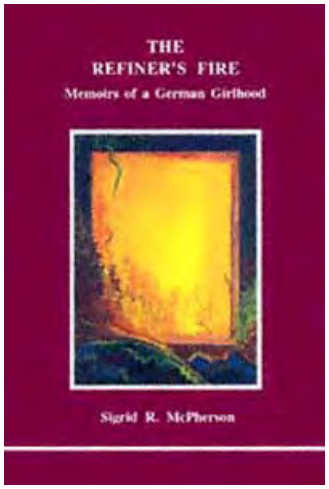

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The Refiner's Fire

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Sigrid R. McPherson

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Contents

THIS IS MY STORY

Erika I am to the world; Wiese, which means meadow,
in the depths of my soul.
Yet nameless I was, in the storms of that time.

1
The Fires of Childhood

Once upon a time there was a poor woodcutter who longed for his son to have a better life. And so he saved his money and sent the lad to study at the university. Alas, after a bad year the father ran out of money, and so before the young man could finish his studies he had to come home to help his father.

During one midday rest, instead of sensibly relaxing as his father counseled, the young man wandered through the woods. Suddenly, from a great oak he heard a voice which cried, "Let me out! Let me out!"

He dug into the tree's network of roots and there found an ancient bottle. It was from this bottle that the voice was coming. The boy carefully uncorked it.

Out came a vapor which in short time solidified into a spirit the size of one-half of the ancient oak.

"I am the great spirit Mercurius!" thundered the monstrous spirit. "I was locked into this bottle as a punishment. I am obliged to break the neck of whoever frees me!"

Now the young man grew very nervous, which caused him to quickly think of a ruse. "Anyone could claim he had been in a bottle," he said to Mercurius. "You have to prove it to me."

And so Mercurius, to prove he had spoken the truth, slid back into the bottle. The young man quickly replaced the cork, and now the spirit was caught once more. This time Mercurius promised a reward if he were freed. And so the young man released the spirit, and in reward received the gift of a magic rag. Mercurius told him that one side of the rag would turn metal to silver, the other side could heal any wound.

The young man tested his gift by cutting a tree with his axe and then rubbing the wound with his rag. Indeed, the tree healed immediately. He then rubbed his axe with the other side of the rag, and immediately the axe turned to silver.

Father and son were able to sell the axe for a great deal of money. And so they were freed of all their worries. The young man continued his studies and in part because of his magical rag he became a very famous doctor.

Mercurius, meanwhile, roamed the forest. In time he grew lonely, as spirits do, and hungered for recognition, as eternal beings, such as spirits, do, and failing to be gratified he lusted for power, as especially untamed spirits do, as is Mercurius. For his untamed nature had been the reason for his imprisonment so long ago. Since it was well within his power to make himself invisible, he now discovered that at least he could gratify his craving for power by entering the

towns and villages that surrounded the forest. There he began to play his daemonic games. And wherever he played, unnoticed and therefore unhonored, people would forget their humanity and live out his wishes, without knowing what they were doing, or why.

Few indeed were those in the towns and villages who asked themselves what had brought so much frenzy to their lives. Most were simply swept up in the swelling chaos, while a few prayed in apparently futile fashion to the rapidly fading images of their traditional gods.

An indescribable pain in a tunnel of red firethat is how I came into this world. Believing that the agony will last forever and forever. With wings on my back following a pram racing out of control down a steep garden path, again and again, that is the next moment remembered in this life. I am both infant and angel behind the infant.

I can walk and sing when life ends. Anna, my singing Anna, she who cares for me, loves me, is gone. Oh, emptiness. I sing. Empty. Anna!!

I am three years old. My friend lives across the street, she is also three. Marianne. Her big sister has golden hair and is so very nice. Marianne has a new tricycle that is easy to ride. Mine is inherited, it squeaks and the pedals are hard to push. "Rust," Father says. I know: Marianne is so very special, I can see light shine all around her. It comes from special love. It is not for me. I "just came," my oldest sister said. She knows.

Winter. I am in a different house, the house of the people who visit us on Sunday afternoons. Their little girl is four, the baby cannot walk yet. I like the Nana. She has a funny white hat on and a big white apron. On her chest is a silvery round thing, showing someone holding a baby. Only I don't like her when we get up in the morning. Then she spanks the baby. Hard. "He is a dirty, dirty Hansi-baby," she says, as she spanks. His sister nods her head sagely. "Yes, Hansi is bad again."

"He made pooh-pooh last night! Dirty Hansi!" Nana slaps the little red buttocks. But one day Hansi is good. His diaper is only wet. I am so glad Hansi is good. I love sweet little Hansi.

A person comes to visit at that house. Anna? Yes? No! Yes? No!! Strange woman. Terror! I scream as I run down the stairs into the street. It is a long time until I am at home again, with Mother, Father, the others.

I have a doll. His name is Peter. He is soft except for his head. He smiles and has blue eyes. I love him; I hate him. Hate is in me when the others tease me. Laugh about me.

I throw Peter down our steep back stairs. Then I run and pick him up and throw him down again. And again. Many times. They laugh, they say, "Do it

again." I cry as I do it again. Peter hurts; I hurt. Mother made Peter's clothes. Now Mother stands at the foot of the stairs and laughs too. I fall down the stairs. On my face. Oh, my nose hurts so much. They say I look funny. I am called "Potato Nose." It is ugly. It hurts.

I sit in the doctor's lap. The doctor will stop the hurt.

Mother says, "She snores so at night." It means I make noise when I sleep. A little girl is not supposed to make noise, that I know. Now I am in his big chair. He puts on a shiny round thing and looks at me through it. But he looks into my mouth, not my nose. "We'll fix this," he says.

My nose is still ugly but it no longer hurts. I am with Mother at the doctor's again. Waiting for him. Mother is afraid. The doctor comes. His smile is different today.

"Do you really want me to do it this way?" he asks.

Mother: "Yes, I am afraid of chloro . . ." a big word. "Will she feel much?"

The doctor says, "No, children don't."

Mother will not come with me to the doctor's chair. Her fingers are in her mouth, she looks like a little girl. I am taken to a different chair, a different room. In this room, all is metal, shiny, cold.

I am put into a chair. My hands are tied to the chair. I ask, "Why?" Silence. Then the doctor says, "Open your mouth."

I obey. He puts something into my mouth. Now I cannot close it. He puts his hand into my mouth. There is a shiny thing in his hand.

The doctor's hand is inside my throat.

A knife is in my throat, tearing, stabbing, ripping! I gag and scream, I fight, I kick, I cannot breathe. I gag and vomit. I vomit blood and vomit blood. He is trying to kill me, I am to be killed, I am not of the ones who are loved. Anna goneohhh the painthe doctor looks dark, strange and oh his eye! His terrible eye from behind the shiny round thing, it so frightens me. Is this why Mother is outside? I am her "embarrassment," her third girl. But why this? Punish me.

"I've never heard a little one scream so loud," says the doctor, pulling bloody gloves off his hands. "Well, your tonsils are cut in half, soon you shouldn't be snoring so loudly anymore. That will please your mother."

I can still see the terrible eye from behind the shiny round thing, the fiery shiny round thing.

Mother rushes into the room, exclaiming, "We should have used the chlo . . . after all! She screamed so!"

Why did Mother let this happen to me? Does Mother really want me dead? Her littlest girl? Yes, punish me. I have never bled this much, it is far more even than when Natasha accidentally threw me against the sharp edge of the bucket by the fireplace and afterward Mother said, sounding funny, "She was al-

most killed!" The cut on my head hardly hurt at all then. My throat is on fire.

I curl in my bed at home, with Peter. I am so hot, I cannot cry, cannot swallow. My doll Peter, his mouth cannot be pried open, lucky Peter. Mother tries to comfort, sounds so odd. Cannot.

Soon she takes me again to the terrible doctor. What this time? If I am to be killed, why this hard, hard way? I cannot ask. Is it really supposed to be like this? Where is Father? At home, he has been stroking my hair, silently, never saying a word.

I am strapped into the cold chair. Something is put on my nose. It burns, I choke. Ah, choke to death! I hear a screaming . . .

I wake up. Mother has guilt and upset on her face. Again I cuddle Peter. Peter with the painted-shut mouth. I am ill for a long, long time. And very quiet.

The doctor says he doesn't like the look of the scars. Mother says that I finally seem to be all right again, happy to go to the market with her.

This is true. I still love the ancient market hall, with the huge mosaic, the one flooded with light. It shows a man kneeling, receiving water from above into the palms of his hands.

Now Mother sighs as she adds to her report about me: "But she still snores as loudly as ever." The doctor shakes his head.

It must be a terrible thing, my snoring, so loud that Mother even hears it at night.

I live in a very large house. It stands on top of a hill, overlooking the valley and our town. In the kitchen, Elsie and Fritje call it "Dr. Karl's castle." I'm the smallest in the house. All along I carry a hurt, a memory, not only of the horrible doctor, but a sweet and sad one, of Anna. Anna, my most important person. Always there, warm, sweet-smelling. I know the feel of her hand, the smell of her hair. Anna. One day she was gone and never came back. Now I must pretend that it is just like it was when she was here. But it is all different, I always have a pain in the pit of my stomach. Since the terrible doctor it has grown so strong.

"She's always afraid," I hear Father say to Mother, disapproval in his voice. I sing a lot, for that is what Anna and I used to do together, she holding me in her lap. Now I must sing along; it helps with the ache, with my shakes of fear. Death. Not being. Sometimes I see myself walking on a sheet of glass, clear like the ice pond to which Anna once took me, blackness underneath. Then I must sing extra hard.

"I've tried to toughen her," Mother tries to explain. I keep playing in my sandbox.

"Remembershe was sort of my experiment. Put into the garden all day long, just crawling along. Remember the little shields I made for her knees when

she'd crawled them raw and bloody? When she went pit-pit-pit on the potty because she'd eaten cherries off the grass, pits and all? So cheerful about it all?" Mother laughs. "She wasn't afraid then! I can't imagine what has happened! Remember how in the Alps . . ."

Does Father want to remember?

It is winter now, and outside it is very cold. There is a dim sun in a hazy sky. We are at dinner; it is one o'clock. Father and Mother and I are already at table. My sister Ulrike runs in:

"Guess what I heard coming home from school! The old castle is burning!"

"Yes," says Natasha, following Ulrike. Natasha is really already grown-up, even though she still goes to school. "Just look out the window. You can see the smokeit's awfully thick." We all get up to look, standing respectfully behind Father who carefully pulls back the lace curtains.

"Indeed, there it is," he says, awe in his voice.

From the center of the city in the valley below there is a huge, black stately column of smoke rising slowly, swirling and swirling, up and up, tiny specks of fire dancing within it, some dropping out. Father closes the curtain. "Well," he says, "what terrible weather to have the ancient castle burn. It is so far below freezing that the water will freeze in the fire hoses."

As is often the case, brother Gebhardt is still missing. Mother's deep intake of breath and the fingers of her left hand drumming on the glass covered tableI sit right next to that handannounce the return to usual matters. Gebhardt is nearly always late, Mother always increasingly upset and angry when he finally does come.

But the silence around the dining table today is caused by more than Gebhardt's lateness. Father sighs. "What a shame. The castle was built so many centuries ago. Looking at it from the outside, with its thick walls, one would think it was invulnerable. But nothing is, especially in these days of turmoil."

Yes, I remember cool, thick walls, the market place in front of it, filled with fat ladies under colorful umbrellas, surrounded by tables covered with baskets of fruit, vegetables, flowers, a place to which I love to accompany Mother. I have felt these walls with my own hands. "*Das alte Schloss*," the words carry reverence, like "Father's fine house," or "Mother's new car."

"Its inside walls are made of wood," Father is saying. "There is an air space between these walls and the stones, one meter wide. For insulation, it is filled with straw. If the straw is burning, I am afraid the old building is in for a lot of trouble." I watch Father cut his meat, carefully, place a potato piece on top of the meat, the fork turned upside down, as he adds: "Poor firemen." The meat and potato vanish into his mouth.

I am eating steamed fruit when my brother finally arrives. The usual question,

"Well, where *were* you?"

"At the fire." Silence. He starts eating his soup; by now it has a skin on top. He stops, bursts out: "What a fire! I just had to go and see it! It smells terrible and there are flames everywhere, and sheets of ice all over the place; the water freezes as soon as it comes out of the hoses. Firemen are being carried away with smoke-poisoning. Half the town is there. People say such a thing has never happened, that it's an evil omen of some sort. You must see it!"

Today, Gebhardt doesn't get lectured for being late to dinner. There is a long silence. Finally, Father says, "Well, too bad. I have a conference which I cannot cancel. I will have to go later. But," turning toward my mother, "why don't you go? Take the older children. They will never see anything like it again."

Mother shakes her head, emphatically. "No, I don't want to go there! I do not wish to be poisoned by smoke!"

A chorus rises, consisting of Father and the two elder children, Natasha and Gebhardt: "You're too afraid again!" A familiar scene, the three chiding Mother for being afraid.

Mother still shakes her head. Now Gebhardt says, "You'd have to be one of the firemen to get smoke-poisoning. Come on Mother, it really is something that should not be missed. Even Ulrike should see it."

"And I?" I hear my own voice, small and fearful. A chorus greets me. "You?!" they say, like nearly always, when I want to be included, "You're much too small! You'd be so scared, maybe even get lost!"

I shake my head. Yes I would be scared. I'm almost always. But I wouldn't show it. And I certainly wouldn't get lost! I try to show how grown-up I am, I too tease Mother, I turn to her and ask: "Are you scared you'll get burned?"

She looks at me with hurt and angry eyes. "What? Even you? Has no one understanding? Not even my youngest?"

Fritje comes to take me upstairs for my nap. I am frozen inside. I have never seen Mother look at me this way. Did I hurt Anna like this, is that why she left?

I climb the steep back stairs. The big bedroom, which I share with Ulrike, is already darkened. The sheets are cold and make me shiver. Fritje admonishes: "Don't get up until I get you today! Such an upsetting day!" Her steps vanish down the hallway.

She does not like me to get up on my own. It's one of our anger points. But I do get up. I get up and push the red chair underneath the window. I crawl on it, carefully open the windowoh, it is coldand push open the shutter. I'm not allowed to do that. If I fell out while pushing I'd be dead, Mother said. The shutter open, I close the window.

There it is, the huge column of smoke, the thick pillar, swirling, the glowing pieces dancing within. Is it not getting thicker? I cannot take my eyes away. And

thenthen I know that it is staring back at me! It has eyes of fire and as they stare at me I am frozen, and I must keep looking at it, follow it with my eyes as it rises from the depth of the valley, up and up until it disappears over the top of father's house. Will it come after me? Oh! I hear its whisper, a soundless whisper, it is saying, "Fly to me!" I open my mouth, I want to tell it that I do not want to do that, but I cannot make a sound. There is a horrible bang and next I know I am back in bed with the covers over my head. Oh, but it was only the wind, the wind banged the shutter shut. Or was it?! Now the window is darkened, I cannot see the pillar of smoke. But then the shutter slowly opens again, and I must go and look. Again I hear its whisper: "Not this time, then! But I will come again!"

Silence. Silent is the huge black and fiery cloud, and now I notice, silent is the house. There are no noises at all, not the usual noises of dishes rattling in the kitchen, no whirring of the sewing machine, no distant voicesnoises that always comfort me in my sleep, especially since Anna is gone. Shaking with cold I open the door, run down to the sewing room. There's no one there. The door to Mother's bedroom is openthere is no one there. Natasha's room, Gebhardt's roomno one. I run downstairs, I open the door to the kitchen. No one there. No one in the dining room, our children's day room, Mother's special room, the music room, Father's library. No one in the basement, in the garageeven Mother's car is gone! Now I am on the thin glass with all the darkness below. They have gone to see the fire, the black cloud, I know, yes, Mother usually ends up doing the scary things Father suggests, even when she is afraid. That black cloud, it might take them away, poison them with its smoke, as Mother has feared, burn them, as Gebhardt said about some firemen. Perhaps no one will ever, ever be back. Now there's just me and that black pillar of fiery smoke. I cannot look at it anymore. There is an awful feeling in the pit of my stomach.

I creep back to bed. I try to be in the time when Anna was here, when naptime was wonderful, a being in two worlds at once, the sunlight on the ceiling through the closed shutters doing a wondrous dance, a cozy feeling of lying in the midst of a white cloud, feeling safe, oh so safe, Anna having made it so with her softness and her prayers. At naptime, she knelt with me to ask the Lord Christ to bed me down on a white pillow of down, very very close to Him, so that as I slept I might hear the heavenly music of the spheres. And so it was, I did hear the music, and Anna and I would talk about it after she had wakened me, her sweet smell coming to me before I could even see her smiling face, her face all blurry, for I was still in a fuzzy white cloud, and she would lift me up and hug me and stroke my hair. I loved her so.

Fritje opens the window. "Guess I didn't fasten the shutter properly," she says

cheerfully. "Did you sleep today?"

Accusingly, I shake my head. But I'm so relieved to see her that I begin to cry. As we go down the back stairs together I finally ask: "Did you go to see the fire?" She startles a bit, then says, "No, no; I was right here, in the sewing room." Now it is my eyes which accuse: "But I looked! In the sewing room, in the kitchen and everywhere!" I suddenly do not care that I shall be punished for telling her I did this. It is terribly important that she tell me the truth!

But Fritje only says, after a pause. "You dreamt that. I guess you did sleep after all."

I go to see Elsie in the kitchen, bending over deep copper tubs, doing the dishes. On other days, except laundry days, the dishes are done when I get up from my nap. "You went to see the fire, didn't you? Didn't you, Elsie? That's why you are doing the dishes only now!" Elsie slowly looks at me, then shakes her head. "N . . . no. Whoever gave you that idea? You were just dreaming, little one." No one understands how important it is for me to know that what I saw, lived, the empty house, was really so.

Mother is already sitting at the table, pouring herself a cup of coffee. My cocoa cup is sitting there, steaming. Natasha is biting into a roll topped with jelly; Gebhardt and Ulrike are sipping cocoa. Ulrike looks as if she had been crying.

"What did you do while I napped, Mother?" A cool response, no smile at all: "No business of a little girl who teases her mother."

I do not dare ask Ulrike, Natasha, Gebhardt.

I do not go near the window all that afternoon. It's out there, thick and menacing as ever. By nighttime, at the supper table, I can see the glowing, fiery eyes rising skyward. In the middle of the night I wake up screaming. Mother is by my bedside, but I cannot tell her what I dreamt, I only know of terror. All the next day I know it was the pillar of smoke with the fiery eyes that came to visit me. During my afternoon walk with Mother I cannot avoid seeing the huge cloud that keeps swirling skyward, looking as menacing as the day before. Everything feels different, like a part of me is in that cloud, watching the rest of me, the others, not really there, after all. That night I dream:

The house we live in, Father's house, is all on fire. I run to the rooms the way I did during my naptime, first upstairs, then downstairs, finally the basement. Each room is on fire, and I am so afraid that soon I will be too.

Again I wake up screaming, both parents having come to my bedside this time. Ulrike in her bed is in tears, my screaming has scared her so.

I dream this dream each and every night, even after the big cloud has gone away, two weeks after the old castle began to burn. My father and mother keep saying, "Strange, that it was such a shock for her, that big fire!"

It is a bad winter. Icy, icy cold. Many beggars come to the kitchen door. Some talk nasty, making Mother very, very angry. Sometimes it is even chilly in bed. "The furnace can hardly keep up," Mother says. Often I go to the basement with Elsie and watch her shovel coal into the big furnace, see deep inside the blue and orange flames flickering, all safe in there. At night, Mother often plays the piano. Sometimes she sings, a deep sadness in her voice, often so sad that all four of us come crying to the piano.

"What is it with my children?" She will then ask Father. "Why does my singing drive them to tears?" I do not know. Father does not know.

Fritje takes us to the pond, all iced over. I see the blackness underneath. With her it does not feel safe to be here, as it was with Anna. Ulrike and I are resting when we see her fall on her behind. She can barely get up, she is in so much pain, and our walk home takes a long, long time. Then she goes away, like Anna did.

I do not like Fifi, who comes in her stead, and neither does Mother. I do not like Johanna, nor Bettina. Then comes fat Frau Rahe. "She will have to do," Mother sighs.

Frau Rahe does not like reading stories to little girls. Often she just sits and breathes hard, smelling of sweat. One day she announces to me, "You're little, but you're smart. I'll teach you how to read."

She picks a book called *Struwelpeter*. It has many pictures and verses. Frau Rahe says that these are cute pictures and funny stories. But "bad Friedrich" is not cute. He is a "furious boy" who "catches flies in the house and rips out their wings," kills birds and hurts a peaceful dog with a big whip. The dog then bites Friedrich in the leg so hard that Friedrich must lie in bed, take bitter medicine. But the dog is rewarded for biting Friedrich. Like a person, he gets to sit and eat at the table, have wine and cake and sausage. In "Flying Robert," a boy is taken away by the wind and drowns. Conrad has his thumbs cut off because he has been sucking them. Little Pauline plays with matches andoh horroris soon all in flames, turned into a heap of ashes with only her pretty red shoes left.

"I do not want to learn to read this book, Frau Rahe!"

Frau Rahe sighs deeply, chooses one of Ulrike's books and begins to read aloud. But I can see the words, and now there are pictures in my head of a little girl who lives in a house with many other people. Like me she is the smallest, and many, many exciting, good things happen, and I do not need Frau Rahe to read to me to make the pictures happen, I can read myself. And when the book is done there is another, and another. But I have to keep looking at *Struwelpeter*, at the pictures of all the terrible things happening in that book, Pauline burning, Kaspar starving.

Then it is advent time, Christmas is only fourteen days away, so says my special calendar, and I am invited to a big party. An important friend of Father's has a little boy about my age. There are many, many children. We have *stollen*, buttery and stuffed with almonds, raisins and candied fruit, cookies and hot chocolate to drink. Then the lady says that Saint Nicholas is coming.

We are told to form a line. Saint Nicholas arrives, covered with snow, carrying two huge sacks. With many "ho-ho's" he settles himself in a big chair. "Good children shall receive a fine gift!" He shouts, pointing to a sack filled with packages. "But bad onesthey shall get the birch switch!" And now he points to a bag filled with brown switches. My heart starts to pound. Surely I shall get the switch!

I am very near the end of the line, and the waiting is very hard. Not one single child has received a switch! Yet he has a whole sack full! Am I the only bad one? I shall feel so, so horrible if I am truly the only one! Never mind a presentbut to be the only one given a birch whip?!

I cannot even say hello when it is finally my turn. My throat is frozen. The strange man behind the beard waits, shrugs, gives me a little pat on the shoulder and then, and thena present!

I cannot talk about it. To anyone.

Winter again, with the cold, smoky sunshine that has no warmth, the kind of weather I dread since the big castle fire. I am in the cold garden, as Mother has said it is good for me. There are a few leaves lying on the yellow grass. The sand in the sandbox is in lumps of ice. I put my ball on the table under the bare pear tree. In summer we often sit around that table, Mother sometimes discussing the fruit picking with the gardener, the bees humming. Today I do not want to play with my ball. I feel a bit like I did when that great fire was raging, hollow, strange. Now there's a wind, and it brings me a funny, familiar smell. Then a crackling noise. I look across the street, and there in the street are men with big yellow hats dragging hoses into the garden on the other side. Firemen! And then I see the fire. The neighbor's garden-house is on fire! There are flames flickering all over the roof, black smoke rising. I cannot move. *He* of the big cloud has come again!

"Oh yes," I suddenly hear his soundless whisper. "I have come again." I pull my arms in close to my chest. I can feel the tears freeze on my cheeks, it is so awful that he has come again!

Fritje's voice from the balcony. "Hello there! I'm back! No need to be frightened, the garden-house won't come after you!"

Fritje! She is back!

I run up the stairs to the balcony and hug Fritje. "Still so easily scared?" she

asks. I cannot talk about it. I can only nod my head, the tears still flowing. Fritje and the easy laughter with which she dismisses the things that make me so afraid! Still, later I try to tell her about the soundless voice in the fire and smoke. But she doesn't understand about *him* of the fire and black smoke.

"Someday you must be a writer," she tells me, "you have such a vivid imagination! Silly. There is no one in the fire!"

In the evening, Father lights the fireplace. A warm feeling, the fire in the chimney, so carefully tended by him. The chimney glows, the carved red-painted designs around the rim of the fireplace shine, "star-symbols," Father calls them. Yet both Mother and Father look serious as they talk. Politics. Again. So many worried conversations about politics!

"Well, he is going to get in, one way or another," Father is saying, lighting himself a cigarette. I never knew Father used cigarettes, but just the other day, to everyone's amazement, he lit up after the noontime meal, saying, "Yes, these are times for smoking." Now I can hear them talking as I sit and watch this friendly fire. Mother talks about a man named Goebbels, quoting: "'He who can conquer the street can also conquer the masses; and he who has conquered the masses has thereby conquered the state.' Clever, he is, that man, and an excellent speaker!"

In May, when the garden is flowering, there is a sweet smell in the air and the bees hum among the blossoms. A festival has been announced. This man Hitler will come to town. He continues to be talked about with much vehemence at our dinner table. Natasha and Father especially discuss and argue about this man. I keep hearing his name, over and over. I get the idea that in the end he is to be disdained, even though for a while Natasha talks about him in a most enthusiastic way. But one day she comes home and has changed her mind; no, Herr Hitler is awful after all. Father nods approvingly.

On the day of the festival there are strange-looking people walking about, in brand-new brown uniforms, wearing funny hats with leather straps around the chin, armbands with designs called Swastikas. Fritje explains that it is the emblem of the man who is coming to speak. The ones in uniform are called SA, which has something to do with protection.

An aide comes running into our schoolroom, hair flying:

"Rudolf Hess, Hitler's best friend, is parked across the street. You're all to run outside and give him the warmest of greetings!"

The big black MercedesI know it by the star that is also on my mother's carhas its top down. Inside are men in the pitch-black uniforms of the SS, which also has something to do with protection. The aide tells us to climb all over the car, to hug the strange, pale man, to shake his hand. Father never, never allows me to climb on Mother's Mercedes! He gets very angry if I even touch it, he says it scratches and ruins the paint. But here I am, having scrambled over

and no doubt scratched!the shiny front fender, now sitting on the cover of the folded down car-roof, shaking the hand of Herr Hess. He has thick eyebrows, dark circles under bright flickering eyes. I feel eerie for a moment, like I do on the ice; the dreaded fire is nearbut I cannot understand why. The sun is shining, everyone is smiling. Then I am back in the classroom, facing the flushed, angry face of our old teacher who clearly feels that little girls are not to climb all over anyone's car!

In the evening, Elsie is hurrying because she wants to be done when Hitler begins his speech on the radio. A friend has invited her to listen with him. Father has a new radio in the corner of his study. It is time for bed and I kiss Father and Mother goodnight. "We will most certainly not listen to that man," Father says firmly.

In the morning, I ask Elsie: "How was the speech?" Fritje is there too, and she laughs, "Na, the speech? there was no broadcast, the communists cut the wires."

Confusing. Were there wires leading from that building to all the radios in town? Could the Communists have cut them all? Communists were the angry men that shouted insulting words at my mother when she told them to stop ringing up a storm on the kitchen bell. Maybe they *could* cut all the wires.

Confusing! Like school. At home I am reading all kinds of books. It is my favorite thing to do. But in school I must often sit with my hands on my desk and not move at all, as Teacher talks about the different letters of the alphabet. She does not seem to understand that I can read already. I often get sleepy in school, I don't understand why I need to draw these letters over and over and look in this book with pages filled with words like "ab" and "bab," say them aloud when it is my turn, even if they do have pretty pictures. Only the last few pages of the book have real stories. Sometimes, when I am supposed to be paying attention, I turn to these stories and read them again, until one day Teacher catches me and I have to stay after school, hands clasping the desk top, fingers on top, thumb underneath, sitting motionless in an empty classroom, until finally she excuses me. Mother is most displeased.

Then it is winter again and cold, and one morning Teacher begins the class something like this: "This is a very special day. We have a new chancellor who will be most helpful to our revered old President Hindenburg. His name is Adolf Hitler and I am going to put his picture on the wall right next to that of President Hindenburg." She goes on talking about the youth and energy Herr Hitler will bring to the German government.

In spring I have to be in bed for a long time, because I am sick. The tonsils again. "A very serious infection," the doctor has said. Often I hear brass trumpet music and the voices of men singing through the open windows of my room.

There is a great restlessness in the air, and I often lie there, feeling very frightened, even though the sky is blue with puffy clouds, and I love looking at it through the branches of the blooming apricot tree outside my window.

There is the day I overhear snatches of a conversation between Mother and Fritje. They are talking in the hall. They are talking about a fire, a terrible fire in which many, many books have been burned. Then something about students. I remember Mother telling me proudly one day that during the terrible times following the World War the students had run the trains, had kept the country going. Now book-burning. Their talk sends chills of fear up and down my spine. It is about fire and burning; my old dread is right in the room with me.

"Even Thomas Mann's works, Frau Doktor." Fritje sounds troubled. "It doesn't seem right; and yet . . ." They walk away.

In summer, there is a huge festival. All day long, from the town below, this time much louder than when I was ill, come the sounds of marching music and men singing. Toward afternoon, men in brown and black uniforms, boys and girls in black and white outfits, hurry about, all excited. At night, the music swells to a mighty roar, different bands playing different melodies, different groups singing different songs, but all of them walking up the many roads leading from town to the hillside towers that surround our town. The celebrators are carrying huge, burning torches to light fires atop the towers, Father says. I stand next to him on the balcony, watching the giant fiery snakes wind their way up. Then, suddenly, a huge flame bursts into the black sky from the tower closest to us, built to honor the unifier of the German nation, von Bismarck. Then across the valley another fire leaps into the sky, near the beautiful vineyard. More and more fires light up the sky. It is awesome. Father has gone inside. I am alone as the now familiar terror returns. Once more, I know that *he* has returned, he of the smoke and fire. Already, as I see the many pillars of smoke rising, I can feel his nearness.

"You're no longer afraid of fire now, are you?" Father's voice is behind me.

"No, no," I lie. Father detests my fearfulness.

Later, from the upstairs bedroom window, Ulrike, Fritje and I watch out the window for a long long time. Mother and Father have gone to a summer solstice party. The singing and shouting of the many torchbearers seems to be getting stronger. Fritje says that now they are gathering around the fires, where all kinds of very moving celebrations are taking place. Somewhere in the crowd, with his own torch burning, is my brother Gebhardt.

When Father is angry, his bright blue eyes flash as if there were fire in them. It is September, we are all going to school again. This time it is Father who is late for the noontime meal. We are all waiting for him on the balcony in front of

the dining room, Mother, Natasha, Gebhardt, Ulrike, Fritje and I. When Father enters, I can see the fire in his eyes. Walking in with very fast, firm footsteps he stops in front of Gebhardt.

"You have been thrown out of the Hitler *Jugend* (youth group)!"

Gebhardt's face turns red and a look comes over his face that tells me he really doesn't know what exactly he has done wrong. I know just how he feels.

"You couldn't keep your big mouth shut! You blabbed about the things we discuss here at home! You are too stupid to draw the line between what is public and what is private!"

Father is burning with rage.

"What, what did I say?"

"You said, I have been told, in full assembly, loudly, apparently, that your father told you anyone who is for the Hitler regime is an idiot!"

I can hear Mother gasp. Even Fritje looks truly frightened. Gebhardt has done something awful, and I can tell he still does not know what it is. The look on his face reminds me of the time when Mother said to me, "We had not planned on having four children at all, your father especially was opposed to so large a family. But he would have been very pleased by a second son. So it's really too bad you didn't come out a boy. That would have made it all so very much better. Two boys, two girls, that would have been right." All the time she was talking I knew that I had done something terribly wrong, something really bad.

All through dinner Gebhardt keeps his eyes on his plate. Father continues looking angry and upset, Mother too. I hear them talk after dinner, Mother trying to explain to Father how perhaps he should keep his thoughts to himself, Father answering, with vehemence, "I will not! If I cannot speak freely in my own house, where *can* I?!"

It is November 9th, 1934, cold and foggy. Father has gone on a long trip, far away to America, the land of his birth. I have a postcard of the huge ship on which he crossed the oceana whole week on the water. In school we learn about the events of this day in 1923, about the bitter fighting in Munich and why there is now a second national anthem called *Horst Wessellied*. There are speeches over the loudspeakers and lots of sad, stirring music. I miss my father; I have many questions only he can answer.

Night comes early in November. That is why in the courtyard in front of the entry to the basement Fritje and Elsie are anxiously bent over an oval tin washtub, squeezing and pushing with all their might. They are washing the insides of the good sofa and easy chair, which is horsehair, in gasoline. They want to be done before dark. Earlier, Elsie had said it was dangerous to wash horsehair in gasoline and that Herr Doktor would not have stood for it, he would have firmly told Frau Doktor to leave well enough alone. The washed horsehair is spread to

dry in the garden room in the basement. As our house is built into the side of a hill, the garden room opens into the garden on one side, underneath the upstairs balcony. The other door leads to the basement corridor, which connects all the basement rooms. Now the entire basement is filled with the heavy smell of gasoline. The gardener left a while ago, calling out as he slammed the door to the basement, "That's mighty dangerous!"

For a long time I stand next to Fritje, at times helping with the washing. Fritje won't let Ulrike and myself out of her sight, with all the gasoline fumes about. But Gebhardt, who is supposed to rake up the fallen leaves in the playarea of the yard, is nowhere to be seen. Again and again, Fritje runs nervously to the corner of the house and calls up to his window:

"Gebhardt! The leaves! Please don't forget! Your mother will be angry not only with you but with me as well!"

Darkness falls and there is more tension in the air. No sign of Gebhardt. But suddenly the basement door opens. Gebhardt stands framed in the doorway, a huge, burning torch in each hand.

"I'm going to rake by fireli . . ." Gebhardt starts to say, but Fritje screams "Back! There's gasoline here!" She slams the heavy wooden door in Gebhardt's face. Silence. Seconds pass. Then a huge, huge *Boom!*, an explosion that makes the whole house shudder, the sound of glass breaking, and Gebhardt's highpitched scream: "I'm burning, I'm burning!" For an instant I think, "Is he teasing Fritje?" For Gebhardt loves to tease her. But Fritje doesn't think so. She runs toward the door, back to the tub, then to the door again, shaking and looking terrified. Ulrike begins to scream at the top of her lungs, a piercing, horrible wail. Fritje then opens the door and I see the thick smoke emerge, the black cloud. I have to run away, for it is *his* cloud. So I stumble through the dark garden, I run as fast as I can, I cannot do otherwise. *He* in the cloud has come again. I reach the fence between us and the neighbor's house.

Mignon and her mother stand in the doorway, beings from another world. Gentle, quiet Mignon, an only child, I do not often play with her because she doesn't like the active things I do, have to do. Now she and her mother have become a magic haven.

"Everything will be all right," Mignon's mother says soothingly. "Just go and play with Mignon for a while." In Mignon's room I sit on the thick white carpet. I cannot talk about what happened, what is happening. We play with Mignon's dolls. I try not to hear the noises from outside, Ulrike's screaming, the howling of the fire engine sirens as they come up the hill, once again to fight *him*.

Then Fritje, her face smudged and tear-streaked, white apron dirty and crumpled, stands in the doorway. "Time to come home," she says, and I know that I

must leave this quiet room and go back with Fritje to the utter terror that my own house has become.

Firemen in yellow hats, smelling of smoke, stomp around with heavy boots, in the kitchen, the hallway, the basement. They question Elsie and Fritje.

"Frau Doktor was informed at her friend's house," Elsie is explaining, "where she was visiting, and she has gone straight to the hospital. Herr Doktor is out of the country, in America; he cannot be reached." Elsie is fighting tears.

"Good thing Herr Doktor built himself a strong house," the fireman quips. "Without all that reinforced concrete, there'd *be* no more house!"

I run outside, down the steps, past the empty tin tub, around the corner of the house. Lots of firemen here, going in and out of the garden room. They have lit bright lights all over. The upstairs balcony bottom, which is just above the entry of the garden room, is black and ugly, gone are the wild vine leaves that bore the magnificent colors. There are hoses, axes, shovels and buckets all about, our tranquil summer sitting place is now a terrible mess. I hear the sound of heavy hammering. I ask a fireman:

"Is the fire out?"

He gives me a curt "Yes," but I ask again, "Then why are you hammering?"

"To make sure the fire will not start up again."

I know it will never be the same, this place where in the summer there is a curtain of sweet-smelling pink roses, where gentle breezes blow even on the hottest days, the place where I began to feel I would be well again when Mother brought me there last spring when my fever was so high and the weather so hot. This terrace, on which my old wicker baby-carriage stands now, a decorative holder for Mother's garden tools, burned black and ugly, it is all part of the terrible thing, part of the awful smell. I know. My nightmare of the burning house, which I never quite forget, is coming true, it has started. One room of the house has now been burnt.

Fritje insists that Ulrike and I eat, even if only our yoghurt with zwieback. Ulrike's face looks swollen with crying, and she sniffles as she spoons. I feel frozen, my legs and hands are ice cold. I feel funny that I am not crying the way Ulrike is. But I cannot make myself.

Mother stands in the doorway, Natasha next to her.

"I was studying for exams, Mother," says Natasha. "I had no idea Gebhardt would . . ."

"Who would?!" Mother cuts her short, upset. "I'm going right back to the hospital, Gebhardt is very badly burned." Turning to include Fritje, she adds, "At least his arms aren't burned, the lodenjacket he wore protected him, and so did his leather pants. But from the knees down his legs are very badly burned, as are his hands and face."

"I know," Fritje answers. "I saw the skin hanging from him when he rode off to the hospital. I was so grateful that the delivery man offered to drive him there right away."

"Yes, he's in great danger, he may not live through the night." Mother kisses us good night and is gone.

Why Gebhardt? I ask myself in bed, cold all over in spite of snug blankets, why did *he* come after Gebhardt? Was it not I who said no to him so long ago?

Gray days follow. Fritje sees to our routine, Elsie cooks us meals. Mother is always at the hospital. Natasha studies in her room for her examinations. Sometimes she walks around the house, reciting classical Greek out loud. I love hearing the musical rhythm of that ancient language.

Then Father is back, very somber. Now both Father and Mother take turns going to the hospital. Fritje has eyes swollen from crying one day, Gebhardt's birthday. He is still not expected to live, but we are to visit him.

Dark hospital corridor, high ceiling, nurses in caps with tails stiffly starched. In Gebhardt's room, an awful, awful odor, a bandaged bundle.

"Happy birthday, Gebhardt!" Both Mother and Father are hiding their crying.

In our house, there is the theme of death, Father's livid rage. "They dare insist that they interview him before he dies!" He fumes against the fire-police. "Just how insensitive can these bureaucrats be!"

Mother's enemy is Death itself. "He will not die!" she vows, again and again, "I don't care what the doctors say, or anyone, I will not let him die!"

And Father: "If you keep letting him hang his head over your shoulder every night, so that the wound-serum runs all over your face you will soon be blind! And that is not going to bring about a miracle!"

"He says it hurts less when he can do that!"

Stern, red face at the head of the table, blue eyes flashing. Soups spooned in silence; silences lasting throughout the meal.

Mother continues to fight her battle with Death. She goes to strange stores and comes home with salves and lotions to put on Gebhardts wounds. "Medicines from olden times," she explains to me one day. The doctors let her, Father says, since there is really no hope. At times in Mother's eyes I see the shining of something ferocious.

In December, snow drifts daily. In the garden, as we do every winter, we cover each flower bed with large branches of fir, so that the bulbs and plants won't freeze. The ground is already frozen. The chickens, which we have had since spring, scratch and scratch the frozen dirt but find no worms.

Ulrike and I use some of the fir branches from the covered flower bed to make an advent-wreath. We buy four especially beautiful red candles, one for each of the December Sundays before Christmas.

"Christmas this year? You children are spoiled!"

Father's anger hits us hard, Ulrike and me. We hadn't asked for a Christmas, we just wanted to make the wreath, as we do every year. This year, the two of us making it alone, it was very special. But Father so often assumes the worst about us.

One night, a commotion, people hurrying about in the hallway outside, a deep voice saying, "Hospital, at once."

In the morning, Natasha is not at the breakfast table, neither are my parents. Fritje says that Natasha had to have an operation in the middle of the night, her appendix had to be taken out.

But Father laughs when he tells a visitor that now two of his children are in the hospital, each in a different one. Because Natasha is doing all right, and now indeed it very much looks like Gebhardt is going to live. Mother has won her fight, at least part-way. I am puzzled that Father acts a bit as if nothing like that had really happened.

"We'll spend Christmas paying visits to the hospitals," Father continues, in the same good mood. "That'll be a more serious holiday than my little spoilt ones are used to!"

Ulrike and I feel much closer during this time; we fight hardly at all anymore. I think we both know very well that all the caring and attention is to be given to Natasha and Gebhardt. Yet somehow, she and I are the spoiled ones, it isn't clear to me why. It makes me afraid, like when I think about not being a boy.

Christmasin spite of the mood at home, a special time. Each day the women of the neighborhood carry huge sheets filled with cookies to the bakery, to be cooked to perfection in the large oven. My girl friend Marianne's mother already has a whole drawer filled with Springerle, Pfeffernuesse, Bird's Nests. At the very last moment Mother decides there is to be baking after all, Christmas *stollen* and Cinnamon Stars, at least.

On Christmas Eve we have *stollen* coffee and cocoa, and then that year's Christmas begins. The streets are empty as we drive past the church where Natasha was confirmed, and I see many candles burning inside. Suddenly, I long to be inside, to be feeling myself in God's good grace. Especially since *he*, the dark one of the cloud, has come back and Father keeps saying I am spoiled, I have begun to long for what Marianne has, and Annette, namely a conviction of being good and being loved by God. It is something I do not have anymore, not since I was tiny, and there was Anna.

The church windows across the street from Gebhardt's hospital room are also brightly lit, and I can hear the singing. It makes our visit feel special. For Gebhardt, there are baskets and baskets of tools, all chosen by Father, who knows how much Gebhardt loves tools.

"Careful where you put them," Mother admonishes. Nothing should touch Gebhardt's still open leg wounds. His hands and face no longer have open sores, but his face looks strangely different, nose pulled to one side, huge welts on his forehead. The backs of his hands look like the legs of our chickens, only thicker and very red. When I shake his hand the skin feels hard and funny. There is a tiny Christmas tree in the room.

Later we drive across town to Natasha's hospital. A nun greets us in the hallway, hands flying, all upset: "We almost had a huge fire here!" she exclaims. "Natasha lit herself a candle and it fell over and the bedclothes began to burn! Thank the Lord she is well enough to move quickly, she threw water on the flames and smothered them with her blanket. But oh, what a scare!"

Father takes a deep breath, pulls up his shoulders. "Well, nurse, I am very glad things went relatively mildly."

"Oh, so are we! We are already straightening the room, Herr Doktor!"

So for me the terror will not stay away, even on this holy evening. Gone are even the longings to feel love in God's church. My heart is frozen once more.

Like my heart, the winter days are frozen. The brown smoke hovers over the chimneys in town and over the railroad tracks, keeping alive *his* presence within me. I have taken to carefully watching the curls of thick smoke that rise from the chimneys of the apartment houses in the valley below, to be sure they do not suddenly grow big and menacing. Most often I feel just scared, cold, awful. Gebhardt has come home, but Mother's battle is not over after all. The wounds in his legs will not heal. Mother often places him in the leather chair next to the big window in Father's study, so the sun can shine on the open wounds. They seem to heal one day, only to break open again the next. It is a topic much discussed, in worried tones, for even the doctors do not know why this is happening. Finally, Gebhardt is taken to another town, where there is a specialist for this kind of problem. Both Father and Mother take him there. They look distressed when they return a few days later, for Gebhardt has been found to have "wound diphtheria," which is very, very serious.

Now Father and Mother take turns driving Mother's Mercedes, a sporty twoseater, to visit Gebhardt. Sometimes Mother takes me along for companionship, she says I can easily afford to miss a few days of school. It is an interesting drive. There is much work being done along the roads. New and strange placards are appearing, pasted onto underpasses and just hung across the road, signs which carry proclamations of the "New Order," the order of the Third Reich. Some are very ugly. One reminds me of Father, with its saying, "The Führer is always right!" There is another which greatly puzzles me, for it asserts that "the Führer carries the entire responsibility!" How can that be? Certainly that is not the way

I am being raised. I feel myself to be responsible for all sorts of things, some of which I do not even want to dwell upon.

On the last stretch of our journey Mother drives her pretty blue car on the newly opened and almost finished portion of Hitler's new pride and joy, the Autobahn. We see many young men with bare brown chests and big shovels, the young men of Hitler's *Arbeitsdienst*. They look so strong and happy, waving at us as we drive by. What a contrast they are to poor Gebhardt, looking pale and sick in his hospital bed.

Near the hospital there is a big square with a huge old gateway, the Feldherrnhalle. It is the law that no one may walk past this place without raising their right arm in the Hitler salute, for it is here that the events of November 9, 1923, took place. I do not like walking past this spot; even on the hottest of days I feel chilled and afraid. Gebhardt's burning, which happened on the anniversary of this event, and this place itself have to me some dark and frightening connection.

In school, a much larger picture of Hitler has been put on the wall, next to the old one. It shows an idealized version of der Führer, clad in crusader's clothes, carrying high the Swastika-flag. Now we must rise before and after each forty-five minute lesson, raise our right arm and say, "*Heil Hitler*." When I enter the vegetable store, I must announce my presence in this new way as well, in place of the old "*Grüss Gott*." But not in the bakery.

One day Mignon tells me that she and her parents are moving to Italy. Their half of the house has already been sold. It is because they are Jewish, she tells me. Not long afterward, Marianne, Ursula and I are talking about the events of that day in school when Lotte catches up with us and also says good-bye. She and her family are going to move to Palestine. We know that Lotte is Jewish, because she has told us about her special holidays. Also, like the Catholic girls, she always leaves class during religious instruction. Now we say with great seriousness, "Oh yes, oh yes, you must leave," wishing her the very best for her future. I do not know why, but although I have never been special friends with Lotte, I feel tearful and very sad.

Then Father has on his anger look one day when he comes home, but with a difference, somehow. He is white-faced at the dinner table and very quiet. Finally, he says, "They have found Nathan Lamhardt, dead in his car. Shot himself, in both temples."

"Why?" Seems we all ask at once.

"Because he was Jewish." Father sounds very grim. "And I couldn't help, this time. I didn't know."

I think of Mr. Nathan Lamhardt with bullet holes in his head, blood all over. Nathan Lamhardt, winter sports companion, expert and wonderfully graceful skater on the ice, except when his bad knee troubled him. When it went out he

used to sit on the ice, his face a grimace of pain, pushing down on the knee until it snapped back in, but right after he'd be doing intricate figures on the ice once more. Afternoon coffee companion to all of us, and to me a very special person, because he made me feel so understood. He was also a wonderful teller of jokes, a bachelor whom my parents loved having as dinner guest. Now he is dead.

I cannot stop thinking about dead Nathan Lamhardt, wondering how it would feel, putting two cold gun barrels to your head, what it would feel like, just before pulling the trigger, feeling you have to pull the trigger simply because of who you are in the world, because you are Jewish, therefore hated, and yes feared, I know, by Adolf Hitler. I discover that I can understand quite well the feeling of needing to do away with oneself because of who one is in the world, not acceptable. Jew, not Aryan. Girl, not boy. A girl to whom Father has said, as she danced on the lawn last summer, real disgust in his voice, "Oh my God, now you are acting like a girl!" A girl whom he sometimes calls, affectionately, "my little prick," and who feels guilt and shame about being all that, his "little prick" and a girl.

Scary thoughts. They stir up in me the feelings of the black cloud, those feelings of being utterly alone, of not quite being here, of walking on glass, of the ruins of the old, burnt castle with nothing, nothing in it. I work hard at not thinking about Nathan Lamhardt.

Gebhardt is still in Munich when it is time for summer vacation. Ulrike and I are to spend the summer at a *Kinderheim* in St. Moritz, Switzerland. When we arrive, my friend Marianne is there already. She acts as if she hardly knows me at all; she is busy holding the hands of other children as they walk across the meadow. But then the three of us share a room, and that is very awkward, for every night I dissolve into tears. I do not know why I am crying, and all the "shut ups!" and the teasing on the parts of Marianne and Ulrike do not change anything at all. The tears simply come and I cannot stop them. My sniffling disturbs them even if I hide my face in the pillows. I am also brought easily to tears during daytime, and that is new. I wish I could stop, I hate the teasing of the other children, I am "crybaby, crybaby."

One day a package arrives for me. A package filled with cookies, nuts and a little toy. It simply says, "For the unhappy little girl, from your friend David." A few days later there is another, and yet another.

Who is David?

David, from Frankfurt, recently moved to St. Gallen, the friendly boy who left soon after we arrived there, I am told by the owner of the *Kinderheim*. "What a nice Jewish boy he is, to be doing that," she exclaims. I feel loved by David, from afar. I lie in my bed at night, and between my sobs I think of him. That comforts me.

I have that terrible dream this summer, for the first time. It makes me wake up screaming, as long ago the fire-dreams did.

The world is at war, and there are bombs being hurled, which dig themselves into the earth. I know that at any moment the earth's crust will break open and the whole earth will fall apart. I know it hurts the earth to have all the bombs thrown into it like that, I can feel her pain. I keep running from adult to adult to beg them to stop, but no one listens. Finally, I beg my father, but to my horror he looks through me with vacant eyes, seemingly not seeing me at all.

On the telephone, Mother tells us how terrible it is with Gebhardt: turpentine treatments are required for his leg infections, now the second one is being planned. He was ready to go home just a few days ago, all the open sores had healed except one tiny one, he had already packed all his thingsand in the middle of the night all the wounds broke open again. It is all so terrible. Now Gebhardt must be under anaesthesia for twenty-four hours and Mother says he has been crying all afternoon, the poor boy, he's been so brave. After the phone call, Ulrike and I just sit there, wondering, "What shall we do now?"

"Don't you dare cry tonight!" Ulrike snaps at me, as we leave the room. "Just not tonight!"

And so I do not. Oh wonder, I am able to hold in the tears.

It is the longest summer. On our big outing to the Jungfrau I look down into the deep cracks of the glacier, wondering how it would be to slip and fall, to be stuck down there in the icy coldness. Not far from our group, a man in patent leather shoes is walking up the glacier as if it were a promenade. Her reminds me of Nathan Lamhardt. Then in fact I do topple into the lake at the bottom of the glacier and have to ride the train home cold and wet, feeling very, very foolish.

In early September, finally, our parents meet us at the train in Münich. We go straight to the hospital. The doctor greets us, all smiles. "Now you have your brother back," he says, "his wounds are all healed." Then there is Gebhardt, looking much fatter than he used to, taller too, walking very stiffly into the hospital reception hall, arms a bit outstretched, like a toddler learning to balance himself. He wears shorts, his legs are pink, covered with thick new scar tissue.

Mother plants a beautiful birch tree with dark red leaves. "In gratitude for my son having been healed," she informs Father, who is about to object to yet another tree.

Gebhardt's walk stays stiff, as if his entire body were encased in some sort of restrainer. Mother is concerned and decides that dancing lessons might help. Ulrike and I are to participate. I love it and dance with whoever is there.

Mother loves music, loves the piano, likes my singing, my recorder-playing.

Gebhardt is no longer taking violin lessons, his hands are far too stiff. Mother asks if I would like to try the violin. I say "yes" instantly, knowing I am saying it to please her, mostly. I love her piano-playing and have the very secret wish to one day be able to play like that. But now I give it up, it is more important for me to please Mother. I start learning on a tiny violin and discover I have to practice every day, for it is very, very important. Often I hear my friends playing out in the street and I feel left out. But I must practice. Sometimes Fritje or Mother accompanies me on the piano, which I like very much. When I play well, Mother is all smiles. One day we play a little piece by Teleman. Suddenly there is no time, no place, only the music we are playing together. It is a magic moment we share.

I play a little piece in school one day and our music teacher asks me to do a solo at our school's Christmas celebration. I practice diligently. On the big day, Mother is in the audience. The music teacher's cheeks are fiery red, she is very excited. As I play I realize something is very wrong, but I cannot tell what it is. I break into a cold sweat. I keep on playing, even though the sounds I make with much effort are weak and frail. It is only after the last note is played, and I take the bow off the violin, that I notice my bow is not tightened. Teacher looks very disappointed and angry, and I worry about how Mother is going to take this.

Mother's coldness, her reaction to my failure, actually lasts less time than I had feared. There are the holidays, and I am also discovering that my violin is sometimes a means with which to reach her when she is otherwise unreachable, when she is angry or depressedeven when she suffers from her stomach. Sometimes she comes to the piano, on her face a grimace of pain, eyes slightly yellowed from her gall-bladder trouble, yet as we play together her face becomes calm and happy. Often she wants to go on and on, playing pieces I find hard to follow, until finally she turns to her own music, and I just listen, enraptured.

