down and wept as I have never seen anyone weep in my life. His whole body was shaken with convulsive sobs. He ceased after a while, and later, when he had dried his eyes, he said he felt that he should go in to see his guests again. He asked me when we got into the light if his eyes were red, and I told him they were, but if he blew his nose very hard just as he entered, the redness of his eyes would be attributed to that cause. He did so, and I never heard any of the guests, with whom I mingled freely, comment on the fact that the President had been crying. [2]

McKinley's handshake was famous. To save wear and tear on his right hand at receptions, the President developed what came to be called the McKinley grip. In receiving lines, he would smile as a man came by, take his right hand and squeeze it warmly before his own hand got caught in a hard grip, hold the man's elbow with his left hand, and then swiftly pull him along and be ready to beam on the next guest. [3]

McKinley's wife, Ida, was subject to headaches and seizures. Every day at exactly three o'clock, McKinley stepped to his office window and waved a handkerchief at his wife. Ida, who spent her time crocheting bedroom slippers (she reportedly made thousands of them), insisted on accompanying her husband to social affairs. [5a] In order to attend to her, if necessary, McKinley broke tradition and sat next to her at official dinners. For example, one evening at dinner with William Taft, "a peculiar hissing sound" came from Mrs. McKinley. McKinley quickly picked up a napkin, dropped it over her face, and continued talking. Mrs. McKinley recovered a few moments later and resumed her part in the conversation where she had left off. [3]

As the wounded President was caught and supported by his aides, he whispered to his secretary, *My wife—be careful, Cortelyou, how you tell her—oh, be careful.* [1b]

McKinley's last words were to his wife, Ida: *Nearer my God to thee, Nearer to Thee.* [5b]

d. September 14, 1901, of Gangrene.

1. Durant, John and Alice. Pictorial History of the American Presidents. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1955. [a.] p. 198. [b] p. 204.

2 http://www.doctorzebra.com/prez/z_x25cry_g.htm

3 http://www.doctorzebra.com/prez/z_x25shake_g.htm

4 Boller, Paul F. Jr. Presidential Anecdotes. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. p. 189-190

5 The American Heritage Book of the Presidents and Famous Americans. 12-volume edition. NewYork: Dell Publishing Co., 1967. [a]p. 637; [b]p. 642

AN UNCIVIL ACTION

Ellen Boneparth

A decade before illegal detentions and abusive treatment of foreign and American citizen captives at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib prison, United States government officials were already engaging in similar practices. In the 1990s, government agencies began to expand the categories of American citizens, legal residents, and would-be immigrants who could be detained and ignored the right to due process. In just two examples, New York closed state psychiatric hospitals and locked up patients in nursing homes without court orders, and the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) held hundreds of undocumented children behind barbed wire because there was no one to take responsibility for them. The increasing use and abuse of civil detention – confinement of individuals considered threats to society – has, on occasion, been successfully challenged in the courts, but usually long after the injury has occurred.

Souvannarath v. County of Fresno is one such case.

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On May 25, 1999, Catherine Campbell watched her new client, Laotian refugee Hongkham Souvannarath, a middle-aged woman in orange prison garb, hands and feet shackled to her waist, shuffle into the holding cell in the basement of the State Superior Court in Fresno, California. Campbell, a lawyer specializing in prisoners' rights, had worked with inmates for years, although typically her clients had long arrest records and were doing time for violent crimes. This petite, sickly-looking woman hardly fit the profile.

Through a glass partition, Campbell, using a Laotian translator, began her questioning. How long had Souvannarath been in jail? Almost eleven months. Why was she there? She had tuberculosis. Confused, Campbell restated her question. What had Souvannarath done? Tears trickled down the prisoner's cheeks. The Health Department claimed she wouldn't take her medications, she said, but she had been on medication for sixteen months.

Campbell informed her client she would try to get her released that day. It would

not be easy. Health Department personnel and a lawyer from the County Counsel's Office were on hand, armed with an Order of Continuing Detention. When Campbell read the Order, she quickly understood that its provisions for hearings, court orders, and legal representation should have been implemented when Souvannarath was first arrested. In the hearing that afternoon, Campbell assailed the County for false imprisonment. The County's TB Controller responded that Souvannarath had been properly detained as a public health threat. The two sides finally compromised: the prisoner would be released on home detention if she agreed to wear an electronic ankle monitor to track her movements.

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Hongkham Souvannarath's refugee journey should never have ended in a California jail. Like hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees, she ledt Laos as a result of the Vietnam War. A mountainous country the size of Oregon, Laos has had the historic misfortune of lying in the path of Asian and Western powers seeking sway over the region. When the French colonial regime in Indochina collapsed at the end of World War II, competing Laotian factions fought for control. In the 1960s, domestic and international conflicts converged as Laos' long border with Vietnam made it a secondary battleground for the U.S. military.

Raised on a farm in western Laos in the 1950s, Souvannarath left home to learn rudimentary nursing – she had no more than a third grade education – at a U.S. military field hospital. In Vientiane, the national capital, she met her husband, who had once worked with U.S. forces on road construction. There, she began married life in 1974, the same year the Communist Pathet Lao overthrew the Laotian monarchy. When the Communists ordered the citizenry into the streets to shout anti-American slogans, Souvannarath, fearful her family's associations with the U.S. would come to light, shouted along. Despite her political vulnerability, she made a good life in Vientiane operating small businesses and giving birth to two sons and four daughters.

In the next decade, 350,000 Laotians, mainly Hmong but also lowland Lao like Souvannarath, fled Communist rule, most of them crossing the Mekong River to Thai refugee camps. In 1984, both out of fear and from a sense of maternal responsibility, Souvannarath decided to escape. Two of her daughters were afflicted with Thalassemia A, a debilitating blood disease, which, given the family's limited resources, would not be treated effectively in Laos. When Souvannarath discovered her husband was unwilling to leave, she proceeded on her own. Living near the Mekong, she submerged a rowboat in the river. One evening, she invited Laotian soldiers stationed nearby to dinner and lulled them to sleep

with prodigious amounts of wine. At midnight, she shepherded her children to the river, retrieved the boat, and rowed to an island where the family was picked up and taken to a Thai refugee camp. There, she obtained medical care for her daughters and made useful connections in the Catholic community. Within two years, sponsored by the U.S. Catholic Conference, she managed, along with her husband, who had re-joined her and the children, to leave for the U.S.

The Souvannaraths were first settled in Louisville, Kentucky, in October, 1986, but, desperate for a Southeast Asian community, in less than a year they moved to Columbus, Ohio. A Laotian social worker found them housing and part-time jobs, enrolled the children in school, helped them apply for welfare and health benefits. Souvannarath encouraged her children to adapt; her husband pressed them to observe traditional ways. Marital tensions led to a two-year separation. At one point, Souvannarath was victimized by Asian gang members, who robbed and beat her. She became anxious, was diagnosed as clinically depressed, and became eligible for disability payments. After a visit to California, she decided, despite some family members' objections, to move the family to Fresno.

California did not turn out to be the paradise Souvannarath anticipated. Her sons, unable to find work, returned to the Midwest. Her four daughters found it hard at first to make friends, as the predominant Southeast Asian group in the community was Hmong, with whom they had no common language except English. Souvannarath and her husband separated for good. While Souvannarath had neither a full-time husband nor sons to help carry the family burden, a serious handicap in her culture, she pushed herself and her children to succeed on the American scene.

By the time Souvannarath settled in Fresno, the city had evolved from a small, agricultural town to California's sixth largest city – a sprawl of housing developments and malls, a mix of neighborhoods, a nondescript city center. In the late nineteenth century, the railroad, roads and irrigation had turned the barren San Joaquin Valley into a flourishing agricultural region. The first settlers were all immigrants – European and Armenian farmers, Mexican farm workers, Chinese gold miners and railroad workers. The most recent immigrants, Southeast Asian refugees, began arriving in the 1980s, attracted by Fresno's climate and slow pace, not very different from Vientiane's or Phnom Penh's. With land relatively affordable, many refugees, once farmers, purchased small plots on which to grow native herbs and vegetables. Despite the attractions, life was hard. The refugees faced competition for unskilled jobs, especially in recessionary times, from unemployed whites, Latinos, and African-Americans. When survival necessitated going on welfare, they were resented by community members and local bureaucrats for placing a financial burden on the county.

Souvannarath and her daughters got by on welfare and disability payments. The girls continued their schooling, worked part-time, dated. Souvannarath, although she missed her sons, was happy to have found a small Laotian community, Asian foods, a Buddhist center, a boyfriend. She was managing. But when illness struck, her family's life changed radically.

In the summer of 1997, Souvannarath stopped eating, lost weight, coughed a lot. She went to a community clinic, where she was given a video on how to stop smoking. When her health worsened, she was given a tuberculin skin test, but did not return to the clinic in time to have the patch checked. A sputum test proved negative. Still feeling very ill, she was referred to a hospital. Chest x-rays revealed lesions in the pleura (membranes surrounding the lungs), but these could not be identified as caused by tuberculosis bacilli. When physicians proposed to extract lung tissue for a biopsy, Souvannarath agreed, believing there would be one incision. She was furious afterwards to discover that the surgeons had made five.

The biopsy produced a diagnosis of TB, which, given its location in the pleura, was not considered contagious. The hospital released Souvannarath immediately, without providing her information about her disease. When, the next day, a medical assistant from the Health Department visited the family, a daughter, whose English was poor, understood only that her mother had TB and had to take medications. Souvannarath was put on the standard treatment of four first-line drugs to be taken for six months. Within weeks, she felt better, and like many patients, went into denial. Her logic told her that if she felt well, the problem had passed. Moreover, she had begun to experience side effects from the medications. She did not see why she should keep taking them.

The Health Department had a well-established program of what is called Directly Observed Therapy (DOT). In the public health field, DOT is the recommended way of treating TB patients: by monitoring their ingestion of medicine. For DOT therapy to succeed, there must be rapport between health worker and patient, including a common language; but the Fresno Health Department had only a few Southeast Asian medical assistants, all of them Hmong. Souvannarath began seeing a Hmong medical assistant who claimed to speak good Lao, but his language skill had never been assessed. The alternative – using the Souvannarath daughters to translate – was also problematic. The girls spoke household Lao, insufficient to explain complex medical matters even if they understood them in English. When health workers came to the house, Souvannarath often complained, questioned, evinced distrust. On several occasions, she missed scheduled appointments or refused to take her medication. The Health Department typed her as noncompliant. Yet she did take medication, if somewhat erratically, and seemed to be responding. By March, her chest x-ray was clear.

At the end of February, however, lab results from Souvannarath's biopsy revealed that her tuberculosis was multi-drug resistant (MDR), with marked resistance to three of the first-line drugs she was taking and negligible resistance to the fourth. Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis first appeared in the U.S. in the mid-1980s, a time of resurgence of tuberculosis after years of decline, due to AIDS, homelessness, and immigration. Although such resistant cases remained below five percent nationally, there were pockets, such as New York City, where drug resistance was found in fifteen percent of tuberculosis cases. New York responded to its tuberculosis epidemic by quadrupling its staff of workers in direct occupational therapy, reconfiguring hospital rooms to prevent contagion, and establishing isolation wards where they detained noncompliant patients. Ultimately, the New York Department of Health spent a billion dollars on the program. California, which also experienced a major outbreak of TB, rewrote its Health and Safety Code to provide local health officials with greater authority, but did nothing to establish hospital or isolation wards.

When tuberculosis is resistant to first-line drugs, it requires stronger medications. The Fresno County Health Department, having seen other cases of MDRTB in the community, chose to attack Souvannarath's disease with fairly toxic second-line drugs. In her case, it was a debatable decision. Two former TB Controllers believed Souvannarath, who seemed close to being cured, should have remained on first-line drugs (Isoniazid, to which she was only mildly resistant, and Pyrazinamide, a new drug for her, to which she evinced no resistance). But the Health Department, fearing an epidemic, took no chances. In an interview, its Director compared MDRTB patients to criminals: "These people – it's like a death sentence. No different from someone with a gun pointed at your head, except with a gun you can see if the chamber is loaded."

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A century ago, public health was seen as the prescription for healthy communities. After World War II, however, responsibility for health care in the United States shifted relentlessly from the public to the private sector, so that today, the latter accounts for ninety-nine percent of total health-related expenditures. In the 1990s, Fresno County public health agencies, like public health systems across America, experienced a crisis of declining resources and lowered prestige. In the hope that services provided by a private hospital would prove more cost-effective, the County closed its teaching hospital and a number of community clinics.

In 1993, Betty Tarr, a nurse practitioner, became Manager of Fresno County's

Communicable Disease Division, which was responsible for tracking diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis. She set out to make the Chest Clinic, which treated TB cases, run more efficiently. She believed that the half-time Tuberculosis Controller, Dr. Tom Cole, was too lenient, especially with noncompliant patients, whom he occasionally detained but then released after a few days. When an opportunity arose to hire a new physician, Tarr chose Dr. Michael Reynolds. A pleasant, Marcus Welby-looking obstetrician and gynecologist employed by a county clinic that was about to close, Reynolds inquired about employment elsewhere. For Tarr, his application was opportune, a county transfer for a job that had become very hard to fill.

Dr. Reynolds had good reasons for wanting to continue with Fresno County. The California Medical Board had put him on probation for alcoholism and had placed him in the Physicians' Diversion Program, which required he have a workplace monitor. He had lost his hospital privileges. By all measures, he was a poor prospect for private sector employment.

Other aspects of Dr. Reynolds' past should have set off alarms, but did not. On his personnel form, he admitted a cocaine conviction. He failed to mention that he had recently been sued for medical fraud. Nor did he disclose that, beginning in 1984, he had been charged with eight cases of medical malpractice and fired from two hospital positions. At his job interview, Dr. Reynolds apparently discussed his alcohol problem and made a convincing case for a new start. Tarr set out to ease Dr. Reynolds into the TB Controller's job. First, she assigned him to shadow Dr. Cole in the Chest Clinic; then had him see patients on the days Dr. Cole was not present. Dr. Cole protested that Dr. Reynolds could not read chest x-rays and was not competent to work as a pulmonary physician. When Dr. Cole threatened to go public with his concerns, the Health Department senior management terminated him. Dr. Reynolds took over.

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Dr. Reynolds had been on the job a month when he first saw Souvannarath at the Chest Clinic. In response to her MDRTB diagnosis, he prescribed powerful second-line drugs – Ethionamide, Ofloxacin, and Amikacin – which were administered through an intravenous line. He said nothing to her about possible side effects. Soon, Souvannarath experienced wheezing, ringing in her ears, loss of appetite, fatigue, ankle pain. After a month, her side effects, according to her medical record, also included "coughing, joint pain, noise in throat, headaches and swollen lips." Dr. Reynolds then put her on Clofazimine, a leprosy drug not approved by the FDA as effective with tuberculosis, which caused in her

nausea, dizziness and considerable psychic pain because it turned her skin dark, something highly undesirable in her culture.

Several months later, in mid-June, 1998, Souvannarath, despairing of her treatment, decided to move to the Midwest to be with her son, and to seek medical attention there. She returned to the Chest Clinic, where her intravenous line wasremoved, and was given two weeks of medication to tide her over. The Clinic staff sent a referral on her to the Health Department in Columbus, Ohio, which, a week later, informed the Chest Clinic that Souvannarath's son was not expecting his mother. A health worker was dispatched to Souvannarath's home in Fresno, where a daughter told him she didn't know where her mother was staying. A week later, Souvannarath's boyfriend told another health worker that she had moved to Modesto and would go to the Midwest from there. The worker left a phone message saying that if Souvannarath did not come in to the Clinic, she would be arrested. She did not appear.

