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

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

Robert F. Kennedy on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

I have bad news for you, for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and killed tonight.

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice for his fellow human beings, and he died because of that effort.

In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it is perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. For those of you who are black – considering the evidence their evidently is that there were white people who were responsible – you can be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and a desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in great polarization – black people amongst black, white people amongst white, filled with hatred toward one another.

Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and to replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand with compassion and love.

For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and distrust at the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I can only say that I feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States, we have to make an effort to understand, to go beyond these rather difficult times.

My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He wrote: "In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness; but love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black.

So I shall ask you tonight to return home, to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King, that's true, but more importantly to say a prayer for our own country, which all of us love – a prayer for understanding and that compassion of which I spoke.

We can do well in this country. We will have difficult times; we've had difficult times in the past; we will have difficult times in the future. It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; it is not the end of disorder.

But the vast majority of white people and the vast majority of black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings who abide in our land.

Let us dedicate to ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world.

Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people.

April 4, 1968, Indianapolis, Indiana
http://robertkennedy.8m.com/speeches.htm

story

WAITING FOR HAPPINESS

John Moncure Wetterau

Spring comes late in Maine. Snow changes to rain; branch tips redden; you can see your breath. Not a whole lot different than winter until the daffodils, crab apples, and forsythia bloom. The sun skips off the water, impossibly bright, impossibly blue. You can almost hear the cracking of seeds, buried and forgotten.

Charlie Garrett was as hardnosed as most. He kept going, did what he had to. "Ninety percent of success is showing up," Woody Allen said. Charlie repeated that in dire times – before medical checkups or visits to his brother, Orson.

Orson knew a lot about success and never hesitated to pass it on. "What you need, Charlie, is a Cessna. You aren't supposed to spin them, but you can. That'll clear your head, Charlie, straight down, counting as a barn comes around – one time, two times, three times – correct and pull out nice and easy." Orson dipped his knees, lowering his flattened palm. Or a catboat: "A solid little Marshall, Charlie. Putter around, take some cutie coasting. You're in sailor heaven, man, all those islands."

"I know some cuties," Miranda had said.

"Last cutie took my silver garlic press. Well, she didn't take it; she borrowed it and never returned it."

"Call her up and get it back," Orson said.

"That's what she wants you to do." Miranda was the best thing about Orson.

"I got another one."

"Where the hell did you find a silver garlic press?" Orson was impressed.

"It's aluminum, I think, or a composite material."

"Oh."

It was always like that; motion was Orson's answer to everything. Charlie stretched and checked his watch. The ten o'clock ferry from Peaks Island was edging to the dock. Soon a few dozen passengers would walk off the ramp, carrying shopping bags, slipping day packs over one or both shoulders, holding dogs on leashes. Margery, short and polite, would be toward the end of the line, one hand on the railing, blinking as she looked up at the city buildings and around for him.

They were similar physically and recognized each other as related, not lovers, not brother and sister, but distant cousins perhaps or members of a tribe – the patient, the witness bearers. "There you are," she said. Charlie stood and they patted one another's shoulders.

"You look very well, not a day over forty," Charlie said, standing back. "Here, let me take that." She handed him a stout canvas bag. "Jesus! What's in here?"

"Rocks and books. You're looking pleased with life. How's the world of architecture?"

"All right. Still looking for the perfect client." He rubbed his stomach with his free hand and pointed across the street to Standard Baking Company. "Croissants," he said. "A croissant a day keeps the doctor away. Are you hungry?"

"No. Let's get on with it."

Charlie led the way to his car, an elderly red Volvo. "Rocinante," Margery remembered.

"As good as ever." Charlie lowered the bag into the back seat.

"Could we swing by the library? I need to return these books."

"Sure. What have you been reading?"

"Tolstoy. The Russians. Dostoyevsky, Chekhov."

"That'll get you through a long night."

"There's no one like Tolstoy," Margery said. "So serene. Cosmic and down to earth at the same time."

"I wrote a novel once," Charlie said.

"What happened?"

"It wasn't very good." Charlie stopped by the library book drop. "At least you finished."

He watched her slide three souls and twenty years work through the brass slot. "There's a story I love about Chekhov," she said, getting back into the car. "He paid a visit to Tolstoy. Late in the evening, on his way home after a certain amount of wine, he cried out to his horse and to the heavens: 'He says I'm worse than Shakespeare. Worse than Shakespeare!'"

"Wonderful," Charlie said. "Chekhov – didn't he die after a last swallow of champagne?"

"It was sad," Margery said. She turned and stared out the side window.

They drove out of town in silence. The cemetery where Margery's father and son were buried was an hour and a half up the coast and midway down a long peninsula. The drive had become an annual event. Margery had no car. Charlie drove her one year and then had just continued. This was, what, the fourth or fifth trip? He couldn't remember.

"Margery, did you see that picture of President Bush on the carrier deck, wearing the pilot get up?"

"I did."

"Wasn't that ridiculous? The little son of a bitch went AWOL when he was in the National Guard. I read that it delayed the troops their homecoming by a day and cost a million dollars."

"Light comedy," Margery said. "The Emperor Commodus fancied himself a gladiator. Romans had to watch him fight in the Colosseum many times. He never lost. His opponents were issued lead swords."

"Nothing's changed," Charlie said. "Commodus?"

"Second century, A. D. We're not a police state, yet. Things get really crazy under one-man rule. Have you not read Gibbon?"

"THE DECLINE AND FALL – never got around to it."

"Good for perspective," Margery said.

"That green!" Charlie waved at the trees along I-95. "We only get it for a week when the leaves are coming out."

"Yes." Margery settled into her seat. Perspective was a good thing, Charlie thought. Even keel and all that. But there was something to be said for losing it. If he could have his choice of cuties, he'd just as soon have one of those dark eyed Mediterranean fireballs – breasts, slashing smile – someone who spoke with her whole body.

They arrived at the cemetery in good time. Margery declined his offer to carry the special rocks, wanting to bring them herself. They were intended to protect the base of a *rugosa* she'd planted the previous year. As usual, Charlie accompanied her and then returned to the car. She would take as long as she needed to arrange the rocks and to say or hear or feel whatever she could.

Charlie had no children; it was hard to imagine what she felt. Her son had skidded on a slick road and been wiped out by a logging truck, a stupid accident, pure bad luck. Her father had died later the same year. Margery had been on hold since, he supposed, although he hadn't known her when she was younger. The lines in her face seemed to have been set early. We were all full of hope once, he thought.

He leaned against the car and watched a man approach. The man was carrying a shovel. He had a white handlebar moustache and a vaguely confederate look. "Hey," Charlie said.

"Yup," the man said. He stopped and leaned on his shovel.

"Nice day," Charlie said, after a moment.

"Yessir. Black flies ain't woke up yet."

"Don't disturb them."

"No. Jesus, no. I guess we got a couple of days yet." He tested the ground with the shovel and looked into the cemetery. "Margery Sewell," he said.

"You know Margery?"

"Since she was about so high." He gestured toward his knees. "Used to go smelting with her father, Jack."

"I'm Charlie, friend of Margery's."

"Tucker," the man said. "Tucker Smollett."

"That's an old name."

"Smolletts go way back around here. Smolletts and Sewells, both." They stared into the graveyard. "You from around here, then?" He knew that Charlie was from away; he was being polite.

"Live in Portland, born in New York. Family came over in the famine."

"Well, then." The world divides into people who have been hungry and those who haven't. Charlie felt himself grandfathered into the right camp. It was strange how some people you got along with and some you didn't. "I'll tell you one thing," Tucker said, "there weren't nobody smarter than Margery Sewell ever come out of here. She got prizes, awards – some kind of thing from the governor, even. Whoever he was. Can't recall."

Charlie nodded. "She's a professor – classics – Latin and Greek."

"It don't surprise me," Tucker said.

They talked, from time to time glancing into the graveyard. Tucker was waiting for Margery, Charlie realized. When she appeared, she was walking slowly. Her head was up but her attention was dragging, as though she were pulling part of herself left behind. She was nearly to them before she focused. "Hello, Tucker."

"Hello, Margery."

"Good to see you," she said. "It's been a while."

"Yep. Since the service, I guess." Tucker straightened. He seemed younger.

"Tucker lived up the road from us," she said to Charlie. "He made me the most marvelous rocking horse. I think that was the nicest present I ever got. When William – " She swallowed. "When – I'm sorry." She turned away. "William loved it too," she said in a low voice.

There wasn't anything to say. Margery gathered herself and turned back to them.

Tucker cleared his throat. "I was – thinking you might come over for a bite to eat, for old times sake." Charlie expected Margery to decline, but something in the old man's tone had caught her attention.

"Well, that's nice of you. You have time, don't you, Charlie?"

"Plenty of time." A few years earlier, she had shown him where she lived, not far from the cemetery. "Ride or walk?"

"Ride," Tucker said. "I'll just put this shovel in the shed."

Tucker's house was a weathered collection of gray boxes that were settling away from each other. A reddish dog got down from a couch on the porch and came to meet them. There was white around her muzzle. "Company, Sally. Margery Sewall and her friend, Charlie." The dog received Tucker's hand on her head and greeted them, sniffing each in turn. "Sally don't see as well as she used to – do you girl?" Her tail wagged and she led them to the house.

"You've got bees." Charlie pointed at four hives that stood on 2x4's at the end of a narrow garden.

"Yep. Good year, last year."

"The lilacs are even bigger than I remember," Margery said.

"They keep right on going." Tucker took them through the house and kitchen to a screened back porch. Charlie and Margery sat at a large table while he brought bread, cheese, pickles, salami, mayonnaise, mustard, a bowl of lettuce, and a smaller bowl of radishes. He set plates and three glasses. "I've got beer, water, and – a little milk."

"Beer," Charlie said.

"Margery?"

"Beer."

"Three sodas coming up," Tucker said.

He and Margery reminisced. "Jack had a taste for the good stuff," Tucker said. "Five o'clock, regular. Never minded sharing, did Jack." Charlie ate steadily and accepted another can of beer.

"Not bad, Tucker," he said. He had noticed a small wooden horse on a shelf when he first entered the porch. During lunch, as Tucker and Margery talked, his eyes kept returning to it. He got up and walked over to the shelf. "What's this?"

"Something I made."

"Do you mind if I look at it?"

"Nope."

Charlie carried the horse back to the table. It was carved from wood, light colored, about five inches high, galloping across a base of wooden grasses and flowers. There was an air of health about it. It seemed to belong where it was. "Nice," he said. "What kind of finish is that on there?"

"Nothing much. Linseed oil, thinned some."

"Mighty nice."

"It's beautiful, Tucker."

"I made it for your mother." It was a statement of fact, but it carried something extra, like the horse. "You probably don't remember Mesquite, Margery."

"Mesquite – " Her face began to open.

"Must have died when you were about four or five."

"I'm remembering, now."

"Mr. Randolph brought him back for your mom – Helen," he said. "Got him at a show down south somewhere. He was a quarter horse, Mesquite. From Oklahoma originally, if I remember right. Damn fine horse." Tucker tilted his glass for two swallows. "I used to take care of him once in a while – when the family was away, you know. Well, one day Helen was out riding and I was walking along. It was in June. The flowers was all out. Mesquite got to cantering and I run along to keep up. Never forget it. The flowers all different, blurring together and flowing along like I was running through a river all different colors. And Helen sitting up tall – she had hair just like yours, Margery, short and thick, straw colored, went with her blue eyes." Tucker slowed down. "Well, I had to do something. I made the horse."

"Mesquite."

"Yep."

"Why didn't you give it to her?"

"It's a long story, I guess. Took me a while to make it. Your mom took a fancy to Jack. What with one thing and another, I went in the Navy. When I got out, I guess you was three years old already."

"Oh, Tucker."

"How's she doing? She still in Florida where they went?"

"St. Augustine. She's down to one lung. She lives in one of those – assisted living places, they call them. She has her own space, but there's help if need be. She gets around on a walker." Margery paused.

"Tucker, why do we cling so to life?"

"Guess we ain't done yet."

Margery looked at him for a long moment, and they exchanged what could be exchanged in two small smiles. Tucker went inside the house and returned with a large cardboard box. "While I'm at it," he said and began taking out carvings and putting them on the table – more horses, deer, squirrels, birds of all kinds, a woodchuck. Charlie held up a fox and looked at it from different angles. Its tail was full, straight out behind him, level with his back. His ears were sharply pointed, his head tilted slightly, all senses alert. Charlie was sure it was a he; the fox was elegant and challenging, superior.

"Damn near alive," Charlie said. "You could make money with these." Tucker shook his head negatively.

"Only do one a year. In the winter, not much going on." He looked into the back yard. "Try to get it done on February 15th."

"Mother's birthday."

"We used to talk about them a lot – animals and birds. Walk in the woods, talk."

"Tucker, does she know about these?"

"Nope."

"But she should see them!"

"She'd like them, you think?"

"Of course she would. They're beautiful."

"I'm not much for writing,"

"I could mail them to her if you'd like." He looked at the carvings, rubbed his chin, and inclined his head. A *why not* expression crossed his face. He pulled a twenty-dollar bill from a scarred black wallet. "Tucker, for heavens sake!" He insisted that she take it.

"Ask her, if she don't mind – I might take a ride down, say hello. Probably get a train down there." He looked at Charlie.

"Amtrak," Charlie said. "Or you could fly."

"I like trains."

They finished lunch and put the box of carvings on the back seat of the car. "I'll wrap tissue paper around them so they don't get banged up. I'll mail them tomorrow," Margery said. "Tucker, thank you so much for lunch. It was so good to see you."

"I thought I'd be seeing you again one of these days," Tucker said.

"We'll keep in touch," Margery said.

"Take care of yourself," Charlie said. "You want a ride back?"

"I'll walk."

They drove away slowly as Tucker and Sally watched. Tucker lifted one hand in farewell.

"You just never know, do you?" Charlie said.

"Tucker Smollett," Margery said. "Good old Tucker."

Halfway back to Portland, Charlie looked over at Margery and asked about her husband. "He cared for me," she said. "He just cared more for someone else."

"Damn shame," Charlie said. Margery brushed the fingers of one hand through the back of her hair. Charlie thought she was going to say more, but she didn't. At the ferry, he helped her with the box and said goodbye.

The next morning was again bright and sunny. Charlie returned to the bench near the ferry and sat, savoring his coffee, croissant, and the salty air. His brother Orson came to mind. Orson was a pain in the ass, but he had a point – sometimes you have to make a move.

Two men wearing similar clothes – pressed jeans, T-shirts, white running shoes, and sunglasses – walked up and took benches closer to the water. One was older, softer, beginning to put on weight. He sat with his elbows on his knees, looking across the harbor. The other, fitter one, stretched full length on his bench, arms out flat behind his

head, and stared into the sky. Neither looked happy. They remained unmoving, as though they were waiting for a delivery.

That is not the way, Charlie thought. He stood, dropped the empty bag and cup into a trash can, and walked in the direction of the unknown furled inside him.

story

THE CHOSEN ONES

Theodore Odrach
tr. from Ukranian by Erma Odrach

Through the windows of our compartment the landscape passed by quickly; the train was coming from Augsburg and approached Nuremberg at high speed. Opposite me sat a young man with a tired Semitic face, slumping deep into his seat, snoring intermittently to the purring sound of the engine. Up on the ledge, directly above his head, lay an overstuffed suitcase, and I assumed he was some sort of salesman. He began to toss and turn, then slowly opening his eyes, asked in a loose German jargon how far we were from Nuremberg.

"About another half hour," I replied.

"Are you perhaps Polish?" he asked drowsily.

"No, I'm from Czechoslovakia."

A warm smile appeared on his face. "Ah, Czechoslovakia – Prague, Prague. Not in all my life have I seen as lovely a city as your Prague."

At that moment the train came to a stop, numerous passengers boarded, then we went on again.

"I'm Benny Blumenkranz." He extended his hand, and sinking back into his seat, threw one leg over the other.

"Pleased to meet you. I'm Igichek Dufek."

As it turned out my fellow traveler was a Jew from Lodz and talked to me in Polish, while I spoke Czech.

"I really can't believe this war is finally over. What a nightmare it's been."

"It's been hell, that's for sure," I agreed. "And the Jews got the worst end of it."

"We've suffered all right. If you don't mind, Mr. Dufek, we Jews have a southern temperament, we like to talk, a bit too much sometimes, but we like to talk. Do you mind if I tell you a most incredible story?"

"No. By all means, go ahead."

"I want to tell you about what happened to me when I was placed in a concentration camp outside of Bogatynia. This was in the summer of '44 and each day, under the guard of SS men, we prisoners were sent off to labor at a nearby train station.

There were carts filled with all sorts of parcels, mostly from soldiers posted in Poland to their families in the Reich. We were made to unload all the undamaged parcels and pack them into separate carts that were to be transported out. Those Germans, what they didn't send! Fabrics, bacon, butter. As I worked, a certain parcel caught my attention. It was large, carelessly wrapped in brown paper and tied with jute. And it was severely torn, I could even see chunks of meat inside. Can you imagine what the smell of meat means to a starving man? I became delirious. I could think of nothing else. It invaded my nostrils, every pore of my body. I ripped the parcel open, snatched out a slab of bacon and slipped it into the bosom of my coat. It didn't even occur to me that an SS man could be watching. I quickly composed myself and resumed working.

"'Well, Benny,' a voice suddenly erupted from behind. 'What are we going to do with you now?' An SS man stepped toward me twirling a rubber whip.

"A chill rushed up my spine.

"'You're a stupid Jew,' he went on. 'Who goes and hides bacon like that? Why, a blind fool can see there's something stuffed inside your coat. Aren't you scared of eating pig meat?'

"'No, *Herr*. Still before the war I ate bacon, in fact, all kinds of pork.'

"The SS man looked/peeked at his watch and burst into a loud and derisive laugh. 'I want you to take that slab of bacon,' he said, 'and stash it in your barracks. Make it back here in two minutes. *Ein, zwei* ... Oh, too bad, Benny, you're half a second late.' And with his whip he flogged me across the spine. 'You know, it's really a shame to waste such fine rubber on a good-for-nothing like you.' He spat between his feet and walked away.

"The SS man's name was Kurt Wilde, one of the most brutal and feared men. He always appeared during inspection time clenching his fists. And that's what I found most baffling. There I was, caught stealing bacon, and all he did was strike me across the back. I couldn't figure it out. Perhaps he wanted to toy with me, then in the dead of night creep up to my barracks, grab me by the hair and shove me into a burning oven. I was prepared to die for that slab of bacon!

"Nightfall came, we were ordered back to our barracks and nothing happened. I climbed into my cot and fell asleep. The next day again. Nothing. Finally, on the third day Wilde called me before him.

"'Did you eat up that bacon, Benny?'

"'Yes, *Herr,* I did,' I replied.

"'And you didn't think of sharing some with me?'

"'I didn't know . . .'

"This time he whipped me mercilessly.

"'This is for your thievery! This is for your greed! And this is for your egotism! Now march, back to your barracks!'

"He was a tyrant, but at the same time there was something peculiar about him, something I couldn't quite figure out. One day he called all the prisoners together and commanded we all sit in the cross-legged fashion. He turned to one of the men and snapped:

"'What do you think of me?'