When practice is over, chores and homework done, I become an Indian scout. I have discovered Karl May's books, his wonderful stories about the Indians in America. In these I read that it is very important for the Indian brave to learn to tolerate pain. So one day I put a thumbtack in my heel and walk around all afternoon in the moccasins and leather outfit Father brought from America, and now I am the son of an important Indian chief. I am Big Bear's little son, and I feel wonderful, even with the thumbtack in my heel. Sometimes my friends play with me. We pray to the Great Father of all Indians.

I am almost ten years old when I break my arm falling off a horse at riding school. It really hurts. Mother is angry, because she believes I was careless. Soon it will be Easter vacation, the time for spring cleaning, and who really has time for a broken arm?

Arm in a sling I study for the big examination I need to pass in order to enter

the course of study that leads to university. There are day-long examinations in German, history and mathematics, written and oral. I do much better than expected, and Mother does not quite believe me when I tell her the good overall grade I received.

"But you didn't study that hard!" she exclaims, and then she laughs, "Well, I suppose you knew how to talk yourself into a good grade!"

That is not all of it. I noticed an odd thing. As I wrote things down with my left handnecessary because the right one was in a cast, and very easy for me to learnI could remember things a lot better and also solve the problems in mathematics faster. Yet when Father exclaims in mock disgust, which he does periodically, "All you females are left-handed," Mother calmly responds, as always: "No, my youngest and I are right-handed."

Her saying that always makes me feel close to her, in spite of Father's usual contradiction. Now I am puzzled, especially since my left hand is also the good one in my violin-playing.

2
On the Horizon, Threatening Clouds

Wisdom, which is flipping out
Sighs of dying, suddenly transformed
Into ringing gales of laughter!

Humming sound, world-shattering
Brown June bugsthe people's spring!
Bugs colossal, bugs possessed
By the rage of Berserkers!
From Heinrich Heine, "Atta Troll" (Tr. by author).

In spite of its auspicious beginning, because of my good grades, spring vacation turns out to be a disaster. Cold and windy outside, Mother in a terribly dark mood inside. That always leads to her having one of her gallbladder attacks. Lying in bed, with hot towels and a heating pad on her aching stomach, she is likely to fret about us, her younger children, with whom Father never seems to be truly satisfied. That in turn leads to such things as asking Ulrike and myself to work in the garden.

This time we are to work with pitchfork and shovel, to plant our own garden. There has been much written in the newspaper about growing one's own vegetables, and Mother thinks that learning how to do this is a fine way to spend Easter vacation. At times she comes outside, her face showing her pain, to oversee our work. It is really hard. The dirt is thick, sticky clay, which must first be turned over, then hacked into smaller clumps. We add mulch from the pile behind the chicken house. Mother keeps saying this hard work is good for us, that we should be doing more of it, it will ameliorate our spoiledness. I feel a sharp pain in my chest as she says this, again and again. One day I cry, only to be told I am taking myself too seriously, that I have no reason to cry whatsoever. I swallow my tears, hurt. But I know that one must learn to do that, force back the tears, the feelings.

This particularly horrid vacation results in my actually looking forward to going back to school. For in addition to the pain of having to hack away at clumps of clay "like a German farmer," there is the spring cleaning, an activity which throws everyone in the house into the very foulest of moods.

Therefore, on my first day going back to school, I am very cheerful. The

weather has finally turned warm, and I am finally allowed to wear knee socks instead of the scratchy long stockings with their cumbersome garterbelt that Mother insists we wear until the weather is very warm, "in order to protect the uterus." It is always such a trauma to ask for permission to make this change. Last year I cheated. I rolled down the horrid things once I was away from the house, but that led to having to wear them for an extra length of time, as punishment. That had been really miserable, for the weather was already very warm by then. Well, I asked first this year, and winter with all the scary feelings is finally behind me.

Entering the classroom, I am met by quite a sight. Each and every girl is dressed like every other, in the uniform of the Hitler *Jugend:* white blouse, black tie, leather tie knot, black pleated skirt. I am the only one wearing a colorful dress. I am very puzzled, even a bit shocked.

"Didn't you get the letter?" Doris asks at once, "the letter that came right after vacation started?"

Dumbly, I shake my head.

"Well," Doris continues, sounding self-important, "that is very, very strange indeed." Pregnant pause. A pause during which in my mind's eye I see my parents in Father's study, Father joking about the latest absurdity of the Third Reich, an idea he knows is being considered, that every family-head prepare and submit a so-called ancestry-passport to attest to the family's racial purity. I can hear Mother's fretful, almost childlike question, "But Karl, they won't just start inspecting people for having non-Aryan looks, I mean, certain kinds of noses, they always make such a fuss about Jewish noses, will they?" And Father's teasing response, "Oh yes, that'll come next, they'll find you by the look of your nose." Then Mother's anxious, "But Karl, mine is really a Roman-looking nose," and Father's laughter, first good-natured, and then, falling into one of his startling attacks of rage, slamming his hand on his desk, exclaiming, "This entire system is one of insanity! And it is driving us insane!"

Now here is Doris, daughter of a high official in the Nazi hierarchy, facing me, staring at me with suspicion.

I ask no further questions that day. But at home, into the first silence at the dinner table, I speak, looking at Father:

"All my class comrades were wearing uniforms today. They've all joined the Hitler *Jugend*, they are *Jungmädel* (the young girls' branch). Doris told me they all received a letter."

Father replies, emphasizing each word, "I want you to know that you have a choice. You do not have to join unless you want to. Because of me you too are an American citizen, and so the German state cannot demand that you join such an organization. You can tell them that. Unless you *want* to join, of course . . ."

Father lets the sentence trail off. It is clear to me that Father would be pleased if I refused to join. It's all over his face. That is what this is all about, for Ulrike is not in the youth group either. No one hassles her about it, now or during all the coming years, but I learn this only much, much later in my life. Quiet Ulrike is never noticed, it seems. How clever she really is.

But right now my heart leaps. A chance to please Father, to show him he is wrong in thinking I am spoiled, and that I do not amount to much because I am a girl and not a boy. That is worth anything!

"Okay, Father," I reply eagerly, "I'll just tell them that."

"Good." Father's voice is full of warm approval, and there is a smile on his face. Then he goes back to eating, as if a small matter had been settled quite satisfactorily.

But it is not a small matter at all. I can feel it inside, and I can tell from the expressions on the faces of Fritje and the others. I realize, as I am sitting here at the round family table, that I am about to embark on a scary and very lonely undertaking. For already I can hear the taunts of Doris and her friends.

Teacher indeed cannot understand why I did not receive a letter. She is ready to hurry off and correct that mistake, all smiles. That in itself is not a very common event for me, to have Teacher smile at me like this, and it makes it extra difficult for me to say what has to come next:

"Oh, that will not be necessary."

"Your parents have already contacted the authorities?"

"No." I am amazed at the cold calm that has come over me. "It won't be necessary because I will not be joining."

"Not join?! Don't you want to?!" Now she is looking shocked.

I shake my head.

"Are you having trouble with someone?although I can't imagine . . ."

"It's not that. I am just not going to join." Now my jaw is feeling so sore that I can hardly go on speaking.

"It's the law, child!"

"Not for me. My father says that because of him I am American, and therefore the state cannot make me join." I hear myself speaking fast and furious, it makes no sense at all, what I am saying, in this classroom, with this clearly upset yet kindly teacher staring at me.

She takes a deep breath as a new smile appears on her face. "That doesn't make any difference! You were born here, you are a resident of Germany. This is your homeland! Your father is German-American, is he not?"

I nod. Yes, I think that is what he is. I remember how he told us once that when he entered kindergarten in America, he knew practically no Englishhe had only spoken German until then. How humiliating that had been. But I also

know he does not like to be referred to as "German-American." As far as he is concerned, he is simply an American.

"Well, so you see? Of course you'll join! I'm so sorry you were overlooked with respect to the letter!"

How much I wanted to say, "Yes, I will." Just do what my friends were doing. Show Doris that I could wear a uniform too. Remove myself from this horrible discussion. Be just like the other girls. But I can see my father's bright blue eyes steadily looking at me, expectantly, and so I clench my jaw once more and say the impossible words, shaking my head.

"But I *will not* join."

The matter is referred to our principal. She is an elegant, scholarly woman to whom I feel gratitude since the day she stopped me as I kept throwing myself on my knees in the gravel-covered school yard, again and again, training myself to withstand pain, learning to be a stoic. It was hurting a lot, and there was a group of girls watching me with a mixture of abhorrence and admiration, and I did not know how to quit. She'd come personally into the yard.

"Being a Blackfoot Indian again," she teases as she asks me into her office. "Let me see, does this little brave still have scars from her last adventure?"

Oh why does she have to be so friendly!

Becoming serious then, she says, "I hear you did not receive the *Jungmädel* letter, and now you do not wish to join! Please do not take the being overlooked so to heart! *Jungmädel* is exactly the kind of organization that would please you, and where you would flourish! Lots of activities, hikes, vigorous sports and healthy competition, things you love and can do well. Comradeship and the learning of many crafts. Friendship and the development of qualities of leadership, for which I believe you would be especially suited."

Fighting to suppress tears, I shake my head. "I . . . No. Father says . . ."

"Yes, I understand about your father. It is quite true, you do have a choice. But that is hardly the issue for you. You are not a little foreigner, an isolated girl. Quite the contrary. And the German language is your mother tongue. You have friends, you are like the others. All of your friends will be involved; in time it may well become a major focus in their lives. Think of it."

I cannot allow myself to think of it, and at the same time bear in mind the utter urgency of keeping Father's approval.

I shake my head again. "No."

I can tell this kindly lady is genuinely dismayed. I feel most uncomfortable, and somewhere, deep down, a deep sadness springs to life as she shrugs and says, "Well, this is not going to be easy for you, or for us either. Please do think about it, for you can always change your mind. One more thing: on the days that the state decrees that uniforms are to be worn, please see to it that you are wear-

ing something suitable too, a dark skirt and a white blouse, at least."

She shakes her head as she dismisses me.

A chill fills the spring air as I leave her office. This chill becomes my very personal companion during that day, that week. A few of my classmates help keep it there, Doris's group. There is the day the music teacher praises me lavishly for a little violin recital I give in class. And on the way home from school, Martha, Doris's seat-mate, confronts me angrily, shouting, "The likes of you deserve no praise!" Before I know what is happening, she slaps my face. She repeats this procedure on the next day, and again on the third.

At home, I complain of headache, of being tired. The doctor says my spine is somewhat curved and recommends corrective physical exercise. Fritje is not exactly elated at now having to devote half an hour daily to overseeing my exercising. When Mother joins us one day and is full of warm praise for my trying so hard, I suddenly cannot hold back the tears. I tell her about Martha's nastiness, her slapping me, but not about the why. Somehow I cannot. The next day, Martha comes up to me after school, strangely apologetic.

"Your mother called my father about my slapping you. I really got it. I'm sorry. Really. It's only, sometimes, I get really confused about what is what, you, Doris . . ."

So do I, Martha. Right now I only know that I am grateful for Mother making that telephone call.

Then I am at the North Sea. All wonderful summer long, I am at the North Sea. No need to worry about *Jungmädel*, angry teachers, a disdainful Doris and friends.

The sun shines almost every day, and there is a lovely breeze. When the tide goes out, the ocean water recedes so far that one can no longer see it. On the ocean floor thus laid bare there are wondrous creatures which I observe by the hour. Sometimes Mother, Uncle Otto who is a childhood friend of hers, and I, walk far out into the bed of the ocean. I really love these long walks into a mysterious area in which we are somehow invaders. When an ocean liner passes along the distant water-channel, deep and always passable, it looks as if the boat is floating on the dry ocean bed. And the farther out one goes, the more fascinating are the sea-weed, the crabs scurrying to and fro, shell-fish so tight that one can only break them open with a knife. But I do not like doing that because that hurts the little creature that lives inside. On the ocean floor there is a pattern of ripples created by the waves. In the distance, one can sometimes see the glistening of these waves, especially when it is close to the time the tide will turn. A few times we have to finish our walk by wading through ankle-deep water.

One afternoon, when the tide is definitely in, and very high, Gebhardt,

Mother's godson Harold, and some other boys invite me to go with them on a ride in a rowboat. They are being especially kind to me and promise they will have me back soon, for I am already wearing my blue dress for afternoon tea. I get to sit on the little bench in the bow of the boat, so I face the rowers.

We are far out at sea when suddenly the calm, friendly rowers drop their oars, stand up and in crazy fashion begin to make the little boat rock back and forth, tilting it so each side almost touches the water line. With their oars they hit the water so that soon we are all soaking wet, and there is water in the bottom of the boat. Oh, I know this game! How well I know this game! It is called, "Let's tease little sister and make her really scared." I know that Father sometimes even approves of this game because he thinks it will toughen me. And Gebhardt and Harold simply love to see me terrified! I feel humiliated, I'd forgotten this dark side of the boys. Now I must not show my fear at all. I hold onto the sides of the madly rocking boat and keep smiling. I am very frightenedeven more than I was when Harold and Gebhardt tied me to a tree and shot blanks from a toy pistol into my face, shouting that I was an evil white woman come to soften and thus destroy the Indian braves. There I knew that sooner or later someone would hear the commotion, and then I could get away. But here I am totally at their mercy. The water is black and deep, I know I could never swim back all that distance. Grimly I realize that neither could Gebhardt and his friends. But they do not seem to be aware of this; they continue their wild game, even as the sky is clouding up and the sea itself is beginning to add to the turmoil.

Finally, finally, thoroughly tired, the boys start rowing back through the heaving sea. Now they gripe at me for being "just an extra weight," and say that maybe they should toss me overboard. Indeed, it is hard rowing, I can see that and I offer to help. But they scoff, saying I am too small and puny. The tide is beginning to go out now too, tugging the little boat back to sea. When we finally arrive on shore, they all look exhausted.

We are also soaking wet. But an interesting change of mood takes place as the boys pull the boat up on the beach, for now they begin to brag, talking about their rowing as if they had been surprised by the bad weather and had struggled heroically to bring "little sister" back safely.

Alas for them, this time that ploy does not work. Apparently someone out sailing at the time did see us. Father, his blue eyes blazing with anger, roughly grabs Gebhardt's armprecious Gebhardt's arm, not touched since the fireand demands to know what could possibly have been going on in Gebhardt's mind to be doing such a dangerous thing out at sea.

"Oh, I . . . I just wanted to tease her . . ." Father's response is a quick slap. Gebhardt looks utterly amazed. The look on his face seems to say, "But it's okay to tease little sister! It's always been okay! Isn't that what she's there for?"

I too am amazed. Haven't I heard time and time again that I am to be a "good little sport," not a cry-baby, that I shouldn't spoil the fun of the others, that I must "learn to take it," that I am too sensitive and too fearful? No, the truth of it is, I do not understand Father's anger at Gebhardt either!

Soon after this we are given into the care of Fritje, while Mother and Father go to Berlin to watch the 1936 Olympic Games. Afterward, only Mother returns to join us at the North Sea, for Father has to go back to his work. She cannot stop talking about all the things she saw, the wonderful image as the torch carried arrived with the Olympic flame, having carried it all the way from Greece, and how incredibly triumphant he had looked. I get chills up and down my spine as she talks. Then there were the wonderful athletes, from all over the world, she was so impressed by the running ability of the American Jesse Owens. There were innumerable dignitaries, parties and receptions to attend, and most impressive of all there were the crowds. She returns again and again to the behavior of the crowd, especially that of certain German women, some foreign ones too, ladies she observed to be falling into an ecstatic swoon each time Hitler made an appearance. She imitates, in falsetto tones, "Oh, oh, there he is!" She is utterly amazed, even now, in the retelling; she cannot understand the uncontrolled outpouring of such emotion, particularly by women who looked as if they had been brought up the way she had.

"It felt so improper, embarrassing," she sighs. "And yet, and yet, that man must have some sort of mystical attraction. And just look what he has done in the few years he has been in power." She is having tea with other guests of the hotel on the veranda.

Below, in the sand, there are a number of wriggling, miserable creatures, starfish which I have laid out to dry. As she talks, I keep having to look at these poor things, wishing they would die and turn pretty the way I have seen them in the shops. I collected them days ago, to take home as souvenirs. Only, they just continue to writhe in the sand, not at all turning bright pink as I had expected. As the sun is setting I run down to inspect them once more. An old sailor sees me and explains that they must be boiled and eviscerated to be made into the kind of shells I have seen in the stores. Wonder of wonders, he offers to do just that for me. He'll have them back by tomorrow. Tomorrow, my last day of summer adventures.

The sailor keeps his word. As we are leaving the hotel, he brings me my starfish, all neatly wrapped. And in his wide, crusty hand he proffers a tiny seagull, a pin made of ebony. "A memoir from the North Sea," he says warmly. I am so grateful that I give him a hug. Mother is not enthused about my new friendship, nor about the bag full of dried starfish, but she does not forbid me to take them home.

The loudspeaker at the Hamburg railroad station intones Mother's name for all to hear. It continues emphatically, "This message is from your husband: please take regular sleeping berths on your trip home. Please do take the sleeping berths!" Over and over the message is read over the loudspeaker.

Mother's face flushes. "Your father!" She exclaims. "First he says we are all spoiled, and then, when I want to unspoil us, he objects. Well, we are *not* taking the sleeping carwe will lie on benches, two to a bench."

As youngest I am elected to share a bench with Mother. Her head by the window, mine on the side toward the passageway, her wriggly feet close to my head. I do not sleep all night long, and when Father meets us I am in tears, my head hurts so much.

"There is *nothing* wrong with her," Mother asserts very firmly. "Nothing at all. She just wants to feel important."

Ouch. Coming home is a giant headache. Having to leave the ocean, the tideland with its wondrous sea life, having to face the school situation, the struggle over not being a *Jungmädel*, which suddenly looms very large again, now the tension between Mother and Fatheryes, it is all one giant headache.

This time it's the shape of my nose which intensifies the family tension. At school a shadow-play of the nativity scene is being planned for Christmas, and because I sing well I am elected to participate. That is, I was, until Teacher saw my profile.

"Your nose isn't suitable for profile," she informs me. "It just doesn't look right; it would spoil the aesthetic image of the performance. We need to replace you."

I am outraged. Probably in part because Mother has often teased me about my "potato nose," sometimes even mentioning plastic surgery.

Worse. She cannot help laughing when I tell her, although she also expresses genuine sympathy. It is Father who, to my great surprise, shares my anger, even wants to call the school. Mother is adamantly against that. "They have a right to pick; her nose does look odd in profile." Father remains grumpy.

Actually, being kicked off the play is nothing to what comes next. In fact, I have to face the fact that that event was perhaps a just punishment. For in my desk is a copy book, my copy book, in which are written the weekly essays that we write to learn spelling. My marks in this subject have been terrible, below passing. The harder I try, it seems, the worse they get. It has been like this for weeks now; I am feeling more and more terrible about it, at night I wake up feeling very anxious, cannot go back to sleep. For a long time, I do not dare tell Mother. Then, just before I finally do show her the book, I change some of the grades to look just a bit better than they really are. That is my very worst mistake, as it turns out.

She discovers it at once. I have the bawling out of my life, but it is worse the next day in school.

"There is an individual in class who is well on the road to becoming a criminal," Teacher announces solemnly. We all look around.

"She has falsified her dictation grades; fortunately she has a mother who had the good sense to contact us immediately upon discovering the terrible thing. Look at these pages!"

Up in front for all the class to see goes my notebook. "Oh!" and "How terrible!" and other exclamations fill the classroom.

"Yes, you," she says, glowering at me, "take a good look at your performance. It is not that of a German girl!"

More than anything, I feel betrayed. When it comes to authority, Mother often sides with the school, I have come to expect that. But to call them without telling me!!

At the dinner table, I can hardly swallow my food; there is a huge knot in my throat that will not go away. I am expected to be silent, because I am so bad, on the way to becoming a criminal. Yes, I am afraid that Mother believes what Teacher has told her, it is quite obvious.

Mother begins talking about me as if I weren't even in the room. It is one of her worst forms of punishment, to act as if one did not exist at all. Each time she does it, it cuts through me like a knife.

"They are changing from *Süterlin* (Germanic script) to Latin," she is telling Father. "Fritje believes this may be confusing her."

Father: "Why on earth? Not that I liked that modern script they introduced, but once it is established, why change?"

Mother: "It seems that Herr Süterlin was not exactly an Aryan."

Silence.

"Besides, for Latin they have to learn it anyway, I was told."

Silence.

Mother continues: "Also, while she had her right arm in a cast last spring, she learned to write surprisingly well with her left hand. Teacher says that apparently she was not stopped doing that after the arm was well, before summer vacation, that she even started to use her left hand at the beginning of this term. Of course, that is totally impossible."

Father flares up in anger: "My God, why are all the women in my family left-handed?"

Mother protests: "I am certainly not, and neither is she. And both Natasha and Ulrike have adapted quite nicely to using the right hand."

Father: "You are *all* left-handed," then, pointing to me, "and she especially!"

I want to protest, for I have been told many times how good it is that I am at

least right-handed. Onlywhat Mother says is true. It is since I am forced to write with my right hand again and learn the new alphabet at the same time that the trouble began. I don't seem to be able to spell anymore, and often feel dizzy when I write. I do not expect anyone to understand that.

Worse, because of me, once more there is angry tension between Mother and Father.

That night I dream:

I enter Ulrike's and my bedroom. In the red chairthe chair I try to avoid ever since I climbed on it to see the pillar of smoke from the burning castlethere sits a strange woman. She has black hair and is dressed like a Gypsy, and she speaks with a strange accent. She has the crooked nose of a witch. She insists she is my mother, and I can only say, over and over, "But you are so different from the person I believe to be my mother!" But she replies, "Mark my words, my child, I am your mother."

I wake up in terror.

In school, for quite some time, I am still considered an incipient criminal. Thank God, it is only true with some teachers, others remaining warm and friendly. With Fritje's patient help I very gradually learn to write correctly in the new alphabet, learn to spell again.

One afternoon the whole horror fades, as I am privileged to receive a brandnew perspective on my life. Hitler is to drive through our main street. On this street is located the American consulate, and we are to observe his motorcade from there, because we are Americans. The street is decked with huge Swastika flags, giving a red hue to everything. Many of the people who line the street are holding little Swastika flags. But just to the right of me there hangs a flag of a different color, a different configuration, the Star-Spangled Banner of the United States. I feel very proud to belong to it this day, even though to me it still mostly means the land where Father grew up, and also the land of the wonderful Indians of my books. Mother is of the opinion that her children are "paperAme-ricans," and thus dismisses my enthusiasm. And to Father, America is certainly not the land of the Indians. In fact, Father does not like Indians at all, he said so when I was ill and he came to visit me and I asked him to tell me about the Indians. It is something I do not like to think about.

At the consulate, while Mother is shy and clearly not certain she wants to be in this so un-German environmentshe has never hidden the fact that she dislikes having had to give up her German citizenship when she married FatherI find within me a feeling of release and pride. I have met the consul before, when he came to a dinner given by my parents. But somehow this time it is different. In his official domain, he is so very impressive, it makes me feel that yes, it is

right to say no to the Hitler *Jugend*. There is a charming lady who smells of rich perfume and who sees to it that I receive a special seat on the broad window sill. She compliments me on my still halting English. But yes, I have memorized many stories in my English text, and it stands me in good stead. Father seems to be in a good mooda rare event for him, recently. And now Hitler drives by below us, standing in an open black Mercedes, right arm outstretched, and we do not have to raise our right arm and cry "*Heil, Heil!*" as do the crowds below us. The nice old lady keeps cooing about how wonderful it is to see the German people so enthusiastic, so loving toward their Führer, and for that I have to like her a little less.

My respite is short lived.

Mother enters our study one afternoon. Fritje and I are working well together, I am grateful for her kindness. Mother yanks me from the chair.

"Fräulein Knobel called from school." Mother is terribly angry and yes, she looks hurt, too. "She told me you have been sassy again! You are to go there right away to be put under school arrest. Haven't we had enough, recently? It is so embarrassing!"

Fritje: "Isn't she to have her cocoa first?"

Mother, sarcastically, "No, she might as well learn about a diet of bread and water."

In tears of rage I run all the way to school.

Fräulein Knobel greets me with a smile: "Oh, there you are already! You see, I have all these boxes of books to unpack, and I need your help."

It is clear that I am not to talk. So I follow her directions, silently, until the last book is in place and the cartons are neatly stacked. Finally I trust my self-control to the point where I dare ask: "Why am I being put under arrest? What did I do?"

Fräulein Knobel smiles, a disdainful little smile: "Well, nothing special, really; just you being you, always such a live-wire. I needed the help, and I knew your mother would not ask questions, she would send you right away. She always believes the worst about you."

After this, I avoid Mother as much as I can. I feel a sense of relief whenever she leaves the house. When I look angrily at Fräulein Knobel for days on end, she asks me to write an essay on "Why I Must Learn to Smile."

Instead, I write a poem. It is a poem about a tree that stands in a meadow, tall and straight, with beautifully formed leaves and sweet smelling blossoms. All sorts of wondrous birds live in it. But there is a terrible cloud, full of thunder, which strikes the tree again and again. It makes all the birds fly away and hide in a cave, and it tears branches off the tree, the way it sometimes happens in our garden during the fall, when heavy winds are blowing. Only the storm in the

poem is much worse, for its ferocity actually endangers the life of the tree, and it comes not once but again and again.

I expect Fräulein Knobel to be dissatisfied, to make me write another essay. I do not care. Instead, she looks at me with amazement, saying, "This is truly a wonderful poem." But that does little to soothe my anger.

The snow and wind alternate with bright sunshine on the March day my sister Natasha has her big engagement celebration. She has just passed the the difficult final examination and everyone is very proud how well she did.

Father does not like to see Herrmann's brother wearing in his lapel a Swastika-pin of the NSDAP *(Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, the official party of the National Socialist Government).

"He has a right!" Herrmann defends his brother firmly.

And at the engagement party, I have my first taste of champagne. I do not like it.

Nor do I like the summerlike day in May that leads to Fritje undergoing the drastic change that the adults call "toppling over." Someone who topples over is an individual who suddenly becomes convinced that the government of the Third Reich is virtually faultless and that Hitler is the best thing that could have happened to Germany. The person who experiences such a transformation seems to become very relieved and energetic, with enthusiasm and optimism for the future. I have noticed that their new kind of energy is similar to the kind I observeoften with amazementamong some of my classmates and newly-hired teachers. It has an air of frenzy about it.

Fritje's toppling over is tied to a very sad event: She comes running into the yard one afternoon, calling out to us: "The Hindenburg has burnt up! Our wonderful airship Hindenburg has burnt up! In New York! And it is all the fault of the Americans!"

The news is a shock to us all. We have seen the stately Hindenburg many times, a proud airship indeed. A good friend of Father's has even taken it on his recent trip to New York and urged Father to take it too, when he goes again. I was glad when Father expressed his doubts, because I learned in school that the American government under Roosevelt has refused to sell Germany the noncombustible gas helium, which meant that the Hindenburg had to continue using dangerous hydrogen gas. Since Gebhardt's accident, when someone uses the word "combustible," I become frightened.

"And that is why it is now ruined," cries Fritje. "No, Frau Doktor, Herr Hitler is right. They are not treating us fairly. We must all stand together against the world. He is absolutely right in bringing the Reich together, uniting the German-speaking peoples. It is the only way we Germans will ever survive."

As Mother and I now go to play music, Mother sighs, "So she's really toppling over, our Fritje. My God, it is certainly understandable."

That day I play the violin so badly that Mother becomes very angry. But I cannot cease thinking about the burning of the Hindenburg; in my mind's eye I can see the huge, black cloud that must have come billowing forth from the burning airship. I feel the nearness of *him, he* of the dark, fiery cloud.

Everyone in the house is excited about the forthcoming wedding, finally even I get drawn into it. Gebhardt asks me to write words to a tune, so we can sing Natasha and Herrmann a wedding song. I like the idea, and as Gebhardt tells me details of Natasha's life that he thinks should be commemorated in song, I put them into verse. I am also the musician of the three of usGebhardt, Ulrike and myselfsince I play the harmonica. We practice and practice.

Alas, I do not play especially well at the wedding, I am too excited and Ulrike is so overwhelmed with emotion that she begins to cry. Nonetheless, we loudly sing verse after verse, to the amusement of all the guests. We are highly praised for our efforts, and Natasha seems very pleased indeed.

Afterward, the house is much quieter with Natasha in her new apartment across town, even though she calls almost every day. Mother reports a time when Natasha is on the phone in tears, because Herrmann insisted on listening to a Hitler speech, which enraged Natasha. Mother says, "I suppose he has to, if he wants to get ahead in his career."

Then it is Christmas time again and Gebhardt has built a huge bobsled. He places it in the middle of Mother's sitting room for all to see; in fact one must walk a little around it to get to Father's study, where the Christmas tree is lit. I am excited, for I have received quite a few books about subjects I care about: horses, the American West, a book by a Canadian Indian, two novels. I want to look at them quickly once more before we sit down to dinner. I jump over Gebhardt's sled, but catch my foot in the iron brake, and as a result I have a very bad fall. Then my right arm sticks out at a crazy angle, and hurts so much that I pass out, as Mother tells me later. My next memory is of Father, eyes blazing with anger, thundering at Gebhardt for having put the sled in such an awkward position. "This oversize monstrosity!" Father shouts accusingly.

I feel terrible. The fall isn't Gebhardt's fault at allit is mine! And I an not standing up for Gebhardt, I am in too much pain, I dread Father's fury.

After weeks of being in a cast, my arm is still stiff and sore. It needs surgery. And no sooner am I out of the hospital than I come down with scarlet fever.

"Isolation time," the doctor tells my mother. "She can stay at home if you have a room where she is really isolated from the rest of the family, and you can

delegate just one person to take care of her."

Gebhardt, having just graduated, is already in England for further study. I am put into his room because it is at the far end of the house and has a little anteroom. Fritje is delegated to be my nurse.

I am not really very sick, and soon I am bored stiff. Even contemplating the pretty spring sky does not help much, nor does listening to all the war-praising soldiers' songs I hear coming through the open window. I cannot have books from father's library, because when I am well these books will have to be burnt. But Gebhardt's glass bookcase is right here in the room, and filled with all sorts of wonders! No one thinks of taking away the key. I become an expert in hopping out of bed for a book, and hiding it when I hear Fritje's steps coming down the hall. I apologize to distant Gebhardt every day for using his books. They are just wonderful. Among them is *Mutiny on the Bounty* and a whole set of books called *The New Universe*, a boys' encyclopedia about absolutely everything.

One day Fritje brings the radio to my room, so she can listen to a speech by Hitler while she sits with me and does the mending. It is meant to be special, this way of keeping me company. Both Mother and Father are out of town and she feels twice as responsible.

And so I learn that Austria, father's beloved, charming Austria, place of the quiet, snowy mountains and charming, gentle people, has become a part of the German Reich.

"But that's terrible," I cry, "surely it will lead to war!"

Fritje rebukes me: "You with your Anglo-Saxon attitude! Hitler is doing exactly the right thing, uniting the Germans."

Six weeks later, when I am allowed to get out of bed, I am four inches taller. Mother starts calling me her "pallid beanstalk," or worse, "the anemic flower," drawing a long face when she says this, over and over. I guess I am no longer a dainty little girl but have become a gawky thing. Each time Father sees me he exclaims, with dismay, "My God, you have grown again!" The books stay in Gebhardt's room. It is only during the war, still in the future, that they do get burned. And not for a health measure.

In school, I am suddenly the tallest. It is again almost time for the May festival, and our class is practicing gymnastics. We are to be on the large meadow doing group exercises and dances. The event may even be filmed. I really enjoy practicing. But suddenly, one day, the gymnasium teacher pulls aside three of us, the tallest ones, and tells us she is very, very sorry but we cannot participate.

"Why?!" A chorus of three voices.

"You are too tall. You would make the others look like little squirts."

"I thought the German Reich wanted tall, Aryan-looking people!" I hear this coming out of my mouth.

"I wouldn't talk, if I were you!" That is Doris's cutting voice, coming from the row of lined-up girls.

Two out of three now are sobbing. I bite my lips to keep back the tears, as I have to face the painful fact that during this practice there has grownagain!a part in me that wanted to belong, and very, very badly so, to the events at the May festival, yes, and even to the Hitler *Jugend* and all it entails. I had secretly hoped that here they would be proud of my being so lean and tall. I am shocked as I discover how much that thought had nestled in, how much I wanted to participate in all the sports and the home-evenings, in the singing, the long hikes in the forest, the companionship, yes, how much I want to have that feeling of belonging that I see so clearly in my classmates. Marianne, my closest friend since age three, is currently being trained to be a leader, as are a few others. That makes her part of a special group, an elite group. They always have serious issues to discuss, which of course I can never be a part of. In fact, no one even seemed to notice I was absent for many weeks. It is sad how distant my friendship with Marianne has become.

But then, almost immediately, there is that other, strong, firm voice in me that asks, "And be like Doris? Mean and insensitive?" Besides, it is quite clear, I do not fit this group, Teacher is making a point of this. It is right, that voice, none of this is for me. Father despises it and by now, at least most of the time, so do I, and sincerely so. Above all else, I know I must remain true to Father's values, and strive to live by them. That just happens to require being separate from the othersin contrast to what we are taught almost daily, namely that we should strive to become just like everybody else.

At about this time, I become especially aware of Father's increasing quietness and somberness. All talk about moving the family out of Germany has ceased. Last summer, there had still been hefty discussions and altercations, Father wanting to pull up stakes and move to the United States, Mother pleading for more time, with words like, "It has to blow over soon! The German people cannot possibly stand for this kind of craziness much longer! Please have faith!" And, "I cannot bear to think of myself living anywhere but in Germany."

Now I ask Father, "Are we going to move?"

Father's hand seems to shake as he strokes my hair. "No, I'm afraid not. They seem to think they cannot do without us here. And their methods of making sure I stay are . . ." he suddenly stops talking. Then he adds, "But Gebhardt is going to school in England and will stay there, I expect, and in time, as I've said before, perhaps you too can go to an English boarding school!" He teases, "That is why Mother keeps holding up to you the little princess Elizabeth!"

Alas, ever since Mother saw Princess Elizabeth in the coronation procession,

she has used her toward me as example of proper comportment and behavior, with the skimpy justification that Elizabeth and I are almost the same age.

The prospect of boarding school in England is terribly exciting to me, for obvious reasons. There, I might be able to feel I belongat least a little bit. It is some time ago now since I began to cherish this fantasy. But today Father's face is not looking as it should when talking about such a plan. In fact the look on his face makes it all feel less real. I feel a heavy weight, because of the way my father looks.

After the Münich conference, in which French Premier Daladier, British Prime Minister Chamberlain and Hitler reach an agreement that is to prevent war "for all time," as Chamberlain stated, we are given the assignment in school to write an essay of what that event might mean to us. I usually enjoy writing essays, and often get excellent marks, sometimes even praise in front of the whole class. But this time, Teacher will not hand me back my copybook; she says she first must discuss the matter with my parents.

My heart drops into my shoes. Oh no! Will I be accused of being a criminal again? Did I write that badly?

My hands are cold and clammy all that day, and the next, when Mother comes to school for a conference with Fräulein Renke. During recess I see her enter the principal's room with my teacher. This must be serious! What on earth did I do?

I practically run up the hill to go home that day. I do not care how severe the punishment may be, I must know what has happened.

My parents are in Father's study, my copybook in Mother's hand.

"That I always have to have contact with school because of you," Mother sighs. But she is not exactly angry, and neither is Father.

"You have to learn to be more careful in what you write," Father begins.

Mother continues: "I was called to school because they are very concerned about the frankly pro-British sentiment expressed in your essay. Fräulein Renke told me she had noticed some of this same sentiment in your essay about the annexation of Austria, about which you wrote earlier this year, but felt that then you had confused skiing vacations with the serious meaning of the event. Fräulein Renke, thank God, is of the old school. But both she and the principal feel strongly that such things wouldn't happen if you were in the Hitler *Jugend* and that you really should join, especially since you are so volatile about your feelings and opinions."

Father, firmly: "She is still an American citizen, she still does not have to." Then turning to me: "But you certainly must learn to be more careful with what you write!"

Mother: "Is she to live out your conflict? Was she not born here? And what, for heaven's sake, is that distant America to her!"

Father: "I maintain that it is still her choice!"

And I?

What am I to say? Why did I write what I did? Alas, it did not just happen. It happened, perhaps, because since I found myself feeling so very disappointed that I could not be among the gymnastics group in the festival, I have intensively nurtured my admiration for the British. This admiration had its start a very long time ago, when I saw the movie *Kim*. Later, it was nourished by fantasies about the British boarding school Father talked aboutfantasies that are especially helpful during the bad moments in school. There was also the trip this summer to Yugoslavia, where the British aircraft carrier *Courageous* was laid at anchor, its elegant officers and wives guests at our hotel. Not only did I admire them from afar, but one afternoon I was actually part of a tea party, receiving many compliments for my ability to speak English. I also read Rudyard Kipling and other British authors from Father's bookcase, some in German translation, but still, these are works written by Englishmen.

"Well, I admire the British," I now defend myself. "I think that without Prime Minister Chamberlain we would have had war. So that is what I wrote."

Father is grinning, as Mother shakes her head: "Sometimes you are quite crazy, my child. To write such things in the present political climate, and moreover, your attitude is soso un-German. I certainly cannot claim to understand you. The British you so admire would say to you, 'My country, right or wrong.' And mark your father's words, the danger is real."

Yes, I know about the danger. There was the day, now long ago, when a man in SA uniform came into our class and gave a long speech about loyalty to the Führer coming before loyalty to one's parents, and that if any of us felt our parents did not support the Third Reich, we should please let him know. It would be to the benefit of our parents, he assured us, for surely it was simply that they did not yet quite understand. Hitler loved little girls and boys, he continued . . .

"Hitler loved little girls."

There had been something dangerously tempting in that statement. It had to do with Father's outspoken disgust whenever I acted "like a little girl." For a split second, there, I was a fervent little Nazi, waving the Führer's flag, the flag of the one who *loved little girls*. An abyss had opened up. Mercifully quickly it closed shut for me, by what the SA man said next, for he went on to insist that the Third Reich wanted to make certain our upbringing would not be unhappy just because our parents did not understand the New Order.

"The New Order." Good thing he mentioned that terrible phrase! It showed me what was really going on here. For the New Order was a myriad of banal slogans pasted on every available space, and crude pronouncements shouted from the windows of all the people who owned one of the new inexpensive radios, called

Volksempfaenger, which Hitler had caused to be mass produced so his messages would be heard by as many people as possible. Indeed, that is why his adherents put up the volume of their radios, often placing them on the windowsill, so the messages had to be heard by everyone who walked by. One could not help but be flooded with patriotic pronouncements and martial music. The New Order was the chilling "voice choruses" that solemnly intoned, again and again, *Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Führer* (One empire, one people, one leader). The New Order included lectures about racial purity and the dangers of Zionism and daily radio announcements about the bad deeds of the Jews.

Mother is visiting in Northern Germany when I come down with what the doctor says is appendicitis. I have to have surgery right away. Father, who is with me at the hospital, is very upset.

But his upset is small compared with mine as things progress. It seems I almost went out for good under the anaesthetic, and that when I woke up I told the nurse, a nun, that I wanted to die. I do not remember anything of the kind.

Mother arrives by evening the next day. I am conscious of having caused an uproar, unintentionally. I see the nun speaking to Mother in worried tones. Mother's face shows annoyance; she says loudly that one need not take seriously the things a person says when awakening from anaesthetic, especially not when it comes from one as dramatic as I, her daughter, and that the almost-not-waking-up was due to my extra small heart. The doctor had told her this, and yes, her daughter would have to take it easy for quite some time. That last comment of hers is to become the source of my upset.

The tedious having-to-take-it-easy lasts all summer, even during our vacation in the Swiss Alps. Gebhardt has joined us from his school in England, and even Natasha has come for a while, so the entire family can be together. Yet I feel especially left out because each day Father, Natasha, Gebhardt and Ulrike go off on exciting mountain-climbing ventures, and I have to stay behind with Mother. Mother is not feeling up to much; she says her heart has been aching all summer long, so Father has asked me to keep her company. I cannot even wander off to the creek in the forest nearby. In the evening, the air is thick with talk about politics, about war. Mother is full of admiration for Hitler's cunning in signing the pact with Russia.

Father accuses, a bit teasingly, "You're out of Germany, and suddenly you are full of pride for that regime!"

Mother pretends not to notice the teasing. "It feels good to have Germany powerful once more," she asserts, "and whatever else he is doing wrong, that feat he has brought about. At least Germany is respected and feared again. Maybe they don't like usbut that they will never do, the other nations."

By the end of August it is all too clear there is going to be war. Tearfully,

Gebhardt flies back to London. Father firmly orders him to go right away, whether school has started yet or not, to waste no time in getting there. Then Father himself is off to a last minute meeting someplace far away, perhaps even England, and so it falls to us women to drive home alone.

Mother is driving father's car, an Italian sportscar that not only has the steering on the wrong side, but is hard to shift as well. It seems like we are the only civilian car on the entire Autobahnthe wide road is filled with military vehicles. There are trucks where soldiers sit in rows, guns between their knees; other trucks are laden with stubby cannons, still others have the words, "Careful! Explosives!" on their tarpaulins. Heavy vehicles pull trailers with long-barreled cannons. It is a terrifying sight, moving toward the Western frontier.

Then a tire blows, and for a long time we stand helplessly by the roadside. Some of the truck drivers wave to us in sympathy, but none stops to help us. Finally, Natasha figures out how to use the car jack. Ulrike and I stand by the edge of the road so none of the huge trucks will get too close while Natasha wrestles with the tire. Mother hands her tools and gives expression to the terror we all feel as the flow of military might goes on and on.

War.

Hitler's emotional, screaming speech is about to end. As he spoke, Mother was running in and out of the room, terrified, insisting that the first air-raid might happen in just a few minutes.

"The French could be here in half an hour, don't you see!" She calls to us repeatedly, hurrying into the basement to check if all is ready in the airraid shelter. Father is still away. She checks everything again and againthe gas masks, water, first-aid equipment, blankets, food supplies, the seals on the doors. The doors have been pasted heavily with newspapers and the edges lined with rubber, to make them air-tight in case of poison-gas attack.

With the rousing playing of the double anthems, the *Deutschlandlied* and the *Horst Wessellied*, Hitler's speech ends. I go outside, into the balmy September day. I see just a few people walking along the sidewalk of our quiet street, older neighbors, looking upset. A woman is crying bitterly.

I go into our yard. Since I am the one who mostly takes care of our chickens, I have a special relationship with them. I am the one who lets them out of their coop, and watches that they do not tear up the flower beds as they search for worms in the grass. It is something I began doing some time ago, because of not being busy with youth group activities, nor bogged down with homework as Ulrike often is. Alone in the yard I have often felt my emotions most intensely, and for this reason disliked this chore. But gradually I have begun to treasure the quiet, where I can just follow my thoughts, or become fascinated by the chick-

ens' behavior, or watch the drifting clouds. Being alone in the garden has become a precious time and often makes me feel good inside. It is my haven from the hundreds of disruptions and excitements that increasingly punctuate our household. On this day, which I shall remember as long as I live, I go into the garden, wanting to do the usual, the familiar, as if nothing at all had happened.

But in fact a horrible thing happened that morning, even before war became an absolute certainty. I started my first menstrual period. Mother hardly noticed when I told her, merely saying, "Well, you have older sisters, so you surely know what to do." It is most understandable, she has a great deal on her mind and I am not so important.

I greatly fear for my relationship with Father. I cannot dismiss his many comments of displeasure when I act "like a girl." Now I truly am one. Will I lose him as a friend? The thought makes me feel cold and stiff all over, even though it is quite hot. It is so quiet in the yardonly the occasional fall of an overripe pear breaking the silence. It seems to me as if all of us were in a crouched hush, like a chicken before the strutting rooster, waiting for the big and terrifying happening called war. I long for the quietness to last.

3
The Fires of War

My inner child Wiese is weeping, deep sobs which flood me with waves of depression. I had not realized she had felt the day so keenly. I recall the me that was rational Erika searching for emotions, thinking I should be having many on such an important day. I recall a feeling of great emptiness.

"It was almost too much to bear," my inner child tells me now. "But let me continue. Until I finally disappear at the end of the war, you must see the events of that time through my eyes."

Of course. Without Wiese telling me of her experience I would not be able to write. I would be back in that frozen state of depression I have come to dread so much.

"Please go on, Wiese."
Erika Wiese Fergus, journal entry.

I have my dream again:

The earth is being torn up as men are loading huge cannons and firing them relentlessly. I know that soon lava will burst forth and tear apart the earth itself. I run from cannon to cannon, begging, pleading for the men to stop with the shooting, but it is to no avail.

I awake in terror.

I am quite alone with my feelings of doom about the war, especially in school, for the *Blitzkrieg* is making people giddy with excitement and pridea state of emotion fueled by the barrage of fanfare-accompanied "special victory announcements" that blare forth from radios everywhere. Every action is described in the loftiest of terms, with great pomposity. Soldiers are never just that, but always "glorious heroes," the enemy never simply that, but always something akin to "the vilest of dogs."

I resent their frequent misuse of the word "dog." Our old dog, Dagobert, has for some time now been my special friend. He is large, his once black coat now a mottled gray. As I have come to know him better, he has become very, very special to me. Perhaps it started on that Sunday morning two years ago when Father whipped him so severely for soiling. But everyone had slept in late, and Dagobert was just unable to wait. When Mother unlocked the door to the hallway where he spends the night, there he was, wagging his little stump of a tail,

saying so clearly with all his dog-being, "Please excuse me, I just couldn't hold it any longer." But my parents were immediately incensed, and Father went for the whip. Dagobert just let the blows hail on him, making hardly a sound. He looked so dignified, taking it like that. I could really feel his pain.

Later that day, I brushed his coat and washed his face, and began giving him his noonday meal. Almost from the time he came, eight years before, I was usually the one to give him his evening biscuit. He had the ability to make a person feel very special for giving him this biscuit, in the way he carried it to his basket, like a great treasure, how he put it between his paws in just the right way, and then slowly munched at it, with many warm looks from his deep brown eyes. After the whipping, I spent more time with him, even taking him for occasional walks.

I am preparing Dagobert's food one day after our dinner, putting together table-scraps and the cooked cheap rice Mother buys for him. Both Father and Mother are in the kitchen, and she says it is becoming very difficult to obtain the rice, not to mention dog biscuits.

"Obviously, the dog must go," Father replies. "Whatever extra food we have must go to the chickens. Besides, he is a nuisance, so lazy and disobedient."

I protest vehemently. I know Father never did like Dagobert, except when he first came to us. Then he did everything on command, at once, for he had had a strict trainer. But when no one continued to work with him in that fashion, he quit being responsive and often showed he had a mind of his own. That always irked Father.

But now Father is talking about giving away my special friend!

"When the current supply of dog food is gone, out he goes," he declares.

But in fact, Father does not wait that long. The dog food goes with the dog. When I come home from school the very next day, Dagobert has disappeared. "Yes," Mother says matter-of-factly, "someone was sent to pick him up this morning. What is the use of waiting? That is Father's decision."

What a betrayal! Not even to allow me to say good-bye!

For two weeks, I act as if Father does not exist. I do not look at him, I do not speak to him, I do not go to the room where he takes his nap after dinner, to put the blanket over him and make myself responsible for waking him up at the time he specifies, which varies each day. And he just lets me be. He does not challenge me, nor does he offer an apology.

Finally, I drop my fury, my pain. I miss Dagobert a great deal. I probably always will. But there are still the horses at the riding academy.

On a Sunday visit, Herrmann tells us that German and Allied soldiers have become quite friendly, hoping they can all go home without firing a shot.

Father raises his eyebrows: "Even the elite troops?"

Herrmann: "Well, I don't know about them. I expect they do desire to do battle." Herrmann does not like to be challenged by my father.

During the same visit it is decided that Herrmann and Natasha will move in upstairs, make the big guestroom theirs, and put a little stove in Gebhardt's washroom so Natasha can cook for the two of them separately. Housing is becoming scarce and the government may well decree that big houses, such as ours, take in boarders. This threat was accentuated since Elsie left recently. Fritje has been gone since last summer, before the war started; she is married now and already pregnant. There is only the new girl, Lulu. As for keeping their apartment, Natasha "counts for nothing," Herrmann explains, trying to make a joke of it, "because she does not have children nor is she even pregnant." I feel for Natasha, as I observe her face turning red.

The fragile hope that there might be peace after all continues into spring. It is even mentioned by Fräulein Dr. Renke, our teacher for English and German literature, one of my favorite teachers. I know she is not enthusiastic about the Nazi regime. But of course hope is dashed completely when in June there is another *Blitzkrieg*.

Waves of enthusiasm about the German feats of battle are even higher than they were last time. Again and again I hear it being said that this is just payment for 1918, and for the treaty of Versailles; they say it in school, in the kitchen on the days the cleaning woman comes, in the bakery, where a son's picture in uniform now has a Swastika-flag attached to it. Everyone is proud. In the summer heat I am standing in the garden once more, herding chickens, and yes, again I am having one of my dreaded menstrual periods. Mother says she always knows days ahead when it is due, that I am absolutely impossible to live with during that time, and that she is always relieved when it finally arrives and she can see "a light at the end of the tunnel." But I am not, no, not I! A voice inside has begun to whisper, especially during those days, that I stink and am not worth anything at all.

On this particular day, the day Hitler's proud army has marched into Paris, I hear not only this voice, but also Mother's, chiding me for who I am: How could I be so depressed at a time like this?! I too should be proud, I too should feel the elation everyone else is feeling, menstruating or not! Well, almost everyone, for I do not believe Father is elated. He is being very quiet. But Mother insists that one cannot help but feel proud of the feats of the German army, of the heroism displayed by its officers and men. There was a picture in the paper this morning of two "pitiful British aviators" together with their shot-down aeroplane. My sympathy reached out to *them*, for the ridicule they must suffer. I know what it feels like to be ridiculed. No, I decide, I will not be proud of the

feats of the German army, I'll leave that to others. I have my own heroes.

It is June 5th, a lovely summer morning, a sweet-smelling breeze coming in through the open balcony doors as I enter the dining room for breakfast. Mother is up early, Father is just finishing his breakfast, still reading the papers. As I kiss him on the cheek, I notice the huge headline: "Three hundred forty thousand Britons flee across the sea at Dunkirk, weaponless!"

I exclaim: "Why, that's wonderful! So many got away, that's just wonderful!" My enthusiasm is truly heartfelt, and Father's response hits me like a bucket of ice water: "It's not wonderful at all," he says firmly. "Far too many got away, and needlessly so, just because of the stupidity of the German General Staff."

"But getting away means they won't be killed!"

Father: "They'll come back to fight another day."

"They have no weapons!"

"Weapons can be replaced!"

"But they're *British*, Father!"

Father, sounding very irritated: "Yes, yes, I know. Eat your breakfast."

I become confused, distraught. What on earth is happening with Father? Suddenly I feel terribly alone. A chill, almost. I'm near tears, but I dare not cry. Mother's ridicule just at this moment would be unbearable. Is Fatherhe of all peoplein danger of "toppling over"? As I struggle to swallow my bread, I resolve that even if that were to happen, I should continue to be pro-British. And no matter what he says, today I am glad so many British soldiers have escaped.

I feel so keenly how Father would have preferred a second son! And Mother never lets me forget it, she brings it up every time she is disappointed with me, which is often. She usually adds that I should thank her that I exist at all, because Father wanted her to have an abortion. Perhaps I really should be thankful, but who said I wanted this life in the first place?

Rose has a priest. Rose goes to early morning mass because she is Catholic and she really likes her priest. Rose tells me that when she is troubled, she is especially eager to go to mass, light a candle and say a prayer, for right away she feels better. She is the youngest in her family, as I am in mine. But in my family we don't go to church. We did, at least twice, when Natasha and Gebhardt were being confirmed, and then again when Marianne's oldest sister got married. I keep remembering how it happened that we have no churchFather's fury about what he perceived to be the unfairness of the church taxation law, Ulrike's tears when she was told she could not be confirmed. Mother's irritated, "That shouldn't affect you so, Ulrike, you can be religious without confirmation," did little to console Ulrike. As for me, she dismissed me with a curt, "You're not religious anyway."

How does she know? She was right, that was the worst of it. I had already

tested God and had given Him up. When I was little, I used to have a long list of prayers, each carefully constructed, which I would say in a specific sequence, night after night. There came a time when I wanted to find out whether I was actually being heard. So each night I began to say one prayer less. Would God notice? Well, he didn't, not even when I said no prayer at all. So then I knew: no one listens. Mother once told me she stopped praying all at once when she was sixteen years old. Just couldn't do it anymore, the words wouldn't come. I know just how she felt.

"My mother hated religion," she explained. "She used to brutally tease my poor father about his profound religiosity. Yet when she died"Mother was only eighteen"every day he sat on a little bench by her grave and prayed by the hour."

