

# A Meeting of Joyce and Proust



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*Petty Recollections of No Importance*

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Everything is so deep, Leopold.

-James Joyce, *Ulysses*.

O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again.

-Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*.



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## Introduction

Two writers. James Joyce, the author of *Ulysses* and Marcel Proust, author of *In Search of Lost Time . . . well . . .*

In May of 1922, near the end of Proust's life, Joyce met the French novelist at a party for Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Diaghilev at the Majestic Hotel in Paris. Though both men of letters propelled their greatest work forward by extrapolating from their favorite subject, themselves, the selves in their work are expansive and vast, taking in whole cities, nations, and social worlds. Both were voracious readers with incredible memories (as we certainly know of Proust) and an intuitive grasp of the cultural mechanisms of modernity. Such serious conversations the two of them might have....

But one attendee, William Carlos Williams, paints a much more comic picture . . .

Joyce, writes Ben Jackson at the *London Review of Books*, "arrived drunk and poorly dressed; Proust, draped in furs, opened the door."

Then, writes Williams, the two men sat in chairs side by side, while "partisans" waited for "the wits to sparkle and flash." Instead, they kvetched in the sports-and-weather small talk of two elderly men meeting in a doctor's waiting room, or two Samuel Beckett characters, beset by petty complaints of ultimate importance.

*Joyce said, "I've headaches every day. My eyes are terrible."*

*Proust replied, "My poor stomach. What am I going to do? It's killing me. In fact, I must leave at once."*

*"I'm in the same situation," replied Joyce. "If I can find someone to take me by the arm. Good bye."*

“Charmé,” said Proust. “Oh, my stomach, my stomach.”

*—Josh Jones, When James Joyce & Marcel Proust Met in 1922, and  
Totally Bored Each Other*

## Planes of Consciousness

–*Come!*

It soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long breath he breath long life, soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessness . . .

–*To me!*

–James Joyce, *Ulysses*.



## *Prelude: Paradise Lost*

The entrance to Paradise Lost was blocked by a Mayflower moving truck while a veritable horde of maddeningly-inspired and passionately-overwrought glowworms crawled languidly across Pennsylvania Avenue, where, I might add, the traffic killed us on the way to the Capitol, and proclaimed the coming of the summer solstice while we beheld the mighty monument to embalmed official records housed in the National Archives where the forged and unsettlingly-irreverent papers of Warren G. Harding had been befittingly kept since he dropped dead unceremoniously, in ignominy, in 1923, under a striped red-and-gold canvas canopy on the comically over-tended kelly green White House South Lawn after the President—oblivious to Florence’s cries of treachery—had been discovered *in flagrante delicto* with the nubile but sexually-frustrated wife of the Treasury Secretary within earshot of the executive chef, himself a native of Paris who had been raised in the East End of London and who was attired in a dark blue uniform adorned with bright red epaulets, military regalia that had always been worn by members of the French Foreign Legion, and, who, holding in his right hand a pan of eggs and sausages, burned at the outer edges by the searing heat of the Mansion’s out-of-date kitchen appliances, no longer covered under Sears warranty, would later be heard shouting at members of Parliament to vote in favor of a hard Brexit that would free Britain from the godawful shackles of 40 years of humiliating servitude in the European Union notwithstanding trade agreements made with the Red Chinese Communists, who, shrieking “Leopold, wir gehen!” at the top of their lungs like a thousand, drunken barons, in shocked horror at the diabolically nauseating scene of the Tiananmen Square massacre, which would in due time destabilize the price of Brazilian bananas on the open market, but before Tibet had declared its independence and assumed its rightful place in the legion of Asian nation states resolutely determined to conquer the Antarctic and enslave the local endangered penguin population that scampered among the ice fragments and floes in the face of the coming winter for which 50 million years of evolution had prepared them, so I had learned one night while dining on black caviar and watching a vintage big-screen TV in a rented house in Brentwood, California, blind to the possibility that the

Big One, feared for decades by longtime residents of Southern California, might trigger a huge stock market crash, with bond prices falling to their lowest level since the year 1567 when Venetian authorities had begun to dutifully keep records, stored for safekeeping in padlocked chambers in the Venice Campanile bell tower—which some scatological Venetians, in an outré association, likened to a tumescent penis—of the ebb and flow of the flooding Adriatic Sea, and, yes, it now occurs to me, Cleopatra had lost her ill-gotten fortune “on or about” the Ides of March, several millennia before, when the Queen of the Nile had made her way to Rome, with Caesar’s protection, and was paraded around the Capitoline Hill and marched through the Arch of Titus, which served as a gaudy glorification in marble of the Emperor himself for whom Cleo—as she was called by intimates (not to mention brazenly disrespectful subjects of a breakaway province of southern Egypt)—harbored a special affection in the glory days of Rome’s rule of the Mediterranean, before the Huns and the Ostrogoths had conquered Northern Italy in a stroke of military genius that was to insure the place of the barbaric Germanic tribes as the leading advocates for women’s rights and proponents of a Constitutional Amendment that would guarantee that midshipman on shore leave would not take advantage of loose women who felt it was their due to earn a living wage by any means necessary, or torment lost dogs, whose dog tags clanged in the night air on Broadway, all the while waiting in line to see a debauched-yet-sanguine Annie sing a boringly-monotone performance of “The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow” among a thousand other errands to be run while riding the A train to Queens or The Bronx or some such place that no decent housewife, if there even be decent housewives anymore, would ever endure and, yea, recite in blessed solemnity under a white satin wedding *chupah* (if I might be permitted this once instance of redundancy), with a reform rabbi chanting in Sephardic Hebrew the sacred commands delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai when the Law was declaimed by God to the ancient Hebrews notwithstanding their discomfort with medieval French conjugations and declensions that Mr. Boni had taught to the upper classes at Central High School after girls were admitted to the hallowed halls of that venerable institution that had educated the poor masses of boys educated on Green Street, or was it Spring Garden Street, in North Philadelphia, and whose school term

ended in mid-June in time to greet the summer with a copy of Joyce's *Ulysses* in one hand and a box of stolen condoms in the other, hitchhiking to the Schuylkill River to get laid under the mid-summer stars on the banks of the West River Drive in the days before the much anticipated exhibit of sculpted characters from Dante's *Inferno* at the special-discounts-for-school-children-and-large-tour-groups Rodin Museum—in reality, a knocked-off version of the Musée Rodin de Paris—located on a chic Philadelphia boulevard, known by locals as “The Benjamin Franklin Parkway”—in reality, a knocked-off version of the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris—left us in awe of the mastery of bronze and marble craftsmen as well as the finer aspects of 20th-century Irish literature.





## I. In Memory of James Joyce

The grievously-evanescent bloom of a summer day . . . or, shall I say, the everlasting sunshine of a thousand-times cycle of sunrises and sunsets chronicled in Dreaming and Memory, . . . or, perhaps, the reminiscence of a saffron blanket of a jungle-like chaos of a thousand-and-twenty marigolds germinating in the far suburbs of Dublin—or . . . *wherever!* . . . a final sanctuary for those who, in hushed tones, like a pious French mourner chanting Kaddish for his late mother and thinking back to the day of her death, *aujourd'hui maman est mort . . . ou peut-être hier . . . je ne sais pas*, bemoaned the wretched misfortunes and enduring afflictions associated with the present-day grief of uncertainty, a never-ending *Götterdämmerung* of unbridled misery, foretold so long ago, as we sat on the craggy rocks and, with pensive solemnity, took Polaroids of the rising sea in the late afternoon while we listened on our iPods to downloaded recordings of Franz Liszt's pompous *Transcendental Etudes* and counted *one alligator, two alligator, three alligator*, as the golden fingers of the sun cast their majestic glance over the enervated shadows of passing destinies and left us enthralled by the wonder of friendships we enjoyed in collegial groups as we were entertained by the final episode of *Seinfeld*, all the while planning to violate federal election laws in remote precincts at some unspecified future time, and persuading us to wade in the oncoming waves of Far Rockaway in pursuit of Big Blue or possibly at the ends of the earth, leaving us full of the earnestly enthusiastic tirades of mad old men drunk with metaphor and cold drafts of beer or swigs of Tanqueray in the rows of taverns down by the small lane where Joyce penned his magnum opus and mused on human frailty, and, with bawdy audacity, once opined to a friend, referring to his neighbor's good-looking wife, Anne Kearns, an oversexed lassie from the town of Carrickfergus near the tariff-free border with Northern Ireland, ". . . the bitch is in heat—she whines when she's in heat," and inciting mutinous revolts by the manically-discontented mob which, moved by the highfalutin' rhetoric of FDR, disturbed the sleep of mankind with dreams of world domination—dreams, no doubt, animated by an insuppressible instinct for incautious reform—notwithstanding the probability that some future utopia of grace and peace would end with a whimper at an overcrowded H&H automat

(that had run out of ham and cheese sandwiches) in downtown Philadelphia when a Messianic figure with a viral infection refractory to penicillin, succumbing with resignation to fate's dictate, pursued some other paradise, some other murky domain where the insects flit among the daffodils and disease does not take its toll on luxuriant hopes of better days, wherever those days might lead us, onward through the slow drift of time where the cycle of death and rebirth that we wistfully pondered under the lines of sycamores along Central Park—or was it Third Avenue? . . . or perhaps it was Eighth Avenue?—while Mike Bloomberg, a made-in-America Napoleon who had not yet met his Waterloo, contrived to make Manhattan Safe for Democracy, and row-upon-growing-row of traffic lights proliferated, on the clogged arterial maze of Manhattan streets, with unbounded enthusiasm above the concrete and asphalt infrastructure maintained by the New York City Office of Bureaucratic Complacency in those days past when, as I now recall, Catholic school boys recited their all-too-quickly memorized French catechism, “*Quelle couleurs sont les arbres?*” –“*Les Arbres sont verts,*” on the outskirts of Central Park, so many many many many many miles away from Lyndon Baines Johnson's ranch in Blanco County, Texas . . . a far expanse in time and space from the entrenched dejection of military planners and brain trusters like Robert McNamara or Dean Rusk contemplating the impending fall of Saigon or, alternatively, some Ben Rhodes Scholar Jew of Anglican Tradition, contemplating the bleak outcome of ISIS victories in the scorpion-infested deserts of the Middle East, then fumblingly lurching toward a triumphant caliphate, longed for by devout Muslims and other seekers of vain wisdom and questionable truth, and fearing that the sorrow and plague of horrendous possibilities might never end, you say, you say with an irresistible glance at murkily-obtuse historical texts and absurdly-wearisome bibliographic data recorded in compendia that encompass us about in a library superabundant with French-language editions of Pasternak poetry and Henry James novellas, translated into Gaelic also with impressive editorial annotation by the great Irish authors like Connor McGuire and Ronen Connelly, writers whose deft sagacity and loquacious diatribes evaporated amid the expansive but ever-so-bland political rhetoric of swift-footed office seekers, soliciting the votes of a weary electorate left bemused by a political campaign that drearily

dwindled in the weeks leading up to the elections, just as millennia ago, in the waning days of the Roman Republic, impassioned Latin scholars-turned-politician read Plato and Sophocles in the original Greek to a crowd of heedless ancients assembled in the forums of Rome, attempting to impress a skeptical and dull-witted citizenry with what was, in reality, a superficial acquaintance with the wisdom of past and nearly forgotten Greek philosophers, who had extemporized in the ancient agora of Classical Athens, at the foot of the fabled Parthenon, sometimes in later-recorded iambic pentameter, an overburdening but astute exegesis o'er the fate of a maddeningly-imperceptive Oedipus and, at times quoting the *Ileum* by Homer's gastroenterologist-with-literary pretensions, Dr. Leopold Bloom, that little known epic poet who cast his lyric spell with enraptured tales of a peripatetic but triumphant Odysseus, that selfsame Leopold Bloom who rhapsodized on the singularly enticing sirens—those beguiling daughters of a fitful sea—who serenaded war-weary sailors with poetic enchantments depicting the bitter days and dreary nights that hovered over the Gates of Hercules at moonlit eventide in midsummer, overwhelming those aforementioned dauntless Greek mariners with mystic conjurations that augured the unfortunate end times of a glorious and exalted Athens, a prophesy echoed centuries later when Roman oracles foretold a frightful invasion of *Roma Eterna* by barbarian hordes, fixedly determined to ransack the ancient Latin capital under the gleefully insouciant gaze of Nero who fiddled in the school orchestra (together with an adolescent assemblage of amateur, but surprisingly talented, accordion players and clarinetists) while Rome burned, and thereafter led his people to ill-starred catastrophes in the decades after Caesar was stabbed to death in the Senate building not far from the graves of Romulus and Remus who were reared by a lactating wolverine among *The Pines of Rome* in the forested suburbs outside *Roma Eterna's* hermetic city walls in the ancient days that followed even more ancient days and, as later memorialized in historical accounts of dubious reliability, wearied British school boys who had to commit to a school boy's narrow memory names like *Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti filius Augustus* and *Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*, names later shortened for modern ears and made famous by public broadcasting in America or the British Broadcasting Corporation in the pre-Brexit United Kingdom after the

decline and fall of a disgraced Richard Nixon who had previously promoted lasting relations with the Chinese Communists and bragged about his support for Section 8 housing as if his past history as an arch conservative under the mentorship of Dwight Eisenhower could ever persuade the cynical masses that Republican politicians cared one iota for the housing conditions of poor suffering Latin immigrants who made their way, with naive impunity, from destitute Mexican towns-along-the-border to the interior of the United States *via* an ever-shifting international boundary—a boundary left indeterminate by the wavering meanderings of the Rio Grande—until a great wall would be built to prevent an unconstrained onslaught of barbarian migrants (not to mention hordes of starving and possibly disease-ridden antelopes) into Texas, all the while Spanish-speaking cabana boys, their skin glistening with SPF 30 sunscreen, imported from underutilized factories in Hong Kong and plundered from the shelves of uninsured CVS pharmacies across the Southwest, and hoping for an extended visa and a sweet movie studio contract with a Hollywood tycoon *who had not had sex with unwilling starlets*, languorously settled back in Pedernales Falls State Park where, decades earlier, LBJ, sharing an intimate tape-recorded confab with his ill-omened friend, future Supreme Court Justice, Abe Fortas—smoking a cigar and looking for all the world like a pre-indictment Ivan Boesky—predicted that no one would ever even come *near* to understanding James Joyce’s greatest opus, *Ulysses*, until a District Court in Manhattan declared that Molly Bloom’s narrative of an orgasm in the book's final chapter did not constitute obscenity under federal law.