On July 23, a health worker made another home visit and "found the client there eating lunch with the entire family. Client denied being ill and refused to resume treatment." Souvannarath insisted that her son had been planning to come for her, but that his work schedule had changed and he could not get away until August. Asked why she had hidden and told her family to lie about her whereabouts, she replied honestly – she felt shame at being caught in a lie and fear of being arrested.

Dr. Reynolds promptly issued an Order of Examination – a legal order that, if disobeyed, results in a misdemeanor charge – requiring Souvannarath to appear at the Chest Clinic. The Order was delivered by a medical investigator and a Hmong interpreter, who was, it seems, unable to convey to Souvannarath the seriousness of her situation. When she failed to show up at the appointed time specified in the Order of Examination, Dr. Reynolds wrote up an Order of Isolation and Quarantine to have her confined in the Fresno County Jail.

July 30th, 1998, the day of Souvannarath's arrest, was a fiasco. The medical investigator, who had no training in civil detention procedures, returned to her apartment with the Order of Isolation and Quarantine, accompanied by two police officers, and with no interpreter. Highly agitated, Souvannarath tried to explain her circumstances to the police. She swore later the investigator lied and told her she was being taken to a hospital. When she asked to change her clothes, she was escorted to her bedroom under gunpoint and was certain that she was going to be raped. In the end, however, she and her daughters left the house voluntarily and rode in the investigator's van, followed by the police.

When Souvannarath realized she had been delivered to jail and not a hospital, she began screaming. A Hmong police officer tried to calm her. A jail administrator promised

she would be in jail at most a few days. She was given a mental health evaluation, which consisted of a few questions asked by the Hmong officer. According to her jail record, she threatened to kill herself. She was strip-searched and assigned to a safety cell, described in a judicial opinion in this way:

> The safety cell is approximately 8' x 10', and has a "Turkish toilet" – a hole in the floor which can be flushed by an officer outside of the cell. Petitioner was very cold in the "safety cell," and was only allowed to wear an armless, heavy garment that did not keep her warm. There was no furniture in the room, and she was never given a blanket. She crouched in a corner on the concrete floor. The room smelled bad from human waste.

For the next two days, Souvannarath was regularly evaluated by jail personnel who did not speak her language. A Lao speaker might have saved her from the safety cell as she later claimed her remarks about killing herself were, in fact, expressions of fear of *being* killed.

After two days, Souvannarath was moved to the Infirmary, which resembled the rest of the jail, except that she was confined to her cell and lived twenty-four hours a day with the physically and mentally ill. Attached to an IV, she was forced to clean up after one cell-mate who was incontinent, and was attacked by another who suffered from a terrible rash and threw scabs at her. Each week, she had one thing to look forward to – visits with her children – but even these were frustrating as she and the girls tried to figure out why other inmates were getting court appointments and being released, while she was ignored.

Souvannarath began to show the effects of incarceration. She dropped from a hundred fourteen to a hundred three pounds because she could not eat the unaccustomed food. She kept trying to fathom the logic of her situation. If she had to be on intravenous medication, she thought, it meant she was sick. If she was sick, why, then, was she in jail rather than a hospital? When, during a check-up, she asked Dr. Reynolds through an interpreter that very question, he told her that if she went home she would infect her children. Souvannarath caught the flaw in his argument, pointing out there were healthy people in jail whom she could infect. He responded by threatening to move her to another facility far from her family.

After Souvannarath was arrested, her daughters closed the blinds to protect themselves from the prying community, and stopped socializing, to avoid answering questions about their mother. They survived on packaged noodles and junk food. Although they could cover their own expenses with welfare payments, they had high phone bills. because their mother was allowed to place only collect calls from jail, and she phoned several times a day. The daughters sought help from their brothers, from Lao community leaders, from their social worker. Every person they contacted went to the Chest Clinic for

information. There, they were told Souvannarath was legally detained and could not be released, because she was a public health threat.

After six months in the Infirmary, Souvannarath was transferred to a "pod" where the rest of the female jail population was housed. Although she now lived with convicted felons, she was delighted to be able to leave her cell for the day room and make some friends. No longer receiving intravenous therapy, she continued second-line drugs orally, always suffering debilitating side effects. On March 29, 1999, after completing eight months of chemotherapy in jail, she had another check-up at the Chest Clinic. A jail nurse had told her she would be going home in August; but Dr. Reynolds informed her that she would remain in jail for the full duration of her treatment – twenty-four months. Furious, Souvannarath resumed sending letters, written for her by other inmates, to the Health Department requesting her release.

In early May, through an Ohio lawyer contacted by her sons, the Fresno legal aid community was alerted to Souvannarath's plight. Soon afterward, a Chest Clinic nurse visited her in jail and handed her an Order of Continuing Detention from Dr. Reynolds, in which he cited the California Health and Safety Code as his authority to detain her. He informed her of her right to request release and to be represented by counsel. He noted that it was his own obligation to obtain court orders to keep her in jail. He made no suggestion that he had neglected this duty for more than ten months.

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Once attorney Catherine Campbell had arranged Souvannarath's release from jail, at the end of May, 1999, Campbell discovered that Fresno County had been incarcerating noncompliant tuberculosis patients for years, although none for as long as her client. The detainees in the most recent cases were all African-American; one patient was most likely still in jail. Campbell quickly filed a writ of mandamus in State Superior Court asking that the Health Department be ordered to cease using the jail for civil detention and to comply with the due process provisions of the California Health and Safety Code.

At the writ hearing in August, the County defendants' own testimony made Campbell's case for her. The Sheriff admitted that Souvannarath, a civil detainee, should not have been housed with the criminal population. Betty Tarr, Manager of the Communicable Disease Division, denying any responsibility for Souvannarath's legal rights, protested, "We're not attorneys, we're just medical providers." When asked whether the County would continue to use the jail for detention, she replied, after much obfuscation, "It's one of the options." Finally, Dr. David Hadden, the County Health Officer, pled ignorance of

detention orders he himself had signed, then blamed rights violations on others.

Superior Court Judge Donald Black, in a decision, issued on January 19, 2000, ordered the County to "immediately and permanently cease the housing of persons detained pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 121350 *et seq.* in correctional facilities, including, without limitation, the Fresno County Jail, unless such persons have been tried and convicted of a crime." Campbell and Souvannarath had won their first victory; but there was little opportunity to celebrate. On January 22, Souvannarath's youngest son was killed in a car accident. Souvannarath was distraught. A believer in the spirit world, she knew what she had before only suspected: she had been cursed by evil spirits, and her soul had been wrested from her in jail.

Even before the first case was decided, Campbell had filed a second lawsuit, this time in Federal Court, in which the Souvannarath family sued the County of Fresno, eight officials from the Department of Community Health, and two from the Sheriff's Department. The complaint contained fifteen causes of action, including, *inter alia*, denial of equal protection and right to counsel, false arrest, civil battery, and municipal failure to discharge statutory duties. The pre-trial discovery process took ten months. County officials from low-level nurses to top-level Health Officers testified that they had no responsibility for legal matters, only medical ones. Even in that regard, they abdicated, admitting their only medical plan for Souvannarath was to keep her on medication in jail, leaving her side effects, for the most part, untreated.

Dr. Reynolds' deposition was the most revealing of medical indifference. He conceded he never tested Souvannarath's boyfriend for TB or determined if Souvannarath was infectious before sending her to jail. He never consulted her mental health worker during her treatment or considered home detention as an alternative to incarceration. He kept Souvannarath behind bars because she was "incapable of making a paradigm shift" and becoming compliant. When asked whether he would have kept a noncompliant Souvannarath in detention for the rest of her life, he replied, "That has been done."

At the end of the discovery process, Campbell considered whom to hold accountable for the injuries inflicted on her clients. While the defendants all denied responsibility, each one appeared culpable of something and, to Campbell's mind, sounded that way. As she finished up taking the defendants' depositions, she prepared the Souvannarath family members for theirs, emphasizing proper comportment – conservative dress, willingness to cooperate. The County's attorney who deposed Souvannarath and her daughters found them sincere and likable. At the close of her testimony, Souvannarath said to the County's legal team, "I thank you for your time and wish that you have your health." Ironically, the deposition had been a welcome experience – the first time anyone from the County had

appeared at all interested in what she had to say.

If the defendants' depositions made Campbell eager for a trial, the Souvannaraths' depositions made the County eager to settle. In early March, 2001, it proposed an Early Neutral Evaluation by an independent mediator. Campbell had to decide whether or not to go to trial. She observed in an interview, "The family was really poor, living on welfare. A jury trial would take a long time. Even though the family would be good on the stand, there was a certain amount of anti-Asian feeling in the community. It made sense to try to settle."

The mediation took place at a large law firm, the plaintiffs and their attorneys in one conference room, defendants and their attorneys in another. The plaintiff asked for two million dollars: one million to Souvannarath for unnecessary, possibly permanently damaging, treatment and unlawful incarceration; one million to the children, for "emotional loss, physical loss, and constant trauma." Along with a written apology, Campbell demanded that "Souvannarath be allowed to return to the Fresno County Jail with her attorneys, her children, and her Buddhist monk to perform a ceremony that will return her spirit to her body."

Campbell thought the case would settle well; but her optimism evaporated when the mediator delivered the County's first offer: agreement to the soul-catching ceremony, an apology, and $250,000. Although she recognized the offer as an opening gambit, Campbell was nevertheless prepared to walk out. In a friendly way, the mediator told her: "You are not to leave this room until I say so." He moved between the two conference rooms, The defendants went up a hundred thousand dollars. The plaintiffs came down the same amount. The Souvannaraths sat stoically through it all. At $1.2 million, Campbell refused to budge. The mediator knew it was a final counter-offer, and the County accepted. The family's reaction was joyful, but not exuberant. It had been a wearing day, after an almost three-year, life-sapping struggle.

On April 22, 2001, Souvannarath and her daughters, dressed in traditional costume, bearing silver bowls of flowers, and surrounded by Campbell, the Sheriff, and the legal team of Fresno County, knelt and chanted Buddhist prayers at the steps of the County Jail. Buddhist monks in saffron robes and nuns in white were led by a shaman to the safety cell in the infirmary and pod. Carrying a butterfly net and a can of Pepsi, the shaman sprinkled rosewater and called for Souvannarath's spirit to return to her body. After the soul-catching ceremony, the guests attended another traditional Lao ceremony, this one at Souvannarath's apartment. Contented and at peace, Souvannarath tied cotton threads around their wrists to bind the *kwan*, the thirty-two spirits of the body, to the possessor with wishes for health and prosperity.

But the legal battle was not yet over. Before the settlement of the federal suit,

Fresno County had appealed the writ case, arguing it had the right to use the jail for detention as long as no state monies were used. In January, 2002, the Appellate Court rejected this argument. Referring to statutory language that persons detained "shall not reside in correctional facilities," the Court said, "The words 'shall not' are as unambiguous as any two words in the English language can be and they cannot rationally be misunderstood."

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The Souvannarath case brought needed change to Fresno County. Dr. Reynolds and Betty Tarr left county employment. The Health Department increased its budget for tuberculosis outreach, and health workers have been receiving training in patients' rights and cross-cultural differences. The Sheriff installed a multi-language phone system in the jail to enable foreign-born inmates to speak in their own language to interpreters twenty-four hours a day. Compelled to detain patients in a facility rather than in jail, Fresno County signed a costly contract with High Desert Hospital in Los Angeles County, the only facility in the state available to house and treat infectious, noncompliant tuberculosis patients. A year later, Los Angeles County officials, facing a huge budget shortfall, proposed closing the hospital, but were persuaded by desperate users to extend it another year.

After a century of progress, the public health system is now seriously limited in its capacity to treat infectious diseases. Souvannarath, like thousands of others, immigrated to the United States without having been adequately tested for tuberculosis, was haphazardly diagnosed, and improperly treated. Unless the health system does a better job of reaching and treating the foreign-born, the global tuberculosis epidemic will continue, through legal and illegal immigration, to afflict the United States.

The managers and health care workers in the public health system also need to implement better strategies for dealing with noncompliant patients, domestic and foreign. Souvannarath's resistance to treatment led to her illness being criminalized. Her incarceration sent a clear message to the immigrant community and underclass of Fresno – "If you're sick, don't tell." Rather than persuading potential patients to seek help, her incarceration may well have driven others ill with tuberculosis underground.

Nation-wide, the challenges of controlling tuberculosis are growing, while the resources to do so are shrinking. In a recent example, the Washington, D.C., Health Department's Tuberculosis Control Bureau, facing a TB rate almost three times the national average, was severely criticized in July, 2004, for lacking a detention facility for homeless, often HIV-infected, TB patients, and simply returning them to the streets. Fears about bio-terror have shifted funding for research and control programs of "mundane" diseases such

as tuberculosis, to countermeasures against smallpox, anthrax, and other bio-weapons. The increasingly worrisome diseases we know, such as multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, are taking a back seat to the diseases of our nightmares.

Above all, however, the Souvannarath case raises disturbing issues concerning civil liberties. At the same time that fears about national security have led to highly questionable detentions of suspected terrorists and "enemy combatants," fear of the physically and mentally ill in American communities has led to illegal detentions. In *Souvannarath v Fresno*, the Appellate Court spoke unambiguously about coercive medical treatment without due process of law, stating, "We appreciate that Hadden, Reynolds and Tarr are medical professionals and not lawyers. However, as public officials they must be held to know the basic provisions of the laws which empower them and govern the exercise of their particular offices and duties."

To combat the growing use and abuse of civil detention, an aware public must hold its officials – whether health providers, immigration authorities, Department of Justice lawyers or the military – to that simple standard.

U. S. — S. U. — U. S. :
AN AMERICAN BOY'S LIFE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Leon Bell

Editor's note: Leon Bell, a Soviet-trained nuclear physicist who later became a world-class plant physiologist with an expertise in photosynthesis, was born in Texas in 1918, and moved with his family to Moscow in 1931. His life reflects the tragedy of the Soviet Union and the situation of an American-born Jew in Stalin's Russia. In his unpublished autobiography the author gives an inside view of what it was like to live in constant fear and poverty in a totalitarian state.

In 1938, during the Stalin purges and troika trials, Leon Bell's father was arrested, declared an enemy of the people, and sent to a Gulag in Kazakhstan. This excerpt tells of the years leading up to that event.

Part 1

Why he writes an autobiography, and how the family leaves for Russia.

Today is December 23, 1987. I am now sixty-nine years old. You can twist that figure around anyway you wish to, but you will always get sixty-nine – there is no escape. In a year's time (if I am still alive) I will be seventy, and that is real old age. Time is running out, and if I expect to write about my life, as daughter Natasha has asked me to, it's time to begin.

Of course, I have my doubts whether it is worthwhile writing. I can't write a memoir as usually understood – a narrative of the life of a person of fame or one who had experienced a particularly interesting life. I am not famous and, strictly speaking, there were no extraordinary events in my life

Then why write? First of all, as I have mentioned, Natasha has asked me to, and wife Ira has supported the idea. Secondly, in my opinion just about anyone's life can be interesting as a mirror, albeit a small one, of the times in which the person lived.