Actually, I do not know many people who say they believe in God, and who still go to church. There is Rose, and Ulla, whose mother is a widow. Ulla has an intensity about God that impresses me as being just like Doris's and Martha's and that of Fräuleins Bilf and Smith for their Führer. It contains a lot of passion and promotes very shiny eyes.

"Our cause is a holy cause, and our war a holy war," is one of Fräulein Bilf's favorite sayings.

Is it? Is Germany undergoing something terribly special after all? A heroic struggle, like Hannibal's march across the Alps? Sometimes, when our whitetiled "children's bathroom" looks the color of the brilliantly red Swastika flag hanging on its flagpole right outside the windowit is obligatory, on certain days, to fly this flagand I hear the singing of marching soldiers and feel the fervor in the air, I really do wonder. Marianne's parents used to be so proud of the fact that their family tree went all the way back to the time when our land was a little kingdom, its political eyes turned West, toward France, away from war-loving Prussia. But now there is a new picture of Adolf Hitler in the entry hall of their home. Two of their sons are in uniform, one a mountain trooper fighting in the Caucasus, the other at officers' school. And Marianne's mother is wearing the *Mutterkreuz* (mother's cross). This is a medal of valor, like soldiers get for bravery. It is an invention of Adolf Hitler. If a woman has four or more children, she is eligible to be awarded this *Mutterkreuz*. Mother and Father had a huge argument the day Mother mentioned that maybe she'd like to wear one too. "As I have often said," she announced to Father, "having a child is like fighting a battle. And I have fought four battles."

"My God, announce the fact to the world that women here are to be prized as breeding machines, like pigs! You do that and I'll divorce you!" Thus spake Father. Mother does not get herself the *Mutterkreuz*.

So I don't know.

This evening I make them all laugh, without meaning to. I talk about my latest goal in life, to grow up to be an "individual." The laughter starts when I am asked to explain what I mean by that, "to be an individual," and I cannot explain it at all well. It is just a feeling, having something to do with writing.

The next morning I wake up after a terrifying dream with my dreaded feeling of guilt. This time it feels particularly like the time in school when I was accused of being well on the way to becoming a criminal.

I suspect my failure to give up the left hand once the right one had healed must be considered a failure at becoming "equalized." This is a new and important term at school. If you've become equalized, it means you've made yourself be like all the others, you've made a conscious effort to give up your own selfish interests for the sake of the common good, the nation, the Führer. Indeed I am guilty of the crime of not doing that, especially with my new-found desire to become an individualist. That must be very bad. But if I were to change, I would die. At those thoughts I am flooded once more with the horrible feelings of shame and guilt that were such a big part of my dream.

I decide I will start the work of becoming an individualist by writing in a journal. It is a difficult decision, because what shall I write about? Certainly not about me! For Mother says it is proof of a bad character if one has secrets from one's mother, and she has an uncanny nose for smelling out my secrets. Sometimes her comments about my essays, often meant to be a friendly tease, or even a compliment, cut like a knife. And those are impersonal compared to the feelings I might put on paper if I were to write about myself.

But then I have an inspiration: I can write about all the things I notice when I am in the yard, watching the chickensespecially the coming and going of the weather. Perhaps, if I chart carefully what I observe, I can even learn to predict the weather! But mainly, writing about the weather can stand for many things: Mother's moods, Father's moods, the household's moods. Even the chickens' moods. For they too have them, I'm sure. I shall write one thing, and think and remember quite another.

I decide I must work on myself in other ways as well. My ways. As Germany triumphs with her victory in France and there is talk of invading England, as soldiers in the streets again and again sing their lusty song proclaiming, "For we're driving, driving toward English-land," I can think of no greater heroes than those people on that small island, preparing for the onslaught. In an old English magazine I find pictures of the king and queen of England. These I carefully cut out, paste on cardboard and fashion a frame for them. I place them on my desktop. I greatly admire King George, because of the stories I have heard about himprobably from Mother's and Father's dinner table conversations at the time of Edward's abdication. The new king has had to overcome a case of severe

shyness as well as a stuttering problem in order to be king, and I can guess that he has had a hard time of it because he is not at all like his dashing predecessor. So this British king shall be my *Vorbild*, my good example, for overcoming obstacles and correcting shortcomings.

Odd, how for years and years these pictures remained on my desk. In spite of Mother's derogatory comments about King George, her ranting and raving about how insulting these pictures were to her German soul, she never attempted to remove them, she who otherwise stopped at nothing in her intrusiveness.

"To the faithful, precious German Reich attach thyself!" She often almost shouts at me, in her best stage intonation. These words, lines of a medieval German bard, become Mother's new battle-cry; she quotes them and others in the hope of awakening my "German soul." She tells me repeatedly of how proud she is of German victories. Next to the intensity of her feelings for "sacred Germany," it matters little to her, I think, who actually rules. Sometimes she speaks about her feelings for Germany in phrases like, "One must love this land, it is like a child whom at times one loves even more because it is so difficult to love." Father says less and less at such moments. I long to hear him assert his views in his strong, firm voice, as he used to do, but increasingly he is silent.

Shortly before we are to go on our summer vacation, Mother and Father are in the basement where our skiing clothes and other winter things are stored. A big package is being made ready to be sent to the German army, as gifts to soldiers stationed in Poland.

I am appalled, I myself cannot really say why. I hear myself asking, "Help for Hitler's soldiers?"

Father is appalled in turn. "Help for soldiers period, child. Help for young men who may be freezing! The coming fall and winter may be very harsh. We all know that last winter there weren't enough warm clothes to go around. Think of Marianne's brothers! They are soldiers, would you want them to be cold!?"

Of course not! And yet, I must bite my tongue. On the tip of it were the words Father exclaimed at the dinner table not so long ago. Mother's godson Harold had just visited, a professional officer now, attached to Führer Headquarters and brimming with enthusiasm about "mein Führer's" doings and sayings, and his so laudable modesty, demonstrated by the fact that only the plainest of meals were served at headquarters. After he left, Father had exploded: "And if Germany's young men know no better than to serve such an egomaniac, then whatever befalls them is their just dessert!"

Now, in the basement among the woolens and the potent smell of moth-powder, Mother is remarkably mild. She smiles as she says, "You just wait until you fall in love with a dashing young soldier. Then you'll sing a different tune!"

I leave the basement, muttering to myself, "That will never, never happen! I

don't even like the *idea* of falling in love. I'm not like Ulrike who swoons whenever a male friend is near. I'll have horses and other animals in my life, that's all. Certainly no men!"

But it does happen. During our vacation. My parents are at an Austrian spa for Father's diabetes, and I am there alone with them, for Ulrike has been invited to the farm of a friend. She is old enough to have to work as a harvest helper during the summer break, so the friend's farm is indeed a haven for her. At the spa there is a young man and his mother, his name is Franz. And I fall for him. He is nineteen years old and I am only fourteen, but right away I decide that the difference in age does not matter, should we decide to get married someday.

It is Franz's last "minute of freedom," as he puts it. He has received his draft notice and will join the army at the end of his vacation.

"It is also a parting time between Mother and myself," he says, as we lean against a hay-hut high on an alpine meadow to which we have hiked. "She is joining Father in Japan. I've only an old aunt in Berlin, so if I die . . ."

Suddenly it all looks so different, so terrifying. Franz expects to have to go to Russiaoh yes, he expects that sooner or later Germany will be at war with Russia. His father, who knows "the ins and outs of the Nazi war machine," has said as much before leaving for Japan.

Sitting in the hot summer sun, only the sound of crickets and the grazing cows near us, Franz continues quietly: "I'll probably die. I assume this war will end in disaster. I was going to study business, help open up the world, but . . ."

I ask about his father in Japan.

"He's with the German embassy. It'll be hard for Mother. She's Austrian, she was most unhappy when Hitler took it over. But Father is a Nazi."

The words are spoken with bitterness. I envy him his mother. She is a dark, slender lady, very elegant. When she sits in the dining room with her son, she often has a sad look on her face. Now I understand why. But his father! Even though mine is ill, and very quiet these days, he did not topple over, really, as I had so much feared he would. Sometimes he strokes my hair very gently and says, "I know, it is all very hard." Those are moments when I feel cared for.

Magic days, this time at the spa. Swims and walks together, and at the end Franz places two kisses very gently on my lips, so precious; he'll never know how much they meant to me. Then he is gone and I feel a sadness like I have never known before.

Alone, I walk on all the hikes we did together. As I relive them, each event is a precious memory.

Father goes back to work. Mother and I travel to a little place in the Austrian Alps to spend a week with Natasha. Just before Natasha arrives I fall ill with a high fever. I am so ill that I do not even recognize her. It is the worst of any of

my fevers, and it will not break. I have an especially bad infection in my scarred tonsil stumps, the doctor says, and I end up being sick for many days. At times I hear Mother and Natasha talk about the Battle of Britain, their voices hushed, Mother saying repeatedly, "All those fires in London! How terrible it must be for them!" One day Mother leaves to be with Father. Natasha has agreed to stay with me until I am well enough to travel.

Franz had promised to send me his field address soon. But the weeks pass and there is no letter. Now I wish it were true, what Teacher has told us about the memories of a summer vacation: "One by one, they fall beneath the table as we go on with our lives." I seem to be having mine atop the table, and they hurt.

Waking existence is hell, but suddenly, wonderful things are happening in my dreams. There is a British adventurer who visits me in dream after dream. Soon I'd rather be asleep, dreaming about him, than be awake with the pain in my throat, the family and all the other difficulties. I have had a falling-out with Natasha. Sleep is much to be preferred, for then my heroI call him "Tommy,"appears and comforts me in ways I've never known before.

Even after my throat has healed, and I am up and about, the dreams continue. Also now, at certain moments, I can conjure up Tommy in waking life as well. We have incredible conversations about all sorts of things I have read and do not quite understand, things I think about and would like explained. He shows me the wondrous places he has explored. He also fights in the current war. One time he is wounded, and in my fantasies I am the one who nurses him back to health. This world within me grows and grows to the point that I do not even care anymore what anyone says to me in the outside world of harsh realities.

Then there is a dream in which Tommy and I ride in a boat together over the rapids of a huge river. The river flows through an exotic jungle of bright pink and red flowers, where multicolored birds flit about. Then suddenly I am having physical sensations totally new to me; they frighten me and yet make me feel just wonderful at the same time, as if I were dissolving into bliss. I wake up with a start, a tingling sensation all over my body. I realize: this wonderful inner world is beginning to suck me in. I cannot live in this inner world and in the real world at the same time, that is suddenly quite clear to me. Already Mother's and Natasha's looks are even more odd than usual, as if I had really begun to act weird. And in school today I hardly knew what was happening.

Sadly, I decide. Tommy and I must part. When next he appears to me in a waking fantasy I tell him so, I explain why it has to be that way. I tell him I will think of him every time I hear British bombers overhead, and when I sneaklisten to the BBC. Of course it's totally forbidden to do that, and most of the time German interference is so strong I can hear only fragments of sentences, but hearing how Tommy's people really talk has been very important for me. Yes, I

shall miss him terribly, I tell him, as he looks at me with deep sadness in his eyes, but this must stop.

At first he actively keeps trying to come into my mind, whenever I am not busy or sleeping. I keep struggling, pushing him away. Finally, in a dream he simply says, "As you wish," and I see him walking away into a fog. Then all dreams disappear, I just sleep. Slowly, slowly, my attention returns to the world in which I must live. I don't know how, but keeping Tommy as a steady presence within me would in time have led to something very dreadful, that much is clear to me.

I feel a different kind of sadness than when Franz left; no tears this time, only a deep, deep emptiness.

The pictures of the king and queen on my desk now have an added meaningafter all, they are *Tommy's* monarchs! Now I do not even mind Mother's periodic speeches on the subject of being German.

Being German! Even she finds it hard to remain proud of that fact the day we go shopping together for root vegetables, and in front of the store there stands Herr Rosenfeld who lives in the roof apartment across the street, looking sad and ashamed, a big yellow star on his chest that says *Jude* on it.

"Oh, that damned new law . . .," Mother mutters.

Spring brings flowers, blossoming trees, wonderfully bright weather, with puffy white clouds in the sky. I sneak-ride my bicycle down the hill to schoolit is strictly forbidden by Mother to do soand am marveling at nature's beauty, when with a crash I hit a tree. Bicycle flying one way, I another. A girl comes running. She's in the class into which I have recently transferred, a quiet, dainty girl. I hardly know her. She is very concerned.

"Are you hurt?"

I'm not, except for a scraped knee and elbow. Even the bicycle is in one piece. Together we walk to school, I pushing along my bicycle.

We share ideas. Inga tells me that she admires my "visible anger," my challenging teachers when they "feed us their *Weltanschauung* garbage."

"That's a neat phrase you thought up for what they're doing!" she adds.

"I said that?"

"You don't remember, out in the school ground, within earshot of Fräulein Bilf? I was really scared for you, but I enjoyed seeing her face turn all red. My father is surprised you say such thingsit's so dangerous!"

Soon we are fast friends, Inga and I. She is as tiny as I am tall. With the chronic infection of my tonsils gone, I am actually growing more and filling out. Every time Father sees me he exclaims, "My God, you've grown more!"

Even my hair has become longer, fuller.

"*Walküre*," Mother calls me that one day, adding, "Actually, you look very

German." She seems to be right. In "study of the races" class, a visiting lecturer picks meof all peopleto exemplify "the Aryan look." He has me stand in front of the class, lecturing as he points to various parts of my body.

"Very tall, long, narrow head, high forehead, light blue eyes, ash-blonde hair, long limbs, torso with well-developed breasts and hips . . .," on and on he goes. It is terribly embarrassing.

I feel some vindication for the times when I was considered unsuitable, because of my nose or my height. But almost at once there is Father's look in my mind, the look that comes over his face when he happens to hear one of the never-ceasing diatribes on the kitchen radio. That radio is not to be turned on, except on rare occasions, but because of the music it gets turned on anyway. The diatribes are about race, the "superiority of the Nordic races," the "utter inferiority of the Jews" and all those who have been "contaminated" by their blood. Chief villains in this respect are the Americans.

Then it is June 22nd, and our class is on an all-day hiking tour. Marianne, exemplarily competent *Jungmädel* leader, becomes more and more puzzled at what she considers my "rare stubbornness" in still refusing to join the *Bund deutscher Mädchen* (youth group of German girls). Marianne, with two brothers in uniform, takes me aside and tells me the the latest news, that this morning Germany attacked Russia.

"I thought you didn't know, and I think you should," she explains.

I hear Mother speak through me: "Oh my God, a second front! Just like during World War One! How stupidwhat a giant mistake!"

Fräulein Blatt, our new home-room and mathematics teacher, takes me aside, her eyes looking into mine cold as steel, as she admonishes me sternly: "You hush up! The Führer makes no mistakes! And . . . if you dare think otherwise, just watch what grade you'll get in mathematics this term!"

"So she'll go beyond giving me a lousy character comment," I mutter angrily to Inga. "That'll cause a whole lot of trouble, and not just with Mother!"

"Be careful," Inga counsels.

But I am too angry to be careful. There's an old truck crawling up the steep, hot road on which we are walking. The empty truck-bed has no rear gate. Someone in our group shouts out: "Wouldn't it be neat to be riding up on that truck instead of having to walk?"

I give Inga a push. "Come on, let's do it!" Inga is next to me as we run after the truck. Fräulein Blatt cries after us, "You two come back! How dare you!"

It is a difficult struggle to hop onto the moving truck, much more difficult than I had thought. And when I finally turn around, all settled, I find I am alone, and that my class is far, far behind. Worse, the truck is now gaining speed.

It takes me quite a while to get the attention of the driver, an older man in

green soldier's uniform. As he lets me off he barks:

"You must be a very disobedient girl! And at a time like this, when everyone must think of nothing except saving the Fatherland!"

When I finally meet my class again, I am greeted by an icy silence. Inga barely dares whisper to me, "That truck-bed was too high for me, you know," to which I nod. For Fräulein Blatt I have ceased to exist.

Fräulein Dr. Wonda, our assistant principal and Latin teacher, calls me into her office a few days later.

She asks me to sit downvery unusual! Sighs, looks at me and says, "I shouldn't say this, but sometimes I have the feeling that you give expression to all the frustration and anger a lot of us are feeling but dare not voice."

Suddenly, I have to suppress tears. Gone is my usual defiance. I wish she hadn't said that, it is simply another burden, just like Father's comments often are. I do not know exactly what I am "giving expression to," I just don't seem to be able to act differently.

"I can't help myself," I mumble.

"Oh yes you can. And you must. For your own safety. Besides, it is high time you joined the BDM."

Defiance back, I flare up: "I don't have to! My father . . ."

She shakes her head in frustration. "Yes, yes, your father. But you are not a quiet girl who remains in the background, unnoticed. Quite the contrary. Besides, it is just a matter of time . . ."

I won't let her finish her sentence. "Will I get bad grades if I don't, like Fräulein Blatt threatened?!"

Fräulein Dr. Wonda remains calm. "I do not know about your difficulty with Fräulein Blatt." With this I am dismissed.

I get by, with my-end-of-term grades, the mathematics grade having been unfairly lowered, in my opinion, by only one point. But the character comment, a descriptive essay on top of the report card, turns out to be a disaster: "She is rebellious . . ." it says, "inconsiderate of others . . . indeed she must learn to acquire an attitude of desiring to be helpful."

Mother is beside herself. There will be no horseback-riding this summer, there will instead be a concentrated effort to develop in me the attitude of "desiring to be helpful." She uses that phrase all summer long, a dreary, dreadful summer during which Marianne frequently tells me glowing stories about wonderful outings with the riding academy.

"You'll fall behind. Yes, even my mother thinks your mother is being too strict."

Meanwhile, Mother persists in holding Marianne up to me as a shining example: "She gets good grades, including a fine character comment. According to

her mother she is a sheer pleasure to her parents, and why oh why can you, my youngest daughter, not be like her youngest daughter!"

My oh-so-quick mouth almost betrays me once more, for I have to swallow hard in order not to blurt out: "Because she has a different mother, one who appreciates her, one who *wanted* a youngest daughter!"

We have our first air raid. In the middle of the night the howling of sirens tears us out of a deep sleep. Mother insists that we immediately go into our shelter, aircraft overhead or not. Father and Natasha simply refuse and stand outside the cellar door, watching the sky. The open door allows me a peek, too. It is the same door out of which Gebhardt tried to get into the yard with his burning torches, years ago. Finally I am allowed to join them, Father says there are only three airplanes. In the distance, there are a few booms. "Bombs," Father says laconically. But then a furious racket of heavy gunfire beginsthe anti-aircraft gunsfrom the huge battery that has been installed by the tower on the hill behind us, not far away. The entire house shakes. It reminds me of when I was small, and a workman began drilling into our stone-tiled hallway with an electric hammer that had just been invented, and I was so terrified I ran into the streetFather after me, laughing, explaining what the noise was all about.

There is no safe outside to run to this time, and Father is not laughing. He is angry because the shrapnel from the anti-aircraft guns is causing more damage by far than the few bombs, hailing huge pieces of metal onto the tile roofs, shattering shingles. Now we must stand inside the cellar door so as not to get hit by the shrapnel of the German guns.

It is over soon. Afterward I lie in bedit is so blessedly quiet outside! Then first in the distance, then coming closer, I hear the noise of an aircraft motor, one that sounds very different from a German motor. "A bomber from Britain," I exult, "he's actually right above me!" I think of Tommy. I whisper a greeting to the pilot above, fervently wishing him a safe journey.

Herrmann tells us the following day that indeed there had been three British bombers, and they had been fooled into believing that the mock railroad yard, set up in a sparsely populated valley nearby, was the real thing, and so they had dropped their bombs there. Herrmann laughs in a way I find disgusting.

My relationship with Herrmann is difficult. We have to share the bathroom, which he resents, especially since he finds me so "bosomy" of late. Presently I'm sitting at table, together with him and Mother. It is late afternoon, and Herrmann is sharing with us his feelings about having been abandoned by his wife Natasha. Natasha has a new and fascinating job at St. Beatrice's Hospital, and is rarely home anymore. He is eating his early supper, leftovers from our noonday meal. He is clearly disgruntled. So many vegetables, so little meat and

fat! He glances at my thighs, exposed, for I sit in shorts.

"Look at all that meat on her thighs," he exclaims to Mother. "It's disgraceful, how fat they look. What do you feed her?!" Herrmann doesn't say so, but he is clearly implying that Mother is feeding me food that belongs to him.

Mother protests. "No, no, Herrmann," she says. "The lion's share of the protein and fat in this house goes to my husband, who is diabetic."

"And you, with your taking extra butter!" Herrmann is really angry now.

Mother's cheeks turn bright red. "Herrmann, I have a gallbladder condition, I easily get an upset stomach. I don't eat any fried food. I reserve the right to distribute the food in this household according to my judgment!"

"Ja, ja, just like the *Bonzen,"*a derogatory term for high officials in the Nazi hierarchy"they too have their special needs, don't they?" Herrmann grumbles. "Meanwhile, I am in danger of becoming a walking skeleton!"

And back to me: "Just look at her! That flesh on her looks good enough to eat!"

Mother, looking queerly at me. "Well, yes, I have heard it said that human flesh is quite tasty. And she really does look voluptuous, doesn't she now?"

Using me as lightning rod, they make peace. It's a tactic Mother uses when I perceive her as having been stung to the core. Once she even apologized to me afterward, saying she had to do it, she had been so embarrassed. At any rate, my chief resentment is toward Herrmann, primarily because he continues to bring up the issue of my shape and size.

Yet it is not only Herrmann who feels hunger. I do too. Vegetables and potatoes do not satisfy that hunger. It was not bad in summer, when there was fruit from the garden, but now that it is fall, I seem to have a chronically empty stomach.

One day, while Mother is taking her customary nap, I am so hungry for something special that I steal a piece of cake. A friend of hers and her daughter are to visit later that afternoonthe cake had been saved from some special event before, for that purpose. "No one will miss this tiny piece," I reassure myself as I munch on the cake while reading, avoiding my homework assignments. Delicious moments!

Of course Mother immediately notices the new cut on the cake, and I turn red before she even asks. "Of all the people in the house you are the last one to be needing an extra piece of cake! And if you get much bigger, you'll look just like a cow!" She storms, "Everyone is skinny except you. You can't really be hungryyou're just greedy and you lack will power! A German girl should not lack will power!"

She humiliates me in front of the guests by stating that I am not to have a piece of cake, because I lack will power. The visiting daughter throws me a dis-

dainful look. After they leave, Mother uses her so painfully effective way of expressing disappointment in me by acting once more as if I did not exist.

The wind howls around our house that night, as it often does in early fall, and I dream:

Mother makes me feel very guilty about having eaten too much of something, even though I keep remonstrating with her that I am really terribly hungry. Finally I withdraw in pain, with the clear knowledge that I am to be the bad one; but it is as if her words were poison, so that I am rendered mute and invisible. With my feet tied together, I am sent into a pasture, as if I were a cow. There I can only hobble.

It is of course true that there are other ways to still hunger than with cakes. Cake is something very precious, something for which Mother has to get the ingredients from her special "hoarding chest" (strictly forbidden by the German government). In fact, as I realize in my current state of guilt, much of Mother's energy is taken up by the procuring and preparing of food. She bakes and cooks a great deal. There are the preparations before the actual cooking can be done: the finding and storing of various root vegetables; the melting together of the odd kinds of fat with some of the butter each of us is allotted, to make it last longer and make the food taste better. The butter tends to become stringy when kept in the refrigerator for several days, therefore it is better to mix at least some of it with other fat. Father says that IG Farben has a hand in that, using coal as a base for artificial butter, which is then mixed in with the regular butter. Also, each week, Mother prepares separate fresh butter dishes for each of us. She has found ways to boil a soup-bone all week long and still have it yield a tasty soup at the end of it. Often she bakes little rolls for Sunday afternoon tea, so we will not miss too much the fruit tortes we used to have before the war. Moreover, she also has to study the newspaper nightly, so as not to miss any possible purchase of a rationed food. A certain meat coupon, for example, will only be valid between the hours of two and four o'clock in the afternoon on a particular Wednesday, one for flour during other hours on another day, and so on. We are luckier than some, because we have our own chickens, though we are allowed only one and a half hens per person. If we have more than that the law says the additional eggs must be given to the state. We secretly have three extra hens.

Getting food for our chickens, on the other hand, is a serious problem. We use everythingpotato peels, dried meat bones ground up, vegetable cuttings. Once Father was given a bag of dog biscuits. He then spent Sunday afternoons with a heavy metal piece attached to a handle, pounding the dog biscuits into powder, in order to add to the chicken food. There was one hen that seemed to know no fear, for she kept sticking her head in the bin as Father pounded away.

"As stupid as the German people," I heard him mutter, shooing her away.

And still, like Herrmann, I feel I do not get enough of the ordinary foods, meat and bread and especially milk. After my fourteenth birthday I ceased being eligible for my daily pint of whole milk. I missed it, and grew hungrier. But although I hate Mother for humiliating me about my "sturdiness," as she puts it, I have to agree with her that I do not look like one who is starving. I fear I almost look fat. Moreover, I have become physically very strong. In gymnastics in schoolnow our most important subject, according to government decreeI am becoming an expert at the double bars, the long horse jump and running. I receive compliments, given most reluctantly, from our fanatic teacher, Fräulein Bilf. Mother cannot help but admire how fast I can rake leaves, carry heavy buckets filled with mulch, spade over the vegetable beds. One day the baby grand piano must be lifted in order to straighten out the carpet underneath. Mother asks if I would try to lift it by being under it on all fours, pushing upward. I succeed without too much straining, and Mother just can't get over it. "She's a regular Brünnhilde," she tells Father that night, half jokingly, and Father, who is known to like petite and delicate women (Mother is not!) rolls his eyes heavenward in a mock groan: "Oh God, not two *Walküres* in the house, please!"

A letter arrives, addressed to me, in an envelope of the German Army.

"Is anyone out there?" writes Franz. "I'm sitting here in the south of Russia, near Kiev. We've been fighting heavily. I have no news from my parents in Japan, and my aunt in Berlin is angry with me. My girl friend hasn't written to me in ages. And then, in my address book, I found this old address of you. Do you remember me?"

I respond to his letter, and I eat less bread in order to save some of the flour, eggs, skim milk and butter allotted to me, so I can bake cookies for Franz. Suddenly my hunger doesn't trouble me. "Ach so," Mother says, "now you can be selfless, and the cabbage is enough for you. Good!"

Franz's response is swift and enthusiastic. He and his comrades ate the cookies at once, he writes, and oh, it felt so good to be getting a letter from home at mail call. Could I write again? I do, and I send more cookies.

My letter comes back swiftly, with a stamp on it, saying simply, "Missing in action, Kiev arena." The cookies do not.

I am not the only one who has sadness, this November. A newsreel shows the fighting around Kiev, where Franz is missing. On and on go the scenes of soldiers running, ducking, shooting. Finally, the announcer explains, "And the camera keeps filming, even though the cameraman behind it is dead, fallen in duty to his country. Another soldier, seeing the still whirring camera, brought it back, so that you on the home front could see what it is like for our brave soldiers." Many people in the audience are crying.

There is also something going on with Father, something that turns out to be very painful for me. It is almost dark when I come into his study one evening. I see him sitting in his easy chair, looking old and frail. It is almost as if he had been crying. As he sees me, he startles, really badly, and exclaims, "My God, for a moment there, I saw Gebhardt walking into the room! I was just thinking of him, wondering how he is doing, all alone in the States. But it is just you!" He turns away from me in obvious disappointment, leaving me standing there, feeling the full impact of the "just you." I am just someone who can be mistaken for the beloved Gebhardt. From then on Father often tells me how I startle him into thinking, just for a second, that Gebhardt has returned. I feel as if he almost ceases to see me, his youngest daughter, as anything but an image of the son he misses so much. That realization brings with it a strange, cold feeling.

But poor Father! It is becoming clear that soon Germany will also be at war with the United States.

On a cold day in December we visit the American consulate for the last time. Everyone is running about frantically, and there are packing crates everywhere. One more time we swear our allegiance to the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands. Then the consul hands us our last American passports, and speaks to us very sternly: "I must urge you once more to leave this country *immediately*, and return to the United States." Father looks like he is going to say something, perhaps explain why we haven't left long ago, but he only heaves a big sigh, and with a look of utter defeat replies, "I know." All of us in the suddenly silent room at the consulate know that no one in our family is going to leave.

On the long walk home, Mother lectures as about America's role during and after World War One, which she refers to being one of "robbing the dead." That does not sit well with Father.

"Well, you'll have your wish soon enough," he says through gritted teeth. "There'll very soon be no choice but to be German citizens or . . ."

His sentence trails off ominously. The situation is actually lightened by Mother's obvious smile of pleasure at the prospect of becoming German again, even if it is the Germany of the Nazis. Her venom gone, she now asks if that will be very difficult or humiliating for Father.

Father: "No, probably not. The local man is decent, I've done business with him. He has offered to make it all go very smoothly."

But nothing feels smooth to me. Not when on December 7th Herrmann has his day of glory gloating over the Pearl Harbor attack by Germany's friends, the Japanese. Not when a few days later I am at a police station, where a man in green uniform with two men standing behind him, hands on their guns, gives me a brown-colored document in return for my green American Passport, stating

that henceforth I am a citizen of the Third Reich. Not when I have to stand and listen to a moralizing lecture from this man, which ends with a harshly shouted "*Heil Hitler*" and a stiffly raised arm, a ritual I must perform in reply. All so very, very different from our friendly U.S. Consulate. Even Mother shakes her head in dismay. Father tries to reassureprobably himself more than anyone:

"We still have our expired American passports!"

Mother laughs. "Yes, dear, with the corners all cut off!"

In April Mother takes my sisters to a special event out of town. Herrmann is away on a business trip, so Father and I and the helping girl Lulu are the only ones in the house. At the noonday meal Father puts on an impish grin: "No Mother, no need to hop out of bed at night each time the air raid siren sounds and a few bombs drop somewhere. We'll get some blessed sleep instead!"

I bravely nod. I have kept it well hidden that in truth I am quite afraid of bombs, just like Mother. Once or twice I have even been secretly glad she is so adamant about going to the air raid shelter. I am ashamed of this fear of mine because, other than Mother, I seem to be the only one who has it. When Mother runs into the basement at the first howl of a siren, I see the mocking looks on the faces of Father and Natasha. Well, perhaps here will be a chance to get over my fear.

It is a clear night and the sirens go off shortly after midnight. I tend to feel especially fearful in my bedroom, upstairs, where I had my meeting with the fiery black cloud during the castle fire, because the memory of that experience never quite leaves me. Now I tell myself firmly that as Father's daughter I am going to learn to enjoy remaining in bed and sleeping, bombs or no bombs. I dream of guns shooting, bombs crashing. I wake up and discover it is really happening! There is also a loud banging at my door, which I have locked, according to Mother's instructions. When I open it, there stands Father, white with anger and, I think, fear, demanding why I am not down in the shelter with him.

"But you said we'd . . ."

"Not when there are bombs falling like this, you idiot! What have you been doing up here?"

"Sleeping."

Father shakes his head in disbelief as I follow him down the stairs. I am amazed, for I really did believe that Father would never, ever stoop to go to the air raid shelter if not asked by Mother.

In May the city of Cologne is attacked by a thousand bombers and mostly destroyed. "That'll happen to us too," Father predicts. We begin to dread the clear nights, especially as the moon grows full.

Meanwhile, as spring turns into summer, General Rommel's Africa Corps reaches Egypt. Rommel is the town's special hero, and whenever he appears in a

newsreel people get up and applaud. The current newsreels show soldiers, naked to the waist, frying eggs atop their tanks.

"Still playing the happy, happy war," Mother says, shaking her head as we leave the theater. "Now they are winning. But how will it all end, with the German army spread all over!"

"Dreadfully," Father grumbles.

For a while I can put that dismal prospect aside, along with my chronic difficulties with Mother and Father and Herrmann's relentless teasing about my size. I owe it to Marianne. In spring she told me one day about an estate where horses were being retrained, especially war-traumatized ones. Each summer, girls were invited, at the cost of tuition, room and board, to do the physical care-taking of the horses, and also the training, and in the process improve their riding skills. Best of all, it would count as harvesting help, thus satisfying the government's requirement that during summer vacation one must work in one form or another. Would I be interested?

Would I be interested?! I pleaded and pleaded with my parents. Hadn't my grades been good enough to obtain permission, I begged.

"No," was Mother's steady reply, but finally she added, "I'll let you go anyway. I'll hear about that from your Fatherbut go!"

A magical four weeks in the Taunus mountains. There is even enough to eat! The horse assigned to me is called Ulan, a very tall horse indeed. Each morning we are awakened at five to hurry down into the courtyard in the chilly morning air to brush and clean our horses. Thirty brushes full of hair, marked on the cobblestoned yard, are a minimum for each horse. My assignment is thirty-three brushes, because Ulan is so huge. After breakfast we ride in the arena, under the instruction of a disabled cavalry officer.

Afternoons, we often practice on the hurdle-jumping courses laid out in the forest nearby, or take outings into the country. Often we have to hide under a clump of trees as American aircraft fly overhead. We also help with the actual harvesting, by doing the gleaning in the fields after the tractor has come through. I especially love the brilliantly blue cornflowers that bloom at the edge of these fields. Near the end of our stay, we are eligible to take the examination for the Medallion of German Youth Riders. I pass with "excellent" in all tasks, as does Marianne. Since I have had to miss riding at home so much because of my various misdemeanors, I am especially satisfied with my performance.

Coming home is a rude awakening. It is hot, the air seems to crackle with tension. The noise from the factory across town where giant submarine engines are open-air tested us a steady drone during hot nights. The talk about war is incessant. How wonderful it had been! Horses do not talk!

I disappear into the garden, to graze the chickens. Here, the sound of blaring radios is at least somewhat muffled. I'll have to hear enough of this when school is in session again.

Just before school starts, Father hands me a letter. It is a letter he has written to me, fifteen pages long. After reading it, I feel about as badly as I ever have. In it, Father tells me he thought a great deal about me while I was away, and that in the process he discovered he was very disappointed in me. He cites reasons I cannot agree with, and I know that were he his old self he could not either. They are vague and confusing. Yet I cannot fully disagree with his complaints about my C's in school when I could easily be getting B's or A's, nor the repetitious grumblings from the school officials about my rebellious behavior, although in my opinion these two are intimately related. As I put the letter down, a wave of hopelessness sweeps through me, for I feel quite certain that I know the deepest reason for his disappointment. It is because I'm not his son; I am not a Gebhardt, I am only me. And there is nothing I can do about that.

I try to talk with Father about the letter. He does not seem interested in doing that, saying he wrote it quite some time ago. The thing that is currently troubling him is that he feels I should now join the *Bund deutscher Mädchen*, even though he had been the one who had encouraged me not to. "Times have changed," he adds. "Now we are Germans."

I do not quite know who is talking in me, but I hear myself saying, "Absolutely not!"

Father looks at me in amazement, for a long time. He shakes his head and thensmiles a little!

And soon it is late fall. On the way home from school Inga asks if I would be interested in seeing the four performances of Wagner's *Der Ring der Nibelungen*. They are to be given on four consecutive Sunday afternoons. The cheapest tickets are very expensive, fifteen marks per performance. Nonetheless, Saturday morning we stand in line. I have in my purse sixty marks, savings from my allowance and thirty marks extra which, amazingly, Father has given me quite cheerfully.

"You are in luck!" the old ticket-selling woman smiles at us. "I have just a few tickets left. These two are very good, they are in the third balcony, so you can see everything."

Mother shares in my excitement. In preparation, she sits down at the piano and plays for me the major motifs of Wagner's *Ring* cycle. She explains how Wagner is a modern composer because of these recurring motifs, and how one must learn to listen for their appearance.

She even sings for me "Wotan, husband, awaken!"an aria sung by Fricka, Nordic goddess of marriage and wife of the war god Wotan.

After the first performance, *Das Rheingold,* she asks what impressed me most. I answer that it was the fact that the dwarf Alberich was willing to sacrifice his capacity to love for the acquisition of power. But the sweeping, rousing music had been wonderful.

Mother smiles: "Personally, I've always found *Das Rheingold* somewhat boring. Wait until you see the *Walküre!*"

Father, sitting nearby, has a grin on his face. I, suddenly conscious of my body, want to get away from both of them.

Prior to the *Walküre*, Mother sings Fricka's section: "Is it the end, then, of the everlasting gods / since you brought those wild Volsungs to birth? / I have spoken updid I get your meaning? / You think nothing of your noble sacred family / you reject everything you used to value, / You rip apart the bonds that you yourself have tied. / Laughing, you let go your rule over heaven . . ."

"Befitting our times," Father comments from his study.

At the opera itself, overwhelmed with the music, with the intensity of the story of the German gods and their offsprings, their trials and tribulations, one section in a long aria that Wotan sings strikes me to the heart: "I touched Alberich's ring: / greedily I held his gold. / The curse from which I fled still has not left me: / I must forsake what I love, / murder the man I cherish. / Deceive and betray someone who trusts me. / Away, then with lordly splendor / divine pomp and shameful boasting! / Let it fall to pieces, all that I built. / I give up my work. / Only one thing I want: the end, the end!"

How sad is the singer's voice!

Next there is the wonderful *Siegfried,* sung and enacted by a man who truly looks like a Siegfried. After the dragon slaying scene I am deeply touched, and shocked to hear the dialogue between him and Mime, the dwarf who has raised Siegfried. Mime claims to love Siegfried, but in truth he raised him only in order to use him one day to obtain power, the Rheingold.

How readily I can identify with Siegfried! And at the same time what a huge difference there is between him and me! He, who after slaying a dragon still does not know what fear is all about and I, who feelswhen I allow myself to become conscious of ita constant undercurrent of terror.

The *Götterdämmerung!* By now I feel as if all of my life were taking place on these Sunday afternoons. I am very moved by Hagen's bitterness and isolation. Son to Alberich, the dwarf who traded the ability to love for the gold of power, he is a bitter man, knowing he is on earth merely to fulfill his father's need to retrieve the gold that now is in Siegfried's and Brünnhilde's hands. But there is betrayal after betrayal. I am shaken to the center of my being by the ending, when Siegfried is lying dead on his burning funeral pyre and Brünnhilde sings of her terrible sorrow, as all of Valhalla, the home of the gods, goes up in flames.

This is *Ragnarok,* the ancient Nordic myth of the end of the gods, taking place in front of my eyes.

The strains of the *Götterdämmerung* stay with me as I go to bed. Two hours later, the air raid sirens howl. We sit shivering in the basement, the weather having suddenly turned cold. When the all clear sounds and we step outside we see to the east a fiery red sky. Someone comes running: "The entire railroad station is in flames!" We quickly walk to the nearby hill from where we can actually see the station. It is a mass of flames. And as I stand there, I hear, louder and louder, the music of the *Götterdämmerung*.

Mother seems to sense how immersed I am in the music: "Yes," she says, "a real *Götterdämmerung* this war may yet turn out to be!"

I keep thinking about the operas. Their dramatic stories of Nordic gods made a much more intense impression on me than the swollen-worded stories I had read. The operas' portrayals had been real and alive! Alberich had been convincingly scary in his intense desire to trade love for power; Wotan really troubling to observe, as his integrity crumbled! And Siegfried, wonderfully heroic though he was, was also a fool. For had he learned how to fear, perhaps he would not have been so disastrously gullible! And why, knowing this about him, had the Nazis picked him for their special image of a hero? Now I understand the message contained in that odd picture of Hitler that has recently appeared! Adolf Hitler, flag in hand, as Siegfried!

When I try to talk about my thoughts with Father, he says kindly, but with disappointment, "Child, I don't understand a thing about opera. You'll have to ask your mother." But I know, as he must, that I cannot ask Mother philosophical questions.

Meanwhile, air raids are increasing in frequency; people are more frightened. There have been deaths. There are horror stories of what is happening to the cities in the Rhineland. So we very much appreciate the heavy rains that come with late fall and early winter. It is one time in my life that I have a friendly feeling toward dark and ominous clouds: they keep aircraft out of the sky, and us in bed at night.

For other reasons, I am spending quite a bit of time in the basement. Via the black market Father obtained several cases of wine, which I helped unpack. As we did this, he mused, "Wine is one of the few pleasures left in life. It'd be fun to have a catalogue of the ones that taste especially goodfor buying after the war, although most likely none of us will be around by then."

Father is giving voice to his conviction that ultimately Germany will be overrun by the Russians. It's too frightening for me to totally accept in all its seriousness. Instead, I focus on an idea I've had: I'm going to make Father a wine catalogue as a Christmas present!

And that is why I spend many hours in the basement. Carefully I take each bottle from its place on the rack and copy the information from the label into a special book I made, with hand-stitched covers.

Father is very happy with my Christmas present. In fact, all in all, it turns out to be a pleasant time, even though at the endas on every ChristmasMother and Father sit crying on the sofa, talking about Gebhardt.

It is winter, colder than usual, ice and snow. Lost in thought, I am walking to our music hall, in order to attend an afternoon violin concert. I am going on the suggestion of my violin teacher. Fräulein Monica Wiesbadner is half Jewish, a fact she told Mother soon after she started to come to our house to give me violin lessons, sharing at the same time her dismay that her own mother had recently "just run away," abandoning her father, the Jew in the family. Mother had asked Fräulein Wiesbadner sympathetically how that was working out, and did they have enough food? Fräulein Wiesbadner shrugged, "We get by." I have studied with Fräulein Wiesbadner for several years nowin fact, Mother thinks I am beginning to outgrow her. Meanwhile, Fräulein Wiesbadner has suggested that for my development as a violinist I would benefit by carefully observing the techniques of professionals.

I am thinking of her because not long ago she invited me to her home, an apartment in back of a warehouse, where I also met her father. He was in his studio, a tiny, apparently very shy man, in a splattered painter's coat, the big yellow star on his chest. He was surrounded by his incredibly beautiful and brilliant paintings, which he was delighted to show me. I had never seen anything like it! There was such joy in these paintings, created by a man who at any moment, I could not help thinking, might be sent to a concentration camp! I keep seeing these paintings in my mind's eye.

When I arrive at the concert hall, I find a large crowd milling about, not entering the building. As I step closer, I notice many people are crying. Puzzled, I move to the entrance. A self-important older man steps up:

"No concert today," he informs me.

"But why not?"

"Because of Stalingrad. Lost. Betrayed."

What does he mean, "betrayed?"

Indeed, the battle of Stalingrad had been much in the news. But Father has not talked about betrayal, only things like poor strategy and over-extension.

Meanwhile, Marianne's eyes are swollen from crying, because one of her brothers has fallen in battle. And her mother is wearing black.

Rostow falls. From the Berlin Sports Palace comes Reichminister Dr. Josef Goebbels's voice, "Do you want total war?" And the audience roars back, "Yes!"

Do they know what they are agreeing to?

In spite of all these disasters, and the coming doom Father keeps predicting, we continue to live our lives. I take violin lessons, and Marianne and I continue our dancing classes. We are in different ones, however.

A good thing too! Because the boys I am learning to dance with are a bitter lot, and it would do no good at all for Marianne to hear the things we talk about. All are nearing their seventeenth birthday, when they will be drafted, and each one is convinced he will not survive the war and that his death will be utterly meaningless. One of them, Ralf, is the group's clown. He keeps making jokes about his "suspected racial impurity," intimating that it will keep him out of the army. He can entertain us by the hour with dreadfully funny Hitler jokes. Sometimes I laugh so hard I get a stomach ache. All along, our lady instructor smiles, and does nothing to stop the fun. Wonder of wonders, one day Ralf brings to our class a set of Yiddish records from New York. Spellbound we listen to *"Bei mir bist Du schein," "Oh mein Papa,"* and other songs. They bring tears to my eyes. The boys, having chosen the girls with whom they wanted to learn to dance, make me feel honored to be among them.

But something is odd. As the class goes onit lasts most of the winter termpeople begin to pair off, to neck and pet with one another. The young man who likes me especially, Willy, is gentle and shy, and if there were anyone in the group with whom I might be tempted to pet, it would be him. But whenever he comes too close, hugs me extra tight while dancing, I hear a firm voice inside saying, "Oh no, you don't! Not you! You re not allowed to do that!" I am pained and embarrassed by that voice. But my friend is most understandinghe is such a poetic, gentle soul. If I do not feel like dancing with him for a while, he simply dances on by himself.

Toward the end of our series of lessons, Father suggests I be allowed to give a party for our group. He fixes a delicious punch that contains lots of sweet apple cider, yet tastes like adult punch. Even worldly Ralf is amazed. We dance in our music room, my parents peeking in periodically, or sitting on the sidelines, watching. Suddenly they look quite old and frail to me, especially Father. Then the air raid sirens howl, and we must spend time in our shelter. But the young men do not mind at all, for Father, bless him, entertains us royally with stories about the United States.

I am sad when it is all over. At the dinner table, I share the parting sentiment of the group, that soon all the boys will be killed, and who knows what will happen to the girls.

Suddenly Father has what Mother later calls "a full-blown rage attack." His face turns beet red as he pounds his fist on the table so hard that the dishes jump. And again. And again. Then there are tears in his eyes as shouts: "And what did that bastard Herr Hitler say when told how many young menespecially offi-

cerswere being killed because of the insane way in which he insists upon running the campaign in Russia? 'Oh, but isn't that what the young people are for?!' The . . .!"

Father is so upset he has to leave the table. Tears are running down his cheeks; I've never seen him like this.

Mother says, clearing her throat, "Let us finish our meal."

Our one and only male teacher, Mr. Tag, who teaches art, is being drafted. Up to now he has been ineligible because of a serious health problem, but now, he tells us, "They need even me." This being our very last session with him, he shows each drawing to the entire class, discussing its merits and its defects. The drawing assignment was one of the very few where we were allowed to draw freely. "Just draw what first comes to mind," he had instructed us. Well, the first thing that had come to my mind was the scene of a jungle, much like the scene of my last dream of Tommy, the dream that made me decide Tommy and I had to partto this day a vivid memory. But as I did the drawing, the image of a young girl, running as fast as she could away from that jungle, turned out to be the main thing. Behind her, the jungle was filled with giant snakes and the threatening eyes of ferocious tigers and lions.

Mr. Tag's voice is critical as he holds up my drawing. "A strange picture, this one is. No talent there for composition, or for aesthetics. And what about the odd idea of a young woman running away like this? As a heroine, shouldn't she remain and fight, as we Germans are doing?!"

That afternoon, as Mother enters my study, I can tell immediately she is in a foul mood. She sees the barely passing grade on my drawing and explodes:

"You good-for-nothing-girl! If you had been a boy, at least you could be making me proud by being a soldier in the German army, by dying a hero's death!" With this she storms off.

I am still sitting there, wondering what to do with this latest demonstration of her affection for me, when she returns:

"The greengrocer has a shipment of cabbage. I was just there. He said he'd let us buy quite a few heads if we have a way to bring them home without being obvious about it. So take that ancient baby carriage, *your* baby carriage, to the store. It'll hold those cabbage heads just fine. They are big like children's heads, he said."

There is a line-up. Right in front of me stands Marianne's mother. "Oh, hello there," she greets me kindly. "My, what a bright idea, that baby carriage! This is my third trip already, and my arms are getting very tired. How nice of you to help your mother. My Marianne is off to one of her meetings."

Pause. She is really being friendly, and I don't know what to say.

"I was just saying to your mother a while ago, when we stood in line here,

how fortunate she is to have her son safely in America. We are so missing our fallen son, oh well, he died a hero's death . . ."

I try to avoid listening to her as she continues talking, now with tears in her eyes. I notice the blue and gold *Mutterkreuz* glistening on her black chest. Things fall into place. *Mutterkreuz* and a hero's mother! Too much for mine to tolerate. I suddenly know that it is really, really true that at this time, and in this country, she would much prefer to have a son who was a fighter in the army, even if he were killed, instead of me. It has always been true. Just as Father would much rather have had another Gebhardt. "Such things just are!" I tell myself firmly on the way home. "They can't be helped!" In my sudden onrush of pain I suddenly see clearlyif just for a momenthow my parents are not to blame, how they are victims of some dark and evil power, yes, that dark cloud of my early childhood, that envelops us all.

There is an invitation in the mail for me, an invitation to attend a series of three officers' dances. I don't know quite why I accept, since I do not know any officers. Perhaps to please Mother. If I cannot *be* a German officer, at least I can dance with one.

The first dance goes on and on and is dreadfully dull. The officer who elects me as partner the most often reaches only up to my chest. I don't know what to say as conversation. One of the officers walks me home as I return late at night.

As I get ready to go to the second dance, Mother says:

"Should youwell, should you ever find yourself pregnant, don't, er, don't try to get rid of it. I'd be glad to raise such a child."

I'm amazed. I suppose I ought to be grateful. Onlyhow little Mother knows her youngest daughter! I don't regret that the third and last dance is called off because an air raid damaged the dance hall.

Yet, as if it were taking place in another universe, our music-making continues, Mother's and mine.

Inga too acts afraid; she speaks to me in worried tones. We are walking up the hill from school when she finally tells me what is really going on: her BDM leader has approached her parents with the demand that Inga give me up as her friend. The leader thinks I must be a bad influence on her, because I am still not a BDM member.

"I'm just not very enthusiastic there, as she expects everyone to be, the nut! And so she's trying to find a reason why I differ from the norm. Like you. And you know"this sarcastically"what a terrible crime it is to be different from the sacred norm!"

"What did your parents say?" I ask, feeling chilled.

"Not much. Of course they're not going to forbid me to be friends with you. Butboth of them did say you are far too rebellious; in fact they're surprised

that both of us haven't been kicked out of school, you for the BDM-thing alone, me for all the other stuff."

"Oh?"

"Oh?" she imitates, a bit sarcastically. "Things like carrying your father's huge golfing umbrella to school, both of us singing that English song of yours right after we've been informed in class that Germans do not have a use for umbrellas anymore! Oh? Like bringing a bottle of cognac to our shift of nightguarding at the school, getting drunk and sleeping right through the alarm and even the bombing, when we were supposed to be watching for incendiary bombsa fact of course noted by Fräulein Bilf whose sofa we turned upside down prior to intoxicating ourselves!"

"Sounds so much worse when you tell me. I'd already forgotten, it all seems so long ago."

Inga: "But it's not. And they do not forget. My parents also think you *should* join the BDM, that it's futile not to. After all, you don't have to *do* anything, just *be* there, like me!"

With jaw clenched I accompany Inga to her next meeting. Because she is my best friend. A buck-toothed man in SA uniform is holding forth. I feel nauseous, to me he smells, in fact the entire room stinks. I promise myself never to come back. All the time I'm there, the leader glowers at me, bitter hatred in her eyes.

"My God, it's probably her whole world," Inga exclaims on the way home. "That means you're a terrible upset to her, a being from another planet! Give her a chance!"

I shake my head. Enough hatred is enough hatred.

Inga continues, lowering her voice: "There is something I should tell you. It's a scary time for my family. My father refused to obey a request that Doris's father made of him, namely not to do necessary surgery on some British pilots that were shot down the other night. Without the surgery, they might have died. My father did the surgery."

Doris's father! Chief of the Gestapo! Doris! She and I haven't exchanged a word in years. Yet both of us play in our school orchestra, she the flute, I first violin. We're about to begin rehearsing the Brandenburg Concerto for our Easter concert. Fräulein Dreher, our music teacher, has asked me to learn the solo for the viola. She says again and again how well Doris and I play together. It's true; when we play the music, nothing else in the world seems to matter.

Perhaps sometimes air raids are fortuitous. In the very next one, Inga's house is so thoroughly shaken up by an exploding land-mine that it becomes uninhabitable. Upon hearing this, the director of the hospital in a small town in the mountains, where her father grew up, invites Inga's father to take over the post of Chief Surgeon. Quietly, without any further confrontation with Doris's fa-

ther, the family is able to get away. Inga likes her new school, she writes. She has taken up violin lessons.

But oh, how I miss her! My one and only true friend, the one person with whom I could be open and honest! In my sadness, I turn to my violin with even more intensity. Mother is amazed and delighted at my progress. When we play on Sunday afternoons, Father often comes into the room to listen. Even though he used not to care much for classical music, he now says he loves just being there and hearing the music, whether he understands it or not.

It is still before Easter when Mother tells me enthusiastically that Fräulein Bareis, violinist in a very famous string quartet, has expressed interest in my becoming her pupil. She lives very close to us, so I can walk thereshe likes to teach in her studio at home"and she is very, very interested in you. She remembers you well," Mother says.

I had started with her as a ten year old. Whenever I made a mistake then, Fräulein Bareis would explode in a fit of rage.

"It'll be different this time," Mother counsels. "And if you do want to become a professional musician, there's no better teacher than her! In fact, I would say she is essential to your success."

Indeed, for some time now, I have seriously begun to think of a career as a musician.