## *II. In Memory of Bloomsday*

A reasoned consideration of the extravagant vicissitudes of the space-time continuum leads us onward to a universe of possibilities: detouring through the depths of Kantian philosophy, the categorical imperatives of existence, and then on to the sometimes disputed theories of Ferenczi and Fenichel, two disciples of a scientific adventurer (whose name I no longer recall) who, through a persistently-applied and logical methodology, created a revolutionary school of thought that attracted adherents who disseminated that adventurer's ideas to the world, a school of thought that over time generated diverse and far-flung training institutes whose senior scholars promoted courses of study that ultimately deviated in radical ways from their origins in fin-de-siècle Imperial Vienna, origins that now seem as distant from us as the big bang, and altered our sense of, among other various and seemingly unrelated controversies of far-reaching importance, the frequently overlooked but limitless potential of debilitated soldiers, wearied but undeterred by their futile search for a convenience store that might stay open late on Christmas eve, where they could buy a bag of ice so that non-British revelers at a late-night holiday bacchanal—ignorant of an English gentleman's sensibilities concerning the addition of ice to gin and tonic—could chill their Tanqueray and quinine, those indefatigable warriors who led America optimistically forward despite the downward spiral of pomegranate futures prices on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange—engendering a devastating and disheartening financial loss, enjoined, no doubt, by a malevolent God—then later, in fact, years after the floor dropped out of the pomegranate commodities futures market and traders lost their red-flannel shirts, an ever-more calamitous and unforeseen eventuality arose, a contingency not prophesied by the ancient books of Talmudic wisdom that, at least as it was reported in the *Chicago Sun-Times* by novice reporters fresh out of journalism schools at state universities, sustained bone-tired Hebrew scholars who, on another Christmas eve decades later, well after the collapse of the pomegranate commodities futures market in Chicago, blunderingly prospected for and ultimately failed to locate a Chinese glatt kosher deli that offered potato knishes with General Tso's sauce, even as those pious Lubavitcher disciples of Rebbe Menachem Mendel

Schneerson, of blessed memory, and often simply called *Rebbe*, slogged on foot through that years-later immobilizing east coast holiday blizzard so many years ago, oblivious to the exasperating pre-recorded-on-an-endless-loop-cassette clinks and jangles of sleigh bells blared persistently from loudspeakers positioned on the snow-capped roofs of decked-out-for-the-holiday-season suburban shopping malls—annoying clinks and jangles that inexplicably delighted their non-religious, and at times blasphemous, Christian brothers but, it's said, enchanted strapped-for-cash Greek Orthodox mariners, who, fearing a final collapse of the Greek economy under a burdensome debt to German bankers, set sail from the Aegean Sea in mortgaged fishing boats, then lost their way in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, ending up at an American shopping mall on the eastern seaboard of the United States during that selfsame end-of-year blizzard, while colonial horse traders in Peru despoiled the Inca's gold, silver, and copper treasures, sacred to that appallingly-aggrieved Indian nation—and, I might ask, who knows what other metals in group 11 of the periodic table?—and exported said ill-gotten bounty to the Spanish Emperor, allowing King Ferdinand, a secretly lapsed Catholic, to skedaddle with the holy relics that ultimately found their way to Valencia, where Spanish seafarers, surviving the sinking of the Imperial fleet, “the Great and Most Fortunate Navy,” off the coast of Calais in 1588, sought safe haven, despairing of ever finding reinforcements to launch a successful invasion of the southeast shore of a pre-Brexit England—the outcome of a failed Spanish invasion that left desperate young seafaring adventurers on the decks of galleons (engaged in coltish horseplay and humbly genuflecting like devout parishioners at a Roman Catholic Requiem mass in chaste supplication to a malignant deity for a change in winds) a pathetic scene that ended up being immortalized in gargantuan canvases by the deaf Goya, committed to recording with oil and brush the innumerable foibles and follies of luckless 16th-century Spanish sailors, and Renoir—disdaining for a brief time his penchant for feminine sensuality—who pledged themselves to painting illustrious and hopefully marketable depictions of that greatest of sea debacles, the sinking of the Spanish Armada, paintings now housed in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, amusing, among other multifarious museum goers, one Justice Stephen Breyer (together with his aristocratic wife and his now late father-in-law,

the 1st Viscount Blakenham), of the United States Supreme Court—whose paternal great-grandfather, speaking only Lithuanian Yiddish, davened at *mincha-mayrev* in the Great Synagogue of Bucharest, after noshing on liver knishes and feeding the pigeons in the Cismigiu Gardens—and who, during a brief but often-later-recounted excursion to the Netherlands following the 2004 Court term, had completed his reading of *Remembrance of Things Past* in the first authoritative edition in French based on Proust’s manuscript, a summer Court recess notable for commencing at the end of a judicial term in which the final decisions would not be released until the following August, owing to an unprecedented delay occasioned by Justice Ginsburg’s audacious insistence on attending a *Mostly Mozart* festival in New York at which she could savor the abstruse fugal writing featured in Mozart’s two final masterworks, the symphonies nos. 40 and 41, which are said by enthusiasts to have inspired Strauss’s daring forays into counterpoint as exemplified by his mid-life operas composed in collaboration with librettist Stefan Zweig, a writer who had a warm relationship with Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, some days and weeks before the Six-Day War, operas that one sometimes hears in excerpted accordion, violin, and clarinet arrangements played by amateur ensembles in outdoor cafés like the Municipal House Cafe and the Narodni Kavarna in Prague, which were, in the early years of the 20th century, frequented by Franz Kafka while writing *The Trial*, that author’s dismally-mystifying tale of judicial misadventure, while living under the constitutional remnants of a now moribund Habsburg Empire, whose last ruler, Franz Josef, *the non-Jewish Franz*, wearing Gray Flannel cologne and lecturing to his uncomprehending subjects on the evils of Ivan the Terrible, visited Jerusalem and thereafter founded a rabbinic academy in Budapest and also hired a mohel to circumcise his son, the crown prince, who would ultimately never rule over a democratic Austria or eat kreplach served by Hebrew-speaking waiters from Tel Aviv—serving Manischewitz wine in Elijah’s Cup or a Florence flask—that same Emperor who couldn’t care a whit whether his Christian subjects considered him to be just one more gallantly-enlightened goyish potentate or, alternatively, his Jewish subjects believed him to be the goyish Messiah prophesied, so it is said, in a non-canonical, abridged Yiddish-language version of the Talmud, all the while

Franz Kafka, the writer, couldn't care a whit whether he ever ate another kosher meal or care whether the Emperor forbade the immigration of Protestant evangelists or Irish novelists to the suburbs of Prague but who, nonetheless, was single-mindedly set on persuading the ruling Tories in Britain to appropriate Scottish links land for miniature golf courses and convert the unbathed multitudes of Northern Ireland to Irish whiskey cream (even if they had never set one foot in McGonigle's Tavern after sundown owing to crushing tariffs and the hard border with Northern Ireland, left in the wake of a less-than-desirable Brexit agreement, which Theresa May and the Tories had promised would never happen in their Government), and, in the end, went so far as to not only abandon his formerly enthusiastic support for a national campaign to provide a safe haven for the Orthodox Jews of Poland by relocating them to government-subsidized former ducal palaces in Lower Austria, but also, at the same time, renege on his promise to contribute, from his meager writer's income, to a French fund to convert the Petit Trianon on the outskirts of Paris to a home for Jewish orphans, and down the road beyond Versailles, buy vacant lots in the scandalous Muslim suburbs of Paris to construct old age homes for once-aspiring but failed Jewish novelists, a brash course of action by the writer Franz Kafka that riled Nicolas Sarkozy, the former President de la République, and his Jewish daughter-in-law who were at that selfsame moment commencing a multi-volume history of the final five French kings—with plans for a fully-annotated English-language edition—all the while tenors, singing on the stage of the Opéra National de Paris, wore threadbare, imitation Ming Dynasty costumes for sold-out performances of Puccini's *Turandot*—down-at-the-heels costumes purchased at a discount Ikea store on the Boulevard Haussmann in Paris from funds allocated by the French president to promote the appreciation of French opera among its Arab-Muslim citizens—hideous Swedish-made costumes worn by nationalistic French members of the Opéra National with the intent to embarrass and infuriate Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden, who had previously noisily balked at listening to Jean-Pierre Sauvage, the French chemist, give his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in Stockholm in Franco-Provençal, yes, that same Swedish king who had nothing better to do in mid-June than watch the



late sunset and commiserate with Swedish school boys who had been assigned to read the novels of James Joyce without a Yiddish thesaurus.



### III. The Inexactitude of Freedom

Oh, can we but despise the *haute monde* or the newly-rich for their ostentatious displays, the Rolex-wearing Lexus drivers dining with an American Express Platinum Card at the Russian Tea Room on 57<sup>th</sup> Street, the insider trading scammers (who now seem to populate our federal country clubs), those unabashed miscreants who absconded, with an inexhaustible hunger to escape from the primitive conditions of their poverty-stricken youth, and, in the end, achieved an exhaustively-celebrated opulence, the ill-gotten fruits of obscure freedom-from-want swindles that left ordinary citizens—who themselves wondered how they would pay their monthly health insurance premiums—with the inescapable sentiment that nowhere does prudence overtake the otherwise shoddy judgment of a textbook-besotted, Irish-Catholic lad with a freshly-minted medical degree more than when a middle-aged Medicare recipient requests a medically questionable intervention for the remediation of a possible hormonal imbalance, and in the cobweblike complexity of that novice practitioner's inscrutable thoughts there abruptly appears a ghastly premonition of an unwanted *dénouement* in a Star Chamber case that might satisfy the jurisdictional amount, a Star Chamber case that would inevitably lead to monotonously-longwinded closing arguments by Harvard-trained ambulance chasers at either side of the courtroom trying to persuade an inattentive jury-of-the-defendant's peers, chosen to evaluate, with an unbounded sense of awe and mystery, the wisdom to be gained through laborious application of, at first small—but increasing gradually by regular degrees or additions over time—intellectual efforts undertaken to comprehend, with the mathematical certainty of, say, a Georg Friedrich Riemann—that notable nineteenth century Lutheran father of the Riemann Integral—the unambiguous and universal laws of medical science expounded with dogmatic efficiency via the annoyingly-opaque sworn testimony of over-inflated Nobel Prize wannabes who populate the lofty heights of academia and who sit in courtroom witness boxes as experts on esoteric topics like “Andropause and Male Hormonal Imbalance,” and who, in another time and place might have dressed themselves in red flannel Marxist “worker's shirts,” and wielded their highbrow intellectual power by advocating incendiary mass protests in Chinese medical schools, overflowing with left-wing, but obscenely-

wealthy trust fund parasites, seeking advanced degrees and medical residencies at impressive institutions dedicated to healing both the sick and the awfully sick, and, who, often denying, “Cross my heart and hope to die,” any improper intention to vitiate the electrical impulses of the sinus nodes of Medicare patients suffering from incurable atherosclerosis, and afterward seeming to unfailingly escape (or to escape unfailingly) responsibility for fishy arson fires that always seem to burn down the over-insured warehouses owned by their overweight but insolvent parents—big-time operators residing in mansions on Oriental Avenue in Beijing with preposterously overly-manicured lawns (or other high-priced thoroughfares in the capital) in the post-Mao Communist era—a fact of life that never fails to remind me, at least, in some hideously foolish way, of an overly-wrought, yet boringly vacuous, theatrical depiction of damnation or, say, a Faustian bargain that might attract hordes of North Philadelphia discount shoppers to the basement of a now-bankrupt department store—there are so many, but let's name Wanamaker's—and then on, up and down the east coast on a summer's day or late in the spring “on or about” mid-June, but before Bloomsday, and shortly thereafter, extending into the summer solstice, one's nose filled with the alluringly-gratifying scent of simmering stews of kosher stock and chicken schmaltz and gribenes, which in generations past ennobled kosher delis in Camden teeming with noontime workaday customers in kipas, or boardwalk casinos (the *heimish* aroma of gribenes wafting over the poker and craps tables) in Atlantic City hotels, where once the children and grandchildren of Eastern European immigrants, yearning to breathe free on the trash-strewn beaches of that fading resort—unaccountably left unexplored by Christopher Columbus and his cohorts in the Italian navigation racket—and northward, on to the five boroughs of New York City where, in neighborhoods of newcomers belching with hunger, expatriates from small towns or villages in eastern Europe, the devitalized, hopeless lives of 12-hour a day nonunion factory workers were lived out in the seamy streets of New York's lower east side in no small measure owing to the misguided agendas of umbrella-toting capitalists, who, sometime in the transitional decade of the 1890s, went into a back office, and, closing the door, concocted a prophetic vision that they could, if they applied themselves with backbone and grit, prevail on The Powers

that Be to do their crooked bidding, and shortly beyond into the years just after World War I, when—my only friend, Stephen told me—the Kaiser and his entourage together with his Jewish banker, ignoring the pleas of Germany's ruling class, fled Berlin by train, in the dark of night, for Holland and left in their wake a country gripped by a spellbinding fear of inflation and unmedicated high blood pressure associated historically with Germany's ultimate descent into fascism that led to the Nazi flag being flown over the burned-out wreck of a Reichstag up-for-sale-to-the-highest-bidder in the crushingly competitive Berlin real estate market dominated in the later 1930s by gentile wool merchants who had supplanted soon-to-be-*émigré* (and I shudder to think of what else) Jewish real estate brokers, inflicting horror and trembling in the souls of preternaturally-sensitive French rabbits cohabiting on the shores of the Seine River on the outskirts of Paris, overrun with art dealers and flim-flam *artistes* and erstwhile Manhattan gallery owners seeking there a rare, exciting, oceanic, some might say deeply moving, exhilarating, and elevating experience that would generate an advanced form of perceiving reality, an alternative to the hallucinatory enchantments that might otherwise be obtained through the decidedly imprudent use of chemical stimulants, herbal potions, or magic spells, and, I assume, also sought by the French diaspora in South America where no one thought that Argentinian rough riders, speaking with a freakishly ludicrous French accent a relatively unknown Spanish dialect taught only at the Vamos Spanish Academy in a derelict French-*émigré* enclave in south Buenos Aires, would encamp under the midsummer sky of Argentina's Pampas region to copulate vigorously, oblivious to the hunger and thirst of an onerous day-long Yom Kippur fast, filing fraudulent disability claims under forged insurance contracts that were breached when the Titanic sank as a result of a pitiful miscalculation in the North Atlantic so many years ago even though the cast iron and steel used by mid-century shipyards to manufacture Civil War vessels (of both the federal and rebel factions) could not outlast the whimpering of Father Christmas's tiny elves who rode on reindeer and could never enter the Kingdom of Heaven without a British passport, even though they knew the Queen's password on Facebook and even though they knew that entrance to her Royal Highness's Holy of Holies in Buckingham Palace, beyond the most