I am a person of the twentieth century, a stormy and at times, maddening, century. Possibly, in the future some people would like to know how ordinary, not widely known people lived in those times.

There is one more circumstance that justifies my effort. I spent most of my life differing in a certain respect from the people surrounding me. Of course, everyone is a special case, but my distinction is a rather specific one, although in a rational world it would not entail any substantial consequences. In reality, though, my "distinctiveness" did evoke consequences, usually of a negative nature (from my viewpoint) that seemed (to me) to be absolutely incommensurate with the cause, and this circumstance may serve to give better insight into a peculiarity of the century, at least in some countries.

When I was young I thought that, fundamentally, all people are the same irrespective of their ethnicity or nationality. As the historian Gumilev, son of the poets Akhmatova and Gumilev, put it, "Some people believe that a black is the same as a *muzhik* but with a black skin." The Russian philologist and historian Academician Dmitri Likhach concedes that there can be shifts in the character spectra of various ethnic groups but believes that the shifts are not large.

In my later years it became clear to me that the shifts may indeed be noticeable and are conditioned to a large extent by the family upbringing. At any rate, this is true with respect to me, and therefore it makes sense to start with a description of my family.

Not being of blue-blooded descent, I never showed any interest in my family tree, unfortunately, and thus my knowledge does not go farther than my grandparents.

My father's family was a rather unusual one. The Belkovskys did not live in a *shetl*, the isolated settlements Jews were forced to live in in the Ukraine and other Eastern European countries. According to my mother, the family lived in a village called Anapol, and this privilege was accorded them because someone in the family had been a "Nikolayevsky soldat" (Nicholas I soldier), which meant serving twenty-five years in the army. I have a photograph of the whole family taken in 1910, just a year or two before part of the family moved to the neighboring town of Radomysl and my father and his brothers decided to emigrate to America.

As a little boy I heard the name "Radomysl" mentioned occasionally in conversations between my parents and our relatives. The name conjured up in my mind the image of a small town of muddy roads, dilapidated houses, sagging fences and destitute of trees or shrubbery. In 1984, I participated in a scientific conference in Kiev, and on a day off Ira, my wife, and I took the bus to Radomysl, which is a two-hour ride from Kiev (about 84 kilometers).

What we saw was a quiet town of sturdy houses with gardens, paved roads, and much greenery. The only picturesque landmark we saw was a church that had probably been standing when my folks lived there. There are three cemeteries: Russian (Orthodox), Polish (Catholic) and Jewish. The Jewish cemetery was neglected; many of the tombstones were broken, but many were put together. In this part of the country the Germans were there as early as August 1941. The inscription on one tombstone informed us that we were standing at the grave of the first resident of Radomysl murdered by the German fascists.

Another feature of the Belkovsky family that I find quite unusual was their secularism. I have a photograph of my grandfather, my father's father, taken in Radomysl in April 1910. He could be taken to be a prosperous merchant (*kupets*) posing in a three-piece suit with a (golden?) watch chain fixed to his vest. His neatly trimmed beard and moustache intensify this impression of a well-to-do bourgeois. On the reverse side of the photograph is an inscription in Russian written in a beautiful handwriting and addressed to his youngest son Mikhel (my uncle Mitchell).

I find it remarkable how these Jewish people, living in a village and then a small town in the Ukraine (not Russia!), mastered the Russian language. As far as I know, they spoke Yiddish among themselves. My mother told us, her children, that my father studied first in a *kheder* (elementary Jewish school), then in a regular school, possibly in Russian. He graduated from high school in Radomysl as an extern. After graduation he attempted to enter the Kiev University, department of law, but because of the admission quota for Jews, was not accepted. He returned to Radomysl. where he worked for a well-known lawyer. He also gave lessons (in what, I don't remember) and wrote articles for the liberal newspaper *Kievskaya Mysl* (Kiev thought) . Being associated with the newspaper was sufficient to attract the attention of the secret police.

During the revolution of 1905, the paper sent him a draft of a liberal constitution, which he read from the steps of the city *duma* (mayoralty), from where he led a large demonstration. The next day he was arrested.

My father once told me how he was treated by the tsarist police and the Soviet secret police. The *gendarme* who interrogated my father spoke to him in the formal *you* – *vy*, analogous to the German *Sie*. The Soviet investigator (*sledovatl*) was rude, threatening, and addressed him with the familiar *ty*, the English *thou* or German *du*.

Despite the politeness of the tsarist official, my father (according to my mother's version) was exiled to a very small settlement where, evidently, he spent a short period of time.

In 1910 he emigrated to the United States, the second of his many brothers to go. The first was my uncle Wolf. In descending order of age the brothers were Nathan (my

father), Abe, Wolf, Sol, Morris, and Mitchell. The sisters were Luba and Eve. All eventually made it to Houston. Why Houston? This is the story my cousin Helen, Uncle Wolf's daughter, told me.

Uncle Wolf had a ticket to Australia, where he hoped to settle. In Galveston, all passengers were asked to leave the ship – a rat had been sighted and the ship was to be fumigated. The passengers were put on the suburban train commuting between Galveston and Houston, where they were spend the night and return the next day to re-board the ship. Uncle Wolf was not only a bad sailor – he easily got seasick – but also was nauseated when traveling in a train or car, except when driving. In Houston, the prospect of the train trip and long sea voyage was too much. The result: nearly a dozen Belkovskys flocked to Houston from the town of Radomysl, in the Ukraine, a subject of the Russian Empire. At present, the fifth generation is popping up.

All I can say about this story is, to use the Russian saying, *"za shto kupil, za to i prodayu"*: or, literally, "I am selling for the same price I bought the goods," meaning, "I am merely saying what I heard."

My father, the next to come, could not be invited by Uncle Wolf, so he went to Philadelphia, where he had a cousin. My father told me that the immigration officer who processed his papers deemed the name Belkovsky too long and difficult to pronounce and proposed that it be shortened to Bell. From Philadelphia my father went to Galveston, where he got a good job at the Jewish Immigrants Information Bureau. When the war broke out in 1914, immigration virtually ceased, and my father moved to Houston with my mother and infant sister, Bertha.

My mother, Genia Friedman, was born in 1892 in the small town of Talnoye, about 175 kilometers south of Kiev, near the city of Uman. Talnoye, like Radomysl, lies in the region south and west of Kiev with a large Jewish population. Names like Zhitomir, Vinnitsa, Berdichev, Zhmerinka, Shepetovka, etc., were noted for their large Jewish population. Berdichev and Zhmerinka were (are?) the subject of Jewish jokes, not necessarily ill-disposed.

When my mother was twelve, in 1903-04, her family moved to Radomysl, for what reason and under what circumstances, I do not know. My father, who also lived in Radomysl at that time, was twenty-five. Genia was the eldest of four daughters, the others being Bertha (Brucha), May, and Rive. Their father, Benzion, was a *melamed*, a teacher of elementary Hebrew and, almost by definition, a poor man. However, my mother told us, the family never really suffered from privation.

My grandfather was truly an unworldly man. I saw him and Grandmother for the first and only time at the beginning of 1932, when the three of us, Mama, my brother, Davie,

and I visited Kiev. He almost never spoke and seemed constantly to be consorting with God. I wonder what he thought, being surrounded by his unholy children and their children.

Grandmother, whose maiden name was Rapoport, was a rather lively person. Besides Yiddish, she seems to have known some Russian. Aunt Maya and her husband, Uncle Grisha, along with Yiddish spoke Russian fluently and also knew Ukrainian.

At the beginning of 1913, my paternal grandfather was murdered by thieves, and my father returned to Radomsyl for a short time. There he met my mother, proposed to her, and arranged for her journey to America. According to the archives, she arrived on the ship *Chemnitz* in Galveston on August 8, 1913. In less than a month's time, my parents were married. Bertha was born July 21, 1914, in Galveston, a little more than a week before the outbreak of the war. It seemed strange to me as a kid that Davie and I and almost all our cousins were Houstonians, whereas Bertha came from some other place.

At the beginning of 1914, Uncle Wolf returned to the old country to bring over the rest of the family: Mother Hinda, fifty-two years old; sister Eve, sixteen; and Mitchell, fourteen.

Most dramatic of all was the voyage of Aunt Bertha. She was invited by my parents who were then living in Galveston. However, her ship never made it to Galveston. This is what cousin Lee copied out of the book *Galveston, Ellis Island of the West*, by Bernard Karinbach:

> On August 5, 1914, the North German-Lloyds' *S.S. Brandenburg* arrived at Philadelphia, with Galveston its ultimate destination. Since by that time, war had broken out in Europe, the ship deposited all its passengers at Philadelphia, including 179 Jewish immigrants, and then headed back to Germany. Most of the immigrants were sent to New York, where they boarded an American ship bound for Galveston. . . . There were fifty nine cases of family reunion on board. These were the last to be distributed by the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau.

The Philadelphia immigration office, as also was true in the case of my father, who landed in Philadelphia, recorded more detailed information than did the New York or Galveston offices. Thus, it was possible to learn that Aunt Bertha was then seventeen years old, worked as a milliner, and had $1 to declare.

The two sisters who were left behind, Maya and Riva, were not so fortunate as my mother or Aunt Bertha. They lived through the war, and then the terrible civil war, where the Bolsheviks, Poles, and Ukrainian nationalists alternately wielded power until the more resolute Bolsheviks finally took over. After a brief respite in the 1920s, because of the New

Economic Policy (NEP), the policy of collectivization of agriculture led to various food problems, and, indeed, in some parts of, the Ukraine, to famine.

For another few years before World War II, living in Russia became more or less bearable, but the war put a firm end to that. Aunt Maya and her son Lusik were able to flee Kiev before the Germans entered the city. Riva and her two children, for some reason, did not make it. The three of them ended in Babi Yar.

I don't know the fate of her husband. he may have been shot in one of Stalin's camps; I never asked Aunt Maya about him. Lusik was killed in 1942, at the front at age eighteen. The war didn't spare even the children of those of our family who remained in the old country.

In 1983, I was finally permitted by the Soviet authorities to visit my daughter Natasha and her boys in London. Natasha invited me to see "The Fiddler on the Roof" in the Apollo theater. I recall the scene where the Jews, ousted from their homes, are discussing where they should go. Leaving home for a strange destination, without money, knowledge of the language, or a familiar environment, must be a traumatic experience, whatever the other circumstances. Unfortunately, I never asked my parents to tell me about their immigration experience. However, my Uncle Sol left a diary which I think gives a good idea of what immigration meant for some in the days when there were no unemployment benefits, no Supplementary Social Income, Medicaid. The diary was written in Russian and, I should note, in a good, literate Russian. It always impresses me how these Jewish young people living in a Ukrainian hamlet learned the language so well.

> Thursday, January 12, 1911
> At 9 o'clock in the morning all my things were in the cabin in the ship "Cassel". [Underlined words are those in Latin letters. L.B.]. It seems strange to me: not only I but even Shiller-Shkolnik himself could not have imagined that on the 12th of January, 1911 at 10 o'clock in the morning I would be on the deck of a steamship. However that might be, all my things are on the ship and I am very glad about that: I am sick and tired of lugging those things from the railway station to the coach, from the coach to the station... Now I am freely standing on the deck... No troubles.
> Noon. The ship's whistle began hooting. What a sickening sound that seemed to me. The ship began to slowly move away from the shore. I stand on the deck and say goodbye to the land. I see an enormous crowd of Germans who stop for a moment. The departure of the ship stopped almost every passer-by. Then the air became white with handkerchiefs – the Germans were wishing the emigrants a happy journey to the new world. The emigrants wave their hats, black hats.

I am standing at a side and watching all of this. A shiver passes through my body: the crowd of Germans has affected me. It seems to me that for them. they understand perfectly well the state of the emigrants and are sorry for them.
The land disappears from view. Sky and water. The sky is downcast; it is slowly snowing. The emigrants are singing together. But then something happened that they had never experienced: the ship started to rock, at first gently. Everyone began to rush to their beds, I too.

January 13, Friday
When the pitching of the boat finally stops, I go out to the deck. There are few people there and not a single woman. Evidently, they are worse sailors. I refuse my food and simply drink a cup of tea with lemon and eat an orange. The ship has covered 271 nautical miles.
. . . . . .

February 4, 1911
Here is Houston and here are my brothers, Americans. I see them, I am talking with them. This is not a dream, this is reality.

February 9
A horrible mood. I am in America. That was my immediate goal? But what is a goal? That is one of the questions frequently posed by people and which can never be solved correctly. Whatever the solution, it ultimately turns into an illusion, into self-deception, whereas reality is always hidden from our reason and comprehension.

When I was in Russia, I didn't see anything interesting around me. Everything seemed to be elusive? illusory? deluding? and life was uninteresting... And now a new goal emerges, a new ideal: to leave Russia and try life in another part of the Earth.

I didn't want to ask myself "Why are you leaving?", because if I were to do so, I would get into a great mess in which any life disappears, fades 1away forever. There is one thing that keeps repeating itself in me: "without faith, without a goal, a person cannot and 'should not' live." That is clear...

"Why are you going away so far? What is in store for you there?" – those were the questions my acquaintances asked me. There was no definite answer because I was ashamed to say so... My old acquaintances and friends were perfectly right in asking me this question since they knew it was not the riches of America which attracted me but something else, but what, neither they nor I know.

February 10
I was in Russia 21 years and 7 months, and now a week has passed in the New Country. I have started to look for work. A trunk factory offers me 2 1/2 dollars a week. I don't agree and go home. I feel dispirited... Why do people go to America? To live a more interesting life. To satisfy one's spiritual needs. Yes, they want free speech and free thinking.. Russia has starved them of this, pressed them down and now they are looking for a way out.

February 12
A new job, "Pickles factory Abe Gordon & Co. " 10 dollars with board and lodging. Work starts at 7 in the morning. I have become a worker. And here I begin to remember some pictures of my past life... I remember Kiev, the narrow circle of friends. I remember the hungry days in Kiev. I remember the cozy room we spent our youth in, our joyous and sad youth. . . . . .

April 12
I lose my job. I get my pay and go to my brothers. It happens to be the eve of Easter. I am glad that I will be able to have a good time during the Easter holidays.

April 22
Easter is over. I have found a new job for 3^{50} a week in a big store. I feel bad because I can't speak English. I work from 6 in the morning to 6 in the evening. My salary is barely enough to feed myself. But I feel cheerful and in good humor because I hope to learn to speak here.

June 22
Promised a new job in a grocery with board and lodging. I leave Mendelsohn (my boss's name) and begin to work in the grocery. I feel much better because I speak a little English. I work from 6 in the morning to 9-10-11 and even 12 in the night.

October 9
I am fed up working 16-17-18 hours a day. I have saved 50 dollars. I have quit my job and am thinking about starting a "cigar stand ". Night courses have opened up, and I go there three times a week.

December 12
Eleven months have flown by since I left Russia, And what has happened? Nothing interesting. I am only busy with the material side of my life. I am beginning to get a little scared of life; it seems to me that I will never be secure materially. But that must be a result of the fact that I have been used to being with my parents; my parents have remained in Russia. It would seem that I am now in a good position: I am in my own cigar stand and earn 100 dollars a month... Anyway, my life at present is not an interesting one. My old friends, comrades and acquaintances are not here. Without them it is quite boring. I remember our evenings together, when hours passed by as fast as seconds. And you had a feeling of satisfaction since the time was spent usefully. I remember the evening when the books "Thus Spake Zarathustra" and "War and Peace" were discussed. It was an interesting evening.