And so Fräulein Wiesbadner is let go. I feel curiously empty and odd as I shake her hand for the last time. She is happy for me, and wishes me the best for my future. As I see her put on her coat I note how threadbare it isso much shabbier than ours, even after all these years of no new coats. Something is not right about letting her go, but I am confused as to what it is. As I shut the door behind her, my exuberance about being for once, just once, the pride and joy of my parents drains away. Something feels very wrong and I wish I could set it right, but I do not know how.

It shows in my very first lesson with Fräulein Bareis, where once more I am subjected to her rage. Afterward, she apologizes, and wishes me the best of luck for our forthcoming school concert.

During spring break, Mother and I travel to Austria to look at a little farm Father has found there. There is talk of our moving, that perhaps it would be better for him, for us, to be tucked away in some little mountain valley, like Inga's family. We meet Father there.

I do not know what happens between my parents. But the little farm does not get purchased and Father leaves before we do. On the long train ride back, Mother talks in angry tones about Father. How one cannot ride two horses at once, and how rarely he listens to what she really needs and wants, on and on, it is all very painful for me. Again I have the feeling that something is terribly

wrong, that we all seem to be caught in a giant, invisible spider web.

The little inn where we stayed has given us a bag lunch for the trip. Homemade bread and sausage. Mother hands me her portion.

"Here, I'm not one bit hungry."

As I munch away, first my portion, then starting on hers, the train comes to a halt, but not at a station. I look outside. Good grief! Outside, working on the tracks with shovels and pick-axes are men in the striped garments of prisoners. They look terribly tired, terribly thin. And, alas, a fat-looking man in green soldier's garb is guarding them with gun in hand.

Concentration camp inmates! Mother shakes her head in dismay. I look at the uneaten part of my lunch. The thought crosses my mind, "Throw it out the window!" As if she could read my thoughts, Mother looks at me sternly, slowly shaking her head. "Eat!" she says.

We do not speak to one another for the rest of the trip.

Soon after, Mother goes to a spa to do something for her gall-bladder. She has obtained a much coveted prescription from a physician friend of Natasha. That means Father and I are often home alone at noon, except for Lulu in the kitchen. Herrmann appears every evening, but Natasha is working practically day and night at the hospital and quiet Ulrike is away at university.

Herrmann's teasing has continued at the usual, almost intolerable level, just as has my hunger. Yet now I do not want to eat anymore. Not since the train ride, and perhaps Fräulein Wiesbadner's dismissal has something to do with it, too. I decide that one way to stop the hunger pangs is to quit eating altogether for a long, long time, for that will make my stomach shrink. Perhaps Herrmannn is right when he says, "Hers is the biggest stomach of all!"

Father does not notice that I do not eat at meals, as long as I am there. I think Luly is glad for the leftover food.

Soon I no longer feel hunger. But I have an almost constant ache in the pit of my stomach. I have to eat a little when Mother returns after her allotted weeks, but for quite some time she is relieved when I say, "Less, please, less."

Until one day she gives me a hug. And reaches around me again, saying, "What's that? You're so thin!"

The scales show I have lost thirty pounds. Mother admonishes, "Now don't lose any more, that's far too much already!"

The war grinds on. German troops surrender in North Africa. I have my seventeenth birthday. The fruit that grow in the garden do not appeal to me this year. British and American forces land in Sicily. When urged to eat, I complain of a stomach ache.

During summer vacation, my parents find a small Bavarian inn for the three of us to stay in, so we'll have some uninterrupted sleep and clear mountain air.

The area is filled with refugees from the Rhineland, where the bombings are terrible. I see terror in the eyes of the little kids; I wouldn't want to see such terror in the eyes of my children, ever. As we go on our walks, Mother sometimes comments, "You look so sad! Whatever has happened to my bouncy, feisty daughter!"

As if I knew!

Mother is upset that I've stopped menstruating. I am not.

The doctor does not find anything wrong. I seem to be swallowing a lot of air. He counsels rest, and shrugs, as he says to Mother, "What do you expect, in these times?! Perhaps she's had an unfortunate experience in love she does not want to tell you about."

4
The Rule of the Dark One

Furthermore, I have left no doubt in anyone's mind that this time, not only millions of children of Aryan Europeans will starve to death, not only millions of grown men will suffer death, but also hundreds of thousands of women and children will burn in the cities and be bombed to death.
Adolf Hitler, April 29, 1945.

I understand the Bavarian physician's position. His waiting room is full of crying, malnourished, frightened children. What is so terrible about not menstruating in times like these? We even talked about it in school, a few of us, and found that quite a few of us were menstruating only rarely.

A few days later I insist on being allowed to go home before my parents do. Their current concern about me is more nerve wracking than their anger, their teasing, their chronic disappointment had ever been. Without anything to keep them occupied, I get major dosages of fretful questions. I simply must get away. I promise to eat, so finally they consent.

My train goes through many bombed-out, devastated areas which at moments appear eerily surreal, almost beautiful, and I feel this experience is exclusively mine. Then, for days, I am entirely alone in the house; Lulu has taken the opportunity to visit a friend. Herrmann only comes home at night.

He and I become more friendly toward one another as the result of sharing a long night of air raids, during which we find ourselves sitting absolutely terrified as the whistling and the crashing of bombs goes on interminably. We try to minimize the terror by classifying the different sounds made by falling bombs in relation to where we think they are hitting. The house groans and shakes and we keep hearing the sound of breaking glass. We need each other's presence, that night in the basement.

By order of the city administration, tunnels are to be dug at various places throughout the city. One is to go into the relatively shallow hillside behind our house, another one deep beneath the house. The work is to be done by people in the neighborhood. One is to work on the tunnel closest to one's place of residence, for one's own spot in it. Our house is between two tunnels. Father likes the shelter being dug beneath our house. It turns out that our house sits on hard rock, and that this particular shelter needs to be blasted into existence. We feel

the blasts clearly. But getting there takes at least three minutes, and that is potentially a very long time, especially for Mother. Therefore Father also participates in the construction of the second shelter, which is dug into clay and needs framing with wood. The work occupies all his evenings and weekends. Each tunnel must have two exits: the one hewed into rock curves back out, the other one goes through to the other side of the hill, to a street filled with apartment houses and shops. So this particular shelter must have many side branches, in addition to the main tunnel, in order to accommodate all these people. Everyone helps with the digging, to a slight degree even the local official, the block warden in brown SA uniform. Work proceeds rapidly. Lumber arrives for the framing. A neighbor donates the essential air-cleaning system. And all along I keep going there, shovel in hand, only to be sent back by Father with the words, "Not until you are healthy again, when you've quit fighting over food and have gained back some weight!"

Not being able to help makes me feel trapped, desperate. But I simply cannot eat all the food Mother places in front of me, something inside of me screams, "No!" It nauseates me. We have horrible fights over this. Easily some of the most humiliating experiences of my life take place in this context, as Mother offers me food that should go to the others, and I cannot eat it. My unbearable feelings of guilt! And the ill-disguised rage of the others!

I am standing in the garden one afternoon. It is only September, but already it is quite cold and there are dark clouds in the sky. I am, as usual, watching the chickens. Today they are picking juicy earth-worms out of the lawn. These chickens seem to be the happiest among us. Reflecting upon my dilemmawanting to be trim, but not fat, so as not to be teased by Hermann and Mother again, yet strong and healthy so I will be able to helpI now vow that, like it or not, I shall eat whatever is placed in front of me and will stop fighting over too much food. It seems all that is required is sufficient will power.

That turns out be a false assumption, because soon something quite terrifying happens to me. In front of my eyes there appears a *someone,* a foggy, tall, dark figure, cloaked in black, the face invisible, only the dreadful glimmering of an eye, looking like the terrible eye behind the shiny thing the doctor wore when he clipped my tonsils. "You may not eat!" I hear the voice of this foggy one inside my head. "You are forbidden!" The image vanishes.

Terrified, I try to dismiss this experience. "With sufficient will power," I tell myself, "I can overcome this out-of-control power in me. I must!"

But immediately *he* is back, silent this time, just staring at me with that terrible eye, and I realize it is *he* of the dark cloud who has returned. In a flash I know the dreadful truth, that *he* is much, much stronger than either me or my will power. *He* rules.

The experience leaves me shaken and humbled. I do not understand what is happening to me, and I dare not talk about it to anyone.

Soon after, I fall ill with bronchitis. I can now feel *his* presence inside, just as I felt Tommy's, so long ago. Only, I cannot send *him* away.

Because of my long illness, my continuing stomach aches, and also because according to Mother I look so dreadful, I now attend school only sporadically. It has become a cold, cold place indeed! There is no Inga, and we all have to sit in jackets because many of the windows have been blasted out by bombs. But most of all I miss Inga.

The Bavarian physician's remark about "an unfortunate experience in love" is not lost on Mother. She keeps ruminating about it, asking me sudden questions which do nothing but throw me into consternation. Natasha brings home the offer of her special friend, Dr. Escher, Chief Surgeon of St. Mary's Hospital. I am invited to his house for tea. He is a famous man, and many people in town consult him for problems that have nothing to do with surgery.

I've met him before. When I was thirteen, he was the surgeon who removed my appendix. I like him a lot and look forward to my visit. I am ushered into the library and am at once enthralled, not only by the many books that encircle the room, but by the magnificent rose garden right in front of the large window.

There is tea, and there are thin slices of bread with even thinner pieces of meat, and the kind doctor does not urge me to eat.

But when it comes time to talk, I sit frozen in silence. I cannot tell him about the bitter, black, hateful feelings that now sweep over me periodically, at times directed at Mother. One should not hate one's mother, after all. Even less can I tell him about my experience of the dark apparition in the garden, about the *one* I am unable to send away; nor can I talk about how *he* sometimes demands that I throw into the toilet the special, nourishing dishes Mother cooks for me, using up her precious reserves in the processand how that makes me feel like the creepiest, worst worm in the entire universe. For everyone is hungry. There isn't a movie being shown that does not feature lavish scenes of eating. Food is what occupies most people's mindsand I have to throw it away.

Poor Dr. Escher clearly does not know what to do with a girl who sits facing him in frozen silence.

"Do you secretly love someone?" he asks, finally. I shake my head.

Teasingly now, "Are you pregnant?"

I try to laugh too. We both laugh.

"Do you sleep all right?"

I nod. I do sleep. I am always tired.

"I have scary dreams," I offer, "horrible dreams."

"What about?"

"They're not very clear. There is a lot of terrified screaming in them. And since the trains use only one engine, I can hear them even in my sleep, the steam-engines make such a noise when they are stuck!"

And so we talk about the many trains that labor up the side of the valley not far from us, coming through the ancient tunnel beneath the hill atop which is our house. During the first part of the war, the trains used to have at least two engines. Then they carried mostly coal, destined for Italy. Presently, trains are usually pulled with one engine only, even though many, many cars are attached, some carrying heavy military equipment. We laugh as we discuss the steady rate with which the train-tracks are being bombed, only to be repaired again. While I am with him, the terror in my dreams, brought about by these train noises, fades into the background.

Apparently I am not the only one who has bad dreams. Mother complains about hers as well. "I've had another one of my terrible lion dreams," she will often say." Mother has always had lion dreams, it seems, but recently she has them more frequently. In these dreams she is visiting a zoo where, to her terror, she discovers the door to the lion cage is open, and the lion has escaped. They usually end with her being chased by the lion.

Now she has other bad dreams as well. In one, she is lost in a bombed-out city. She does not know this city, and in the dream she ends up searching and searching for a way out, always unsuccessfully. "I wake up exhausted," she complains. A second one is to me more awesome. I can really feel her emotions when she tells it: "I am a kind of ghost, and I am haunting the halls and corridors of my house, which somehow is like a medieval castle. I can find no rest, for I know I am all alone." That dream gives me chills up and down my spine; it reminds me so much of Mother's sad voice when she used to sing to me as a very small child. What has happened to us all?

The tunneled shelter completed, we now find ourselves running down the street, most often at night, when the sirens howl, meeting neighbors as we hurry along. Next to our beds we have clothes to throw on, long underwear, sweaters, boots, a metal helmet, a back-pack with identification and extra underwear in case we are bombed out. Alas, Father ordains I am to go with Mother to the upper shelter, the wooden one, deemed slightly less safe in one respect, because the soft dirt atop it is only twelve meters thick, yet safer in another, because of its proximity to our home. That is most important to Mother, who wants to use that shelter. Father, on the other hand, prefers the one underneath our house, and therefore the others do too. I suspect they all enjoy being separated from our anxiety-ridden mother.

"You take care of Mother, stay with her. That is now your job," said Father when both tunnels had been completed. So I am stuck with Mother and her panic

attacks, undiluted by Father's firm, calming comments. Hour by hour I must sit next to her, listen to her obsessive talk about the relative safety of the two shelters. Of course she misses Father, but she cannot decide for the longer distance, and she talks about the issue incessantly.

Ours is a crowded shelter. The air turns foul even with the air cleaning system. It is noisy, and at the most distant sound of falling bombs, children, especially those who have recently arrived from the Rhineland, begin to scream and writhe in terror. It is truly awful, and now I know for certain I shall put no children into a world that makes them suffer so. Their cries pierce right through me. Yet still worse is Mother's dread. Even when she does not talk about itwhich is seldomI can feel it in her body squeezed close to mine on the narrow bench.

Christmas comes and goes. It is cold and snowy outside. I ride a sled one day, as Father shovels snow on the lower walkway around our garden, which is pretty steep and good for sledding. Mother and Natasha did it last night, and though it was great fun. So Mother said I should, it might even give me an appetite.

As with almost everything I do, something goes wrong. My sled goes out of control, and with a horrible thud I run into Father's legs.

No sound comes out of Father's mouth as he slaps me hard, first my right cheek, then my left. I am stunned, and without a word I go back up the hill.

Later, Mother says to me, reproachfully: "Those are quite the bruises you put on Father's shins. No wonder he slapped you!"

As if I'd done it intentionally!

Natasha has been running a mild temperature for quite some time. Her doctor friend feels she should have a special kind of intensive examination, since her complete physical has not yielded a clue. There is only one place to have such a thing done, and that is at a university hospital. Dr. Escher has arranged an appointment not only for Natasha, but for myself as well.

It is a clear, cold day in February when we arrive. We are put into separatedepartments of the university clinic. Now begins a week of being probed and poked and x-rayed. I have to drink inordinate quantities of fluid and then pee them all out, exactly on the half hour; tubes are stuck into my stomach; I have to bounce on one leg to get a thin rubber hose into my gall-bladder and then lie there and watch the bile drain into a bottle.

The results? Possibly a fatal disease of a gland in the brain. "However," the old professor writes in his report, "a more likely cause of the illness is this: young girls are like cows. They need peace and quiet in order to develop; they need to be put into verdant pastures. Because these necessary ingredients for normal development have been missing, there may be in her a serious hormonal deficiency."

Since hormone preparations are unavailable, the professor recommends the implantation, into the muscles of my stomach, of a live calf-gland. All this I learn much later, from Dr. Escher.

Natasha's fever remains unexplained.

The wintry landscape is clear and sunny as we take the train back home. Suddenly, the train comes to a stop in the open fields. Outside, someone is running along the length of the train, crying at top voice, "Everybody out, everybody out! Enemy aircraft!" We hurry to the door. In the sky, quite close, there are several fighter aircraft spiraling down, heading right for us. I freeze. Natasha gives me a push: "Don't just stand there! Hop down! Get behind the wheels!"

I do as I am told. We are crouching, each of us behind a thick, round, iron wheel as the aircraft open fire. I can see the fiery shots flashing from their guns. Ping, ping, ping go the bullets as they hit my wheel.

"Stick your head out and end it all," whispers a voice inside. "Come on! Just stick your head out a little. One bullet and it will all be over!"

I remain frozen. I manage not to move my head. Finally, the fighter planes leave. Yet Natasha yells at me, "Come on, come on, get up! They'll be back, and this time they'll be dropping bombs!"

We run across a frozen field. Some distance away, a ditch is visible, toward which Natasha is heading. "I can think of nothing worse," she gasps as she runs, "than to come home with a dead sister! I could never face Father!"

We arrive at the ditch. "Is it wet?" Natasha is suddenly her old princess-self. "After all, I don't want to ruin my good fur coat!"

Her comment shocks me into wakefulness. I too do not want to come home with a dead sister. I yank her down with me into slushy water.

We've ducked down none to soon, because immediately the edge of the ditch is peppered with bullets. "Amazing," I think to myself. "Trenches really do work!" I even dare to look up. The aircraft are flying so low that the American flag painted on their sides is clearly visible. The pilots look dark. First I think they must be black, but then I realize I am seeing their oxygen masks. Their guns flash brightly.

On their third pass, the steam engine of our train is shot to pieces. As the last of the steam escapes, it lets out a mournful whistle. Next, the tiny train station near which we have stopped is bombed. Then we see the squadron leader tip his wings as the planes turn and head way up into the sky, west. It is over.

There are wounded, both civilians and soldiers, because the last two wagons on the train were carrying wounded soldiers home from the western front.

"This time there really *were* soldiers inside," Natasha mutters, as we stand waiting for a new locomotive, "not ammunition, as is sometimes suspected, and as perhaps the Americans thought. If we want to think kindly of them."

The train had been overly full, as are all trains. There are many helpers and from the hospital wagon come bandages and splints. We are cold, tired and hungry when finally a new locomotive comes steaming down the tracks.

When we are under way once more, a woman with a small child comes into our compartment. She asks if she might sit with us, in our second-class compartment, where seats are reserved, though she only holds third-class tickets.

"Of course!" we exclaim in unison, Natasha and I. The other people not having returned, we assume they've found space elsewhere or are wounded, or worse, have been left behind. The little girl is still shaking with fear, and the woman cannot stop talking about the "terrible, terrible attack." Soon an official arrives to check our tickets. Ours in order, he turns to the woman. As she hands him her tickets, she begins to stammer, about being so terribly upset, about finding this seat . . .

"Show me your identification card," the official thunders.

Frantically, she searches in her purse. "I must have left it behind." Cause for further panic, it is plain to see.

The official's face turns a fiery red. In a rage he screams at the poor womaan: "Do you not know it is forbidden in the Third Reich to be anywhere without your identification card?! That it is *verboten* to die without your identification on you?! Now back to your own compartment!"

"Madness, madness," Natasha mutters, as the woman is shooed out. And I think, "I may be crazy, with an inner demon who asks me to stick my head into the path of a bullet, and won't allow me to eat. But they are madder still!"

We arrive home late that night. When we tell Father what happened, he clenches his fists in rage, coming close to one of his really frightening attacks: "That I would live to see the day when Americans shoot at *my* children! Those dirty . . . !"

Soon after, I have to go to the hospital for the implantation of the calf-gland. Incredibly, Dr. Escher been able to procure not one, but two live calves, one for me and one for a girl my age who is even skinnier than I, so weak she can hardly get out of bed. He tells me he will do the two surgeries on the same day, one right after the other. His assistant, young Dr. Sensel, is in fine spirits as he comes to visit me. "We shall kill the calf, rush upstairs, implant the glandand thenand then, we shall have brains for lunch! Oh yummy!" To him, the prospect of brains for lunch is clearly going to be the highlight of the entire procedure! Poor calves! I feel so foolish about all this.

The operation isn't much, only a local anaesthetic, and afterward I can feel the calf-gland pulsing inside my belly. "Perhaps you didn't die in vain, poor calf," I tell it, "perhaps you'll help me get strong enough so I can fight that *thing* in me that at present runs my life."

Next day, Mother visits, having walked the long distance. She is all upset. The other girl who had the operation has gone truly insane, and has had to be transferred immediately to an asylum. Mother admonishes me, "You simply must force yourself to gain weight! Or else you too will go mad! That would be unbearably shameful! Remember that and stuff yourself!"

I share her fear. How I long to tell someone about the phrase I keep hearing, "the Lamentations of Jeremiah, oh, the Lamentations of Jeremiah," over and over in my head. There is another word that keeps popping into my mind at odd moments, the name Nebuchadnezzar. I've asked myself, what do I know about Nebuchadnezzar? Only what I learned long ago in religion instruction in schoolthat he was a great king of the Old Testament, that he took Jewish tribes into Babylonian exile, that he became insane and during that time believed himself to be an animal and acted like one.

Mother misunderstands my silence, accuses me of being most horribly stubborn and selfish, stuck in my determination to further humiliate her and cause her pain. While she has always had only my very best interests at heart.

In walks Dr. Escher. Her angry, hurt looks, my silence, seem to be enough for him. "Please leave," he asks Mother, brusquely. "As her physician, I ask you to please leave immediately! And do not come back while she is in my care!"

I am not only surprisedafter all, Dr. Escher is a good friend of my parentsbut filled with gratitude. He smiles as he adds on his way out, "Besides, your mother should be at home where she is needed. Our nuns will do the mothering here."

And indeed they do. Soon I am up and about, offering to help them. They are so cheerful and friendly! At certain times of the day I can see many of them in quiet prayer in the convent garden, side by side on long benches, their white, starched triangle-hats sparkling in the sun in sharp contrast to their black habits. None of them seems to wonder why I am still in the hospital, my scar almost healed. I have the feeling that whatever their Dr. Escher orders is fine with them. Sometimes, after having spent part of the night in the basement because of an air raid, one or the other will come into my room and sit quietly by my side for a while. That is so very comforting.

One night we have a particularly horrible air raid. We are all sitting in the cavernous basement of the hospital, our shelter. In beds along the wall are wounded soldiers, one of them groaning terribly. Down the corridor a woman is screaming. I am told she is in labor. As the bombs drop, the old building shakes, making the mortar fall, and there is a particularly potent feeling of terror in the place. It may have to do with those seriously wounded soldiers. We all seem to be affected by it, except for the nuns. Cheerfully, calmly, some walk between the beds, saying soothing words. Others sit, their lips moving in silent

prayer. During our long stay in the basement the moaning soldier dies.

The floor where my room is located has been spared, except for broken windows and glass doors. I help sweep it up as the old nun wielding the broom says over and over, "Terrible Thy wrath, oh Lord, terrible, oh Lord. But Thy will be done; yes, Thy will, not ours."

Lying awake at night, I reflect upon what I am experiencing at the hospital. And one morning I know: I want to become a nun. Yes, even if it means first learning about Catholicism, becoming a Catholic, doing battle with my parents about my decision. I feel an exhilarating determination. When I ask myself why there is this new wish in me, the answer comes loud and clear: Because in our world gone chaotic and senseless, clearly the lives of the nuns retain an order and meaning that was established centuries ago, and this age-old aura of meaning surrounds them like a shining cloak. Dr. Escher is Catholic, and I admire the way he speaks with the nuns.

But in my planning I had not reckoned with the *one,* the dark *thing* whose voice I presently hear inside: "You?! Worthless girl! You shall not become a nun!" As I know all too well, his power is much, much stronger than mine. Soon my exhilarating dream is in tatters.

I ask Dr. Escher to send me home the very next day. I realize I have no right to be here any longer; the beds are needed for people who are really ill.

At home, I become an even more silent person. At first I make the mistake of talking with enthusiasm about my stay at the hospital. Mother makes it very clear she does not wish to hear such talk. She talks about "having it out" one day with Dr. Escher. It is becoming harder and harder for me to deal with the chronic strain in our relationship. It seems to ease only when we make music together. Or when she plays by herself, late in the evening, as once upon a time she did so often, one piece after another, Mozart, Schumann, Bach. Then her music permeates the house and I feel at peace with her. Sometimes I am already in bed when she plays. Then the music becomes my wonderful, ethereal companion. Often I reflect on how the composers are called back into being when their music is being played, and in my mind's eye I can see the Salzburg of Mozart, who next to Bach is still my favorite composer.

One Sunday morning in early summer we are just sitting down for breakfast when the sirens begin to howl. "What?!" Father asks, "This is a new scheduleon Sunday yet!"

Reluctantly, we leave our food to go to our separate shelters. There we must sit and sit, and I become very squirmy and long to run down to the other shelter, to be with Father and the others. The warden's opinion is that they are bombing elsewhere, and will soon fly over after having finished their job. Then it'll be all clear again. But no sooner has this pronouncement been made than there is a

most horrible sound, the wood over our heads snaps in two, dirt falls down, all the lights go out and it feels as if we are being spun around and around. People scream. Shaken, we hear more explosions in the distance, and then an impact that once more rocks the entire shelter. Finally the all clear is sounded.

Outside, smoke fills the air. There has been a hit directly over our heads, and the bomb crater is eleven meters deep. We were only one and a half meters further down, that is why the impact cracked the wood over our heads. In the street just outside the shelter, partially dug into the pavement, lies an entire aircraft engine. It was probably the cause of the second heavy impact. A giant red ring lies on the sidewalk. On it has been painted in white: "This bomb intended for Germany. Made in the USA."

But when I look at our house I become nauseous. Father's house, the house I was born in! That is Mother's first exclamation: "Oh the house into which you were born, my child! It is destroyed!"

One corner of the house is completely gone, roof and all, the rooms exposed. There is a huge crater where our front entrance used to be. But the house is not totally destroyed.

Father has already returned, he is inside fighting to extinguish a fire that has started upstairs. He brings it under control, but the room is gone, there is nothing left but a charred hole.

"It's as if you had a premonition, when you built this house in the twenties," Mother says to Father, pleased that the house is only damaged. We are all sitting around, exhausted. "I mean," Mother continues, "if you had not insisted upon reinforced concrete up to the second floor, that big bomb would have pulverized this house. By the size of the crater, the warden said, the bomb must have weighed about five hundred pounds."

Father smiles at her through bloodshot eyes. "Yes, that is a blessing amidst the disaster. While we won't have electricity, water or drainage for a long, long time, we still have a roof over our heads. Also, most of the fire-bombs that hit the house did not ignite, and a great many have landed in the yard. Take a look at your chicken house!"

The chicken house is no more. Henceforth the hens will have to be housed in the basement, as they already are in winter.

It is soon apparent that the Americans and British who have landed under the command of General Eisenhower are here to stay. They will not be thrown back into the sea.

"How can the tired, thinned-out German army resist? What can they possibly do against the vast resources of the Americans?" comments Mother, while Father talks about bumbling and stupidity costing many more lives than necessary.

But there is talk about a terrible new weapon about to be unleashed, a weapon

that might well turn the tide. At least so says Herrmann. Meanwhile, alarms and bombings are on a steady increase.

One day our brown-uniformed block warden looks especially glum, and his wife is in tears, as they head toward their special niche equipped with comfortable furniture, in place of the narrow wooden benches provided for the rest.

What has happened? "They have come and taken away Herr Rosenfeld." That is what has happened, we are told. "That nice Jewish gentleman who lived on our top floor, who during these last months has been so brave, staying all alone in the basement of the apartment house, since Jews are not allowed into the shelter. They've taking him away to Theresienstadt! It is so sad!"

The block warden tries to comfort his wife. "We'll send him food packages, dear, to make certain he returns safely. I've been told that is one of the very best camps."

Mother heaves a deep sigh. Once upon a time she used to fret that from his high balcony Herr Rosenfeld might be able to look into her dressing room window. Now he is gone, and she clearly feels badly. I think of poor Fräulein Wiesbadner and her shy, gentle, father who painted such wonderful pictures.

The new weapons are called V-1's, and they are being shot at England day and night. My feelings of compassion for the British grow still stronger. On nights when they've been over us and dropped bombs, I can often hear their motors as they start their long journey back. I always "talk" with them, wistfully, sometimes even tearfully, telling them I wish them a safe journey back to their island, where people can at least feel good about having to defend themselves. For in truth, we cannot. Father is absolutely right: we Germans are a menace who recklessly began this war, and these are our just desserts. Recently, during one of his moments of utter fury right after a bombing, he shouted, again and again, "Oh God, and we deserve it, we deserve every last morsel of it!" Mother has learned to remain silent during such outbursts.

Leaflets dropped from the sky, the English newsprint reminding Mother of the happy times of her youth, warn us of worse to come.

It comes in early July. We have a terror raid like never before. It is hot, and as we sit in our shelter we are shaken by bombs crashing all about not for a few minutes, or half an hour, but on and on. Heavy smoke and the deafening roar of aircraft engines are transmitted through the ducts of the air cleaning system. It will have to be shut off. We can only hope there is enough air in all the tunnels for us to last until the raid is over. Soon people are coughing. I am alone with Mother, as usual, and now both of us worry whether the rest of the family has made it safely to the other shelter.

When it is finally over, the town is lit sky-high with fires burning out of control. All the water pipes are broken, and so the buildings just burn and burn.

Our house still stands, but is a shambles. Not an unbroken window left, and glass everywhere. There is a fire upstairs, and as we enter we can hear Father hacking away with an axe, trying to chop away the burning beams. We run up and down the stairs, carrying buckets full of sand and the water we saved in the basement for just this purpose. Much water has been carried already, and sand thrownFather and the others have come back just as soon as the bombing lessened, otherwise the entire house would have burnt down. This time it is my room that is ravaged, the room I have had as my own ever since Gebhardt left. Books and notes and everythinggone! Natasha's girlhood room right next to it is also a blackened hole. In fact, it looks like the entire upstairs is going to be uninhabitable.

"Never mind," Father says briskly, "I am going now to help next door."

The neighbor's blaze has grown bigger and bigger, in spite of all efforts to extinguish it. The fire is burning up from the basement, like a giant torch, and soon it engulfs the whole house.

Father assigns me the duty of standing next to the torn-away portion of our roof, which is closest to the neighbor's burning house. I am to watch for the burning embers, extinguish them as soon as I see any. A scary task, for many fall on the wood of the attic floor, closest to where the side of the house is ripped away. Whenever I run there, the entire floor sags beneath me.

But what the othersexcept Motherare doing is scary too. They are running in and out of the neighbor's house in an attempt to rescue as many possessions as possible. I can hear their shoutingespecially Ulrike's voicein the street below. The fire itself is entirely out of control. When did I last hear Ulrike shout like this? Oh yes, when Gebhardt was burning! How separate we've grown since then, she and I. How I envy and admire her. Mother sent her to school a year early, and not me, much as I begged to go, because, she said, she wanted my company for one more year. Thus Ulrike graduated two years earlier, while I shall only graduate next spring. Ulrike could go off to university and begin studying medicine, be knowledgeable and do useful work, respected by everyone, especially Natasha and her friend Dr. Escher, while I am a nothing.

What a contrast to me she is! Here I am, silenced by my inner demons, considered "sick" by everyone, my one and only usefulness lying in "taking care of Mother," as Father urges me to do again and again. What an utter failure I really am. And so I stand in an inner as well as an outer inferno. A terrible wind is beginning to howl around the house, the dreaded fire-storm; soon it is so strong it blows the embers right through the attic, making the loose boards clatter and rattle. Fires everywhere, the sound of people shouting and running below going on and on. The torch that was the neighbor's house keeps on burning and burning, making horrible, crackling noises. Indeed: *he* of the black and fiery cloud of my

early childhood has come back, *he* has kept his promise.

Finally Father comes to get me. It is already light, a brownish-yellow, smoky, ugly light. We have cold canned peas for breakfast, together with our bread. Father breaks open a bottle of warm champagne.

The sight of the side of the hills close to the railroad tracks puts me into a state of weirdness. It looks so terrible, the way the earth has been ripped open, the debris of houses lying all about. As I look, I hear that wounded earth utter the very cries Gebhardt once did: "I'm burning, I'm burning!" For a moment, it is as if some invisible hand has pulled aside a curtain: I can see the pain, the madness, as an observer, an impassioned witness. It is not I who am mad, but *that* is.

Natasha notices me.

"And you?! What's the matter with you? Don't just stand there! Come on, help!"

How? With what?

Of all people, Mother comes to my rescue: "If she is that upset about all of this, just let her be, Natasha. Better help me worry about where I've left my key basket! Without it, I cannot get to any of the reserve food supplies, and without those, we won't eat!"

Caught in my trancelike state, I wander about the house, periodically getting curious glances, particularly from Natasha. I seem to be trapped in this state and I feel a dreadful amount of shame. Why must I be like this?!

And then I find Mother's key basket! Years ago, I gave it to her for Christmas, made a hand-stitched liner and wrote a poem to go with it. Mother was very pleased and has used it ever since.

Suddenly my wandering about seems justified. And the finding of the keys somehow frees me of my trance. I nod my head as Natasha says, "Oh, good for you! Now we get to eat!"

We have enough water for the day, and incredibly, by evening a huge water truck has made its way through all the rubble and debris, as well as a "Goulaschgun," a truck filled with stew. We are given more than we can eat, but the chickens refuse it altogether, for the food has a spicy, salty taste to it. "Laced with saltpeter," Mother explains, "to suppress sexual desire; the threat to life so intensifies one's longings, and that just wouldn't do."

The sound of periodic explosions goes on all day long, all night, and into the next day. These are the time-bombs going off long after they've been dropped, one never knows when. They are a recent addition to the things dropped from the sky. In the days and weeks that follow the giant air raid, there are so many alarms and raids that often I actually end up falling asleep in the shelter, bombs crashing or not. For water, we have had to go to a spring in the valley. We go to

the bathroom in the garden, shovel in hand, digging holes. For washing, we use only minuscule amounts of water. We bless Mother's antique, the wood-burning stove, which now enables us to cook not only our own food but often that of the neighbors as well. When we go outdoors, we must be very careful, because there is phosphorus powder all over, it burns only partially as it is dropped from the sky. Nonetheless, I manage to stick my knee into some, and for hours afterward have to keep the spot moist, because of the burning.

One day I offer to bring lunch to Father at his bombed-out office, where he is trying to sort papers from a safe that has nearly melted. I walk through streets flanked with the stony façades of burnt-out houses, the empty window sockets staring at me. Written with chalk on the front of almost every building are the words, "Here everyone dead." I can feel them surround me, these dead, I can hear them asking, "Why us? Why not you?"

Indeed, why? What power chooses who will burn to death and who will not? The sun blazes as I slowly pick my way along the narrow piece of road that is clear of rubble.

Herrmann is sitting at the table, shaking like a leaf. No interest in food today. "I should not tell you what I am about to say. In fact I promised to keep silent. But I cannot."

It isn't much, in substance, because the man who tried to tell him about the conditions found at Dachau concentration camp kept freezing into a horrible silence himself. But the horror, the absolute horror, was not lost on Herrmann, and is not lost on us.

"And I have heard something else," he says. "There's a weapon being developed of such power that the V-1 is like a child's toy in comparison. We can only pray the war ends before it falls into the hands of this madman."

The dark *one* lurks in the shadows of Herrmann's story. The horror of Dachau, of a doomsday weapon! How it has touched Herrmann, who used to listen to Hitler's speeches with his ear glued right next to the radio, because no one else in the house wanted to be subjected to *that man's* voice.

And then it is July 20th, that black day of the attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. The news comes piecemeal, but it is soon all too obvious. An attempt to kill Hitler has been made, and it has failed. What strikes me most is how terribly, terribly upset Father becomes at hearing the news, about the trick of fate that had Hitler step away from the briefcase containing the bomb seconds before it went off: "Von Stauffenberg should have kept that briefcase in his hand and kept close to Hitler until the bomb exploded!"

That would have meant certain death. Can one demand such a thing? I think of the stories I have heard in school about the Japanese Kamikaze fighters who plunge to their death as a matter of course.

Later Father sits by the radio, tears running down his cheeks as he listens to the description of the arrests, the triumphant tone in the announcer's voice that the "beloved Führer" is alive and well!

Mother tries to comfort him. "Don't take it so personally," she says, stroking his hair. "It's fate, don't you see, it's our fate."

Father just shakes his head.

And then Father says, sounding like a dark and ominous oracle, "And mark my words, when this war is over we will discover that not even the lowliest dogs in the world will wish to talk to us Germans!"

Little do I know, as I hear these words, how they will come to haunt me.

Summer passes with bombs exploding, with scenes that etch themselves into one's brain, never to be forgotten: Russian women, working to clear rubble, with white scarves on their heads, singing beautiful melodies that I listen to until chased away by a guard. A meeting on a narrow, steep path on which prisoners of war drag behind them a huge unexploded bomb, allowing it to bounce along, obvious in their joy at doing this. Hearing a French prisoner of war from Indochina sing like an opera star, to the delight of the entire neighborhood, as he hammers together broken roof rafters.

September brings the rains. Day after day it pours. I am graduated from high school with an emergency diploma, for this indeed, has become Goebbels's "total war," and there is no more school. I graduate with good grades, a surprising fringe benefit of my getting thin and quiet. Suddenly, every teacherexcept for Fräulein Bilf who in her fury at me even let me fall when she was supposed to lend support during a workout on the parallel barshas given me good grades. I do not feel I have earned them any more than I used to feel I earned the bad ones. On my own, I attempt to continue the study of Latin.

On the radio there is an ascerbic commentary on an agreement reportedly made between Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt, the so-called Morgenthau Plan. The plan is said to stipulate that conquered Germany will have its industrial centers, especially the Ruhr, razed to the ground, and be transformed into an agrarian society. "That is why we must fight to the bitter end!" cries the newscaster. "No second 1918!" It is a refrain I hear again and again during this war, *"No second 1918!"* Now that sentiment has been given added fuel.

Mother shares in the general indignation. Vivid in her memory of 1918 and after is her terror as the conquerors took everything away, her deep humiliation as she could no longer walk freely about, having to be ready to step off the sidewalk for any French military officer who might happen to walk by. Now she is deeply, deeply offended that once more Americans are planning "an untenable future for Germany."

Hitler establishes the *Volkssturm,* highest in command being the dreaded Herr

Himmler. Local command falls to the *Gauleiter,* the local chief and leader. Now anyone can be drafted.

It continues to rain. I pick up rain-soaked fruit. In our bomb crater, in front of the house, frogs are croaking lustily. We enjoy the alarm-free nights. We retire early, because now that the summer light is no more, we have to rely on candlelight. And candles are scarce. Toward the end of this rainy season, which personally I attribute to the fire-storms of the summer, when all is quiet at night, we can hear a steady thundering from the west. The front has come within hearing distance.

October is bright and clear. General Rommel commits suicide, an aftermath of the July *putsch,* as rumor has it. The town grieves for its very own hero. I am sent to the store to buy hand-soap with coupons, Mother's precious prewar reservoir having finally given out.

"Sandy soap or Jew soap?" asks the saleslady.

"Jew soap?!"

An older customer says to me sadly, quietly: "Yes, that is the rumor."

The saleslady: "Sure, the kind that floats, the smooth kind. Human fat, melted down. Jewish fat. Which kind shall it be?let's see first what kind of coupons you have!"

Why oh why am I still shocked at the callousness of some of my compatriots when I should know by now that they've simply ceased to be feeling human beings, that they have been absorbed into the Nazi ideology and all it carries, not least of it the constant, ongoing venom about the Jews.

Yet I feel closer to these persecuted ones, somehow, than to anyone else. I vow that henceforth I shall only use the sandy soap, which indeed is mostly sand. At least it is not a symbol of horror.

But we are surrounded by horror, we cannot escape it, even if I use no soap at all, and it is becoming numbing in its intensity. Herrmann's latest tale: Russian prisoners of war, left alone to starve to death, have turned to cannibalism.

The long arm of the Nazi government reaches for me once again as mail delivery resumes after the long pause in bombing. An official letter informs me that it has come to their attention I am at present not serving the Fatherland in any capacity, and that I am therefore drafted into the *Arbeitsdienst*. I am to appear at their office this Friday, at ten o'clock in the morning.

A friend of my childhood days, Brigitte, has received the same letter. Because her home was completely destroyed last summer and she has had to help her parents, she has slipped into joblessness. Without some sort of employment, one is at the mercy of the government. Mother happened to learn about Brigitte's status, and so Brigitte and I can at least keep each other company as we take our bicycles on the long trip across town. Fingerprints are taken, forms filled out and

finally we are dismissed with a "You shall hear from us shortly."

The ride home turns out to be a terrifying experience. Suddenly, glistening and shimmering like the giant Thunderbirds of my Indian tales, thousands of American B-17 bombers fill the sky. They are well over us before the sirens begin to howl. Brigitte and I pedal up the hill toward the nearest shelter, gasping for air because of our effort and our terror. Yet there is beauty in that apparition in the sky. I cannot help but keep looking up at all that sparkling so high above us, feel touched, as the air vibrates with the humming of the many engines. How can one be so terrified and yet enraptured at the same time? Then we hear the loud, rhythmic thumping of exploding bombs.

But the Americans do not lay down the dreaded "bomb carpet" where a town is covered with bombs from one end to the other, as do the British at night. The entire cargo of all these aircraft is directed toward a few single targets, which, we learn later, they thoroughly demolish

And so I do not "shortly" hear from the *Arbeitsdienst,* for their office was severely damaged by this bombing. Many thanks, USA.

American troops enter Aachen. The noose is closing. There is much sad talk in the shelter about fifteen-year-old boys being drafted, being used as "gun-fodder." Sundays, Father is in the cold garden, planting tulip bulbs as if his life depended on it; Mother shakes her head, not understanding. I think that in all this horror, all this death, Father needs to plant life, even if it is only some tulips that might bloom in the spring.

In November our house is on fire once more. It is subfreezing weather, and the water freezes as it touches the roof beams, where the fire is eating its way into the structure of the house. Father spends all night hacking away at the heavy beams, working to open up the nest of fire. I think of the fire of the Old Castle during my childhood, which smoldered for two long weeks. Father is finally able to put out the fire. Soon after, he is coughing badly.

But that is of no concern to the man who comes by to take Father to the *Volkssturm*. "He'll get well in learning how to fight," we are told, as Father is led away.

He is back within days, now seriously ill with pneumonia. But the illness is a blessing in disguise. By the time he is better, the war front has moved so close that the Nazi officials are getting ready to leave town. At night, the western horizon is lit with the red flashes of heavy guns, their rumble now a constant background noise, day or night. Through the deserted streets of our town roll the trucks of German officialdom, filled with their possessions and their loot. There is reason to believe that now they will let us be.

But then the western front slows down, even comes to a stop, as von Kesselring succeeds in entrapping American troops near Bastogne. Once again

we are subjected to the newscaster's triumphant staccato on the radio.

In early December there is talk that the city may even be able to restore electric lights. So Father digs long and hard in the muddy bomb crater, until he finds the buried wire that brings electricity into our house; it was ripped apart when the bomb hit. When he finds it, he carefully takes the heavy city wire that he has hung mid-air over the crater and connects it to that of the house. First he takes the left side of each wire, and makes a connection, then the right.

"What if the electricity goes on right now? You'll be electrocuted!" Mother frets, not unreasonably so. Past experience has shown that after the lights have been out for a long time, one day they'll simply come on, without any notice.

"I'm connecting them one at a time," says Father, and explains how even if there were electricity in the wires, he would be perfectly safe as long he touches only one wire at a time. Ah, the magic of scientific knowledge! Knowledge of which I have obtained so little during my schooling. Start physics, and the instructor is gone, drafted! Start chemistry, and the same thing happens.

Our Christmas is air raid free, and we are grateful. Hitler's New Year's speech seems to imply that if Germany loses this war, it will be entirely the fault of the German people, certainly not his. He also announces that if this should happen, he will not be there to witness her demise.

This time it is Mother who explodes in a rage: "The utter, utter . . . of course he would do that! In place of facing judgment!"

I had heaved too soon my sigh of relief at the departure of agents of the Third Reich. For in January its arm reaches for me once more, this time in the form of a notice marked "Very Urgent." It turns out that I am drafted into the German army. I am to report almost at once, to the largest nearby *Kaserve* (barracks), a half-day's train ride away.

I am housed in an old stone building, in a large room, together with many other girls my age who have also been drafted. They come from farms and small villages, where up to now they have been allowed to remain in order to help their parents. They are very cheerful, and quite excited about having been drafted. Moreover, they have brought their own supply of food, and they are most generous in offering some to me. They are soon full of concern about my extreme thinness; they decide it is the the thinness of the "city girl," and almost ceaselessly urge me to eat. But I cannot. As they munch, they discuss whether to sign up for service outside or inside. Outside service will consist of the manning of anti-aircraft guns, now to be pointed parallel to the ground, toward the approaching Russian army. Service inside is KP duty and similar tasks. The group seems to lean toward service outside.

When asked by the inquiring officer the next morning, I too elect outside service, having thought about it most of the night. I choose it with the assumption

that it will grant me a quick and merciful death.

But it is not to be. There is a cursory physical examination, and the very young man in the white coat who looks me over says at once: "You are not fit. You are ill, you might die." The ones who in fact do perish, tragically, are all those young women who so urged their food upon me, and were so happy to be choosing service outside.

And so I am released at once. When I return home, Father is hysterical. Now he just knows this is not the end. He says he is afraid that now that "they have your number," they will not let go. A few days later, he produces a letter from the Swiss government, offering me permission to stay in that countrynow generally closed to Germans. He also gives me a second note, with a German official stamp on it, which gives me permission to leave town. He also holds in hand my old, partially burnt American passport with its edges cut off, and of course my brown German one.

"You must leave!" He implores. "My friends in Switzerland will take you."

He is referring to a former business friend, once a very close friend of Father and a very wealthy man. I once met the family at their lakeside home.

Just as adamant as Father is about my leaving, so Mother is about my staying. She cites the ongoing confusion as a sign that the danger from the Nazi government is on the wane. My place is here, with the family, she insists. Her arguments make a great deal of sense. We are all in this together, after all. And who is to be with her in the shelter when the fighting armies reach our town? Alas, soon I hear an inner voice, growing stronger and stronger, urging me to follow Father's advice.

The more Mother senses I am thinking of going, the more obsessed she becomes in her wish for me to stay. Day by day she grows more upset and tearful. How could I even think of abandoning her now! Finally, she begins to intimate that I am a traitor, "a rat abandoning the sinking ship." Oddly, the more intense she becomes, the more loudly calls that new voice inside, telling me to pull free of her, to leave this land which is so very much hers.

The struggle is between Mother and me. Father has made it abundantly clear that he feels I should leave. I have no idea how he has amassed the documents, and he keeps silent about it. Natasha supports my leaving, in spite of her sympathy for Mother's despair, frequently voicing the opinion of her friend Dr. Escher, who echoes Father's sense of urgency. Ulrike is so involved in her own life that she doesn't seem to notice the turmoil at all.

I decide. Or rather, "it" decides for me, namely that I shall leave. Her resentment palpable in its intensity, Mother takes me to say good-bye to the neighbors we have grown to know so well during these last years. To Marianne and her parents she announces, disdain in her voice, "My daughter is leaving, now,

to go Switzerland." It is clearly the worst sin a German girl can commit. The silence which follows is so deadly I find it hard to breathe.

Actually, it is not at all certain I shall make it. Many trains heading for the border are being bombed to pieces by Allied aircraft; some say the ratio of destroyed to undestroyed trains is fifty-fifty. Any day now, they will stop running. The conditions at the border itself are cloaked in murky silence.

It is February 4th, 1945, about three-thirty in the morning, when I board the train. I am wearing Mother's ancient fur coat. It is Russian wildcat fur, the warmest coat she owns; it has been in her possession since she was a young woman. In its moth-eaten ugliness it is a piece of my life in the shelter, where it kept me warm during all the many hours I spent there.

As I stand on the platform, my teary-eyed mother continues to accuse: "You look dreadfully stubborn and far too young to be leaving home!"

That is not how I feel. I feel tired and old, and like the rat Mother has intimated I am, once more entirely in the clutches of an inner power I cannot oppose, and whose reasoning I cannot understand. Yet I know I must go.

As the train slowly begins to pull out of the bombed-out station, Father calls after me a most chilling thing: "I release you from being my daughter! Henceforth, you are alone!"

Daylight dawns as the train proceeds slowly through the wintry landscape. It is around noon when it stops in open fields. Once again I hear the running along the tracks, the shouts, "Aircraft, everyone leave the train!" I wonder, as I obey the order and crouch on snowy tracks beside the huge iron wheels, whether I have come here to share the fate of those who were in the other trains, whose charred remains I have seen as we traveled along. Yet there is a calm in me, I somehow know this will not happen. Indeed, it is soon apparent that the aircraft are busy lending support to their troops in combat very near by.

It is night when the train pulls into the border town. Beyond, there is a "little island of Switzerland," a part entirely surrounded by Germany. People from that area have jobs in this German border town, and to this day there is a Swiss train which daily transports the workers back and forth. I see it sitting there, as we pull into the station, clearly defined by the Swiss flag. It has several flat-cars equipped with anti-aircraft guns, and it is manned by Swiss soldiers.

And now there is a scene in which the angel of my early, early childhood seems to take over, quite independently from me. I seem to be standing over to one side, an observer, as if all of this were a play being enacted.

There "I" stand, a young woman, thin and tall, in a heavy, ratty-looking coat and ancient ski boots, old suitcase in hand, facing the stern border official of the Third Reich.

"I don't care how many documents you have," he is saying. "The borders are

closed. No one is allowed to leave the Reich. You cannot cross."

Air raid sirens begin to wail.

The border guard, folding together his official books: "Come into the air raid shelter with me."

A Swiss soldier from the train comes over, speaks to the German official: "We are holding the train, please hurry."

The German brushes him off. *"Nein."*

Behind the person that is "I," the Swiss begins to pace up and down, up and down.

"I" continue to stand there, silent.

Bombs begin to drop.

"Come on, come on! Into the air raid shelter!" The face of the border guard begins to show fear.

"I" begin to peel out of my purse the food coupons that have been part of the provisions for the journey, laying them slowly, one by one, on the counter, in front of the increasingly frightened guard. Blue for meat, pink for bread, yellow for fat. "I" feel no fear, "I" would much prefer to be killed by a falling bomb right here to going with him to the shelter.

Another bomb explodes, this time very close. And suddenly the border guard grabs the coupons: "When you return, the Third Reich will restore these to you. Heil Hitler!" Off he runs to his shelter.

"Come," says the Swiss soldier. It feels as if my angel of childhood were now incarnated in him; I feel a protective, invisible mantle surround me. Together we climb into the train. It is almost empty. I choose a seat as he disappears to his post.

It is not quite over. Not yet. Because as the train pulls out, marching down the corridor comes an officer dressed in the black SS uniform, clearly checking for hideaways. My heart sinks, for in this moment I have begun to care about life again.

He does not notice me, or perhaps chooses not to. Once more we stop, to let him off. And then the train crosses the border into Switzerland. The most important border crossing of my life.

5
The Ashes After

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,
far from my prayer, from the words of my cry?

There is a dreamlike quality to my encounter with the Swiss officials. I silently hand them all my documentsexcept the burnt, invalid American passportreceiving in return a yellow booklet which identifies me and states that I am allowed to remain in Switzerland.

Zürich is like another planet. Shops filled with goods, people bustling about. The magnificent Charlie Chaplin movie, *The Great Dictator,* does much to restore to me some sense of sanity.

Father's good friend, Emil Miller, is a quiet, reassuring man. In time, I will learn just how strong is the sense of honor and morality that permeates this fine Swiss. He likes me. His wife, after all is said and done, all legendary hospitality and good will accounted for, does not. Certainly, with all my feelings of insecurity about the world and myself, I am not an attractive refugee. And while "Uncle Emil" seems not to notice these aspects of me, "Aunt Helene" does so all the more. But no wonder! It becomes her job to spend time with me, buy me clothing to replace my patched-together gray outfits. Without decent soap and practically no water, my clothes have not been washed properly for many months. Besides, Helene is ultraproud of her Swiss heritage, and basically, Germans are to her *chaibe Tütsche,* which means something like "those damned Germans" in Swiss German.

And yet, even she is aghast at the news of the bombing of Dresden. Indeed, the news portrays an inferno. Not only is the town burnt like a Gomorrah, but the fleeing population is further terrorized by direct attacks from the air. What a contrast he is, this Swiss radio announcer, to those of the Third Reich. His voice is calm and thoughtful, his expressions those of concern at the many losses in a town that had not only been free of industry, but was also a particularly rich treasure-chest of European culture. "One more step into barbarism," he concludes. I dare not dwell too long on the fate of Dresden.

It is all so strange. I am only allowed to stay in Zürich for a short while, and am then sent to an *Institute des Jeunes Filles,* a girls' residential school high up in the Engadin mountains. One must walk to it, while luggage is pulled up the hill on a horse-drawn sled. It is a gorgeous place, long established and quite

large. In the dining room, girls sit at long tables surrounded by marble columns. And I, who not long ago did not care much whether I lived or died, yet who felt, on that interminable train ride to the border, that within her there was an entity that *knew*, that held a certainty about the path I was to take, am now floundering, anxious about everything, a void inside. My hypernervousness is quickly noticed by my Swiss instructors; they are patient and gentle.

I eagerly follow the suggestion of one who counsels me to teach myself to type and learn shorthand. His advice resonates powerfully with my discomfort about having cast myself upon the mercy of Father's friend, of being so incapable of earning my own livelihood.