"'I think you're a very fine man, *Herr.'*

"'Liar! You think I'm a swine. No lies here or I'll chop you up into little pieces!' He then flung himself around, and looking straight into my eyes, said scoffinglyscoffing, 'Benny, did you ever love a woman?'

"'Yes, *Herr.'*

"'And did you propose to her?'

"'Yes.'

'Benny, do you see that pole over there?'

"'Yes, *Herr.* I see it.'

"'You idiot, you! That's not a pole. Don't you recognize her? That's your sweetheart. Go and make love to her!'

"'Oh, Lilly, I love you.'

"'Not like that!' Wilde walloped me over the head. 'Be more theatrical, add romance to your voice!'

"'I love you, Lilly.' I embraced the pole. At that point all I wanted to do was turn around and kill him.

"Wilde rose to his feet, and searching among the prisoners, his eyes finally rested on Shmool, a short, fat hunchback with small beady eyes and thick lips who had been a shopkeeper in Lodz.

"'Shmool, you can do better!'

"Shmool threw himself on the pole, then fell to his knees.

"'Dobo, I love you. Come into my arms. Let's get married. I have a beautiful house with large windows. Together we can sit and look out into the yard at the chickens, ducks, geese, hens, even pigeons. You see, my love, I'm in the poultry business.'

"'Enough! Enough!' Wilde clapped his hands. 'March, back to your barracks!'

"That was Wilde. He had an authoritative walk, his boots were always immaculately waxed and his uniform pressed. True, he was despicable and loathsome, yet still, there was something that set him apart from the others. For some reason, every time he caught sight of a fence or a tree stump, he would climb to the top; first he would balance on one foot, then on the other, he would walk with arms outstretched dipping

here and there, making fantastic spins. Quite the sight! Later we discovered he had been a tightrope walker with the Berlin circus. He would walk from rooftop to rooftop without a net to catch him; passers-by would gather below and watch in fascination. This was his greatest passion.

"When our work at the train station ended, rumor had it we would either be transported to Dachau or, worse yet, butchered alive and thrown into some pit in the woods outside of Bogatynia.

"Finally the time came. There were thirteen of us, all Jews: Shmool and I were from Lodz, two from Ukraine, some from Warsaw, and the rest from Byelorussia. One day Wilde called us together and warned:

"'If any of you try to escape, you'll get it right between the eyes. Understand?'

"That same day, under the guard of four SS men we were packed into a boxcar, eastbound. The hunchback Shmool was convinced of our imminent death.

"'Benny, they'll probably do away with you first because you're so mouthy. But I've got hope, all my life I've depended on it. Er . . . perhaps you would like for me to pass a little something on to your family. I will tell your mother – over there, in the woods, beyond Bogatynia is your son's grave.'

"'You're a fool, Shmool. If the bullets don't get you the first time, the bayonets will.'

"'Why should they kill me? I never harmed anyone.' Then looking intently at me, his eyes clouding, 'Benny, why do you talk like that, anyway? Tell me some jokes instead.'

"After four long hours of traveling we were shoved out of the boxcar and assembled in single file a few meters from the tracks. We were deep in the woods, an abandoned little farmhouse peered out from behind a stand of tall conifers, and a powerful range of mountains obstructed the blue-gray sky. There was an ominous calm and it seemed before long we would be digging our own graves. That day we were handed axes and told to chop down trees and with the logs build parapets for German soldiers who were to be stationed on the eastern Front. Surprisingly, our food ration increased and with it our dispositions, even Shmool managed to slip in the occasional anecdote. We worked nonstop. Wilde watched over us with the butt end of his rifle pressed against his shoulder. Next to him stood Ziggy, his ruthless sidekick.

"They locked us up in a cold, damp chicken coop. In the mornings we were fed morsels of dried food, then chased off to work. The nights were undisturbed and we were coming to believe that perhaps our lives would be spared. Then one night came the sinister clicking of heels. Later, muffled voices. Somebody was fumbling with the latch of the chicken coop. We sat motionless, our backs pinned to the wall. We listened. The door banged open. There stood Wilde and Ziggy, their faces wild, almost inhuman.

"'Get up!' they charged.

"Under gunpoint we stumbled into the darkness toward a huge pit we had dug the day before. I could hear Shmool moaning under his breath. I poked him in the ribs to keep quiet.

"'Attention!'

"We stood at attention. A second more, I thought, and our bullet-riddled bodies will go tumbling into the pit, one after the other. We held our breath. Then at that very moment the unexpected happened. Our mouths dropped in disbelief. Wilde had jumped Ziggy from behind and was choking him with his bare hands. He called out to me:

"'Benny, quick, take off your pants!'

Realizing what was going on, I ripped off a piece of fabric from my pant leg, formed it into a ball and shoved it down Ziggy's throat so that he couldn't scream. After a few minutes Ziggy was all tied up.

"'Benny, quick, help me throw him into the ditch!'

After we threw him over the edge, Wilde shouted out to us, 'Jews, get over there by that tree! *Schnell!'*

"We obeyed immediately and to our astonishment, under a pile of conifer twigs, lay rifles and SS uniforms. Wilde gave us five minutes to change and before long we had rifles flung over our shoulders and an ample supply of ammunition in our belts. Wilde yelled, 'Forward, march!' We followed after him.

"Halt!' yelled Wilde when we were deep in the woods. 'From this moment on I am your commander. I'll shoot anyone who disobeys my orders. If any of you are fool enough, then kill me now, but that won't save you. The Gestapo will track you down in no time. Do you want me as your commander?'

"'We want you,' we shouted in unison.

"'This is my plan: we'll go traveling about, and we'll do our best to keep out of harm's way.' Then with a serious look, 'You know, Jews, yesterday I received orders from headquarters to have you all executed. But I thought to myself, to destroy a bunch of fine fellows like yourselves, that would truly be a shame.'

"'Excuse me, *Herr,* we don't appreciate your sarcastic tone.' The hunchback boldly stepped forward.

"'Shmool, come here!' Wilde was enraged.

"The color drained from the hunchback's face and he refused to budge. A few of us pushed him forward – we saw freedom in our futures and we weren't about to let Shmool ruin our chances.

"'I'll shoot you!' Wilde pointed the spout of his rifle into Shmool's chest. 'I don't need the likes of you in my brigade.'

"'*Herr,* I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me.' He waved his arms in the air and tossed his head about. 'It must be something in these woods.'

"Shmool was a nuisance and I was the first to suggest, *'Herr Offizier,* why don't we tie him up for a while. Maybe that will keep him quiet.'

"'I'm not an *Offizier* any more, Benny. Right now I'm merely a commander, or if you prefer, a commander of Jews.'

"On this day we stripped Shmool of his clothes, tied him to a tree and watched his naked body be swarmed by mosquitoes and black flies. He swelled up like a pumpkin.

"With no particular destination in mind we pushed eastward. As far as provisions went we had little trouble; we would slip into remote villages on the edge of the woods and stock up. Outside of Krakow, when asked by peasants what sort of brigade we were, I was chosen to act as spokesman.

"'We are the Jewish sector of the national Polish army. We're fighting for an independent Poland and are now on our way to the eastern Front to fight the Germans and the Russians.' When we reached Rzeszov we inadvertently landed in a Polish military camp. There was a minor shoot-out and within minutes we were surrounded. On the end of a twig, up went our capitulation flag. We were disarmed and cross-examined. After short deliberation Polish headquarters decided to release us, but the general, an elderly man with gray hair and bushy white brows, informed us that he would not return our weapons or Wilde. We had a brief conference, then announced:

"'If you don't return our commander and our weapons, you might as well kill us all. He's our leader and without him we're as good as dead.'

"'Lieutenant,' suddenly Shmool burst in, for some reason addressing the old man as lieutenant, 'Wilde, though he's a German, somehow he's not a bad sort and protects us, well, like Moses the people of Israel. He's helping us because he couldn't bear all the suffering, he had enough. What can you possibly gain by his death?'

"Then Aaron Goldberg, a good-natured, burly tailor from Bialystock threw in, speaking distinct Polish, 'We both feel the same way about the Germans, but as you can see for yourself, Wilde is no enemy. He once was an SS man, that's true, but his real passion has always been with the circus.' Our pleading finally touched the old man's heart and he conceded. Before departing he raised his finger and cautioned, 'Make sure your Wilde doesn't lead you to Buchenwald!'

"We made our way toward the woods and before long we spotted Ukrainian villages. They were up in smoke. The peasants were terrified of strangers, especially those who spoke Polish. Within our brigade there was no predominant language. Shmool, Goldberg, a few others and I spoke Polish, but to Wilde only in German, and our comrades from Ukraine spoke mostly Ukrainian. Creeping along the edge of the

woods, we slipped into a small village and to our surprise we were momentarily surrounded by a band of armed sentinels. We jumped into an empty hut and took refuge.

"'Surrender!' charged a voice from outside. 'You're surrounded!'

"'Hey, we're one of you!' called out Jordan Bergman in distinct Ukrainian. 'I'm from Sheptivka myself. Born and raised there. Put forward your commander and we'll get to the bottom of this misunderstanding.'

"'Come out, one of you!' An order came pouring into the shack.

"We shoved Bergman forward, unarmed. He was instantly grabbed and a gun was put to his head.

"'Give yourselves up, Red paratroopers!' another voice roared from behind the storage barn.

"The sentinels had mistaken us for Bolsheviks so Wilde yelled out:

"'Meine Lieben, wir sind unabgehörige Kempfer!'

"His impeccable Berlin accent caught them off guard and a confused silence followed. We started to make demands for the return of Bergman, trying at the same time to explain ourselves, but they refused to listen. Then we requested that one of them come forward to negotiate. From behind the storage barn two sentinels emerged, carefully approaching the hut, with Bergman between them. We told them our story, that we were Jews simply traveling about and that our commander happened to be German. Ironically, they didn't believe a word we said and took Wilde to be the only Jew among us.

"'What's your mission?'

"'We're not on a mission. We only want to protect our own lives. The war will end and we'll go off somewhere, probably to Palestine.'

"'To Palestine? And are you going to take your Nazi friend along with you?'

"'If he wants to come, we will take him. But I have a feeling he won't want to come.'

"Throughout the village word had spread that Jewish soldiers were blockaded in a hut. Outside the door peasants began to haggle. Later old women arrived with big, loose bundles, hallooing through the windows:

"'Hey, we've got something to trade with you! Perhaps you have some nice fabric. Maybe a little footwear?'

"But when they peered inside their eyes popped open in disbelief. One, two, seven, thirteen SS uniforms! They froze.

"'My dear women,' called out Bergman, waving his arms in the air, 'you've got it all wrong. You see, we're not really Germans, we're only wearing German uniforms.

This man' – he pointed to Wilde – 'has been kind enough to escort us out of a prison camp and now we're simply traveling about. We're friendly, I assure you.'

"This speech made little impact on the villagers. Then Isaak Zimmerman, a native of Vilnius, took the stand. Though his tone was somewhat upbraiding, he knew how to capture the female heart.

"'We were prisoners. The Germans beat us with their rubber whips, starved us, baked us in their ovens. The tortures we've endured!'

"He spoke with a deep fervency, and happily we noticed that not only on the faces of the women, but on the sentinels as well, gleamed a sense of compassion. Then one old woman cried out: 'That's because you Jews crucified Christ!'

"'Baba, those who tortured us were Godless. And believe you me, they don't just torture the Jews, but Ukrainians too! A Ukrainian friend of mine, Andriy Kopach, they tortured to death.'

"Another old woman, leaning against the wall of the hut, clasped her chest.

"Zimmerman went on. 'He was my very best friend, a fine human being. He shared his last morsel of bread with me. How he grieved for his wife Natalka and his little girl Annochka. The Reds somewhere by the Buch River killed them. He even…'

"But before he had a chance to finish, an ear-splitting voice resounded through the village, 'Eek! Take cover!' Gunshots erupted from the outskirts. Then came the explosion of cannons. A young man came running as fast as he could, shouting but one word: 'Poles!'

"By way of the meadow, a band of Polish soldiers had crept up to the village's edge and had already set fire to several farmsteads. The shooting unsettled the commanding sentinel and he turned to us and said, 'We can't trust you fellows just yet. Give up your weapons. After we chase out the Poles, then we'll deal with you.'

"We translated this for Wilde but he was not impressed. He did not like to be told what to do. Ignoring the commander's orders, he waved his hand in the air and shouted out to us:

"'Never mind men we'll fight anyway. We'll fight the Poles. If the Poles seize the village, they probably won't harm us. At worst they will strip us of our weapons and clothes. If we help the Ukrainians they won't detain us any longer. Actually, it's all the same to us who we fight. Get ready to attack!'

"'Er, Commander,' the hunchback came forward speaking in a low tone, 'if you permit, my conscience does not allow for this. I am an honest citizen of Poland and I refuse to fight the Poles. I was born in Lodz, I grew up there, I had my shop there. I cannot and will not fight the Poles.'

"'Benny, tie him up!' Wilde lost patience. 'We have no time for this now.'

"Instead of tying Shmool up we locked him in an old wooden storage shed. Wilde divided us up into two sections: he commanded the first, I took the second.

"The Poles were already crawling through the tall yellow grass toward the outlying houses. We watched them in silence from dugouts and from behind buildings. When they were within range, we opened fire and smothered them with bullets. Then, unexpectedly, from behind a clump of bushes jumped another band of Poles and charged to the rescue. Wilde and his group, stationed on the edge of the village, began to fire and the Poles, caught off guard, fell into a panic and started to retreat. Most were killed and those about to be taken captive committed suicide. It was a great victory and the Ukrainian sentinels procured a fine collection of weapons. After the battle we became named the Hebrew Heroes and were even proclaimed honorary members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Peasants showered us with gifts, young girls tossed flowers at our feet, and boys hooted and whistled.

"Still under the command of Wilde, we pushed farther east. Because the surrounding villages knew of our victory over the Poles, we no longer had to plunder for food; the peasants greeted us with great hospitality.

"One day, as we advanced toward a large hamlet in the heart of Galycia, we heard the ripping sound of machine guns. The village was being ransacked. We decided to go to the rescue and jump the enemy from behind. Wilde recognized the weapons as German.

"'Well, my chosen ones, it's the *Goldene-Fasanen.* We'll fight. Benny, you go to the right field; Shmool, you go to the left. Disperse!'

"'Commander Wilde, I can't shoot from the left. I can't aim properly. Put me behind Benny, when he gets killed, then I'll begin shooting.'

"When Shmool came up against my heels, I kicked him as far away from me as I could. He moaned and groaned for the longest time.

"On all fours we crawled toward a mound of brushwood where we got a clear view of German soldiers hiding in a coppice, shooting at the village. The peasants were firing back, but their bullets were missing the enemy. Carefully checking all positions, Wilde raised his left hand and made a sign of attack: 'Ready! Aim! Fire!' And our bullets came riddling out. Pandemonium broke loose among the Germans and, flat on their bellies, they began to flee. Wilde motioned our right flank to the edge of the brushwood, cutting short their getaway. But then a set of explosives went off. A reinforcement of German soldiers started to hurl grenades from a dugout by the main road. A fierce battle followed and all but one German managed to escape. He was a balding soldier from some *Landwirdschaft,* his face thin and colorless. He mumbled something under his breath, and then made unintelligible references about Ukrainian partisans. Wilde addressed him in German.

"'We're not Ukrainian, not to worry. I'm German myself and these men here are Jews. Shmool, are you Jewish?'

"'I don't appreciate such a harsh tone, Commander.' The hunchback threw back his head. He was feeling brave. The battle was over and he had little left to fear.

"'Benny, maybe I should shoot him once and for all.'

"'He's asking for it, no doubt about it,' I answered. 'But hasn't this war killed off enough of us already?'

"A few moments later, when a messenger appeared from the village with a note of appreciation, the sound of a gunshot exploded from behind. I swung around and there lay the captive German with his face down in the mud, blood gushing from his skull. Next to him stood Shmool, gritting his teeth.

"'That's what the bastard deserved. For all my suffering. I swore I'd kill ten Germans to pay for it.'

"Wilde turned purple with rage. 'Shmool, what the hell did you do? You shot him from behind!'

"'This is just the beginning!' Shmool spat between his feet, then aimed his rifle at Wilde, his finger on the trigger. Wilde came at him.

"'Don't come any closer. One more step and I'll kill you.'

"But Wilde continued head-on. Shmool rapidly began to lose courage and within seconds dropped the rifle to the ground. Wilde raised his fist and punched him savagely in the jaw, then pounded him to the ground. Shmool screwed up his face. Wilde ruthlessly sank the tips of his boots into his rib cage, then kicked him in the head. Shmool squirmed on the ground and Wilde showed no sign of mercy.

"'Commander, he isn't conscious any more.' Bergman grabbed Wilde by the arm and pulled him back. 'Hasn't there been enough bloodshed?'

"Wilde turned on us. 'Cowards! All of you! Get out of here!'

"But we didn't budge; we stood and waited until Wilde calmed down. We knew that without him we were as good as dead and he without us. A strange kind of fate tied us together.

"The half-conscious Shmool was left behind in some remote village, and we traveled farther east. The Front was now somewhere near Lvov and extended northward in a crooked line. Germans, Ukrainian partisans, Poles and Russians were now swarming the entire area.

"'We're going to have to plan our next move,' said Wilde one day. 'Have you got any suggestions, Benny?'

"'I think we should make contact with the Reds. The Ukrainians are an unreliable bunch, after all.'

"After short deliberation, we all agreed to head beyond the Front. Ukrainian villages were now avoided and if one were up in smoke we turned the other way. Carefully we wove northward through dense forests and along the edge of open fields. Somewhere near Vilnius, we landed in a Bolshevik ambush. A fierce fire opened up. We dove to the ground and waved our capitulation flag. Under gunpoint, the Russians marched us down a narrow path that led to main headquarters. And this was how we landed on the eastern Front. At first they did not believe our story, but after hearing of our adventures in detail, they decided we were telling the truth. Even Wilde passed as a Jew from Germany. The Bolsheviks insisted we enlist in the Red Army and we readily agreed. Better to be Red than dead! When orders came to have us transferred to Czechoslovakia, we rejoiced. We were given a crash course in sabotage, then flown over Bohemia where we parachuted near the town of Tabor. Quickly we made contact with a garrison of Red partisans and they gave us orders to assassinate some minor forest-guard by the name of Koch, stationed by the railway tracks. And so we became Bolsheviks on the German trail!

"'Well, my knights of Solomon,' began Wilde, 'shall we murder this Koch or not?'

"'If we must, we must,' said Aaron.

"'Let's forget it.' Wilde waved his hand in the air. 'Why should we care about any commands from the Bolsheviks? We're independent soldiers, after all. No one orders us around.'

"Instead of killing Koch, we decided to head west because the Front was already retreating. Upon reaching Pilsen, we traded our uniforms and weapons for food and civilian clothing, then headed for Bavaria. The war was over."

As the train approached Nuremberg, the passengers began to take down their luggage. When it entered a large, dilapidated station, Blumenkranz pulled his overstuffed suitcase down off the rack above his head.

"Are you selling food?" I finally asked.

"No, I'm taking food, to Wilde. He's in prison right now. At his trial we plan to tell our story."

"'We'?"

"The Jews about whom I've been telling you. Only we don't know where the hunchback is. Well, Mr. Dufek, I must be on my way. It was a pleasure meeting you. Your Prague is truly a lovely city."