August 28, 1912
And who could have imagined that I would turn up among trees? All of a sudden, I sold my cigar stand for 650 dollars and bought 100 acres of land with trees. Now I am by myself in Cleveland [Texas. L.B:]. Wolf has gone to Houston for a few days. I am in a good mood... I

> try to explain this but cannot. Maybe because there are no acquaintances or relatives around,
> no complaints to be heard? Or maybe because I am in a new world,
> in a world of quiet and calmness....

The diary finishes here. Probably, the bustle of American life into which he had been drawn dampened my uncle's enthusiasm for writing.

It seems my two uncles, Sol and Wolf, had ideas about becoming farmers or going into forestry; but these plans were not realized. Quite soon, Uncle Sol went into the grocery business and Wolf eventually into the insurance business.

Uncle Sol was happy to be in a "land with trees." His father had worked in forestry. Could it not be that forestry was a traditional occupation of the Belkovskys? There can be no doubt that they had lived in Poland, all the more because the Ukraine once belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian union. I would speculate that my ancestors arrived in Poland about the year 1500, when Jews were being expelled from western European countries and Poland was regarded as a safe country for Jews.

By the time I was born, in 1918, it did not seem to really matter how or when my ancestors settled in the Ukraine, or how they had acquired their name. The reality was that quite a few young men in their twenties and thirties living in Houston with the name of Bell spoke English with an accent. Baby Bells were now on the rise. These first-generation Americans are now very old. Several have died. Their children, the famous "baby boomers," have children (and in one case, even grandchildren) who have never heard Yiddish spoken or heard the word "Radomysl," and cared less.

In those years my father had a small novelty shop and bookstand. Davie and I liked to meet him at the corner of our block when he came home for lunch. Besides, we were hoping to earn some money to buy our favorite candies. called "silver tops." (Now they are called "Hershey's kisses.") For a penny we would get two candies, one for Davie and one for me. To earn the penny, all we had to do was to brush off the dust from Daddy's shoes. This took about ten seconds, so we were paid quite well. (At that rate, assuming an eight-hour workday and five-day work week, we would have earned over $10,500 a year, not bad at all in those times.)

In 1926, my family moved to a new house at the corner of Albany Street and Tuam Avenue. The house was much more convenient than our old one; there were four rooms (but one bathroom) a large kitchen and kitchenette. There was a gas stove in the kitchen, but in the winter we still heated the children's room with a wood stove (with the traditional boiling chainik on it). A couple of myrtle trees with beautiful pink flowers grew in the front

yard along with a few rose bushes which my mother cared for. In the back yard there was a fig-tree which actually bore fruit from which mama made jam. There was also a garage, really a barn. which at one time my parents rented to a black man for fifty cents; I never learned if that was for a week or a month. In the back yard I appropriated a small plot of land for a garden. Radishes were the only plants that yielded anything of significance.

We lived in this house for more than five years, and it was here I spent my conscious American childhood. There were several boys in our neighborhood of my age and with whom I became good friends. Next to our house was a new apartment house in which Bobby Brown lived. Douglas Carter lived across the street and Edward Gliot at a corner house a block away. Eddie had a nice lawn large enough for us kids to gather in the evening to tell horror stories or wrestle. Eddie's left arm was paralyzed (from infantile paralysis) but that did not stop him from wrestling with us as equals. When grappling with him, the main job was to keep clear of his two deadly holds: scissors and strangling hold. He had very strong legs and a strong right arm, which, when linked with his lame arm, could be deadly.

Another kid by the name of Victor lived a few blocks away from our neighborhood, but he would come from time to time to wrestle on Eddie's lawn. He had a paralyzed leg, and that put other kids at a disadvantage: when he was in an upright position we tried not to push him to make him fall. On the ground he was as good as any of us.

There were some other boys of my age whom we played with but were not such close friends. We played a lot: "Americans and Germans" (the war hadn't finished so long ago); "Americans and Indian" (these games involved difficulties in determining who would be the Americans, which everyone wanted to be); baseball; hockey on roller skates with a tin can as the puck (resulting in an intolerable, for the adults, amount of noise).

Our school, as was the junior high and high school Bertha would attend, was only for whites. Segregation in those years was complete in Houston: in the streetcars a small board fastened to the wall with "for whites" written on one side and "for colored" written on the other side warned that blacks were to sit only on the back seats; a sign at the large Heinke and Pilot grocery store let it be known that blacks and dogs were not allowed in the store; a water fountain near the store was only for whites. At the baseball stadium, blacks sat in the bleachers, the very name of which is humiliating. There was no roof over the stand, which was located in the worst place to observe the game, far out in right field. Making people sit several hours under a broiling Houston sun even then (I'll explain in a few lines what I mean by "even then") seemed to me to be senselessly cruel.

Our house was in the middle between a neighborhood of middle and upper middle-class homes and a district in which Negroes lived, which whites called "nigger town." Sometimes, by myself or with a friend, I would ride by bike to the bayou, a rather exotic

river where alligators were alleged to live. To get there I had to pass through the Negro ghetto. I was always a little afraid that rocks would be thrown at me, but that never happened. The houses in the ghetto were old wooden houses, and poverty was evident in everything.

How did I react to this racial discrimination? In our leftist family chauvinism and racism were absolutely foreign. Nevertheless, I can't boast that I felt the full depth of the injustice. Moreover, I have to admit that I did not worry about the crime being committed before my eyes. I was a child living in conditions that seemed to me to be the order of things. I didn't know any other life. Like other children, I believed the Earth was the Universe, and that what was going on today had been going on from time immemorial. And this despite the fact that my father was doing what he could to help persecuted Negroes.

I saw fewer cases of anti-Semitism. maybe because there were no other Jews in our neighborhood. In one case, a boy from some other neighborhood whom I did not let ride my bicycle began calling "Jew-baby, Jew-baby." I was terribly surprised – I didn't really know the kid, and when or where did he learn I was Jewish? Another incident occurred during a visit of the Bell family to Aunt Bertha and Uncle Sol's home. The son of a neighbor was angered by something – I can't imagine what could have provoked the youth – and began yelling, "Go back where you came from." At school I don't remember any ugly incidents like these.

At Fannin School, before the lessons we said the Lord's prayer in the King James version. I knew the beginning words of the prayer and also those where we asked to "Give us this day our daily bread." After the prayer, we saluted the flag and all together pledged "allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands. . ." I don't know if my parents were aware of these activities, but I am quite sure they would not have worried. After all, nobody was forcing me to say the prayers nor would anyone force the children to read the commandments.

I left junior high school when I was in the "low seventh" grade, i.e. after about one and a half years in the school. Oddly, I do not remember much about the lessons there. I can't even recall what mathematics we were studying or anything about the science lessons, if there were any. The lesson I most vividly recall was the few times we were instructed in "music appreciation". We were introduced to Grieg's "Peer Gynt," for example, by listening to "In the Hall of the Mountain King." We were taught songs, including spirituals. As usual, musical lessons, like those of physical culture and vocational training, were regarded as less important than math, science, language, history. What a sad delusion. After all, not all children have the opportunity to take music lessons at home. I for one didn't have the chance, and school could partly have offset this disadvantage.

After school, there were always games to be played outside.

The two most popular team games were football and baseball. The latter was my favorite for several reasons. It was a "clean" game with a great variety of situations, a game in which brute force was not a prerequisite, an important factor for a little guy like me. One could enjoy the game with a softball, a bat and a vacant field. There were a number of other factors that made baseball particularly popular. Houston had a new stadium – Buffalo Stadium – which could hold 6000 fans, not bad for a city of 350,000. It had a good baseball team, one of the best in the Texan League. The Houston Buffalos were a farm team for the Saint Louis Cardinals which won the championship of the National League in 1928, 1930 and 1931.

I still remember the names of some of the players who made it to the Cardinals and thus to the major league: Carey Selph who played at second base, Mickey (?) Medwick in center field, pitchers Wild Bill Hallahan, Dizzy Dean, Big Joe Lindsey.

It goes without saying that the batting averages were carefully studied in the Sunday newspaper. Generally, only the names of those batting over .300 were scanned. If the name of a popular player could not be found in this range, I would go down to .290 or even .280 – but no lower.

Lying on a shelf in my New York apartment there is a baseball that is almost seventy years old (I am writing this in August, 1999). The ball was presented and signed by a shortstop of the Houston Buffalos, George Binder. George was courting a girl in our neighborhood, so we kids got to know him. He didn't play long for the Houston team, but long enough for us to solicit the ball.

How this ball did not get lost during the multifarious events in my life and that of my family seems to me to be almost a miracle. The tenacity of my mother who held on to the ball, as well as Davie's and my stamp album, the Ku Klux Klan proclamation sent to my father in the 1920's (which I keep as a relic), and some other items, is amazing.

Even in Russia I had a chance to play a little baseball. And on returning to the U.S., sixty years later, the only sport I watch on TV (along with tennis) is baseball.

A couple of events aroused another interest – in physics and, ultimately, in nuclear physics, which in those days was considered to be "pure science" with no possible practical applications. My sister Bertha took me to a students' science exhibition at Rice Institute. I particularly remember being impressed by watching a tricolored disk turning white when vigorously rotated. An even greater impression was made by a large photograph covering two pages of the *Houston Chronicle* and depicting a Van de Graaff electrostatic electron accelerator. There was something special, even romantic in this beautiful machine and in the

idea of splitting the atom. I think it was from this day I became fascinated by what later be called nuclear physics.

A couple of years later, while already living in the Soviet Union, after reading some popular science literature, I was completely captivated by the possibility of releasing the enormous amounts of energy contained in matter, and of unraveling the structure of the atom. I was hooked and lucky to be so – from childhood on I knew what I wanted to be: a physicist, or rather, a nuclear physicist; and also what I had to do: study at the university

In October 1929 the famous (or infamous) stock market crash on Wall Street occurred. I remember the enormous headlines on the front pages of the newspapers but not much more. Externally, at least as far as I could see, nothing much changed in Houston. I never saw or heard of breadlines or demonstrations of unemployed such as those shown in the papers or documentary films.

In my family, however, something did occur: my father gave up his novelty and newspaper store and went to work in an insurance company of a certain Mr. Fried. I can't say when that change took place; my parents followed the policy of keeping us children (at least Davie and me, I can't say for Bertha) unaware of their financial troubles. I think that is a very sensible and compassionate course: involving the children will not help solving the problems but will certainly make their lives less cheerful. I deeply believe that the childhood of a person should be as cloudless and serene as possible. Their time for worries will come. In my opinion, the "they-should-know" advocates are essentially children killjoys.

My parents kept their troubles to themselves, but I could feel that they were very worried. This, however, did not deter them from continuing their public activity. My father, for instance, gave a lecture advertised in a leaflet as follows:

IMPORTANT!

"Soviet Russia is the most interesting and disturbing factor in the political, social and economic life of the world at the present moment. It is carrying out an experiment on a scale unparalleled in history. On its success or failure to a large extent depends the nature of the civilization of the future.

An interesting paper on

"COMMUNISM AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE SOVIET UNION"

will be read by Nathan Bell WEDNESDAY, April 15th at 8 p.m. M & M Bldg., No.1 Main Street, tenth floor. An open discussion will follow. Everybody is welcome. No admission charges.

The Soviet Union had embarked on its first Five Year Plan and was boasting of big achievements in industrialization of the country, and of the impending transformation from an agrarian to an industrial-agrarian country, which indeed happened in just a few years. The Soviet Union also declared it was building a more just, classless society, where there would be no exploitation of man by man. Each member of that society was expected to work according to his ability, and to be rewarded accordingly. This socialist society was supposed to be the first step toward communism.

This idealistic goal caught the imagination of many people in the U.S.S.R. – the propaganda machine was operating at full speed – and also abroad, where the depression was raging. Consequently, quite a few people from the West visited for long periods of time or emigrated to the U.S.S.R. to "help build socialism." My parents were among them. What induced my parents to make such a consequential decision – moving to the Soviet Union – I don't know. Economic and financial problems may have played a large role. But ideology must also have been a significant factor.

It has been said that people have to believe in something sublime, they need a faith. (For myself I can say that I need none). I think my parents believed that Soviet Russia was moving toward a benign society in which there would be no poverty, class strife, religious persecution (?!), racism, ethnic discrimination, etc. Belief in an utopia of this type was equivalent to adhering to a faith. But faiths are delusive; I like the definition given by the critic and author (whose name in our family always provoked derisive comments) H.L. Mencken: "Faith may be defined briefly as an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable."

I find it difficult to understand how grown-ups, and in particular, socialists like my father, can embrace utopias. I find it even more difficult to understand how my father did not pay attention to the ominous signals that were coming out of the Soviet Union, and there certainly were enough of them. A continuous chain of "trials" began as early as 1928, when Stalin felt that he had enough power to have things go his way. In August 1930, for example, a group of bacteriologists were accused of being responsible for the loss of horses. A month later, forty-eight workers of the food industry were shot.

The famous *Prompartiya* (Industrial Party) trial took place at the end of 1930. Information about this scandalous trial – if not the others – must certainly have appeared in American newspapers and been known to my parents. Stalin's relentless attack on the intelligentsia continued. In February 1931, a group of well-known historians were arrested, one of them being Likhachev, who, years later, became an academician and, after the death of Andrei Sakharov, the *doyen* of the most honest part of the Russian intelligentsia. In March

1931, a few months before my father left for the Soviet Union, a political trial of a group of Mensheviks took place.

These gruesome trials occurred contemporaneously with Stalin's collectivization campaign, which disrupted agricultural production in the country and was the cause of famine in parts of the country. It has been asserted that millions died of hunger.

With an unattractive physiognomy like this, it is hard to imagine that anyone on their own accord would want to emigrate to such a country.

I never discussed with my parents what induced them to make such a critical decision as emigrating to the Soviet Union. I thought they might have regarded my question as a reproach, something I had no intentions of doing. And I was young when I was separated from my fatherland; the question did not interest me – life in school and at the university did not leave space for such thoughts.

I can think of two, not necessarily mutually exclusive, answers to the question:

1) all reports of a negative nature pertaining to the Soviet Union were brushed aside as bourgeois propaganda or plain slander;

2) the wish to believe that there was some place on the Earth that held promise of a better future for humanity and that place was the U.S.S.R.

In a word: blinders and faith, the usual curse of the human race.

In May 1931, my father left for New York, where he boarded the steamship *Isle de France* and ultimately reached Moscow. In Moscow, he apparently made the acquaintance of some Soviet citizens who sincerely believed and convinced him that despite all the difficulties the country was experiencing, most of them would be overcome in a couple of years. One such acquaintance was a man named Kubanin, about whom I shall write later.

When I learned that my father was expecting the family in Moscow, I revolted. I didn't want to go to a country whose language I didn't speak, whose standard of living, I knew, was way below that of the U.S., whose climate was harsh, where they didn't play baseball or football or have any good boxers. Most important, I didn't want to leave my friends or relatives. As a way of protesting, I didn't answer the letters my father wrote.

It could be that the intuition of a thirteen-year-old boy was sharper than the insight of a despondent fifty-two-year-old man, who, as it can be asserted in retrospect, was unable to assess correctly the gravity of the decision he (and his wife) had made.