I have difficulty making any kind of connection with the other girls. Here too I feel I have been dropped from another world, my only link to that from which I came being through the news on my little radio, loaned to me by Helene. There are several German girls who have been staying here since the beginning of the war. Thet do not want to hear about any aspect of what is happening in Germany; in fact, when I do talk about it, they quickly become nasty. They let me know they still believe that ultimately Germany will win the war. One of the Swiss girls informs me they are the children of high-ranking officials of the Third Reich. I withdraw. I discover the company, the soothing qualities, of the cigarette, and with that earn the disapproval of those in charge, for of course smoking is not allowed on these premises. I take my cigarettes with me when I go skiing. My old boots still serve me well, and the mountains are truly magnificent. Often I walk up the mountain, then ski down. The white solitude soothes me. Sometimes, however, the blue sky becomes filled with glistening, droning aircraft on their way to bomb some German town from bases in Italy. Then all of us who come from there become very quiet.

Early in spring, the time of the melting snow, the institution closes for a long time. Helene finds another, one which will remain open for a while longer. It is much smaller, catering primarily to girls from the French- speaking parts of Switzerland who are being taught German. I really like it there. I am even allowed to stay with the family who own it while it is officially closed during the snow-melting season. I make friends with the two sons and the daughter, home on vacation, and the four of us spend many happy days skiing in the slush.

Evenings I lie in bed and listen to the radio. One night the Swiss newscaster describes in vivid detail how in the dead of night American troops have crossed the Rhine over the bridge at Remagen, an old railroad bridge supposed to have been blown up by the fleeing Germans. "Many lives shall be saved," concludes the commentator. It impresses me deeply, this image, so vividly painted in his words, of that first crossing of Germany's sacred river by the Americans.

President Roosevelt dies on April 12th. A happening occurs with respect to

this event that causes me to feel terribly ashamed. So much so that for a time I have to wonder whether I can remain with this kind family.

It happens like this: It is April 13th, and the old grandmother, who lives with the family, is sitting at the dining room table, sobbing. I learn that she is crying about the death of President Roosevelt. I do believe my intention is to reassure her when suddenly I hear words coming out of my mouth that I myself do not understand, words suggesting Roosevelt had not been a good president at all; my father had said so many times so she needn't feel badly about his death.

The family is stunned. So am I. In the silence that follows, the harshness of my words continues to ring in my ears. I sounded like a Nazi!

Later, Mrs. Linden enters my room. "Come to church with us next Sunday, please," she pleads. She has asked me before. She is dismayed at the lack of religion in my life, for the Lindens are genuinely pious people. How dearly I would like to go to church, if only she knew! But I am much too afraid. I recall too vividly what happened when I wanted to become a nun. I can only numbly shake my head. When she leaves, disappointment and sadness in her eyes, I cry.

May 8th is the day of the return of all the girls from French Switzerlandsome originally from Franceto begin the spring-summer term. The snow is almost all gone, and the first flowers on the Alpine meadows have appeared in their brilliant colors. The ringing of the cows' bells, as they graze the tender young grass, fills the air. I love that sound.

Except for today. Today my mind is not filled with the wonder of the mountains, the blue skies, the fresh meadows. Today, Germany has surrendered to the Allied forces. The war is over. It is the day of *Waffenruhe*, when the weapons rest. What a momentous statement that is, "The weapons rest."

As the girls walk up from the little train station they are in a state of exhilaration. *"Ils sont battu!"* "They are beaten!" they cry again and again, echoing French Prime Minister Daladier, whose repeated, *"Ils sont battu!"* on the radio had filled the air of my room only a short while ago.

As only the French can, these girls show me a chivalrous respect that is quite remarkable. They treat me as if I represent the losing side of an honorable conquest. I am both touched and puzzled. Not knowing what else to do, I play my role. But perhaps it plays me, for it soon feels real enough.

I am expected to be devastated, and so I am. Because of that, I do not take part in the welcoming supper turned victory celebration. Instead, I withdraw to my room where I lie on my bed and cry. The tears are real enough, there is no bottom to that well, but I cannot define why they are being shed, for I had waited for this "weapons' rest" perhaps more eagerly than those celebrating downstairs. Everyone in the house expects me to shed tears. Mrs. Linden comes into the room, sits by me for a while, then leaves me "to my grief."

What grief? This war, this horrid regime that now has finally collapsedfor that I cannot grieve. Instead, gradually, I feel the familiar terror within.

Days later, burnt American passport in hand, I visit the American consulate in Zürich. It is again one of the scenes where I am more observer than participant. There is the interview with the vice-consul in which I request the return of my American citizenship. I hear myself speaking calmly, in clear English, hear myself explain the circumstances of the loss of my citizenship and my reasons for wanting it back. The man facing me was attached to the consulate in my home town not so long ago in years, but aeons in experience. Now he acts as if he had never laid eyes on me. I fill out forms. I leave. With this act, I have given up all claim to my German citizenship.

The Swiss make it official; at the same time that my permission to stay is extended, the word *Staatenlos* (without a country) is stamped across my yellow visitor's passport.

I am a woman without a country.

I meet Helene and a friend of hers for lunch. We decide to see one of the new American films. That turns out to be a disaster. It will take me time to sort out which films are designed primarily to enhance hatred of the enemy, the Germans, and which ones have a story to tell. The one we see is one of the former kind, a film which ceaselessly focuses on brutal German behavior, albeit in American style.

Afterward, I become the convenient German. Over Vermouth I am lambasted not only by Helene's friend but by Helene herself. I am attacked by both as if I had personally piloted the Messerschmidts that in the film fired on civilians, as if I personally had dropped the bombs on innocent farm houses and ignited them with flame-throwers, causing burning children to run screaming.

"And now you want to be an American," rails Helene's friend. "Well, I bet every German would just love to become an American now! But it's not that easy, I tell you. It's not that easy."

Indeed it is not.

I visit a dentist. The work is very painful, and he wonders why my cavities have been allowed to become so deep. But then steps back, saying,

"*Ah, Tütsche!* Of course! You threw out so many of your dentists that there weren't enough left to go around!"

I cannot contradict him. After our Dr. Stern left town, we never did manage to find a new dentist.

Meanwhile, I continue to fret about my future, alone and, alas, sometimes aloud on the telephone to Helene, to her considerable annoyance. I am not hopeful that the American government will restore my citizenship, a fact with which Emil agrees. The US government is taking the position that I renounced my cit-

izenship of my own free will when I became a German citizen in 1941. Emil is of the opinion that even if there had not been the grim circumstances of the time, I had been too young to make such a decision. He has hired a lawyer to fight my case, but as he points out, "The power of the official American sentiment against Germany is distorting each and every transaction."

Sometimes I think of emigrating to Central or South America, but actually, I try to think of just any place where I might get permission to enter. Having rejected my German citizenship, it does not feel as if in time I might ever return to Germany. I do not even think about that, there seems to be such a very loud "No!" in me, just below the surface. I would like so much to be able to find work right here, in Switzerland; but that is impossible for almost any foreigner.

I ask Emil and Helene whether I might live in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, so I could become fluent in French. They agree. A small pension in a Swiss-French university town is decided upon. There I can attend classes and prepare to take the examination for the interpreters' diploma.

It is an interesting group that lives at the pension: a young woman who is a student at the school of commerce; a young man studying engineering; a single, retired older woman, Madame Chapette, who is very much alone in the world; and a young orphaned girl for whom the pension has become home. And soon to arrive, tattooed number on wrist, Monsieur Parry, concentration camp survivor. A Parisian, Madame Poivre, both owns and manages the establishment. We speak French exclusively, and she sees to it that it is properly spoken. At first I have to struggle mightily. In a few weeks, I can join in the conversation. I am told my French accent sounds more English or Swedish than German. How odd!

And what a gift of the universe. For French and English soon become the only languages I speak, grateful that I can hide my German origin. That protects me, and therefore provides me with some distancenot much, just enough to survive, not to be swallowed upfrom what is beginning to unfold in films, in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, everywhere: the absolute horror of the deeds committed by Nazi Germany.

No one who knows me personally attacks me, not boarding-house mates, nor fellow students, nor my instructors. If anything, they are kinder. But I am bracing for the attack from within, from the *dark one*, for it will surely come.

He is invited in, inadvertently, by kindly Madame Chapette. One sunny afternoon she comes into the vine-overgrown verandah that looks out over rooftops and the lake beyond, an open magazine in hand. She asks if she might talk to me for a minute. It is a quiet Saturday, for almost everyone has gone out. I am lost in reverie, in contemplation of the lake glistening in the distance.

"Dit-donc," she begins, sitting down next to me, speaking more slowly than usual, so that I might clearly understand. "Perhaps you can explain something to

me, something I do not understand. I have just been reading, here"she points to the magazine"about the absolutely unbelievable conditions in thesethese concentration camps." She is so upset she can hardly speak. *"Affreuse, vraiment affreuse!"* (absolutely horrible) she exclaims, tears in her eyes. There is a long silence. And then, "You are a young woman; you are *charmante*, you are well mannered, you are sensitive. And yetyou are one of *them,* you were *there,* in Germany, where all of this was being *planned! And executed!* So tell mefor this is what I wanted to ask you*did you not know what was happening?!*"

As echoes of polemics, yelled over loudspeakers, pasted on billboards, introduced into dialogues at the movies, all defaming the Jews in every manner possible, roar through my mind, and as in my mind's eye flashes the sarcastic look of the corpulent saleslady who had asked, "Jew soap?"I still can only shake my head. This? About this? Not in the furthest stretch of my imagination could I have thought of this! Talk, pictures, accusatory screams are one thing. But these piles upon piles of emaciated dead bodies, these gaunt, hollow-eyed survivors, these ovens and chambers of horror, no, about this I did not, could not know! And so I continue to slowly, slowly shake my head.

"Eh bien," continues Madame Chapette, "I believe you. So you did not know, *alors*, you were but a child. But now I have another question: "What is it, do you think, "*Qu'est que c'est qu'on manque*what is it that is missing in the German soul that it is capable of such thingssuch inhumanity?"

When I remain silent, sunken into myself, she pats my back and continues.

"*Je le regret;* I am sorry; an unfair question, for I forget, you were indeed but a child. How could you possibly know? Forgive me. It is just that all this has created such a terrible turmoil in me!"

Not just in you, Madame Chapette, not just in you. That last question you asked, "What is missing in the German soul?"like an arrow it goes right into my side, perhaps where my liver is, lodging there, bringing back the old pain that is so much the mark of the dark *one*.

Indeed, he now returns. I cannot answer her question, which he echoes. I cannot tell him what is lacking in the German soul, in my soul. I only know it seemed to me that many individuals suffered the loss of their souls, as the madness swept over them.

He is not satisfied. Bathed in sweat, an insight comes to me in the middle of one night: "We, the Germans, are the ones who are not human. Not the Jews, not any of the so-called 'inferior races,' as Hitler proclaimed. But us. And it is not a propaganda ploy. It is real."

In class the next day I feel dizzy, leaden, unable to concentrate or even hear the professor. In place of his voice I hear the ringing of cow-bells, those comforting cow-bells of the Alpine meadows. Once again I am close to something

very frightening, I know. And with that comes the knowledge that if I am to survive, the terrible knowledge revealed to me last night must be held in abeyance, at least for now. With this, to my amazement, the torture stops.

The United States drops the atom bomb, first on Hiroshima then on Nagasaki. When I hear the news I know this is the weapon Herrmann spoke of with such terror. I also know that now the kind of weapon that can bring my terrifying childhood dream to reality has come into the world.

On a battlefield I run from cannon to cannon, pleading with the soldiers to please stop shooting these terrible weapons, for at any moment they will penetrate the earth's crust and destroy all.

On a visit to Zürich, Helene and I feel close to one another as we talk about this awesome new weapon, and what it might mean for the future of mankind. I am surprised at the intensity of her dismay.

"They should not have done this! They should never have done this!" she exclaims again and again.

Soon after, I experience a new pain that is much more personal than the dropping of the atom bomb. Once more I am asked to come to Zürich, to learn that Emil has received a most troubling letter from my father. It is not even clear how it came into Emil's hands, for there is at present no mail service between Switzerland and Germany. Emil will not share the whole letter with me, but that is not necessary. It is abundantly clear that my father is in very deep mental trouble. As we talk, there is a profound sadness in Emil's eyes. We must face it: the slime of Nazi Germany has destroyed his cherished friend, my father.

Winter comes early and is bitterly cold. Heating is very costly, because it is all done with electricity. There is no coal. Food is also scarce and expensive, especially meat. Madame Poivre is always at great pains to portion it out fairly. There is great upset one day when Mr. Parry, newly arrived, reaches across the table and with shaking hands takes the meat platter and transfers almost all the little slicesone intended for eachonto his plate.

"He's taking all the meat," whispers Ursula, the student of business, voicing the general sentiment. Mr. Parry quickly senses the mood and returns the extra meat to the serving platter. After the meal he says to me, shaking his head, "I am so very embarrassed."

He? Embarrassed?

Wrapped in blankets, I spend hours in my room studying. Here, no one objects to my smoking. On a tiny camp stove I sometimes brew myself the luxury of a cup of Nescafe. I feel settled here, in this cold little room, knowing I am doing what I can to prepare myself for an uncertain future. I try to ignore, as best I can, the undercurrent of anxiety that pounds away in me.

But it grows louder. I develop a friendship with a young woman who spent her adolescence in the Mauthausen concentration camp. She does not want to talk about it. She is alone in the world, her entire family having died there. She shares with me her amazement at the speed with which she regained her physical strength. Now she wants to look only ahead, to the future. I can feel her anger as she says this, just as anger pervades much of all her communications. How could it be otherwise? Her restlessness soon causes her to go study elsewhere, in search of a different subject.

There is a Scottish church on top of the hill near where I live. One early day in spring I dare go to a Sunday morning service. Amazingly, my path is not blocked by feelings of terrible anxiety. In fact, I find the service comforting. As I leave the church, two American soldiers follow me, ask me to talk with them.

"An almost-American girl," they exult when I tell them a bit about myself. Recipients of the Medal of the Purple Heart, they are here on special leave. They are so happy to have met a girl who can speak English fluently, and they at once invite me to participate in a series of lectures on Shakespeare being given especially for them at the university. All I have to do is ask the woman officer who is the organizer. And she quickly grants permission.

Among these many men in uniform, I am the only girl. Notes begin to arrive in my lap. "Who are you?" "What are you doing here?" "Can I take you out for coffee after the lecture?" "Where can we meet some girls?" "Can you introduce us to some?"

That seems to be the most pressing problem: girls, for company and for the coming dance. Luckily, several of my classmates are interested, and a few even speak English reasonably well. As for me, these soldiers, especially the two I met at the Scottish church, having somehow a young innocence and decency all their own, become a veritable lifeline. I show them the town, they take me for afternoon coffee, to the movies. And when once we accidentally find ourselves in one of the horrible "propaganda-mill" type, the older of the two takes me gently yet firmly by the arm, and insists we leave at once. There is kindness in their eyes. I do not fear looking into those eyes.

Then they are gone, and summer is here once more. I do well on my examination for the interpreter's diploma. I go to Geneva to take American College Boardsthe first given since the warjust in case. In Geneva I am offered a job as an instructor at a private school for girls. But I cannot accept. My mounting anxiety with respect to my future is beginning to make me nauseous.

Coming home for lunch one day late in June, I find the longed-for yet dreaded letter from the US Consulate. I open it with shaking hands.

"Dear Madam," it reads, "We are pleased to inform you that your request for reinstatement of your American citizenship has been granted. However, in order

for it to remain in effect, you must return to the United States immediately. There is a vessel leaving from Genoa on July 4th, destination New York, which will carry civilians. We urge you to book passage on this vessel at once."

My head spins. It has actually come true! "Return to the United States!" I cannot get over that word. *Return*. Return to a place I have never been. That has a mystical quality to it.

Emil, having received a copy of the letter, has already reserved passage for me by the time I return to Zürich to pick up the precious US passport. In a few days, a bus will take passengers from Como to Genoa. I am filled with anticipation. Contact has already been made with individuals who will welcome me in New York. More of Emil's caring work. Soon, Gebhardt sends a letter, urging me to plan to stay with him. Suddenly, there is a future; one that looks bright and exciting.

But that is never how it is for me, just bright and exciting. *He* always pulls me back. This time it is in the form of news from Germany. My dear childhood friend Hansi, "baby Hansi," my once "intended," if only in parental jest, a son dearly loved, is dead at seventeen. He fell during a mountain-climbing venture.

Has there not been enough of the dying of young men?

When I look into the mirror, I see a ghostly face. It speaks the word, "Hansi," directs it at me. It happens again, then again. The message is quite clear: the *one* in me is saying, "It is not Hansi who should have fallen off that mountain, but you!" That ghostly image is to haunt me for years.

After the shock subsides, it raises in me again that unanswerable question, "Why are you alive, and others dead?" It is with this question in mind that I travel to devastated Genoa, that I wait in a severely damaged hotel for the boat to be readied for the long journey, that I swim in the ocean until I discover I am swimming in raw sewage, that I forget to ask for water and soap to scrub it off.

I stand on the deck of the *SS Vulcania*. The heavy ropes are cast off, the gang-planks to the shore removed, and with a sudden movement the vessel moves backward, pulls away from the dock, the dark, swirling waters now appearing between boat and shore. In me there grows a silent scream such as I have not experienced before, it is so filled with grief, and it goes on and on. I see an image of roots torn loose, my roots; I see them being dragged behind this boat that with ever-increasing speed is heading into the open sea. I hear my mother's voice, crying in that saddest voice of all, which as a child had made me run to the piano where she was singing, "Do not leave me!"

Or is that the call of the German earth itself, to which she is so intimately bound?

6
The Dream of the Bridge at Remagen

I'd put stakes in front of the mortar and sight on the enemy. We'd have an observer, and he would try to see where our shot landed, and then we would make corrections. . . . We were fighting our way through Bonn when we heard that the Remagen bridge was still standing. So we pulled up stakes to Remagen. Sure was a dark night.
Sergeant Virgil Fergus, 3rd US Army, 90th Chemical Warfare Batallion.

I have just awakened. Again this troubled, troubling sleep. Perhaps the propeller noise of the three a.m. United Airlines taking off. God, who am I, really? Must touch myself. Ah, yes, I am Erika. I am married to Virgil Fergus and my belly is round with child. Six months along. Perhaps this one will stay, not follow all the ones I have lost. They went so much sooner than six months. Only my firstborn, my unexpected, unhoped-for miracle child grew in me to be born alive. Perhaps this one will make it too. I am beginning to feel hope.

No, it was not the United Airlines takeoff that awoke me; it was the dream! Now I remember. What an odd, terrifying dream.

I am standing on the remaining piece of the bridge at Remagen. There is huge machinery all about; on the bridge-piece itself stands an old house that is partially destroyed. The woman who still lives in the house tells me all the equipment has been brought here in order to strengthen the bridge. That for a long time it had been thought the bridge was still strong enough to hold the house, but that recently the discovery has been made that the pylons had not been placed deeply enough into the bed of the Rhine river. That the huge machines were able to dig into the needed depth from within the existing pylons. I am then riding atop the huge shovel of a digging machine, down inside the pylon. Down and down I go, until I finally come to what seems to be a deep underground cavern. There is at first only darkness. Then in the distance there appears an eerie light, and the outline of a creature that looks like a giant wolf, perhaps there is another behind him. I am very frightened, yet I know I must go there, along this long, dark tunnel beneath the Rhine.

I do not know why this should remind me of another dream I recently had, which so troubled me:

I own a painting. It is the painting of a colorful, lush landscape when I hang it up in Europe, but it will not hang right on the wall. When I hang it up here in the United States it stays perfectly, but the colors of the painting begin to fade and the landscape turns arid. I keep hanging and rehanging the picture in an effort to straighten it out, but I never succeed.

Well yes. Both dreams do touch on my two existencesthe growing-up in Germany, and the adult years in the US. The bridge dream no doubt refers to the terrible realization I had as I stood in waking life on that ruin of a bridge toward the end of my recent visit. The dream of the picture, when I think about it, is really a pretty accurate reflection of how I felt then and currently feel. I cannot live in Germany, but love certain aspects of it nonetheless. I am quite capable of living here, but there is deep pain in doing it.

There seemed to be no trouble, at least not this current, miserable kind, until my recent visit back to Germany. Before that, I had made myself feel as I imagined a native American would, and had often indulged in the fantasy that I grew up here. My recent trip taught me the utter futility of this fantasy.

In fact, that journey managed to shatter the carefully built-up and cherished story of my life, to which I have held fast ever since that moment of the terrible tearing away, as the boat left Genoa. How clearly I recall it!

I stayed on deck as we went into the open sea, bright summer water beneath a cloudless sky. As we slowly made our way toward Palermo, Sicily, I soon managed to become absorbed in watching the delightful dolphins that in great numbers followed the boat, gracefully leaping in and out of the sea.

To this day I regret I did not go ashore in Palermo with the people I had already befriended. The boat was going to be docked for several hours. On board were many American officers, both male and female, and I had made the pleasant discovery that my eating place was with them, in the stateroom, not in the ordinary eating quarters where nearly all the other civilian passengers ate. They all went on shore. I stayed on board.

Perhaps it was the sights that had greeted me on arrival, those emaciated yet nimble young men who began diving for coins the passengers threw overboard and laterwith equal eagernesscollected the garbage our ship disgorged into the harbor. Others had found it amusing, but I found it dreadful. And then, as far as I could see up the steep, white-baked slopes, there were the ruins, and more ruins. And even though I was determined now to be truly American, with that special innocent curiosity I had observed in the Americans I knew, the wish not to see any more ruins prevailed and kept me on the hot deck of our ship.

In the night, a hot storm arose from Africa, bringing with it very heavy seas which made us pitch and roll. It lasted most of the next day. Almost everyone was sick. The crew was kept busy mopping up. Toward afternoon I went to my

cabin. Through a curious accident I had obtained one all to myself. But it was just a storeroom that had been converted into an emergency cabin, because the Italian authorities had mistaken my name for that of a man, and had assigned me to a cabin with twenty other men. That certainly would not do, they assured me over and over. The heaving motion of the boat soon lulled me to sleep.

I was awakened by an old sailor knocking at my door. He identified himself as being Swiss, and shyly expressed concern about my well being. Somehow he knew I was feeling very alone. He soon became a guide for me during the next three weeks, this delightful old man, full of salty sea stories which he loved to share, so reminiscent of my sailor-friend who had prepared the star fish for me to take home when I was a child.

I remember passing the Rock of Gibraltar: It was evening, and there was a lengthy Morse dialogue taking place, with flashes of light between our boat and the rock. A wondrous moment, as the boat halted, during that dialogue, for in the evening dusk I could see both the coast of Africa and that of Europe at the same time. And then we were steaming along the coastal towns of Spain. I hardly slept that night, for it was so beautiful. In later nights there was France, the Canary Islands and then just the endless sea.

I spent days and days on deck, watching the ever-changing patterns and colors of ocean and sky. My books were forgotten in the cabin. I was dreaming my way across, feeling myself to be a part of the ocean. Meals were rich and pleasant, the WACs and WAVEs at table with me a friendly, talkative group who accepted me in an easy, matter-of-fact way, without asking many questions. That in itself was still a miracle to me.

And then one day there was the cry, "Land!" I thought of all the immigrants who had ever come to the New World and seen its green hills rise majestically out of the sea as I then didfor at first glimpse the New World looks a pristine green. And waking up early the next morning, passing the Statue of Liberty, steaming up the Hudson river in the golden, misty light of a summer morning, the skyscrapers aglow, I was filled with gladness. A new beginning!

That gladness carried me through the intense questioning of passport control and the long hours of waiting as the boat was unloaded. But that is also where the fantasy, at first a charade, began to become earnest, for when I was asked by dock-workers, customs officials and others, and I was asked many times, "Well, how does it feel to be back in the USA?" I copied what I had overheard others say, namely an enthusiastic "Great!" or "Terrific!" And in the saying, I made myself believe that this was indeed a return.

I was to stay at the farm of distant family friends, at least for a time. But within days I would be somewhat shocked by a letter that informed me I was now in custody of my brother Gebhardt. According to American law, I was still

a minor, I was told. Well meaning on Gebhardt's part, no doubt, but I was twenty years old and had been much on my own. I resented being placed in the custody of anyone.

But first there was an overnight stay in a hotel in New York. After I had settled in and had dinner with the lady I was going to accompany to her farm the next day, I sneaked out late at night and walked along the brightly lit streets. How different, how strange everything was, from the shape of the electrical wiring to the food people ate, to the clothes they wore. I wanted to be dressed like them.

Yes, it had all been exciting, wonderful, especially at first. The images keep coming as I lie awake now, unable to sleep. The farm, its rolling hills of peach and apple trees, was in its heaviest work season. I began right away to help with the harvesting.

Alas, fate soon intervened. I came down with typhoid fever, although I only learned it was that after the worst was over. I dared not stay in bed one day longer than I absolutely had toI was a guest, after all! I remember trying to weed in the vegetable garden, nauseous, blinded by the sun. Looking in the mirror, I again had my old vision of Hansi's ghostly face, reminding me of the one in me who now had to be asleep. The ghost was there all the same, again pointing to me, saying "Hansi." "Perhaps I am going to die after all," I thought. Oh, how upset the lady had been when I came back from the doctor with a strongly suspected diagnosis of typhoid, saying the doctor wanted me to return for tests.

"Nonsense!" she said firmly. "You're not to go back!" I didn't understand until much later that a confirmation of typhoid would have put their livelihood into jeopardy. But she knew. That is why she let out such a gasp when she saw my rash. Now she asked me not to sort fruit or touch any vegetables until I was completely recovered.

Barely well, it was time to join Gebhardt. No sooner had I arrived in the West, where Gebhardt lived, than my hair began to fall out. It was not a good beginning. He and his wife, not knowing about the typhoid, because it had become my secret, concluded that I must be "quite hysterical." I had to recall Emil's words of warning in Switzerland when I had talked about possibly living with my brother:

"A poor idea," he had counseled. "That is a young marriage, with small children. They need privacy, not a permanent house guest!" He had strongly urged me to find another place to stay.

But it was taken out of my hands. Gebhardt laid claim to me, which meant I could not continue to stay on the farm. I had no money to live by myself. Actually, by the time I left, after the typhoid, I had that old familiar feeling of not being very welcome. Suddenly I was glad I was going to live with Gebhardt.

But Emil had been right. It was not easy at all for us to live together in a tiny rented house at the edge of the suburbs.

We managed. The bright side of my life became the university. Thanks to the examination I had taken in Geneva, I was readily accepted. I also quickly discovered that the science professors' notions of what my wartime education had been like were quite unrealistic. It was I who had to be the realist and find my own proper courses.

I knew I wanted to be a scientist. I wanted my life to be governed by the cool reason and logic of scientific disciplines: mathematics, physics and chemistry. I signed up for classes in all three, to the dismay of the kindly dean of students, who thought an easier schedule at first might be more suitable. If I didn't want to know about my being new to this country, he was quite aware of that fact. He wanted to be helpful; I wanted to just work very, very hard and better myself.

The mathematics class for which I enrolled was calculus.

The memory is so clear: the lecture hall, the row of seats rising steeply upward, the professor below, already waiting for the students to be seated. There were many students, because so many GIs had returned to college. Presently, a cluster of young men entered, talking animatedly among themselves. One of them somehow stood out. As he turned his head toward me in order to find a seat, a clear voice inside said, "Your husband."

I remember shaking my head in irritation. He looked particularly arrogant, not at all what I might imagine in a life partner. No, I thought, these inner voices must become a thing of the past. I did not want one to tell me who was going to be my husband. Besides, I argued back, just to be safe, that kind could do much better with someone who had pretty clothesjust look how nattily he himself was dresseda girl who did not wear a sweater she'd knit out of yarn unraveled in an air raid shelter!

By the end of the lecture, having consciously forgotten about him, I stopped at the professor's table to ask a question. Suddenly he was next to me, asking in that casual Western way I was beginning to notice, "Hey, are you German?"

I remember mumbling something and fleeing into the hallway. "Leave me alone!" I felt like shouting. "Just don't remind me!"

He was part of a group that went out for coffee during the ten o'clock break. Several girls were often asked along, myself included. I learned his name was that of a Roman poet. I still wonder about that as he now lies next to me, snoring a little, still a stranger to so much of me.

In fact, my feeling that fancier clothes were required to keep his interest turned out to be correct, at least in the short run. Cold weather came and I wore "the Cat," Mother's moth-eaten fur. I was no longer invited for morning coffee.

But I'd found other things to keep my interest. I was offered a job in the de-

partment of modern languages as a German instructor, a well-paying position which included a partial scholarship. The job enabled me to take up skiing again. Soon I was skiing every weekend. That kept me away from the little house in the suburbs, and was most joyful in its own right. I loved the Colorado mountains. I was busy planning an extended ski-tour all the way into Utah when I injured my knee.

Spring came. I quit limping, and a friend of Gebhardt's wife gave me some nice clothes she herself no longer wanted. Virgil began to court me in earnest.

I had dated quite a bit by then. I had learned about football, learned to play bridge, attended dances, even begun to pledge a sorority.

But the old trouble of not feeling entitled to a romance, that had first surfaced in my German dancing class, still haunted me. Also, it was all just a bit too speedy for me. I ended up feeling I barely knew this young man by the time he wanted to become physically involved. Gebhardt's wife was contemptuous, saying this was how things were done here, a girl should want to be kissed on the very first date.

I decided then that I was not going to date at all anymore, was not going to marry, no matter what inner voices said. I would dedicate my life to research, in medicine and the biological sciences.

Enter Virgil. Clever, those forces which seem to run my life. He didn't ask for a date. I would have said no. Classes were unexpectedly canceled one day in spring. Right away he suggested we go horseback riding. Afterward, he invited me for a glass of beer, and then dinner, and then a movie. Soon after he kept showing up in his old car as I trudged along the street toward the bus, offering me a ride.

He was and is so very different from me! What we shared was horseback riding, love of the outdoors and dancing to the music of the big bands. He was going to be an engineer, down-to-earth, practical, whereas I was interested in science and lofty ideas. He was preparing himself for the good things in life, a secure, well-paying job. He had grown up poor, a child of the Great Depression. I was intent on improving myself, on transforming myself into someone worthwhile. He loved country-and-western, I classical music; he the movies, I lectures at the *Alliance Française*. He was a war hero, terribly proud of his deeds, I haunted and guilt-ridden.

But in spite of myself, my body grew to like him. I soon sensed that beneath his somewhat gruff and quicksilver exterior there was a certain sensitivity, yet a reticence which allowed me to respond. There was no sudden freezing of my emotions. Then I had an impressive dream:

I am in the Kinderzimmerthe children's studyin the house of my childhood, a room in which Ulrike and I had our desks and study materials. It is on

the second floor. As I am sitting at my desk, glancing out of the window, Virgil comes riding by through the air. He looks Indian and is dressed like an Indian chief. As he rides by, he shoots arrows at me through the window.

When I told the dream to my sister-in-law, who prided herself on her knowledge of modern psychology, she couldn't stop laughing. Oh, what a "Freudian dream" I had had, its sexual imagery so very clear!

Not that I necessarily disagreed with her, but it was the fact that Virgil was an Indian chief in the dream that so impressed me, that and the dream's vividness.

Virgil proposed on a mountain hike, where we sat and rested, and at that moment the old inner voice of mine said "Yes" for me before I could even reflect. Oh, I did rebel against that inner authority in a small way: I requested that Virgil teach me how to drive first.

I spent the summer break working at a resort in the mountains, while Virgil sanded and painted floors in town. We saved our money. But not for a frugal, sensible beginning. No. In an old, rebuilt Model-A Ford, we planned to drive to the California coast, on a two-week honeymoon.

Foolish? Yes! Worth it? A hundred times, yes! What a magnificent trip it turned out to be. I was able to visit places about which I had read avidly as a childColorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, where Virgil was born in a dugout on the prairie, we visited them all. To this day I feel the chill of delight when I think of all the adventures! Rolling into Salt Lake City at night with practically no headlights because the generator had given out. The unbelievable heat of the Mojave Desert, those barren, majestic mountains! The Grand Canyon, the Painted Desert. Then days spent at the beach in Santa Monica, evenings exploring Hollywood. A little journey on the brand-new freeway to Pasadena, just for breakfast!

The trip helped strengthen my wishful fantasy: "I have always been here." All I had to do was observe Virgil, that ultra-American, to feel American myself. I rarely allowed myself to think of Germany. To Mother I wrote just a cryptic note that announced my marriage.

The most unexpected of all happened on that trip. I became pregnant. I had been told I was so terribly underdeveloped that I might never have children. I had been surprised that this pronouncement had not driven Virgil away.

Frightened for my carefully worked-out plans of study and career, I was amazed how happy I felt, how I wouldn't listen when the doctor told me, in what he believed to be reassurance, that I was most likely to miscarry. I knew this child was a gift from heaven. And a power stronger than those dark predictions of my mother allowed me to carry it to term. Best of all, it had been "an accident." I did not have to feel responsible for its untimely appearance.

I remember how well I felt while carrying Robertand how very different

from the current state of affairs, where I am so miserable. Even my hair grew thicker, stronger, so I could wear it long and flowing, the way Virgil liked it. I began to study Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care,* each page bringing me utter amazement. The book became a veritable Bible for me.

Dr. Spock's description of the small child and his world brought to memory my own childhood, so clearly mirrored in *Struwelpeter*, that German book of child-rearing stories that had so frightened me. In *Struwelpeter's* way of rearing children, if you did not eat your soup you were bad and soon died. In such a situation, Dr. Spock would suggest offering the child a different choice. In *Struwelpeter*, when a small child, left all alone, finds some matches and burns to death, it is clearly considered her own fault. According to Dr. Spock, the safety of the child is the responsibility of the mother, and such tragedies are quite avoidable. Because of my own shame-ridden, secret thumb sucking as a child, the *Struwelpeter*-image of the little boy with both thumbs cut off to bloody stumps had made an especially indelible impression on me. And here was Dr. Spock, suggesting it was quite natural for the child to be a thumb sucker, and that the parents' response to it should be one of acceptance, they should check that the child was not being unduly frustrated. Indeed, I was reading Dr. Spock as much for myself as for the coming baby.

Alas, putting Dr. Spock into practice was much harder than I thought. My beautiful baby boy developed a milk allergy which made feeding extremely difficult. I soon felt that I alone was to blame for his frequent crying, and there was not much contradiction to that feeling from my environment. Virgil pointed to the wife of his friend as example: *she* had babies who didn't cry all the time; *that* mother wasn't all upset and distraught; why wasn't I more like her? The pediatrician wondered if the trouble was not that I was "a nervous mother." It was on his orders that I stopped nursing the child, an action I have regretted to this very day. Gebhardt and his wife believed to know for certain that it was because of my attitude that the baby cried so much and ate so badly.

I wonder, as I lie here now, is this why I feel so nervous this time around? Will it happen again, the agony of those first three months?

A package arrived from Germany during that dreadful time. In it I found my own old baby clothes. Mother had sent them together with a letter in which she expressed her sadness that she could not be with me to help. But I had already sewn everything for the baby myself on an old sewing machinein spite of school and teachingright down to the last diaper. I did not want these offers of help, these reminders of my past which threatened to awaken that part of me I so badly wanted to keep underground.

Indeed, it might have awoken, if the misery with the baby had continued. But after three months, through trial and error, by calling the pediatrician again and

again, I finally found that Robert could tolerate skim milk if it had been boiled for a very long time, and soon even cereal. Almost overnight he became a happy little child, bright and curious. On a long string we hung a red rattle over his crib. Oh what joy at hearing the little noises he made as he kicked that rattle endlessly with his little hands and feet. No more screams, no more despair.

He was a year old when Virgil graduated, bringing to an end an otherwise idyllic time of living as students, behind the university, in a Quonset hut, among other veterans and their families. I had been happy taking classes and teaching my German courses.

Now Virgil wanted to test his mettle, find work. He was not interested in graduate school, which I had urged. But this was 1949, there was a recession, and jobs seemed impossibly hard to get. I must have typed over a hundred letters of application for Virgil. Finally, he wanted to just go and drive from place to place, looking for employment. So we stored most of our possessions, put the rest into our old car and headed East. On that trip I was filled with anxieties worse than those I had had in Switzerland. "What if we run out of money before Virgil could find a job," I fretted. "Dear God, what then?"

We came close to that. And the fears I carried during the many days of our travel somehow cut very deep. For now there was not just me, there was the child. Virgil seemed little affected, the fears were mine alone. But finally he landed a job and we found a little house in the country near his work.

It sat in the middle of ten acres. There was no running water. In place of an old-fashioned outhouse there was an indoor toilet to which one had to carry the water for flushing. The water came from a deep well located down the hill from the house.

At times it felt like wartime without bombs. Certainly the lack of water in the house, the saving of every drop for flushing, the extra energy required for cleanliness and sanitation, all these were most familiar to me. Even the first winter, when the freezing storms howled around the house and we could heat only two roomsthe kitchen with the butane-burning stove, and the little living room by means of a tiny oil heater, all that felt quite familiar.

Summers were differentincredibly hot and muggy, with little bugs that crawled beneath one's skin and caused itching rashes. Thunderstorms such as I had never witnessed, adding to the feeling that was growing in me, in this lonely wilderness where the next neighbor was miles away, that I had been dropped onto an alien planet. The thunderstorms affected little Robert quite remarkably; they became his delight as he ran after the lightning flashes, striking the ground on all sides, until firmly grabbed by me. One night our bathroom was hit by lightning. That was familiar, like the striking of a bomb. But what a relief! Only the weather!

I planted a garden; we raised chickens, had our own eggs. Money worries continued so I set about searching for work. I was lucky. Hired as a packing clerk at the religious publishing house located not too far away on a beautiful farm, I was soon elected to be a translator. After a while, Robert seemed to like the old couple I had found to care for him while I worked. Gradually the stress, the feeling of alienation, began to ease. I so loved the view over the distant rolling hills of Missouri from my little front porch.

But the good things never seemed to last. Our well ran dry. For weeks we hauled buckets of water in the trunk of our old car. In time we became exhausted and panicked at the prospect of winter and icy roads. We decidedwithout proper reflectionon the purchase of a house, though neither of us particularly liked it, in the poor part of the town where Virgil worked, simply because no down payment was required. That was the beginning of a terrible time of deep loneliness for me. Suddenly, Virgil began to prefer sports, the airport, photography, to the company of Robert and myself. Turmoil once more as I realized that in this town there was no university, no possibility at all for me to continue my cherished dream of education and self-improvement. I was simply alone.

I blush, here in the dark, when I recall with what fervor I urged Virgil to sacrifice his vacation in order to accept a job offer from an aircraft company in California. He had grown disillusioned with his jobalas, it would not be the last time in our lives that this would happen; his chronic dissatisfaction with his work situation in time became a slow poison to our relationship. He had written an application, "just to see if there was anything doing," as he put it. After all, he was presently not working in the field of his primary interest and training, namely aircraft engineering. Here was his chance. But to take the very first offer? That was not his style.

But I was afraid there might not be another offer. The image of that university, to which I had planned to go when I was still in the old country, was suddenly strong in my mind's eye. Happiness, opportunity, I was convinced, lay in a move to California.

And so he yielded to my pressure and accepted the job. He went ahead to California and I followed after the house was sold. Once again I drove through that magnificent desert. This time, the heat nearly overwhelmed Robert and me.

Of course Virgil should have followed his own instincts and tested other possibilities. It is no good to feel you've been pushed into something that is not really your own choice. The years that followed were troubled by strife, by further financial hardship. It was, of course, much more difficult to become a homeowner without the GI loan, and the barely-paid-for car had been pretty well destroyed in my drive through the desert. The first rainy season flooded our small house. We had purchased it against my better judgment, this time Virgil pushing

me into something I did not want. I had to fight like a wildcat to obtain an agreement with the developer by which we could trade our flooded house for another one in his tract. At higher cost.

And so I had to go to work again. I too found work in an aircraft company, as a technical writer. Further than ever from realization was my dream of higher education, intellectual and creative endeavors. Editing and typing other people's creative efforts, ordinary progress reports or technical manuals for the military, was not my notion of being creative.

Oh yes, I still work there, and will until it is time for my maternity leave in another month.

The job made me incredibly depressed. I hated to be away from Robert so much. I could not stay pregnant. For some reason I have as yet to understand, and in spite of my current need to work, I desperately wanted to be pregnant again. At this moment I suspect a good part of the longing was for the wonderful feeling-state I had experienced while pregnant with Robert. But as it is turning out, that was a unique experience.

I wish I could sleep. The longer I lie awake and think, the more upset I get. Well, there is nothing to do about it. The doctor has said I just have to put up with this sleeplessness. And the nausea, and the headaches, and the anxiety and momentary feelings of unreality. Sometimes I hear a voice from deep inside wail, "What am I doing here, in this alien land?"

The memories keep crowding in. Accepting the job at the aircraft factory, I had to commit myself to working ten hours a day. I hated it. Still do, even though now I only work eight hours. The car-pool ride home takes almost an extra hour. If I weren't so terrified about money issues, I'd really be looking forward to stopping work. The depression hits me hard, daily. No wonder, really, since the entire place is like one giant air raid shelter.

Our group works in a large room in the center of the building. There are no windows, no daylight. Even during coffee breaks it is almost impossible to go outside, to see the sun. Once in a while, when one of the fire-escape doors is unlocked; I can step outside and see the sky for a moment. Inside, the walls are concrete, the lighting is fluorescent, the temperature perennially chilly. There seems to be no way to properly adjust the thermostat. If we get sufficient heat, then the important people who have the offices with windows complain of suffocating. Therefore, we freeze. And in me the memory of the special treatment required by the *Bonzen* (bosses) of the Third Reich is never far away.

Perhaps it was because of this air raid shelter atmosphere that my correspondence with Mother improved. After all, we had spent a great deal of time in one together. I ended up agreeing to visit her when she offered to pay for part of it, not easy on her pension. I told myself it would be a welcome relief from my cur-

rent existence. Also time away from Virgil, whose anger at the time was never far from the surface. Somehow, he did not understand that my coming home so late was a necessity, that otherwise there'd be no job. Yes, yes, I know. "Better management," is his favorite retort. But with a second mortgage still on the house, dear Lord, how?

So it was hard for me to take the money for my share of the flight out of the savings account, even though I'd put it in. Then I became aware that I wanted to go to Germany looking very much the American, and that meant spending some money on clothes and hair-styling.

It was a very long exhausting flight for Robert and me; first on a TWA Super-Constellation to New York, then on a Swissair DC-7B to Newfoundland, and after refueling on to Shannon in Ireland, then finally to Germany.

Pain goes through me now, as I recall my encounter with a former concentration camp inmate on this flight. How different it was going from returning! How shameful, as I think about it now. On the way over we had a lot to say to each other. I learned he was going back to visit the site of his misery, perhaps in order to be less ruled by it. He also wanted to look up friends from that time, but most importantly, he wanted to travel all over Germany, a free man, protected by the power of his new country, the United States. We shared vague fears about first setting foot on German soil, although I recall that to a part of me that seemed somewhat absurd.

Things were different between us on the return flight. He approached me looking like the victorious hero who had succeeded in slaying the dragon. And I, still fighting a terrible sadness that I did not, still do not, understand, and a feeling of worthlessness and guilt that reminded me of my worst childhood days, was suddenly filled with an incredible amount of pain and rage. I heard myself say to him in German, though we had spoken English before, "Go away, please leave me alone, I want to be left alone!" I recall how his face fell with surprise and disappointment. I had somehow betrayed a trust, with my sudden need to reject him. The look on his face told me so.

Sandwiched between these two encounters was my actual visit. Mother's and Natasha's sincere joy at seeing me; six-year-old Robert's shyness that soon gave way to exuberance at the sight of the many ruins on the drive to my old home.

"Oh boy, bombed-out houses!" he exclaimed. "Daddy told me I'd see those!"

Instant fury on the part of Mother and Natasha at such exclamations from this little *Amy*.

The grating fact that Robert was an *Amy* child then remained. The term *Amy* was a postwar German derogatory term for American. Mother and Natasha were clearly insulted at having in the family this *Amy* child that knew no German. I couldn't explain how Virgil's merciless, derisive teasing had made me freeze

whenever I attempted to teach German to Robert.

Some understanding of this state of affairs was expressed in halting, stuttering words by Father, whose long emotional illness had by now ravaged both body and mind. His hands shook almost all the time, he had become nearly blind, and he could hardly walk. He spent most of his days sitting in his chair, reading philosophy or the Bible, smoking endless cigarettes. He hardly spoke.

Natasha told me how I had really been freed from the German army. I had not simply been found too unhealthy to serve. It had been Dr. Escher's work. He had contacted the chief military physician, and within the fraternity of physicians my dismissal as "unfit" had been arranged.

How had Dr. Escher found out about my having been drafted, I wondered aloud. Natasha replied: "Who else but Mother! As soon as you left she put herself on the phone and did not quit pestering the nuns until they had Dr. Escher on the line. And he knew what to do."

"But she'd been so mad at him?!" I puzzled.

"Little does that matter, when one of her brood is in danger," was Natasha's response.

I visited Dr. Escher to express my thanks. With him I then had one of the very few conversations that had substance to it. To this day I treasure his openness with me. "I wanted to leave the country in 1936," he told me. "I saw what was coming. I went to Argentina. It was so awful there that I had to come back home. Then I made myself believe things would change, that the disaster which was so clearly on the horizon was not going to happen. I fooled myself."

Later he added, almost vehemently, in a way that signaled the end of any further discussion of the subject: "But there have been disasters elsewhere in the world, throughout history. Like the spanish Inquisition, the extermination of the American Indian. so no one dare point the finger at us, no one!" Then he buried his face in his hands and I had the feeling he was fighting to keep control.

Mother handled her distress by talking and talking. How it had been when the French troops had come into town, how her elegant French had helped her deal with these first conquerors. How the Americans had then taken over, and the battle she had had with the soldiers quartered in her house, needing to teach them respect for her home, her carpets, her dishes. "Such savages!" she exclaimed.

She found it difficult not to show her rancor about the fact that I had been instrumental in helping Ulrike and her German physician-husband immigrate to the United States, taking away from her this second daughter, these grandchildren as well. Her distress made me feel very bad. It was only after I reminded myself of the letter Ulrike had sent me, which had so reminded me of my own anxious time in Switzerland, that I could feel at ease with what I had done. They were happily settled on the East Coast.

Mother also made efforts to rekindle my German soul, especially in response to my expressions of pain about my German heritage. Her efforts took the form of detailed descriptions of people among her acquaintance who in their deeds and attitude demonstrated the good side of the German character: conscientiousness, industriousness, inventiveness. As to that other side, the side that had brought about the past disaster: "Yes, we were very, very mean. But others have also been mean." When Natasha tried to point out to her that this recent war had been entirely Germany's own doing, Mother almost burst into tears. "That cannot be," she said, "that simply cannot be. All those young lives, all the fallen young men, they must have died for a worthy reason!"

She was so filled with pain that Natasha and I could only shake our heads.

Often she talked of the many suicides that had followed the end of the war. How Father had sobbed, begging her for permission to end his life.

I dare not stay too long on the subject of Father, so ill, so clearly dying. The terrible rage that still festered in him came out one day in a surprising way. A lady came to visit. She talked almost incessantly. Perhaps Father's presence made her especially anxious. On and on she went about her recent visit to Paris, how much she had enjoyed speaking French, how she had not uttered one German word during the entire time she was there, "Because, well, to be speaking German anywhere these days is so humiliati . . ."

She got no further, for Father stood up, shakily, and began to throw the glasses from our table at the wall, shouting, tears streaming down his cheeks, "That-is-not, that-is-not how to deal with this terrible, terrible thing, for there is no wayno wayone is simply condemned to be . . . to be German!"

Mother's calmness amazed me, it was so unlike her. She very gently took his arm and held it, speaking soothing words, as if to a small child, stopping the throwing, the shouting, ending the crisis.

When later she found me crying, she said, matter-of-factly, "No need for tears; that's just how he is, until we find a cure for this illness."

I hadn't seen Father's reaction as part of his illness, for he had spoken of sentiments present in my own soul. His actions had ripped open the door behind which I had hidden them so carefully. But after this episode, I looked at all I saw during that visit through different, more questioning eyes.

There was a great deal of pain that somehow seemed to go unacknowledged: at the baker's where the young widow was still wearing black, after all this time; in the stories about hardships suffered by families who had to flee East Germany; in the atmosphere of sadness pervading the room where Marianne's father lay, dying of cancer.

An intolerable sadness, thus suppressed, on the part of Hansi's mother, whose hypercheerfulness denied the tragedy of Hansi's death. All I heard about, when I

visited his parents, was her talk about their busy, busy lives, the parties, the new things they were now able to get for their house. It was only when Hansi's father and I were alone for a moment that he was able to turn to me, grief in his eyes, and say, "Your presence here so reminds me of him. I'm so grateful you came. It is terrible when the memory fades, for it is all we have."

On the plane back to the States, in the rest room, I saw my old vision. Looking into the mirror, there was Hansi's ghostly face, especially vivid, the disembodied finger pointing at me, saying, "Hansi." I firmly dismissed the experience by telling myself what Mother, in her most matter-of-fact mood, might say: "Some people get aches and pains. You get visions. Who is normal, after all?" The latter was a phrase she used a great deal during this visit.

Shortly before it was time for Robert and me to return, Natasha suggested we take a drive to the Rhine river. She knew of a restaurant that served delicious salmon. She added that we might drive on to Remagen, pay a visit to the ruin of the old bridge, for I had shared with them Virgil's role in the establishment of a bridgehead across the Rhine during the war.

It sounded like a fine idea, at first. But then the weather turned cold and rainy, the drive became unpleasant, and suddenly it was like it had been so often during my childhood, as if it all had been my idea that we should go to Remagen bridge. Perhaps it even was. At any rate, I ended up feeling quite guilty.

I can see myself now, as we stood on that black, broken piece of a bridge. A cold wind was blowing. Soon I could hear Virgil's voice telling me once more how he had crossed the bridge in the dark of night, unable to see anything at all. They had been between the battle-lines, sneaking across, just taking a chance they'd make it. And then I could see myself, in bed that night in Switzerland, hearing on the late news that American troops had crossed the Remagen bridge, feeling the importance of that event permeate me. I had cheered for them, as I had for the British bombers throughout the war, for they had been my heroes. But little did I know then that I would be wife to a man whose primary enthusiasm about the shot-out farms and villages on the other side of the Rhine had been that they harbored huge pots of jam, left behind by the fleeing German army, and plenty of eggs and wine. All one had to do was ask for these goods, gun in hand. And why not, I now must wonder. After all, Virgil was barely more than a boy at the time.

But since my return, perhaps even prior to that, something feels broken between Virgil and me. His total lack of understanding cuts so very deeply. It is as if now, when I can no longer live my fantasy of being the all-American girl, he demands I be just that. I become nauseous when he whistles his old army tune, "There's a German in the grass, with a bullet up his ass . . ." To him, it's just innocent fun. I cannot get him to see it differently; worse, part of me feels I have

no right to protest, none whatsoever.

"Destroyed forever," I then heard Natasha say. This bridge at Remagen has become too archaic, not needed sufficiently to warrant the cost and effort of rebuilding. How cold the wind was that day!

I walked alone to the edge of the bridge, to where the last pylon goes down into the swirling waters of the Rhine. "Ah," I found myself thinking, "to go down into these swirling depths, to drown like the legendary fisherman who smashed his boat while listening to the haunting melodies of the Lorelei. For we are a beaten people . . ."

Momentarily, I was back in the war then, hearing my father's voice as I had heard it many times, exclaiming in anger, "The Germans deserve no better, the fools!" Unsuccessfully I tried to blot out these voices from the past, wishing not to hear what would come nextMother's voice, expressing her strong sentiments: "Right or wrong, my country! They must not lose this war; if they do, it will be once again, win all the battles, yet lose the war, victory snatched from their hands!" And back and forth they would go.

Where am I? Where was I then, on that cold ruin of a bridge? I felt caught between two worlds, orphan in both. Father's America, Mother's Germany. In me was the clear knowledge that I dreaded leaving, having my roots torn once again. A great shock, this realization, that I did not want to return to my life in America. Stripped of fantasy, of the hopes for a brighter future, my life looked arid indeed. But I did not, could not, remain in Germany. I returned in great mental turmoil.

Virgil is nonplussed that the eagerly anticipated trip has resulted, for me, in greater fits of depression than ever before. Worse, this longed-for second child was not bringing me gladness but anxiety.

All of this burdens me with new feelings of guilt. I am not being a good wife to Virgil, not at all the kind I read about in the magazines I recently subscribed to, in anticipation of being a housewife again. I feel deep shame when I read how the good wife has only her husband's well-being in mind, that he needs to know she loves only him, that she must be there waiting when he "comes home from the hunt," how she is "capable of using her social skills"*what* skills, I ask"to help further his career aspirations and his leisure interests . . ."

I hear my silent cry: "What about me? What about *my* interests?"

"You are selfish," I chide myself.

I break into the cold sweat that has recently become a nightly visitor. Yes, I am an utter failure, there is no doubt about it.

Then I see the ghostly, familiar figure at the foot of my bed. Oh please, not *him*, not again! But already I can hear *him* whisper, "And who granted you permission to have a second child?! Know that it is nothing but your selfish wish!"