Blumenkranz walked briskly down the platform, then disappeared beyond the exit gates.

story

AN UNLIKELY ALLIANCE

John Michael Cummings

On my way to see Mom at work, I stopped in the liquor store and found Grandma doing something I never expected. She was in the storeroom, scraping the paint off the little window that had been painted black years ago, using one of those little scrapers made for narrow places. She said the room could use a little daylight, even though we were talking about the storeroom, which was always dark.

The black paint was coming off so easily it seemed it had never been made to stick to glass in the first place. I looked out. With half the window scraped clean, the other side of town was visible now. You could see everyone at the fire hall, along with cars pulling in to the post office.

I offered to finish scraping the window, and Grandma said all right and stood back and watched for a while. Then she went up front, and I continued working, careful not to scratch the glass, although that was nearly impossible.

All of a sudden a car pulled up outside the window, and someone was walking right toward me.

Lonny Dunn!

Lonny Dunn was the toughest, meanest boy up on the mountain, with a reputation for breaking into houses. He never came off the mountain and into Harpers Ferry like this, where all the tourists would look down on him for being a hillbilly. He was a few grades ahead of my oldest brother Jerry, but because of his size and rough way, he seemed much older. Jerry talked a lot about him, not just because Dunn was always being expelled from school for fighting, but because he had a glass eye. Most people wanted to look at him, but were afraid, because his glass eye always looked back at you as if it could see. He never wore a shirt, had tattoos all over his body, and stringy blonde hair.

He lunged at the window to try to scare me. Then he leaned down and rapped on the glass so hard I thought he would break it.

I stood there grinning. I often wondered why I wasn't as scared of him as I should have been, despite the trouble he was. It was a feeling inside that he liked me, and a person who likes you, even one as rough as Lonny Dunn, wouldn't ever hurt you.

"Ssh! My grandma," I said, when I got the window up. I pointed to the front of the store.

"Mrs. Jennings's your grandma?" he said.

He knew her, he said. I didn't believe him. He said he stopped by here all the time. I still didn't believe him. She had the best price around on Jack Daniels, he said. Now I was starting to believe him. Plus, she was a real nice woman, he said. I believed him.

Hell, he said, trying to climb through the small window, that practically made us family.

The window was way too small for him, so he had to go around the front way. I ran to the storeroom door. He came into the store and said hello to Grandma by name, and she said his name back. She was even smiling at him.

I wandered out, trying to act casual, and Lonny walked up and slapped me on the shoulder. Grandma was all eyes.

"You know my grandson, Lonny?"

"Sure I know him. Me and him rob banks together."

Grandma was showing a thin smile to this. The best I could read it, it said everybody was amusing to her, even Lonny Dunn. The fact was, all different types, including tourists from the city, came through her store. No one surprised her.

Mom would have described her a little differently. Grandma was a good Christian, she would say. She never judged anybody.

Lonny was being careful not to cuss. He asked me why I hadn't been on the mountain in a while. Ordinarily, he would have let out a few hundred foul words asking that. Grandma answered for me, saying I had been busy at home here in town.

Wiping his sweaty face, Lonny said he would be looking for more

work, if she knew of any.

Grandma looked at me.

"Your mother needs help with the house, doesn't she?"

I nodded. I couldn't believe what she was suggesting – one of the break-ins Lonny was suspected of doing was to my father's cabin on the mountain.

"Maybe," said Grandma, "since you all know one another…"

"Whoa," said Lonny, putting up his hands, "his old man don't like me none."

Grandma took a moment to answer. She said there was no need to worry about that anymore.

Dad was gone. After years of fighting about his guns and the condition of the house, my parents had split up this summer. Dad took all his precious guns and was living in the cabin on his mountain property. He said he hated town anyway, with all the

tourists. But the real reason was, he was ashamed of our house, of all the repairs it needed – repairs he could have done if he had just put his mind to it, Mom said.

Also, he loved the mountain. He delivered mail up there, so everyone knew him. Jerry, who was pretty smart, said the big difference between Mom and Dad was that she was English and Dad was Irish. The English were like whites in our county, the Irish like blacks. Mountain people were like blacks, too, which made Dad like them.

That night, Mom was unsure of the whole thing. Lonny Dunn! Lonny Dunn helping out around *our* house? After what he did, or was suspected of doing, to Dad's precious cabin? She and Dad were sure it was Dunn who had busted in and stolen Dad's sophisticated brass scales for weighing gunpowder, along with a whole assortment of fine tools. They always thought that Jerry had been involved in some way, too, but could never prove anything.

Mom had no idea that Grandma knew Lonny Dunn. Imagine, my mother, she said, knowing him. Sometimes her mother was too trusting, she said. He must have been all smiles with her. She would have to think about this, she said.

"Maybe he does good work," she went on to say. "But if your father ever finds out."

He wouldn't, I said. He wasn't around anymore. And so what if he did? It was our house now.

She looked at me. She didn't quite agree with my attitude. But the fact remained, we did need help, and I couldn't do the work by myself, and she wasn't involving my brothers, because they would only tell their father.

The bottom line was, she knew of no one else. Plus, Grandma did say that Lonny didn't charge much, and that alone might be enough of a reason. But she would sure have to watch him every step of the way, and under no circumstances was he to be allowed in the house.

It had been arranged that Lonny should come by after eleven the next day, after my brothers had gone to work. Some time after eleven but before half past, we could hear a car backfiring on the hill. Mom peeked out through the blind. "My lands, look at that, in front of our house," she said.

Lonny was making a parking spot for his filthy Pinto, and that caused Mr. Barnes and a few other shopkeepers to look on as he pulled halfway up onto the sidewalk. Mom said he would get a ticket.

I ran outside, and the first thing Lonny did was throw an empty soda cup up at me. I kicked it off the front porch and ran down the steps and stood there grinning. It was the strangest feeling, standing out in the front of the house with him, in front of

practically the whole snooty town. It was the first time I had really stood in front of the house without trying to hide myself, without looking down. And who was I standing with? Not with Tim Richmond or Deedee Jessup or Ernesto the artist or anybody else classy-looking, but with Lonny H. Dunn, as my father called him, from the mountain.

I looked across the street at Mr. Barnes and gave him a mean look. Having Lonny Dunn around was like having your own monster to protect you from all the people who pretended not to be monsters but really were.

Mom spoke to Lonny through the door, looking as if I had brought home a wet dog from the river.

"My son knows what you all are supposed to do," she said, backing inside.

The first job was to cover the ugly white sewer pipes out front. That required hauling dirt from the backyard. To do this, I had to take him through the workshop. It was the strangest feeling, going through the workshop with him, knowing his eyes were seeing what no one outside our family ever had – insulation falling down, junk everywhere, dog hair everywhere, as if there had been ten years of chicken fights back here.

Funny, of all the people in the world I would want to see this mess, Lonny Dunn was the only one. The way I saw it, he was from the worst place on earth, Hard Hollow, and Dad's workshop was the second worst place on earth, so he was the only one who wouldn't look down on us. I felt that made us close, me being from the next to the worst place, he from the worst. Close in a way no one else would ever understand. Closer even than brothers.

He could carry two 5-gallon buckets of dirt at one time, and that impressed Mom looking out through the kitchen window. When she found an excuse to come out, he was on his best behavior and didn't say much except "Yes, ma'am" and "No, ma'am." But when she wasn't around, he went into his sneaky mode, glancing at the kitchen window to make sure she wasn't looking before he started looking behind boards and under things for something to take, usually some of Dad's worst old tools that he had left behind, so I didn't care.

At lunch, when I went inside to eat, Mom wondered whether she should offer him something, and that afternoon she did bring out two lemonades and say, "Lonny, would you like some watermelon?"

He was as polite as he could be.

The second job was to shore up the rock wall out front. Mom thought that was something I should leave to Lonny. So I went inside with her. She went on keeping an eye on him, peering through the Venetian blinds the way Dad used to. Then, when a tourist stopped in front of our house and asked him directions, Mom said, "Oh, Lord, he won't know."

I went to the window. Lonny pointed this way, then that way, and Mom groaned and snickered at the same time, as if she couldn't make up her mind whether it was sad or funny. Imagine, she said, a boy from the mountain giving directions to tourists in Harpers Ferry.

To me, Lonny didn't see himself as a boy from the mountain or that there was anything wrong with what he was doing. He was just there, working, and afraid of no one.

"Oh, who's he talking to now?" Mom said with that giggle of hers.

I went to the window for the umpteen time. There was Lonny down by the rock wall, in front of our house, talking to a tourist girl. That made me say something. Lonny in his dirty tank top, tattoos showing, glass eye half popping out, talking to a pretty tourist girl?

"Well she sure seems to like him," Mom said.

The girl stood there, looking the way a girl does when she does like a boy.

"That boy," Mom said. "I can see why my mother likes him."

I had to shake my head, too. Mom wouldn't say it, but we could learn a lot from Lonny Dunn.

As soon as Mom left for work, I waved Lonny up. I led him into the workshop again, then up the back steps.

"Man, your old man sure was a hoarder," he said, looking around at the bamboo poles, the rolls of roofing paper, and the old bricks Dad had us stack up because they might be worth something someday.

He touched the top of the freezer kept against the back of the house and asked if it worked. He looked up over the bank, at the two logs lying side-by-side and half-buried in the dirt, with rungs across them. He asked what it was, and I told him that was how we got up into the backyard. He said it looked like something in boot camp. He glanced at the high wall of bamboo growing around the house, which Dad had planted to keep eyes from looking in. I waited for him to ask what kind of plant it was, but he just squinted at it as if it was magical to him, like a kaleidoscope.

As I led him up the back steps, he looked down at the creosote planks as if thinking they might break through. He saw the old gutters overhead, the dead wasps' nests, the water pipe left above ground and covered with heat tape, the screen door falling off the back door. I waited for him to say we lived like mountain people.

I took him inside the house through my bedroom door on the third-floor landing. When his eyes adjusted to the dim light, he looked around at the unpainted, hand-troweled walls. He looked down at the unpolished floorboards and overhead at the

cracked ceiling. I thought I saw him nod, as if he was thinking about what needed to be done.

I listened to my voice saying which rooms were my brothers'. It was as if I was trying to sound like a tour guide, but we were really in a kind of cave, exploring. He looked in Robbie's room and asked why there was writing all over the walls. He asked, too, if they were any lights on this floor. He kept his head ducked. He had never seen ceilings so low, he said.

We went down to the second floor. The walls down here were painted, but there were empty spaces around the room from where Dad had taken things. Left in the middle of the room was a spinning wheel. Against the wall was a push-pedal sewing machine.

"The bathroom's real bad," I said, leading the way.

He looked at the rotted plasterboard around the bathtub. He even leaned forward and looked down through the hole clean through the floor behind the tub. Then he jumped up and down a little, testing the boards. The floor was still solid, he said. He turned and saw the rotted floorboards around the commode. I expected him to say it was gross. I expected him to say our house was falling down.

We went downstairs. It was full of paintings, knickknacks, and Mom's furniture projects. We had pretty much finished repainting the walls down here. At least there were no ghosts of Dad's guns to see or think about.

He went into the kitchen on his own. That was bad, too, I said, waiting outside the door.

He came back out and looked around. "Man, this place just needs some work," he said. He actually said we had a nice house. It just needed some work.

We went down to his car and got some tools out of the back. In the bathroom, I crouched down beside him as he measured the area of plasterboard that needed replacing. I noticed the veins in his arms. When he stood up, I stood up, too, and saw the two of us in the mirror together. The room was all around us. I had to smile. He was the first person outside our family to ever set foot in here. It was like having someone know the worst part of you and you feeling better for it.

By the time Mom came home, Lonny and I had nailed the new plasterboard in, then gone back outside and covered the sewer pipes and patted down the ground with shovels. She was glad those unsightly white pipes were finally underground, she said as she came in. She just hoped the stink would stay there, too.

I was nervous as she went upstairs. A few minutes later, she called out my name in that tone and stood at the top of the stairs, her face all twisted up like Dad's.

"You let him in our house, Josh?"

I thought she was foolish for acting this way. The tub was about to fall through the ceiling.

"Somebody's got to!" I said, almost yelling.

She gave me her "that's ridiculous" look, but said nothing else.

That night, when my brothers were home, Jerry spotted the plasterboard patch in the bathroom. He flew downstairs like Dad, wanting to know what was going on, who had been in the house and done the work.

"Jerry, never you mind," Mom said, standing up from the table.

"Who is it?" he said, being as demanding as he could be.

Mom picked up and slammed down the fruit bowl on the table. The house was half hers, she reminded him. She didn't have to answer to anybody about that. Was that clear?

The next morning, she had a different attitude toward me. I could tell she felt sorry for how she had acted. I knew she was scared. So was I. At the kitchen table, she told Jerry and Robbie not to mention the work to their father. It was for the better right now. J erry sat there, looking as belligerent as he could be.

When Lonny arrived later that morning, Mom invited him inside. They started walking through the house. On the way up the steps, she apologized for the lack of lighting. He said he could fix that, too. Upstairs, she asked if he knew how to get the armchair out of the house without lowering it over the second story porch. He said he could hammer it apart and take it out in bags. She looked at him as she couldn't believe how everything to him had a simple answer. He also said it would be no problem moving the foldaway bed upstairs.

In the bathroom, he ran his hands over the plasterboard around the back of the tub and said the spackling needed a little more sanding. Mom volunteered to do that. She said she could also take down the old wallpaper herself and prepare that surface for painting, too, as long as he thought that was okay.

Lonny looked at my mother as if he didn't know what to say, and she realized it was a question he didn't have to answer. So she said instead, trying to make conversation, "So you know my mother?"

"Yes ma'am. She's real nice."

Yes, she was, said Mom back. She looked at me. I looked at Lonny. It was as simple as that.

The next step, Lonny said, was to work on the floor around the tub from below, from the kitchen.

That night, Jerry looked around right away, noticed the patch on the kitchen ceiling, then started sniffing around everywhere else. I couldn't believe how much like

Dad he was becoming. He went outside and stood under the porch light, looking at all the dirt that had been put in the flowerbed and around the maple tree. He snooped around out the workshop, too, turning on lights and following the muddy tracks from the backyard where Lonny and I had hauled the dirt.

Some time later he came in the kitchen door. Mom was reading a magazine at the table. I was sitting beside her, drawing something.

"Mom, he's been smoking out back, whoever he is," he said. He held up a cigarette butt for her to see.

"Jerry, are you still harping on that?"

"I can do the work, Mom," he said, his voice full of whining.

He flounced out of the room and stomped up the stairs. But the sound of his big boots stopped, so I knew he was just standing up there, waiting for Mom to call him back down. But she had given up doing that years ago.

After some time, he shuffled back down on his own and started acting sorry for how he had behaved. He had his head down and was moping around the kitchen door. He finally came in and stood against the pie safe.

"I want to help, Mom," he said.

I hated to see him begging in front of me.

Mom started turning the pages of her *Family Circle* magazine, turning them automatically, not really reading anything, barely glancing. Then she put down the magazine and looked squarely at him. "I want to know, Jerry," she said, getting that hard look, "did you tell 'somebody' what was in your father's cabin?"

She blamed Jerry for so much in her life. Treated him like a little version of Dad. I felt sorry for him. He wasn't always a bad brother. He was just the oldest, and the oldest always got the worst.

"I did it," I blurted out.

Mom turned to me. "*You* told him? You told Lonny Dunn?" The look on her face was out of this world. The look on Jerry's was about as bad.

She started flipping pages of the magazine. You could hear them practically ripping. At first, she wouldn't look at me. Then she made me tell her the whole story, from the start.

I told her about sneaking off the property. I told her about running into Dunn. I lied a little more and said we didn't plan on stealing anything from Dad's cabin. The whole time, she just sat there. So did Jerry.

"The disappointment you boys put me through," she finally said.

I looked at Jerry. All the belligerence was out of him. There was a lot of something out of me, too.

It was then Mom said, "Jerry you might as well know." She told him Lonny Dunn was working on the house, thanks to Grandma. She told him how he had come recommended.

Jerry sat there, looking socked in the stomach. Lonny Dunn working on our house? That was all he could say over and over.

Mom went back to flipping pages. "I swear. The way things turn out."

The whole time, you could hear the tick-tock of the last old clock in the living room.

"Now, Jerry, if you want to help out around here, I guess you can paint your own room." She looked at me. "You all can."

Jerry wanted to take a light up on the third floor tonight and look at the walls and ceilings, and Mom, to our surprise, said it was a good idea. We could help her move some boxes around while we were up there.

Up the third floor stairs we filed, Jerry holding an old metal desk lamp on the end of an extension cord unraveling behind him. There was already an extension cord running up the stairs, but it was old and stapled down, and rather than mess with the arrangement of old plugs already up there, Mom thought it was better to take up a separate light.

As we went up, light from the desk lamp Jerry carried cast up around the plastered-up walls as if inside a cave. Dad had started work up here before we were born, but never finished. The walls were a swirl of gray and white patches of plaster.

I found a flashlight on the top step and started shining it around. I wanted to paint my room blue, I said. So did Jerry. Mom said a neutral shade would be better for one of the rooms. Eggshell-white or beige. Our brother Robbie would want to pick a color, too, she reminded us, so we all should decide together, to be fair.

The three of us stood there, in the light of the lamp.

"Is *he* coming tomorrow?" Jerry asked.

"Yes, Jerry, *he* is," Mom said right back.

Then Jerry laughed, and it was not his usual cruel laugh, either. It was the laugh of something funny.

story

AND UPON REGAINING THE GARDEN, SHAME

Lisa Kavchak

What a torture the jasmine was that day, Caroline – caressing the undersides of our bellies and parching the lining of our throats as we crouched in the Rhodes' garden hoping to see with our eyes what our ears had been telling us for weeks: Randy had a new girlfriend and was sneaking her up to his room by way of his mother's rose trellis. But what they were *doing* up there – Jesus, the sounds we heard! What lushness, what ecstasy of the senses we imagined him playing upon her as her warbling tongue shivered the stamens of the tea roses' and yes, even their erect thorny spines, for we saw everything with such excruciating intensity that summer – the hummingbirds' nectar-frenzied stasis at the lip of the petunia, the swooning of your just-delivered barn cats as their first milk came down and, the most devastating of all, the drugged eyes of the boys at the lake as Susie Martin, obliviously lost in a book, drew the flat of her palm from rounded hip to golden thigh.

How we took it all in, gluttonous fistful after fistful, and as one, Caroline, as *one*. (For wasn't that our pact, the seal of secret blood we mingled with the dirt of our fort after we'd fooled our mothers for three months straight – *menstruating*! Oh, no, not *us*, never! we'd shriek and giggle and then duck out of range of their prying eyes for yet another month of the child's freedom we knew would be knocked out from under us with such severity we'd turn overnight into the bilious, bleating – and worst of all – *tethered* goats our older sisters had so tragically become.)

But something went wrong that day, a tenseness in your fingertips as I attempted to guide you up from the jasmine and onto the trellis, a subtle then vehement resistance that forced me to prod and yank you up the rungs as the girl's sonorous sighs were steadily muffled, overcome, and then utterly ravished by the most murderous cacophony of human guttering just as we reached Randy's window and we saw . . .well, whatever we'd imagined he'd been doing to her, whatever we'd imagined she'd been *allowing* him to do to her, it certainly wasn't *that*. How could she – how could any girl – ever submit to such convulsive ugliness?