secret corridor of Windsor Castle (a fact comprehended by only a select band of bagpiping Attorneys General who reside in the suburbs of Edinburgh—or is it the Scottish highlands?—but, in fact, deserving to be confined long-term to a federal facility or at least disbarred . . . but I have lost my thread, shall I continue? . . . will you permit me to continue? I will conclude by saying that in the Canadian wilderness where bear and other wild beasts native to Alberta graze in the grasslands, and possibly also in Vancouver shipyards where ironclad, steam-propelled warships, employed more than a century ago in sea battles waged against a soon-to-be-defeated Confederacy, were once manufactured under firm fixed-price contract to the United States Department of War to exacting specifications (laboriously drawn on drafting tables marketed to the public in end-of-year Ikea discount sales) by comprehensively-trained engineers with MIT Ph.D.'s, fluent in Hindi and Urdu—and employing computer-simulated models that originated in Silicon Valley several decades earlier, before insider trading scandals rocked the industry—without any thought by said comprehensively-trained foreign MIT Ph.D.'s of how they could extend their visas or pay off their student loans, but hoping for a reprieve from future uncertainty, a lifeboat, as it were, that might arrive fortuitously in the form of an election year promise of assistance from a presidential candidate hell-bent on securing his party's nomination by wreaking havoc on the national debt, all the while ignoring the urgent entreaties of the *haut monde* to put a lid on government spending before the markets collapsed and the roofs caved in under the pressure of nighttime revelers partying to the burlesque of a maddeningly-discordant 1940s dance band making merry with jazzed-up versions of Chopin boogie-woogie, and couples going off and doing who knows what in the jungles of eastern Vietnam even though Lyndon Johnson and his troupe of economic advisers could never have foreseen such an eventuality.

#### IV. The Cuban Embargo

The extravagantly-overpriced barium x-ray images of the sigmoid colon of His Royal Highness Prince Charles, who was treated on the morning of Halloween by Dr. Leopold Bloom, a gastroenterologist affiliated with the King's College Hospital Department of Gastroenterology in London, a few years before his ill-fated marriage to Diana and far away from the seat of his pants, and unashamedly billed to a beleaguered National Health Service at risk of default, bolstered the likely supposition that rectal bleeding among horse healers of mystical talents in the Texas panhandle was the likely after-effect of succumbing to the dietary enticement of hyped-up gourmet Italian cheese processed to rigorous EU standards and used in the fabrication of overcooked and overpriced pizza sold in off-the-beaten-track towns in Texas with laughable names like Amarillo, Borger, or Dumas to customers oblivious to the dangers of high cholesterol, that most assuredly, that is to say, without a clinamen of hesitation, tastes better in the heart of Florence than in the less-populated regions in the foothills of Tuscany (unlike melts-in-your-mouth-not-in-your-hands chocolate kisses whose piquancy is enhanced when consumed on the far side of the moon left unexplored by Neil the Comic's one small step), where enhanced images seen through stratospherically-expensive infrared night vision cameras do not reflect the grotesquely-loathsome bluish-green phosphorescence emitted by monstrously-overweight and unemployed TV sitcom writers who have, I must emphasize, never failed to enliven the heartland of America with underdeveloped and counterfeit plots strung together with potboiler vaudevillian contrivances from Depression era, Catskill-inspired storylines composed in clichéd dialogue that was written in the Late Middle Ages by illiterate and, I might add, intemperate Episcopalian monks who, drunk on kosher-for-Passover Communion wine, could never account in their sacred texts for the fact that the value of discount trading stamps would no doubt have been compounded if they had been used to purchase stock in profitable railroad lines winding their way to the East End of London—at least those parts of the East End not incinerated by *Luftwaffe* pilots during the Blitz—while Schubert's Unfinished Symphony blared from antiquated radios imported from Singapore in violation of international trade agreements, which echoed in railway cars incapable of traveling as far as the South China Sea, where

undergarments the size of overcoats had been tossed overboard by the over-bored and languidly-blasé passengers in flight from sexually-frustrating naval expeditions undertaken off the coast of South Vietnam in the latter days of the war to reconnoiter (*God, how I love the word reconnoiter!*) the sunken treasure of deposed Asian dictators—the successors to failed colonial empires—whose reins of power, at least as far as members of the Shanghai mafia were concerned, were trammled in the soggy, dull and lifelessly infertile acres of abandoned rice paddies in the glacial highlands of Scotland where moose and black bear hibernate while attempting to block out from their brutish *traguses*, *helices* and *lobules* (or is it *tragi*, *helices* and *lobulae*) the vibrantly-throbbing and auditorily- invigorating sonorities of vintage recordings of Verdi's late operas, like *Aida* and *Falstaff*, sung in Sicilian dialect, operas premiered in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century at La Scala while Italian school children, eating less-than-ripe pomegranates and singing tunes in the *Piazza del Duomo* that were made popular between the world wars at about the same time Mussolini made the trains run on time, tunes like, *Palombo vi si Fossero Recati due Mesi Prima*, hungrily anticipated summer vacations on the volcanic-ash-sprinkled beaches of Sorrento, near the old *Fabbrica di Cioccolato*, and tradesmen, hoping for a quick buck, looked forward to President's Day sales that would most assuredly boost profits, which, speaking optimistically, might well exceed the billions of wasted taxpayer dollars that could have been used to pay off a colossal national debt if only George W. Bush had not invaded Iraq and told Americans that federal revenues should subsidize discount condoms in bombed-out Baghdad Halal supermarkets, where cantaloupes, pomegranates-with-shiny-red-jewels-like-vestibular-bulbs, and overripe Crenshaw melons, paid for with funds withdrawn from underfunded Mellon Banks in violation of the banking regulations governing Arab-speaking provinces overrun with Isis brigades, all but certainly making it impossible to declare Title VII on Bastille Day while an ever-increasing plenitude of Chilean goat farmers foresaw the day when Bernardo O'Higgins, speaking Spanish with an Irish brogue, together with his retinue of libidinous Andean rogues, encamped in the exercise yards of overcrowded Santiago prisons, and pleading for intercession by Democratic United States Senators (of both the liberal and conservative wings of the Party), notwithstanding the fact



that House members wearing pink bowties could not declare war on Santiago without a Congressional resolution that would guarantee that James Joyce would not be allowed to import his filthy books—or copies of *The Economist*—into the five boroughs while New York court rooms were filled to the brim with less than enthusiastic spectators, yawning over the testimony of wildly-incomprehensible terrorism defendants (or prisoners with pending habeas motions), who had been apprehended in the shallow end of the East River not far from Gimbels basement, under a starry Manhattan sky, painted with unrestrained vigor by a morbidly-melancholy and one-eared Van Gogh, who sought refuge in an outdoor cafe near Times Square after watching the ball drop on New Year's eve and drank a bottle of overwarm Heineken that had lost its fizz and rambled on about Picasso's Blue Period, or some such thing, and, all the while, strained to block out that vexatiously-reprobate gypsy fiddler who stood his ground in competing with the French-speaking waiter for more-than-acceptable tips, which he would ultimately conceal from the IRS, and recalled a night at the Opéra National de Paris when he squinted through superincumbent cataracts, attempting to observe the sexually-lurid and obviously fecund Phi Beta Kappa honors graduates of the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, recently brought in from Moscow, prancing in tutus on the stage of the Palais Garnier, dancers whose failed attempts to impeach President Trump ahead of the 2020 presidential primaries in states west of the Mississippi, where tea leaves read by a fortune-teller named Professor Marvel had predicted a major drought that would trigger a precipitous drop in soy bean prices, subjecting the region to calamitous volcanoes whose lava flows could very well topple several of the more historically-worthwhile of Frank Lloyd Wright's now crumbling and out-of-date high-rise buildings that still tower, so I've heard, over a downtown Chicago whose hopelessly confused streets were badly designed by Yale-educated urban planners, while Mrs. O'Leary's unenlightened and hideously-attired cows ramble aimlessly toward the Great Lakes, decked out in ill-fitting dark blue pullovers emblazoned in gold letters with the words "Lake Michigan," lakes formed in the last ice age now made unnavigable by unrestrained melting glacial ice masses, for no other reason than that the weak-kneed President of the United States, kowtowing to West Virginia coal operators, repudiated the Paris Climate Agreement using quotations

banded together with the unlikeliest of verses penned by Tennyson, lines that made cravenly-ungifted poets, shirking their poetic Duty and Responsibility as set forth in the Rhyming Poet's Code (*as amended and annotated*), questioned whether this nation or any nation so dedicated and so consecrated could long endure on the beaches of San Juan Puerto Rico, crowded with souvenir-hunting, peak-season Russian-speaking tourists who had only recently been released from Lubyanka Prison, even if we assume that the annually-adjusted rate of inflation would make Mexican rum more expensive than the imported-from-Peru Tequila typically sold south of the border in Tijuana or Ensenada or Santa Ana, and lines of impoverished Latino customers—with Spanish equivalents of no-longer-fashionable American names like *Daniel* and *Craig*—impatiently waited in front of Spanish-language bookstores selling pirated magazines filled with vintage black-and-white pornographic pictures, were in danger of being overcome by vasovagal syncope in the afternoon glare of the conflagrant sun and, defying the temptation to rest in adherence to a traditional Jewish siesta, prayed for an end to the embargo of Cuban cigars that were, at that particular juncture, sitting in mortgaged container ships in sunny Havana while Fidel Castro could not assume that relations with the United States would improve over time, through patient diplomatic dialogue mediated by the American Ambassador to Russia – who, at the very moment (“the moment in and out of time,” as it were), tiring of Russian legal jargon, Greek Orthodox Biblical passages, and Slavic mythology, was restless to get back home to his long-suffering wife in Ithaca – if only Castro's brother, Raul, could learn to tie his shoelaces.

## V. Events Precedent to the Impeachment of Donald J. Trump

Can we ignore the radical creditability of religious zealots, listening to Sean (“Toots”) Hannity or Ray Murray or Davey Stevens or some other fictional, whiskey-besotted Irish character spouting Delphically-unfathomable fake news on the Fox Channel, as they pace back and forth in the monastery courtyard, dictating in medieval French a collection of aphoristic recollections or, as they call them, “Laconic Remembrances of Fascist Times Past” for a soon-to-be translated Book-of-the-Month Club selection with the facile title, *Diaries of a Former C-Grade-Actor-Turned-Republican-Governor*, that contained barefaced insinuations of debauched sexual infidelity involving “one Cuban cigar named Alexandro” and an Irish Whiskey Cream-stained blue flannel pullover, a hideously-partisan rendering-in-prose of wretched and, as they say in the trade, “unreliable rumor and hearsay”—and, as if we needed to hear more—that damned conversation between two crippled lawyers that Sean Hannity overheard on the dance floor at a national *Los Republicanos* Broadcaster's convention held at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles and later retold in perjured testimony in front of a Congressional investigating committee in the late 1980s, “Did you hear the rumor about me at the broadcast studio?” (“You mean the rumor that you smoke contraband cigars? Yeah, I heard about that!”), a scandalous paraphrase of grapevine evidence of deceit and cover-up, or psychological resistance, as Kleinian analysts say with dialectical certainty, in the outermost recesses of the mind of a psychoanalytic patient trying, with coffee-addled determination, not to doze off on a fake leather couch, and at the same time, avoid a face-to-face confrontation with a recently-painted light green office wall (one could still smell the paint fumes) festooned with an enigmatically-stoic portrait of Sigmund Freud, despairing of ever assuaging the hurts of a thousand arrows thrust into the hearts of cardiac patients who had imprudently failed to take a baby aspirin every morning, all the while fearing the appalling destiny of agnostic sinners grievously denied entry to Paradise, which might have offered a blissful coupling with 72 vestal virgins, a foreordination that all lecherous and Obama . . . or rather, abominably decomposing corpses all hopped up on embalming fluid take as their due—calling to mind the hapless circumstances surrounding the premature adjournment of

laughter and merry wit in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Act III, Scene 4—(you will, no doubt, recall the scene where Falstaff and Prince Hal argue about the size of a miniature box of birthday candles on a pinhead), ignoring the inconvenient truth that the sun had set in Miami Beach at 6:30 PM in the afternoon the day before and rose early the next morning at Hialeah—where there is no shortage of bookies-with-aliases who had gone underground in the latter days of the Viet Nam War to evade the draft—with the neighing of thoroughbreds chomping at the bits and pieces of hay stacks fortified with Vitamin E served in tan-colored plastic cereal bowls (or is it a breakfast of eggs and sausages?), at the crack of dawn, ever since two Iraqi caravan coachmen represented by public defenders and currently under grand jury subpoena in the Southern District of New York, riding alone silently through the chilly, early spring night, had unsuccessfully attempted to muster support for camel-driving Saudi princes wearing worn-out, red-and-white plaid keffiyehs as well as erstwhile Manhattan gallery owners riding in presidential limousines through the Iraqi desert, thus suggesting to one notable *New York Times* reporter (who shall remain anonymous but answers to the proper Irish name Maggie) that the purportedly grievous crimes committed by the late Saddam Hussein in the waste lands of the cradle of civilization would never rise to the level of an indictable offense under Title 18, in the hinterlands of the cosmos, in the sixth dimension of space, where in that an alternative universe known as South America, schools of uncultivated but arriviste dolphins swim—more often than not in avid pursuit of amatory adventure—with accredited academies of freestyling fish, who, with aquatic grace and piscine fortitude, and seeking a happier and simpler life in the pleasant waters in off-shore Central America near *Mosquito Coast* or, perhaps, in the serene surf that laps the western edge of Peru near the Inca trails where Ellen reconnoitered the Andean ruins of Machu Pichu on Thanksgiving Day, and—in the cramped quarters of their soon-to-be-smoked-and-served-at-a-Jewish-deli fish crania—carefully pondered (in their rare moments of limited reasoned reflection, to the extent gill-bearing aquatic craniate creatures can ponder anything), the intrigues of late 19th-century American holders of high political office, specifically, the better forgotten and dismally inept presidential administration of Chester A. Arthur, who undertook an overhaul of the