My unborn child rolls over, forms itself into a ball that causes my belly to rise. "Are you frightened, little one?" I put my hands on my belly and whisper.

"Never mind *him!* There must be other powers in the universe, powers that saved me, powers that granted you be."

I think of Schiller's lines in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: "Brethren, over the vault of heaven, there must reside a good father!"

Yet in addition to the infant within, I can feel another stirring. It is that of my childhood self, with all her passions, all her despair.

7
Doctor Kassler

The transference . . . alters the psychological stature of the doctor . . . He too becomes affected, and has as much difficulty in distinguishing between the patient and what has taken possession of him as has the patient himself. This leads both of them to a direct confrontation with the daemonic forces lurking in the darkness. . . .

In any particular case it is often almost impossible to say what is "spirit" and what is "instinct." Together they form an impenetrable mass, a veritable magma sprung from the depts of primeval chaos. When one meets such contents one immediately understands why the psychic equilibrium of the neurotic is disturbed. . . . They emit a fascination which not only gripsand has already grippedthe patient, but can also have an inductive effect on the unconscious of . . . the doctor. The burden of these unconscious and chaotic contents lies heavy on the patient . . . they isolate him in a spiritual loneliness which neither he nor anybody else can understand and which is bound to be misinterpreted. . . .

The doctor, by voluntarily and consciously taking over the psychic sufferings of the patient, exposes himself to the overpowering contents of the unconscious and hence also to their inductive action. . . . The patient, by bringing an activated unconscious content to bear upon the doctor, constellates the corresponding unconscious material in him. . . . Doctor and patient thus find themselves in a relationship founded on mutual unconsciousness.

It is none too easy for the doctor to make himself aware of this fact . . . the more unconsciously this happens, the more the doctor will be tempted to adopt an "apotropaic" attitude, and the persona medici he hides behind is, or rather seems to be, an admirable instrument for this purpose. Inseparable from the persona is the doctor's routine and his trick of knowing everything beforehand, which is one of the favorite props of the well-versed practitioner. . . . The greatest difficulty here is that contents are often activated in the doctor which might normally remain latent.
C. G. Jung, "The Psychology of the Transference."

All of the above I saw, I witnessed, I was part of, in my relationship with Dr. Kassler. What exactly was it that took me into the arms of his big black chair, for years, into the office of this young psychiatrist, Californian born, bred and to the core?

A quarter of a century after the events, I had a dream in which a voice insisted I put into words that which I had no wish to remember, to dwell upon, namely my time with Dr. Kassler. The voice still haunts me in the waking state, until I begin to write.

Was it the recurrence of the fire-dreams of my childhood that threatened to flood me in the last trimester of my pregnancy? Was it the terrifying vision of the demon of my young years at the foot of my bed, after my return from Germany? That horrible dream of the howling wolf? The sudden flashes of unbidden memories, carefully suppressed for so many years?

All of these.

I obtained Dr. Kassler's name from the County Medical Association. I picked him simply because his name reminded me of the city of Kassel where Mother's mother had been born and raised. I never knew her, for she died when Mother was not quite eighteen years old. But I think I have seen her in my dreams.

"The correct choice," my psyche seemed to say, and Dr. Kassler nodded benignly as I told him so.

My first dream in therapy was a version of my old childhood nightmare.

I am at the home of my childhood. It is all ablaze. I am small, yet I hold in my hands a huge fire hose, with which I go from room to room, quenching the flames. What makes it at all possible for me to do this is the fact that Dr. Kassler is standing right behind me, helping me hold the hose.

And that is how it seemed to be, at least during our early time together, when I experienced him mostly in his mode of caring wise man. His orientation was Freudian. My encounter with him led me to fall in love with Freud's intellect and approach to the human condition. Here, as Dr. Kassler never tired of pointing out, was reason and sanity for me to put in the path of the terror of fire. Again I dreamt:

A fire has ravaged the entire house in which I grew up. I enter the library. There is a complete set of Freud's works on the shelf, all eighteen volumes of it. Only the paper covers have burnt awayto my elation I find the books themselves are still intact.

"They would not burn," I say to Dr. Kassler in amazement, thinking back to a childhood of reading books banned by the state. These books had been put into hiding by my parents. In reading them, I sometimes received their grudging approval, other times their harsh criticism, for being *so different,* for wanting to read when everyone else was busy *doing*. The dream made me want to buy for myself Freud's writings in German, which I did. The fact that my set turned out to have been printed in England during the war carried a very special meaning.

Dr. Kassler! What wondrously healing hours I spent in his big black chair, what dreadful, awful moments of sheer agony! He said so many wise things, and so many that were filled with the essence of his innocence. It feels very strange now, that time in my life, so distant, for I have journeyed far. And yet, thinking about it in response to the inner voice's insistence that I write, I feel as if it had just happened. It was only yesterday that I was driving to his office, filled with a mixture of despair and a little bit of hope, knowing I was a failure because I was no longer able to manage my life, my carefully structured, logically planned little life. The other day I found a picture of how I looked then. It shows that this was the time of the return of the daemon; the awful picture reminds me of his terrible look. How intimately I still know that sad, anxious woman, so pained and troubled, how I can feel her within me even now, as I write, my inner one whom I call Wiese.

I shall let her tell our tale of Dr. Kassler, seen from her perspective. I can still hear her, as she used to whisper to me as I entered his office, where she had to face such horrors: "But I am a girl, I'm just a little girl."

The initial interview:

Yes, Dr. Kassler, I grew up in Nazi Germany, and yes, my "peer relationships" were absolutely disastrous, due to circumstances of the times I believe. But maybe there is more? And yes, my father had diabetes and he, the energetic creative inventor, began to suffer from deep depressive episodes during the war years, and a terrible irritability and a way of judging that cut right through to the heart. No, in fact he was depressed much earlier, in 1937 when he suddenly announced that no one was going to sell the house and move to America, never explaining why. We never talked about that in the family, nor about Mother's tears at the the mere mention of the possibility of leaving Germany, and how that might have influenced him, nor about what really did happen that so altered this bouyant man's countenance into one of such anger and despair.

But I ask you, who was not depressed during those years? When Hitler ended his speech on the first of September and we all knew war had comeI can still see myself walking along the streets of our neighborhood, my very first sanitary pad between my legs, the first day of my womanhoodthere was silence everywhere. Only a few people were in the street, heads bowed, some with tears in their eyes. I suppose all the celebrants were elsewhere, that day. At home, a terrified mother, the sweet smelling garden of a hot, late summer day, a refuge, at least for the moment. And now you say to me, as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world, this very first time we meet, that Adolf Hitler is important to my personal life? Do you really mean that? Do you really mean to completely shatter my carefully created fantasy that this all was really only a horrible nightmare, that I really am no different from anyone who grew up in America,

anyone who went to an ordinary high school like East Denver High, where Virgil, my husband went?

No, my father wasn't Jewish. German immigrants' son, proud and rigid, terribly offended at Hitler's words and policy toward the Jews, helping in whatever way he could, with money and contacts to get to America. But aren't you Jewish? You remind me so much of Ralph, my half-Jewish friend in Germany, then safely kept from harm, as was his Jewish mother. I have no idea how his father did that and I'll never know, for he died right after the war of a heart attack. Ralph was the comic of our group, now he's so depressed he can barely function. You say you will not tell me whether you're Catholic, Protestant or Jewish? And in the manner of your not telling me you do tell me, of course, you young doctor with the look of utter innocence on your face, for now it is suddenly an odd, haunted look I see in your face, as if I had touched a childhood pain. But is it not safe here to be a Jew? Am I that confused that I do not know? Must I degrade myself now by promising you that I will keep it our secret?

I am very good at keeping secrets. My mind wanders back so easily these days. Ralph brought us a Yiddish record, smuggled in from New York, a major offense, it had the song "*Bei mir bist Du schein*." We loved that record, we played it again and again, a further offense; we were proud of our clever Ralph, a third offense. I understand none of that has anything to do with you. Clearly, I am not supposed to ask certain questions, you say it is so we will be better able to work out our relationship. Is that why you hide behind your mask of anonymity? So that I won't have to hold back anything, you say? But alas, you really do not have a poker-face, my young doctor, for all the while we are talking about this issue of your identity I notice you are blushing and turning pale in turns. I feel a deep anxiety as I observe you. I fear that with my question I have been the bull in the china shop.

You cannot know that inadvertently you have entered into playing a crazy game with me, in a fashion that has stirred up much turmoil from what until this hour I still had hoped to be a distant past. Having to sit here now and talk with you, pretending I have no knowledge of what I know in my bones to be an important issue between us, having to ignore that, makes me fear it is going to be just like it was in my childhood. Then in school I did not "know" I was living in a nation that year after year was coming up with crazier schemes and ideas; then I had to watch adult after adult "topple over," change from a reasonable human being into a strangely obsessed creature, often even with bodily changesrigid posture, blazing eyesbut not "know" that anything has changed. In fact, we were forbidden to have knowledge of anything except what we ware instructed to know. It is a loaded, ominous statement for me, your, "You shouldn't know anything about me," yet you say it so smoothly. It in-

stantly brings to mind the memory of forever having to sort out the knowing I actually carried from homefrom my secret listening to the British broadcastsfrom what I was officially allowed to know. Upon the penalty of someone's possible death. You do not seem to realize, although you talk about Hitler as being of direct relevance to our work because I grew up there, that a considerable portion of the nation Hitler ruled had to make itself "not know" in this absolutely inhuman, terrifying regime. That during the Nuremberg trials, next to "We followed orders," the most damning testimony was "But we didn't know!" And you want that to be a part of our work? It's so I can tell you *all* my feelings about Jews, you say. Even the nightmares about trains and more trains going through the night, through valleys filled with stinking swamps, trains made of red brick, like ovens, loaded with the agony of an entire people?

Months later, when I bring you some of these dreams, you will ask me again and again, "Are you sure you didn't have Jewish relatives?" I do not know. There is only the memory of the frightening dream, again and again, turning me into a sleepwalker, the dream of the woman who was a stranger and yet my mother, appearing to me in medieval dress, telling me with urgency that her life is in danger. I believe her to be my grandmother. But perhaps this image of the desperate Jewish woman is an image that was in the soul of all Germans. I do not know, and you, who so clearly do know your heritage, demand of me that I have no share in it at all, when such a sharing would be of great comfort to me. It would be a help in dispelling the dark, confusing cobwebs, reassurance that this is a different land, with different rules, where it is not necessary to place a pillow over the telephone, to silence a possibly hidden microphone, each time one wants to talk. A land where what I say cannot turn me into a murderer.

And how shall I tell you how it was, right after the war, in Switzerland, the absolute horror of seeing it all laid out on the movie screens and in the newspapers, on the radio, in almost every conversation, the entire unfathomable event, the Holocaust? How can I share the ways I made myself take it in, see the pictures on the movie screens, read the newspaper accounts, the magazine descriptions, a voice in me crying steadily, "That is what it is to be German." Meeting individuals who had just been freed from the camps, how to speak with them, they with memost of us in these encounters struggling so intensely to find our humanity, for how indeed can there be any humanity left between us? I, alone, no one with whom to share my misery, I dare not, the shame is too overwhelming. I live in a small boarding house with Swiss people and a camp victim, and a world is crashing around my ears. Alone I am discovering how meaningless, in the light of this, had been my little rebellious stances in school, my refusal to join the progressive stages of the state's youth group system, each one more difficult to avoid, all that little stuff that somehow landed me in

Switzerland during the last days of the war. Meaningless the entire basis of my existence, for since then I truly know that I carry in me a portion of an abyss of human nature, German made.

How can I tell you the ways in which I then came to the horrid conclusion that there must be something missing in my own humanity, because of this heritage? From the safety of your anonymity you want me to "speak freely" about experiences that, this much I know, surely require a personal human presence. Oh doctor, young and innocent, how will it be possible, otherwise? And yet it is the bitter truth, I realize it, it is staring at me as I sit here, that I came to see you because of this desperate fear that has sprung alive again, that has been gnawing inside of me ever since I went back to Germany for the first time, a year ago, namely that there really wasissomething terribly lethal in all us Germans, something I might pass on to my children, to this gorgeous newborn son I have at home. I cannot find the words now to tell you this; the fear, the confusion, are far too great. This question cannot be asked.

So it remains part of the broiling, searing mass that has brought me to your office, shameful as it is for me to do so. Keep your secret about your identity. Be grateful it can be kept, that you do not have to announce it to the world every time you speak, and forget yourself just a little bit, so that the unmistakable accent tells all. I will obey. I will not know about your heritage.

"What is happening?" The doctor asks into the long, long silence. Still I do not answer, for now I hear the ringing of cowbellsmy beloved cowbells on the meadows of the Swiss alps in the spring prior to that terrible summer of 1945. Through most of that summer these bells were with me, ringing inside in moments of greatest desperation and aloneness. What solace they were then, and are in this moment.

I leave that first encounter shaking from head to toe. You suggest I come back, you expect it. Yet I am in greater turmoil than before I came to see you. I sense all sorts of issues between you and me, issues that are of an entirely different dimension than my concern about my current anxiety. Back in the sunshine of reality, I wonder what *is* this sudden reawakened *thing* insideof me in response to your curiosity about my childhood in Nazi Germany? Must we really discuss Hitler? Could I not talk about my husband, about our differences, about my seven year old, about my baby? Ah yes, there's the rub! This door into the past, reopened, with all its images and terrors, can it be closed again?

Driving home, I think of Neil, our friend the artist. During the last months Neil has offered repeatedly to introduce me to his analyst, a Jungian from Vienna. He is certain I would like the man very much. I cannot say why I never could say yes.

I call Neil. I ask him about being told facts about the analyst's background, I

am so troubled by Dr. Kassler's, "I will not tell you." Neil laughs, "Of course my analyst has talked about himself! How he had to flee Vienna, and how much gratitude he holds for all the friends who helped him. How could I share my innermost self with someone who refuses to tell me who he is, his roots?"

Desperately I want to say, "Neil, take me to your analyst!" But I cannot say the words, they will not form.

"Think about it," Neil encourages.

I do. I remember the Nazis' early liking of him, and Mother's admiration. I recall Mother's dislike of Freud when she was reading *The Interpretation of Dreams,* sharing "what Sigmund Freud would say," at the dinner table, her fondness for Jung, because he was "not so dreadfully involved with sexuality," and because "one" approved of Jung, at least for a while . . .

My reflections are rudely interrupted. There is a voice in me that speaks up with great authority:

"If you do not return to Dr. Kassler you are a coward, unwilling to examine some important reason that made you look for a psychiatrist in the first place."

I counter: "Why not a European doctor? Neil's doctor."

"*This* doctor! None other!"

I am reminded of the time a voice such as this said to me, when I first saw Virgil: "*This* one will be your husband." Now the voice's insistence was even stronger than it had been then.

I counter once more: "One who doesn't react so strongly when . . ."

Again I am interrupted: "Remember this: A German who is healed by a Jew such as he, heals the Jew in turn!"

My God, I do not understand. But I cannot bring myself to ring up Neil and go with him to where I might be met with understanding and have a feeling of safety. I must conclude that I do not deserve such benefits, just as the dark *one* once insisted I did not deserve the benefits of a meal.

I am tearful as I make my next appointment. The terror in me is real, no "figment of the imagination that will get better if you just put your mind to it," as Virgil informs me time and again. Now I fear the degree to which that anxiety might mount if I defy the inner voice, for I know the power it has; I remember well. I am worried about how my being so scared all the time might affect my baby. And you, young doctor, did seem so kind and confidentexcept for this one issue.

Driving to my next appointment, I hear a different kind of voice, one that truly makes me break out in a cold sweat. It is the staccato Nazi voice that taunts, just as I heard it many times as a child: "The German comrade avoids the Jewish physician!" I hear myself whisper a fervent response: "And that is exactly why I am going there!"

Neil's Viennese doctor might understand such horrors in my soul, since he fled from there. He might relieve the feelings of shame and guilt that surround me like a black, ugly cloud. I know: that comfort is not meant for me now.

Suddenly, I can hardly think of a time when I have not felt this black cloud of shame and guilt. The words I hear on my trip to you, Dr. Kassler, come from a world that was chosen for me, a world of crazy powers in which values and moral sensibilities were turned upside down and inside out! I am truly confused! Who am I to say what you should or should not share with me?

When you invite me to talk, during our subsequent meetings, my strongest feeling is often one of being an enormously deficient individual. The contamination that poisoned my German education becomes all too apparent in the most casual conversations. I do not know what is right and what is wrong, as does for example my husband, righteous hero that he was during this last war, and as you apparently do.

And then, gradually, but more and more frequently as time goes on, I sense during sessions that there are more than two of us in your cozy consulting room. In fact, sometimes I feel the room is full of invisible people. It is dizzying and I can only sort it out many years later, when finally I become familiar with Jung's approach to psychology.

But at present I must sit in that black chair, terrified as I sense behind me my enemy and horrid shadow, the newly awakened daemon, his power so reminiscent of the *one* that nearly made me die of starvation during adolescence, a hard look in his eyes, a speaker of Nazi slogans, taunting me with commentaries I try not to hear. He wears a black uniform and he lashes me with the whips of his words, "A German must know how to hate!" "A German girl never cries!" Perhaps he is the cause of the terror that in momentary flashes I see in your eyes; my shame urges me to long for a speedy death. And oh, how long until the dream comes that frees me:

I am in a hospital. My bed is in a large room with several other beds. I get up to brush my teeth. Over the washstand assigned to me I see the cap of an SS man, with its insignia of skull and crossbones. Someone else's name is printed over the washstand, and, I now notice, over my bed as well. In fact, none of the beds or washstands carries my name. I say aloud, "Oh, a case of mistaken identity," and leave the hospital at once.

But that was later. At present it is you facing me from behind your beautiful oaken desk along the side of which is the black chair where I sit. You smile, you speak warmly. Yet behind you I see the hag, a grieved and furious Jewish woman, ringing her hands, raging at me, as if she were holding me responsible for the murder of all six million Jews. The Nazi-daemon and I, hag and you, ex-

change roleswith lightning speedtime and time again. Now you witness the transformation, hear the harsh words, now you don't. We cannot talk about your role in this at all. I am provocative, you say, I am an angry person, yet you say nothing of your own sudden behavior in kind.

Yes, I acknowledge it, the daemon carries fury, he is horrid. As best I can, I acknowledge him to you, I explain to you his genesis. But there are moments when you seem to actually want to incite his rage, when you seem to actually enjoy its eruption. And I cannot set aside the angry hurt I feel when you keep me waiting, time and again, in the hallway in front of your locked office; it is an exercise in utter humiliation. Your no doubt valid reasons do not matter after a time, when it happens over and over, the minutes ticking by. No, I cannot "just analyze it all out," the way you tell me you are doing with your own analyst. But perhaps you cannot help yourself, there must be so many who stand behind you with their pain and anger at anything German.

Without really knowing it, my strongest longing is for a connection to your God. Ever since my frightening encounter as a small child with the black, fiery cloud that for days swirled over our house in the freezing winter two years before Hitler's ascent to power, I have felt a special awe for fiery clouds. There have been many fiery clouds in my life. The Jewish God Jahweh, as he led the ancient Israelites out of Egypt, was also such a cloud. Now I find myself searching for his prophet within you, for a good prophet to keep us safe. Yet you assert that your backgroundtalked about now as if allowed to be known by me, acknowledged, yet remaining firmly unacknowledged at the same timeis irrelevant except for certain cultural affinities, that religious sentiment is based on an illusion, as Freud explained so eloquently. You say that in time I will see how good it is to let go of such longings, to really grow up by realizing that God is an invention born of infantile needs. You add, "Only for some people does religion serve a useful purpose."

I am given to understand that I am not one of these. It is a compliment, I know, and as such I appreciate it, feel proud of it. It especially fits the attitude of Erika, that other part of me. I make an effort to embrace this attitude of yours, I consider it a failure that I still long for an understanding of that terrible encounter, so long ago, with something I knew even then to be infinitely larger than human. At the same time I am around eleven years old again and all religious instruction is stopped in my school, special arrangements having been made for those who will soon have a church confirmation. But I do not qualify for that group. In a fit of rage Father has quit the church. Of course the fact that it is my favorite subject does not matter at all. In its place is set a new religion, the Nazi *Weltanschauung* class intended especially for true followers of the "New Order." I am invited to attend that one, I feel weird as I hear praise about my

choosing not to be confirmed. The *Weltanschauung* class I have to leave immediately, I cannot tolerate their talk of spirit, for indeed their talk is of spirit, dark, intense, frighteningly so. To this day I cannot clearly recall how I spent these hours. I am at loose ends, neither parent approachable, Mother's firm "You are not religious!" cutting off all further dialogue, Father's embarrassed and pained looks even more so. I recall missing my old religion teacher, there since I started school; she favored the Old Testament, she read us Psalms and Proverbs, with music in her voice. Lifelong I shall remember her reading of Jeremiah, "my Jeremiah, fragments of whose Lamentations occur to me over and over during the long years of the war.

My tale of struggling to remain apart from the Nazi youth movement has little impact on you. I mention it as an aside, a curiosity, in fact, I am ashamed to even bring it up. Lost to both of us is therefore an awareness that perhaps some of the energy for my fight came from a need to fight off an intense, black spirituality that I dared not recognize as such, lest it overtake me. Your assurance that I am "too bright and reasonable a person" to find solace in religion is pale comfort. As is your comment, "Your intelligence stood you in very good stead, then." Look at me now!

Yet, how can I really disagree with you? Had I not been a translator for a Christian religious publishing house just a few years ago and deeply resented their insistence that one attempt to adopt their dogma? If I had not so badly needed the income, I would not have allowed myself to tolerate the compulsory sermons and prayers several times each day. When finally I do quit, and a German war-bride is hired as my replacementone who, in all innocence, brings to the office an old little German 3-D viewer and pictures of "der Führer and his best friends"I find I am not very surprised that the old ladies of the establishment ooh and aah in admiration. This in 1949! What does it say about me to have tolerated this further effort at indoctrination for the sake of relieving a financial emergency?

I try to hail you as my Zarathustra.

"Use your good reason," you urge, again and again. I know, "Where id was, there shall ego be."

Before I understand what this really means, this admonition, I tell you about my special inner wartime companion, my British adventurer. I dare tell you about him who had become so real to me that then in terror I had to send him away altogether, had to say to him he could no longer come to be with me in my thoughts. I try to communicate to you the terrible grief and emptiness I felt afterward, feel in the telling, about this loss of a most dear friend. But I must realize that you do not understand, not the longing, nor the terror of the temptation to slip away altogether into his unseen world. Perhaps you do not wish to under-

stand. You interpret him to me as a left-over imaginary childhood companion, to be firmly set aside. When it slips out about the angel whose comfort I experienced when I was not yet three years old, but suddenly old enough to realize I was a child who was not wanted, that my being, my femaleness was perceived as burden, not a joy, as was that of my little playmateyou suppress a snicker. The snicker is meant for the angel, you assure me, as I burst into tears. You sincerely reaffirm your sympathy with respect to my many experiences of rejection. But the words will not come to describe the inexplicable feeling of connectedness that I felt, during all my years of growing up, after the angel left, with those who also were not wanted and who were being groomed for chambers of death. Lost to us is thus the deep meaning that my experience might have had for both of us.

I am your good patient. I learn to see the matter of my former inner companions through your eyes. I learn to see them as irrational, immature, therefore bad. A deep sadness covers the hole into which they are stuffed. From a more abstract point of view, which I try so hard to make my own, it is indeed interesting, how many different ideas and concepts during my lifetime have been defined as "bad," or "good," and redefined all over again.

A dream illustrates for me what I suffer in my wrestling with the daemon:

I struggle to come for my hour with Dr. Kassler, for I am a cripple. Both my arms and legs have been hacked off; I drop to the doctor's feet, exhausted, covered in blood.

To you, the rational, reasonable one, the dream suggests that I labor under the illusion that I must suffer terribly before I can feel deserving of attention, I must learn to accept attention more readily. To me, the dream represents the price I pay for my work with you, the sacrifice of my inner childhood companions, the onslaughts of the daemonic. In the dream it is I, the little girl so terrified of the cloud of smoke and fire, trying so hard to be a woman. Indeed, coming to sessions is sometimes a herculean task.

I have no words as yet for this powerful image of the mutilated dream woman who is such a large part of me. But I begin to feel the deep stirrings of a new indignation, a will to live, the wish for a license to live without an inner daemon who mutilates. To live like you. For you seem to be alive so naturally, so convinced you are doing what you are meant to do, with purpose and enthusiasm, showing me this in the ways you speak, in the lively motions of your body.

And so I begin daring to challenge *him* in earnest and with persistence, this haunting daemon. He has his logic, just as you have yours. But the daemon's is crazy, confusing and so very strong. I must realize over and over that my little rebelliousness, Father's expressed outrage, had been poor shields against his on-

slaughts. I can see his poison in a hundred subtle ways in me, as we talk; the more I wrestle with him, the more that is apparent. My fight is carried out mostly alone, as I sit in tears. The things I do share with you often provoke such a strong reaction I dare not say more, much as you urge me to. My hatred of authority, inexorably linked with past demands to obey blindly the least desirable individuals among usbe it officials, neighbors or teachersoften sits between us. I cannot tolerate it when you make suggestions such as, "Don't pay so much attention to your dreams and fantasies." Even more, between us, like a block of hard rock, I feel the pain of unlived, unacknowledged emotions.

Once I tell you that in some moments during my adolescence I know with lucid clarity that I am in the midst of utter madness. I experience these moments as very frightening, yet curiously calming, for the violence of the bombings, the screaming, the crazy languageall are suddenly events quite apart from my being. As I tell this, I am appalled, young Dr. Kassler, that you sadly shake your head, chiding: "Watch out now. It is not believed that nations go mad, that is not accepted theory. Only individuals do." When I remonstrate, vehemently, you add, "Might it not simply describe your own mental state at that time?"

Yes, but only if properly understood! Not what I dread that you are implying. I dare not push further. So distraught by the presence of the vicious daemon that has emerged in the context of our work together, by his strength, I am alone enough as is. And now a part of me reawakens, a part that stems from the time of the madness just now disputed, a part that knows there really is no hope for me at all. It is a hopelessness I saw most clearly reflected in the eyes of my old teacher of English literature, so pained about how we, her charges, were being poisoned year by year. I can still see the wringing of her hands, which she did nearly all the time during the last year she taught, clutching a white handkerchief, much as I find myself presently wringing the tissue in my hands. The daemon agrees with this old, despairing part of me, asks in fact, "By whose authority do you still exist at all?" A sin compounded, I realize more and more, by my wished-for second child.

If only I could convey to you the experience of the truly, truly, daemonic that is such a large element in my life. But how can I, since for you that dimension seems unreal; how can I, when I myself am so confused? What, then, is insanity, if not the behavior of the Third Reich? Yet I cannot be too angry with you. In fact I must be grateful, because you do keep trying, you do not send me away, you state again and again that you are pleased with our work, with my progress.

But the issue of a nation gone mad is a burr in my side. I cannot truly accept Dr. Kassler's dictum. Must I not find someone who understands? Does such a person exist? I cannot. Cannot again experience the tortures of the daemon if I were to retell my story.

Once more the voice that made me stay with Dr. Kassler springs to life in me with a new request:

"Remember how you wondered as a child why Hitler was so desperately afraid of the Jews?" Indeed I remember. It had been a great puzzle for me. I had felt like the little girl in the fairy tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes." No one had ever talked about what I perceived.

"Now is the time to find out," the voice continued. "About a great many things, even the terrible cloud. You have a mind! Read! Study! Jewish history! Religion! German history, uncontaminated!"

My infant son begins to spend an extra hour at the baby sitter, while I am at the library, checking out books to take home. In time it feels as if a steel band is taken off my mind, put there by myself, years earlier, in response to the Third Reich's madness. The steel band had been designed to allow me to delve only into those subjects that seemed neutral, rational, free from possible distortion and irrationality, namely the sciences. Now I face what lies beneath these fearsa dread of emotions so intense they are certain to lead to further confusion, a resurgence of the chaos. Indeed, as emotion mounts in me in response to what I read, I experience moments in which I nearly drown in a great flood of tears. I sob in the car, over the dishes, over my notes. The sadness has no bottom as now with greater strength I experience emotionally what has been lost to the world, to the land where I grew up, to me personally, in the firestorm that was Nazism. It wells up in me as I read Jewish history, poetry, religion, as I read the writings of those who have fled Germany. I grieve for the vibrantly creative life that has been killed, that is gone forever.

To my surprise, my new studies greatly change my relationship with Dr. Kassler. He warmly approves of what I am doing, he even has no objections to my interest in Jewish religion. And I, discovering many of the daemon's roots in history, find he is gradually becoming more objective to me, losing much of his power. I like what I read in one of Dr. Kassler's journals, in which it says the patient appropriates the strength and the courage of the doctor in order to face and accept the truth about her own self. Perhaps that means he can be my good Jewish prophet after all, understanding and forgiving.

This dream shatters all too quickly, when he opens our session one day by talking with much emotion about the arrest of Adolf Eichmann, and shares with me his hopes that this man's capture will draw needed public attention to the events of the Holocaust. In a flash, I experience a memory as vivid as a waking dream:

A stopped train near Dachau; a sandwich in my lap. Cold misty outside. Prisoners from the nearby concentration camp, heavy equipment in skinny hands, looking thin, cold, tired and hungry. Guards with guns. Should I throw

my sandwich out the window? Mother says, "Eat! You're always hungry!"

Henceforth, for years, I would at times be unable to eat, let alone bite into a sandwich. It all clicks into place as I relive this memory, totally buried for years. As I talk about my intense feelings of guilt surrounding that incident, absurd as the thought might be to the rational mind, in this moment of reliving I almost feel as if I should be tried together with Adolf Eichmann. I long to hear from you some words of understanding, yes, even forgiveness, some perspective. When I am told instead, in factual tones, that this could not have happened, it must be a "screen memory," I am hit by a terrible psychic pain. I could have tolerated with greater ease your honest rage, your, "Why didn't you!" Once more the pain of a particular kind of guilt is my companion. It is a feeling of collective guilt, as I would learn one day, indeed the guilt of the archetypal psyche itself. But here, in this little room, it is mine alone.

Soon after, you respond warmly, and with with much interest, when I talk about attending a concert in which Bach's concerto for two violins was being performed. I describe how much I had had to think of Monica Wiesbadner, my childhood violin teacher, for she and I had loved to play that concerto together with my mother. Quite without intending to do so, I relive in our session the sad story of her dismissal, so terribly troubling. I feel again my inability to study with the new instructor, chosen especially to develop my talents. How terrible I feel, in the reliving, about my blind obedience, which would not even allow me to think of Monica's fate, let alone remonstrate against it!

In response, you place great emphasis on the violin and on my unused talents, none on my emotions, my guilt. I persist until you actually say, "Can't we talk about something else?"

What to do other than just sit here, after that? I cannot stop crying. Something has been broken. If you cannot share in my grief over this inadvertent betrayal, what is the point of my attempting to understand what it is to be truly human, something I have always associated with the Jewish people, a people I saw being ruthlessly persecuted, perhaps because of that? A people whose religion is so close to me because of the pillar of smoke and fire in my own life, a religion, I have now learned, that insists upon a direct relationship between man and God, a religion that demands that one study, read, think, ask questionsthose precious, almost lost goods of the human spirit. In a dream that night:

I stand with city officials in a semicircle as a memorial to my violin teacher is being unveiled.

I am most grateful for that dream.

The very issues I now raise in response to my studying, which first seemed to excite you, now apparently disinterest youespecially after these two sessions. I

assume it is my fault. Perhaps I am not working hard enough, even though I do try to find within me all the attitudes and behaviors that do not fit with my image of who I am to beyour image of the well-adjusted woman. I search for all my hidden infantile attitudes, my neurotic needs and behaviors. I bring you my painful discoveries as soon as I have made them, only to hear you say, with increasing frequency, "Yes, yes, that is you! That is how you are." Each time I am devastated. You do not seem to understand.

"That is confrontation," you explain to my tears, "This is how we really *hammer* in the new insight." If only I were not reminded of Hitler's words, "Everything that is weak must be *hammered* away!" It is the word "hammer" that is so troubling.

I bring to the session a German children's book, hoping it may help you understand why I am as you seem to see me. The book, meant to be funny and educational, contains a series of horror stories. These pictures speak louder than words, it appears, for I see in your eyes a glimmer of understanding.

Indeed, afterward, for a time, there is a greater kindness in the room. We even seem to have traded interests: You tell me about a famous German Christian, whose lecture you attended; I tell you about the famous New York Rabbi I went to hear. I do not know the response of the hag behind you, as you listened to the German, but I dare tell you about the waning fury of my inner daemon, and how in the course of the lecture he grew more and more silent, until a deep feeling of peace came over me. There is new hope in me.

In Europe that summer, as Virgil retraces his wartime paths, a new inner voice begins to speak in me with great authority. I think of it as the voice of the Jewish prophet Jeremiah. He directs my attention to many of the historical events I have studied, where and at what time in history a certain pogrom has taken place, what may have unleashed it. He asks me to visit memorials built to victims of the Holocaust and to go to Dachau, that first concentration camp of the Third Reich. It is the one my father had begun to talk about as a place to be feared when I was seven years old. When I see the big exit sign on the Autobahn, I vividly remember that sign as a child, so innocuous, so just like all the others, only having such power that it could even change the tone of my father's voice. The empty camp still holds the terror, the bleakness is in the remnants of the barracks, the inhumanity in the life-sized pictures, in the barbed wire. A dignity lost to Germans, to the world. Often, during that summer, whenever I take a shower, I am reminded by that inner voice of the lethal showers that killed. When once I badly bruise my fingers I hear him tell me about the artists of Teresin, who kept on painting, with fingers smashed, to make a record of the absolute evil reigning around them. There was a children's book, called *I Never Saw Another Butterfly,* drawings and poems of the doomed children of that

camp, testimony to the purity of the human spirit.

Even though I keep Jeremiah a secret from you, the sharing of the summer's experience maintains the new warmth. There is between us a feeling of intimacy, at moments it even seems to contain the energies of sexuality. You share experiences, feelings, of a personal nature. But then you deny their importance.

I experience myself as containing your feelings, and I respond with my emotions. But these you cannot acknowledge, you insist I make too much of "just an aside comment."

The old dance again. The healing knowledge that indeed your unowned emotions have become my burden still lies in the future. Now I only know that these so-called "asides" of yours seem to strike the very core of what is so large, so difficult between us. As when you express your shame and rage about the fact that so few Jews fought back in going to their death, when you exclaim, "Why didn't they take some of the bastards with them, at least, wrest a gun or two from their hands and point it where it might do some good?!"

My inner Jew, product of a collective European unconscious that he surely is, suffers pain and rage because his response is not valued. He cannot understand how enormously difficult it must be for you to realize, you who grew up in this town of movies, with all their bravado and simple solutions, how it might have been for the Jewish European, who after hundreds of years of shared culture could not grasp, in spite of all the evidence, that one partner in the sharing had been devoured by the Devil, had gone insane. That is not accepted theory, you say.

It is spring again. We are talking about Passover, when suddenly you smile, warmly yet with slight condescension, and say to me: "You are feeling passed-over. You'd like to be among the chosen."

In the small room there is a silence, as deep inside me the voice of a very little girl whispers. "But I *am* chosen, chosen by an enormous black, fiery cloud."

Then I am once more the isolated, terrified child, the teen-age pariah with often only a journal for companionship, the shattered young woman in Switzerland. Now I try to write about chosenness. I cannot. There is only the renewed feeling of being enveloped by an impenetrable black cloud.

Perhaps the dream that comes during this time is some sort of explanation:

A mother cat is standing on a round table that is spinning so fast she can barely keep her balance. With her on this table are one live kitten and a bloody, dead kitten-foetus. Observing the scene, I realize that the kitten cannot be properly taught, on this spinning disk, how to be a cat, and how difficult it will be for it, for that reason, to venture forth. Finally the kitten jumps off the spinning disk, landing on shaky legs. I realize that the live and dead kitten are really one, somehow symbolic of my work with Dr. Kassler.

The spiritual kitten of my work with you is stillborn, the energies surrounding us of such magnitude that even the live kitten is on shaky legs. The task now becomes the strengthening of the kitten's legs. Without being fully aware of it, one more time I begin my descent into Hades, my world begins to shrink as I accept entirely your rational point of view. My rational side, Erika, takes my place. Now she must tell the rest.

I have only recently recognized the kitten dream as a termination dream of sorts. Certainly it had been that for Wiese.

Dr. Kassler and I parted quite amiably, both expressing satisfaction with the work. I had reason to feel satisfied, for the world had begun to open up for me. Moreover, I needed to feel satisfied. I had surely not been an easy patient, challenging the young doctor in so many ways, with my "Germanic perfectionism." I had found it so very difficult to let things slide. Afterward, I cultivated a feeling of gratitude; indeed, it was quite likely thanks to Dr. Kassler that I was alive and sane, able to pursue a demanding academic program in which I was hoping to discover for myself why nations go mad.

It had not been an easy termination. It took time to learn to disregard the curiously flat feeling that began to grow in me after the kitten dream. Again and again she in me wanted to explore the darkness, even write about it. Doctor Kassler remained convinced that this flatness, of which I complained to the end, was a remnant of my traumatic childhood, to be endured, to be lived with. As much as possible, I must set aside my past. He felt my pain could not be dealt with in any other way; it had to be suppressed, my ego having been made strong in order to accomplish that. "Can't you just leave it behind?" he would exclaim, often with irritation. At other times he advised with compassion, "Why not forget all about that particular kind of writing. Now you have other things to focus on." I myself had been at a loss to understand why I felt such deep unhappiness in realizing that the sacrifice of writing about this part of my life was required of me in order to be well. As that message sank in, Dr. Kassler would offer me coffee, even medication, which once in resignation I accepted. I learned to consciously set aside the ineffable longing of my deeper side.

In time I missed my dreams. It remained difficult for me to keep in mind that the absence of dreams meant I had had a successful analysis, as even one of the senior psychoanalysts at the hospital where I was training reassured me. No question, in my time with Dr. Kassler I had regained the ability to be competent, "to work and to love," to live according to Freud's axiom of the mature person. I had a good life, I could tell myself honestly. Studies, in time a Ph.D., the potential of a university position, children growing, home life reasonably satisfactory.

But in fact it was the beginning of a wandering in the desert, as my inner one,

Wiese, would inform me when finally that time drew to an end, when at last I had found my way to Jung, and to the elderly analyst gentleman who invited me to reflect upon these words of Jung:

"The violent resistance, mentioned by Freud, to the rational resolution of the transference is often due to the fact that in some markedly sexual forms of transference, there are concealed collective unconscious contents which defy all rational resolution. Or, if this resolution is successful, the patient is cut off from the collective unconscious and comes to feel this as a loss."

Unable to achieve the rational resolution of inherently irrational unconscious contents, which would have required, as a beginning, that Dr. Kassler acknowledge their existence between us, and a good deal of work afterward, I could finally understand why, after I left, there was such a feeling of flatness, even emptiness, of incompleteness. Even then I had an intuition that something precious was being abandoned here, might be lost to me forever.

To free me of my carefully cultivated gratitude toward Dr. Kassler, the Jungian wise man quoted a Buddhist proverb: "A boat is to be used to cross the river, not to be carried on one's back ever after, in mistaken gratitude."

A fuller understanding of what may have transpired between Dr. Kassler and myself was initiated by a dream which also led to the writing of this book:

Jung has never fully recovered from the heart attack he suffered in 1944. I see him lying on his bed, looking thin and frail. A voice informs me that his remaining illness is connected with the incredible psychic wounds he experienced prior and during World War Two. The voice states emphatically that I know about this kind of wounding from personal experience, and that I am to write about it.

Jung's writings about the transference came to mind, the mutual infection in the process of psychological work. I felt that in this infection I had experienced Dr. Kassler's deep, spiritual wound superimposed on my own, indeed an infection coming from the deepest magma of the psyche, bringing with it its own kind of unfathomable, draining pain. I thought of Jung as Joshua in the eyes of Freud, who saw himself as a Moses of the psyche. I recalled Jung's deep personal involvement with Freud, of which he writes in his letters. I reflected on Freudian-oriented Dr. Kassler and his dismissive attitude toward spirituality, the sacred dimension of human existence. These thoughts began to heal the wounds of the past.

I reread what Freud wrote regarding his own spiritual attitude: "Our science is not illusion, but it would be an illusion to believe that we can obtain anywhere what it cannot give us." I remembered how reading this passage made me feel quite elated and proud to be educated enough also to believe it.

I was so deeply moved by my dream. Indeed, I felt the dream showed me the presence of a potent connection between myself and Jung, because of our similar experiences. The dream said that what had wounded me had also wounded Jung.

In "The Psychology of the Transference," Jung writes of an "island of consciousness" that, if knowledge of the larger, surrounding territory is missing, for many becomes psychologically too narrow. He writes of the terrible monster that is roused once the neurotic realizes the meager and cramped conditions on his small island of consciousness, when the existence of the unconscious is not acknowledged. In my life, the monster arrived before there could be any wellbounded island of consciousness. I do believe that young Dr. Kassler helped me build walls strong enough to stave it off in its most dangerous aspect. The greatest difficulty arose when, because of him, I had to learn to deny its existence. The problem with the latter is aptly described by Jung. The dweller on that cramped "neurosis island," he writes, knows "that this seemingly alarming animal stands in a secret compensatory relationship to the island and could supply everything that the island lacks." Dr. Kassler's denial of this intuitive knowledge, and my tearful efforts to get support for my longing that this be so, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary furnished to me by my childhood, had been a fulcrum of our many painful discussions.

For Freud and for many of his followers, the aroused monster was and remains "the black mud," the unacceptable "primary process." In reflecting upon my dream I began to feel that in his role as Freud's friend and collaborator, this attitude of Freud's became Jung's burden, an additional burden to the one Jung already carriedas Dr. Kassler's denial of the reality of the deeper layers of the psyche had become my burden.

Gradually, thoughts of a more frightening nature occurred to me. I began to see that Freud's terror of the mudwhich is, after all, the collective unconsciousand his consequent rejection of all that is irrational, and thus from the depths, was strangely mirrored in that most irrational of all political systems, Nazism, even as the Nazis were living out an incredibly archaic aspect of it. Their frantic projections onto the Jews mirrored their terror of their own unacceptable unconscious, their shadow. But when the personal shadow cannot be accepted, then the collective shadow takes possession of the personality. In the light of Jung's writings, I could see in the Nazi projections the reflection of Mercurius himself, that wily god of individuation, that incarnation of life power, that elusive, deceptive, ever-changing power that "now flits about from patient to doctor . . . as the third party in the alliance, continues its game, sometimes impish and teasing, sometimes really diabolical," as Jung described him. Surely a strong endorsement for the attitude of Sigmund Freud!

But fear and fascination with that "elusive, deceptive, ever-changing power"

seem to go together. Freud's study was filled with statues of ancient cultures, symbols of this power, and he described his need to collect them as "an addiction second in intensity only to his nicotine addiction." The Nazis, in their fascination with their primary object of projection, the Jews, spent a great deal of time and energy "researching" and composing confabulations called "character attributes." Their descriptions of Jewish traits read like those of an alchemist about the dark side of the god Mercurius.

I continued with my reflections: Had dark Mercurius not sprung alive already in Europe as these two great men were working together? Would the assault of this live energy as a third partner in their work not verify most poignantly Jung's remark that "the further consciousness becomes distant from a certain point of equal balance, the more dangerous become unconscious contents which strive for an equalizing"?

I wondered: When is that point reached? Why was I not able to set aside all this darkness, at least in the beginning, as Dr. Kassler so often encouraged me to do? Was it in part because his own spiritual burden was added to mine? I believe so, yet I shall never know.

Jung continues: "Finally, dissociation is a result: on the one hand self-consciousness tries desperately to shake off an invisible opponent (Freud's black mud), on the other hand he succumbs in increasing measure to the tyrannical will of an inner opposing ruling force that shows all the characteristics of a daemonic infra- and superhuman element."

The whole sequence, from the effort to maintain the balance by keeping dangerous unconscious contents at bay, to the final takeover, was manifested in the phenomenon we called *Umfallen*, toppling over, during the Third Reich. With his words, Jung verified my experienceonce awakened, the monster cannot be put back to sleep. One must work with it, struggle to transform it, make a connection with the other pole of this incredible entity, the healing spirit.

After World War Two, a saddened Jung wrote about the destruction and desolation that was left in the wake of the daemon's tornado, the Third Reich. It was "a reaction of this distancing of consciousness from a position of equilibrium," he wrote, "for there does exist an equilibrium between the soul's 'I' and the 'not I'; a religio, that requires a careful considering of the existing unconscious powers, which one cannot neglect without courting danger. This turnabout has been in preparation for centuries because of the change in the position of consciousness away from the point of equilibrium."

To the end, Freud held the daemon at bay, and with that remained an angry, unforgiving father toward Jung. His theory of psychoanalysis "had become his whole life," he wrote, his island and bulwark against the black mud. That was true not only for him, but for many since. A most important island and bulwark

it is, and all that is required for many, while for others it can never be more than a first step. It is a tragedy Freud could never recognize that, indeed, Jung had been his Joshua. For just as Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, neither was Freud. But while Moses was led to the mountain to see, and rejoiced, Freud remained blind.

In his role as Joshua, Jung went into the darkness, into the stormiest regions of the daemon, where live the tearing emotions, the psychic tortures so grotesquely and concretely lived out by those in whom the daemon had taken over all consciousness, and already described with eloquence in the ancient texts of the alchemists. Through this journey into the great depths of the living psyche, Jung achieved a spiritual reunion, a transcendence of what has divided Jew and Christian for two thousand years. This can be seen most clearly in the writings of his later years.

There is much more upon which to reflect. But this much has crystallized out for me: With my little personal life, with my little intensive psychotherapy with Dr. Kassler, I traveled a piece of the road Jung traveled with Sigmund Freud. That to me is the knowledge the dream referred to, about which I was to write. For me, there were then Jung's writings for the next essential part of the journey, and an analyst trained by hima new ark for me, psychologically speaking. Jung had no ark ready made, he had to build his own. Painstakingly he built it, starting with old boards dropped on civilization's scrapheapthe Gnostics, the alchemists. My dream implied that the insights he gained about the nature of man, about man's relationship to nature and his place in it, were almost too much to bear for one human heart.

8
A Leave Taking

You darkness, whence I came
I love youmore than that flame
which, with its sheen, does bound the world
through its shining
for just any circle
outside of which no one knows of it.

But the darkness pulls together everything
shapes and flames, animals and me
as it seizes
man and might.

And it may well be: a great power
is moving in my vicinity.

I believe in the nights.
Rainer Maria Rilke, Prayers.

"Be patient . . . try to love the questions themselves like . . .
books that are written in a very foreign tongue."
Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet.

How late it has become. The semester is over, and now all the good-byes have been said, the formal ones, the tearful ones, even that last one, the most important. I feel a growing emptiness painfully reminiscent of that time in 1946 when I was standing on the deck of the battle-scarred *Vulcania*, realizing that with each second I was being carried further and further away from Europe and my roots, certain I would never again dwell there. Dreadful image of torn roots in my mind's eye then, and a presence in important leave takings ever since, like children going off to college, moving away for always; and like this one.

For I, Erika Fergus, Ph.D., am leaving this university, my Golden University, as I have called it to myself. Here I have experienced my being most fully. Truly, for the first time ever. That feeling has carried me for many years. Initially I felt it as a graduate student, then as a faculty member, supervising clinical staff member, consultant and research associate in charge of a longitudi-

nal project, that special apple of my eye. And now I am packing my things.

Tear stains on my papers, my books. Yes, I am crying. I'm very glad to go now, butsome of the happiest days of my not too joyful life have been spent here. And one more time there is that terrible feeling of roots being torn up.

Why am I leaving? Surely I could have written a new proposal to continue my work. It would have been funded. I was encouraged to do so and I have publications and good pilot data to effectively back up such a proposal, even with my recent lengthy "dry period." I could even have planned on an unpaid clinical associateship for a timeI was more than cordially invited to do just thatuntil I caught my academic breath, so to speak. I could have afforded that, since my part-time private practice is going well. In this way I could have kept intact my root connection to this cherished institution. But I know I shall never "catch my academic breath." During all the recent agonizing, the internal decision making culminating in that dreadful, numinous inner encounter, that realization is what has led me to this day, this moment of finality. Recently, I was often asked by close colleagues: Was I depressed? Was there a way they could help? Had I thought of antidepressants?

Yes, surely I was depressed, at times terribly so. After all, depression is no stranger in my life. But no, this had been different, this inner change. Harder to bear, in certain ways, than my familiar depressions, yet strangely carrying hope and inspiration after all. I did not want to suppress any of my feelings during this time of decision making in any way, not by distraction nor by special nurturance. They were of such great importance to me. At times I have felt like a fake, these last few months, no, years, as my preoccupation has shifted away from the concerns of the university to the events happening inside of me, about which I wrote with increasing frequency in my journal. None of that could be shared with my colleagues. As time went on, I became more and more the odd ball, increasingly distant.

And so I am abandoning shelves stacked with valuable data, computer printouts representing years and years of intricate statistical analysis. "Highly creative, highly original," people have said. But by my own evaluation, when I consider the mass of diverse data collected, sifted, computerized, and thus at my fingertips, the time and energy invested in this endeavor, the harvest has been disappointingly slim. Oh, if only I had been able to silence the voice of the inner daemon that throughout these years has kept me from becoming truly engaged in my work! If I could have silenced his demanding whispers, who knows what I might have been able to achieve! Certainly the ideas kept presenting themselves in a steady, magnificent stream, only to rot away like fruit left to spoil. Work in the white-and-purple notebook, my journal, always seems to calm him. But not other kinds of creativity.

How fitting, after all, has been the atmosphere of this office of mine. Never again, if I can help it, shall I work in a room without windows. I now know that too much of the past comes alive for me in such offices. I had them in the industrial jobs I held prior to my graduate study, and so I had not minded being asked to move into this basement atmosphere, this modern building that for the sake of efficiency had been designed with practically no windows at all. But in truth I have never really felt comfortable in this space, it brings back so easily the air raid shelters of my childhood. That has often caused me to long nostalgically for my first room here, the one I was assigned as a brand new member of faculty. It is located in the charming old building next door, a little room with old-fashioned casement windows through which blows a refreshing ocean breeze, with a view over the Science Court, its intermittent throngs of students and the distant hills.

This new space had spelled progress. Had I not even helped argue for it at that important site visit, many years ago? Indeed, the more equal temperatures and relative freedom from dust had been a needed improvement for our sensitive equipment. But it was hard on my inner sensitivities.

Golden days, my time in the sunny old office. I had decorated it in ways that I had never dared decorate any space of mine before, with wild, psychedelic posters and collages I made myself.

"It almost looks like the office of a teenager," Dr. Rubsam, professor in charge of the research and my former dissertation advisor, had said smilingly. "Just right for your work with adolescents."

I was doing much therapeutic work then. We were in the phase of our research where we worked with many troubled families in accordance with our complex and clinically intense research design. When offered the job to administer this project, I had stated firmly that if therapeutic intervention seemed advisable and the family would not accept a referral elsewhereoften they refused because of the transferencethen I would want to provide the therapy. Little did I realize the incredibly long hours I would need to invest. But it has been very important for me personally.

Often I would work with the troubled adolescent as well as with the entire family. I rejoiced when I saw improvement. Our referral network sent us many families that were Jewish. And quite often, in the middle of a session or afterward, as I would usher my charges out of the consulting room, I would feel a joy of an incredible intensity flash through me as a strange yet familiar inner voice would exult: "These he did not get, the arch-villain! These are *alive!*"

At that time I had been quite uncomfortable with my inner voices, not only because they were such dreadful reminders of the past, but also because in the language of our "dynamically-oriented" case conferences they constituted an omi-

nous symptom, not to be shared with anyone. Yet I always enjoyed hearing *his* delight, the delight of this inner Jeremiah, this new evolution of my helpful inner Jew of the days of Dr. Kassler. Here he had felt indeed like the ancient Hebrew prophet sprung to life inside of me.

The families are long gone. I am leaving. No one will ever know how much this university has meant to me, truly my Alma Mater. In spite of the dark moments here, how healing had been the freedom to express my ideas and experience respect for my abilities, a respect that sometimes I myself could feel only with great difficulty.

I should get on with the packing. Tomorrow morning the new occupant will move in. But almost every item I pick up is filled with memories and wants to be held and reflected upon, if only for a moment. Take my old journal that has had its place in the bottom drawer of this gray desk for so many years. Inscribed on the front are the words, "My Graduate Studies." It is a journal I started on the first day of graduate school, to keep a detailed account of that long-awaited time in my life.