And *of course* I was as shattered as you – no matter how bitterly I later denied it – of course I would have followed your sprinting feet first to your mother's kitchen and then my own, would have spat out with the same ferocity the enormity of our lie had you not raked your nails down my calf in our flight and, at the very moment we'd regained the garden, pinioned me to that trellis with your eyes, because it wasn't until then,

Caroline – no matter how bitterly you still deny it – that I knew the true meaning of shame.

FOUR POEMS

Jesse Lee Kercheval

Gav'rinis

5000 years ago & already religion over
turns religion—

fells a 16 ton menhir
carved with deer a running hare

& hauls it to the shore
onto a barge for the trip

to this shale island
lost among a sea of islands

buries the pictographs inside a fresh dug dolman

covers them
with pounded earth

because *like Islam 3000 years later*

this new faith does not show
its God in pictures

but rather in abstraction
in sweeping curves &

circles inside circles—

God with her daughters
resting in her—

They had come so far—these first human farmers

Plants grew & cows gave birth
when & where they ordered

Everything was possible—everything was new

So the menhir from the old believers
hunters/ gatherers was buried—

then time covered the new religion to

these people
their boats

as time will cover ours—

now we walk to board our boat
& find the tide
dropped
20 feet

leaving our poor boat stranded
in a bay of sticky mud

the earth sleeps
the sea never

so I'm left with time to wonder

why sit in the dark
etching circles into limestone

with nothing
but a sharp quartz pebble?

Why make the ordered marks
already fading on this page?

because you do not draw
a human head
to show the face
of God

Children of Paradise

Paris is an egg. It is *the* egg.
Wide or narrow, it is a ribbon
of pastry, of moonlight, of butter.
Paris is the light
gliding over our eyelids,
sneaking in even when we try
not to see. We know ourselves
through Paris & in this
Paris is as private
as blood & as public
as humiliation in high school. I broke a molar
on a piece of popcorn
watching *Les Enfants du Paradis*
in Paris, watching that luminous cloud Arletty
playing the heroine Garance.
Like the flower, she says
after giving her name. *What flower?* the audience
always murmurs. Me too—
& that's what I love—
the not knowing.
Just as no one in the Paris of the film
can truly know Garance.

But what with the cracked tooth,
watching this film about Paris
in Paris turned out
not to be the rush of paradise
I expected, but instead,
along with Baptise the mime,
I was in agony. Baptise
from his unconsummated love

for Garance. Me from my molar,
from the pain crashing through my nerves,
& for a moment I thought
ammonia & chlorine bleach
had come accidentally together
filling the whole theater
because I was crying,
because I couldn't breathe.

Then Paris
took me out of myself & into the souls
of the stars, filled me with great pity,
with a sense infinite space as poignant actuality,
as the light from the projector
shone over the heads of the audience.
But there is more, much more
to Paris than that. In Paris, life
runs away, is a runaway
at play & passion is everywhere.
Paris dangles all possibilities before us,
clanging as loud as bells. The mind sees
as through a glass--*Heaven.*
The heart sees--as through a moving curtain—
worlds beyond the bones
of everyday.

The Red Balloon

I escaped America in a hot air balloon

the same way my great grandmother
escaped the siege of Paris

I floated out of Florida,
across the iron gray Atlantic, headed for France
land where I was born,

reading waves, stars, finally maps,
looking for the lights
that signal Paris

until by morning
I was drifing past the Tour Eiffel, eye-high,
safe enough

though a few Americans threw ice
fished from their cups
of *Coca-cola.*

The radio talked to me in French
the way it did when I was little
& I tried to understand

like a child
without thinking
without translation
without knowing words are spelled with letters
(but tell me—is that possible?)

is it possible to smooth a scar
to baby skin—

is leaving
ever painless? Is returning?

I honestly don't know
but I did escape America

& let me tell you—
I am never going back.

Isle de Brehat

In this garden enclosed
by a stone wall
on this stone island
where the stone houses
have stone roofs—
my son twists
on a wooden swing

In between cold
rock shore & cold rock
shore, this garden
bleeds w/ roses
the bruised kiss of fuschia
Beyond the wall, in
the low & marshy land
sheep crop the sweet
salt grass

This could be
my stone house—*Ker*cheval
in the land where
ker means home,
It could be my
parents in the cemetery close
inside the church
yard walls—my father
grandfather

lost at sea
lost to war

their faces still young
in the enameled
photographs that grace
the cemetery walls
or hang in honor

in the Chapel of the Rescuers—

resting place for those
who died
searching for
neighbors/other islanders
lost in the slate grey sea.

Who have I saved
lately?—a Breton
300 years gone
from this stone land—
long ago set sail across
the wide and
salty sea?

No one, I admit
at least not
lately
&
catch my son
in my arms, hoping
love—mine or God's—
will be enough save him
First him, then
my husband
& then
me

poem

Blatnoy and the Lawyer

Michael Graves

All you life long and loud,
You working for little for Legal Aid,
Because you idealist and work for oppressed.
Once you file motion
Reducing unjustly imprison crowd
In minority dorm on island of Riker
And you was so proud
Of setting the wictimized loose,
But you only put criminal back on the street
And causing more crime than normally is:
Muggers, robbers, rapers, murders
In every borough increase.
You create revolution in peace of New York,
Even if peace isn't so good.
You like keeper of zoo
Who open the cages of tiger, lion,
Serpent, gorilla, Hispanic and Nigger, Bloods and Crips.
So was no justice for stranger or neighbor,
I know where you live and hear about crime,
Brutal abduction of children, beating of women,
Selling of drugs and shooting of guns,
So was no justice and everyone hate you,
But you was late from you office one night
When one of you wictims rob you and whip you
With pistol beneath crime prewenting light.
You recognize you perp's face,
Because you was advocat release

Before you unconscious and rush to emergency
To surgeon broken bones of you face.
So it was expected you learn you lesson.
People is betting you change or be same.
Now you return we gonna find out.

poetry

from

MEDEA
AND HER WAR MACHINES

Ioan Flora

Translated from the Romanian by Adam J. Sorkin
with Alina Cârâc

Deadly Nightshade

The Battle Commander stood at a table littered with portfolios, dispatches, cups,
quills, inkpots, maps pinpointing citadels – Baradulim and Bel Grando,
Ahandin, Zorio, Zorzanelo and others, a multitude, as far as Burgas,
Pera and Constantinople.
He was engaged in leafing through random chapters
of a massive manuscript inscribed in tendrils of *gotic textualis*,
yet he seemed engrossed by neither contents nor appended illustrations.
What was clear was that he lingered over only the parts about dogs,
"strong and fierce, raised on purpose to be vicious and to bite"
(*per ipsum designum demonstratur*):
lank dogs cloaked in vests of donkey or buffalo hide, bearers of fire
in copper cups; and especially the horseman struggling
in his steel-armor trap, the cavalier, cornered, who endeavors to do battle
against chimeras of barking air but loses his balance,
tumbles heavily to the ground, helpless.
"It's passing strange," the Battle Commander muttered to himself. "Everything
is represented here
as if we fought (and died) in a perfect desert:
no house in sight, no trace of a tent, no river or tree.
Just the dogs' presumptive howl at the moon, ripping shrill
through the dense black sheet."

The Battle Commander drifted into a deep reverie. No images flitted through his mind.
No fancied apparition with six hands, grasping
in each an adder, a torch, the talisman of a hairbrush,
a key, a whip, a dagger.
For some moments, his thoughts turned (inexplicably) to belladonna;
he concentrated on remembering what else the plant is called
that can multiply life, that kills on the spot.

"*Devil's cherry*!" the Battle Commander exclaimed triumphantly,
after the briefest hesitation.

And long ago it was known as *dwale*…
There's also *deadly nightshade*…

How Could Something That Is, Just Vanish?

His temples throbbed again, jagged wrenching palpitations, stomach cramps.
Although he had fought no one, this day he felt defeated –
tomorrow undefeated,
the soil forever black.
The room smelled of garlic and naphthalene,
his flushed cheeks reflected purple in the sliver of mirror glass,
the cube or glass clock on the table,
a perpetually unchanged nature, and always someone else who savors doubts
about well-nigh everything.
(How could something that is just vanish?)

On pale winter evenings, he'd talk about pre-apocalyptic disasters,
about astral cough and mushrooms.
Once in a while
a reminiscence of those rare days
when he drank his beloved with his eyes
(dismembering her, recomposing her in his arms).
The fields where they sought refuge heaved into view, drowned in sweat.

On a Giant Screen

We'd talk for weeks, even though sometimes
we didn't speak a word.
Meanwhile he invented rollerblades and the nail *de luxe*, each
with profound implications – gnostic, financial, existential.

We'd talk for months; gradually the century set on our shoulders
(with amazement and mild distrust, we watched
second after second tick by on a giant screen).
He invented rollerblades and the nail *de luxe*. I racked my brains
with grandiose, shadowy nothings:
instant relief for stress, anger, worry;
mapping the five Europes on a foreign continent;
unconventional cures for sciatica and angina pectoris;
sinking the Balkan powder keg
to the bottom of a dead sea.

We'd talk. Simply talk.

The Handbook of the Postmodern Knight

1

"At war, knights stifle all fear," wrote
the squire and biographer of Don Pero Niño,
the unconquered knight of the late 14th century.
"They expose themselves to any peril, they squander their bodies
for love of adventure, they grind their lives away
on the pyre of adamantine death.
Sour bread, moldy biscuits, meat cooked or raw;
today food in abundance, tomorrow blackest fasting;
little or no wine;
water from rain barrel or pond;
shelter of dry branches or tent under stormy sky;
hard bed, poor sleep
stiffly dressed in plate armor, nailed fast inside iron, they bless their enemy
a short arrow's flight away."

2

A poem of the period:
"A knight is a worm,
a worm worming
in an iron cocoon."

The knight rides in a saddle that juts high
like a ridge on the horse's spine, with spurs
attached to stirrups that hang so low
he is nearly standing.
He strikes first with his lance.
He carries a sword wielded in two hands and
an eighteen-inch dagger;
also, attached to his saddle or carried by his squire,
a long sword that he hurls as if throwing a javelin;
likewise, a battle-axe with a spike behind the curved blade,
and a mace with sharp, ridged edges,
the weapon favored by warrior bishops and abbots.

A knight is a worm,
worming
in an iron cocoon.

3

Courage, strength, skill made a knight *preux*.
Honor, loyalty, courtesy, politeness, generosity
defined the ideal chivalric behavior, along with courtly love –
genius for leadership.

4

The troubadour Bertrand de Born:
"My heart fills with gladness when I behold
castles besieged,
palisades breached,
a multitude of fallen vassals,
horses of the dead and wounded straying to the four corners of the earth.
My heart fills with gladness when I behold
men of the best lineage pitch into battle,
purposing only to break bright heads,
chop off young limbs."

5

In an ambush, Don Pero Niño was struck by one arrow
that pierced gorget and gorge
and by another through his nostrils.
What most disturbed him, however,
were several lance stumps stuck in his shield,
a radiant sun in its center.

6

In the treatises, in the *Codex Latinus Parisinus*, nothing gets said
about captive noblemen
(oh, berserk hydra with ninety-nine heads!
oh, insatiable swarm of locusts,
shadow darkening life in this world,
total eclipse at noon!),
or about hands tied behind the back, a rope around the neck,
about throat-cutting or the indignity of trekking
week after week,
barefoot and bareheaded, clothed
in a beggar's shirt of hemp.

Ransom is not mentioned either, nor the price of knocking at its door:
twelve Irish falcons, each accompanied by a falconer,
falconer's gloves embroidered with pearls and precious stones,
twelve hunting hounds,
twelve thoroughbred stallions caparisoned with harness
bearing the coat-of-arms of the duke's house,
saddle trappings in the form of golden rosettes,
purple Reims cloth or tapestries of Arras depicting
the history of Alexander the Great, for instance – everything to soften
the heart of an enemy
as terrible as he is greedy and vengeful.
In the treatises, in the *Codex Latinus Parisinus*, war machines
are represented by the thousands,
and above all the Victory that the Battle Commander will enjoy,
our brave and righteous soldier of Christ,
be it at the very end of the world,
whirling in an ultrasonic spin, inexpressibly deceitful.

7

La Tour Landry, a nobleman of high estate who had fought in many campaigns, was, contrary to the customs of chivalry, a man who loved his wife and who sometimes was known to enjoy sitting in his garden, *luxuriating in the song of the thrush in April*.

8

For a knight, to travel by carriage was
against the principles of chivalry, and never under any circumstances
did he ride a mare.

Bareheaded, Riding a White Mare

It looked like we had taken Vidin and Rahova. No, I wasn't dreaming
or seeing with the bloodshot eyes of the mind,
the chronicler Paulus Sanctinus confessed one August morning.
The blue sky showed no intention of falling, and if it fell,
in any case, French knights were ready to prop it up
on the points of noble lances.
They had ridden into a skirmish on the hill, not far from the Fortress;
Turkish spahis enveloped their flanks.
Down on the plain, the Commander and his allies fought like frothing boars,
the French knights kept piling up around them in mounds of the dead,
and withal, caution had bowed before vainglory and the faltering
mystique of valor.
A delicate balance between the living and the dead still seemed possible,
but then a two-faced schismatic with a thousand horsemen
came to the timely assistance of the Turk (a direct descendant of Alexander the Great!),
with the result that the heavens from the Danube to Avignon soon hung with mourning.

It looked like our master, the Battle Commander, slipped from his saddle
under the heavy onslaught of spears and yatagans. But immediately he remounted
a nag and rode backwards to the bank of the river
and through the water to the confused ship
floating down the Danube.
When it came to escaping, yes, he made his escape – bareheaded, riding a white mare.

About Raising the Waters to the Heights

1

Once again, as if nailed to this oak bench, I sit at the oak table
in the kitchen garden, pensively watching
the neat rows of tomatoes, garlic, cabbage,
the dill that has no intention of growing
under my eye greedy for the real.

As I have said, at the low table I leaf through random chapters of
the massive document where the author explains,
in the most minute detail,
how a truly enlightened Battle Commander can subdue
a walled city, however proud, defiant, hostile:
"Without the water of the river that courses through the city, the mills are doomed,
and along with them, the tanners' trade as well as the wool and dye shops;
soon the city's populace must decide to yield to the greater power
and be grateful with obedience."

About the water, about drawing it off and depositing it somewhere at the heights,
the old author writes that it will sparkle with sun because
"it will thereby have been restored whence it originated."
And about the water that turns the wheel, having fixed upon the axle
the bellows that fan hot coals in the forges, one may also say that
it will be of practical advantage in the churches
"for sounding the organs and giving praise
to the Lord."

2

The oak bench, the coffee that cooled long ago,
the cabbage, tomatoes, dill,
the Battle Commander preparing at leisure
(in Timisoara, it seems to me)
for the impressive (and likewise, as will be judged later on,
the definitive) Crusade,
the dill, the wine grapes nowhere close to ripe, the neat rows of tomatoes.
His fogged-up eyeglasses,
the hill which, so they once believed,
had tumbled into the valley out of the clear blue sky
(depending on how you interpret the eternity of the moment!),

the dill, the acacias with their cascades if yellow flowers,
the wild apricot trees bent low with fruit,
the rows of tomatoes,
September twenty-fifth,
Nicopolis,
Anno Domini 1396.

I sit on this oak bench, at the oak table
in the kitchen garden:
crickets, horseflies, the rains soon to come, the forest
(not the hill) set in motion,
the Doberman Le Duc gnawing the afternoon away on a sheep's shank-bone,
Paul and Doina who are supposed to arrive any moment,
the apple tree in full bloom,
the Sauvignon in my torpid glance, frosted with mist,
a sparkle in the dusk.


Ceithre ealaiontoiri cun lea dair
Ceannans mor a criocnu.
Usaidteas cuig priomh-datanni:
dearg-luide dearg; dui-mianrac
le gealacan uibe; glas-copar;
corcra-duilleog de planda as tiorta meanmuiri:

A Page from the Book o'Kells

by Ronan Coyle

The text says: It took four illustrators to complete the Book of Kells (an leábhair ceannais mór). Five principal colours were used: Red – red lead; Yellow – egg yolk; Green – copper; Purple – plant leaves from the Mediterranean.

The artist used the four illustrators with those five colours to spell out the first word of the passage. He included the main devices that were used in Celtic strapwork, which are: abstract strapwork; those derived from people (their facial hair mostly, and one extremly twisty arm); animals (various birds); and plants (which are rarely used in Celtic illustrated manuscripts because the branching stems create problems in the 'over-under' rules of strapwork). Although he wrote there were five colours used, he mentioned only four of them because halfway through the text he realised he was running out of space.

The blue birds highlight the letter forms of the first word. Here he had to use exotic breeds of birds because all nature in Ireland is a kind of greyish brown.

Materials: The artist drew his page with markers, which do not stand the test of time well, so he tried to enhance the colouring in Photoshop without making it look too garish. The materials were just markers on normal paper. The preparation consisted of doing a few smaller roughs to figure out the knotwork strategy, then he scaled it up to the final image size (15x13 inches). Because the marked ink seeps under the paper pulp, the pencil lines were easily erased without disturbing the colours.

A detail follows.

essay

STUPID HISTORY,
Or The Past in Black and White

Robert Castle

Given: teenagers are indifferent to history or, what amounts to the same, feel history is utterly useless subject matter.

Given: teenagers in high school must be taught at least one, possibly two years of history, probably American History and/or World Cultures.

Given: theoretical and conceptual discussions in high school generate little or no interest.

¶

I start many History courses by asking two questions: "What is history?" "Why should we study history?" Students answer perfunctorily, from lack of interest and from my insistence on answers. Responses fall into several categories:

History is the totality of events that have happened up to the present moment.

*History, one way or another, is manipulated (*ergo*, unreliable if not mostly lies).*

History repeats itself.

History is necessary for humans to avoid making the same mistakes (not really an answer to the question and is usually said by those who believe this is an answer I'm looking for).

The first response represents student logic more than anything else. It seems reasonable to assume that history is the sum of all that has happened before. The history they will study happened "before." There are no courses called "Future history." The logic extends to the events themselves. For example: when a candidate wins the most votes, he wins the election. Sometimes the frail student is logic so easy to crack that there's no real sport left, as, for example, when I discuss the electoral college in the elections of 1800, 1824, 1876, and 1888. Nor have they absorbed the election of 2000 to aid their understanding of the "college which doesn't graduate anyone," let alone to anticipate that what they see is not what they will get.

But I must return to the original thesis and take an elliptical route. I say that only an infinitesimal number of events happening to mankind are part of history. "Elliptical" because I have invited them to misunderstand me. They believe I am saying that most

things that have happened are insignificant. *I am*, and more: most lives have been insignificant!

I don't clarify immediately. I prefer that they see the sharp edge of the concept I'm flinging at them. Or, at least, they think it sharp, and duck – that is, not ask any questions. Rarely do I get a chance to toss their self-esteem into a shit pile. On another day it would seem a reckless act, as if I had smacked their deadened faces (especially the dead-eyed faces of first period).