United States Civil Service system, in anticipation of the thirtieth anniversary of Sigmund Freud's circumcision on May 13, 1886, orchestrating an ouster of graft-prone civil servants who were not accountable to lawmakers and who had theretofore avoided an ultimate showdown with the President of the United States, whose advocates, arguing before the Supreme Court, leveled grave accusations against bawdily-repugnant plantation owners who housed African slaves in bondage, lo those many years ago, and whose cotton fields yielded the fruits of servitude-and-misery of human beings labeled “chattel” (and later, beggared sharecroppers) stripped of human dignity, causing a civil war that pitted the principles of freedom and justice against the debauched evils of a corrupt system and, I must query parenthetically at this point, should our government ever have acquiesced in the damnable chicanery of European-Revolutionaries-Turned-Despot who toppled failed monarchies and encouraged villainously-depraved Bolsheviks or Marxists-in-red-flannel-shirts, fixedly-dedicated to destroying the capitalist system in Indonesia under Sukarno—the late south Asian dictator formerly-known-as-Kusno-Sosrodihardjo—whose only accomplishment was his misguided decision, late in his unmerciful presidency, to allow beer-guzzling, burka-wearing Muslim women to publish the doctrinally-questionable fatwas of unscrupulous imams who preached compassion—on even-numbered days of the Hebrew calendar—for the underprivileged, lachrymose, and lamentably underfed aboriginal children of Buenos Aires who had been oppressed and left to suffer under the *Época de los Desaparecidos* in the rain forests of northwestern Brazil, their last supper being a paper plate of pan-fried rabbit and roux, and . . . and overstimulated by dispiriting thoughts of colonial tyranny that enveloped a Spanish-speaking continent and made us weep o'er the fate of a fallen humanity, all the while envisioning, in their cunning little fish brains, a sale of Wanamaker's Department Store securities that would benefit only the fat-cat shareholders of that now-bankrupt enterprise while leaving members of the boards of directors of other Herald Square chain stores scratching their heads by virtue of their inability to competently envisage (or inability to envisage competently) the enormous losses on Wall Street that would axiomatically follow a disastrous premiere performance of an Inca-dialect production of *Tristan und Isolde* (or was it Strauss's *Elektra*?) in a dilapidated and non-air

conditioned theater, colloquially known as “the Strauss Firm,” in a derelict but soon-to-be gentrified precinct of Lima— for, I might query a second time, what obtuse impresario could have failed to foresee the enormous protests that would arise from the lungs of aggrieved descendants of a fleeced Indian tribe to what was rightly perceived by those guileless natives as a mockery—consummated by descendants of European colonialists, those benighted Prosperos of yesteryear in search of amenable Calibans—of a forfeited but revered culture by overweight, Euro-trading, white-skinned opera singers, many of whom had lost their voices crying out in support of *Freedom and Brotherhood!* in affiliation with the Mothers of the *Plaza de Mayo* and were temporarily blinded by the lustrous glare of chromium license plates reflecting the razzle-dazzle Peruvian late-afternoon sun—not to mention transiently disoriented by one of the lesser known Prokofiev piano concertos that was then blaring from a souped-up limousine stereo system—a disconcerting razzle-dazzle reflected off forged license plates riveted to the rear ends of limousines transporting a coterie of sycophants accompanying the President of Peru, an unapologetic clique of partisan grand-standers who eagerly anticipated a night at the opera, sycophants whose corrupt political party *Los Republicanos*, numbering among its members a sizable cohort of fraudulent horse traders and unprincipled, miscreant croupiers-on-leave from Rio casinos—greedily inclined to eke out a more-than-comfortable living in the finer neighborhoods of Lima, Arequipa, or Trujillo on inflated Brazilian Real—a double-dealing clique that had importunately disavowed any interest in assisting the submissive underclasses of north-of-the-border Guatemala or Honduras, and, after shrewdly fleeing to Brooklyn, waited patiently for an explosion-free ride on the Long Island Railroad for a day at the beach at Far Rockaway, while the not-far-away Helen Palsgraf, standing adjacent to a man with a suspicious-looking package on the railway station platform, and decked out in lewd but oddly fashionable hosiery, bought in the discount section of Gimbels' basement in its flagship store on Herald Square (*where else?*)—together with her duplicitous and soon-to-be disbarred lawyers—cooked up still another crackpot scheme to file yet another contemptibly-frivolous lawsuit that would make her rich beyond imagining and allow her to buy a penthouse apartment on Fifth Avenue, across the street from the Metropolitan

Museum of Art, or perhaps be gifted a luxurious condo on Kamergersy Lane in Moscow by the President of the United States, bound and determined to curry favor with Vladimir Putin.





## VI. Fourth of July in Maine 2020

A chance encounter with a tiresome Professor Marvel – an erstwhile carnival *artiste* whose abandoned stage name, The Wiz, had inflamed members of the Black Lives Matter Movement attuned to provocative allusions to a well-known band of white-sheeted bigots all hopped up on alphabet soup – on my way home from buying a pair of ruby red Nike Flex running shoes at a newly-renovated Target store in a commercially-revitalized suburb of Bangor, Maine on the Fourth of July, 2020 tipped me off to the likelihood that one could never hope to envision the true future of America without at least a passing acquaintance with the banal platitudes and clichéd generalizations about American exceptionalism that one might overhear while eavesdropping on an assemblage of fleet-footed, blue-and-white-Speedo-suited-up-to-get-laid Greek sailors on shore leave, sipping gin martinis poolside while encamped at the Penobscot Health Spa, located in an entirely different Bangor suburb, Greek sailors oblivious to what were to them the incomprehensible English lyrics of George Benson’s R&B version of *Beyond the Sea* pumped over the aquatic center’s jacked up sound system – all the while midshipman Konstantinos, who, though fluent in English, had been rendered nearly deaf by impacted ear wax – and hanging around in late afternoon for the annual fireworks display financed this time round by an infusion of coronavirus relief checks that were, even then, bankrupting a proud people waylaid on the road to oblivion while making America Great Again, the aforementioned libidinous sailors discouraged about the future of inter-regional political relations in their corner of the world by disheartening thoughts centering on the machinations of a swindling hotel-magnate-turned-spokesman-for-the-Evangelical Right – himself spouting banal platitudes and clichéd generalizations about American exceptionalism – and his keen-eyed Orthodox Jewish son-in-law who, unaccountably bored by his wife’s seemingly interminable orgasms and thirsty for a cup of Hershey’s cocoa, was at that moment laboring to bring lasting peace to some God-forsaken, off the beaten path collection of sand dunes down the road from the Greek peninsula formerly governed by the long-out-of-commission Ottoman Empire, whose last Sultan, Abdul Hamid I (a descendant of a corrupt Muslim mogul of the Imperial House

of Osman), in flight from Turkey after a catastrophic war with Russia compelled the Ottomans to sign the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, found himself, one torrid night near the end of June two years later, in a far off British colony across the sea dining on halal Kung Pao chicken with a shady, slaveholding ghost writer – who, hiding his true identity, called himself Tom and whom I would describe as a red-haired hypocrite in a powdered white wig who self righteously shot off his mouth wearisome hokum about Freedom and Human Rights, an individual subsequently arrested by the police Special Victims Unit on suspicion of having had consensual relations with an underage girl named Dorothy who longed to get back home to her Aunt Zelda and Uncle F. – outside a Shanghai Gardens closed-for-the pandemic-but-still-offering-take-out-and-delivery at the intersection of Tenth and Chestnut in One Colonial Capital Known in the Vernacular as The City of Fratricidal Racial Division, hoping to be invited as an esteemed Muslim guest days hence to the signing ceremony of a big time legal certificate earlier commissioned by, and at that juncture under consideration by the Continental Congressional Special Select Committee on Revolt, Insurrection and Sedition all the while waiting for the much enduring King George III to foment a military shit storm by sending in a corps of obsequious but at times riotous and rum-soaked red suits to Lexington to counter a *second* corps of enterprising but nonetheless medically-attentive, iPod donning Carolinian patriots attired in filched-from-a-New-York-hospital surgical masks and riding on saddles-rented-for-the-Revolution (on thoroughbreds retired from less-than-stellar careers pacing the paddock at Liberty Bell Racetrack) – the monotonously-diatonic harmonic progressions of a jazzed-up version of *Yankee Doodle* providing an incongruous accompaniment to a contemplated rendezvous with a mutinous destiny only dimly foreseen more than a century earlier by the more intuitive, far-sighted and politically astute settlers at Plymouth Rock – patriots social distancing in compliance with CDC recommendations in the hopes of forestalling an unwanted encounter with The Invisible Enemy stalking Americans who yearned for barrels of tax-free imported Earl Gray tea and who cried out for a Chief Executive who *did not* have royal pretensions or misappropriate millions of public dollars to fund weekend excursions to a Florida golf course or install his immediate family in official positions like

some familial league of royal parasites (as if that could ever happen in a free America!) or spend his endlessly bountiful executive time overseeing the demolition of his one-time hotel casino, The Taj Mahal, a now decaying, bankrupted establishment on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City whose twenty-five suitors over the years, including one Lieutenant Stanley G. Gardner, were dismayed by dwindling property values throughout that declining seaside resort, the forenamed Taj Mahal in reality being an over-promoted, hyped-up boarding house that in former times was frequented by Polish virtuoso accordion players and members of the Indian Nonviolence Syndicate including an unemployed and crooked-counseling, devious-devising, Trump-supporting auditor and accountant with impeccable right-wing credentials named Milton K. Gandhi, *The New York Times* best-selling author of *Growing Up Hindu in the South* (and known to friends as the Keen-Eyed Emissary), who had only recently been cleared of federal racketeering charges by the Justice Department under the stewardship of the embarrassingly reprobate Attorney General for the offense of misapplying Homeric epithets at Gaelic Athletic Association-sponsored professional poker games (as well as a host of other predicate state offenses), but, having enabled an unlikely troop of singing hookers (on the road to inevitable stardom at the Rainbow Lounge and Bar at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas), to reduce their annual taxable income by setting up legally-suspect retirement plans — a fact reported widely in the liberal fake news media — was nonetheless, despite his unimpeachable record as a reliable ally of right-wing wacko causes, *persona non grata* in religiously conservative Topeka, then under emergency coronavirus lockdown, as well as sold-out Trump Campaign rallies in several other redneck strongholds across the Midwest.



### **Petty Recollections of No Importance**

I have never kept a diary, and even if I had, it would have been lost with all the rest of my belongings in the two world wars. But, it is my good fortune to be endowed with an uncanny memory which allows me to trace my whole long life almost day by day.

**-Arthur Rubinstein, *My Young Years*.**



*Wednesday, July 29, 1981.* I was 27 years old and worked as a law clerk at a small Philadelphia firm. It was the summer before my third year of law school at Temple University. My supervising attorney at the firm, Stephen F. Ritner, Esq., is now one of the top corporate and business lawyers in Philadelphia. That evening Ritner had a party at his condo in center city Philadelphia for firm employees. I entertained party-goers with my FDR impressions. I can remember accompanying another lawyer, Mike Mulvey to a convenience store to pick up a bag of ice. A few months later, at the firm Christmas party, another lawyer, Neil Sagot, eyeing me on the dance floor and recalling my apparent fondness for FDR, quipped: “He even dances like a cripple.” Neil was a comic. Oh, yeah, that morning Prince Charles wed Diana in London. My law career ended up being about as successful as Prince Charles’ marriage.

*Friday, November 24, 1978.* I was a 24-year-old employee at The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. I had the day off. The previous day had been Thanksgiving. I went to Wanamaker's Department Store in downtown Philadelphia and browsed the book department. The store had received a shipment of books, *The Diaries of Cosima Wagner*, Volume 1. Cosima Wagner, wife of the composer and daughter of Franz Liszt, recorded each day of her life with Wagner from the year 1869 till Wagner's death in 1883. Years before, I had read in the *New York Times* that publishers had begun preparing an English-language edition. I had eagerly awaited the *Diaries'* release. It was a massive editorial project that involved impressive historical annotation. *I had to buy a copy!* I ended up reading the book cover to cover. It took me until the end of the year—five weeks—to read the entire book, which was 1,160 pages. I impatiently awaited the issue of volume 2, but I was to wait five years, till 1983, when the English-language edition was published.



*Saturday, September 12, 1987.* I was 34 years old and worked as a paralegal at Hogan & Hartson (“H&H”), a mega law firm in downtown Washington, with two individuals named Craig D. and Daniel C. I had taken a few days off that week to visit Atlantic City with my sister and brother-in-law and their two daughters. My brother-in-law, a master of blackjack, would enjoy the casinos while I looked forward to a few days at the beach. It was to be a four-day vacation from Monday September 7 till Thursday September 10. On Friday September 11, Craig invited me to a party at his place in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, set for Saturday evening. He said to me, “If you don’t come to my party, I will burn down your house and kidnap your dog. (I did not live in a house or own a dog. I guess he did not mean that literally.) The next day, Saturday afternoon, I purchased a bottle of Tanqueray and stopped by Craig’s residence to drop the gin off for the party. (I am partial to gin and tonic—with ice.) It was raining. Craig loaned me an umbrella; it was a huge golf umbrella. I said, “That’s not an umbrella, that’s an awning.” When I arrived at Craig’s place that afternoon, he and Daniel were playing a recording of one of the Prokofiev piano concertos. *A Prokofiev piano concerto?* You learn the strangest things about people when you visit them at home. That evening, the evening of the party, it poured like a South Indian Monsoon. In fact, I later read that *that* Saturday rainfall was the highest precipitation total for the entire year in Washington. I ended up not going to Craig’s party.

Flash forward to the week of August 6, 1990. (I can remember that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had invaded neighboring Kuwait the previous Thursday). Craig and I had lunch at DuPont Circle. I worked at the law firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld (“the Strauss firm”) at the time. Craig said to me, “Last Saturday, my friend Richard and his wife and I went to Wolf Trap to see Sergei Eisenstein’s movie, *Ivan the Terrible*, with the music score by Prokofiev.” (*Again, with the Prokofiev?*) “Richard said he had an extra ticket, and did I know anybody who might like to come along. I said, ‘My friend, Gary would like this.’ But you know, Gar, I didn’t have your number so I couldn’t call you. I would have called you if I had your number.”