Not too many entries of the kind I thought I would make! Instead, many factual notes about coming examinations and term papers. The first two years were the hardest, because I had been away from university life for so long and had acquired my knowledge of psychology mostly through a series of crash courses. The journal also contains quite a few entries of a despairing nature, in which I wonder if I will make it at all. It had been so very hard. Ah, here is one of the kind with which I hod hoped to fill the book:

> I so love the rice plants that grow tall behind the patio which separates the old building from the new one. In the early afternoon, when the wind comes up, the shadows of the leaves play on the fresh whitewashed walls in lovely dancing patterns. Like an ever-changing Chinese brush painting, a Haiku without words.

During those years, I would not have been there any later than early afternoon. Sometimes I envied my classmates for being able to stay just as long as they wanted to, studying in the library, eating and socializing for a bit at the Student Union, then studying some more. I, of course, had to hurry home, first race up the hill to my distant parking lot, hop into the car and speed away, so I would arrive at about the same moment as James on his way home from school. He got so upset when I was late, it just wasn't what a mother was all about, in the opinion of this headstrong seven year old. Then there would be the children's homework, sometimes lessons, dinner to prepare. Finally, there would be my time to study. Often I would be so very tired.

Poor James. He had so heartily disliked my starting graduate school! Perhaps I'd been too much the ever-present mother for him prior to that, his last two

years of childhood freedom before school would become serious business in his life. I had thought it all out, believing that if I gave him that special time, he would be able to see me go to school as he himself began first grade. But I was then already struggling with Virgil's negative reaction to my plans, leading to many tense moments between the two of us. No doubt that affected James.

Here's an entry written almost right after the event. How terribly upset I had beenhow I had to do this writing just to get hold of myself!

> For many years now I have taken for granted a state of affairs that I should never, never take for granted: I am thinking about things like good and sufficient food, shelter, uninterrupted rest at night, and, most important of all, relative freedom from anxiety. Alas, for me this state of affairs has just been shattered because of what happened a few hours ago. I was all ready to take an examination that in part will determine whether I shall be allowed to continue to the doctorate level or have to settle for a master's degree.
>
> I was standing in the hallway in front of the locked classroom, chatting with my fellow graduate studentsalready nervouswhen suddenly the fate of the entire Western world began to hang in a most precarious balance between continued existence and annihilation. At issue was whether a Russian navy vessel with a load of missiles on board would continue to head for Cuba or not. President Kennedy had left no doubt in anyone's mind that if the Russian ship did not turn back, there would be instant nuclear war. We students discussed the fact that at any moment missiles with atomic warheads might explode. In this context, what did the examination matter anyway?
>
> As they talked, it became clear to me that for them the possibility of war was somehow a very distant event, that their immediate and intense concern continued to be the examination. Meanwhile, my entire being reacted to the word "bomb," and instantly I was in a terrible inner turmoil. Should I drop everything and rush home, take my children from their classrooms at different schools, drag them with me into the tiny crawl-space underneath our house, realizing all along the utter futility of this? Or just hold them in the comfort of our living room, waiting for the bomb to fall? "But what if the disaster does not strike?" I kept asking myself.
>
> As I stood there in the emptied hallway, I was back in the air raid shelter of my childhood, recalling the torment of time dragging, of waiting and waiting for the bombs to drop, feeling so frustrated and so exhausted that at times I would find myself longing for the bomb that would end it all. Had I not vowed then I would never have children because I felt so strongly it was not fair to subject any child to such an experience?
>
> No, I couldn't just run to my car and act on impulse, I realized. I had to recognize a most important aspect of this situation, namely that just like all of this was not "really real" to my classmates, so it would also not be really real to my children. Unless I made it so. And that I would surely do by grabbing them, carrying them with me emotionally, infecting them with all my upset, all my terror of past and present. That indeed would make it terribly real for them, really traumatize them.
>
> Now, only a few hours later, I sit here in this quiet room at the univer-

sity, writing. I have argued with one of my classmates because when the crisis was over I loudly vented my feelings, gave expression to my deep disappointment and sudden distrust in our dashing young president. The Russians have turned back. I did right, by not hurrying to my children. But any feeling of security on my part is henceforth once more a frail illusion.

Having decided not to rush home, I had even tried to take the examination. That had been a disaster, of course, in my mental state. But just as I had learned that expressing really angry feelings about the leader of our country was acceptable, so I learned that even among professors in a graduate program that was determined to weed out unsuitable candidates there was some humanity. My examination was set aside.

In the drawer with my old journal there is a letter I wrote, several years after the missile crisis, to my two sons. I have never given it to them. It is incomplete, like so many things in this office. At the time, Robert was about to leave for college and James had become quite independent, very serious about surfing. The tension over my "running off to graduate school," as both Virgil and James still expressed it, continued. I shall be forever grateful that my first-born, Robert, always stood firmly by me whenever that painful issue reemerged, as it had the night before I wrote the letter.

Last night we were discussing once more my attending graduate school. I want to offer you my apology for doing that again, even though I have voiced these sentiments to you many times already. I want to make this written apology especially to you, James, who at age seven was suddenly confronted with an unknown powerful sibling called "Mom's graduate school." I can still hear you tell me how much you hated 'those guys at the university.' I suppose your continuing anger is justified. My going to graduate school did take an awful lot of time away from you. And yet, if I had to do it all over again I would still do it, even though I have blamed myself bitterly for putting such a burden on the two of you, James especially. You must know that you were and are enormously precious to me. Somehow I felt that if you became too precious, as you became more and more the center of my entire life, I might actually be harmful to you. This would be so because I would be expectingwhether I wanted to or notto live out my dreams and ambitions through you. I was afraid of my ambitious side. I had lived with a mother whose unconscious, chronic sense of failure haunted my entire childhood. Moreover, I feared my own intensity. It needed a focus beyond motherhood.

When I was a teen-ager I swore I would never have children because it had been so unbearable to witness the sheer terror in the little kids who sat with me in that dank tunnel, our air raid shelter, night after night. So I have always felt somewhat guilty about bringing you two into this world after all, especially since it has now become a world that could become a horror chamber of fire-storms within seconds. As you grew older, I would reassure myself that perhaps you would have enough happiness in your young lives before the disaster struck, so that on balance you would have found life

worthwhile. I am so grateful that the other day you both said I was being really maudlin to be worrying about such things, that you wanted to be alive no matter what the future holds.

Nowadays, a mother going off to school is no longer such an extraordinary thing in the life of the family. Then, and especially in our socio-economic environment, it was. While it seemed all right for a mother to work in order to augment the family income, for her to have a career of her own definitely was not. Remember Mrs. Weiss's shrill voice as she shouted one day at the two of you, "Well boys, you just have a career woman for a mother!" Your tears of hurt and anger really made me wince, James!

But there are so many unanswered, perhaps unanswerable questions that always churn in me, sometimes making me very, very emotional. The longer I study families, the more certain I am that what I carry should not be contained within the family. Thwarted energies turn to poison. I went to the university in the firm belief that if I studied psychology in a scientific manner, I might find some answers for myself, and through that, for us.

The letter is incomplete. The last sentence is quite untrue. Something about the real reason for applying to the university had made me stop writing. The monster of an old, horrible grief had reared its head, frozen me into inactivity one more time.

Long ago, when I finally could give myself permission to apply to graduate school at my Golden UniversityI had always wanted to come here, ever since my father talked about it when I was still a little girl and it was then, in his words, "at the edge of the world"I wrote that I wanted to pursue a course of graduate study in Social and Clinical Psychology in order to learn *why nations go mad*. My application had been accepted. This to me had been some sort of validation for my belief that it was possible to pursue such a course of study.

I remember how eagerly I had clung to the idea that a scientific study of human nature would provide me with information that would soothe by virtue of rendering the images of horror living inside of me into comprehensible, scientific information. For a long time I suppressed the doubts that arose in me whenever I reflected seriously on the neatly designed experiments that were supposedly going to provide the answers. Some even did, to a certain extent, such as the work by Kurt Levin, the MIT and California studies on prejudice, the famous Milgram experiment on following orders. Only, I felt they never touched the core, the fiery volcano underneath, the stuff that contains the abysmal evil, the stratum in which I had lived as a child.

The strongest hope for me continued to rest in psychoanalysis. But in time, I had to face it: the theory of psychoanalysislike systems theorywas only a scaffold for my work with families and individuals. Long ago it had ceased to be of help to me. More and more I felt like someone who had been locked out of basement and attic in her own house, where there was food and wine, but also the terrible monsters. I recall feeling quite desperate. I turned to Eastern religions

and meditation, even though, when I began reading Jung, I learned that he warns Westerners against this approach.

Perhaps it is because much has happened in the world since Jung wrote his warning in the preface to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. I see myself described when he writes that meditation serves a need to keep at bay the overwhelming energies of the omnipresent collective psyche, which he believed was generally not a need of Western man. However, meditation did help me. Because of it, gradually the feeling of shallow barrenness began to lift, once more I was beginning to be aware of having some depth. The images that came during meditation were vivid, frightening in their intensity. But they were endurable, because in accordance with the instructions I had studied, my focus remained on the task of breathing, and so these images came and went. Today I believe that perhaps this meditation was a very important and necessary first step in the task upon which I am about to embark in dead earnest. Meditation restored balance to my life. It was a most important counterpoint to my busy, even workaholic existence.

I remember a summer in the mountains when I rose every morning at five o'clock, then hiked into the forest behind our cabin to meditate. Frequently, one or two dogs would suddenly appear and accompany me on the hike, then be by my side as I sat there, almost motionless. It was so peace giving.

I recall wanting one morning to climb an especially steep and lush little mountain. But an inner voice sprang to life and firmly told me I was not to meditate on that hill. I obeyed. Meditation had reawakened in me the need to take those inner voices seriously. When I did not, one time, I ended up injuring my knee. But perhaps that was a blessing in disguise, for while I was laid up with the cast, I began to study Jung in earnest.

I began this studyno, really, it just happened. When I came home from the hospital, I noted with amazement that during the previous weeks I had checked out a whole series of Jung's *Collected Works* from the university library. Now I can still see myself lying on our deck, a book by Jung propped up in front of me, while from below came the voices of James, now almost eighteen, his friends and his father. James and his friends were about to graduate from high school, and they were busy rebuilding an old Volkswagen van which they were going to drive through Mexico into San Salvador, on a summer-long surfing adventure. I could hear Virgil's calm voice explaining the most diverse elements, from the care and handling of an old engine to the precautions that should surround any adventure with a woman. I felt a warm glow as I heard him speak. When earlier I had expressed my doubts as this venture was being planned, James had looked at me in utter astonishment and said, "You could hardly object, Mother, after what you did at my age!" So I had been silenced.

My fears about the venture being planned on the patio below me were dis-

tanced by my becoming engrossed in the writings of Jung. I did not realize at the time that reading Jung would not only help me get through a difficult summer, but would also turn out to be most helpful in all of my life, at first especially in my clinical work, and then particularly with my most difficult project families.

The project! Should I someday write another unfinished paper, "Memories of a Project Directed"? For so many years it was my life! My involvement had begun early in graduate school, when a few of us in the clinical program were invited to participate with a team of faculty members in research discussions which would eventually lead to the design of the project.

The primary question being addressed at that distant time was this: "What are the conditions that antecede a first occurrence of schizophrenia in a young adult? What might be gleaned from a study of his or her family before a possible breakdown, before the terrible disruption of family life, that is part of such an event, has taken place?"

Our research plan was unique not only in its complexity but also because we chose to study families who had applied for help at our university clinic, and therefore were not volunteers who came for reasons of service, payment or fame. The involvement of such volunteers was of a different nature from that of a family who saw themselves as needing psychological help. The adolescents in "our" families, while troubled, were functioning individuals and from the beginning I was able to work clinically with many of them. This strengthened a most necessary feeling for me, namely that we were helping human beings, not just collecting data. No "medical experiments" for methat was a strong feeling.

We learned about the life and nature of each family in many different ways. We worked with them individually, in dyads and triads. We administered a great variety of psychological tests, and we invited each family member to share with us certain fantasies they might hold about others in the family. Through observation at tasks both serious and playful we learned about them as a primary group. Finally, especially for me, because it was so much my interest, there was the intensive clinical work.

Never shall I forget my amazement, even reverence, in discovering repeatedly how each family, each couple or individual presented me with a new challenge, a new insight into human nature. As we worked, the family would reveal itself as an integral and unique organism, a system of interrelated parts containing incredible complexities. Here the themes expressed on projective tests by individual members would be enacted without anyone in the family being aware of it. Here a child's efforts to heal in reaction to the psychological distress of a parent could be seen with the greatest clarity. And yet when I worked with a single family member, an entirely new and different picture would emerge.

It became fascinatingly clear to me how each family was enmeshed in differ-

ent ways in the surrounding culture, and how a parent would at times embody a different aspect of his or her own cultural background in the relationship with each child. That observation was of great value to me personally, for it validated in the outer world a personal experience I had lived, yet not really understood, until that time: My German-American father, so torn in his loyalties, had presented his German side to all members of the familyexcept to me. He had been bitterly opposed to the Nazi system, yes, but according to my siblings he had always insisted to them that because of his parents he was German. Not to me. I had learned about the kinds of games American boys played, about American Sunday school and American Sunday dinners, about the joys of reading the *Saturday Evening Post*. It seems to me now that the side my father had been taught to suppress in his family of origin, where he was only allowed to speak German, he could bring alive in response to the child toward whom he felt perhaps as conflicted as he did about himself.

Tears come to my eyes when I recall that special, mischievous look that would come over his face when he would chide me during World War Two with the question, "Been listening to the BBC again?" Often, I would have to nod my head guiltily. I did not care that I could be shot for treason, and so I listened, but I was really being disobedient, especially toward my mother, who was much concerned with the danger. Father's urgent next question, often asked in English, would be, "And? What did they say? Tell me!" What would follow would be a few minutes of intimate discussion, relished by both of us.

Yes, parents were often utterly emneshedwith their own ethnic mores and backgrounds, both that of their immediate family of origin and that of the larger culture. Angers, guilts and obligations that had been passed along through several generations would spring alive in family therapy sessions. How often I was reminded of my mother's Prussian roots, that Bismarckian heritage, which with devotion, pain and loyalty she carried throughout her life. What eye-openers, those sessions when I invited a grandparent to participate. Seeing a troubled mother in her relationship to her own mother, observing the springing alive of the archaic powers of a dark Demeter in interaction with her Kore, allowed me to understand much better the relationship I had had with my own mother.

Sometimes I would invite parents to discuss their own upbringing, and how they were disciplined, as the "troubled adolescent" and I would observe their discussion from another room on a video monitor. The young people usually loved learning about their parents in this way, especially since quite often these parental discussions went from childhood experiences to the happy days of their courtship, giving the child a chance to see the sweetness that had then been between two individuals who at this point were often engaged in bitter battles. These scenes reminded me of the moments when my own mother had told me

about the days of her courtship, shortly before World War One. "I was so happy being married," I recall her saying, "that I used to sit up in bed in the early morning and awaken your father by singing opera arias to him." Mother had had a trained, beautiful voice.

As I learned how the environment in all its many formsschool, neighborhood, friendships, jobsimpinged upon the boundaries of these families, I became especially curious about the kinds of psychic barriers families utilized to protect themselves. I was thinking here of the blaring radios, the constant, vicious propaganda and the weird transformations that occurred during my own childhood. At moments I would feel myself become oddly touched with gratitude, that in contrast to my own experience, the impingements that these families encounteredespecially on the part of officialdomwere usually of a neutral or even benevolent nature. This was something I also observed in the schools my own children were attending. Instead of having to sit motionless, hands locked on the desk, as I had had to do, in the schoolrooms of my children there was motion and play; there was a wall filled with the students' drawings and writings, and for James even a patio surrounded by green shrubs, with mats for playing. Often, when I went to my children's schools for some official event I had to fight tears of intense emotion. These schools were manifest proof that this culture at its core was benevolent, was functioning, was not psychotic.

I need to get on. Yet each remaining document wants its moment of attention. So it shall be.

In my hands now is a file of two conferences on "Authority and Leadership," residential conferences based on the theories of Melanie Klein and those of Kurt Levin, one of the master theorists on the true concept of Gestalt. Attending these conferences, I believed, would further deepen my understanding of groups, of the family system. They did. But they also did much more. They are evidence to me that I never seem to really know why I find myself in certain situations.

Both transported me almost instantly back to Nazi Germany. Having assumed after the first conference that now I had it all figured out, had been "inoculated," so to speak, against the inner assaults of pain and guilt, I had to realize during the second that for me things went infinitely deeper than that.

At each conference, in a day or two, gone were the social masks of the professional participants. Issues were fought over with the same irrational furore and lack of objective perspective as in the most troubled of our families. But more fascinating and also much more upsetting for me was the emergence of themes that apparently lay buried in our culture: World War Two and the Holocaust; women's rights; Black rage; the Vietnam War. These were the issues that were wrestled over as most personal, a life-and-death importance attached to them, with a correspondingly intense emotionality.

During the second conference in particular, lasting ten long days, I observed something that retrospectively I can only call the dance of the archetypes. One memory stands out especially clearly and painfully, that of a professional woman whose parents had been incarcerated at Bergen Belsen, a "survivors' child." She became hysterical about the smoking in the conference rooms, wailing with daily increasing intensity, in a most pitiful way, that she could not tolerate any kind of smoke. As the tension mounted, so of course did the smoke. One conference leader got into the habit of lighting up very close to her with the words, "I really do like to smoke." Yet she seemed unable to pack her bags and leave. Her life, I learned, consisted of work, more work and still more work. Her parents' suffering had become her own burden, unshakable, even after a full course of psychoanalysis. I found myself thinking, "If she marries, her children will have to carry her burden. And she is just oneof how many?" At this point I became filled with a feeling of despair.

Veterans among the participants told us that the battles at this conference were of an unequaled intensity. Few were able to sleep at all. Toward the end, various people seriously complained they had been "crucified," while others stated in highly emotional tones that it was here they had found their "true salvation." I was especially struck when a high-ranking church official pronounced that he had seen his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, in the most arrogant of all the conference leaders. A woman who had turned herself into a most convincing embodiment of a haughty queen established an equally bizarre following.

What had happened? From a Jungian point of view, a most intense activation of the collective unconscious. Indeed, I saw unleashed energies of the kind I had seen in Nazi Germany. The conference leader who liked to smoke so much had become a sadistic *Bonze;* the church leader, as well as others, had demonstrated to me a most vivid *Umfallen,* the dreadful "toppling-over"; while the smoke-allergic womana psychoanalyst in professional lifewas a living example of the terrible extent to which some individuals carry the burden of a collective trauma. And that had touched my own wound, not only in the reawakening of feelings of guilt, but in a deep, general sadness about the plight of mankind.

A more personal experience added to my grief. I have gotten quite used to issues of the Holocaust being raised again and again, and know that each time I will be asked certain questions, to which I have learned to respond in appropriate, if painful ways. I have also made my peace with the fact that afterward, each time, it is my task to renew my acceptance of this vague but intensely experienced sense of guilt, which I have carried since Switzerland and have identified as a case of collective guilt, a concept Jung vividly describes in a paper called "After the Catastrophe." With that there is always a resurrection of anguish.

I recall the moment on the day before I left for the conference that became

such a counterpoint for me while I was away. A group of us, students and faculty, were having a late afternoon snack in the Student Union. In the course of the conversation, Mark, friend and senior colleague, began to talk about the cathedrals of Europe. He highly praised those of France and Italy, then with a demeaning comment pointedly dismissed the cathedrals of Germany as being definitely of interior quality. I have trained myself never, never to speak up in such a situation. Finally, Mark slammed his fist on the table and said: "Erika, when will I ever succeed in getting you to respond in defense of your homeland? It is amazing! I've tried for years! And never once have I succeeded!"

Something entirely different happened at this second conference. Indeed, the Holocaust was one of the very major issues, for there was not just one but many survivors' children present, now adult professionals. As we interacted, I received a great deal of acceptance, support and yes, deep caring, from exactly those individuals from whom I had expected a chilling distance. And that, curiously, did not lessen my pain but intensified it.

We were staying at an Ivy League college. Below the window of my room there was a pond teeming with all sorts of water fowl. Early each morning I would jog along a path leading around it and then through a stretch of thick forest. But on the next to last morning, the normally pleasant run began to feel eerie. There had been a thunderstorm during the night, and I had gotten up somewhat earlier, so it was still quite dark. Suddenly, a huge black dog came running directly toward me, and I became quite frightened. However, the dog began to trot right next to my side, so close that at each step his side touched my leg. He was obviously quite friendly, and I began to relax. But as we ran around a curve on the path, deep in the forest now, a second dog appeared, a huge and ferocious German shepherd. He came at us with teeth bared, a terrible growl in his throat. There was no mistaking his intention. He was in a rage and on the attack. Before I quite knew what was happening, the two dogs were in a terrible fight. I ran on as fast as I could, shaking with fear, expecting at any moment to be attacked from behind. Instead, in time, my friend, the big black dog, reappeared, coat ruffled, spittle all over his face, again hugging my side, as we ran back to safety.

The symbolism of the fighting dogs stayed with me. It was what we had been livingthe alchemists' "ferocious inferior coniunctio"!through riots in the nearby town and even on the tranquil campus, also the Holocaust, and above all, the Vietnam war. Vietnam, just about over, with all its hideous images, had been a constant psychic presence, adding to my strongly reawakened feelings of collective guilt. That night, I dreamt:

A Vietnamese man is sitting on a pedestal, in meditative pose. To his right, a typical Western party with much alcohol and noise is in progress. . . . To his

left, there is a terrible image of deathcorpses in cobwebs. I see myself crawling toward them.

I woke up in terror. The dream reminded me of an inner voice I had heard years ago, in the early sixties, a time when Buddhist monks in Vietnam were immolating themselves in fiery pyres of protest against what was happening to their country. "If you are serious about your 'never again' promise," my voice had said, "you should do that too. Immolate yourself!" I had buried myself in work.

At the airport on the way home from the conference, reminders of my past were further underscored by a giant black tornado cloud which brought vividly to mind my early childhood terrors. Oh, how powerfully returned the fear and pain which meditation and long hours of hard work had kept at bay!

Once more I decided that succor from the reawakened inner turmoil was to be found in meaningful, steady, hard work. I planned to begin right away on new papers. But the writing is still unfinished, the preliminary notes unassembled.

In notes for the first, I wrote:

> One might look at the Germany in which I grew up as a family gone (driven?) psychotic within the tribe of European nations. In studying extremely disturbed families, in which the irrational dominates the entire system, we have found that there is a particularly lethal triad of methods by which parentsalbeit unconsciouslycommunicate with their children. Here are the three aspects of such communications: 1) a clear implication of the dominant parent's superior knowledge, ability and expertise that must never be challenged; 2) the prediction of dire consequences should the child engage in any kind of independent, autonomous activity or creativity not sanctioned by this dominant parent; 3) provision of convincing information that the child is weak, somehow defective or inferior to others, yet in spite of this is very much loved by the all-powerful parent.
>
> A child reared in such a family has an excellent chance of never growing up at all. And such, as judged from my personal perspective, were the conditions established in the Germany of the Third Reich, among Adolf Hitler, his followers, his representatives and "his people," the Germans.
>
> To the first point: One of the most insistently repeated commands during the Nazi regime was a series of slogans which communicated imperatives such as these: "You know absolutely nothing; only those in authority know!" "Der Führer knows everything!" "Der Führer is never wrong!" "Your one and only responsibility is to obey!"
>
> To the second point: The officially accepted doctrine, as personally experienced by me, especially in my schooling, made it abundantly clear that any endeavor to be separate, to be an individual and apart from the group, was an evil thing that would have dire consequences.
>
> To the third point: As Germany became depleted in the course of the war, as battles were lost, cities bombed and burned, messages attributed to Adolf Hitler more and more hinted at his bitter disappointment in "his chosen

people," with implications that the German people were somehow inferior after all, for otherwise they would continue winning until the *Endsieg* (final victory)yet that in spite of this they continued to be much loved by their Führer.

My vivid recall of these messages had made me cringe once again. I had stopped writing for a while, then made myself continue:

In such a deeply troubled system, be it a family, a community or a country, I no longer think that any single explanation is adequate, with one possible exception, namely that which Jung has delineated in great detail for the individual, which may also hold true for the family, group or nation. It is that an enduring, deep, psychic imbalance brings about an influx from the collective unconscious into the domain of the ego, to the extent that one falls into a state of possession; one ceases to be "one's self." In such a state one has been overwhelmed with contents from the archetypal psyche, that raw, living energy that forms the core of all living creatures, in a form that cannot, perhaps by its very essence, be assimilated into the consciousness of a group. It is therefore a factor that dehumanizes.

I had filed it away. I simply could not continue to write about that which dehumanizes just then.

Here are notes on the second paper I was going to write after the conference, entitled "On a German Children's Book: *Struwelpeter*."

I was still quite small when I learned to read, primarily because no one seemed to have the time to read to me. As a clinician, I am suspicious of this business of being so very, very busy which pervaded my childhood home. I have seen enough of it in troubled families to feel I understand its genesis. After all, there was enough help in the household. Why should there be such a constant hustle and bustle unless it was in response to some ill-defined inner urgency which was already then beginning to drive everyone? Indeed, I can remember the feeling of sudden, overwhelmingly intense bursts of energy. These may well have been my own experience of the powerful activation of the German collective psyche then in progress . . .

When I was about three years old, one of the many housekeepers that came and went during that time said to me one day, "Here, I'll show you how to read. That'll solve the problem."

The book she used to teach me was called *Struwelpeter*. As the subtitle explained, it is supposedly a book of "Cheerful Stories and Cute Pictures for Children Ages 3 to 6."

But to me, neither were the stories cheerful nor were the pictures cute. Indeed, both were terrifying. The opening story tells of a little boy with impossibly long fingernails and long, uncombed hair; he is shamed and ridiculed in a most humiliating fashion for his refusal to have his nails trimmed or his hair combed.

Difficult moments during child-rearing indeed. I recall my own little son going through a period when I could only trim his fingernails or cut his hair if the cut-off pieces were carefully put into an envelope and stored in a safe

place. They were part of him, he insisted. Recalling the horror I had felt as a three year old, I responded uncritically and the problem soon faded.

In *Struwelpeter,* however, things become worse in story after story. There is the tale of a little girl who had been left all alone in the house. Little Pauline is happily skipping through the rooms when suddenly she sees a shiny box of matches. She decides to make a fire, as she has often seen her mother do, forgetting in her excitement her mother's warnings about matches. Nor does she notice the cries of the household cats. With a lit match in hand she begins to dance around the room. Alas, soon her apron catches on fire, then her hair, then the rest of her clothes, her hands, and finally, in a dreadfully vivid picture, the entire child is shown engulfed in a mass of flames. This is followed by the sad picture of poor Pauline's ashesall that is left of her, the text explainsand the two weeping cats.

Many children suck their thumbs. Mine did. I did myself, albeit secretly. Therefore the story of Conrad in *Struwelpeter* was material for nightmares. Conrad is also left home alone. Mother leaves Conrad with the stern warning not to suck his thumb in her absence, because if he does, a "tailor-man" with huge scissors might appear and cut off Conrad's thumbs as quickly as one cuts paper. But no sooner has Mother disappeared that Conrad forgets all about her warning and pops his thumb into his mouth. And just as fast the door flies open and in walks the dreaded tailor with his huge scissors. With two swift cuts he severs both of Conrad's thumbs. "Poor Conrad," relates the text underneath a picture showing a weeping boy with blood dripping from mutilated hands. That is how the returning mother finds her son.

And so forth: children are brutally bitten, drowned, blackened. The most outstanding feature of this book, to my mind, is that in most of them a horrible consequence turns a minor infraction into a tragedy or even death for the child. I remember as a child worrying for days about how Conrad would manage without his thumbs, how Pauline's parents might feel. There is no saving grace in these stories. Children are given responsibility far beyond their capability, and punishments for minor transgressions are quick and final. Moreover, the more horrible events tend to come from "the outside," from a mythical realm against which the child's parents are powerless.

Recently, the contents of this book have been of special interest to me, because of some of the findings in our studies of troubled families. There is the parents' failure to accurately assess what is reasonable to expect of the child in terms of self-control, so vividly delineated in *Struwelpeter*. We have also found that dire outcomes, often attributed to mythical outside forces, are routinely predicted by the parents of our most troubled adolescents. Such predictions seem to have as consequence an excessive fearfulness and shyness on the part of the young person, which in turn seems to inhibit learning to make one's own decisions. The view in such families seems to be that living is a terribly dangerous business; indeed, one might want to forget about it, try to just get by, somehow. We have observed this reaction not only in the actual interactions of such families, but also in their projective test materials.

But since a thrust toward maturation and greater differentiation seems to be basic to the human species, the young person is faced with a terrible conflict, a conflict so severe that often the very core of the personality is

deeply and adversely affected. A feeling of anxiousness seems to pervade their days. In some instances, a deliberate suppression of the emotions, a stance of stoicism or toughness appears to be adopted in reaction to the underlying sense of basic insecurity.

In rereading *Struwelpeter,* I find myself thinking about a statement made by a colleague of C.G. Jung: "Certain Nazis made a sport of trying to kill all their feelings. The artificial destruction and hardening of feeling was supposed to be heroic."

I had gotten no further with this paper. "A sport?" I had wondered. For it had suddenly struck me forcefully that anyone whose feeling life had become suffused with terror, inadequacy and utter helplessness might also choose to harden him or herself into nonfeeling or cease to live. Myself included.

It is this issue of fleeing into nonfeeling which I am shocked to find in reading over my journal entries of that time. For weeks, months, I as an individual am not mentioned, have disappeared. The writing is fact oriented to a remarkable degree, the subject matter solely concerned with others, without mentioning any relationship to me as a person, just objective discussions about this individual or that patient-family, a particular student, a new idea with respect to teaching. No wonder that in the midst of outward success I sensed an increasing despair on the inside. And meditation did not help.

Indeed, I have to recognize it, as I stand here, slowly and reflectively putting my past into boxes. It had been one thing to see the relevance of Jung's theoretical framework for my work, quite another to embrace it personally. Regarding the workings of the family, I was making use of his ideas in many ways. Their application demonstrated to me again and again why the reductive psychoanalytical approach, communication and systems theories alone, were truly insufficient.

But my next step had been enormously difficult, for like some of my adolescent patients, who were so often convinced that any new venture would certainly lead to disaster, so it looked like courting disaster to me to one more time submit to the analytic scrutiny of another human being.

I remember skiing one Christmas morning that year. I was on an isolated slope, all alone. The mountains surrounding me looked dark and foreboding, and it was extremely cold. There was a deep frozenness in me as well.

"You must do something! Soon!" I heard an inner voice, speaking urgently. "Soon!" Oh, how I disliked the urgency of that voice! Did it not know I was like the burnt child who is forever afraid of fire? My burning had occurred, or reoccurred, in so many of my experiences with Dr. Kassler.

Finally I had a dream which managed to make me feel somewhat safer.

An old gentleman, looking somewhat like the German-Jewish Jungian analyst I met when our students needed a faculty chaperone to see a film and hear a lecture on Jung, was standing at the entrance of a most remarkable room. In the

middle of this room was a giant table covered with ancient manuscripts and medieval-looking maps. On the walls there were shelves and shelves filled with books. In the background, I noted antique-looking retorts which sat on an old stove. The scene was like an ancient alchemical laboratory, such as I had seen depicted in one of Jung's books.

"Come in, come in," said the old man, invitingly, pointing to the texts laid out on the table, to the books on shelves, the retorts in the background.

What made the dream so unique and offered a new perspective was that in it I clearly felt myself being invited in to share these riches. This stood in significant contrast to the image of a traditional therapist-patient relationship. It is an image that is still very, very important to me, one I try to keep in consciousness at all times in my own work.

When I looked up the analyst in waking life, he did not hold out much hope of my being able to do the necessary work. He told me that all the other Germans he had worked with in analysis had invariably left when archetypal material began to emerge.

An ominous feeling. I then realized he represented my last hope for some sort of understanding of my inner turmoil and attacks of utter despair, an understanding for which I now really hungered. Yet I could also hear the clanging of a warning bell inside, telling me it was going to be very difficult, if not impossible. Otherwise, others would not have left. After all, I was no stranger to the "dropping of the hot coals" phenomenon that the running away of these patients suggested.

I am holding in my hand that three-ring note-binder which contains many of my thoughts and ideas, thus representing my unused creative potential, my failed dreams, my thwarted desire to attain at long last a feeling of worth, a feeling that I too am truly contributing to the human endeavor.

Why has so much of it come to naught? Oh yes, in the quietness of this evening, in this room like an air raid shelter where so much of me has tried to live, to strive, I can face it now with a new claritythanks in part to my encounter with Eli. It is, of course, the "dark apparition," that dark god that lives within me, the *one* whom I seem to have harbored almost as long as I have lived, and may always harbor, the forbidding *one*. Certain emotional states, the slightest hint that someone is envious, a colleague's teasing remark about my thoroughness, somebody's praise, whatever it may be that gives him or her extra power, had tended to freeze me into immobility.

Speak about envy! Speak about that almost unbearable shadow that raises its dark specter whenever I saw someone doing, achieving what I knew I was also capable of, yet had no inner license for! When like Tantalus I felt myself being teased with the fruits of success, only to be yanked back by this vague, yet over-

powering inner restriction.

Recently I have thought a lot about *him*. Now it feels that this was perhaps preparation for my encounter with Eli. But even setting that aside, I have felt so keenly his destructive influence on my creativity during all these years, I had to wonder what continued to sustain him.

So I had written in my journal:

> It is difficult to imagine, let alone reconstruct in consciousness, the potency held by the Nazi invectives that one knows nothing, that one has only one responsibilityto obey. To obey without even daring to think about what one is asked to do or not do. Such instructions, repeated daily, like a collective mantra, fester in one's soul as long as any significant portion of them remains in the unconscious. Yet how can they possibly be made conscious if at some level an individual is absolutely convinced that he or she knows nothing at all, and carries the conviction that the only thing permitted and therefore worth doing is to obey? How to develop the honest daring to take the initiative, with such an invective close to one's soul?

"Only with great difficulty," I had answered my own question.

I continued: "Recently, I read a book about the Third Reich written by a German psychiatrist with a Freudian orientation . . ."

I recall how very troubled I had been by portions of that book. Reading it, I could hear in the author's words the sounds of the language used in Hitler's Reich. Especially when he wrote about Adolf Hitler, I saw reflected in the author's wordsno doubt in contrast to his consciously-held attitudea deep and shining loyalty to *mein Führer,* surviving in the depth of a man whom I knew to be pursuing a very humanitarian-oriented career.

Not too long ago I had been introduced to him at a convention. I had liked him at once. What distressing evidence then, these passages, for the tenacity with which the images of that time had been pounded into the consciousness of an entire people, how it held fast in the depth of one's psyche.

Not only his. I keenly recall my time with Dr. Kassler, where that certainly had been a living experience for me. That irrefutable evidence of Nazi images within my being had been my greatest source of terror. And I had felt that no one would ever understand. Now, with my Jungian analysis, I was beginning to feel understood, thus I did not feel so terribly alone. Moreover, I discovered that through study and work I had gained a much more objective perspective, and I felt able to carry the burden of further discovery.

Until that day at Yad Vashem, at the memorial to the Holocaust in Israel. Dreams had suggested I visit Israel. Even now, as I reflect on that journey, on the many sacred places Virgil and I visited, the feelings of elation that I experienced almost throughout our tour, I can feel an inner glow once more.

But at the end there was Yad Vashem.

It was the second time in my life that I experienced emotions of indescribable and total isolation in the face of the incomprehensible, of which somehow I am a part. These feelings, so much like those I had experienced as a refugee in Switzerland when confronted with the Third Reich's doings, returned to me at Yad Vashem with a terrible intensity. A circle closed for me at Yad Vashem. Here, as before, I found myself face to face with utter, inhuman horror. But at Yad Vashem its divine origin truly was revealed to me with dreadful clarity. This revelation contained the dark apparition of my childhood and adolescence, in greater and more horrible magnitude. Facing it inside that dark Memorial, as I looked at the black basalt slab with its many names of concentration camps, its almost invisible eternal flame, I felt myself to be the only human soul on the planet earth. I heard myself ask silently, "All of these?"

And a roaring, yet silent voice with the hardness of steel and the coldness of ice answered: "Yes. All of these. And more!"

Stunned, I stood there, motionless, tears pouring down my face. I felt that I would remain there, standing just so, until the end of time.

But then there was Virgil. Virgil, never before sympathetic toward my emotionality, never attempting to comprehend my inner agonies, now put his arm around my shoulder and gently led me outside. I felt he was bringing me back from the brink of an unfathomable abyss.

It is especially this one incident, in our long and difficult time together, that holds for me the clear foreknowledge of the coming separation between Virgil and myself, such a painful thing to contemplate. Israel had transformed Virgil, had taken him away from his Peter Pan stance of "I'll never grow up!" Afterward, it made me very sad to realize the temporariness of his transformation.

As for Yad Vashem, even now the memory is painful. Yet I cherish it, it was such a necessary experience for me, such a fulcrum in my life. It was as if I had suffered burns all over. For days I could not stop the tears. On the flight home I fell ill with a high fever.

Hopeless, I had felt then, my quest to understand and with such understanding somehow redeem myself, retrieve that part of my soul that had gone to the underworld as I was first confronted with the horrors commemorated at Yad Vashem. Shallow and empty any attempt to give meaning to my life, in the face of this block of basalt and the *one* who had called it into life. His was the icecold voice of murderous triumph, mine the sobs of the hopelessly guilt-ridden. No analysis of any kind could exorcise that sort of horror.

There were dreams then, more terrifying than any in my early weeks with Dr. Kassler. Dreams in which I wander over fields of ice and snow, struggling with a terrible sense of confusion, knowing I am in danger of losing my mind. In one:

I tell Virgil about a poem I had attempted to write in waking life, about my

experience at Yad Vashem. I explain to him: "A collective psychosis is part of this material. Whenever I come near it, I am touched by it, I become a stranger to myself." Virgil stares at me uncomprehendingly.

I began to fear that perhaps I would end up losing my mind in earnest. Finally, there was a dream that suggested otherwise.

The wife of my Jungian analyst, herself an analyst, and I are riding together on a sled across a snowy field. Suddenly our sled begins to plunge down into a deep abyss. As we descend, I am convinced we shall both perish in these depths, as our little sled will surely grind to a halt. In total darkness we ride on and on. At last, the sled on its own ascends the hill on the other side of the valley. It comes to a stop on a green meadow where there is a round table, food and drink. We are welcomed by a group from within the "Jungian family."

This dream forcefully brought to my awareness the kindness of that woman, which I had experienced very soon after my return from Israel. Having lost her first husband and other members of her family at the hands of Nazi Germany, she let me know in just a few words about her own struggles with pain and guilt, and convinced me I would be able to achieve an understanding of this material through my analytic work, and that even if not, it was worthwhile to keep on struggling.

"Try to love the questions themselves," writes the poet Rilke.

As I attempted at least to be friends with my nightmarish question about the meaning of my life in the context of this most recent experience of horror, most of my energies turned to the passages I began to record in my very special white and purple notebook. This spelled the beginning of the end of my time at the Golden University.

More relevant by far than all the material on the shelves, all the research notes and computer printouts, were the words I wrote in this notebook. One passage stands out especially clearly, from Jung's *Dreams, Memories, Reflections,* where he tells about finding his own myth. "In the most natural way," he wrote, "I took it upon myself to get to know my myth, and I regarded this as a task of tasks."

"Task of tasks." I remember copying the words, again and again, all stirred up, underlining them, and also the phrase, "in the most natural way." I added: "Since I am still living, in spite of my prohibiting inner dark apparition, that now must become my task of tasks as well!"

What happened next was as puzzling as it was relieving. That "other one" in me, Wiese, that "stormy inner child," as my analyst has called her, suddenly became very alive, and for once in a positive way, not with sobs and utter despair. I felt quite happy for the first time sincewell, I cannot remember ever having

had such a moment of serene contentment.

Of course the doubts surfaced soon after. "Another career?" asked the inner critic. "Without the university, you'll be more depressed than ever," admonished another voice, one I recognized as that of an inner Dr. Kassler. Pages and pages in the notebook cover the inner battle that ensued. Then this entry:

> Today, as I was working at my luncheon table in Science Court, writing my panel presentation of the Holocaust, I met Eli, Dr. Eli Freudenbacher . . .

Eli, intuitive and quick minded, rushed into my psychic life with the energy of a whirlwind. How I shall miss him!

He so much reminded me of the "Jewish family man" who not so long ago came to me in a dream and demanded with great intensity that it was I, and not anyone else, whom he wanted his silent, troubled women to work with in family therapy.

For days I had struggled with a paper for a panel discussion on the Holocaust. I was going to talk on Jung's notion of collective guilt. The paper was not coming together; what I had written was poor, the words had no feel to them. I had taken it with me to the little eating place at the edge of Science Court where I frequently have lunch. Usually, I love to sit at one of the tables that is partially shaded by a tree, enjoy the view over the distant hills or read as I eat. Today was different, for I was immersed in an agonizing struggle.

Suddenly I heard a booming voice above me. "The Holocaust and Jung's Notion of Collective Guilt. Hmquite the title. Do you see yourself as survivor or as guilt-carrier? Both? Or perhaps neither?"

The large, dark brown eyes of the man towering above me shone in a pale face framed with dark curly hair. The rest of his features, which were mostly hidden by an incredibly thick, black beard, revealed a very high forehead, an eagle's nose, a surprisingly delicate mouth. He was an imposing figure.

"Guilt-carrier, I suppose, at least in part," I replied, feeling my defenses rush into place. Then I tried to disperse some of the energy he was radiating by asking, "Who are you to be reading over someone's shoulder?"

He bowed formally.

"Eli Freudenbacher, Professor of Physics."

Close up, he looked younger than I had guessed him to be. I'd seen him around. He is considered somewhat of an odd character. At times he appears at the Faculty Club, where my group frequently holds combination luncheons and round-table discussions. But we rarely see him there with a colleague.

Now he looked at me a bit sheepishly. "I apologize," he said. "I really had no right to be doing this, nor to be asking you such a personal question. But when I saw your title my interest got piqued. The issue of the Holocaust is of intense concern to me, you might say it is a painfully unsolved riddle of my life."

As it had been with the Jew in my dream, of whom he reminded me so.

"I'm sorry," I mumbled, wishing I could somehow gracefully pick up my paper, bad as it was, and disappear into my air raid shelter office, just continue my day. Eli's presence was quite overwhelming. It somehow augmented my strong feelings of inadequacy with respect to this coming presentation.

"Don't be," Eli Freudenbacher said firmly. "May I sit down?"

I nodded, gathering my things. Perhaps if I saw someone walking by . . .

"I mean that," he continued. "And don't leave, don't run away because I've been so clumsy. There is something about the way you sat there, and I really would like to hear about the material you are working on."

He looked at me, an almost boyish and curiously longing expression on his face. I could feel my own facial muscles relax somewhat in response.

Surprisingly quickly I found myself actually sharing with this strange man my deep frustration about my paper, feeling myself suddenly long for his help, as I explained: "The trouble is, every second paragraph or so I keep sliding into phrases like, 'I was a child at that time, I didn't really know, but my parents, who were adults, didn't really either, I think, although I've never really had the chance to ask. In fact, many people . . .'" I broke off, then continued, in a rush: "You see, everyone around me was so damned scared, no one could process anythingat least that's what I think now . . ."

I must have failed to hide my mounting tension, for suddenly his hand was resting on my arm.

"Professor . . ." he said, "Gee, I don't even know your name."

"Erika Fergus. And it's Adjunct Associate, and I'm a clinical psychologist."

My shyness was mounting.

"Ah. Erika, I can call you that, can't I, you're much too close to your material. Perhaps I can really be of help. I'm experienced. I've talked with my father about quite a few writings of a similar nature. You'll see."

With surprising eagerness he offered to meet with me again at lunch the next day. He suggested we hold a dialogue about my material, that my efforts to explain to him in detail what I wanted to communicate would help objectify it for me. I on my part had to acknowledge that I was truly grateful for this prospect of help. I also quickly sensed that he was really curious, wanted to learn about Jung's theory of collective guilt. That meant I had something to offer in turn. It caused my missionary zeal to communicate about Jung to spring alive.

As it turned out, we met not once but many times, always at that sunny table at the edge of Science Court. Our discussions about my paper and Jung soon led to our sharing portions of personal history and concerns.

Oh deeply wounded Eli, son of a once idealistic young German student of classical Greek, turned biblical scholar in response to the psychosis of his

beloved Germany. Pain-carrying Eli, with his shy mother, daugther of Eastern Hassidic Jews, still grieving for her parents, whom she had lost at Auschwitz. He was to me the embodiment of the brilliant survivors' child whose life had been deeply marred by his parents' suffering.

But he also impressed me as being wedded to his science, his profession and his loved and fervently pursued hobby. It is through this, I grew to think, that he maintains a connection to the divine element of the psyche, the Numinosum. I remember him saying to me one day:

"When I see a star that has exploded I can consider it just a magnificent happening, a brilliant display of the divine power. Yet who knows about the suffering that explosion might have caused, what wrathful fire of a *deus irae* shed upon the innocents, from the perspective of some distant life form. Only, in contemplating the stars I do not have to worry about issues of good and evil, these opposites that you talk about so matter-of-factlyand do we know what they are, after all?"

Having attended a brilliant lecture by a renowned Jungian, I had attempted to explain to him what I had learned about the essence of Jung's views on the religious situation. I had said that in Jung's view the modern man is an individual who is no longer contained in the connecting myth of an established religion or group; that this may happen to the individual who by virtue of his or her keen awareness of man's situation in the cosmos has become solitary, no longer nourished by identification with any kind of belief system; that in the process of this becoming, however, such an individual suffers from spiritual bankruptcy. In order to be healed, and with that help heal the world soul, it is necessary for such a person, Jung's modern man, to hold in awareness the opposites that form the essence of the collective psyche, as well as their energy-laden thrust to connect in a joining, called coniunctio.

I had quoted to Eli the opening sentence of Jung's masterpiece, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*that is how the lecturer had begunin which Jung asserts: "The factors which come together in the coniunctio are conceived as opposites, either confronting one another in enmity or attracting one another in love." I had added that the emotional requirements to achieve this aim were extremely difficult, since they concerned primarily those issues to which one has one-sidedly attached one's most intense emotions, a prime example for Western moder man being the issue of good and evil.

How quickly he had grasped the notion that these opposites were only the source of consciousness, the prerequisites, and that to become conscious required much more, namely the actual tolerating, within one's own psyche, of highly charged opposites, both the positive and the negative aspect of an issue. He had understood the energy of intense emotionality in the realm of the psyche to be

akin to high energy potentials in the realm of the physical sciences. Oh, it was a wonderful, fascinating discussion. I took such joy in it.

But then, gradually, his questions about my thoughts with respect to the paper, and about me personally, became probing in a most curious way. I felt as if he were searching for something within me, something I was hiding, that he somehow needed to pull out of me. For some time I was not aware of holding back. I did not really realize myself that indeed I was closing off, responding to Eli's increasing pressure with less and less openness. It was not something that happened because I was growing tired of our meetings; in fact, quite the contrary, I very much looked forward to them, he had become important to me, he is such a fascinating and lovable person. Retrospectively, I believe it happened for two reasons. First, because of that infamous book I had begun to read. Second, and almost equally important, I was beginning to protect Eli. He impressed me as being so very intense, so highly charged with emotion behind his mask of tough, lone-wolf scientist, that I became a little frightened.

I had ordered the book from Germany, believing it might be of relevance for my paper. That proved not to be the case, at least not directly. My reaction to it my struggling not to have to feel the full impact of the horror of this book, that was quite another thing.

"Why are you being like this?" Eli asked one day, exasperation in his voice. "Am I being a pest? Then we should stop. I apologize. I have no right!"

Of course he had the right, in my opinion.

The book is called *Commander of Auschwitz*. It contains the autobiographical confessions of Rudolf Hess.

To my horror, it turned out to be the document of a fervent believer, a man dedicated to doing his duty, as he saw it, to the utmost. A man totally possessed by the black moral and spiritual values of the Third Reich. The detailed description of the event in history that became Auschwitz was intolerable, nauseating to read. Even more, the passages I encountered in hurrying through the dreadful thing strongly reflected the fervent energies of a profound religious beliefa belief most deeply felt and devoutly followed. Indeed, to this man, Adolf Hitler had been Jesus Christ Almighty.

It is altogether different, from a feeling point of view, whether one thinks about this affirmation as an abstract possibilityafter all, certainly it had been hinted at in my German high school yearsor whether one reads it years later, from the perspective of adulthood and far removed from the madness of that time, in a confessional work such as that of Hess.

Almost worse was the response of my unconscious to my reading of this material. A number of dreams addressed the issue of Hitler as Dark Christ figure. The last one was the most explicit:

I have made a hurried visit back to Germany. I am at the railroad station of a small town near where I lived as a child, then known primarily because of its factory where giant railroad locomotives were being built.

I am waiting for the train that will take me to the international airport. There are four of us in the waiting room: the old station master, a young German man with a small child on his arm, and myself. In the center of the room stands a glass cage. Suddenly this cage lights up and in it appears the holographic image of a scene very much like da Vinci's The Last Supper. But in the place of Christ there is Adolf Hitler, and those who surround him are not the ancient disciples but henchmen and followers, men with hard, cold expressions on their faces. In the place of Judas, wearing the checkered pink and white dress my mother had sewn for me out of thirty-three remnant pieces, there am I as a fifteen-year-old girl. An eerie, cold light illuminates the scene.

There is a terrible, yet reverent silence in the room, as we four strangers encircle the image. The image vanishes as my husband and others enter the waiting room. When I want to show it to my husband, the station master insists that it does not exist.

The dream greatly upset me. Had I not been bitterly opposed to that regime? Had I not devoted almost my entire life to the psychological understanding of how a monstrosity such as the Hitler regime could have been unleashed in Germany in the first place? Now indeed I had to practice what I had lectured about to Eli, namely hold in consciousness the opposites contained in the attitudes toward Hitler, adolescent on the one hand and my unconscious one as a disciple on the other.

I reflected upon myself at fifteen. Ah yes, the checkered dress I had often worn "accidentally," in rebellion, on school assembly days, when I had been told to wear an outfit that would simulate the black and white of the BDM uniform.

In the dream there were four of us, a quarternio, image of wholeness, the Self, representing different aspects of Germany, perhaps alluding to an eventual experience of wholeness within me. The old station-master could be seen as a link to the past and officialdom; the young father and child as heirs to the disaster; and I, as the fugitive returned.

What about the suggestion of discipleship? And what am I doing there at all? Those central aspects of my being had been the ones that unconsciously my parents had wanted to deny. In the dream, that theme is given expression. As the war neared its end, as the collective insanity deepened, I was expected by both my parents to be the hero who somehow would redeem the family from intolerable feelings of humiliation. I had felt that clearly. Not just from my mother, in whom it had been quite evident, but also from my father, burdened as he was by a life-long confusion about his national identity. Moreover, for Father, I was

then living out the anger and rebelliousness which he did not dare experience within himself. The disciple who betrays is a rebel. Now I puzzled: had anything happened to me personally at age fifteen that suggested the role of a Judas?

Suddenly I could hear my father's voice, full of despairing anger. A chilly Sunday afternoon in fall, both parents in the yard. Father with a garden tool in hand, a despondent look on his face, talking to Mother. I, as usual, guarding the chickens. Suddenly Father's voice growing loud:

"In Hitler's mind, the bright young people who so devotedly follow him are nothing but objects to be used in his mad endeavors. The young men are for being killed in battle, as he has stated explicitly. And the young womenwell, they are just there for breeding, for breeding like pigsfor making infants to feed his future cannons."

An assumption carefully kept in hiding somewhere inside of me since childhood then hit the frozen ground, as down to the core of my being I knew: *Hitler never did love little girls!* And so I also saw my dream image as representing Germany's abused youth.

Why this particular little town? That image especially suggested to me that the dream was one that referred not just to me but also to a collective happening. A whole series of my dreams, which very clearly refer to the collective experience of Nazi Germany, contain machinery so huge that by its size alone it dwarfs anything human. Locomotives add to this image of inhumanity: they are not only very large and powerful, they pull railroad cars, which in connection with the Third Reich carry the most ominous of associations. And yet, this little town of my childhood is also an image of the opposite. Located in a river valley filled with fruit-arbors, surrounded by vineyard-covered hills dotted with quaint castles, it is a town with a history and a proud cultural heritage.

In the dream, the image of the Last Supper with its revelation of the dark Numinosum, of Hitler as anti-Christ, existed only for the four of us who somehow had a deep psychic connection to it. Indeed, as I kept working with this dream, I knew it to be a "big dream," a dream to be kept in consciousness, to be much reflected upon.

But here was Eli, still looking upset behind the flashes of anger. "I'm annoying you!" he insisted one more time, poised now to get up and leave.

This time it was I who placed a calming hand on the arm of the other. "No," I reassured him, "it's not that at all. It's just that I have come across a book that has upset me most severely, andwell, a dream."