Those who embrace the "totality of events" history use it to justify not studying history. It must be a hopeless task, they reason, to try to know everything. There are too many facts. Other students are motivated by getting "good grades," despite the hopelessness of the task, but we will not be concerned now or ever with student grades as a measure of anything (throw that onto the parent shit pile). I would rather have those who did not study.

I clarify my remarks about the relative significance of everything by pointing out that "History" derives from the Greek word for story, and that the Father of this kind of history is Herodotus. Stories tend to be dramatic and the events told to us, inside or outside the History class, would be the kind people thought worthy of remarking about. Events stand out, for many reasons, and are told and re-told. The mass of events students had assumed was history actually have been selected and refined and made significant by the fact that they were remembered above other events. Significance is chosen. History is chosen.

Narrowing history to accounts, stories, and interpretations of past events leads us neatly to the second student definition: History is manipulated. Either we are hearing the winner's version of events (non-winners include native populations and colonized peoples especially), or the accounts are little more than public relations for the United States or Europe or Japan. In Students in particular fear being manipulated, by parents, the school principal, and teachers, as well as by any source which might taint their original thoughts. Some reflexively reject anything coming their way, adopting a radical skepticism toward a society which every moment is trying to get their attention, money, love, and votes. Where history, for those who sympathize with the oppressed, appears to be part of the oppression, and the History teacher becomes the spokesperson for the oppressors.

I will not necessarily fight the students' definition here but try to take the skepticism one step further. Isn't everything we say or do, at some level, a form of manipulation? Few students agree. They only see the obvious bits of manipulation. I persist. Isn't speech an attempt to construct a reality for someone else, a reality with which we want the other person to agree? If so, history is no worse or better than love, religion, business, sports, the sciences, etc. Analyzing historical events, understanding how peoples have understood reality in the past, why they thought these realities were superior to other realities, might take us a long way to becoming less easily manipulated.

By the time I get to the third definition, *history repeating itself*, the theoretical exercise begins to repeat on me! "History repeating itself" and "those who don't study history are condemned to repeat it" are the most fondly received ideas in history class. Students confidently ask whether I subscribe to "History repeating itself." "No, I do not," I say firmly. "Nor do I believe studying or knowing history prevents people from repeating the same historical mistakes."

Only to select classes will I direct the second part of the statement. Again, the attempt, as before, is to outrun student skepticism. To make them breathless before a more imposing task. History, in fact, is more difficult than they would have imagined in their worst dreams. Then, again, history is no more imposing than life. Speaking of which, outside of history, in life, how often do we learn from our mistakes? Put another way, do we not recognize how heavily humans invest in a particular way of doing things, and how very difficult it is for a person to alter a course that may have started in infancy or, at least, early childhood? Why expect history to teach us anything, anything we will learn? In fact, those most attentive to historical matters, historically, have been troublemakers and people nursing grudges! In the history classroom, we assume that this past is one we can deal with or has led to a situation in the present that seems desirable. This assumption bespeaks the status quo and the Establishment How did we get to this ideal today from times of a fumbling democracy – "democracy" as explicitly defined in American History as the maximum level of participation by the people in the process of political change? How did America develop into a world power? In essence, we view the world from an Americo-centric vantage point.

In one stroke, I have apparently agreed with a fervent minority who believe history is manipulative. Worse, I seemed to have given the majority of students a reason not to pay attention in my History classes. To deepen this impression, I add that our understanding of the past has done little or nothing to help us proceed into the future, and may have set us back. Learning the facts is one thing; applying what is learned another.; and remembering the past has been a waste of time.

"You're a History teacher," they might respond to what I have just said, "you can't believe that."

¶

More meaningful responses to historical events by students occur unexpectedly. Meaningful, in that their responses distill definite feelings toward the past that leave out theories or schemes. The class studies the usual abominations and atrocities: battles with tens of thousands of casualties; forcible conversions to one religion or another; assassinations of benevolent rulers; irrational responses to plagues; caste and class systems;

ad nauseam. Inevitably, someone remarks "that was stupid" or "those people were stupid." This teenage reflex, admittedly, cringes from anything in life remotely different to her mind from what she already knows. Yet, embodied in the "stupid" remark are qualities of mind shared by many:

–incredulity over past events and the customs of foreign cultures

–intolerance of past stupidities and wrongs

–they, the students, could never be as remotely stupid as those they consider stupid

–our era isn't as stupid as past stupid eras.

Unarguably, many past events are stupid because the world conformed to codes that were extraordinarily unfair to blacks, women, Indians, non-western cultures, etc. Certainly, they aren't stupidities a teacher could defend or justify, save for the rationalization that "they are products of those times." These indefensible attitudes and actions in the past make history a tough "sell" to students. What can they, they suppose, learn from such bigoted times, as though narrow attitudes and intolerance poison all aspects of past history and culture? Didn't George Washington have slaves? And why they should learn about Ferdinand and Isabella, who started the Inquisition and banished the Jews from Spain? Obviously, they can't respect war makers like Napoleon and Alexander the Great, when many teachers spread the gospel that peace is the ultimate value of civilized people.

Historical stupidity alone, however, does not evoke "That was stupid." Incestuous practices, celibacy and licentiousness, and outdated customs either automatically repel them. National ideologies or missions, such as Manifest Destiny, seems beyond my power to explain. Far be it from me to defend the dynastic marriages of the Hapsburgs. Or the Spanish monarchy's insistence on marriages to first cousins, when it appeared Church Law prohibited such marriages, *and* the "fruit" of these marriages ended the Spanish Hapsburg line. Hell, it seems more than a little stupid!

No, my inclination to upset or disturb the students grows in proportion to the level of obviousness of their views and interpretations. This level rises to flood conditions when two topics are broached: war and slavery.

Who would defend either?

I wouldn't, but students – despite insisting on being non-judgmental – function in a black-and-white world, and my attempts to explain obnoxious institutions sound like briefs justifying if not approving those institutions. War and slavery are bad. Skip the discussion. Let's move on to less complicated moments or to something we can feel good about. Why, I wonder, do I bother to pursue the very path that stimulates their frustration and anger with the past?

¶

Occasionally, I show Hollywood films in class. One-quarter to a third of them are not in color. It's interesting to hear the students' responses to characters in some of the black-and-white films. It's as though the world depicted in the 'Thirties and 'Forties was ludicrous in style and emotion. Their disrespect bleeds into other of their judgments about the past. They often wonder aloud why this guy or woman would do something that, to them, seems so obviously avoidable. You have characters dying in a spooky mansion yet none of the survivors seem to stay together. Students often define the past--history--as they see the black-and-white world depicted in these films. What is contemporary, modern, is in color.

What is their "black-and-white" thinking? Women were oppressed in the past. European and American whites are racist. America is the greatest nation on earth (this is spoken by adults who use it as a mantra to fend off a world they fear). Wars are bad. The Church should distribute all its billions of dollars to the poor. Countries should print money so that all people will have enough to spend. Hitler was pure evil. It is as if the mental syntax rejects the slightest equivocation, and our inherited terminology – *liberal, conservative, sexist, racist,* etc – have become obsolete concepts that hinder the defeat of the very things those who use the terms want to see eliminated from the world.

Can you blame the student for thinking history is nothing more than stupid compared to the educated ideologue who wants to make history more than it is? Taking a cue from the students I flip their thoughts and allow them to discover her own ignorance.

"Stupid History" temporarily acts as an antidote to ideologies.

¶

The first lesson of Stupid History deals with Thomas Jefferson and slavery. Much has been written on, and many have debated, the subject: op-ed pieces, an *Atlantic Monthly* cover article, the Oprah Winfrey Show. Many thinkers want to deny Jefferson his accomplishments *because* he owned slaves. For them, Jefferson actually serves as the paradigm? of all the Founding Fathers who owned slaves, or those who believed even remotely that blacks were inferior to whites. They remember that such beliefs also occur in Lincoln's and Woodrow Wilson's speeches and positions. The crux of the torment lies in Jefferson's apparent inability to follow through on his Enlightened ideas of freedom, which have become snarled in the barbarity of keeping slaves and fathering children by Sally Hemings. Why indeed did he not renounce his plantation heritage?

Jefferson's actions seem stupid because he was intelligent enough to pluck himself from his dilemma. In other words, he knew the right thing to do, and he would not do it. We would like to think that we could have done what he did not do. At the core of our

wishful thinking lies the premise that it would have been easy for him to free his slaves. How easy is it to do the right thing, when that very thing strikes at the core of your society's sense of order and decorum? Put another way, when you resist something that a society cherishes or sees as a fundamental duty, that society might issue a severe penalty or retribution. However, the race issue is, simply, too emotionally volatile for the History teacher to defend Jefferson amidst his southern plantations. So I must search for an analogy for the force of Southern society, an unfeeling, unsympathetic entity that only knows self-interest based on the slavery system.

What is the thing that our own society could not function without, that high school students must have, yet whose problems they are aware of?

The car.

I ask the students to consider a hypothetical situation, set two hundred years hence, roughly the same time that has passed since Jefferson's era. Avoiding the apocalyptic scenario of the Greenhouse Effect, I portray a world suffering from horrible pollution. So badly has the atmosphere been poisoned, that humans now realize that the use of fossil fuels, especially those refined for gasoline, have caused the greatest damage. I note that the exhaustion of fossil fuels didn't happen and humans were not artificially prompted to give up their vehicles, though once in a while, someone is found hiding a car or illegally riding around the countryside and sent to jail for these environmental hate crimes. In schools, learning about the twentieth century, the century of the car, students are more critical of those who owned cars than they are of nations that deployed or even used nuclear weapons. How stupid we were, especially after the 1960's! How could we have driven cars knowing full well the poisonous consequences of our activities? How could we have rejected the flawed but energy efficient vehicles and purchase *en masse* SUVs? We couldn't even bring ourselves to call cars a necessary evil.

Can we defend ourselves? Why can't we give up cars or modify our driving habits? Would all the accomplishments in the 20th and 21st centuries be wiped out because of the pollution catastrophe in the 24th? Martin Luther King and Jonas Salk are implicated for having driven cars. Lee Ioccoca becomes the Adolf Hitler to the environment. Gandhi might be the only one who would emerge untarnished by stupid history.

In the classroom, there's a difference between the nods of assent to my analogy and the actual understanding of it. Mostly, students are concerned about whether the material will appear in a test. I would put it in a test if I believed that parroting a response in an essay amounted to a form of understanding. I may remind them later of the Jefferson / slavery/ pollution analogy the next time I make another incursion into stupid history.

Nor do they have to wait very long for this. Inevitably, we study a war – the Hundred Years War (most stupid only because it lasted 116 years), the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars (Napoleon himself gets many stupid calls, but so does the Reign of Terror

for cutting off heads), World War I, or the Punic Wars. There are very few things the students would go to war for. Certainly, there are even fewer things to die for. In that vein, *kamikaze* pilots are certainly more stupid than Napoleon. Likewise, few would ever want to be bossed around by a pharaoh, caesar, czar, or kaiser, and many students believe that no nation or empire has the right to rule over another people. Then, again, given the inertia of middle-class existence, it sometimes seems difficult for them to imagine why anyone in the past did anything except sit around and enjoy life. Hell, why can't everyone let everyone else alone?

Their responses here generally irritate me, if only because they seem blind to the belligerence manifested sometimes in their own behavior. Do they understand how little they really get along among themselves? Do they realize how much their own culture is reviled in other parts of the world, so much so that some people would die to see us suffer? (The recent terrorist attack on the World Trade Center dumbfounded everyone precisely because it was a suicide attack – gee, do they hate us that much? – and I'm sure in a few generations the attack will be viewed by students as stupid)? "Saving human lives," "avoiding suffering," and "thinking about the children first" are three principles to which most students subscribe. These are simply inarguable – they love the feeling of being impregnable to the teacher (or any adult) who lives in a world of expediency. Being for "peace," for example, means being against the forces which might take one's life involuntarily, especially since there are few causes to die for! Besides, who would be passionate enough to throw away one's life, especially for causes that appear to have no chance of winning, or are simply unfathomable.

I feel compelled, finally, to take a strong pro-war stance.

You can have all your stupid wars, I tell the students, but there is one that was inarguably necessary. I turn to the American Civil War. No options were available in the 1860s. No matter what Lincoln's original intent was for saving the union, slavery had to end. But wouldn't slavery have ended eventually? Wasn't the southern economy doomed? (Charles Beard's history textbook back in the 1920s propounded this.) Was it worth over five hundred thousand lives and the innumerable casualties?

Yes. Slavery had to end.

Were there any signs of the South's economy changing? Given that there were fifteen slave states, this meant that a Union of sixty states would have been needed to pass a constitutional amendment. If anything, the South was becoming more psychotic over the slavery issue in the 1850s than it had been thirty years before.

Slavery was not going to end without a war.

I hastily inform the students that, yes, this is an interpretation, not a fact, but it's an interpretation I feel quite assured about passing along to them. I reiterate that it was as necessary a war as had ever been fought – forget about the religious or philosophical

niceties about a "just" or "unjust" war. Lincoln, who knew better than anyone else, knew that only a war would end slavery. He was genius enough to maneuver the South into firing the first shot. As Garry Wills wrote: "Lincoln defined what the Civil War would be for most Americans."

As the Civil War was necessary for America, so were the Crusades for western civilization. Recently, in the age of multiculturalism, the Crusades have taken their lumps. In a secular age, religious wars look particularly stupid (even the peace-spouting John Paul II has apologized for them). Besides, with *jihads* being called from every corner of the Middle East and the subsequent condemnations of those calls by Christians and Muslims alike, defending the Catholic holy wars would seem particularly stupid. And the Crusades originally were meant to bolster Church power, as well as to take a few frustrated barons out of the medieval European picture. The long-term effects, however, caused increase in trade and, unintentionally, a surge in monarchical power that directly led to the *decrease of Church power*. No amount of apologizing or self-criticism will undo the incredible luxuries, comforts, and first amendment liberties we endure today. The Crusades forced Europe to make vital contacts outside of western civilization. It's inconceivable that Europe would have grown out of feudalism so quickly without its holy wars. You cannot have the luxury of condemning the Crusades and having no Crusades as well.

¶

Curiously, the apparently high regard many students and parents have for their own time, the present day, contradicts the other main currents nurturing their concept of the world: namely, the world is a mess and values if not institutions and morals are in absolute disarray and confusion. In a very peculiar way, we are witnessing a feat of intellectual magic. Not only do we feel superior to the past but also to the present. Few people are genuinely respected except some obvious names: the Pope, Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, and the Dalai Lama. Those fragments of the past that are respected enter the same present-day pantheon as all other obvious ones. History transforms into a playground of conflicting cultural ideologies that offer new plans and standards every ten years.

There seems nothing left for a teacher but to battle what seems obvious to students and discover what is not so obvious in the classroom. Perhaps the occasional student utterances will stimulate some tangible history instruction and turn stupid history back on itself. Then, hope for the best.

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THE AMBASSADOR'S STORY

Merrill D. Peterson

from

"STARVING ARMENIANS":
AMERICA AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE, 1915-1930 AND AFTER

Henry Morgenthau, newly appointed United States ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, sailed through the Golden Horn, where East meets West, to take up residence in the embassy at Constantinople in the fall of 1913. On the city's crowding hills rose the Byzantine palaces, the mosques and churches, the splendid monuments, the gilded domes and soaring minarets of the centuries-old capital. After two event-making years, Morgenthau would return to the United States as the man who alerted his country, indeed the world, to the barbaric crime committed by Turkey against the Armenian people in their midst.

When President Woodrow Wilson, newly elected, first proposed the Turkish post to Morgenthau, the finance chairman of the successful Democratic campaign, he had declined it. He preferred a policy-making place, perhaps at Treasury or Commerce, in the new administration. The present ambassador in Constantinople, Oscar S. Straus, whose Jewish father had emigrated to the United States from Germany, as Morgenthau himself had done, had served in the post for so long, under so many administrations, that it assumed the character of a Jewish fiefdom in the United States government, as if it were, said Morgenthau, "the only diplomatic post to which a Jew can aspire."[1] Wilson, in fact, wanted a Jew at that station because of the paramount importance of Palestine and its Jewish colonists in the Ottoman Empire. American interests in the Near East still centered on the protection of Christian missionaries and affiliated schools, colleges, seminaries, and hospitals. But on the eve of the European war the empire was in turmoil from the Adriatic to the Caucasus and from the Euphrates to the Nile. In 1908 a party of "Young Turks," organized as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), deposed the autocratic sultan Abdul Hamid II and introduced parliamentary government under a reactivated constitution. "Turkey for the Turks" became the rallying cry of the nationalist revolution that rose up in succession to the dying multinational empire of the Sublime

[1] Henry Morgenthau, ALL IN A LIFE-TIME (Garden City, N.Y., 1922), 160.

Porte. Many European Jews, meanwhile, inspired by Zionist aspirations for a national homeland, migrated to Palestine. Germany joined the race of the European powers to control the economic development of the Near East, and Emperor William II courted the favor of the CUP. In these circumstances, the State Department instructed Ambassador Straus to transfer his efforts from the protection of missionary endeavors and institutions to matters of economic development: railroad and oil concessions and advancement of commerce.[2]

Traveling in Europe in the summer of 1913, the fifty-seven-year-old Morgenthau, whose most striking feature was a trim Van Dyke beard, remained eager for a career in public service after making a fortune as a New York lawyer, banker, and real estate investor. In Paris he met with Ambassador Myron Herrick, who warmly advised him to take the Turkish post, and also with Stephen S. Wise, the charismatic rabbi of the Free Synagogue in New York, to which Morgenthau belonged. Wise was returning from a tour of Palestine, and he emphasized the service a man of Morgenthau's talents might render the Jews there from the only American seat of importance in the Near East. He was persuasive.

Upon returning home Morgenthau advised the president of his change of mind. The nomination went forward to the Senate and Morgenthau was quickly confirmed. During a leisurely Atlantic crossing in the fall, he became acquainted with a group of Protestant missionaries returning from leave to their duties in the Near East. "I had hitherto had a hazy notion that missionaries were sort of over-zealous advance agents of sectarian religion and that their principal activity was the proselytizing of believers in other faiths," the New Yorker later wrote of this encounter. "To my surprise and gratification, these men gave me a very different picture. They were, I discovered, in reality advance agents of civilization."[3] That proved a useful lesson for the new ambassador.

After presenting his credentials to the Porte and meeting Sultan Muhammad V, Abdul Hamid's younger brother and nominal successor, the new ambassador made acquaintance with the power behind the throne, the cabinet ministers Talaat, Enver, and Djemal, the oligarchic triumvirate of the CUP. Talaat, with the title of minister of the interior, was the ablest and the most powerful of the trio, Morgenthau would conclude. Enver, minister of war, formerly military attaché in Berlin, affected the dashing style of the German officer corps. He and Morgenthau often rode horseback together. On the walls of his office Enver hung portraits of Napoleon and Frederick the Great. Djemal,

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[2] Oscar Straus, UNDER FOUR ADMINISTRATIONS FROM CLEVELAND TO TAFT (Boston, 1922), 297.