Apparently, Craig liked movies about dictators. That's something we had in common. He once mentioned that he loved the Abel Gance silent movie, *Napoleon*. I think he said he saw the movie in Boston while he was living there years earlier. I saw *Napoleon* in the fall of 1982 in Philadelphia. Incredible movie.

*Tuesday, June 29, 1976.* I was 22 years old. In the evening I sat down at the piano to play a short, simple piece—only 21 measures long—by Franz Liszt. It was the andantino in F-major from the 5 Klavierstücke. Composed in 1876, it is a gentle and quiet song based upon a brief two-measure theme.

The next day my father was scheduled to undergo major heart surgery. The following day he died.

*Wednesday, July 13, 1977.* I was 23 years old. In later years I carried with me the memory that on this evening PBS-TV broadcast a performance of Franz Liszt's *A Faust Symphony* with Leonard Bernstein conducting the Boston Symphony. I was enthralled by the hour-long piece, which I had never heard before. Days later I purchased a recording. I remembered the date because it was the evening of the 1977 New York City blackout. All of New York City went dark that night and the rest of the next day.

I recently Googled a query and came up with a television listing in a San Antonio newspaper that confirmed my recollection.

*Saturday, November 6, 1965.* I was 11 years old. I was bedridden with a bad cold. My sister and mother went to the mall. My sister had offered to buy me a phonograph record. I said I would like one of two symphonies by Franz Schubert: either no. 5 or no. 9. My sister returned with a recording of Bruno Walter conducting the Columbia Symphony Orchestra in Schubert's symphonies nos. 5 and 8. That was the first phonograph record I ever owned. I can remember the date because I can recall that several days later the great Northeast blackout occurred, on Tuesday, November 9, 1965. New York City went dark.

Monday, June 5, 1967. I was a thirteen-year-old 8th grader. My aunt, Zelda—my mother’s older sister and only sibling—and her husband, Francis, whom we always called “Uncle F,” were about to embark on a two-week vacation. They had settled on traveling by car to Montreal to visit Expo 67, the world’s fair. I can remember this date because it was the beginning of the Six-Day War in the Middle East. At the start of the war on Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> my aunt and uncle decided to postpone the vacation for a few days till the world situation settled down. They eventually departed for Canada a few days later.

Zelda and Francis had a special lawn. As I grew older, I developed the sense that they considered their lawn and trees to be their symbolic children. They had no children of their own. Their adored greenery, like cherished children, needed special care and they had spent large sums on lawn treatments to achieve the perfect lawn. My mother used to boast, “Walking on my sister's lawn is like walking on a carpet! It is so beautiful and lush.” *Then there were the trees! . . . the treasured atlas cedar, the beloved mountain ash, the grove of well-tended white birches, like a scene in a Russian novel . . . not to mention the assorted shrubs and flowers of all kinds . . . rhododendron, peonies, and irises . . .* Once my aunt told my mother, “if we ever move, we plan to dig up our favorite trees (*her favorite trees?*) and transplant them to our new house.” In the fourth grade I completed a school project. I took a leaf from each type of tree on my aunt's property and preserved it between pieces of waxed paper that my mother ironed together. I bound these preserved leaves in a book, which I presented to my teacher, Mrs. Lewis, together with the names of each kind of tree. I remember Mrs. Lewis, who mentioned that she lived in Horsham, a neighboring Philadelphia suburb, said to me: “I thought *I* had a lot of trees. But this is amazing!”

Lawn mowing had to be done in a strict manner. The lawn had to be cut several times a week to ensure that it grew no more than about a quarter inch. Zelda and Francis needed to have someone “baby sit” the lawn while they were on vacation. They recruited my mother. My mother worked a full-time job. No matter. My aunt enlisted my mother to drive up to her house in the suburbs—a 40-minute drive, 36 miles away—every few days to mow the lawn. The lawn was sizable: about a third of an

acre. I could not assist my mother because Aunt Zelda and Uncle F had a sit-down lawn mower and I was deemed too young at age 13 to ride it. So, every few days in early June 1967, my mother and I trudged off after dinner to my aunt's house in the suburbs so that my mother could mow my aunt's preposterously overly-manicured lawn.

But wait, there's more! My mother was told, "If it rains, you need to do this more frequently because the rain will speed up the growth of the grass." My mother ended up mowing the lawn two or three times.

*Tuesday, September 29, 1970.* I was 16 years old and a high school senior. In Mr. Finkelstein's social studies class, one student, whose name I no longer recall, said to a classmate, Jay Berman: "Nassar died." Gamel Abdel Nasser had been the long-time President of Egypt. He was a major actor in the Six-Day War that pitted several Arab countries against Israel in June 1967. Hearing of Nasser's death, Berman countered: "What do you want me to do, say Kaddish?" Kaddish is a Jewish prayer recited for the dead. Berman ended up moving to Israel after college. He is a senior lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Some years ago, I read that his wife was murdered in a terrorist attack.



Monday, June 13, 1988. I was 34 years old. Effective this day, I began permanent employment as a paralegal at the Strauss firm. I had two law degrees but did not practice. Working as a paralegal was a way to earn money—pay the rent and put food on the table.

June 13 was the anniversary of Franz Kafka's bar mitzvah in Prague in 1896. Soon after he completed his law studies at the University of Prague, the young Kafka decided on a career in insurance, all the while determined to write in the evenings. In 1908, he took a job at the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia, where he had the relatively menial task of processing disability claims. He referred to the post as his *brotberuf*, his bread job—a way to earn money.

*Saturday, December 29, 1979.* My girlfriend, Amanda and I took the Amtrak train to New York to attend an evening performance of Strauss's comic opera, *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Metropolitan Opera. It was a gift for my birthday, which was a week earlier.

Before the show Amanda and I dined at the Russian Tea Room on 57<sup>th</sup> Street. But I might be wrong about that. We had visited New York the previous April to attend a matinée performance of Wagner's opera, *Parsifal*, and we stayed at my girlfriend's brother's house in Park Slope, a gentrified neighborhood in Brooklyn. It might have been during that earlier April visit to New York that we ate at the Russian Tea Room.

*Amusing memory:* Amanda's brother, Edgar earned a law degree at Columbia University in New York City in the 1970s. She said that Edgar and his law school chums once paid a visit to an aged, hapless New Yorker named Helen Palsgraf, who, in a notorious negligence case studied by every first year law student, *Palsgraf v. Long Island Railroad Co.*—a court case decided by a panel of state-court judges including later U.S. Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo, then a New York state appeals court judge—lost her bid for damages to compensate for injuries she suffered as a result of a bizarre, Rube Goldberg-like set of circumstances she encountered on a railway platform on a warm summer afternoon while waiting for a train from her Brooklyn home to Far Rockaway Beach, Queens in the late 1920s.

I remember the third act of *Der Rosenkavalier* where a bullying, late 18th-century baron gets his comeuppance at a disreputable tavern, and calls out to his manservant, “Leopold, wir gehen! (Leopold, we're leaving!).”

While in New York, Amanda and I stayed at the Manhattan apartment of her friend, Elaine who was away. On Sunday morning my girlfriend got a phone call from Elaine saying that her friend's mother had just been killed in a car accident. I had an obscure premonition that something ghastly was about to happen. I went out alone to pick up some sandwiches at one of the kosher delicatessens on — was it Third Avenue or Eighth Avenue? Amanda and I left a sandwich in the refrigerator for Elaine before we departed for home on Sunday afternoon.

*Sunday, January 6, 1980.* I had just turned twenty-seven on December 23. I was on Christmas break, home in Philadelphia from my first semester of law school in Spokane. In the afternoon, my mother drove me to the airport for my return flight to Washington State. It was between 2:00 and 4:00 PM. We listened – actually, it was *I* who listened (my mother had no interest in classical music) – to the weekly Philadelphia Orchestra concert broadcast on the car radio. I remember the Strauss oboe concerto and the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony.

It was the last time I saw my mother. She died a few days later. I don't know the exact day. She died unexpectedly in her sleep. I suppose it could have been Tuesday night or Wednesday morning. I always think of the opening line of Albert Camus' novel, *The Stranger*, which I read in Mrs. Miller's tenth grade French class. *Aujourd'hui maman est mort. Ou peut-être hier. Je ne sais pas.* "Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday. I don't know."

*The Week of December 26, 1966.* I had turned thirteen a few days earlier, on December 23. I was an eighth grader and home from school on Christmas break. My mother had bought me a model ship building kit. It was a model of Christopher Columbus's flag ship, the *Santa Maria* on which he sailed to America in 1492. I remember being attentively absorbed for hours in my bedroom, building the ship model, and meticulously painting it. I recall that I completed the project in one afternoon. My sister's boyfriend, Eddie later told my mother that he would never have had the patience to build a model like that. People noticed that I seemed to work very hard.

*Saturday, October 5, 1979.* I was a twenty-five-year old first year law student living in Spokane, Washington. I did not own a television, but I had a radio and I used to tune into a local affiliate of the NBC television network that broadcast on the FM band. In the early evening I listened to the NBC-TV nightly news. I remember a news story about the visit to the United States of Polish-born Pope John Paul II. The previous evening the Pope had attended a concert by the Chicago Symphony, conducted by Georg Solti, of Anton Bruckner's fifth symphony. My ears perked up when I heard the soundtrack of the story. It included a few moments of what I later learned was the symphony's final movement, a portion of the fugue. I had been a Bruckner fan since I was sixteen, when I purchased a recording of his seventh symphony in May 1970. I had never heard the Bruckner fifth and when I caught heed of the brief excerpt I was amazed by its beauty and daring. Indeed, the hour-long work is dense and somber, but, at times, ethereal—otherworldly. I ended up not hearing a recording of the entire work until the summer of 2004 when I borrowed a CD recording from the library. At a moment in the final movement, I thought excitedly, "*That's it! That's the passage I heard fifteen years ago!*"

*Tuesday, November 8, 1960.* I was six years old. It was the presidential election night in the Kennedy-Nixon contest. My Jewish father was a staunch Democrat and Kennedy supporter. I was thrilled about the election. Throughout the fall my father brought home from his biweekly union meetings campaign buttons and bumper stickers supporting Kennedy for president. My mother was Polish-Catholic, and I suppose the prospect of electing the first Catholic president pleased her, although she generally had no interest in politics and was not even registered to vote. I remember election night and following the returns on TV in our living room with my parents. With chalk and blackboard, I recorded the election results. I was not your typical six-year-old.

*Sunday, May 11, 1969. Mother's Day.* I was a 15-year-old 10<sup>th</sup> grader. My sister got married this day. I served as best man at the wedding, a service for which my brother-in-law, Eddie had purchased for me a thank you gift: a two-record set of Gustav Mahler's symphonic song cycle based on Chinese texts, *Das Lied von der Erde*, in a recording with Otto Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra, Christa Ludwig and Fritz Wunderlich, soloists. That evening I rode with my parents, together with Aunt Zelda and Uncle F., to the Philadelphia Airport to see my sister and her newlywed husband off on their honeymoon, a one-week stay in Miami Beach. During the car ride Aunt Zelda turned to me and said, "Wouldn't it be nice, Gary, if you got a job, saved up your money, and took your mother on a vacation to Miami Beach?"

My sister and brother-in-law returned to Philadelphia the following Sunday, May 18. We had a small gathering at my parents' house that included Uncle Lewie, my father's older brother, and his wife. My mother had a bottle of champagne on hand. My sister had bought me a gift: a men's jewelry box, the lid of the box decorated with an antique map of the world.

*Saturday, May 9, 1964.* I was a 10-year-old fifth grader. I had developed a peculiar red rash. My mother took me to the pediatrician, Dr. Joseph Bloom, who lived in our neighborhood. The doctor diagnosed German measles. I remember later that afternoon watching one of my favorite movies, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. In the movie, an extraterrestrial alien – a perfect embodiment of a powerful image of our own human conscience and ideals – lands in Washington, D.C. and tells the people of earth that they must live peacefully or be destroyed as a danger to other planets.

My father was in New York City for a few days. He was a delegate at the 50th Anniversary Convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. I recall that he stayed at the Hilton Hotel. When my father returned he regaled the family with, what I considered at the time to be, exotic tales of his adventures in New York City, including a visit to the New York World's fair in Flushing Meadows, Queens, where he saw President Lyndon Johnson deliver a speech. My father said, in my recollection, "Johnson is taller than he looks on television. He has a ruddy complexion." Months later, on August 27 – LBJ's 56<sup>th</sup> birthday – Johnson accepted his party's nomination as Democratic candidate for President, in Atlantic City.

I had a small tape-recorder and I remember my father days later rehearsing on tape draft versions of a speech he planned to present to his union local, reporting on the events of the convention. In my estimation my father was an important man. He was employed as a garment worker, cutting neckties, but I was proud of his position as shop chairman of his factory. It was only as an adult that I came to realize how much I identified my father with the President of the United States, and how, as Thomas Wolfe wrote, the thing that in one way or another was central to my life was my search to find an image of a strength and wisdom external to my need and superior to my hunger for a strong father, to which the belief and power of my own life could be united.



Monday, October 6, 1986. I was 32 years old. I worked as a paralegal at H&H. That day a new employee started. His name was Craig D. We shared office space in the second-floor library of the firm, a tiny annex. Espe Espinoza, a supervisor, introduced him to me. I had formed a strong dislike of Craig before I met him. Another employee, Cindy Rinder, had said to me weeks before, “They’re hiring a new guy. He’s really good. They might just decide they don’t need you anymore.” When I met Craig I thought, “So you’re the guy who’s going to take my job.” When we met, he was wearing a bow tie and carried with him a copy of *The Economist* magazine. He chatted with Espe about speaking French with his roommate. I thought he was an eccentric or, perhaps, a Renaissance man.

At lunch Craig asked me, “Are we allowed to eat in here?” After all it was a library. I noticed he had brought chicken from home for lunch, and I said, “As long as you don’t throw the chicken bones on the floor.” Later in the week, another employee, Matthew Dolinsky said to me, “I was talking to the new guy, Craig. He seems like a nice guy. Did you talk to him?” I probably sneered.

I did not like the fact that he sat at a table in the library where Chaz G. used to sit across from me. It was a desecration, in my opinion. Chaz was a temporary paralegal, a 1985 Emory Law School graduate, who worked at H&H from September to December 1985. Chaz was a jolly chappie. Glenn Fine, then a young law clerk and later Inspector General of the United States at the Justice Department—and, I might add, a Phi Beta Kappa Harvard grad and Rhodes Scholar—used to see Chaz and me shamelessly goofing off in the library whenever he had occasion to visit. Chaz left H&H—and a bright career as a paralegal—to join the U.S. Army JAG Corps. His first posting was West Germany. When I saw Craig, in early October 1986, sitting in the chair in the H&H library formerly occupied by Chaz, I shook my head in dismay and thought, “You’re no Chaz.”