I very much didn't want to go. I remember riding on my bike in a cool October evening and repeating to myself, "I'm still in America, I'm still in America".

However, it wasn't for me to have any say in the matter.

Part 2

The Bells have moved to Russia. Leon is now in ninth grade, in a Moscow school. These are the years 1934-38, the years of the Terror, the Great Purge, famine, and bitter hardship.

I think it was in the ninth grade that we were studying Chernishevsky's novel WHAT IS TO BE DONE? (*Shto delat'*). One of the characters, Rakhmetiev, was a proponent of the theory of Judicious Egoism. This Rakhmetiev was supposed to be an acceptable character according to Soviet standards, and therefore it seemed clear that his theory should accordingly be rated. So, we were somewhat surprised when Appolonovich, the teacher, asked the class whether the Judicious Egoism theory was a correct one or not. After a pause, one of our most active participants in the literature discussions, Fira Mittelman, volunteered to answer. Hers was a simple and logical answer: What is bad if I do things that are good for me and do not harm others? The answer turned out to be wrong. We were told that such conditions or circumstances might arise that one would have to sacrifice personal interests for a more common cause. The class was quiet for a time to let that sink in; but then we understood that, essentially, we had been taught this all the time. Weren't the shock workers (*udarniki*) sacrificing themselves for the common cause? Hadn't Comrade Stalin said that work was a matter of honor, valor and heroism? Heroism implies self-sacrifice, that is, behavior which is not conducive to the personal needs or interests of a person.

Such indoctrination (not always explicit) was an organic part of the Soviet educational system. It undoubtedly played an important role when my generation was called up to fight Germany.

I would like to note that personally I do not consider the call for self-sacrifice inferior in any way to that for rugged individualism, which in modern times has largely degenerated into the egoistic pursuit of money.

Talking about the war, I should mention that as far back as the mid-Thirties, we had lessons in civil defense. We were instructed about the various types of poison gases (of which I particularly remember mustard gas and phosgene), shown how to put on a gas mask, extinguish incendiary bombs, and so on. When the war did come, not much of that knowledge was of practical importance, but it was useful in the sense that we were prepared for the worst. Hitler did not use poison gas, and one of the reasons for that was that he would have gotten more than he had given. Even before the war, Churchill had warned Hitler about chemical warfare.

By now I had joined the Young Communist League (*Komsomol*). There were special political classes for members, which meant practically all students. The second Five-Year Plan was now (1935) in full swing. We were told that, since the first Plan had been fulfilled so brilliantly, and the basic industry – heavy industry – had been successfully created, the second Plan would focus on light industry. This information was greeted with great enthusiasm since it was virtually impossible to buy decent –or any – clothes, furniture, kitchen utensils, and the like.

At one of the political classes, a senior student shocked everyone by asking when, concretely, would it be possible to buy a pair of pants? That was an unexpected and, clearly, an impudent question: we were expected to ask "correct" questions. This was obviously not one. In those years one could sometimes get away with such things.

But not always. My friend; Sanya Murinson told me in 1934 (or 1935, the year ration cards for bread were abolished) about a student who had been expelled from his college for not agreeing with a teacher who declared that Stalin was a philosopher. This occurred at an early stage of turning Stalin into a "coryphaeus"* of science as he later was to be called.

I remember how difficult it was for me to believe that the student had actually been expelled for such an "offense". But very soon, I would learn not to be surprised. Anyone with any sense of self-preservation would now certainly not raise the pants problem in public.

All in all, there seemed to be a discrepancy between what we were being taught, and what, in reality, was being contemplated ; but, so far, I had no concrete proof. It would come in a few years, though.

I mentioned that the lessons were conducted in a strictly academic manner, which I, personally, appreciated. I knew there would be strong competition, and therefore I would have to have solid knowledge, in order to get into the university. I was determined to become a nuclear physicist. Wonderful things were happening in nuclear physics during 1932-1934. Cockcroft and Walton had built a machine that could be used to bombard the atomic nucleus; Chadwick had identified the neutron; and later, Rutherford and his colleague discovered the deuton: all this in a single laboratory, the Cavendish, in Cambridge, England, headed by Rutherford. At about the same time, the positron was discovered by Anderson in California; and a little later, artificial radioactivity by the Joliot-Curies in France.

I think it was my Tekstilshchiki friend Zhenya Popov who gave me a popular book on nuclear physics. With a Russian-English dictionary, I began translating parts of the book, and was fascinated by the prospects of extracting large amounts of energy from insignificant

* (The leader of a Greek chorus. A leader or spokesperson)

amounts of matter. There was the usual calculation of how many carloads of oil would be necessary to supply the same amount of energy that was contained in one gram of matter. Thus, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, I was saved from the trouble encountered by so many young people of solving the problem, "Who am I going to be?"

I should mention here that for a short time one of the teachers of mathematics at the Anglo-American school was a mathematics graduate of Cambridge University, David Guest. David was also a student of philosophy and a strong believer in Marxism. I still have his little book, *Dialectical Materialism*. As was common in those times (1933-1934), believing in Marxism was equivalent to believing in Stalin, at least in the Soviet Union. And David was also a militant believer, a trait that didn't fit well with his outward appearance and gentle nature.

Naturally it was David I would turn to with questions about physics. But he wasn't very keen about nuclear physics, so when one day in 1934, he brought over a group of English friends to Tekstilshchiki (where he also lived), he pointed out a young man who, he said, had just recently graduated from Cambridge University and was a physicist. This happened to be David Shoenberg, who became a lifelong friend of mine.

Fortunately, the mathematics and physics lessons at school were given by qualified teachers and the subject matter was sufficiently solid; in fact I think it was too difficult for most of the students. Our math teacher was the most respected. He was a great pedant, which isn't bad for mathematics, and would dictate our lessons, so that when we completed our course, we were in possession of a hand-written textbook. He was especially good at teaching trigonometry, making use of the trigonometric circle, so that many of the relationships could be visualized and not have only to be memorized.

In the meantime, important events were happening in the outer world that we were well aware of. After the great 17th Party congress, in December 1934, the death of Kirov was announced. As usual no details were given of how it had occurred except we were told that a treacherous enemy of the people had shot him. Listening to the radio tell of how his body was brought to Moscow and the burial ceremony took place, we were all saddened beyond belief. We were made to believe that enemies of the Soviet people were trying to kill the best Soviet leaders, and particularly those most beloved by the people and the party. Only more than twenty years later did we learn how much Stalin "loved" Kirov. It was revealed, then, that Stalin had almost been toppled as head of the party, and that Kirov would have taken his place.

People have debated what would have happened to the country if Kirov had been at the top. Some say there would not have been the Terror of 1937-38, and, consequently, not

the terrible economic, military and psychological setbacks that followed. Others contend that a Bolshevik is a Bolshevik, and the grip on the country would have been an iron one as before; and cited Kirov's activities in Azerbaijan, where he was sent by the party to help establish Soviet power there.

In 1935, the Ethiopians were resisting Italian aggression, and the Soviet papers were full of righteous indignation. And so were we. The fascists (as the Nazis were called in the Soviet Union) were doing terrible things in Germany, and we were taught to hate them, also. On the other hand, at home, things seemed to be picking up. In 1935, Khrushchev was made secretary of the Moscow party organization. And he did an incredible thing – he introduced New Year trees. These were not yet Christmas trees, which would be related to religion, but they gave one a feeling that besides the heroic work that we were constantly reminded of, there could be some fun in life. About at the same time, jazz was being reintroduced. All this, and the fact that ration cards had been abolished, induced Stalin to announce that "*zhit' stalo luche, zhit' stalo veseley*" (life has become better and more joyful). Very few of us in the city realized, or so it seemed to me, how awful the conditions were in the villages and how horribly the peasants were being exploited.

Another event that distracted our attention from anything at home that might cause our dissatisfaction was the civil war in Spain. Just as in Ethiopia and Germany, it was the fascists who were the aggressors. And we were wishing for victory by the Republicans and were thrilled to know that people of many different nationalities were fighting on the Republican side. And although there were rumors that Soviet military men were in Spain (this was a secret and was never publicly admitted), we knew that German and Italian pilots were participating in the war. Despite all the enthusiasm and our profound confidence in the ultimate victory (as epitomized by the slogan *"No passaran"*), the war was lost:

Franco's four columns plus a fifth column in the city itself were able to capture Madrid and win the war.

We were so used to believing that the cause of the Soviet people or of anyone we sympathized with was always victorious, we were thoroughly perplexed by the loss of the war in Spain.

I don't know if there was any direct connection between the loss of the Spanish Civil War and the famous 1937 "February-March Plenum" of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but the fact is that it occurred at the time it did: after a defeat. I vividly remember the threatening tone of *Pravda*. It turned out, we were told, that saboteurs and spies were undermining Soviet power, and vigilance should be he word of the day. There seemed to be some incongruence here, since just a year or two before we had been told that the basis of socialism had been built, and we were now living in a classless society. However, there was

one point that *we* had overlooked: Comrade Stalin had discovered a very important law. He found that, the closer the country got to socialism, the greater was the resistance of its enemies. A mathematician could express it thus: on asymptotic approach to socialism, its enemies' resistance grows infinitely.

According to another "law" we had been taught (was it Maxim Gorky who enunciated it?), "if the enemy doesn't surrender, he is to be annihilated."

So we had a set of propositions to substantiate what became the Great Purge. Many people who had been its leaders were declared its enemies and summarily executed, after trials that had nothing to do with justice. Although arrests of prominent people had been going on all the time, it was the quality and quantity of those victimized that made it hard to grasp the real meaning of the events.

Marshal of the Soviet Union Tukhachevsky, whom the media had portrayed earlier as a military genius, was now denounced as a German spy. Old revolutionaries who had risked their lives for their cause (Bukharin, Kamenev, Rudzutak and many others) were accused of espionage. Karl Radek, who right up to his arrest had written talented articles directed against Italian atrocities in Abyssinia, and who was naturally regarded as a hundred percent Soviet patriot, was also "exposed". All these alleged metamorphoses of prominent Soviet political and public figures seemed so incredible that it was hard to decide what to believe. For an eighteen-year-old youth living in an authoritarian country, in which virtually all information accessible to its citizens was that which the government saw fit to release, it was not easy to appraise the plausibility of the accusations. What I could do was to tell myself that this was a fight among the big brass and it was their *tsuris*. But it was not only their worry, and therein lies one of the greatest tragedies of history.

I should have remembered a couple of Russian sayings that would have cautioned me against such a delusion. The first is: "When the masters fall out, it is the people who suffer."

The second saying is more pertinent, in fact so much so that it became a sort of dictum for the NKVD, as I was to learn during the arrest of my father: "*Lyes rubyat, shchepki letyat*," or, literally: "When you chop wood, chips fly."

From the middle of 1936 to approximately the middle of 1937, it was mainly the big shots who were "tried" and executed. Then in September 1937, Stalin and his heir apparent at that time, Zhdahov, who were vacationing together must have been getting bored, and decided more flying chips would liven things up. At this point, Yagoda, the head of the NKVD, was responsible for political and military trials. Evidently Stalin thought he was incapable of really mass repressions, and in September 1937, when I and my classmates had, just three months earlier, finished our last year at school, Yagoda was removed (and

eventually executed, of course) and replaced by a little fellow by the name of Yezhov. It was this man who really made the chips fly.

While I was in school (and Yezhov was still in the waiting room), I was not aware of any large-scale arrests of the parents of my peers. Only many years later, at one of the get-togethers of our class, in the late Seventies, was it revealed that the fathers (and in may cases the mothers) of about half of the class had been arrested.

Part 3

Father is arrested.

The arrests were now going on at full speed, the fathers of my friends were "taken," and I thought that it was because they were important people and my father was not. Unfortunately, I was mistaken.

On March 14, 1938, a day we (now Davie and I) observe each year, a man by the name of Valyaev came to our house with a very pitiful-looking sample of humanity and the deputy director of the institute, who soon went away with my father. The NKVD man said that he would now make a search of our two rooms. My sister and I were the only ones home at that time, and we assisted him, hoping to get through with the matter as soon as possible. Since many of the books, which mainly interested him, were in English, we had to explain what they were about. The lieutenant's labor was finally rewarded, and I am sure he felt that he had done a good piece of work: he found a book by Leon Trotsky in English. Why my father kept that book knowing Stalin's fierce hatred, hatred beyond human comprehension, of Trotsky is beyond me.

After the search was over, with the bewildered little man still in attendance, we were told that our father was arrested. Then they both left. The little man is called in Russian a "*ponyatoy*." The only equivalent I could find in English is witness. In Russian the usual word for witness is "*svidetel*." A *ponyatoy* is a special type of witness: his job is to witness the arrest of a person. Usually janitors or yard-keepers are invited to fulfill this patriotic duty. In some way I found out where the little man lived. I was naive enough to believe that he in some way could influence the course of events! What an insane thought!

But at that time I was ready to try anything, and so I visited the "witness" at his home. I think the very choice of the witness says a great deal. He was living in a barn-like house, in a large room containing many families separated from each other by curtains. The whole family was there when I arrived the next day: the man, his wife, and a little baby

several months old. I had seen many communal apartments – in fact, it seems to me that at that time most people lived in them – but this was something special. It was a family flop-house, something that is hard to imagine. Obviously, the man had been promised that something would be done for him, but he was so servile that he could be expected to do anything he was told to do, in particular, to keep his mouth shut. I think that it was easy for him, since he seemed to be in a state when the brain is virtually nonfunctional.

I tried to explain to him that my father couldn't be guilty of any crime, but then, foolish though I was at the time, realized that talking to him was useless, and left with a feeling of complete disgust at the life some people were living.

Someone, I can't remember who, said that my father was being held in a jail in Tsaritsyno, a little town farther out from Moscow. At that time it was the center (capital) of the district to which *Tekstilshchiki* belonged. So I headed to the chief of the NKVD in Tsaritsyno. Now my father and I had had had business with this chief a few years ago: I had not applied in time for my passport, and was warned accordingly by the NKVD, who supervised such matters. My father therefore took me to the head of the NKVD of our district to beg for "absolution." They got involved in a friendly conversation. It crossed my mind that the two men had much in common. They had both believed in the humane mission of communism, and one of them had risked his life for its cause, whereas the other had also done whatever was in his power to ensure the emergence of what he believed would be a more just society.

But all this had occurred a few years ago. The man who now confronted me had changed immensely. He looked haggard and had the expression of a doomed man. And doomed he almost certainly was. The old cadres were being removed (which meant, arrested) by the younger ones bent on making a career. Little did the latter realize that they were also doomed men. Only when the appetites of Stalin, Yezhov, and then Beria, and their acolytes, had been more or less satisfied did this system of layer-by-layer liquidation of the personnel of the NKVD itself slow down.

When I explained my predicament to the NKVD chief, he looked at me with sad eyes and said that there was nothing he could do, and I should see the inspector who was responsible for the case, Valyaev. He told me how to find him, and thanking him for his "help," I left for Valyaev's office.

This turned out to be a small room with files and papers scattered on a desk. After asking me to take a seat, the inspector asked what I wanted. I wanted one thing. I wanted my father to be set free. I had come to explain that my father was an honest man and could not be guilty of any crime, political or not.