[3] Morgenthau, ALL IN A LIFE-TIME, 176.

minister of marine, was the mildest of the triumvirs. Morgenthau could not help seeing these men in his own mind as political bosses on the model of Tammany Hall.[4]

While thus getting acquainted with the Young Turks, he introduced himself as well to the American community in Constantinople, especially the missionary-educators William W. Peet, the representative of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; Dr. Caleb Frank Gates, president of Robert College; and Dr. Mary Mills Patrick, president of the Woman's College. The ambassador was struck by the anomalies of his position: "Here was I, a Jew, representing the greatest Christian nation of the world at the capital of the chief Mohammedan nation." In a speech before the Chamber of Commerce of Constantinople he left no doubt about his true mission. It was not about sewing machines, petroleum, and tobacco, though business could not be neglected. It was rather to make his embassy a salient of American civilization in the Near East. It was, he declared, "to foster the permanent civilizing work of the Christian missions, which so gloriously exemplified the American spirit at its best."[5]

The coming of the European war presented new challenges to the ambassador. German designs envisioned Turkey as a vassal state. "Deutschland über Allah" was the way an embassy aide put it.[6] The Germans quickly closed the Dardanelles, thus bottling up the Russian enemy, though not before Germany had sneaked two of its cruisers into the Black Sea. The Ottomans then abrogated the "capitulations," which were the treaty arrangements that protected foreigners and their enterprises by placing them under the jurisdiction of their own countries' legal systems and exempting them from Ottoman laws. The churches and colleges and other American institutions were thus placed in jeopardy. Then, in November, Turkey entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. Given its strategic position, it at once became the Reich's most valuable ally. Morgenthau began to see a good deal of the German ambassador, Hans von Wangenheim, an imposing cigar-smoking Prussian. The Turkish military establishment had been reorganized along German lines. Morgenthau was mistaken, however, in supposing that it was controlled by Berlin.[7] War broke out between the eastern empires in October. The sultan then proclaimed a jihad, a holy war against the infidel; and Morgenthau thought he saw Germany's hand in this appeal to religious hatred. Fortunately, although the proclamation reverberated in the mosques, it fizzled ingloriously. Yet, Morgenthau later wrote, "it started passions aflame that afterward spent themselves in the massacres of the

[4] Henry Morgenthau, AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY (Garden City, N.Y., 1918), chap. 2; Lewis Einstein, INSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE A Diplomatist's Diary during the Dardanelles Expedition (London, 1917), 1.

[5] Morgenthau, ALL IN A LIFE-TIME, 209, 203.

[6] Einstein, INSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE, 2.

[7] See Ulrich Trumpener, GERMANY AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1914-1918 (Princeton, 1968), 13 and passim.

Armenian and other subject peoples." Early in 1915 the Allied fleets attempted to force the straits at the Dardanelles and capture Constantinople. The campaign, with every promise of success, failed in March, however, and the subsequent attack on the Gallipoli peninsula met the same fate. Morgenthau wrote mournfully, "Had the Allied fleets once passed the defenses at the straits, the administration of the Young Turks would have come to a bloody end." The embassy aide Lewis Einstein added that "the main sufferers" of the defeat would be the Armenians.[8]

The Armenians, numbering over 2.5 million, were scattered throughout Asia Minor. Perhaps half lived in Russian Armenia, lodged in the Caucasus in the shadow of Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark was said to have come to rest. A million inhabited the six "homeland" *vilayets* (provinces) on the tablelands of eastern Anatolia; others belonged to so-called Little Armenia, in ancient Cilicia, between the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea; and a substantial colony of Armenians transacted most of the business of the great metropolis, Constantinople. The Armenians were Christians; Armenia, in fact, was the first nation, in 301 A.D., to adopt Christianity. They had been persecuted through the ages, yet they survived; and in the nineteenth century, responding to currents of modernity and availing themselves of the education offered by Christian missionaries, mainly from America, they became forerunners of Westernization in the Near East. The Armenian massacres, as they were commonly called, had their startling beginning in 1894-95, during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, the Red Sultan, and went on sporadically for years, before and after the Young Turk revolution, which the Armenians had greeted with high hopes, only to see them utterly crushed in 1915.

Early in that year, Djevdet Bey, brother-in-law of Enver Pasha, the war minister, came to the eastern walled city of Van with a commission to annihilate the Armenians. They made up three-fifths of the inhabitants. Van was a pretty city on a lake and the home of a well-staffed Protestant mission with schools, a college, and a hospital. Feelings were tense because of the war. The Armenians were naturally drawn to the Russians, an Allied power, nearby in the Caucasus, while the Turks demanded their loyalty and their service. Hostilities broke out in April, after the withdrawal of Russian troops. The Armenians, behind the walls of the old city, came under fiery siege by the Turkish army. When the siege was lifted after twenty-seven days, most of the Armenians were dead. Van had become a Golgotha. The Russians returned with nothing to do but to clean up the place. According to Dr. Clarence Ussher, director of the hospital, they cremated 55,000 bodies.[9]

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[8] Morgenthau, AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY, 161-70, 195; Einstein, INSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE, vii.

[9] Clarence D. Ussher, AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN IN TURKEY (Boston, 1917), 280; Morgenthau, AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY, 299.

Comparatively few Armenians—a respectable few—died in battle during the war. Most were victims of a brutal system of murder known as "deportation," for which the war was a smoke screen. Typically, in one village after another, the gendarmes would go from house to house, confiscate any arms, and take off the men, allegedly for work details, then instruct the women and children to prepare for a journey on foot to some unnamed destination. The men, of course, never returned. They were beaten to death or hideously dispatched in more barbaric fashion. The women and children formed long caravans pointed in the general direction of the Syrian desert or the Mesopotamian valley. Across the ambassador's desk in Constantinople came reports from United States consuls, missionaries, and other eyewitnesses. (Morgenthau's Armenian dragoman, Arshag K. Schmavonian, translated those written in his own language.) As Morgenthau later described it:

From thousands of Armenian cities and villages these despairing caravans now set forth; they filled all the roads leading southward; everywhere, as they moved on, they raised a huge dust, and abandoned debris, chairs, blankets, bedclothes, household utensils, and other impedimenta marked the course of the procession. When the caravans first started, the individuals bore some semblance to human beings; in a few days, however, the dust of the road plastered their faces and clothes, the mud caked their lower members, and the slowly advancing mobs, frequently bent with fatigue and crazed by the brutality of the "protectors," resembled some new and strange animal species. Yet for the better part of six months, from April to October, 1915, practically all the highways in Asia Minor were crowded with these unearthly bands of exiles. . . . In these six months, as far as can be ascertained, about 1,200,000 people started on this journey.[10]

In June, Leslie Davis, consul at Harpoot, a city of 30,000 perched on a hill above the broad plain, wrote distressingly, "Another method has been found to destroy the Armenian race. This is no less than the deportation of the entire Armenian population . . . from all six vilayets. A massacre would be humane in comparison with it. In a massacre many escape, but a wholesale deportation of this kind in this country means a lingering and perhaps more dreadful death for nearly everyone."[11]

During the summer and fall shocking accounts of the massacres surfaced in American newspapers and magazines. "Armenian Horrors Grow" and "Tell of Horrors Done in Armenia" were among the headlines in the *New York Times*. Readers already emotionally drained by Belgian atrocities were scarcely prepared for something ten times worse. For some the stories smelled of Allied propaganda. But after James Bryce, the English author and statesman, former ambassador to the United States, made a dramatic

[10] Morgenthau, AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY, 313-14.

[11] Leslie Davis to Henry Morgenthau, June 30, 1915, quoted in Armen Hairopetian, "Race Problems and the Armenian Genocide: The State Department File," *Armenian Review* 37 (Spring 1984): 48.

and solidly based report in the House of Lords, Americans sat up and took notice. Bryce's authority was unimpeachable. Forty years earlier he had ascended Mount Ararat, then published a travel journal, *Transcaucasia and Ararat*, that practically introduced the Western mind to Armenia. In 1915 Bryce joined with a rising young historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, in compiling a pamphlet, *Armenian Atrocities*. The following year, at the request of the Foreign Office, he collaborated on a massive blue book, TREATMENT OF THE ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, for civic enlightenment. In both Great Britain and the United States Armenian relief funds sprang up almost overnight.

Morgenthau, meanwhile, confronted the Young Turks with the evidence in his bulging Armenian file. They had, he believed with German prodding, revived Abdul Hamid's satanic enterprise of resolving the Armenian Question by exterminating the Armenians. In one of his interviews, Talaat freely conceded the point. The plan embodied in the deportations had been approved by the CUP after prolonged and careful consideration. "We have our objections to the Armenians on three distinct grounds," he told Morgenthau. "In the first place, they have enriched themselves at the expense of the Turks. In the second place, they are determined to domineer over us and to establish a separate state. In the third place, they have openly encouraged our enemies." The latter charge was based mainly on instances of aid to the Russians in the Caucasus, which Morgenthau had already dismissed as of small importance. "Why are you so interested in the Armenians anyway?" Talaat asked on another occasion. "You are a Jew; these people are Christians." Morgenthau replied, "You don't seem to realize that I am not here as a Jew but as the American Ambassador. My country contains something more than 97,000,000 Christians and something less than 3,000,000 Jews. So, at least in my ambassadorial capacity, I am 97 per cent Christian." Talaat objected to Americans' spending money for the relief of Armenians. Why don't you give it to us? he pleaded. One day he astonished the ambassador with a particularly callous request. He asked that American life insurance companies that had written policies for the Armenians be directed to make the Ottoman government their beneficiary. "They are practically all dead now and have left no heirs to collect the money. It of course all escheats to the State." Morgenthau was left speechless.[12]

The ambassador opened a back channel through the German embassy to exert pressure on the Turkish ally to stop the massacres, apparently without success. As Lewis Einstein observed, "The Germans, to their eternal disgrace, will not lift a finger to save the Armenians." Their responsibility, it seems, was not in instigating and abetting the crime, as Morgenthau inclined to believe, but in doing nothing to arrest it. Wangenheim, in poor health, categorically refused to intervene; and after a heated encounter with Morgenthau in October 1915, he retired to home and bed and suffered a fatal stroke.

[12] Morgenthau, AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY, 290, 333-34, 337, 339.

Morgenthau found a strong mind and a sympathetic ear in Dr. Johannes Lepsius, a representative of German missionary interests and long a friend of Armenia. Lepsius, having been given free range in Morgenthau's file, diligently pursued his search for evidence, and upon his return to Berlin launched a campaign implicating the German Reich in the Armenian massacres. His published indictment deeply embarrassed the Wilhemstrasse. While Germany stood by, half the Armenian nation was annihilated. "Our conscience demands the rescue of the other half." With that Lepsius prudently chose to cross the border into Holland.[13]

Morgenthau was in regular communication with the State Department about the Armenian catastrophe from April 27, 1915. At first, of course, it was not clear that it was a catastrophe. The CUP leaders seemed to be responding to revolutionary elements among the Armenians; and Morgenthau conjectured that that campaign would be followed by action against Zionist Jews. By July, however, an annihilative assault on the Armenian people was clear. "Reports from widely scattered districts," he cabled, "indicate systematic attempt to uproot peaceful Armenian population and through arbitrary arrests, terrible torture, wholesale expulsions and deportation from one end of the Empire to the other, accompanied by frequent instances of rape, pillage, and murder, turning into massacre, to bring destruction and destitution on them." The movement was wholly under civil authority. It was not in response to popular or fanatical demand; nor could it be justified in the name of wartime security and defense, despite the lame excuse of treachery on the Russian border. The ambassador explained the protests he had lodged with the ministers and the grand vizier, and asked for guidance on drawing the line between expressions of humanitarian concern and interference in internal affairs. He was growing frustrated by the failure of the United States government to respond in a positive way to the crisis. "I earnestly beg the Department to give this matter urgent and exhaustive consideration." What was at stake was the survival of a people almost as old as human history. Could not a weighty protest be lodged? And could not every facility be given to aid and rescue the sufferers?[14]

In a cable dated September 3, 1915, Morgenthau made an unusual request to the secretary of state. "Will you," he asked, "suggest to Cleveland Dodge, Charles Crane, John R. Mott, Stephen Wise, and others to form committees to raise funds and provide means to save some of the Armenians and assist the poorer ones to emigrate?"[15] The message was forwarded to James L. Barton, secretary of the American Board of

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[13] Einstein, INSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE, 176; Morgenthau, AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY, 383, 343; Trumpener, GERMANY AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 220-42.

[14] Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Apr. 27, July 20, and Aug. 11, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915* supp. (Washington, D.C., 1928), 980, 982-83, 986, 988.

[15] Ibid., 988.

Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in Boston. Barton himself had once been a missionary in the Near East. He was one of the group Morgenthau had met on his voyage to Europe two years before. Seizing the critical moment, Barton sent out calls for a meeting, September 16, in the office of the New York businessman-philanthropist Cleveland H. Dodge. The meeting led to the formation of the Armenian Relief Committee under Barton's chairmanship. Several members of the board of trustees, among them Dodge, a mining company executive, were personal friends of President Wilson. Nearly all had long experience in American educational and religious efforts in the Near East. Dodge's children were conspicuous in this regard. Before it adjourned the organization set an emergency goal of $100,000. This amount, half of it the gift of the Rockefeller Foundation, was promptly dispatched to Ambassador Morgenthau—a down payment on the millions the organization would eventually raise.[16]

A front-page story in the *New York Times* on October 4 described the Armenian atrocities in heartbreaking detail. Uprooted mothers abandoned their infants in the desert or tossed them into the Euphrates to drown; girls were ravished or sold to become Muslims; men were tortured with the bastinado and other brutalities in the course of massacre; all were starving to death.[17] Two weeks later a great rally took place in the Century Theatre, on Central Park West, addressed by Barton, Hamilton Holt, editor of the *Independent,* Rabbi Wise, and the stem-winder W. Bourke Cochran, among others. Relief committees earlier formed joined forces with this impressive new organization. It evolved through several changes of name to become known finally and definitively as Near East Relief, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York.

In February 1916 Morgenthau returned to the United States, technically on leave; but his tour of duty in Constantinople was over. He said that Turkey had become "a place of horror" for him, and he could no longer bear dealing with the men who "were still reeking with the blood of nearly a million human beings." He wished also to work for the reelection of President Wilson. Nothing in international politics was more important than that, he believed. In a departing interview with Talaat, the ambassador made a final appeal on behalf of the Armenians. "What's the use of speaking about them?" Talaat retorted. "We are through with them. That's all over." The only hope for them, Morgenthau had come to believe, was "the moral power of the United States."[18] Wilson was necessary to that project. So was the mobilization of American aid and opinion under the leadership of Barton and Dodge and their associates. "City Rises to Honor Henry Morgenthau," read the *Times* headline on his arrival in New York Harbor. His book MORGENTHAU'S STORY appeared two years later.

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[16] James L. Barton, THE STORY OF NEAR EAST RELIEF (New York, 1930), 4-9.

[17] *NYT*, Oct. 4, 1915.

[18] Barton, STORY OF NEAR EAST RELIEF, 385, 391-92, 328.

INCOMING

Katherine McNamara

I've been thinking about culture shock though wishing there were a more pleasing phrase for it, and have decided it must be like having the bends. The bends attack you when you rise too quickly toward the surface from the deep. Abrupt change of air pressure; oxygen bubbles in the blood; agony. Careful decompression required.

For the past eight months I have been traveling regularly in Ireland, the Republic and the North, and Scotland. This came about because of "Re-Imagining Ireland, " a conference held last May in Charlottesville, to which a hundred or so people from Ireland and many more from North America convened to talk about new ways of thinking about tradition and change in those two nations inhabiting one island.[1] And for thinking about what "Irish" and "American" mean, conjoined. For *Archipelago* came the pleasure of publishing an exhibition from AN LEABHAR MÒR / THE GREAT BOOK OF GAELIC. While traveling, I attended a number of events organized around LEABHAR MÒR and hosted by the arts councils of all three countries. Cultural politics are lively in the Gaelic archipelago. They work differently than in America. On that side of the Atlantic, it seemed to me, the arts and culture are not separate from the polity, although standing at a critical angle to it; nor are they separate from the urgency felt in those nations of re-inventing their civil societies. Arts organizations are mandated to assist them, even when artists very often make works that will answer back sharply the society that cradles, or mocks, them.

Another kind of culture shock is the one you feel on re-entry. From abroad, I kept an eye open on Bush's America. Was that my country? Now I've come home, for a while at least. Writing this interim report, I wonder: Where is my country?

1

On the plane home from Shannon, at the end of February, my seat mate was a man born in Co. Mayo, returning to his home in America. He introduced himself as I stowed my bags, his manner welcoming yet discreet. As the hours passed our

[1] See "Re-Imagining Ireland," Virginia Foundation for the Humanities http://www.re-imagining-ireland.org/default.asp.

conversation grew intimate, as strangers' can, without breaching privacy. He told me he had left Ireland in 1965, and lives in the Midwest, and was of the fifth generation of his family to emigrate. He named his people back to the great-grandparents and out to cousins, and their dates, having spent a good deal of time tracing relatives, a number of whom are buried in the cemetery of a small town near my birthplace. We smiled at this coincidence of place implying we did have something else essential in common. As he spoke, I thought: *Imagine how many generations of mothers let their children go out to a New World, never to see them again or meet their grandchildren. Desolation.* When recounting his mother's death, nearly twenty years ago, a tear rolled down his cheek. His quiet voice was filled with hope, even wonder, as he talked of all those who had overcome truly desperate conditions and thrived. Thrived! He repeated the word, not in triumph but quiet satisfaction and relief. *We are here, we have survived, we are living without want, in comfort.* His family goes back twenty-three generations, he told me, although he does not know their names past the sixth or seventh generation before him: and here his only child, a girl, marries a Hungarian (born in America)! Twenty-three generations thrown away, he told her. An American immigrant's rueful jest.

I had come to Ireland to have tea with President Mary McAleese, at Áras an Uachtaráin, the official residence in lovely Phoenix Park; nor was I alone in this. Into a great reception room came Irish and Scottish poets and artists, contributors to AN LEABHAR MÓR / THE GREAT BOOK OF GAELIC, and arts organizers and other friends, among them, Americans.

The history of the Gaels is old. Fifteen hundred years ago, the people known as the Scotti, later called Gaels, migrated from Ireland into the West of Scotland; over the next five centuries, they united the country and named it. For a thousand years, the Gaels' lands were united by the Irish Sea and their culture and language were one and whole. Irish (as the Gaelic language is called) is the official language of the Republic; but, interestingly, in Scotland, native speakers of Gaelic (pronounced 'gallic') outnumber the native speakers of Irish today. The project of the book was to give expression to a great possibility, the coming-together of the Gaels making their own future. Or as the great poet Sorley MacLean wrote:

> … *the humanity*
> *That the sea did not tear,*
> *That a thousand years did not spoil:*
> *The quality of the Gael permanent.*

Mary McAleese is the second woman to become president of the Republic, following the distinguished Mary Robinson. Both were barristers; McAleese carries another distinction as well: she is from the North, having been born in Belfast, to a

Catholic family. The theme of her presidency is "Building Bridges"; well-chosen. "Fáilte. You are very welcome here," was her warm greeting. It said often in Ireland, and, you felt, in this house, certainly, it was meant. We fifty or so visitors had arranged ourselves loosely in a large circle within the handsome public room. Cordially, the president made her way along the line, shaking hands and speaking to every person, knowing, it seemed, at least half of them. Many she spoke to in Irish. This was a scene unimaginable to an American, for we have grown used to our leaders' being locked behind their barriers and protected from ourselves.