Of course he wanted to hear about both. Especially the book became an obsession with him. How I wished I had never mentioned it! Now I tried quickly to summarize, to dilute. He would have none of it. "Translate for me the passages you consider key," he asked over and over. "I wish now that my German were

functional. It's not. So please." Oh, Eli is most persistent. He asked me again and again, always with a burning intensity.

So I gave in, against my better judgment I agreed to read him a few short selections.

Reading directly from the book, loosely translating, I chose some passages of the author's early life. Then some that factually described the establishment of the Auschwitz concentration camp. I could hardly do it, the horrible facts were intolerable. I decided to finish by reading from the passages that had stirred me the most, just to be done with it:

> Now I was very much calmed down, with the knowledge that we should be spared these blood baths, that even the victims could be protected until the very last moment. Especially this last point had made me worry, when I thought of all the descriptions of the killings that I had been given, . . . the horrible scenes that had been witnessed: The running away of those only wounded, especially the women and children. The so frequent suicides of the soldiers of the commando troops who could not tolerate any longer this wading in blood . . .

I stopped. On Eli's face an indescribable look. "Go on!"

> The little children often whined while undressing, because of the strangeness, but if the mother, or the special commando person spoke to them reassuringly, they quieted down and went into the chambers playfully, teasing one another. I also observed that women, who suspected or knew what confronted them, the fear of death in their eyes, still managed to harness the energy to be playful with their children, to encourage them . . .
>
> It happened that women, in the moment that they discovered what would happen next, would scream curses upon us. I also experienced that a woman tried to push her children out of the chamber as the doors were being closed, crying out in tears, "Please, at least let my dear children live!" In the spring of 1942, hundreds of human beings, in the springtime of their lives, went to their death. Most of them were unsuspecting, as they walked beneath the blossoming fruit arbors of the farmyards. I can still see it vividly before me, this image of the becoming and the dying, it is in front of my eyes in this very moment . . .
>
> When I received the order . . . to carry out this destruction, I could not imagine how that would be. But the reasons I was given made me accept this order as one that was all right. I did not think more about it. I had been given the order, and I had to carry it out. Whether it was necessary or notI could not permit myself a judgment about that. Once the order was given, there was no more thinking to be done on my part. "Fuehrer, you order, we follow!" That was not just a phrase, a suitable sentence for us. That was bitter earnest. It has been suggested to me since then that I could have refused to obey this order. I do not believe that among the thousands of us SS leaders, that thought came up at all. Entertaining such a thought was a sheer impossibility. Surely, many among us complained bitterly about harsh orders, and many among us have experienced much pain through the unneces-

> sary hardness of our superiors, but to touch such a superior in adversitythat was unthinkable. The orders in the name of the Führer were sacred. There could be no reflection, no interpretation, no second-guessing. These were orders that had to be carried out exactly to the word and to their final conclusion, with a conscious readiness to sacrifice one's own life if needed. It was not in vain that in our schooling the sacred Kamikazes of Japan, for whom the Emperor is also God, were held up to us as shining examples. Our training was no ordinary training, like the attending of lectures at a university. Our training went very, very deep. Outsiders thus cannot understand why there existed not one among us who refused to follow an order. Whatever the Führer or his closest representative ordered, that was the law. For the Führer was always right . . .
>
> How I envy my comrades, who were allowed to die an honest soldier's death. Unawares I had become a wheel in the giant machine of destruction of the Third Reich. This machine has been smashed, the motor has gone under, and I must go along with it. The world demands it . . .
>
> I would never have allowed myself to reveal, to lay bare my most secret self, if I had not been met here with a humanity, with an understanding which disarmed me, and which I could never have expected. I am indebted toward this human understanding . . .

I put down the book. "No more, Eli."

Tersely: "Now the dream."

And so I told him the dream. Afterward, we both sat for a moment, silently, I shaking on the inside, Eli stiffly and oh so quietly, as if barely breathing.

Then he got up, and without looking at me or saying a single word he walked away, hurrying across Science Court to his office building.

Returning to my own office, I felt absolutely horrible. What had I done to this manthis genius so young in mind that he almost seemed like a son to me, with an inquisitiveness so reminiscent of that of my own son? I had fed him Nazi poison, that is what I had done! So what if he had pressured me! Did I not know better than to yield to such pressures? So what if in response to his persistence I had begun to feel he had a right to know? Should that not in itself have been a clear warning to me, namely that in part I was responding to my own strong unconscious need to ask someone to help carry my burden? Why had I been so blind to the signs of trouble in him?

I debated calling his office but quickly rejected the notion. I dared not contact him. Oh, all the wonderful meetings with Eli surely had been a giant mistake, akin to acting out with a patient!

I furiously packed all that afternoon, staying late, wanting to get it done, wanting to get away.

And then, late at night, just as I was ready to finish one more box, there was a banging on my office door. I opened it, thinking it was the janitor. But there stood Eli, his face white as a sheet.

"How could you read this thing," he accused, speaking through clenched teeth, "this filth!? Do you not know that one must never, never, not for a single moment, confuse those *creatures* with human beings, one must always, always hold in mind what they were capable of doing, one must not, under any circumstance, make the mistake that those guards madenever, never, I repeat, one must not touch, get near, in mind or bodythey are not part of the human race!"

Something in me exploded. A voice I hardly recognized as my own interrupted Eli, shouted back, "No! No! In saying that, you become like *them!* That was the worst of their teaching, that they, like gods, could decide who was a human being and who was not! Men possessed, yes, their consciousness taken over by archaic, black powers from the collective unconscious, yes! But declare them not to be part of the human race, no, Eli, no. That is the horror of it, that this, potentially, lives in us all. It you go into the depths, there is heaven, and there is hell. Do not become one of those who now persecutes the Germans, and in doing so turn yourself into a Nazi!"

I had stunned him into silence. He just stood there, staring at me. Indeed, I must have been quite a sight. I could feel the tears streaming down my face, probably a dirty face from all the packing I had done. I recall feeling strongly that I wanted to throw him out of my office and hug him all at the same time.

Finally, slowly, he began to speak: "Ah, yes, your dream. Christ and Hitler, goodness unleavened by evil, evil unleavened by goodness. Star of brilliance and black hole. The basic opposites, 'constellated,' as you put it. The universal equation. Zero sum."

Again there was silence in my little office, only broken by the click-click of the janitor pushing his dust mop along the main hall.

But then Eli spoke again: "Joshua. I will always remember the lines from Joshua, my father said them so often, they go something like this, 'These Jewish tribes, they enforced a ban, a destruction, on everything, on men and women, young and old, and even on the animals, the oxen, sheep and donkeys, *massacring,* yes massacring them all.' A killing for *Lebensraum,* ill-disguised."

He stopped talking, looked at me with an intensity that made me quite uncomfortable, then blurted out: "*Erika, perhaps one day I won't have to hate anymore! I grow so tired of hating!* I don't know if you know what that is like, being filled with hate for what happened to your parents, the innocents. No amount of reasoned reflection helps!"

I nodded. I thought I knew about that kind of inner pain. Yet there seemed to be nothing I could say. So we remained silent, awkwardly so.

Then Eli surveyed my boxes. "You're almost done. You're really going."

I nodded, gave my usual *spiel* about needing solitude, time for reflection and writing.

"Good, good," Eli responded.

He stood there, watching me, as I resumed my packing.

"Youall along you have somehow reminded me of . . . oh, never mind . . . well yes, my sister; you still do, how she might have been if . . . She was going to be the author of the most brilliant dissertation ever . . ."

"What happened?" I motioned him to sit down on the only space available, the banana chair below the blackboard.

He shrugged, lifting both hands in a helpless gesture. "Biology on a collision course with ambition. She got pregnant. But she felt that having a child would interfere with her continuing graduate work, so she planned for an abortion. She was a bit late getting into it, dreaded it, I suppose. As she entered the clinic, some fanatic yelled at her, called her murderess, no better than a Nazi. Afterward, she hit the skids emotionally. Couldn't talk her out of it. No holding on to her. She even tried to kill herself. As far as I can understand, the real trouble was that she really isn't just that ambitious intellectual she thinks she should be; underneath she's gentle and sensitive and feminine."

"And she's lucky," I tried to reassure. "She has a brother who really cares."

Eli shrugged again. "It's been quite some time now. I wonder if she'll ever be really well. For that to happen she would have to accept both sides of herself, the gentle, womanly side as well as the ambitious one that can be such a killer. Isn't that right, Doctor of Jungian Psychology?"

I nodded.

Another pause. "Going to write a book?"

How did he know? I had not mentioned I had been pregnant for the last twenty years with a book about my experiences in Nazi Germany. I could feel myself grow defensive as I said. "Maybe. Maybe I'll try; maybe for certain, I'll try. Butjust like it was with the paper, only worse, I keep freezing up. Can't write. Get horribly depressed. Become practically immobilized. That's been going on for years."

"Justjust don't take pills."

I shook my head. "Of course not."

Eli probing again. "Why do you think you freeze?"

I hesitated. Why tell him? It went through my mind that the energy emanating from him now was different, there seemed to be a new calmness; it felt more like having a caring brother sit next to me in place of a troubled son, as before. So I said, "There are two major reasons, as far as I can tell."

Eli: "The first?"

"It has to do with my parents. It wasn't like you might perhaps think, that I had all sorts of support from home for my refusal to join the Nazi youth group, for my general rebelliousness against regimentation. It came and it went, that

support, mostly coming from my father, but it was very confusing. My mother would often be really furious at meif I had to be a girl at all, why couldn't I be normal and obedient? And my father would grow sort of helpless in the face of her wrath. It'sit's as if the collective craziness infected them periodically, in different ways, as it did so many people. I know they couldn't really help it, the way they were. Father all confused, Mother awash in shame. That's horrible to write about. And yet I feel that what happened to them is a very important aspect of the Nazi history, how that collective insanity penetrated the vessel of one's origin, the family. Some families were able to keep up a protective wall, as far as I could tell. They were devoutly religious. But I can't talk about them, I didn't grow up in such a family."

Eli: "I see. Obviously, I am not the only who has struggled with what happened to parents, with why they couldn't do better for themselves. The other side. And the second reason?"

Eli would not forget to ask about the second reason.

"That basically I do not feel I have the license. I never have. It's an outgrowth of the first reason."

"License to?"

"To write from the perspective of personal experience, the girl's and the woman's, not from one that is scholarly and impersonal, although, as you've seen, I even have trouble with that. And yet I know the personal is the only perspective from which I will be able to write, if I am able to at all. I've tried all the others."

Eli stared pensively at the floor, as if solving a difficult problem. I imagined his thoughts had reverted to his sister, who also seemed to have experienced great difficulties in her life, with respect to living out her womanly nature.

At long last Eli spoke again: "I read, no, studied, that book by Jung you recommended, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. There is one place where he talks about the voices of what he calls the Unanswered, Unresolved and Unredeemed, capital U's, and how he felt that the questions and demands to which his destiny asked him to respond came to him from the inner world, rather than the outer. Here, I wrote down some of it, I think I may even send it to my sister."

He pulled an index card from his pocket and read, quoting Jung:" 'There were things in the images which concerned not only myself but many others also. It was then that I ceased to belong to myself alone, ceased to have the right to do so. From then on, my life belonged to the generality.'"

Again he was silent. But when I wanted to say something he held up his hand. He wasn't done.

"I think that applies to you too, Erika, maybe even especially. So to write the way you said, that would really be a challenge. If you can keep that in mind,

Jung's words, then maybe you can do it after all. Andand let that sensitive woman that lives inside you have a voice. If you make itI would really like to see you make itI want to be among the first to read it."

He could ask that. In his asking, I felt his deep friendship for me. It made me teary.

And then, abruptly, with a quick good-bye, he was gone. There was only the sound of his firm footsteps echoing down the empty hallway. Suddenly I found myself wondering, had he been reality or myth sprung to life, this man Eli?

I went home that night feeling an urgent need to become involved in something, anything, that would connect me to my girlhood. That turned out to be a recording of German songs sung by orphaned German children, some of which we had sung in our school choir when I was a child. I played them over and over, sobbing, feeling something in me melt that had been frozen for a very long time. That night I dreamt:

I am leaving Hades. I walk through the dark, cold night, the river Styx roaring in the depths to my left. I walk and walk, until finally to the east the sun rises and I know I am back on earth.

The dream made me feel deeply grateful. As I meditated on it, I had a vision:

I am standing at the gravesite of my parents. It is springtime, the flowers on the grave are blooming, the trees rustling in a gentle breeze. Then the Dark One, in his black cloak and with his shining eye is standing at some distance, saying in his familiar, ice-cold voice: "Two-thirds for life; one-third for me." For the first time in my life I dare to answer him. I find myself asking, "Is this all of your message?"

He does not respond. But suddenly, behind him, a radiating glow appears, very bright, yet with a soft golden hue, gradually enfolding him. I am awed.

I have been so much the daughter of this patriarch, of this dark, chthonic power that seems so overwhelmingly potent in our times. That power, which manifested itself to me as a fiery dark cloud when I was just four years old, which took hold of me then, has never let me go. Now I know: *his* is the power that in my youth carried the clouds of the fire-storms all over Europe, the world, and which lives on in the awesome threat of the deadly mushroom cloud.

I must seek to develop my most feminine nature, that of my inner child Wiese, who lives in *his* close proximity. I must do this as I strive to be in relationship with *him*. Thus, my inner four year old must learn to respond to his bidding, and so must the terrified seven year old. It must become the task of the inner adolescent woman to not allow *him* to forbid her the taking of nourishment nor the living out of her womanhood, but to challenge him, in dialogue.

Only in this way may he be transformed. This is what my vision means to me, his gradual transformation into an entity that is bathed in light.

Birth and death are the great uniters. And so, the third of my time that is *his,* that belongs to the underworld, must become the third in which I die to the world in order to give birth to the new. In the depths, in *his* domain.

9
Epilogue
Obstacles in the Path of Writing

A voice asks into the darkness of my night:
"And what then is your current image of God?"
These words come:

Canis Lupus Dominus,
Your ferocity has lessened
Since first I saw you, Dominus, in
this particular image
of your essence!
Your eye,
Set in creature's head
Brightly conscious now
a beginning.

Oh wolf-hound god!
From the depth of the Arcanum
your image
has come to me.
Messenger from the depths
to which I must descend,
for into your presence
I must come.
Wrest from you
images, words, which will tell befittingly
of your recent emergence.

Terrified by your fiery breath
fearful of your ferocious jaws and wild appearance
I descend, nonetheless!

No pact have I made
no promises received,
none given!

Bare-handed I come
to listen, feel, transform, carry back,
for I hear in your howl

your eternal longing
for your own transformation!

Yet tremulously I ask:
can you tolerate my humanness?
or will my frailty tempt you,
awaken in you that awesome hunger
for human sacrifice?

Can you and I
across chasms and aeons
touch one anotherwithout cataclysm?
Oh creature-god
May I encounter thee
in fashion
beneficial to us both!
Erika Wiese Fergus, journal entry.

Like Psyche, I felt I was engaged in an immense task of sorting as I began this work. What is purely personal, what is collective? What important, what trivial? And ultimately, it was the dreams that brought the answers. Those many, many dreams of sorting, and especially those horrible nightmares which I began to think of as teaching-mares. For behind the horror they contained messages of deep wisdom, gave me glimpses into the workings of the archetypal, collective psyche. Through immersing myself in the dreams I was eventually helped to bring about a miracle, namely a return of that part of myself that enables me to write creatively again, sometimes even a poem, after over forty years of frozenness, of linearity, of futile attempts leading to frustrating dead ends.

Yes, of course I could write. Translations. Technical manuals. Research papers, clearly described, logically discussed. But there was always an inner conflict, a not being able to give it my all. It was at times very upsetting and I only knew that this was not where my heart lay, that this was not the kind of writing demanded by a small but persistent inner voice.

I made many attempts. Each one as disastrous as the next. After a page, or several, I would find myself sitting in frozen silence, enveloped by a numbing, black depression.

One attempt stands out vividly, even shamefully. This time it was to be a collaborative effort with a young psychiatrist in training with whom I had a consulting relationship. He had experienced his military service in Vietnam to be in deep conflict with his Jewish faith. Our article would focus on the psychological

aspects of reentry into a normal life, subsequent to a searing war experience. He told me he was suffering from a case of "survivor's guilt"; others had died, he had not. And when he told me, I echoed, "Me too!" For with his story he had so accurately portrayed the emotions I had experienced in late adolescence, after fleeing war-torn Germany. I believed that now, after our long talks, I would be able to put our thoughts on paper. Doubtful of his own skills at writing, he admired my outline, looked to me as a competent journalist. But after the first page of actual writing, I simply could not go on. Night after night I sat in my office, willing myself to put words on paper, the hand refusing to move, a knot in the pit of my stomach, a knot called worthlessness.

I decided to question the I Ching. I cast Hexagram 23, "Splitting Apart." The message was clear. Any further attempt to force myself to somehow do the writing would tear me apart. The collaborative article was never written.

My Freudian therapist counseled: "Leave all that alone, for heaven's sake! It's in the past! Enjoy your life! You've earned it!"

Have I?

I dreamt:

I am driving a German BMW. The car is equipped with a magic rear vision mirror designed to highlight the dangers that are now behind me, that I had encountered in my journey through life. The mirror is placed there to help the driver steer a safer course in the future. But as I drive, I think to myself, "Well, human nature being what it is, people will learn to translate the mirror's images and edit out the warning images of danger."

This dream led me to to discover that part of me, at least, no longer wanted to see the dangers that my personal past represented. Indeed, as I reflected upon this, I was soon flooded with intense emotion: a fear of actually becoming possessed by the collective madness against which I had struggled when young. Once again I saw myself as a child who for years had walked a razor's edge, in stark terror. Sadly I realized that my need to write about it might not be filled, that my Freudian analyst was right.

A second dream seemed to confirm this fear:

I am in a lovely, lush valley. I am told to walk up a steep pathway leading to a mountaintop. It is a narrow path. Suddenly a car comes careening down the path, out of control, barely missing me. Its occupants are men in the various uniforms worn during the reign of the Third Reich. A second car, just like it, with similar occupants, follows, then a third, then many. Some are trying to hit me, out of control as they are. I am terrified; yet I know I must continue to walk up this path. Suddenly I notice "little people," elves and gnomes and fairies, occupying each tree and each bush. Some are dancing and singing, others busily

carrying things to and fro, as if a party were in progress. All seem oblivious to the commotion on the path. Now even the flowers along the path exude delightful scents, as their blues, reds, greens and yellows turn into marvelous, brilliant hues. Exquisitely colored birds flit about, singing sweetly. Mozart's music is in the air. And as my attention focuses on this wonder, the cars brushing past me become like phantoms, no longer dangerous. I know that I shall be safe just as long as I direct all of my attention onto this delightful numinous world.

I felt that the dream gave me a glimpse into the nature of the opposites of the German collective psyche, showing me both its most terrible as well its sweetest aspects. But did the dream not also seem to say to me, "You will be safe just as long as you only focus on the delightful, childlike side of this collective image, and ignore its out-of-control, murderous aspects?"

And still, the little inner voice would not give peace.

Years later, immersed in Jung's Analytical Psychology, I tried again. It would be a "Letter to My Two Grown-up Sons," this writing about my past!

> Sit down, dear sons, before you read this letter. Because it is going to be very long. A letter from me to you, my sons, about that part of your heritage that comes from me, from my background. Oh, I can see you two already smile agreeably, as you perhaps think to yourselves, "Well, Mom has always been ruminating about her childhood experiences. She has taken all that stuff so personally!"
>
> And perhaps you're right. Yet it must be hard for you to imagine what it was like then, even though you have asked many thoughtful questions, especially since the summer the four of us traveled in Europe. Yes, I know, you wondered about the many many cemeteries we encountered as we traced the path of your Dad's wartime experience. I know you had your own thoughts as we looked at the black, broken remnant of a bridge at Remagen near where your Dad and his German photographer-friend swapped war stories, that bridge Dad had crossed as a fighting hero, in the dark of night. Indeed, that summer may have contributed to the strongly antimilitaristic attitude that both of you carry now as adults. And still, to you Germany was a small, friendly country.
>
> The Germany I knew was not. On my visit to Israel, I saw, at the Weizman Institute in Tel-Aviv, a memorial in the form of a torn Torah, symbol of the Holocaust, the eternal flame of remembrance burning underneath. A circle of words surrounds this flame, in Hebrew as well as English: "To remember and not to forget." I took a picture of this inscribed circle around the almost invisible flame. It hangs on the wall in my study, a reminder of the psychic task I still feel is mine. This letter forms a part of that.

I wrote on, full of hope that this time the paralyzing depression would not materialize.

> Some time ago I attended a conference for Jungian analysts. There I met

several trainees and new analysts from Germany, people born during the last years of the war or after. I was struck by the aura that surrounded them, namely that of having been precious children born to young adults daring to hope again in a land of devastation. They impressed me as being keenly aware of the hardships suffered by their fathers and mothers, and the meaning and pleasure they had been able to give their parents. They certainly came from a Germany different from the one I grew up in. I fled a country that had become psychotic and lawless. They came from an orderly, benign and socially very conscious and responsible Federal Republic.

During this congressas during I should say almost every psychological conference I ever attendedthere were several references made to Nazi Germany. To me it often seems as if the remaining energies of that time and and those happenings are such that they demand attention, require that they be the focus of discussion whenever an opportunity presents itself. Indeed, the phenomenon is not even confined to psychologically-oriented gatherings. For example, on my drive to the congress through central California, I stopped for breakfast at a small roadside restaurant. Behind me there was a booth full of hard-hat construction workers. One of the group began to tell his comrades about his wonderful teacher of the German language, a man who spoke many, many languages, and who was so very smart. Within minutes, however, the entire group was totally involved in an intense discussion about "Germany and its Nazis."

I continued, increasingly hopeful.

"A Jungian analyst," I wrote, "a student and colleague of Jung, told me that Jung once told him in conversation that he considered the disaster of Germany's Third Reich to have been a failed effort at individuation on the collective level."

I next attempted to explain to my two sons what Jung meant by "individuation" and "collective level."

Then came the dream, a "teaching-mare":

I am in England, touring in my square-back Volkswagen, together with a young woman friend, a delightful, bright Jewess proud of her heritage. I discover that England has been overrun by the fighting forces of the Third Reich, my worst childhood fears having come true. Their headquarters is a huge hangar located at the bottom of a deep valley. I am required to drive my car down an almost impossibly steep ramp in order to obtain permission to continue my tour. As I struggle, I am amazed to see others walking up and down this steep ramp as if it were just a gentle incline. In the hangar, I am treated with supercilious friendliness by the young uniformed SS men with whom I discuss my tour. I even dare to relax for an instant into a certain small feeling of safety. Alas, it is illusory, for I now overhear other men, men dressed in ragged, slovenly-looking uniforms, as they talk in excited whispers, planning the cruel torture-murder of my innocent young companion. They seem so very sure that soon she will be in their hands! As they talk, they pass a picture around, a picture of myself and my

friend, depicting us as I am handing her a gift. A black smudge covers part of my face, making me look ugly in comparison to her. Yet on the picture I look no older than she, in fact I look like I did when adolescent, and there is on my face a look of utter innocence. An innocence that is no longer mine.

Finally, I am given permission to continue my tour. But the implication is very clear: I myself am to bring her back, I myself am to make certain that my Jewish friend comes into their hands. As the SS men make their point, the picture of my friend and me in their hands grows very large, the look of innocence on my face becoming more pronounced and therefore more jarring to me. I find myself longing for the smudge to completely obliterate my face.

Heavy of heart, I drive across the British countryside. It is pouring rain, and it is very dark. Soon we are driving through an old British village. The conquering army has already been here, as attested by grotesquely huge machinery set along the roadside, machinery designed to transform the countryside, so huge that I can drive underneath it. I lose my way and become very frightened.

A young Englishman, a vagrant in torn clothes, offers to guide me out of this jungle of Nazi machines. While he is with me, I feel secure. But once we are safely in the open country again and he simply vanishes through a magically appearing door in front of my vehicle, my great fear returns. I do not dare stop at an inn with my young companion, for fear she will be taken prisoner. So I ask her if she would like to spend the night in the car. She likes the idea, in fact she likes it so much that she jumps up and down in her seat exclaiming, "Oh, fantastic!" She has brought her "snuggly bag," she tells me, and assures me that between the two of us we have brought plenty of food and drink, and that the seats folded back will make a cozy bed. She is as excited as a little girl about the prospect of spending the night like this, so close and cozy, together in the rain, so safe, no other human being present.

I, however, am feeling more and more desperate. Should I tell her about the approaching danger and spoil her enjoyment of the brief time we do have together, or not tell and hope for an inspiration, a miracle, to save her? Or will doing this rob her of a chance to find a hiding place on her own? And what about me? As I sit there, bread and cheese sticking in my throat, I am most desperately aware of the coward in me, the one who in a moment of terror and unconsciousness might turn over this bright young Jewess to the henchmen, in sudden creature rebellion against all the intentions of a conscious mind, which would choose death over betrayal.

When I woke up, I was at first shocked to recognize that the young woman of the dream in waking life resembled Jane, my younger son's girlfriend! Why her? I respected her. I liked her quick mind and scholarly astuteness, her fine sense of humor, her open pride in her Jewish heritage. We enjoyed skiing together.

Was I a jealous mother? That somehow did not fit. Because of the depth I perceived in her, Jane was my favorite among my sons' girlfriends of the time. But there was something else about Jane that I especially treasuredwith a twinge of envy, because I myself had never been able to have a similar feeling: her innocent and trusting attitude. She was preparing to study law and use her education to improve the lives of the disadvantaged of California, the Mexican farm workers, the urban Chicanos and so on. She believed in the ultimate fairness of public institutions.

I recorded the dream in the letter to my sons and wrote on.

> The smudge on the dream picture seems to tell me how I was sullied by the madness of the collective psyche in which I lived during my childhood.

I continued, now with a growing feeling of nausea.

> In the dream, the inhumanity of the Nazi regime was symbolized not only by their behavior in the hangar, but also by the hugely oversized mechanical equipment designed to transform the genteel English countryside into an alien place. In sharp contrast to that was my Peter-Pan-like guide, whimsical, his own inner world so strong, apparently, that it even transformed mine while in his presence, so that for a time I could lose my fear. In fact, when I was fourteen years old, for a few special months I had an inner companion just like him. But that couldn't last in the turmoil of those times.
>
> The ease with which those associated with the conquerors' headquarters were able to walk up and down the ramp that to me appeared impossibly steep seemed to me a fitting image of the psychic layers the German collective had learned to negotiatealbeit unconsciouslyduring the reign of the Third Reich. Then, as in the dream, I knew I was unable to do that.
>
> The young Jewish woman of my dream, sweet, full of life, innocent and proud of her heritage, surely represents a part of me I was never allowed to live. Yet in the dream she brought about what makes the dream so very painful for me to contemplate: she brought me face to face with the exact opposite of innocence. For one, I had to acknowledge that she did not even understand the whispered threats, for they were spoken in the macabre language the Nazis had fashioned out of the German language, an embarrassing insult to my own heritage.
>
> Moreover, she confronted me with the most dreaded side of my own nature, the potential within me that terror would be stronger than ego, and that out of this terror I would betray. How many times as a child did I see adults become possessed by such a terror, saw and heard of those who so thoroughly changed their view of life that they ended up attacking and betraying others. Learning, for example, that a favorite, dashing, riding instructor of mine had become an agent for the Gestapo; that a friendly doctor, so full of humor, was a sly informant. There were many others. Worse, there was also the secret fear of my own impulsiveness which might inadvertently turn me into a betrayer through carelessness, by speaking in public about certain things my father had discussed at home, things that by the very fact of having been spoken endangered his life.

Confronted head on with this almost unbearable shadow, I fell ill with a lengthy, tedious, energy-sapping bladder infection. This put the "Letter to My Two Sons" on the shelf. During the course of my illness, a spiritually-oriented acupuncturist told me that the sore in my bladder was a big lump of fear. "Fear of God," she said wisely.

Her comment made me think of Jung's autobiography, where he tells how as a child he had to think the terrible, frightful thought that God had given him to think, namely the image of God's giant turd smashing the roof of the Basel Cathedral. I began to feel that some of this turd had landed on me as well.

An article in the *Los Angeles Times,* entitled "Storycide and the Meaning of History," stated more clearly than I ever could a core aspect of the feelings that haunted me. The writer asserted that the Jews are a "story-people," and if in any form or fashion they lose their right or their ability to tell their story, especially that of the Holocaust, and to tell it again and again, because indeed it is such an utter necessity for them to do so, then they would cease to be a people. Feelings of the rightness and necessity of the act of storytelling permeated the article.

"And where, oh where," I felt, "am I to find the right to tell my story? Certainly not in any collective experience of rightness, nor in any private conscious conviction that mine was a story worth the telling." Words came to mind, written by a "Jewish storyteller," as the author referred to himself, a Midrash tale about Adam and Eve:

"Outside paradise . . . they discovered a purpose to their existenceto use the experience that had been theirs. To transmit. To communicate by deed and word. To safeguard. To tell the tale, omitting nothing, forgetting nothing. To keep alive the memory . . ."

To keep alive the memory. Indeed. Another dream:

I see a film which shows various versions of Wagner's Götterdämmerung. In the first act, Wotan and Loge are engaged in an intense but incomprehensible argument. It is therefore very frustrating for the observer. The next scene shows an poor old couple sitting at their wooden kitchen table. Suddenly the wife stands up and with a gruesome smile which contains both rage and relief pulls a huge sword out of its scabbard and holds it up high. Within seconds she will strike. Schiller's words occur to me, "Da treiben Weiber mit Entsetzen Scherz" (and then women make a joke of horror).

The third scene takes place in Russia. It is winter and there is snow on the ground. We are at a railroad station on the outskirts of some town. Out of snow and black coals some people have made the image of a "new god," a huge, distorted bust of Adolf Hitler with some of Stalin's features added. There is a large dent on the right side of the forehead of this figure in the snow, this new godimage. As we continue to see the people with their new god-image, the main fo-

cus now moves to the station itself, where children are running, trying to get into the cattle-cars of a standing train. There are some women there too, but what strikes me most are the many terrified children. I turn to my husband with the words, "They are fleeing because there are no gods left. That is also why it is so cold." I am very upset.

My husband does not understand. He tries to reassure me by saying, almost cheerfully, "But they are creating a new god!" As we talk, the god-image in the snow grows more grotesque and distorted. It is now very large and half fallen over, lying at an angle and looking somewhat like the huge stone faces on Easter Island.

The ancient Germanic gods of storm and fire arguing in a fashion that is incomprehensible to us human beings; indeed, the feelings aroused in me during that first scene of the dream matched those of many of my childhood experiences, when confusing emotions and energies were pervasive. The second scene expressed a rage that somewhere must also live within me. For I saw it as the rage of the denied spiritual aspects of the feminine, not only as expressed in the attitude toward women taken by authoritarian regimes, such as those of Hitler and Stalin, but also in a generalized suppression of any gentle, feminine functioning of the soul in both men and women.

Words of Marie-Louise von Franz came to mind: "Certain Nazis made a sport of trying to kill all their feelings. The artificial destruction and hardening of feeling was supposed to be heroic." I remembered my oldest sister playing "Indian," teaching herself not to feel pain by inflicting knife-wounds on herselfand my own similar efforts.

Alas, I realized in the waking state that my dream-husband's superficial reassurance contained an important truth: man cannot live without god. And in the dream, a new god-image was indeed being created, out of the snow of frozen emotions and the coals from the fires of the ovens. A damaged, irrational god, as the dent in the bust's forehead implied.

It occurred to me then that these children in the dream might prefer deathwhich is what these cattle-cars seemed to representto living in a world ruled by such an archaic god. And did that mean my inner children, my ideas for writing, would rather be burnt to death than have to share life with this terrible god?

The theme of self-immolation reoccurred in a second dream:

I am in a mountain cabin, where a play is being performed. The subject matter is that of war, capture and torture. The final scene is clearest: five men, the leaders and known to be the most conscious ones, in order to save the others will sacrifice themselves by burning. There is a giant oven on stage. Now one man opens it and we see that one of the five is already inside the oven, suffocated.

People wander about the stage, as if in a trance. It seems that many of them are not even aware that the five who will burn are making an effort to rescue them, fully knowing that in doing so they shall perish.

The play over, it is time to leave. But first we have a little farewell party at which both actors and audience participate. There is a young woman in the group who would like to use this cabin as a quiet place to do her writing. Apparently, it is my cabin. But I have to tell her I do not as yet have an extra set of keys, so she will have to wait. She is very understanding of my position.

We are all very quiet and subdued, still carrying the deep and painful emotions of this intense and tragic play. The memory of those wandering ghostly souls especially is still alive among us.

This dream brought to mind a time during my adolescence, during World War Two, when the word "Nebuchadnezzar" would occur to me over and over again. I had no idea what it meant. But the dream image of the five conscious men made me think of the Bible story told in Daniel 3, in which, in compliance with King Nebuchadnezzar's urgent instructions, three righteous Jewish men called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the "burning fiery furnace." But these men did not burn. An amazed king Nebuchadnezzar asked, "Did we not have these three men thrown bound into the fire?" He received this response:

"Certainly, O king, but . . . I can see four men walking about freely in the heart of the fire without coming to any harm. And the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

Because the dream stressed the quality of leadership and consciousness of the five who self-sacrificed, I wondered if they did not also have a connection to the ancient Jewish legend of the thirty-six Zadikkim on whom at any time in history depends the fate of the world.

A first inkling as to who would do the writing was given me by the young woman to whom in the dream I could not as yet give the keys to my cabin.

Humiliating dreams were to come first.

A foreign-accented, Jewish woman asks me for advice. Her son has bought a box full of little symbols. One of these is a black circle with a white Swastika inside. The woman asks me what she should do; she cries out: "How could they put this thing into a collection intended for a child!" Pained, I try to explain both to her and to her son that the Swastika is also an ancient Nordic symbol. They are not convinced.

Awake, I found that the black and white of the boy's toy reminded me of the dreadful black and white god-image in the Russian snow. Just a few days later:

My husband and I enter a restaurant. A man there tells us how he had lunch here during the regime of the Third Reich, and how Hitler had come to sit with

him at the tablea table full of strangers! The man is still full of admiration that Hitler had done that. As he continues talking, there appear under the table huge black spiders and tarantulas which the man tries to sweep away, unsuccessfully. I am amazed that I find in me some understanding of the teller's point of view.

Upon reflection, I had to recognize that the builder of the god-image of snow and coal, that dark god-image of the underworld whose companions are black spiders and tarantulas, also wanted recognition in me.

I felt burdened by this image until another dream brought some clarification:

I am in the street, together with many other people. There is a festive atmosphere in the street. Suddenly there is a huge explosion, and a giant flame springs into the air, followed by a black cloud. A great cry of anguish from many voices can be heard. I am horrified and say to a passer-by that a horrible accident must have taken place.

But now suddenly into the night sky there emerge multicolored pictures, one after the other. At one moment these seem to be sacred images of the childhood of Christ, but in the next they are the ancient images of the caves at Lascaux.

Then they are no longer in the sky, but are standing on the street right in front of us. A large dart board appears in the middle of these images now turned to three-dimensional figures. People gather around. The woman-manager of the dart board explains that one is invited both to throw darts and to write something important on the pages of an ancient book she has opened up. I remain in the background of a throng cager to throw darts. But the woman calls to me and tells me to begin. I ask if I might not first write in the ancient book, that being so much more important to me than the dart-throwing. I want to write some words that express caring about Germany, a caring that lives within me in spite of all the inner voices that speak against it. But the woman laughs goodnaturedly as she explains that this is just not possible. A dart has to be thrown first.

I woke up with my arm poised to throw the dart.

Explosion, fire, and especially the black cloud of the dream referred to those events of my early childhood which I had experienced as monumental harbingers of cataclysmic events to come. They had made a deep and lasting impression on me and had led to many nightmares. The images in the dream-sky, stretching from the infancy of Christianity all the way back to the beginning of the human enterprise, somehow gave me a different perspective. The dream seemed to demonstrate the enormous potency of cosmic powers, against which our human consciousness is just the little light of a candle, that tiny candle of which Jung spoke so often.

So, I was to throw a dart, try to hit the center of this image of a mandala, the

dart board, before I could write caring words into an ancient manuscript. That would refer, one more time, I thought, to the aspects of my tale in which I would have to report how the energies of spider and tarantula had poisoned my own family of origin, and with that, me as child.

The thought felt confirmed by this dream:

Several times I hear the word "Nurenberg." Then a group of us is walking through the darkest part of a deep valley. There is the feeling of a "split." Later, we are being shown our fates in symbolic fashion. Mine consists of being nailed to a wall in an extremely dark time. There is something about the illustration representing me that suggests I am pretending I did not know I had such a very dark moment in my childhood.

The word "Nurenberg" suggested to me both the extravanganza of the Nazi movement and the scene of the postwar trials. The words of the many defendants who stated again and again that they had merely "followed orders" came to mind. Am I doing that, I wondered, in my not writing? After all, one of the most repeated Nazi invectives had been, "You know nothing!" How can one write if one knows nothing?

The "split" in the dream seemed to underline the previous message that there was no key as yet for the woman-writer in me. That part had been split off, and still was, perhaps in part because of the very dark moment in my childhood to which the dream alludes. Dimly, reluctantly, I recalled it now, that moment.

This recalling led to agonizing headaches. Two weeks later, an image about that time in my childhood appeared in a dream:

I am having an agonizing headache. Then a vision appears in which I see three sides of rock, each side being a face of God, carrying an expression of agony. By entering the rock I also enter the three faces, and as I do so my pain subsides. Now I know that my headache had been "God's agony," and as I am joined to it by being in the rock I find relief. But when it comes time for me to separate from the rock, I dread the return of the agony.

When one is contained in the stone of a cosmic depression, then one is also somehow protected from very human pain. One has abandoned one's humanity in a merger with the divine. I knew that this was not what Jung meant when he told of his own carrying the pain of God, for his was a conscious, human carrying, the very thing I feared so much at the end of my dream.

So now I knew that part of the problem was the fear of a very bad psychic headache which was human and at the same time part of the transpersonal realm. I now began to hunger for the strength to overcome my fear of pain.

There was hunger then in a dream as well:

I am walking along a German road, next to a potato field. The field has just been harvested, and pieces of the harvest, hot potatoes, are on the road. I pick some up to eat; they are quite tasty, as if they had been seasoned with cheese or a sauce. A family comes by, and I am embarrassed about eating off the road. But they join in. Now I note that in order to make their portions edible they have to scrape away a bright blue poisonous substance, copper sulfate (CuSO4), a root killer. There is not much food left, so I give them my piece and then try to scrape more off the street.

Hunger, both spiritual and real, had been a part of my growing-up years. Potatoes had then been a most important source of food. They are the poor man's sustenance, and thus I felt that the dream expressed a spiritual poverty that was my legacy and that I had to deal with by sharing what little I had with a "German family," that is, an aspect of the collective German psyche. The blue root poison represented to me the danger of an overly rational thinking attitude. Alas, that aspect of the dream I understood only later.

I was ready to try again. This time my story was to be told from the point of view of a German woman, an imaginary analyst who had me as a patient. It was to be in the form of a report which the analyst prepares for a symposium. I called her Margot, and I spent considerable time in developing her character. I thought of her as coming from a family that had been smart enough to leave Germany before the war began, a decision my father had not made. I imagined her to have grown up in a household where there was religious instruction and secure and well-regulated boundaries between them and the outside worldall of which I lacked. I imagined her to become very engrossed in her work with me, because through me she was inadvertently being brought into touch with an aspect of her own psyche that lay hidden in the depths, and that would eventually connect her to the collective German shadow.

For she was oh, so good and pure, this Margot, product of a protected upbringing with parents who were cultured, sensitive people, parents who respected her intellect and encouraged her creativity. As she came to life in my writing, I discovered that she felt herself to be quite separate from her country of origin, troubled only occasionally by a vague feeling of dis-ease. She was a competent, respected professional. As she began to write her report, two themes, however, crept into her communication, unrecognized by me at the time. The first was a disavowal of having any part in a feeling of collective guilt; the second, a subtle disdain for those who might find it more difficult than she to shed such feelings. Clearly, she was a shadow aspect of myself.

If I was unconscious of what was happening in this writing, my word-processor was not. At the first printing of the text it literally exploded. As each page came out, the printer reversed itself, taking back what had just been printed! As I

watched in amazement, the computer itself began giving me strange signals and then quit altogether. Trying to have it repaired became a lengthy, difficult process, for no one could figure out exactly what was wrong, or what had happened. In fact the computer company was so nonplussed that eventually I was given brand-new equipment, in spite of the fact that the warranty had run out.

During the long time of waiting and haggling, I had to struggle with feelings of disappointment and frustration, but I worked as hard as I possibly could to explore and become conscious of the symbolic message contained in the computer explosion.

A dream came, in several parts:

1) I am in a yard. Against a hillock there stand two tall brick fireplaces, both burning. But the fire in one burns badly. I reach inside and a large pile of trash falls out of the chimney; then the fire burns much, much better. Now two rabbits appear, running away from these fireplaces, first burying themselves under the sand and crawling along like moles, then climbing into a hole in the hillock behind the chimneys.

2) Then I take a walk at night. There appears a black and gray German shepherd, which first barks at me, then begins to chase me, teeth bared. I talk to the dog in order to quiet it. Suddenly I am holding a leash which I now put on the dog's collar. Filled with excess energy, the dog begins to chase around me in wild circles, round and round. Suddenly I realize that this dog is a variation of the poodle in Goethe's Faust. And as I realize this, there appears in front of me a ghostly figure, larger than life, dark and frightening. I know it is the ghost of Faust, and I cry out, "Faust, I know you are here! Give me space! I'm doing what I can!" I can only dimly perceive his dark face, but out of this darkness his eyes shine with extraordinary brightness, making it clear to me that he is also Mephistopheles. And so I know he also represents the return of the ghostly dark figure that haunted me during adolescence.

3) I am hurrying home from an activity I did well. Yet I am feeling terribly, terribly sad; I am enfolded in a cloud of utter sadness. I do not know why I am so sad. I then realize that this feeling in me is larger than any personal emotion could ever be.

I saw the two chimneys as the two aspects of my life which occupy most of my consciousness: my professional life, burning well, and my creative life, being stopped up with trash.

What trash? I wondered.

It occurred to me then that the invented Margot story that blew up the computer was akin to a psychological trash removal, a making conscious of a shadow aspect of mine. That indeed might allow the flame of creativity to burn

more strongly. But at a cost, for it seemed in the dream that an aspect of the instinctual, vulnerable, feminine aspect of my psyche, represented by the rabbits, had to go into hiding. For these little creatures, the heat seemed too strong. Perhaps the terrible sadness in the second part of the dream emanated not only from a part of my personal unconscious, but also from the collective feminine psyche, doing its task well, yet in spite of this carrying an enormous burden of sadness.

Intimately connected with this theme was the dream figure of Faust-Mephistopheles. This archetypal German image, indeed this collective image for scientific and technological-minded Western man's disconnectedness from the sacred, served to remind me that I could not write about this material from a position of superiority, from a safe, intellectual distance, as I had tried to do by inventing the character of Margot. Instead, the dream seemed to say, in this writing I would need to speak from, in fact relive in part, my own very personal encounter, as a vulnerable girl, with *him,* that dark numinous force. I would need to write from the perspective of my vulnerable feminine side, symbolized by the rabbits.

Like the rabbits in the dream, I first went into hiding, pulling back into my old shell of reason and intellectualization. I began to devote almost all my energies to the preparation of a course I was to teach.

This dream invited me to reconsider:

There is to be a carnival in town. The town reminds me of the town of my childhood. In the dusk of a late summer evening my husband and sons are sitting on a balcony overlooking the town. In the course of the conversation, doubt is being raised about the nature of "the other reality."

Immediately, I have a vision: From the north-east, where the summer sun rises, there appears a fiery red wolf that crosses the sky. Then, for a brief moment, something most amazingly beautiful and indescribable unfolds, something for which no words can be found. And then the fiery red wolf returns, retracing his steps. There is then the feel of an overwhelming amount of energy about us, and I see a huge wagon passing by, filled with performers for the carnival. There is lots of music and dancing.

The fiery wolf, intimately linked to the frightening dark figure of my adolescence, represented the return of a terrifying specter in my psychic life. The wolf had appeared to me in a vision soon after a disastrous return visit to Germany. I had been totally unprepared for its intensity. This symbol of savagery and trickery, this messenger of Satan and pagan demons, had haunted me. Now here he was again, this time wandering across the sky like a star in the heavens, bringing with him an extraordinary amount of energy and pagan festivity.

The carnival scene made me think of Jung's description of his vision of a

similar pagan scene when his mother died. I was aware that Jung had always been very conscious of his mother's powerful connection to that "other reality," about which a question had been raised at the beginning of my dream.

I knew then that my psyche would no longer allow me to retreat into the sanctuary of reasoned questioning and doubting. I finally understood the image of the blue "root killer," copper sulfate.

I became aware of *her* as a separate entity within me as I was driving to a Benedictine monastery in the California high desert, where Belgian and American monks gave refuge to heathens like me who need a place to be with themselves. It was the week before Easter, and I wanted to be there to feel some of the energies said to surround this particular place, and to meditate upon a way to proceed. I was feeling a great deal of pressure from within.

I could feel my shadow sister as a physical presence. She, that perennial inner person who kept alive the memories of the past, the shame and the guilt; she who kept asking the questions to which there were no answers, the one I became in times of turnoil and trouble; she, the "odd one," the "enfant terrible," of my childhood, the one who had decided, long ago, that to be German was to be less than fully human; she, with her stormy, intense affects, her impetuousness, her tears, her dreams, her frightening images; she, with her indefinable longings, her ardent love of nature; she with her torn roots, who managed to keep me in a state of painful inner restlessness whenever she was awake.

"I am Wiese in you," she identified herself. "And yes, I am the one you seem to have much trouble acknowledging, especially recently."

Her appearance, at this moment, on this journey to a place where prayer and meditation were a way of life, and where I was going to attempt to come to terms with a task which part of me*she*had known about almost all my life, seemed to me of the utmost importance. She was right. She was a part of me I currently experienced only rarely, such as during moments of Active Imagination. But what I had not recognized, until she told me, was that often I actually suppressed her, forced her out of my consciousness.

Wiese was the name my mother had given me, but she had never called me that. I was called Erika, so named because I was supposed to have been an Erik, honoring with this name a deceased friend of my father. Not liking Erika she ended up giving me yet a third name. But I am Erika.

The name Wiese, which means meadow, she gave me so that she might remember the blooming meadow in the Black Forest where I had been conceiveda last act of spontaneous passion, or so I was told, on the part of my middle-aged parents. The trauma of the particulars of my arrival, about which I learned in detail while still a child, and the distress over the fact that I was a girl when a boy would at least have mollified my father's sense of insulted aesthetics at having

yet another baby, apparently severely stressed their already troubled marriage. As a woman of her time my mother was haunted by the guilt of having displeased her husband. Indeed, in time this girl-child, me, became the container for her own shadow, for she too had been an unwanted child.

Wiese described her status within me by reminding me of a recent dream:

I visit a poor woman who has made her home in a manhole underneath the street. The woman shares with me how hard she is struggling to find a better, safer place, for she is not only cold but also much afraid of the street maintenance men who might discover her and throw her into the street. All the time she is talking I marvel at the beauty she has managed to bring to this dank cave.

The dream spoke for itself. Wiese, this most essential part of me, had been relegated to a dank hole beneath the pavement, exposing her to the danger of harsh criticism from a primitive, collective animus.

"It is not enough for me," she said, echoing the woman in my dream. "Just think, that is how you treat the unwanted feminine part of you, shoving it under the pavement!"

"Understandably," I replied defensively, "Being female was our major crime! But look, here I am going to a place to meditate upon how I am to write, and that will surely focus me on myself as a growing girl, on you, so . . ."

"And that is why I have come to you now," Wiese interrupted me. "For you were mostly me then. I have come because you are at the end of your rope. And that is when I always come, whether you acknowledge it or not."

Memories of when she was strongest in me emphasized the correctness of the point she was making. She continued:

"Without me the writing will remain an insurmountable task. For it is the story of your life, a lived observation of awesome happenings, and it is the story of your efforts to comprehend, to find in the memory the meaning of your life. No explanatory letter to sons, no scholarly clinical paper on 'patient Erika' is going to measure up. For much of it is my story and must be devoted to bringing to life the raw experience of the struggle, and the witnessing that was ours. That is the task."

After a long silence, Wiese spoke again:

"Tell me," she asked, "what was your, our, best-kept secret and most intense wish while growing up?"

I answered without hesitation. "To be an individual! To be a person with her own ideas and her own feelings!" How well I remembered a phrase with which I had often reassured myself: "But I am going to be an individual! Not abnormal, crazy, but an individual!" My reading, my writingsuch as I dared dowere suffused with this notion.

I now saw the degree to which I had since dismissed this important aspect of my childhood.

"And now tell me," Wiese continued her questioning, "what was the most intensely stressed collective message of that time?"

"To be like all the others!" I cried, and immediately words and phrases, long suppressed, sprang to consciousness: "You are nothing, the Reich is everything!" "Equalize!" "Obey the leader!" "Dare not be different, for all those who are not like us, we despise!" And that most infamous one: "One Reich, one people, one Führer," repeated again and again. Even my mother's frequent references to what "one" did, the opinions "one" held and how important it was to be "normal" had been a part of that.

"The mandate was to feel what you were told to feel, and suppress your own inner experience," Wiese continued. "And so, you see, by suppressing me, by putting me beneath the pavement, you allowed into your soul a piece of that energy that considers sinful the full development of one's own individuality, with all its disliked qualities and rough edges, all its own passions. This in spite of the many years of academic study in psychology and your dedicated work in personal analysis, by which you have attempted to find answers to the questions *I* have kept alive in you!"

I was struck speechless.

She spoke slowly now, emphasizing each word:

"And in this context, the stubbornness I made you exhibit, the rebellious, silly-looking things I made you do, and of which you have since been secretly ashamed, considering them worse than useless, having had no good outward effect, having saved no one's lifeare these not worthy of some respect, after all? Am *I* not worthy of your respect?"

I had to agree with her. "Yes," I said, "for they were at least in part motivated by a deep inner urge to protest, an unrecognized need to resist being crammed into a Procrustean bed that was devoid of all humanity."

She continued: "Since then, you have often attempted to smooth out the rough edges of your individuality, where I live, in order to be, at long last, 'the good girl.' So you have agreed with the 'experts' who insisted it was Father's outrage you somehow were compelled to act out, give expression to. Actually, it could just as well have been Mother's, festering below her awareness, an outrage of the German soul, entwined and enriched as it has been for centuries with that of the Jewsthe very ones Hitler sought to destroy! But most of all it has been my persistent presence in you that would not allow you to sleep in peace. So the major task of redemption falls on both of us, it is our very own individual task, *yours and mine*."

Clearly, Wiese was going to be a major contributor and protagonist in my

story. Suddenly I thought of all the years I had carried a private burden of shame and lack of self-respect, in addition to my sizeable collective one, because of having judged her clinically, by very unfair standards. Now she was offering a new perspective on an old pain by reminding me of my childhood longing to be an individual.

A dream came which felt as if it were not only an image of the psychological state-of-affairs of my own personal birth, or potential rebirth, but also an image of a birth-giving effort of what I can only call the collective German soul, that soul whose presence I so strongly felt in my mother when I was a child.

In a primitive hut, there is a woman on a bed in heavy labor. A thunderstorm is raging outside. A young man with blond curly hair, looking exhausted and helpless, is holding the screaming woman in his arms. She goes on and on, screaming and crying. My observation post seems to be from mid-air, as if I had become once more the angel I so often felt myself to be in early, early childhood. I am very upset. On the one hand I know that in a few minutes this woman will no longer be able to tolerate her terrible pain and that no one will come to her rescue, and so she will get up and run into the thunderstorm, thus endangering the unborn child, looking for help or at least for something or someone that might give her relief from her terrible anger. And I already know she will not find the help. But on the other hand, I do not know the outcome, and I find myself wishing intensely that she would be able to just remain on the bed, endure her pain and deliver the child.

Except for the primitive hut, the dream depicts the physical circumstances of my birth as my mother told them to me. And the pressure from within to write, my struggle with how to bring it all out, feels so much like a prolonged labor.

Moreover, the scene in the hut was as if taken from a Wagnerian opera. That made me think of Jung's comment about "failed individuation at the collective level." Indeed, Germany's effort at reaching a higher level of spiritual consciousness in the twenties, of finding a creative path out of the dreadful consequences of World War One, had truly failed.

That dream was immediately followed by another:

I am asked to insert a tube inside of me, right next to my heart. The individual who instructs me warns me not to puncture my heart. As I proceed, I can feel not one, but two strong heartbeats, one near my sternum, the second clear over to my left. I realize there are two hearts in me, Wiese's and mine. I can feel the throbbing of her heart in the palm of my hand and know that I shall not puncture my heart.

The dream confirmed what Wiese had said: accepting her into consciousness,