The lieutenant's response was curt: "*razberutsa*." This characteristic Russian word means, "They'll look into that and decide what's right and what's wrong." But I wasn't to be put off so easily. I wanted him to understand that my father was not guilty. I said, "You know that my father is not guilty."

I was then nineteen years old, had lived in the Soviet Union for over six years, but obviously still understood very little of some of the most important aspects of Soviet life. I should have known (or maybe at that time many others also did not know) that Valyaev could in no way free my father. That a process had been triggered that was irreversible. The presumption of innocence was not recognized in the Soviet Union, as the main prosecutor of the big political trials had declared explicitly. If a man had been arrested, that meant there was a reason, and the reason was that he was guilty.

Thus, if I had told the man who had made the arrest that he knew his victim was not guilty, I would virtually have accused him of committing a crime. When I told Valyaev that he knew my father was not guilty, he looked at me for a very long time without saying a word and seemed to be thinking something over. After leaving him, I realized what that was: "Should I take this kid also? That will increase the number of arrests, and no one can say that I haven't been doing my job diligently. After all, in many cases, people of his age have been taken."

Maybe his plan had been fulfilled, or even over fulfilled: in any event, I was permitted to go home. I remember the day. It was March 19, 1938, a sunny and warm day. The snow was melting, little rivulets of the water were trickling down the hill on which Catherine the Second's unfinished castle stood. The story goes that the castle was being built for Catherine by her favorite, Prince Potemkin, but on viewing it from afar during its construction, she announced that she did not like its looks, and construction was terminated. Since the end of the eighteenth century, the outer walls surround plots of land with wild flowers, grass, and even small trees.

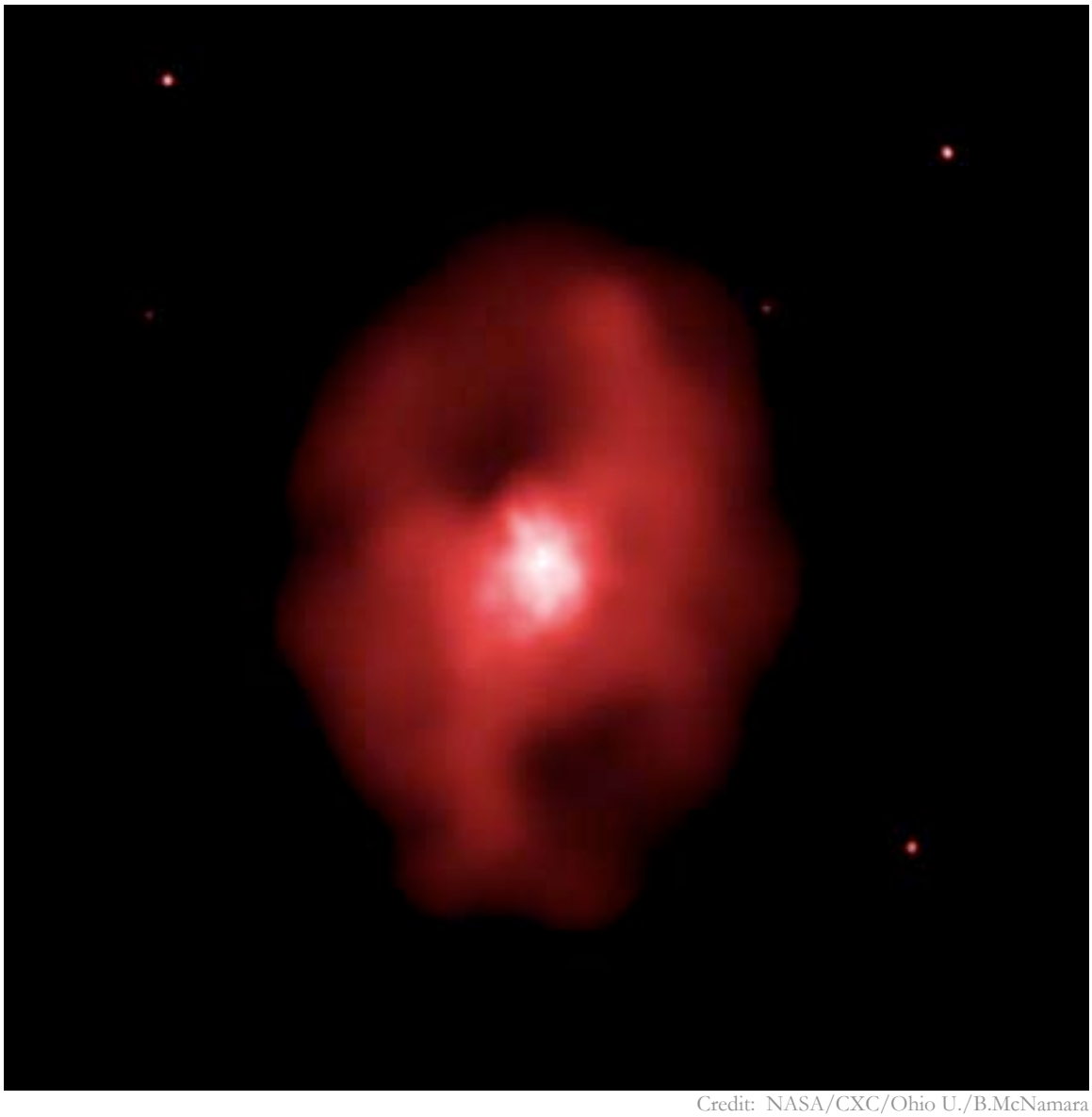
Walking down the hill, trying to avoid the streams, I repeated to myself several times the self-pitying sentiment: "Look, I'm only nineteen, and Spring is here and everything could be so nice. Why does this have to happen? Now why does it have to happen?"

Self-pity or not, things had to be done. The first was to find out where Daddy was being held. I couldn't learn whether he was being held in Tsaritsyno. At any rate, I was unable to pass to him a food parcel. I was told, again, by "someone" that he might be in the infamous Matrosskaya Tishina jail. There was a long line of women trying to find out if their fathers or husbands were incarcerated. Nothing came of that for me. My next destination was the Ministry of Justice, on Pushkin Street. I still don't know what, if any, connection this institution had with the NKVD; possibly none, but at the time it seemed to me that there

should be some relationship between the arrest of a man and an institution empowered with upholding justice. How little many of us understood what was going on! We couldn't bring ourselves to realize that lawlessness was rampant in the country. There had to be some hope, some rationality. So here I was, a young boy amid a crowd of women in a reception office of the Ministry of Justice of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in April 1938. The man who received us was very rude and about as good an instigator of anti-Semitism as one could imagine. His very typical, but not Russian features must have helped deflect the hate and frustration of these people from the government to a person who happened to be a Jew.

I don't remember how, but in some way I was informed that Daddy was now being detained in the famous Butyrskaya jail, or "Butyrka." Parcels were accepted and I brought a few, although I don't know if they reached my father (I never asked him afterward).

THE LARGEST OUTBURST EVER SEEN IN THE UNIVERSE



Credit: NASA/CXC/Ohio U./B.McNamara

This Chandra image shows two vast cavities - each 650,000 light years in diameter - in the hot, X-ray emitting gas that pervades the galaxy cluster MS 0735.6+7421 (MS 0735 for short).

—Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics
http://chandra.harvard.edu/photo/2005/ms0735/

Heating a Distant Galaxy Cluster by Giant X-ray Cavities and Large-Scale Shock Fronts

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Nature, January 6, 2005

Abstract:
We report the discovery of a pair of giant cavities, each nearly 200 kpc in diameter, embedded in the gaseous halo of the redshift z=0.216 galaxy cluster MS0735.6+7421. The cavities appear as surface brightness depressions in an image of the cluster taken with the Chandra X-ray Observatory. The X-ray cavities are filled with radio emission and are bounded by an elliptical shock structure resembling a "radio cocoon." The shock's energy and age, ~6E61 erg and ~100 Myr, respectively, give a time averaged power of ~1.7E46 erg/s, making it the most powerful radio outburst known. The outburst is apparently heating the cluster by 1/3 keV per particle, which is sufficient to quench a large cooling flow for several Gyr and to supply a substantial fraction of the energy required to "preheat" the cluster. If the outburst was powered by accretion onto a supermassive black hole, more than 3E8 solar masses of material would be required to do so. This implies that the putative supermassive black hole lying at the center of the cD galaxy has accreted a substantial fraction of its own mass in less than 100 Myr.

See also:

Most Powerful Eruption in the Universe Discovered
http://chandra.harvard.edu/press/05_releases/press_010505.html

How Black Holes Both Consume and Eject Material, Chandra, Harvard Center for Astrophysics
http://chandra.harvard.edu/chronicle/0105/bh_ce/index.html

Chandra Observatory News http://chandra.nasa.gov

Discovery Channel http://dsc.discovery.com/news/briefs/20050110/blackhole.html

RedNova http://www.rednova.com/news/display/?id=116562

In the Fortified City

Katherine McNamara

My neighbor, a retired doctor, genial, a good man to talk to across the driveway, drove up on Election Day. I was loading materials in the car to take down to the precinct for the party volunteers. Doc called, "You've voted already?" "Yep," I said. "Ha! I've cancelled your vote!" he cried with gleeful spite that so surprised me I ignored it. But the next morning, numbed, I lifted the "No War" sign that had been on my lawn since before Bush's invasion of Iraq, and the Kerry sign, and the sign supporting the good, smart, decent challenger to our odious incumbent congressman, who won by his usual comfortable margin. Somber was my mood, thoughtful my demeanor. A friend e-mailed from Dublin that his city was mantled in grief and he had found himself saying, "We have lost America." Although my city, Charlottesville, went seventy-two percent for Kerry, our congressional district remained deeply reactionary, doubly annoying as the odious incumbent had been voted by Capitol Hill staffers one of the stupidest people in Congress. He was as stupid as a sly dog. On the final day before the vote he sent out a robo-dialed phone message to the frightened faithful, whispering, If you vote for him, he'll vote for *homosexual marriage*, and that will *bankrupt Social Security. Hsss...*

The 'logic': if homosexuals could marry legally, then gay widowed spouses would claim their partners' benefits; bankruptcy of the fund to follow. Q.E.D.

Back of my back yard is a rise that was nicely wooded until last year when the man in the house at the top of the slope began felling trees. Now through the unleafed spaces I see the Stars and Stripes and the Stars and Bars he flies, even at night, even in the rain. He must think you cannot burn an American flag, but you can keep it aloft in the dark and the damp. It seems to me there are more "W" stickers and Confederate flags on cars since November 2. Even so, before Christmas the F.B.I. announced it had reopened the case of the murders in 1964 of Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the town where in 1980, Reagan had announced his first candidacy for the presidency by endorsing "states' rights."

During November and December I seldom looked at the *Times* and *Post* on the web, although occasionally I checked the BBC. The bloggers had to struggle without me. The

morning radio no longer played NPR, but classical music. What more had we to learn, now? The news was uniformly ugly, while the American papers still reported it as though nothing really had changed; as though the regular four-year process had, more or less, worked. Yet our country had finally, irrevocably spun an illiberal u-turn and headed off lurching in the wrong direction. This was the news that should have been reported, analyzed, given historical perspective, and caused a great many journalists to question the institutions for which they worked.

As Inaugural Day neared, I was looking – gingerly – at the papers on-line again, especially the foreign press and the *International Herald Tribune*, which, somehow, was more palatable reading than its owner the *Times*, no doubt because it was published in Paris and kept its cross-Atlantic head. I clicked on blogs, glanced at posts, followed links; there, at least, I could find out what was happening back behind the media and government screens. In the *Post*, I think it was, a phrase caught my eye: the Fortified City. It was grim play on the Federal City, seat of the sovereign people of our nation. I thought, I want to see this.

And so, on January 20, 2005, I drove with two other women to Alexandria, across the Potomac from the District, parked at a friend's house, and, despite the snow of the day before, by noon was on the metro, which to my surprise was not crowded. We three came out on L'Enfant Plaza and made our way toward the Mall. At Independence Avenue and Seventh Street, S.W., we approached the first check-point. Here also were protests: a sign held up on a pole – the pole was not allowed inside the checkpoint – asking "Why *Should* God Bless America?" A man with a bullhorn – which was allowed – announced a message that might have sounded reasonable when spoken in a normal voice.

While George Bush was (I assumed) being sworn in, we found ourselves standing amid a crowd in the street-space before a large white tent. It took us more than an hour to advance to the tent, our gateway to the Mall. I spoke with people around me. I assumed they were, mostly, Republicans. I myself had worn a mink, my warmest, coat, supposing it would let me pass through the security gates about which the *Times* had warned us. ("The decision to impose extremely tight security for the inauguration, even though government officials acknowledged there had not been any specific threat, has stirred little public complaint, even from Democrats in Congress. As final plans proceeded, meteorologists had potentially threatening news for Mr. Bush and the spectators expected to attend inaugural events on Thursday. Forecasters said that at noon, when he is sworn in, the temperature would be 34 degrees – 27 degrees on the wind chill index – and that snow might be falling.") The meteorological threat had already dispersed; the day was chilly but there was no snow.

The woman beside me didn't look Republican, and was not; she was a teacher from south Georgia who had brought thirty students to see the great quadrennial event of our

political life. On their way to the Mall they had glimpsed from their bus windows protestors on McPherson Square carrying flag-draped coffins. Look, she had instructed the children, look, this is our democracy in action. Don't forget this. Now she fretted at the wait, because they were missing the biggest event of their lives. I thought, I hope this isn't the biggest event of their lives. I said, well, this was our public life now and they could look and learn.

A young man nearby saw my microphone and recorder – I carried a minidisk player to catch events as they happened – and I asked if he would talk to me. He was flattered. Whom had he voted for? "Bush, of course, no other choice," he replied with confidence. I asked whether he didn't object to Bush's having changed our history with his doctrine of preventive war, or having lied about why he invaded Iraq, or that his lies and the terrible pictures from Abu Ghraib had lowered our moral standing in the world. With unexpected intensity, I said I was deeply ashamed for my country, because this president had made a war of choice, and because the world knew us now as torturers. He had dishonored us before our friends.

The young man listened respectfully to my speech and then explained that Saddam was a bad man and had to be gotten rid of. He had sent assassination teams to this country, did I know that? (It was news in the Reagan years; but I didn't get to ask the young man – his name was Robin – what he thought about Rumsfeld's having delivered the goods in those days to Saddam Hussein for making chemical weapons.) Saddam was *trying to undermine us*. Robin was affronted. Several times, he used the phrase when referring to any possible opposition anywhere in the world. As for the war: the war was unfinished business that had begun years ago, before Kuwait, and it had to be settled.

Not long after Bush invaded Iraq, I countered, I had heard Bob Woodward speak about his book-in-progress on Bush at war.[1] Woodward had recounted how, during the week before his first inauguration, Bush had been briefed by Tenant of the C.I.A. about the three most urgent threats that his agency estimated faced America. These were: *one,* al Qaeda; *two,* China's army; *three,* the proliferation and distribution of nuclear weapons, particularly in new states of the old Soviet Union. Woodward had asked, rhetorically, If you were the new president and your opponent's C.I.A. director had just told you these things, what would you do next? You would order your most trusted national security advisors to review the evidence and propose a course of action to secure the country. What did Bush do? – I was paraphrasing, but accurately I thought, – Bush did nothing. So Woodward had reported.