A bound, published version of LEABHAR MÒR was presented to her, first in Scots Gaelic and English by Malcolm Maclean, director of Proiseact nan Ealan / the Gaelic Arts Agency, then in Irish and English by the poet Theo Dorgan. These men were co-editors and devisors of that fine collaboration of Irish and Scots poets living and dead, visual artists, and calligraphers that resulted in a book as yet unbound that is in its own right a work of art. Mary McAleese received the volume speaking in Irish and English.

Theo Dorgan's speech was made, characteristically, of wit and dark humor. "It's been a pride of discovery among all of us involved in the Book, rediscovering the common Gaelic presence," he said, "not just the past, although we're happy to look backwards; but we're very conscious, and very happily conscious, of pride in the continuing traditions." Most people in the room knew very well the communities, some of whose traditions, if outgrown by those present, are none the less contentious and sectarian. The old fights between Catholics and Protestants, the politicization of language: he up-ended them. "The Book is full of all sorts of marvelous perceptions that were perhaps not seen in the public domain before. It gives me a particular, sardonic pleasure to have to say, the astonishment on the faces of those who were not conversant with, or they had not processed the fact that, *Irish*, for instance, in the North is spoken mostly among people of a Catholic background, and *Gaelic* is spoken by strong, honest Presbyterians, which incredibly confuses, in the most ungrammatical ways, issues that have been oversimplified." And, turning to President McAleese, ended gracefully: "I know that you have set your face resolutely against simple versions of the things you have delighted in, the variousness and contrariness of who we are, and who we might yet be."

"Who we are, and who we might yet be." It is the future to which these new Gaels look. They do not agree their language is of the past, their culture dying. The earliest poem in the book dates from the 6th century; but the latest was written in the 21st, and the artists and calligraphers are of their time: now.

I don't yet have the language for speaking about this Ireland I traveled in, for in many places were echoes of distant, childhood, new-world memories; of accents I was

educated away from ("film," not "fillum" as the old people said in my Pennsylvania valley); men in tweed jackets and soft caps tipping their head to one side in civil greeting, seen first at my grandmother's house in America, again years later in the West of Ireland. The mysteriousness of language in a divided household. I believed once that the descendants of immigrants had only truncated memories of their ancestral country, "memories" which had stopped in a distant past, and, retold, become fantasies. What did it mean to be "Irish" when I was a child in America? First of all, it meant being Catholic. (Were there Protestant Irish? But the Lord Mayor of Dublin, who appeared on Ed Sullivan, was a Jew; this was noteworthy and admirable, we thought in my house.) On the other hand, "you're going up there among the Prods," said my father's relatives, when we moved ten miles away to a town where the WASPS (as they said then) were the majority. Why had such distinctions mattered in America? Yet, they still matter in Ireland, and also in Scotland; this was an unpleasant surprise. About language, I learned, you have to be more watchful.

The island is full of ghosts.

The island is coming to terms with immigrants, or "incomers." I read that forty thousand new people have swollen the voting ranks. In Dublin I had heard a smart stand-up comic riffing on how life in the city has changed – all the new cars, the new money, the new faces of dark people on the streets, the gang violence. Poking at his young audience, asking whether they felt good seeing their elders' racism come out. The audience, startled, laughed painfully at the truth he had named.

The Irish and, too, the Scots, "the Gael permanent," have many ways of re-imagining who they are now. Through their artists, they are investigating their ancient culture – by investigating new forms of multiculturalism, not formed on the American model of English-language and mass-culture dominance, but the civil society.

I fell in love with the youthfulness of Ireland, after my near-immersion in the Gaelic culture battles. Yet, who would not be moved by these heroic workers in the arts, people of my generation and older, who had labored for decades setting up the wonderful possibility that young people will love their culture as much as they do, and carry it on in new forms and media? It is gamble they've made, and not a bad one.

Now, what will the young do?

Here is one answer: use new media, with dead-pan humor and skill. In this issue appears "A Page from the Book o'Kells," by Ronan Coyle, a young artist and animator living in Dublin. Sweetly parodying the older Great Book, he wrote his text in Irish not Latin, devising the capital letter of four entwined illustrators with twisty arms. (They must be artists locked in combat.) Ronan Coyle drew his page on a large sheet of ordinary paper, with pencil and felt-tip markers.

My friend Eldrid Herrington, an American scholar in Dublin, wrote, "Choose youth and age; distrust the camp that keeps to one."

2

Do we remember easily, we outsiders, that that green island contains two countries, the Republic, and, across the River Boyne, Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom? The train from Dublin to Belfast takes two hours. The border-crossing is marked, not by Customs, but your mobile phone service, switching from Irish to U.K. signals. Your phone buzzes as the text message arrives informing you of the change. The land is so lovely, the Northern farms looking well and stolidly kept, and over the border, softer-edged. Two-lane roads run parallel to the railway line; cross it; turn off and away. A friend remarked on the loveliness of the countryside but couldn't help but think, he said, of all the cars that had gone down those roads carrying torturers and the tortured. Northern Ireland prefers to call itself now a "post-conflict" society, because The Troubles came to an end, or were transformed, in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which laid the way for devolution to self-government. Although home rule is suspended, and the Agreement is – it seems – being re-negotiated, and although the two hardest, most deeply opposed men in the North, Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams, would, if London did not presently rule, be First and Deputy First Minister, observers say that everything in the peace process is better than it was even a year ago.

Across Ireland, artists and arts agencies have worked together decommissioning barracks, military hospitals, jails, convents, churches – sites of oppression – by turning them into arts centers. Every county has its arts officer. The arts are by statute part of the public life. This is true in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. I learned of another way of "decommissioning," however, which is as hopeful. It is erasure. On the Shankill Road, in the Protestant area of West Belfast, a community group has been whitewashing some of the great political murals that cover sides of buildings and are the often-vibrant street art of conflicted areas, in an attempt to raise the hopes and spirits of an impoverished neighborhood. So far, the contractors doing the work have not been stopped by paramilitaries, and the venture has become less tentative.[2]

I was thinking about the ordinary acts of art, how they might drain moral poison from cultural wounds, when I read about Bush's appearance recently at the annual Radio and Television Correspondents' Association Dinner, in Washington. It is traditional that

[2] See "Shankill Cleans Up" http://icnorthernireland.icnetwork.co.uk/news/local/page.cfm?objectid=14035096&method=full&siteid=91603, March 4, 2004. See also, the Northern Ireland Political Collection, Linen Hall Library http://www.linenhall.com/Collections/index.htm, Belfast.

the president appear and make a speech in which he pokes fun at himself. Bush's method, since he is not good with words, was to show a slide show with scripted commentary. A reporter named David Corn wrote about this event:

> At the end of the slide show, Bush displayed two pictures of himself with troops and noted these were his favorites. The final photograph was a shot of special forces soldiers—with their faces blurred to protect their identities—who were posing in Afghanistan where they had buried a piece of 9/11 debris in a spot that had once been an al Qaeda camp. Bush spoke about the prayer the commander had said during the burial ceremony and noted he had this photograph hanging in his private study.[3]

Such an appalling incident is part of what Frank Rich called, in *The New York Times*, "the fake narrative of 9/11."[4] As well, it seems to me blasphemous.

3

In Dublin, I was asked to give a radio interview about a book I wrote some time ago that was an account of the years I had spent among native people of the Interior of Alaska. Actually, I was advised to submit the questions as the interviewer would not have time to read the book. Another broadcaster who thought well of the book was a friend, and so I asked if he would suggest questions to interest Irish readers and radio-listeners. Here they are, addressed to an incomer:

Q. In Ireland, we're aware of the contrast between an incomer and the native community. We have a long history of sociologists who come and live in a village or town, write about the people there with complete freedom, and then go away, often leaving the people themselves distressed and furious because they don't recognize themselves in the resulting portrait. Did you have a preconception of yourself as an incomer? If not, how did you fit in? Are there layers of that country, and the lives of the people among whom you lived, to which you'll never have access?

Q. What kind of response to the book have you had from people you wrote about?

Q. How do you recognize in yourself – or perhaps you do not – the romantic view of nature held by urban intellectuals? For instance, often the local people will look at the landscape and see jobs in it, ways of making a living, while the outsider, the observer,

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[3] David Corn, *The Nation*, posted 3/25/04
http://www.thenation.com/capitalgames/index.mhtml?bid=3&pid=1336

[4] Frank Rich, "Operation Iraqi Infoganda," Times March 28
http://nytimes.com/2004/03/28/arts/28RICH.html?pagewanted

sees beauty, or sublimity, or even personal refuge, without reference to local desires. Would you have anything to say about this kind of dissonance in points of view?

Q. In terms of American citizenship, under which you have the freedom to come and go as you wish in American territory, what is the tension between someone like yourself, who feels free to do so, and people such as you write about, who know themselves as being so intimately part of their own country that they know it as their relative?

Q. Can there be personal relations across cultures, or do you think they are culturally specific?

They are good questions. He was an excellent reader, for I had asked most of them of myself when writing the book. But he had another point to make, about Americans and our presumption. The point was taken.

4

Last autumn, Bush went to London, invited by the Queen. He was the first American president since Wilson to go to Britain on a State Visit. It was an honor and courtesy extended after the September attacks and by then, an irony beyond measure. I was in Edinburgh at the time, where two major anti-war, anti-Bush demonstrations were held the day before he arrived. Overnight and the next morning, many Scots took the train to London to march in further protest. My landlady told me that a friend of hers, a judge on the high court, had gone to London to join the protestors. It was taken for granted among the people I met that Bush-and-Blair's war was immoral and/or dangerous to the world.

A few weeks later, I was at an event hosted by the arts councils of Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland, celebrating the signing of an agreement under which they would work in common for the advancement of Gaelic arts and cultures. Because *Archipelago* carried the exhibition of LEABHAR MÒR, I was welcomed. I wondered what being American might have represented just then; but earnestly I was told – again and again – "No, I love America. We love America here. God, most of the books of poetry on my shelves are by Americans. Your music, your energy: we love this. I am not anti-American, I'm anti-Bush! I'm anti-Bush and his horrible war!" In separate conversations, with deep emotion, distinguished men begged me to carry this message back to the States:

The demonstrations across the United Kingdom are not anti-American, and we are not anti-American. We are against Bush and against this war. Please, tell this to your fellow citizens.

5

On February 28, 2004, the day I flew home from Ireland in the company of the decent man from Mayo, an article appeared in *The New York Times*:

> Treasury Department Is Warning Publishers of the Perils of Criminal Editing of the Enemy
>
> Writers often grumble about the criminal things editors do to their prose. The federal government has recently weighed in on the same issue — literally.
>
> *It has warned publishers they may face grave legal consequences for editing manuscripts from Iran and other disfavored nations, on the ground that such tinkering amounts to trading with the enemy.*
>
> Anyone who publishes material from a country under a trade embargo is forbidden to reorder paragraphs or sentences, correct syntax or grammar, or replace "inappropriate words," according to several advisory letters from the Treasury Department in recent months.
>
> Adding illustrations is prohibited, too. To the baffled dismay of publishers, editors and translators who have been briefed about the policy, only publication of "camera-ready copies of manuscripts" is allowed.
>
> The Treasury letters concerned Iran….
>
> Laws and regulations prohibiting trade with various nations have been enforced for decades…. Applying them to grammar, spelling and punctuation is an infuriating interpretation, several people in the publishing industry said.
>
> "It is against the principles of scholarship and freedom of expression, as well as the interests of science, to require publishers to get U.S. government permission to publish the works of scholars and researchers who happen to live in countries with oppressive regimes," said Eric A. Swanson, a senior vice president at John Wiley & Sons, which publishes scientific, technical and medical books and journals.
>
> Nahid Mozaffari, a scholar and editor specializing in literature from Iran, called the implications staggering. "A story, a poem, an article on history, archaeology, linguistics, engineering, physics, mathematics, or any other area of knowledge cannot be translated, and even if submitted in English, cannot be edited in the U.S.," she said.
>
> "This means that the publication of the PEN Anthology of Contemporary Persian Literature that I have been editing for the last three years," she said, "would constitute aiding and abetting the enemy…."[5] (italics added)

[5] Adam Liptak, "Treasury Department Is Warning Publishers of the Perils of Criminal Editing of the Enemy," The New York Times, February 28, 2004 http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/28/national/28PUBL.html.

Several years ago *Archipelago* published a powerful poem by the Iranian feminist poet Simin Behbahani. We offered the original Persian, and a fine translation by Farzaneh Milani and Kaveh Safi.[6] Later, I received a query from a professor at the University of Teheran inquiring how she might subscribe to this journal, as several of her students had requested it. I wrote back saying that *Archipelago* exists on the Web only and is without charge to readers, and suggested she might like to download the pdf edition for printing.

Shall I have another such opportunity? I hope so. Shall I think twice about my government's strong hand on the editor's shoulder? Indeed I shall. Both times, I will think: This is censorship, and I will not let them abridge my intellectual freedom.

The American Library Association is ardent and constant in its championship of the First Amendment, free speech, and intellectual freedom. Librarians may be our great defenders against the steady pressure the government brings on our civil liberties. The A.L.A., on their excellent Web site, quote Justice William O. Douglas reminding us of our true vulnerability:

"Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us."[7]

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[6] Simin Behbahani, "Banu, Our Lady," *Archipelago* Vol. 4, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/behbahani.htm. The translators set the scene:

> On Thursday evening, July 8, 1999 , soldiers and vigilantes invaded a dormitory at the University of Tehran. This had been the first day of student protests against the new censorship laws and the forced closing of the newspaper Salam. The invaders attacked the students, beating many and throwing some out of the windows. The poem "Banu, Our Lady" is an expression of outrage by Simin Behbahani, author of over a dozen books of poetry in Persian and recipient of the Human Rights Watch/Hellman-Hammet grant, for her struggle for freedom of expression in Iran. It focuses on a scene of this rampage: an attacker invoking the name of Fatemeh Zahra, the beloved daughter of the Prophet, while pushing a student to his death.

[7] Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, "The One Un-American Act" http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/foryoungpeople/theoneunamerican/oneunamerican.htm, *Nieman Reports* http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/contents.html,vol. 7, no. 1 (Jan. 1953): p. 20.

The American Library Association argues that parts of the infamous USA PATRIOT Act (2001) are unconstitutional. Their web site http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/ifissues/usapatriotact.htm is an excellent resource for resistance, issues, and action, including recent changes in the law.
N.B.: just before this issue went live, the Times reported as follows:

> Ban Is Eased on Editing Foreign Work
>
> By THE NEW YORK TIMES
>
> WASHINGTON, April 4 The federal government has eased a ban on editing manuscripts from nations that are under United States trade embargoes, a move that appears to leave publishers free once again to edit scholarly works from Iran and other such countries.
>
> The Treasury Department sent a letter on Friday to a lawyer for the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers, an international group representing more than 360,000 engineers and scientists, saying the organization's peer review, editing and publishing was "not constrained" by regulations from the department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. The group says its members produce 30 percent of the world's literature in electrical and electronics engineering and computer science.

6

I've ruminated long on the question of where to live, if not in America, and had considered both the Republic and Northern Ireland; why not? *Archipelago* in exile – if Bush is elected this year – could be published from either of those countries where digital technologies have been remarkably, successfully developed.

What do I think about when I think about living outside the United States?

I recall September 11, 2001, when the president was absent all day from Washington, our capital. I thought it was from fear, and am not yet dissuaded from the idea, but now read that the man in the White House who used to be in charge of knowing about al Qaida, Richard Clarke, whose recent testimony before the 9/11 Commission reminded us authoritatively how little this administration thought about the clear and present danger to our security, was responsible for keeping Bush flying from airbase to airbase that day. Clarke was seriously, badly wrong about that. The president should have been in Washington. Why did he let a subordinate tell him to stay away?[8]

> The letter from the Treasury Department referred specifically to publishing by the institute, but Arthur Winston, the group's president, said he believed the ruling would be "a relief for nearly everyone" in the scholarly publishing community.
>
> "The ruling eliminates potentially disturbing U.S. government intrusions on our scholarly publishing process," Mr. Winston said.
>
> No one at the Treasury Department could be reached for comment Sunday night on the ruling....

In theory, even routine editing on manuscripts from those countries could have subjected publishers to fines of $500,000 and 10 years in jail. (continued at http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/help/copyright.html)

[8] It is well to remember that Republican administrations going back to Nixon have acted counter to traditions of American democracy, and that this habit is still strong. For instance, *The Atlantic*, in the March 2004 issue, published "The Armageddon Plan," by James Mann describing decades of planning for change-of-regime in the event of nuclear war, in which planning our Constitutional separation of powers and order of succession were treated lightly, when not dismissed entirely.

> ….Rumsfeld and Cheney were principal actors in one of the most highly classified programs of the Reagan Administration. Under it U.S. officials furtively carried out detailed planning exercises for keeping the federal government running during and after a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. The program called for setting aside the legal rules for presidential succession in some circumstances, in favor of a secret procedure for putting in place a new "President" and his staff. The idea was to concentrate on speed, to preserve "continuity of government," and to avoid cumbersome procedures; the speaker of the House, the president pro tempore of the Senate, and the rest of Congress would play a greatly diminished role.
>
> The inspiration for this program came from within the Administration itself, not from Cheney or Rumsfeld; except for a brief stint Rumsfeld served as Middle East envoy, neither of them ever held office in the Reagan Administration. Nevertheless, they were leading figures in the program.

A few details about the effort have come to light over the years, but nothing about the way it worked or the central roles played by Cheney and Rumsfeld. The program is of particular interest today because it

I write critically of Bush. For how long will it be legal for me to do so? *Archipelago* is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization: within months, such organizations may be *forbidden from publishing or disseminating any opinion or even information considered critical of the president or members of congress.* I am incredulous – the attacks on our civil liberties just keep coming! – but should not have been. Listen and learn. Then mobilize.

> Date: Tue, 30 Mar 2004
> From: Wes Boyd, MoveOn.org
> Subject: Republicans trying to gag nonprofits
>
> Dear MoveOn member,
>
> Are you involved in a local or national non-profit or public interest organization? As a leader or board director or member? Please read this message carefully, because your organization could be facing a serious threat.
>
> The Republican National Committee is pressing the Federal Election Commission ("FEC") to issue new rules that would shut down groups that dare to communicate with the public in any way critical of President Bush or members of Congress. Incredibly, the FEC has just issued – for public comment – proposed rules that would do just that. Any kind of non-profit – conservative, progressive, labor, religious, secular, social service, charitable, educational, civic participation, issue-oriented, large, and small – could be affected by these rules.
>
> Operatives in Washington are displaying a terrifying disregard for the values of free speech and openness which underlie our democracy. Essentially, they are willing to pay any price to stop criticism of Bush administration policy.
>
> We've attached materials below to help you make a public comment to the FEC before the comment period ends on APRIL 9th. Your comment could be very important, because normally the FEC doesn't get much public feedback.
>
> Public comments to the FEC are encouraged by email at politicalcommitteestatus@fec.gov
>
> Comments should be addressed to Ms. Mai T. Dinh, Acting Assistant General Counsel, and must include the full name, electronic mail address, and postal service address of the commenter.
>
> More details can be found at http://www.fec.gov/press/press2004/20040312rulemaking.html….[9]

Mobilize!