*Saturday December 18, 1971.* I was 17 years old, about to turn 18 on December 23. I was a first-year college student at Penn State Abington, located in a northern suburb of Philadelphia. My French final, my last examination of the fall term, was early that morning. My teacher was Irma Jean Smith, a native of Kalamazoo, Michigan, who was working on her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. The subject of her doctoral thesis was Jean Cocteau, the French poet, playwright, novelist, designer, filmmaker, visual artist, and critic. After the exam I traveled by bus and subway to Sam Goody's record store on Chestnut Street in downtown Philadelphia. I purchased the complete recording of the Paris Version of Wagner's opera, *Tannhäuser* conducted by Georg Solti. When I left the store, I walked west on Chestnut Street to catch the subway at city hall. Walking east on Chestnut Street were Fred Cohen and his brother, Murray Cohen. Fred Cohen had been in my French class at Central High School and was at that time a second-year student at the University of Pennsylvania. Murray Cohen was a senior at Central. The Cohen brothers are now medical doctors.

That afternoon I listened to the Saturday afternoon broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera, a performance of Wagner's opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. My sister, Zelda (she was named after my Aunt Zelda) telephoned my mother in the afternoon. My mother called out to me, "It's Zelda. Do you want to talk to her?" I picked up the phone and mentioned that at that very moment I was listening to the Met broadcast of *Tristan und Isolde*. We talked about my French final that morning. My sister had started college with the aim of majoring in French with the hope of teaching the language, but later changed her major. I still remember one day years earlier, the first day of school in September 1961, when I started third grade at age 7. My sister was beginning high school and commencing her French studies. At the dinner table that night my 13-year-old sister taught me to say, "Quelles couleurs sont les arbres? Les arbres sont verts." "What color are trees? Trees are green."

*Sunday, December 25, 1988.* Where was I on Christmas Day in 1988? Well, I can tell you, my friends, I did not spend my dinner hour at a Chinese restaurant: red Chinese or otherwise. My friend Craig D. invited me over to his place, where I spent the day. At that time Craig had an English sheep dog named Toots. During the afternoon, Craig, talking about his dog, said, "The bitch is in heat. She whines when she's in heat." Daniel C., another friend and former coworker from H&H, where I worked from 1985 to 1988, arrived late in the afternoon. Daniel's friend, Axel Ramirez, also showed up. Axel was originally from Central America. He grew up in Honduras or Guatemala—I do not remember now. Axel mentioned that he had spent years on a psychoanalyst's couch.

Craig pan-fried rabbit cutlets for dinner, prepared with a roux. Before the meal, Daniel and I went out to a video store—leaving Craig home alone with his still-simmering rabbit and roux—and rented the movie, *Mosquito Coast*, based on the novel by Paul Theroux. In the evening, while we were watching *Mosquito Coast*, I smoked a cigar, which prompted Daniel to comment, "You look like Ivan Boesky" referring to the infamous stock trader who figured prominently in an insider trading scandal in the mid-1980s. Craig retrieved a pomegranate from the refrigerator. He offered me one. I declined. Craig then went to his bedroom and changed into a dark red shirt to conceal any errant juice from the pomegranate. It looked like a Marxist "worker's shirt." The shirt might have been flannel, but I do not remember now. I do recall that Craig used to douse himself with Gray Flannel cologne.

Tuesday, November 7, 2000. I was 46 years old. This was Election Day in the presidential contest between Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush. As I walked north on Connecticut Avenue a few blocks from my apartment toward the Edmund Burke School, my precinct's polling place, I spotted Jared Silverman, a young attorney. Silverman had moved out of my apartment building earlier that year, I believe. Did he still reside in the same precinct? I don't know. I assumed he had just voted and thought, "Hey, isn't that illegal? If he no longer lives in this precinct, he's not allowed to vote at the Edmund Burke School." That was the last time I saw Silverman.

In May 1998 I had read an article about him in the *Washington Post*. He was apparently a huge fan of the popular TV sitcom, *Seinfeld*, and on the evening of the show's final episode, Thursday May 14, 1998, he had held a party at his apartment, a get-together to view the series finale with friends. For some reason, the *Post* thought that was newsworthy. "Local Lawyer Holds *Seinfeld* Party at his Apartment on Connecticut Avenue." I am guessing it was a slow news day.

*Monday, July 13, 1970.* I was 16 years old. It was my first day in my first summer job at The Franklin Institute. During lunch break I walked to the main branch of the Philadelphia Library on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, just a few blocks north of the Institute. I borrowed the complete waltzes by Chopin. I went back to the office and spent the rest of my lunch break perusing the piano score. I lost track of time and my supervisor, Dawn Jones, noticing that I was engrossed in my book, said it was time to get back to work.

*Wednesday, May 31, 1967.* I was a 13-year-old eighth grade student. My mother took me—at my urging—to see a performance of Wagner’s opera, *Lohengrin* presented at Philadelphia’s Convention Hall as part of a nationwide tour by the Metropolitan Opera. *Lohengrin* is a mythic tale that concerns a knight of mysterious origins who appears on the scene to defend the honor of a maiden who had been targeted with base rumors and false accusations. Sandor Konya, the Hungarian tenor, sang the title role. I wore a plaid blazer. It was the first opera performance I had ever seen. At the end of the evening, as my mother and I were walking out of Convention Hall, I overheard an opera-goer say, “That opera was awful. It didn’t have any memorable tunes. It had no memorable arias.” I remember feeling insulted by her comments.

*Early August 1989.* I was 35 years old and worked at the Strauss firm. In the early evening, paralegal Jesse R. asked me to join him and an old friend, Franz Wisner, accompanied by Franz's girlfriend, for dinner at a Chinese restaurant in the Adams Morgan neighborhood. Jesse lived nearby. Incidentally, Wisner was the 2005 *New York Times* best-selling author of *Honeymoon with my Brother* and is now married to the award-winning stage and screen actress, Tracy Middendorf. As dinner was about to conclude our Chinese waitress asked: "How did you enjoy your meal?" I said, "It was *très formidable!*" Terrific! Jesse got the Jewish joke and said to me, "It was *treif*, you mean." *Treif* is the Yiddish term for "non-kosher." He had grown up in a conservative Jewish household. At the end of the evening we walked back to Jesse's apartment. Wisner admired the belt I was wearing and asked me where I got it. I said, "Hecht's," referring to a now-defunct Washington, D.C. department store. Wisner said, "It's a cool belt." I replied: "Hecht's is a cool store." Jesse said: "I'd invite you up, but it's late. We have to work tomorrow." I then turned to Jesse: "We're friends now, right, Jesse?" He said, "Always, Gar, always."

*Saturday, January 20, 1973.* I was 19 years old and a second-year college student. That afternoon Richard Nixon was inaugurated to his second term as President. I remember Orthodox Jews – many of whom adored Nixon – were annoyed because the inauguration was held on a Saturday, so they could not watch the broadcast on TV. Orthodox Jews are forbidden to use electronic devices on the Sabbath. That evening I accompanied my piano teacher, Miss Griffith to the Annual Anniversary Concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Academy of Music. It's a benefit concert; the proceeds go to the upkeep of the Academy. My father got angry with my mother. He said I should be socializing with people my own age and not going on a date with my 60-year-plus piano teacher. I remember the last piece on the orchestra program was Respighi's *The Pines of Rome*.



*Friday, June 2, 1967.* I was a 13-year-old eighth grade student. I was out of school the previous day. My mother let me stay home because I was out late on Wednesday May 31 to see a performance of Wagner's opera, *Lohengrin* at Philadelphia's Convention Hall. In the morning I gave my absence note to my homeroom teacher. My mother wrote that I stayed home because I had attended the opera. Coincidentally, the homeroom teacher was an opera fan. He told me that he himself had been to the Met's performance of Puccini's *Turandot* earlier in the week. He said it was amazing to see Franco Corelli and Birgit Nilsson in the title roles "going at each other." I remember his phrase, "going at each other." His name was Mr. Corn . . . *something* . . . I don't remember the whole surname. He was a substitute math teacher. My regular homeroom teacher, Mrs. McKay was out.

Maybe fellow student David Freund, a friend, remembers him. I wonder if David's mother, Florence ever took him to the opera. I recall one occasion when our science teacher talked about the Florence flask used in labs, and David said, "My mother's name is Florence!" I remembered that. My mother's middle name was Florence. That was my maternal grandmother's first name too.

*Monday August 15, 1988.* I was a 34-year-old paralegal at the Strauss firm. The previous Friday my supervisor asked me to work during the weekend to complete a task for lawyers who had to appear on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> in a matter before U.S. District Court Judge Barrington Parker. I remembered that Judge Parker had presided in 1982 over John Hinckley's trial for the prosecution of his attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan the year before. I had been assigned to digest the deposition of an accountant named Farrell Kupersmith, who at the end of the deposition made a wisecrack comment to the attorneys present, "It's been great guys!" I remembered the name Farrell because I had a Jewish friend in elementary school whose father's name was Farrell, and when I mentioned that fact to my father, he said, "No Jew would ever be named Farrell."

I arrived at work shortly after noon on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> and stayed at the office all night, not leaving until about 8:00 am in the morning of Monday the 15<sup>th</sup>. I remember that I left a humorous note for my supervisor, stating, "I'm taking the rest of the day off to celebrate Napoleon's birthday."

On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> I had lunch with Craig D. and another former coworker at H&H at a Thai restaurant near the Strauss firm's office. The Republican National Convention, which named George W. Bush the Republican candidate for President of the United States in the upcoming November election, opened in New Orleans the previous day. Craig said he was impressed with a speech delivered the previous evening at the Convention by an up-and-coming star in the Party, Arizona Senator John McCain. Craig, then aged 29, mentioned that he had started dating a nineteen-year-old summer intern at H&H, a Smith college student named Alexandra Zapruder. She was born in 1969, or as Craig once said, "she was born the same year as my Mercedes." After we left the restaurant, Craig and his companion paid a visit to my office where Craig admired the firm's artwork on the corridor walls and I ended the get-together by saying, "It's been great, guys!"

*Friday, September 5, 1969.* I was 15 years old and a high school junior. That year I took a chemistry course that had a lab component on Friday afternoons. September 5 was the first lab class of the school term. I recall two students in the class: Perry Rubenstein and Mark Pearlstein. I was acquainted with Pearlstein. We lived near each other and sometimes traveled on the same bus to and from school. I was a sullen teenager and Pearlstein had once said to me: “You’re not exactly Joe Social.” Pearlstein ended up becoming a lawyer. Rubenstein went on to become a high-profile art dealer in New York, where he owned the famed Perry Rubenstein Gallery. An incident that happened months later during the week of March 30, 1970 made a lasting impression. Classes resumed that day following the week-long Easter recess. On about Thursday of that week, my chemistry teacher, Mrs. Fischer, noticed that one of the students had not been to class all week. “Where is Rubenstein?” she inquired. “I haven’t seen him all week?” One of Rubenstein’s buddies spoke up: “He went to Florida for spring break and he couldn’t get transportation back.” Mrs. Fischer commented sarcastically, “some people have a nice life.”

My father used to tell a story: In the early 1940s, at the beginning of World War II, my father – then in his early thirties – lived with his older, married sister, Ella Klein, in a house on Oxford Street in North Philadelphia. In those years, my father was what Jews of previous generations might have called a *luftmensch*, an impractical person who had no visible means of support. He decided to take off for a few weeks’ relaxation to Miami Beach, Florida where he led a dissolute existence gambling and going to the racetrack. *Some people have a nice life.* Upon his return to Philadelphia, his sister, Ella, handed him a letter from the government with the infelicitous salutation: “Greetings!” It was a draft notice. When he finally showed up at the draft board, so my father recounted, an officer bawled him out: “We were trying to get in touch with you! We had no idea where to contact you! Don’t you know you were supposed to give us a forwarding address? You needed to keep us informed about your whereabouts!” The way my father used to tell the story, I sensed he was acutely stung by his experience at the draft board.

*Saturday, April 25, 1970.* I was a 16-year-old junior in high school. That evening my mother's supervisor Bernie Barenboim, and his wife Martha, had a party at their house in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. My parents attended. The next day my mother and father recapitulated the events of the party. It was Passover and my mother said Bernie apologized for not being able to serve bread. The Department Director Alec Peters was there, and he read to the assembled guests a poem he had written (probably in Romanian). Peters was a Romanian refugee who had been jailed in Lubyanka Prison (KGB headquarters) in Moscow for ten years following World War II, presumably for political reasons. He was a hard-nosed and intimidating figure who once chastised an employee who was listening to a radio at work: "You know, in prison they play the radio to the prisoners as a form of torture." Bernie's Jewish-Argentinian wife, Martha, a professional pianist, performed several pieces for the assembled guests, including Schumann's *Träumerei*. Martha Barenboim said she was not a fan of Chopin.

*Friday, March 16, 1990.* It was my niece's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. I remember the Sunday she was born, in 1975. I was a senior in college, working on a degree in journalism at Penn State. In the afternoon, when the telephone rang, I put down the book I was reading. My mother was calling to tell me my sister had delivered a baby girl. Perhaps my mother told me the choice of a name, "Meredith," but I do not recall now. I had been engrossed in a recently published book about Freud and the psychoanalytic movement, titled *Freud and His Followers* by the Canadian scholar Paul Roazen. I had purchased the book days earlier. That school term I took a course in Jewish history taught by a rabbi, and I had chosen as the topic of my term paper, "The Jewishness of Sigmund Freud." I used Roazen's book as an historical source for the paper. I was intrigued by Freud's project, namely, begetting a scientific discovery then gathering about him a body of disciples to disseminate that idea to the world. I probably read for the first time in Roazen's book about Freud's self-analysis and his investigations into his dreams in the 1890s which led to his discovery of psychoanalysis.

Be that as it may.