Robin, who had already said that he had worked in Army Intelligence ("Intel") and lived in McLean, Virginia, asked whether I had read the 9/11 Commission Report. (I had

read through it; he had not.) Before the attacks, the report said explicitly – I quoted – "all systems were blinking red."[2] Did he also know, I asked, that on September 1o, 2001, Ashcroft had cut the F.B.I.'s counter-intelligence budget? They weren't paying attention, I said.

Robin looked surprised, but carried on his argument gamely. "I like this kind of discussion, I like the mental stimulation," he said, and offered more points of his own in return. He argued, several times, that terrorists were "undermining us." We had the right to go after any kind of threat, we were in a global war on terror. I asked how the war on terror was different from the war on drugs, which is a metaphorical war. He thought we ought to enlarge the war on drugs, too. He saw danger everywhere. He said the United State *had*, without question or threat, to be the most powerful nation, because we were democratic and would spread peace and our democratic, free-market way. There was no other choice.

Joan Schatzman, with whom I had traveled and whose report on marching on New York during the week of the Republican convention appeared in these pages,[3] asked him, genuinely curious: "What would you like to see happen over the next four years?" Robin answered hopefully, sometimes in words if not meanings we ourselves probably would have chosen, that he would like to see more equity between our citizens, more wealth for all – but: without government handouts that kept poorer people dependant, or allowed them to escape working. Joan asked, doggedly, "How do you see that happening? Do you, for instance, support a guaranteed minimum wage? Do you support a living wage?" Robin was sincere in his conviction that a minimum wage would undermine people's incentive to work. Then, what did he think of the gaping distance between huge corporate salaries and the growing population of working poor? Would he support a cap on outsized corporate salaries, allowing workers to begin to close the gap?

Our discussion was genial: it *was* a discussion, although Joan and I kept tossing our factlets and observations at him, and I thought I grasped, if not Robin's authentic view, then a certain mind-set in which he shared – when an excited gasp went up from the crowd, and it began to move forward. We shook hands with our fellow citizen, and Joan thanked him for his candor and for talking with us. Eager and patriotic as he was, and as much as he hoped for the best for all his fellow citizens, he was surprised to hear about matters he should, in Intel, have known about. I had asked if he knew about this new commando force – recent news to me – that, according to Seymour Hersh, in the *New Yorker*, was going to be deployed at home and abroad secretly, even in countries that, officially, were our allies.[4] "You *are* well informed," he had said; but I wondered what else he didn't know, and whether he might have changed his mind had he known more, or known it differently.[5]

Joan and I and our friend Michelle arrived at the entrance to the tent. The guards there and on the perimeter were Secret Service and soldiers, some dressed in fatigues, others in trim black jumpsuits, still others in well-cut black topcoats and ties, all wearing i.d.-card lanyards. The entry guard called out: "Ladies to the left, men to the right." The woman in front of me plunged inside saying, "I've heard that before! I just came from the Holocaust Museum." In the tent, T.S.A. employees asked us to hold our coats open. They patted down every one of us from upper ribs to hips, and rummaged through our bags. I blinked, and walked out onto the Mall. What do T.S.A. guards learn by doing this? For their livelihood and without probable cause, they search their fellow citizens, as though – or because – we are all and each of us under suspicion. But the search was not thorough. They used no wands, no metal detectors; a knife in a boot, say, might not have been found. What was the purpose of the mass pat-down? Is it good for their souls to learn to treat their fellow citizens thus? It is bad for civic life.

We walked up Seventh Street. To our right, Independence Avenue all the way to the Capitol was blockaded by buses and a steel barrier. Joan asked where all the people were. You couldn't go past the barriers; the whole Mall had been divided into "staging areas." Media vans and trailer-trucks lined both sides of Seventh Street. Joan was incredulous. "I came here for Clinton's first and second inaugurals," she said, "and there were people everywhere! The Mall was filled with people! Where are all the people?"

To reach Pennsylvania Avenue, the parade route, we had to go through a second checkpoint. Same drill, except that, this time, the T.S.A. woman asked me if this wasn't quite a day. "I'm amazed," I said, "it shouldn't be like this." Her face darkened; she patted me down and gave my bag to another worker to check. "Short and sweet," she said crisply.

Outside, Joan was talking to one of the tall, slender men in well-cut black topcoats. She held out my digital camera, which she had been using, and asked me how to erase the picture, which she made sure I saw. It was of Michelle in the tent being patted down. I asked what the matter was. The tall man in the black topcoat – a coiled wire ran from an earpiece down under his crisp white collar – said, "We'd like you to erase the picture." "Why?" I asked. "We don't want you to take pictures of this." He moved his chin slightly in the direction of the tent. Briefly, I considered asking more questions, but Joan said, "Erase it." I erased the photo, and we walked on. "Damn, it was a good picture," she said. I found myself wondering whether, if Kerry had been elected, security would have been so extreme. She and I had gone to a Kerry fundraiser in Washington after the Democratic convention, and had had to pass through metal detectors, with leashed dogs standing by, before entering the ballroom. I had tried to photograph a dog, but its handler, whose badge

I couldn't read, had waved me off. It might not have been different, except that we would have been celebrating.

Moveable-fence barriers separated the spectators into narrow lanes and directed them into defined areas. On Pennsylvania Avenue at Sixth Street, we found ourselves crowded against a fence set up around bleachers with empty seats. Two blocks away were the permitted bleachers put up by ANSWER, the protest group that had organized the first great march against the war on Iraq, in October 2003[6]; I had marched, with 100,000 other people whose presence had been dismissed by the President. It was now about 2:00. We had waited an hour to go through the first security tent, somewhat less time for the second one. Inside the barriers, men in SECURITAS jackets and Boy Scouts with badges patrolled the aisles. When an Asian couple were let through the gate without showing tickets, Joan, who stood leaning over the barrier, asked how you got in, and the SECURITAS man motioned the three of us inside. Behind me stood a couple wearing cold-weather gear and big "55th Inaugural" buttons. They had Midwestern faces. The man said, "Look at that. Security was nothing like this four years ago." He sounded unhappily surprised, although I supposed he had probably voted for Bush.

In the bleachers, the people were somber. Joan muttered about the Boy Scouts at the gate. She had talked to one of them. "He's a true believer," she said, "he's bought the whole line! What did they call the Nazis' youth troops?" Next to her, it happened, sat a German exchange student, who told her, the Hitler Youth. While she and the German student talked, I recalled this same event four years ago, when the air had been crackling with excitement. Protesters like me had come to demonstrate against an illegitimate presidency and were pleased to see so many like-minded people at what seemed almost like a reunion. We were well outnumbered by Bush supporters, who even on that wet, cold day felt they had reason to cheer. Not this time, however. Protestors were thinly-spread among the spectators, while the spectators, who should have been shouting happily, were quiet. Perhaps they were cowed by the militaristic show. Along the whole length of Pennsylvania Avenue, from the Capitol to the White House, as far as I could see down both sides, stood a line of police, hundreds of them, from the District and jurisdictions around the nation. They stood nearly shoulder to shoulder. I read later that in some places they stood two and three deep.

What were they protecting us from? Across the avenue and down two blocks was the fortress-like Canadian Embassy, with its good art gallery. The Maple Leaf fluttered from the terrace below the roofline where privileged observers watched the proceedings below. On most other rooftops were snipers, dark figures against the gray sky. The teacher from Georgia had told her students to watch the rooflines for sharpshooters, as part of their new

civic education. I happened to notice as one mounted a scope and sighted down his weapon. I wondered who his target was.

My constant sentiment was wonder. Amid the miles of armed guards, repeated affront of the pat-downs, raw display of martial force, and undemonstrative celebrants, the whole display looked pathetic. There are tribal warriors, one reads, whose mocking opening gambit is to grab their penises and shake them at their enemies. "Girly men!" "Bring 'em on!" Oh, it was all sad, cheap, vulgar, and insulting.

Some time after 2:30, a loudspeaker went live. ". . . police from the great City of Chicago." Were Chicago cops about to march into sight? Were they guarding the street in front of us? The voice roared again, its message still garbled. A squad of vehicles – police cars with flashing lights, a couple of rented limo-buses – sped up the parade route. The police, hardly an honor guard, still faced the crowds. A little while later – there seemed to be no particular schedule for any of this – another squad came into view: police cars with lights flashing herding a line of dark vans. Zip, zip, they rushed by. At one window appeared a fine, large, white-haired head: Barbara Bush, as I recognized: *Come home with your shield, or on it.* None of her sons had ever publicly displayed physical courage. The loudspeaker piped up. People around us, interpreting, said that Bush's brother Neil, "the disgraced one," his parents, and President Clinton had been in the vans.

By now my friends and I were cold on those aluminum bleachers, watching spurts of armored vehicles carry our leaders past. Nobody around us stood at attention. Nobody cheered. Bush wasn't worth the wait. To re-enter the Mall we had to pass back through the security checkpoint again; coats opened, bags searched. Did they think we were stealing the silver?

We had come out by the National Gallery. Wanting art not weapons, we entered the West Building by the side door, the only one open to the public, in the only museum (we learned) open that day on the Mall. In the lower galleries was a very fine exhibit of drawings and prints from the Armand Hammer collection. The Gallery was nearly empty, the lights low, the atmosphere wonderfully private, almost countering the general *creepiness* of the spectacle outside.

Michelle and I had just found each other near the café when an elevator door opened and three sharpshooters stepped out. They were tall, graceful, alert – tensed when they saw us, – dressed in black, hefting black-wrapped bundles, those being their weapons. They had come down from the roof. They looked, with their clear faces and otherworldly eyes, like young seminarians, or like Ninjas. They carried silence around themselves and seemed to palp the air for any motion that would set them off. They moved as a unit through the shadows to the great entrance onto Constitution Avenue, and disappeared.

Whether these young men were from the hidden commando units circulating now in this country, or the Secret Service, or whatever unit it is that specializes in sharpshooting, they were, in their ghosting presences, killers among us. Achilles might have looked like them, that glorious hero, his masculine pride wounded when Briseus, captured prize, was denied him by his commander.

We have been told, reliably, it seems, that the President and his advisors live in a bubble with limited peripheral vision. Now I've seen the kind of delusions they invent in that bubble. They look afraid. This mortifies me. The president and all his men and women are so deeply afraid; that is what that kind of militaristic display always means. It was as though old, grainy news pictures had been photoshopped, those ones of the old men of the Supreme Soviet watching their May Day parades; except that, here, the parade, and the old men too, was vans full of presidential families and former presidents speeding up Pennsylvania Avenue as if evading snipers. The route was lined with cops standing nearly shoulder to shoulder. The cops stood facing us! American people! As if we were a threat.

Our poor, sad, illiberal, authoritarian, warmongering, homophobic democracy. Who can love us anymore?

But none of those men and women, our officials, are warriors. It was their pride, too, that was wounded by the September attacks. They had not been paying attention, and they lied about this in their confusion and chagrin; and their primitive sense of vengeance was roused. They can see no end to what they began – their "war on terror" – because they dwell inside their fortress, where their words and emotions have little connection with the world as it is lived. They cannot test their senses against a ground; their words are bubbles floating away in the cold air; but they have weapons, and they, in their fury and shock and grief, and their cold desire that their kind prevail, unloose them.[7]

My trope is the wounded warrior and the danger he poses, the pity he evokes: the wound is from Vietnam; from the Gulf War, which so many of them believe was unfinished; from the Iraq war, which we also are going to lose.[8] In that history lies the image of our public situation: the wound and poison, still unhealed, of Vietnam and the shock of the September attacks. Their wound is a terrible one cut into the scars of old wounds. The young man, Robin, whose war is "unfinished business" going back to before Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, was born after the Vietnam era. What and who had taught him to see this world as he saw it? Am I, are my dear ones safer for it?

In my heart, at home, I contrast the martial excess of a delusional president with the confidence of my old friend, a man whose lovely young daughter was murdered twenty years ago while serving in Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer. Her killers were an embittered local woman and the woman's two male confederates. Lately, he had told me that to his surprise,

near shame, the last ten years with his wife had been the best he could have known. He realized, veteran civil rights worker that he is, that his ease had come because the two of them had not accepted from the government of that African country the offer of a seat at the murderer's trial; further, they had asked that the murderer not be punished by death. They had left it to the national court to seek justice, and they had desired no personal retribution. Refusing that dark way, they had striven to remake their lives in the face of horrifying loss and, to their sweet surprise, had succeeded, and were happy.

Here in this dangerous time still lives an ethic of social justice, a morality that cries out against vengeance, a system of values enacted by persons who love each other with intelligence, honor, respect, and warmth. Away from our fortified capital is the lesson, a true answer, and a balm.

Notes:

[1] Bob Woodward, "Bush at War" http://millercenter.virginia.edu/programs/forums/forum_archive.html, The Miller Center, University of Virginia, May 2, 2003 (audio file; scroll down)

[2] "'The System Was Blinking Red,"' THE 9/11 COMMISSION REPORT (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), pp. 254 ff. The 9/11 Commission Report says the August 6 PDB was "the 36th PDB item briefed so far that year that related to Bin Ladin or al Qaeda, and the first devoted to the possibility of an attack on the United States." It goes on to say: "The President said the article told him that al Qaeda was dangerous, which he said he had known since he had become President." (p. 260)

[3] Joan Schatzman, "The Peace March in New York During the Republican Convention," *Archipelago*, Vol. 8, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol8-3/schatzman.htm

[4] Seymour Hersh, "The Coming Wars http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/, What the Pentagon can now do in secret," *The New Yorker*, Issue of 2005-01-24 and 31 Posted 2005-01-17:

> The war on terrorism would be expanded, and effectively placed under the Pentagon's control. The President has signed a series of findings and executive orders authorizing secret commando groups and other Special Forces units to conduct covert operations against suspected terrorist targets in as many as ten nations in the Middle East and South Asia.
>
> The President's decision enables Rumsfeld to run the operations off the books—free from legal restrictions imposed on the C.I.A. Under current law, all C.I.A. covert activities overseas must be authorized by a Presidential finding and reported to the Senate and House intelligence committees. [The laws were enacted after a series of scandals in the nineteen-seventies involving C.I.A. domestic spying and attempted assassinations of foreign leaders.] "The Pentagon doesn't feel obligated to report any of this to Congress," the former high-level intelligence official said. "They don't even call it 'covert ops'—it's too close to the C.I.A. phrase. In their view, it's 'black reconnaissance.' They're not even going to tell the cincs"—the regional American military commanders-in-chief.....

On Sunday, January 23, 2005, the *Post* and the *Times* would repeat the story:

Eric Schmitt, "Commandos Get Duty on U.S. Soil http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/23/national/nationalspecial3/23code.html?oref=login&ei=5094&en=29e9f1e02da990f2&hp=&ex=1106542800&partner=homepage&pagewanted=print&position=," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2005:

> WASHINGTON, Jan. 22 - Somewhere in the shadows of the White House and the Capitol this week, a small group of super-secret commandos stood ready with state-of-the-art weaponry to swing into action to protect the presidency, a task that has never been fully revealed before.
>
> As part of the extraordinary army of 13,000 troops, police officers and federal agents marshaled to secure the inauguration, these elite forces were poised to act under a 1997 program that was updated and enhanced after the Sept. 11 attacks, but nonetheless departs from how the military has historically been used on American soil.
>
> These commandos, operating under a secret counterterrorism program code-named Power Geyser, were mentioned publicly for the first time this week on a Web site for a new book, "Code Names: Deciphering U.S. Military Plans, Programs and Operation in the 9/11 World," (Steerforth Press http://www.steerforth.com/books/display.pperl?isbn=1586420836). The book was written by William M. Arkin, a former intelligence analyst for the Army....