---

helps to explain the thinking and behavior of the second Bush Administration in the hours, days, and months after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. (continued http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2004/03/mann.htm)

[9] MoveOn.org http://www.moveon.org/news/fec-gag.html

The night before I left Dublin, I went out with a couple of good friends who are well-known poets. We talked politics, as usually happens. The war is an undercurrent in any conversation. The subject arose of Sam Hamill, the poet and publisher of the excellent small press Copper Canyon, who in February 2003, responded to an invitation from Laura Bush to a symposium at the White House on Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and Langston Hughes, by calling for poets to protest against the obviously-coming war.[10] Laura Bush "postponed" the event; no Eleanor Roosevelt, she. "It

[10] Sam Hamill established a Web site called "Poets Against the War" http://www.poetsagainstthewar.org. The site is well worth visiting and reading in depth, and has useful links to related sites. Here is an excerpt of Hamill's "A Message for the New Year":

> It was in fact George W. Bush who put poets in the position of having to protest. In his January, 2003, State of the Union speech, Bush told us that we were either with him or "on the side of the terrorists." No middle ground and no place for debate. Since Bush and his appointees reserved the exclusive right to define what a terrorist is, his statement makes a terrorist of every pacifist, every conscientious objector, and every citizen who questions the intelligence or morality of the United States engaging in "pre-emptive war." Another Republican president, Teddy Roosevelt, said that placing any president [or administration] above criticism or argument was "morally treasonable."
>
> Poets Against the War was officially born when Laura Bush invited me to attend a White House symposium on Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Langston Hughes, scheduled for February 12, 2003. But it was truly born in the hearts of each of us long before the naively planned and quickly "postponed" symposium. The "postponement" continues today, the White House having faced its only public humiliation when we rose in unison to defend not only our nation's conscience, but poetry itself.

But see also, Robert Pinsky's remarks on the subject, in *Slate* http://slate.msn.com/id/2080074/:

> I will close on a different note with some lines that are relatively explicit, even editorial, about American power and our role in the world. Though written decades ago, these lines take up the current issue of American "policing" around the world. When poets declined Mrs. Bush's invitation last month, many observers referred back to Robert Lowell's refusal to attend a reception at Lyndon Johnson's White House, in protest of America's role in the war in Vietnam. Robert Lowell remains, many years after his death, one of those figures who attracts public attention, who seems to focus energy partly through some mysterious personal quality or fate. But Lowell was also an extraordinary poet, and, beyond personality, he commands attention because he was able to write about public matters with moral vision, though never moralistically. He could write clearly about uncertainty and grandly about anxiety. He could even write definitively about political ambiguity.
>
> Here are some lines from Lowell's poem "Waking Early Sunday Morning," which was written around the time of the Johnson invitation. The poem opens with a passage later quoted by Norman Mailer in *Armies of the Night* , a wistful vision of freedom and of the struggle for enduring accomplishment before life ends:
>
> > O to break loose, like the chinook
> > salmon jumping and falling back,
> > nosing up to the impossible
> > stone and bone-crushing waterfall—
> > raw-jawed, weak-fleshed there, stopped by ten
> > steps of the roaring ladder, and then
> > to clear the top on the last try,
> > alive enough to spawn and die.
>
> Lowell's final stanza weighs the idea of prolonged uncertainty—the "monotonous sublime" that is the opposite of the salmon's conclusive breaking loose. As an account of a bad dream, or a despairing vision, the lines retain their force:

doesn't matter," I said with some asperity. There came a startled response. I tried to explain: Hamill hasn't the stature of Robert Lowell confronting Lyndon Johnson at the White House during the Vietnam War. Poets do not have the stature in our present society that they – some, at least, and the best of them – once had. So many of the assembled poems are mediocre; this is inexcusable. More to the point, this president is uneducable; nor would he ever become aware of a protest called "Poets Against the War." And his wife had not the courage to welcome dissident citizens to our nation's house.

I was more downhearted than my friends. Four more years of Bush-Cheney meant our democratic system would be changed permanently into the monolith that it has come to resemble, with three branches of the Federal government run by one party, for the benefit of a (wealthy) minority of citizens. This is power on a scale nearly inconceivable on this island, I thought. But I could not convey my meaning. The woman poet was deeply dismayed, and said, softly but in some agitation, that she could not agree: that *poetry always matters;* that we would be less than human without it, it was unbearable to her to believe otherwise. That the Poets Against the War had helped people see the injustice of the invasion of Iraq, and that their protests had already helped spread opposition to Bush. – She was utterly correct. I think she was sad for me, too, because I've been too long away from poetry.

I tried again to explain what I meant; I did not succeed. Her companion, a public man, said, "I don't see how you can live in Bush's America."

Bitterly, more than I could have imagined, I said, "Where else would I live? Do you want another incomer?"

Pity the planet, all joy gone
from this sweet volcanic cone;
peace to our children when they fall
in small war on the heels of small
war—until the end of time
to police the earth, a ghost
orbiting forever lost
in our monotonous sublime.

Also:

An Leabhar Mòr / The Great Book of Gaelic is an international collaborative artwork bringing together the work of more than 200 visual artists, poets and calligraphers from Scotland and Ireland. It has generated an international touring exhibition of 100 artworks, a book publication, a television documentary, a series of BBC radio programmes, a music CD, a schools pack and an events programme. Following the exhibition tour (until 2008) the artworks will be bound into one volume to form a visual anthology and a permanent visitor attraction. The web site for the book is here http://www.leabharmor.net/.

An Leabhar Mòr / The Great Book of Gaelic was produced under the direction of Proiseact nan Ealan / The Gaelic Arts Agency http://www.gaelic-arts.com, the national development agency for the Gaelic arts, which designs, develops and pilots new arts and cultural initiatives. Their address is 10 Shell Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2BS, Scotland. Tel: +44 1851 704493 Fax: +44 1851 704734 E-mail pne@gaelic-arts.com

Poetry Ireland / Éigse Éireann http://poetryireland.ie is the national organisation dedicated to developing, supporting and promoting poetry throughout Ireland. They are a resource and information point for any member of the public with an interest in poetry and they work towards creating opportunities for poets working or living in Ireland. Their address is: 120 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. Tel: +353 1 671 4632 Fax:+353 1 671 4634

Iomairt Cholm Cille / the Columba Initiative http://www.colmcille.net/ was launched in 1997 to create greater contact and understanding between the Gaelic-speaking communities of Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It fosters the chance for these Gaelic-speaking communities to meet each other more often, and in so doing to learn more of the language, heritage and lifestyles of one another. Projects must be at least bipartite, linking Scotland with either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. Priorities are given to projects linking all three regions. Contact information for each office is: ICC Scotland: Tel +44 (0) 1471 888590, e-mail sm00dam@groupwise.uhi.ac.uk. ICC Northern Ireland: Tel +44 (0)2890 238293, e-mail ccille.ultach@cinni.org. ICC Republic of Ireland: Tel +353 (0)91 503278, e-mail ccille@udaras.ie.

Re-Imagining Ireland http://www.re-imagining-ireland.org/ was held May 7-10, 2003, in Charlottesville, Virginia. The gathering, opened by President Mary McAleese of Ireland, met to explore the meaning of Ireland for the world as a modern and prosperous, yet traditional, culture. Participants – more than 100 journalists, writers, politicians, artists, scholars, musicians, and citizen activists, most of them from Ireland – discussed how the Ireland of the future could emerge as a compassionate and vital society that created itself anew, while preserving the strengths of its heritage. Re-Imagining Ireland was produced by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities http://www.virginia.edu/vfh/.

A bound version of An Leabhar Mòr containing all 100 poems in Gaelic and English and 100 artworks is published in hard and soft cover by Canongate www.canongate.net, 14 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1TE, Scotland. The Great Book of Gaelic is here http://www.canongate.net/main.taf?_n=8.

The exhibition shown in *Archipelago* http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-3/anleabharmor.htm is by courtesy and with permission of the Editors and of Proiseact nan Ealan, whose generous assistance we gratefully acknowledge.

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Cholmcille/The Columba Initiative http://www.colmcille.net/ for the production of the exhibition and accompanying CD-ROM.

Katherine McNamara, NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH, A Journey into the Interior of Alaska (Mercury House http://www.mercuryhouse.org/mcnamara.html, 2001)

Previous Endnotes:

The Only God Is the God of War http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-2/endnotes.htm

"Where Are the Weapons?" http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-2/endnotes.htm

Patriotism and the Right of Free Speech in Wartime 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

AN LEABHAR MÒR

THE GREAT BOOK *of* GAELIC

… an fhéile
Nach do reub an cuan,
Nach do mhill mìle bliadhna;
Buaidh a' Ghàidheil buan.

… the humanity
That the sea did not tear,
That a thousand years did not spoil:
The quality of the Gael permanent.

Somhairle MacGill-Eain
Sorley MacLean
1911-96

edited by
Malcolm Maclean (Alba)
and
Theo Dorgan (Èirinn)

An Exhibition in *Archipelago*
http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-3/anleabharmor.htm

Seeing Another War in Iraq in 2003
and
The Unseen Gulf War

Peter Turnley

The Fall of Basra. After more than two weeks of putting the southern Iraqi city of Basra under military siege, the British Military took Basra April 7, 2003. At the end of this day, residents of Basra look on at the newly arrived British troops who have entered their city.

An audio talk by Peter Turnly about his experience as a unilateral photo-journalist during the American and British invasion of Iraq, March 2003, and a show of his photos and texts from that war, as well as from the Gulf War (1991), are on *Archipelago* http://www.archipelago.org/vol7-3/turnley.htm.

Contributors

Alina Cârâc is an active translator of Romanian literature into English, including more than thirty volumes of drama, works of poetry, novels, collections of short stories and essays, and film scripts, as well as numerous books from English into Romanian. In 2002, she published her first novel, LETTERS FROM PARALLEL WORLDS, in Romanian, and has finished a second novel which is awaiting publication. She works as a senior editor with Press Group Romania, in charge of the publication, *Romanian Panorama.*

Robert Castle (popesixtus2000@yahoo.com) teaches history, sociology, and film criticism at a small academy outside Trenton, N.J. His previous article in *Archipelago*, "From Desperation to Salvation" http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/castle.htm presented theoretical problems for the history teacher, whereas "Stupid History" is a report from the trenches. His work has appeared recently in *The Paumanok Review, elimae, Bright Lights Film Journal, Metaphilm,* and *Unlikely Stories* (a regular feature called "A Sardine on Vacation").

Ronan Coyle ronancoyle@lycos.com writes that his need to legitimise his artwork with rules of structures began in his teens when he became obsessed with Celtic patterns, or may have begun in Montessori School, where he was top of his class for drawing groups of parallel lines. Therefore, he went on to study architecture. Three years into his studies he realised he was more interested in presentations than in building structures, so he began a four-year course in visual communications. He freed up there for a while but then discovered 3D software and fell back into his old habits of seeing the safe beauty of geometry (along with all his other dodorkahedron buddies). He did advertising animation for three years before taking two years off to make a short animation – *Phantom* – for the Irish Film Board, and is at work on a new animation, *Calcification*. He lives in Dublin, where he is a research assistant for Media Lab Europe http://www.medialabeurope.org/ (a division of MIT).

John Michael Cummings' Johnmcummings@aol.com non-fiction has appeared in *ACM (Another Chicago Magazine)* and *Utne Reader*. Excerpts of his first novel, THE BEST MARK OF A MAN, are forthcoming in *Confrontation, Puckerbrush Review, Kennesaw Review, Rosebud,* and *North Dakota Quarterly*. His short stories have appeared in *North American Review* and *Alaska Quarterly Review*. He is a native of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and lives in New York City.

Ioan Flora has published fourteen books of poetry. MEDEA AND HER WAR MACHINES, from which the poems in *Archipelago* derive, appeared in 2000. Flora has won prizes at the Struga Poetry Festival, from the Writers' Union of the Republic of Moldova, and from both the Romanian Writers' Union and the Association of Professional Writers in Romania (ASPRO), among other awards. He was born in 1950 in Yugoslavia in the Romanian-speaking region of Serbia across the Danube from southwestern Romania, and he graduated from the

University of Bucharest, the city where he has lived since 1993. The author has told Adam J. Sorkin that poems of MEDEA form a kind of "a parable which speaks about all wars in history, determined by the poison of Medea and her myth," and demanding "the sacrifice of everything we care about, from children and love" to ourselves as well, "in order to revenge betrayed love. . . ."

Michael Graves mikegraves50@hotmail.com was a student of James Wright at Hunter College. He is the author of a book of poems, OUTSIDE ST. JUDE'S, and is a recipient of a grant from the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation for 2004. He has read a selection of his poems to a meeting of the James Joyce Society at the Gotham Book Mart in New York City and in his spare time runs the Phoenix Reading Series, in downtown Manhattan. With Victor Schermer he is co-author of "The Abandoned Male Persona and the Mysterious Feminine in the Work of James Wright: A Study in the Transformation of the Self," published in *The Psychoanalytic Review* (85, 6, December 1999, pp. 849-870). He is the organizer of the conference "Baptism of Fire: The Work of James Wright," which took place at Poets House in New York City, in March of this year.

Lisa Kavchak lbkavchak@hotmail.com grew up in Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania, an environment she describes as sensorially lush and surreal and which she feels has contributed immensely to the lyrical and image-driven nature of much of her work. She has lived and worked in Europe and the Middle East, and presently lives, with her husband and two children, in Pensacola, Florida, where she is at work on a new series of author and poet literary dialogues for *Web Del Sol*. Her short fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Bitter Oleander*, *Janus Head*, *3rd bed*, the on-line edition of *Quick Fiction* and *The Café Irreal*, among others. REPUBLIC OF LOVE, the translated, selected love poetry of Syrian poet Nizar Kabbani, a book she transcreated and edited with Nayef al-Kalali, was published in 2002 by Kegan Paul International; a revised issue is forthcoming.

Jesse Lee Kercheval jlkerche@facstaff.wisc.edu was born in France and brought up in Florida. She is the author of six books, including the poetry collection DOG ANGEL and the novel THE MUSEUM OF HAPPINESS.

Theodore Odrach was born on February 13, 1912, near Pinsk, Belarus. At age nine he moved to Vilnius, Lithuania, where he later attended the Stefan Batorego University, earning a degree in ancient history and philosophy. Following the Soviet invasion of 1939, he returned to Pinsk and worked as a schoolteacher and editor of an underground newspaper. Denounced by the Soviets and forced into hiding, toward the end of WWII he managed to escape by way of the Carpathian Mountains into Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic). Odrach found his way to Germany, then England, and in 1953 settled in Toronto, Canada. Theodore Odrach died in 1964.

Between 1953 and 1964 Odrach produced several novels, short stories and plays, all of which were published in the Ukrainian language. Many of the themes he covered dealt with the tumultuous periods that he lived through. The grim reality of his life, however, never obscured his sense of humor or his ability to satirize. His works are currently being translated into English by his daughter, **Erma Odrach** michael.mychaluk@sympatico.ca. Many pieces have appeared in journals in both the U.S.

and Canada. For her translation of WHISTLE STOP AND OTHER STORIES, Erma Odrach received an honorable mention from the Translation Center at Columbia University, New York. She is currently translating a novel, WAVE OF TERROR, also by her father.

Merrill D. Peterson, Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Virginia, is editor of the Library of America edition of the writings of Thomas Jefferson and author of numerous books, including LINCOLN IN AMERICAN MEMORY, JOHN BROWN: THE LEGEND REVISITED, and THE JEFFERSON IMAGE IN THE AMERICAN MIND. "STARVING ARMENIANS": AMERICA AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE, 1915-1930 AND AFTER http://www.upress.virginia.edu/books/peterson3.html has just been issued by the University of Virginia Press http://www.upress.virginia.edu/.

Adam J. Sorkin's ajs2@psu.edu recent volumes of translation include THE BRIDGE, poems written over the last weeks of Marin Sorescu's life (Bloodaxe Books, 2004) and three 2003 books, DIARY OF A CLONE by Saviana Stanescu (Spuyten Duyvil/Meeting Eyes Bindery), SINGULAR DESTINIES: CONTEMPORARY POETS OF BESSARABIA (Chisinau, Moldova), and 41 by Ioana Ieronim (Bucharest). Sorkin has won the *International Quarterly* Crossing Boundaries Award, Kenneth Rexroth Memorial Translation Prize, and various other honors abroad, including the prize of the Writers' Union of Moldova for SINGULAR DESTINIES. His co-translations of the poems of Mihai Ursachi, "Epistle on a Leaf," appeared recently in *Archipelago* http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-3/ursachi.htm.

John Moncure Wetterau johnwetterau@earthlink.net was born in Greenwich Village and raised, mostly, in Woodstock, N.Y. He studied at Hamilton College, the University of Hawaii, and in the Vermont College MFA program. He has served in the U.S. Air Force, married twice, and worked in Hawaii and Maine (software design and programming, cab driving, construction, waiting on tables, etc.). He is presently writing fiction and poetry full time. Publications include two novels (JOE BURKE'S LAST STAND; O+F) and two collections of poetry (TO KEEP YOU COMPANY; THE BOOK WITH THE YELLOW COVER).

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News of Our Contributors

Christian McEwen ChristianMcEwen@aol.com is the author of " 'Music Hiding in the Air,' A Memoir of Rory McEwen (1932-1982)" http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/mcewen.htm, and "Winter Alphabet" http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/mcewen.htm, a poem; both memoir and poem appeared in *Archipelago*. As well, she is the editor of JO'S GIRLS: TOMBOY TALES OF HIGH ADVENTURE (Beacon Press, 1997). Now, her video *Tomboys! Feisty Girls & Spirited Women*, has just been released. The film "weaves together Christian's present-day interviews with personal photographs and archival footage to explore the tomboy's journey through time. In the course of that journey, the audience has a chance to question how the tomboy's energy and spirit translate into resistance to the current status quo."

Christian McEwen reminds us that "The original tomboy was in fact a boy, and a 'rude, boisterous and forward' one at that," but that the word "has come to mean

something more positive in this post-feminist era, as increasing numbers of women become public leaders, enter sports professionally, and take charge of their own lives. But there still exists a 'taming' influence on young women, who learn (all too well) that they have to 'behave themselves' in order to succeed. . . . *Tomboys!* is intended to meet that need, to hone the dreams of every girl (and adult women too) who has the chance to see it."

For information, contact: Julie Akeret akerdan@gis.net, phone (413) 585-5968. OR: The Fund For Women Artists, P.O. Box 6067, Florence, MA 01062. Phone: (413) 585-5968.

Christian McEwen ChristianMcEwen@aol.com is available to present the film any time after June 6, 2004.

Peter Turnley peter@peterturnley.com, the photojournalist whose visual and audio reports on the recent Anglo-American wars in the Middle East appears in our issue on-line, writes that he has established a Web site http://www.peterturnley.com/ showing "my career's work in photography, with many different portfolios covering distinct themes such as; The Family of Man, In Times of War and Peace, World Leaders, Parisians, America in Black and White, Love and Sensuality, A Food Lover's Guide to Paris, Corporate and Commercial Work, Portraits, The Other California, and A Personal Photo Album. The site also contains an in-depth 'Peter's Journal' of writing on my life and experiences in the world of photography."