At 2:00 PM on March 16, 1990 I had a weekly consult with my psychiatrist at that time, the psychoanalyst, Stanley R. Palombo, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry at the George Washington University College of Medicine. I do not remember what we talked about. After work that evening I stopped off at the local Safeway supermarket to pick up some items for dinner. Browsing in the market I came upon a product I had never seen before: Hershey chocolate pudding cups. I froze for a moment, with an almost child-like sense of wonder. I thought, "That must be really good! Hershey chocolate pudding!" I contemplated buying a package but decided against it. One of my psychological hang-ups centers on deferring the experience of pleasure, as if I were in exile from pleasure: both desiring an object but enforcing my estrangement from the object.

Since childhood I had romanticized notions about the Hershey chocolate company. In seventh grade, in November 1965, I read a biography of company founder, Milton S. Hershey, for an assignment in Mrs. Snyder's English class. I identified with Hershey's innovative spirit and his

humanitarianism. He originated a novel method for manufacturing chocolate, erected a factory to make the product, then built a company town, Hershey, Pennsylvania, to house his workers. The chocolate industrialist also founded and funded The Milton S. Hershey School in Hershey for “poor, healthy, male orphans between the ages of 8 through 18 years of age.” I associate Hershey’s ingenuity and social activism with Freud’s scientific adventurism—Freud’s discovery of an idea, psychoanalysis—and his later gathering about him a band of adherents to propagate it. In eighth grade, in May 1967, we took a class trip to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the state capital, and on the way back home to Philadelphia we stopped off at the Hershey chocolate factory. The company handed out promotional material to visitors including samples of Hershey’s chocolate products and a brochure that talked about the company’s history and its chocolate manufacturing process. One page of the brochure described a new medical school then under construction in Hershey, The Penn State College of Medicine. For some reason, that interested me.

At the outset of my treatment with Dr. Palombo, in January 1990, I had given him a paper I had written about myself, a self-styled psychoanalytic study that I titled, *The Caliban Complex: An Attempt at Self-Analysis*. I was proud of the paper, which I wrote on Columbus Day, 1988. I thought I had made important discoveries in mapping out my psychic interior. I had a grandiose identification with the Italian navigator, Christopher Columbus. He was a boyhood hero; at age thirteen I had built a model of the explorer’s flag ship, the *Santa Maria*. Even today, my apartment is decorated with model ships and paintings of boats. In my neurotic estimation—with my psychoanalytic paper—I had delved into the uncharted channels of my mind just as Columbus had made an unprecedented voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to explore a new continent. Dr. Palombo’s apparent failure to share my bloated self-appraisal injured my narcissism. Did the narcissistic injury I experienced with Dr. Palombo resemble the psychic threat I experienced upon learning of the birth of my niece fifteen years earlier?

After retiring on the evening of March 16, 1990 I had a dream, which I later memorialized. The dream I had that night encoded selected events

earlier in the day as well as associations from my past, as Dr. Palombo explains in his book, *Dreaming and Memory*, “the dream compares the representation of an emotionally significant event of the past with the representation of an emotionally significant aspect of the previous day’s experience.” It was as if Dr. Palombo’s theory was coming to life before my eyes.

This is the dream:

*I have just completed a session with Dr. Palombo. I go outside the apartment building in which Dr. Palombo’s office is located. Dr. Palombo is lounging in a swimming pool on an inflatable raft with a friend, also a physician. Dr. Palombo’s friend says to me: “Dr. Palombo is such a humble person, he probably never told you about his background, did he? Dr. Palombo is an outstanding physician. He was founder of the department of psychiatry at the School of Medicine at Penn State.” Dr. Palombo’s friend mentions that Dr. Palombo is Jewish. At that point I think, “I knew it. I knew that he was Jewish. He’s too fine a doctor not to be a Jewish doctor.” But then I think, “But ‘Palombo’ isn’t a Jewish name.” First I reason that perhaps Dr. Palombo is an Italian Jew. I then reject the idea that Dr. Palombo is Italian at all, and settle on the idea that he must be a Jew who has changed his name. I think, “His name must have been something like ‘Palombofsky’ and he changed it to ‘Palombo.’”*

*I find myself in a bedroom. I imagine that it is a hotel room. The room resembles my parents’ bedroom. I feel that I am an observer in the bedroom—that I have no active connection with the locale or the persons in the room. A woman in the room receives a telephone call. It is room service. The woman is advised that the hotel is sending a birthday cake up to the room, since it is the woman’s birthday. Dr. Palombo arrives. The woman tells Dr. Palombo that room service is sending up a birthday cake in honor of the woman’s birthday. Dr. Palombo becomes enraged. He says to the woman, “I am the great Stanley Palombo, a professor of medicine, and one of the greatest psychiatrists in the world. And room service is sending you a birthday cake? Who are you? You’re nobody!”*

*Thursday, December 31, 1981.* I worked that day at my job as a law clerk at a small firm in Philadelphia. Employees had bought a cake for Jeffery Orchinik, an attorney whose twenty-ninth birthday it was. He was not at work that day. Late in the day, a secretary called to tell him they had a cake at the office; she wanted to know what they should do with the cake. Orchinik said he did not care what they did with the cake. I offered to deliver the cake to his apartment myself. *Room service.* He lived a short distance from the office. Orchinik told the secretary he did not want me to deliver the cake. The memory of that day entered the dust bin of my memory.



*Friday, July 17, 1970.* I was 16 years old. I had just completed my first week of my first summer job at the Franklin Institute. I asked my supervisor, Dawn Jones, “If I don’t take a lunch break, can I leave work early?” She said that was fine. At about noon I purchased some snacks at a vending machine down the hall, and filled up on junk food, then immediately got back to work, intending to leave work at 4:30 PM, instead of the usual quitting time of 5:15 PM. At 4:30 I left work and headed to Sam Goody’s record store on Chestnut Street. I purchased Gustav Mahler’s Symphony no. 7, in a recording by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein. I had never heard that symphony before. When I got home, my mother had made steak for dinner. But I was so full of junk food from my brief lunch time break that I was not hungry. I did not eat dinner that night. My mother was not pleased.

*Saturday, December 24, 1966.* I was in the eighth grade. My thirteenth birthday had been the day before. A classic winter nor'easter was making its way up the coast: the Christmas Eve 1966 Snowstorm. Philadelphia began to experience blizzard conditions in the early morning that worsened after nightfall. I can remember the thunder and lightning. In the morning, my parents argued fiercely in the kitchen. My father became so enraged that he started to bang his fists against his head. He was generally in a depressed mood during the Christmas season. His mother had died on New Year's Day in 1933 and his father had died on Christmas Day in 1929. My father almost always seemed to relive these sad events at the end of the year. After my parents argued, my father retreated to my parents' bedroom where he listened to the radio. Incidentally, my father had an Orthodox Jewish background, while my mother was Polish-Catholic. I did not have a Jewish education, though "Jewishness" (as well as covert antisemitism) was a pervasive presence in my childhood. Unlike my cousins, I did not have a bar mitzvah, the religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13.

On the morning of December 24, 1966, my mother, after surveying the nearly empty pantry, concluded she would need to make a visit to the supermarket to replenish our quickly vanishing food supply. Because the storm was already treacherous, she could not see how she could drive to the supermarket but would have to go on foot. She decided to have my nineteen-year-old sister accompany her. I would gladly have gone with my mother, but I had just taken a shower and my mother feared that I would get a chill. My mother contrived a plan. She would tie a cardboard box to my snow sled and transport a small number of necessary groceries in the cardboard box from the supermarket. And thus, it came to pass that my mother and sister, buttoned up against a fearsome east coast Christmas Eve blizzard, went off on foot to the food market with a snow sled pulled by a rope.

While they were out, my aunt, Zelda, my mother's older sister, telephoned. When I informed her that my mother and sister had gone off together in the blizzard to the supermarket, my aunt was furious. She bitterly lashed out at me. She wanted to know why it was not *I* who went

to the market with my mother instead of my sister. Using the language of family therapists, my mother's older sister was my mother's "guard dog" — the individual who blindly attacks family members perceived as causing the slightest upset to their esteemed spouse, partner, or child.

Later in the afternoon, my mother announced that days before she had ordered a cake for my thirteenth birthday (which, you will recall, was the day before) from the Gimbels Department Store at the nearby Cheltenham Mall. My mother said she wanted me to accompany her to Gimbels to pick up the cake. And so, after dinner, my mother and I trudged off in the still-formidable-and-worsening blizzard to pick up my birthday cake because, as my mother explained, she didn't want to "lose the deposit on the cake." At about 6:30 PM my mother and I trooped off into the white madness. Gimbels was about two miles away. It was a half hour walk to the mall on any normal day. But on this night, it took us about two hours to make it to the mall. Every footstep was a chore. The sidewalks and roadways were buried under deep snow, which covered the streets from one row of houses to the other while sharp, gusty winds battered us. We were concerned the whole time about getting to Gimbels before the store closed at 9:00 PM. If we did not make it in time, the whole trip would have been in vain. I could not see how we could get to our destination before the 9:00 PM closing-time if every single step took so much time and effort. Luckily, we got to Gimbels and picked up our precious cargo, the infamous Christmas-Eve-Blizzard-Birthday-Cake, about a half-hour before the store closed. There was a route H Bus that had its terminus at the doorway of Gimbels. My mother and I took the bus home bundled against the cold.

These memories flood back every Christmas. It was really a disturbing day in some ways — what with my parents' arguing and my aunt attacking me — but my memories of this day are affectingly nostalgic. I have the persistent wish to relive this day as if it had some special pleasure for me. Perhaps, the ancient Roman philosopher, Seneca, offers a clue to my fond recollections: "Things that were hard to bear are sweet to remember."

But I am leaving something out. For my thirteenth birthday my mother had purchased for me a recording of Beethoven's violin concerto in D major, opus 61. It was a recording of Nathan Milstein soloist with the

Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. I have a personal identification with the Beethoven violin concerto. It was first performed on December 23, 1806 – the date of my birth. At that age I studied violin and played in the school orchestra. Also, for Christmas that year my mother purchased for me a recording of Wagner’s opera, *Götterdämmerung*, my favorite Wagner opera. It’s four-and-a-half hours long! I have had a life-long passion for that opera, and I still listen to it often. *Götterdämmerung*, an epic drama, presents a quest for world domination: in reality an allegory of the effect of a quest for power on individuals and relationships, with the hero Siegfried representing the successful son of a multi-generational dysfunctional family who is emotionally numbed.

There is a psychological phenomenon called “peak experience” in which the individual undergoes a moment accompanied by a euphoric mental state – a “rare, exciting, oceanic, deeply moving, exhilarating, elevating experience that generates an advanced form of perceiving reality.” The peak experience is even mystic and magical in its effect upon the individual. It is not necessarily about what the activity is, but the ecstatic, blissful feeling that is being experienced during it. Common triggers for peak experience include art, *nature*, sex, creative work, *music*, scientific knowledge, and introspection. I wonder if my challenging foot-slog through the snowstorm on this day together with my enthrallment with Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* were peak experiences that contributed to ecstatic feelings that have left me with a nostalgic longing in adulthood. I think of the metaphoric meaning of an odyssey through the snow. Might a preoccupation with the unpeopled landscape of a blizzard express a dissociated state of bliss in which subjective agonies are suspended, or *frozen in space and time*—safely distanced from the elated sentient contemplation of one’s “solitary track stretched out upon the world?”

That was my thirteenth birthday. For *his* thirteenth birthday, the piano virtuoso Arthur Rubinstein’s parents bought him a special gift – the complete *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, another Wagner opera, in what Rubinstein later described in his autobiography as “the incomparable piano version by Karl Tausig.”

*Friday, April 3, 1981.* On this day transit workers and the City of Philadelphia reached a tentative contract agreement, ending a 19-day transit strike that halted buses, trolleys, and subway trains for 400,000 Philadelphia commuters. I was in my spring semester of my second year of law school at Temple University in Philadelphia. I was taking an evening course in trial advocacy taught by Judge Richard B. Klein, who sat on the Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas. Judge Klein's father, Charles Klein, had been an eminent Philadelphia judge and was the namesake of the Temple Law School Building on North Broad Street in Philadelphia. Richard Klein, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Amherst and a Harvard Law honors graduate, was the youngest judge in Pennsylvania history when he assumed his judgeship. He ended up serving 28 years as a trial judge and eight years on Pennsylvania's intermediate appellate court, the Superior Court. One night during the transit strike Judge Klein let students know he was riding to center city after class and anyone who needed transportation was free to join him. I took him up on the offer. I lived in downtown Philadelphia, at Broad and Locust—adjacent to the Hershey Hotel. Judge Klein and I rode alone silently through the chilly, early spring night down Broad Street. Neither he nor I said a word. I was intimidated out of my wits. But then, I wonder, do judges talk while they drive? I do not know.

Judge Klein's father, Charles, was about the same age as my father, who was born in 1906. They grew up in the same neighborhood in North Philadelphia, which at that time was a predominantly immigrant-Jewish enclave. My father mentioned his family was acquainted with the Klein family. Small world.

*Friday, August 7, 1987.* I was 33 years old and worked at H&H. This was the last day for summer interns Tom Veatch, a University of Virginia student, and Brett Rome, a student at Princeton. Veatch said he wanted to become a doctor and mentioned he had an interest in psychiatry. As a going away gift, I gave Tom a copy of David Viscott's book, *The Making of a Psychiatrist*. Craig D. was taking off that afternoon for a one-week vacation in Miami. About a week earlier, Craig gave our supervisor, Miriam Ewing a memo advising of his Miami vacation plans, a memo that included some off-color sexual references. The supervisor reacted angrily, telling Craig to rewrite the memo, and instructing him never to give her another memo like that. I had purchased a book for Craig, *Character and Culture*, a collection of non-clinical essays by Freud. I had read the book when I was 18 years old, and it whetted my interest in Freud and psychoanalysis.

At noon, department employees went out to lunch with our supervisor, Miriam to celebrate Brett Rome's departure. I remember Miriam saying to Craig about his upcoming Miami vacation, "use sunscreen. Lots of sunscreen." Craig had fair skin. At lunch I sat between Craig and a summer intern named Tom McIsaac, a law student at Catholic University. McIsaac said to me, "You're right-handed." I said, "How do you know that?" McIsaac said, "Because your watch is on your left wrist." I said, "You're a sleuth." A few weeks later, at McIsaac's farewell dinner at an Italian restaurant in Bethesda, McIsaac mentioned the movie, *The Seven Percent Solution*, a 1976 Oscar-nominated British-American mystery film about a fictional encounter between Sherlock Holmes and Sigmund Freud. Was Tom McIsaac a fan of Sherlock Holmes and sleuthing? At lunch on the 7th McIsaac and Craig bantered in what seemed to me to be a hyper-masculine exchange. I remember Craig at one point making a snide comment, calling into question the masculinity of members of the Princeton football team. Was Craig unintentionally revealing jealousy of Brett Rome, the Princeton student?