Barton Gellman, "Secret Unit Expands Rumsfeld's Domain, New Espionage Branch Delving Into CIA Territory http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A29414-2005Jan22.html,"

Washington Post, Sunday, January 23, 2005; Page A01:

> The Pentagon, expanding into the CIA's historic bailiwick, has created a new espionage arm and is reinterpreting U.S. law to give Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld broad authority over clandestine operations abroad, according to interviews with participants and documents obtained by The Washington Post.
>
> The previously undisclosed organization, called the Strategic Support Branch, arose from Rumsfeld's written order to end his "near total dependence on CIA" for what is known as human intelligence. Designed to operate without detection and under the defense secretary's direct control, the Strategic Support Branch deploys small teams of case officers, linguists, interrogators and technical specialists alongside newly empowered special operations forces....

[5] *See* Mark Danner, "How Bush Really Won http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17690#fn7," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 52, No. 1, January 13, 2005:

> If your babies were left all alone in the dead of night, who would you rather have setting there on the porch— John Kerry and his snowboard or George W. with his shotgun? —Sean Michaels, professional wrestler, warming up the crowd, Tinker Field, October 30, 2004
>
> On a beautiful October evening three days before the election, Orlando's Tinker Field had become an enormous bowl filled with 17,000 screaming, chanting Bush partisans floating in a sea of red, white, and blue. On the stadium wall hung a great fifty-foot high sign proclaiming that George W. Bush was "MOVING AMERICA FORWARD!" Inside, flanking the stage in letters that dwarfed it, and echoed by smaller signs bobbing up and down everywhere in the crowd, was the terse slogan "AMERICA: SAFER STRONGER BETTER!" And then, precisely placed around the stadium in enormous letters, were the words on which the campaign was built: "STRENGTH! LEADERSHIP! CHARACTER! INTEGRITY!" Disciplined, organized, relentless, the Bush campaign would never be accused of subtlety.
>
> "Well..., I'm just so proud of the way he handled 9/11—I mean, that was...*amazing*!" Dot Richardson-Pinto told me as we sat together near the podium. When I'd asked why she supported the President, she had had to search a moment for an answer, and not entirely because she couldn't understand how it could be that anyone wouldn't. She'd had to think for a moment, I came to realize,

because her ardor had so much more to do with who he was than with what he did. And who he was could be summarized by those four giant words looming over the stage.

"It doesn't matter if the man can talk," Ms. Richardson-Pinto told me. "Sometimes, when someone's real articulate you can't trust what he says, you know?" As the security helicopters circled overhead, and the crowd launched into yet one more chant of "*Kerry is scary!*" I was struck again by how precisely the campaign had managed to define Bush's strengths in perfect contradistinction to what they had defined as Kerry's weaknesses, and then to devote all its resources to emphasizing both. Every repetition of what Bush was—and the repetitions were unending, and intricately varied —was crafted to be a perfect reminder of what his opponent was not....

[6] CNN, "'Counter-Inaugural' revving up, Dozens of groups converging on Washington for protests http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/18/inauguration.protests/," Wednesday, January 19, 2005 Posted: 8:26 AM EST (1326 GMT):

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The committee handling Bush's Thursday inaugural is focused on pomp and pageantry, but protesters are also preparing.

Dozens of groups, from environmentalists to feminists to antiwar activists, are uniting for what they're calling "J20," or "The Counter-Inaugural."

"No one should underestimate the hatred that the world has for the Bush administration," said Bill Hackwell of ANSWER http://www.counter-inaugural.org/: — Act Now to Stop War and End Racism....

[7] Ron Suskind, "Faith, Certainty, and the Presidency of George W. Bush," Miller Center for Public Affairs, University of Virginia, January 26, 2005 http://millercenter.virginia.edu/

_____, THE PRICE OF LOYALTY, George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill http://thepriceofloyalty.ronsuskind.com/ (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004)

_____, "Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush," *The New York Times Magazine* http://www.truthout.org/docs_04/101704A.shtml, October 17, 2004:

Bruce Bartlett, a domestic policy adviser to Ronald Reagan and a treasury official for the first President Bush, told me recently that "if Bush wins, there will be a civil war in the Republican Party starting on Nov. 3." The nature of that conflict, as Bartlett sees it? Essentially, the same as the one raging across much of the world: a battle between modernists and fundamentalists, pragmatists and true believers, reason and religion.

"Just in the past few months," Bartlett said, "I think a light has gone off for people who've spent time up close to Bush: that this instinct he's always talking about is this sort of weird, Messianic idea of what he thinks God has told him to do." Bartlett, a 53-year-old columnist and self-described libertarian Republican who has lately been a champion for traditional Republicans concerned about Bush's governance, went on to say: "This is why George W. Bush is so clear-eyed about Al Qaeda and the Islamic fundamentalist enemy. He believes you have to kill them all. They can't be persuaded, that they're extremists, driven by a dark vision. He understands them, because he's just like them. . . ."

[8] Warren P. Strobel, Jonathan S. Landay and John Walcott, "New intelligence reports raise questions about U.S. mission in Iraq http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/warren_p_strobel/10667714.htm," Knight Ridder Newspapers. Posted on Mon, Jan. 17, 2005:

WASHINGTON - A series of new U.S. intelligence assessments on Iraq paints a grim picture of the road ahead and concludes that there's little likelihood that President Bush's goals can be attained in the near future.

Instead of stabilizing the country, national elections Jan. 30 are likely to be followed by more violence and could provoke a civil war between majority Shiite Muslims and minority Sunni Muslims, the CIA and other intelligence agencies predict, according to senior officials who've seen the classified reports.

A CIA spokesman, Tom Crispell, said he was unable to comment. A White House

spokeswoman had no immediate comment. The federal government was closed Monday for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

A new public report by the National Intelligence Council concludes that instead of diminishing terrorism, U.S.-occupied Iraq has replaced prewar Afghanistan as a breeding and training ground for terrorists who may disperse to conduct attacks elsewhere.....

Juan Cole, Informed Comment http://www.juancole.com/, January 19, 2005:

> For American observers concerned with Iraq not to realize how truly awful the situation is, and to fail to understand that the US faces a grave crisis if key policies are not changed, makes them poor Americans. The United States is a democracy and a democracy only works if the citizens are informed and exercise their faculties of critical reason. Looking for token pro-American Iraqis to say nice things while ignoring all the evidence of US failure is pitiful. I sometimes get messages from readers who are excited by all the rebuilding work the US has done in Iraq and think it is unfair for it to be overlooked. This way of thinking is just wrong. The British in India built railroads and lots of infrastructure. By the 1940s, no Indians were grateful, and they just wanted the British out so that they could have their independent country. The railroads, they said, were after all mainly built to transport British troops and merchandise. When you mess with a people's independence, they stop being grateful for infrastructure. Ask King George III.

Martin Luther King, Jr., MLK Jr. In His Own Words
http://www.alternet.org/ts/archives/?date%5BF%5D=01&date%5BY%5D=2005&date%5Bd%5D=17&act=Go/. Posted January 17, 2005

Editorial, "The Vote on Mr. Gonzales," *The Washington Post*, Sunday 16 January 2005
http://www.truthout.org/docs_05/011705F.shtml

Mark Danner, "We Are All Torturers Now," *The New York Times*, Thursday, January 6, 2005. Posted on commondreams.org http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0106-26.htm

> At least since Watergate, Americans have come to take for granted a certain story line of scandal, in which revelation is followed by investigation, adjudication and expiation. Together, Congress and the courts investigate high-level wrongdoing and place it in a carefully constructed narrative, in which crimes are charted, malfeasance is explicated and punishment is apportioned as the final step in the journey back to order, justice and propriety.
>
> When Alberto Gonzales takes his seat before the Senate Judiciary Committee today for hearings to confirm whether he will become attorney general of the United States, Americans will bid farewell to that comforting story line. The senators are likely to give full legitimacy to a path that the Bush administration set the country on more than three years ago, a path that has transformed the United States from a country that condemned torture and forbade its use to one that practices torture routinely. Through a process of redefinition largely overseen by Mr. Gonzales himself, a practice that was once a clear and abhorrent violation of the law has become in effect the law of the land.

Doug Struck, "Torture in Iraq Still Routine, Report Says, Detainees Beaten, Hung by Wrists, Shocked by Security Forces, Rights Group Finds," *Washington Post* Foreign Service, Tuesday, January 25, 2005; Page A10
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33349-2005Jan24.html

Steve Clemons http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/: trying to build a "a credible and compelling alternative to neoconservative foreign policy thinking," January 17, 2005:

> For now, I am interested in getting the foreign policy part of this initiated and don't want to tackle all issues until we have developed a road map for tackling one. Josh Marshall seems to be doing a great job saving social security -- so I'd like to focus for the time being on national security and foreign policy challenges. And then broaden as the strategy succeeds (or fails?).
>
> I have my own thoughts on how to develop a network of talented people and alternative

foreign policy thought -- but I am really interested in learning what I can from those of you reading this. Some of the challenges involve sorting through the great diversity of thinking in centrist and progressive circles on foreign policy. Peter Beinart wants the Dems to be tough, and the DLC loves his stuff.

Others think that a constructive, enlightened policy can be successfully pursued by Democrats without chasing a "Zell Miller Light" strategy.

By the way, I'm much more interested in developing a foreign policy strategy that either party might adopt as its own – not just the Democrats as many of my moderate Republican friends support this initiative. But, the Democratic Party seems to me more hijackable at the moment – though I think that Republican foreign policy circles need to have a civil war, and I have an active hand in that.

Josh Marshall on Social Security http://www.talkingpointmemo.com

Anatol Lieven, AMERICA RIGHT OR WRONG: AN ANATOMY OF AMERICAN NATIONALISM http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/Anatol_America_Right_Or_Wrong.asp. (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2004)

From Steve Clemons http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/ (see above)

Anatol Lieven also deals with America's "good vs. evil" habit. He writes:

Bush and his leading officials. . .possessed, and expressed, a boiled-down, simplified and extreme version of a vision of America which is in fact held very widely in American society and has deep historical roots: "The U.S. primarily goes to war against evil, not in its self-perception, to defend material interests."

In addressing how this technique was used by other Presidents, such as Harry Truman, Lieven writes:

. . .The dubbing of the enemy as an enemy of civilization itself and the embodiment of evil. . .also suggested that it was pointless to seek to understand his motives, even if doing so was in order the better to resist him.

And as applied to the post-9/11 era:

The tendency both to demonize and to homogenize different kinds of "enemy" has had a specific and very damaging aspect in the context of 9/11 and the struggle against terrorism. Immediately after 9/11, Bush eliminated any discussion of the concrete issues at stake between the United States and Islamist radicals from his own and the administration's public statements. Indeed, avidly abetted by most of the media and the political class, public discussion of these issues was to a great extent suppressed.

Steve Clemons http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/ (see above): On the moral consequences of the Iraq War, Zbigniew Brzezinski comments:

A great deal of what is happening thus far in American foreign policy has been influenced by the ongoing conflict in Iraq. Now I would like to say very briefly that in my view, that war which was a war of choice is already a serious moral set back to the United States. A moral set back both in how we start, how it was justified, and because of some of the ***egregious incidents*** *that have accompanied this proceeding. The moral costs to the United States are high. It's a political setback.*

The United States has never been involved in an intervention in its entire history like it is today. It is also a military set back.

"Mission Accomplished" are words that many in this administration want to forget.

David Neiwert (Orcinus), "The Rise of Pseudo Fascism" http://dneiwert.blogspot.com/2005/01/america-haters.html

Previous Endnotes:

Some Notes on the Election and Afterwards, *Archipelago*, Vol. 8, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol803/endnotes.htm

A World That Begins in Art, Vol. 8, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol8-2/endnotes.htm

Incoming, Vol. 8, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol8-1/endnotes.htm

The Only God Is the God of War, Vol. 7, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-2/endnotes.htm

"Where Are the Weapons?" Vol. 7, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-2/endnotes.htm

Patriotism and the Right of Free Speech in Wartime Vol. 7, No. http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-1/endnotes.htm

A Year in Washington, Vol. 6, Nos. 3/4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/endnotes.htm

Lies, Damned Lies, Vol. 6, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/endnotes.htm

The Colossus, Vol. 6, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-1/endnotes.htm

The Bear, Vol. 5, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-4/endnotes.htm

Sasha Choi Goes Home, Vol. 5, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-3/endnotes.htm

Sasha Choi in America,Vol. 5, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-2/endnotes.htm

A Local Habitation and A Name, Vol. 5, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-1/endnotes.htm

The Blank Page, Vol. 4, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/endnotes.htm

The Poem of the Grand Inquisitor, Vol. 4, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/endnotes.htm

On the Marionette Theater, Vol. 4, Nos. 1/2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-2/endnotes.htm

The Double, Vol. 3, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-4/endnotes.htm

Folly, Love, St. Augustine, Vol. 3, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-3/endnotes.htm

On Memory, Vol. 3, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-2/endnotes.htm

Passion, Vol. 3, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/endnotes.htm

A Flea, Vol. 2, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-4/endnotes.htm

On Love, Vol. 2, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-3/endnotes.htm

Fantastic Design, with Nooses, Vol. 2, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-1/endnotes.htm

Kundera's Music Teacher, Vol. 1, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-4/endnotes.htm

The Devil's Dictionary; Economics for Poets, Vol. 1, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-3/endnotes.htm

Hecuba in New York; Déformation Professionnelle, Vol. 1, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-2/endnotes.htm

Art, Capitalist Relations, and Publishing on the Web, Vol. 1, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-1/endnotes.htm

Contributors

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Leon Bell was born in Texas in 1918 and moved with his family to Moscow in 1931. He was trained as a nuclear physicist and later became a internationally-respected plant physiologist and biophysicist with expertise in photosynthesis. With his wife, Ira, Prof. Bell lived until 1992 in Russia; they now live in New York. The author's brother, David (Davie), still in Russia, survived World War II, became an English teacher, and taught for many years in the city of Dubna, 70 miles north of Moscow and the home of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research. Prof. Bell is the co-author of "Energetics of the Photosynthesizing Plant Cell," with K. A. Timiryazev (Soviet Scientific Reviews Supplement Services, *Physiochemical Biology*, Vol. 5, 1885) and THERMODYNAMICS OF LIGHT ENERGY CONVERGENCE, with N.D. Gudkov (The Hague: SPB Academic Publishing, 1993).

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Samuel Menashe has won the Pegasus Prize "Neglected Masters" awarded by the Poetry Foundation http://www.poetrymagazine.org/pegasusawards_PR.html. As part of the award, his *Selected Poems* are to be published, with an introduction by Christopher Ricks, by the Library of America in Autumn 2005. Samuel Menashe is also the author of THE NICHE NARROWS (Talisman House, Publishers, 2000), six poems from which appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol. 5, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-2/menashe.htm. The text of the cantata *No Jerusalem But This* by Otto Luening http://dram.nyu.edu/dram/note.cgi?id=8536 is drawn from two collections of poems by Samuel Menashe, THE MANY NAMED BELOVED and NO JERUSALEM BUT THIS, which include the poems in this issue.

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