After law school, McIsaac practiced law at a large firm that included among its members Richard Nixon's attorney and adviser, Leonard Garment, but thereafter embarked on a second highly successful career in the technology industry. Did McIsaac, even in law school, have the

unconscious sense that he would ultimately abandon the practice of law? I can remember a conversation the two of us had in which McIsaac, talking about my work history, specifically, my having obtained a law license, but later embarking on what he called – with obvious sarcasm – my “second career” as a paralegal. Was there a psychological connection between McIsaac’s facetious comment about my “second career” as a paralegal and his own later decision to start a second non-legal career?

I thought McIsaac was a bit of a wiseacre. At his farewell dinner in late August when I approached him to shake his hand to say goodbye, he said jocularly, “Aren’t you going to kiss me?” I laughed. But then, I suppose I gave him reason to believe that I was a queer duck. In July, a group of us – Craig, Daniel, McIsaac, and Michael Wilson and I – had traveled to Capitol Hill for lunch at Bullfeathers, an eatery famous for its burgers. Each gentleman ordered a hamburger, while I ordered pasta. I tend to have a perverse need for uniqueness. I think McIsaac said he was a golfer and Craig suggested they get together on the links. I admired McIsaac. His intelligence and drive were impressive. He was a person of substance and character.

*Saturday, December 31, 1978.* I had turned 25 the previous week. I had reserved a hotel room in New York City for the weekend. I arrived in New York by train at about noon on Saturday December 30 to attend a matinée performance of Strauss's opera, *Elektra* at The Metropolitan Opera. On Sunday afternoon, I visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art where I purchased two Renoir prints. That evening I attended a concert performance of Wagner's opera, *Tristan und Isolde* at Carnegie Hall, conducted by Eve Queller. Maestro Queller, at the opening of the concert, offered a few words of thanks to the audience for choosing to spend New Year's Eve at Carnegie Hall to listen to Wagner. I liked that. After the concert I headed to Times Square to be among the crowd watching the ball drop to ring in 1979. I took the train back to Philadelphia on Monday morning.



Wednesday, July 14, 1993. I was 39 years old. In the afternoon I telephoned my friend Craig D. I thought we could get together for lunch. We had lunch from time to time. Craig said he did not want to see me anymore. He had decided to end our friendship. "I don't want to be friends with somebody who doesn't have any other friends. I don't want to be somebody's only friend," he explained. He told me I should be friendly with dead people. *Whatever that meant.* During that period, he and his girlfriend – the woman he would eventually marry – were in a long-distance relationship. She was living in San Francisco for a year, working on a project. Craig's girlfriend was Alex Zapruder, granddaughter of Abe Zapruder, who unexpectedly captured the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963 in a home movie while filming the presidential limousine and motorcade as it traveled through the city. Craig and Alex had started dating in 1988. *Was it Craig who was struggling with feelings of emotional deadness? Was he depressed about being separated from his girlfriend? Is that why he wanted to end our friendship?* It would take a good psychoanalyst to figure out Craig's enigmatic mind! I said to him, "I'll never forget this phone call. It's Bastille Day and I'll always remember that the last time we talked was July 14." Craig said: "I should call H&H's Paris office and wish them a happy Bastille Day." He was still employed at H&H where we started working together almost seven years earlier, on October 6, 1986.

Monday, September 27, 1971. I was 17 years old. This was my first day of college at Penn State Abington. Penn State Abington is a satellite campus of the Pennsylvania State University, located in Abington, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. The idyllic campus is set on 45 acres of wooded land. I, like most satellite campus students, spent two years at Abington then completed my studies at the University's main campus in State College. My first class that afternoon was introductory philosophy at 2:00 PM with Dr. George Frederick Rieman. My instructor shared a name with Georg Friedrich Riemann, a notable 19th-century German mathematician. At the start of class, Dr. Rieman took a Polaroid picture of the students, then counted "one alligator, two alligator, three alligator . . ." as he waited for the photograph to develop. Dr. Rieman engaged the students in a discussion of the subject of duty and responsibility and used the case of Kitty Genovese to illustrate pertinent issues. Genovese was a 28-year-old woman who was stabbed to death in 1964 across the street from where she lived in an apartment above a row of shops in Queens, New York. *The New York Times* later published an article claiming that 38 witnesses saw or heard the attack, but none of them called the police or came to her aid. What were the neighbors' moral responsibility in this situation? Did they have any moral responsibility at all? I was keenly interested in the class discussion. It was my first exposure to a Socratic teaching method. My next class that afternoon was introductory English, a writing course, with Dr. Smith.

*Friday, August 15, 1986.* I was 32 years old and worked at H&H. At lunch I went to the IRS office to file my 1985 tax return. Back in April I had filed for a four-month extension. This was the last day for Tom Veatch, a summer intern and recent high school graduate. He was starting college at the University of Virginia in the fall. He said he wanted to become a doctor. We got a transistor radio for him as a going away gift. He was an avid rower and mentioned that his crew team had Olympic ambitions. Sunday evening, the evening of the 17th, my sister called to inform me that her infirm mother-in-law had died.

*Friday, November 22, 1963.* I was nine years old. Late every Friday afternoon our fifth-grade teacher, Mr. Pass used to take the class to the school library where we were free to browse books till the end of the school day. At one point, someone came into the library and handed Mr. Pass a note. The teacher read the note. He said nothing to the class. He assumed a somber expression for the remainder of the school day. After school I learned that President Kennedy had been assassinated in Dallas, Texas. In the evening after dinner my mother drove my sister, her friend Marleen K., and me to the ice-skating rink. My sister was a 16-year-old high school junior. While we were riding in the car on the way home Marleen cheerfully noticed the Christmas lights that had been set up on one of the main thoroughfares. I thought it was odd that a Jewish girl seemed excited about Christmas decorations.

*Friday, June 18, 1965.* I was an 11-year-old 6th grader. My mother allowed me to take the morning off from school to attend my sister's high school graduation, which was held at The Academy of Music in Philadelphia. It was the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

I can still remember that the Girls High orchestra, seated in the orchestra pit of the Academy, performed the second movement of Franz Schubert's fifth symphony as a processional, accompanying the graduates as they took their seats on stage. I found the ceremony very moving, especially the Schubert 5th, which I had never heard before.

Among my sister's friends who also took their places on the Academy stage that day were Nedda C., Marleen K., Barbara S. – and Donna Cotzen. Donna Cotzen, M.D. is now a psychoanalyst who practices in Philadelphia.

I remember it rained that day and my mother drove Nedda's mother back to her notions store on Old York Road. My mother had bought my sister a transistor radio, green in color, as a graduation gift.

Monday, October 10, 1988. I was a 34-year-old paralegal at the Strauss firm. The office was closed for Columbus Day. I had a typewriter at my desk, and I went to the building this day to work on a personal project. I had settled on the idea of writing a psychoanalytic study of myself that I planned to call *The Caliban Complex: An Attempt at Self-Analysis*. I arrived at the empty building carrying a suitcase full of reference books: history texts, biographies, novels. I date my interest in analyzing myself back to the summer of 1984, four years earlier. At that time, I was about to complete my graduate law degree and I happened to read a biography of the playwright, Clifford Odets—author of such plays as *Awake and Sing*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Waiting for Lefty*—by the noted psychoanalyst, Margaret Brenman-Gibson. My father had been a close friend of Odets’ same-age cousin, Benny Rossman in the 1930s and spent a lot of time at the Rossman house, which was in my father’s North Philadelphia neighborhood, an area of immigrant, working-class Jews. Brenman-Gibson recounts in her biography of the playwright: “Unlike the Odets family, where Yiddish was rarely spoken and a Jewish newspaper was never seen, the Rossman household was a free-wheeling, lively place filled with Yiddish talk and Yiddish newspapers . . . Freda [Rossman] recalled ‘lots of people always dropping in, some living with us for a few months if they had no work . . . always good food. [Clifford’s father used to come] in for fried matzoth and to hear my prost [common] father sing songs in Hebrew and Yiddish.’ *My father was one of those people who was “always dropping in.”* On one occasion my father witnessed Odets, together with his Oscar-winning actress wife, Luise Rainer, arrive at the Rossman house in a limousine. In any event, I was amazed by Brenman-Gibson’s scholarship and her use of psychoanalysis and creativity studies to decode the mind of a writer. I learned much about analysis and creativity from the book and began to think critically about my own psychological struggles.

By 1988 I had many ideas about myself that I wanted to present in a writing. I wrote my analytic study in one sitting, on Columbus Day 1988, in my office at the Strauss firm. A few weeks earlier, I had lunch with Craig D., Daniel C., and Mike Wilson, friends from H&H where I had worked until late February. I mentioned to them that I planned to write

my “autobiography,” and they consented to accept a copy when it was complete. At the end of the day on October 10th, I stopped off at the Xerox machine in the office to make three copies of my completed paper. While I was using the copy machine, someone entered the room. It was the young associate, David Tobin. I thought: “He’s a witness to my theft of company services. This could be a problem.” I typed up three cover letters with which I planned to transmit copies of the paper to my friends Craig, Daniel, and Mike. I still remember what I wrote to Mike: “I have no formal training in psychoanalysis, but then, neither did Sigmund Freud.”

*Wednesday, June 30, 1971.* I was 17 years old and had just graduated high school. I had a summer job at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. At lunch I took a walk to Sam Goody's record store on Chestnut Street in center city Philadelphia and purchased a recording of the Mozart Symphonies nos. 40 and 41, Otto Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. My sister, Zelda and brother-in-law, Eddie came over to my parents' house for dinner that night. We ate in the dining room because my mother was wallpapering the kitchen. Eddie was involved in one of his money-making schemes: selling correspondence law courses. You could become a lawyer by purchasing the books he was selling and get a job as a high-powered ambulance chaser, I suppose. Eddie said he was reading one of the law books and that it had whetted his interest in going to law school. You should have seen the look on my father's face! He sneered. It was as if his son-in-law had said, "I'm thinking of applying to Harvard to work on a degree in advanced particle physics." (*You? Law school?*) Eddie was never an academic type, though he had a lot of potential; years later, in his thirties, he built a successful mortgage business through his own tireless efforts. But in his early twenties, he worked as a sixth-grade teacher in Camden, New Jersey in a job his mother got for him through family connections despite his having a business degree that his well-to-do uncle had paid for. The irony was not lost on my father.

Anyway, that is the image inscribed in my mind. Every time I listen to these Mozart symphonies, thoughts of that evening flash through my consciousness.



*Sunday, May 18, 1980.* I was a 26-year-old first year law student attending school in Spokane, Washington. It was a beautiful day. I did not listen to the radio that morning and I did not own a television. Around noon I took a leisurely walk downtown, which was perhaps two miles away. I sat on a bench in Riverside Park, site of the 1974 World's Fair. It could have been any sunny, Sunday afternoon in the park on the banks of the Spokane River rendered by an Impressionist painter. I noticed the sky looked peculiar. My attention was drawn to a huge greenish-gray cloud. I thought it was a storm cloud. I decided to see a movie. *Dr. Zhivago* was playing at a nearby theater and I bought a ticket. I had seen the film several times before. It was one of my favorites. I remembered one scene in which Zhivago deserts a troop of revolutionary partisans and trudges alone through the deep snow in the barren hinterland. *A desperate journey.* It was early afternoon when the movie started. The film is about three-and-a-half hours long. I got out of the theater at around 4:30 PM. I was not prepared for what I saw. What I did not know was that Mount St. Helens, hundreds of miles away in Western Washington State, had erupted that morning, spewing tons of volcanic ash into the atmosphere. The odd cloud I saw earlier was in fact a cloud of volcanic ash. Visibility in Spokane was extremely poor as a fine mist of volcanic ash descended on the city. It was worse than a blizzard and more like a dark and viscous fog. I think of lines from the novel *Dr. Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak on which the movie was based: *Not the sun we are accustomed to on earth, but a dim ball of some substitute sun hung in the sky. From it, strainedly and slowly, as in a dream or fairy tale, rays of muted gray light, thick as honey, spread and on their way congealed in the air and froze before him.* I thought, "How am I going to get home?" as I began my two-mile trek back to my apartment through a dense haze. I did not get far. A kindly motorist seeing my plight pulled over. He picked me up and drove me to my front door.

*Wednesday, October 14, 1964.* I was a 10-year-old sixth grader. On this day Martin Luther King, Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. That did not sit well with my mother who harbored the racist sentiments typical of her generation. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, or maybe the next day, my mother said to our neighbor, Goldie Schwartz: “So now they award Nobel Prizes to jail birds!” In 1963 Dr. King had been arrested and sent to jail because he and others were protesting the treatment of blacks in Birmingham, Alabama. A court had ordered that King could not hold protests in Birmingham.

*Friday, May 13, 1988.* I was 34 years old and worked as a temporary paralegal at the Strauss firm. The firm, one of the largest law firms in the country, was managed at its highest level by its founder, legal powerhouse Bob Strauss and civil rights leader, Vernon Jordan. Jordan, a black man of humble origin, comfortably hobnobbed with the elite and powerful in business and in government. He was a friend of Arkansas Governor and later President of the United States, Bill Clinton.

I had lunch that noon with Craig D. and Daniel C., two paralegals at H&H where I used to work. This was the first time I saw Craig and Daniel since I had left H&H in late February 1988. Daniel used to mock me: “Gary is desperate to be Craig's friend, but they have nothing in common.” The three of us ate lunch at Pershing Park, a short distance from H&H's office at Columbia Square. I gave Craig a belated birthday present, Fritz Stern's *Gold and Iron*, an historical account of the personal and business relationship of nineteenth-century German chancellor Otto von Bismarck and the Jewish banker, Gerson Bleichröder, who ambitiously penetrated the highest levels of the German government in the late nineteenth century to become a trusted adviser of the Chancellor, defying the obdurate antisemitism of the day. *They say that opposites attract, sometimes by complementing each other.*

Daniel mentioned that he was reading Hermann Hesse's novel, *Demian*. Craig interjected at that moment, “My mother's maiden name is Hess.” Craig was of German extraction. His grandfather served in the German *Luftwaffe*, and Craig himself weighed the idea of enlisting in the Air Force after college. A police officer was giving presentation at Pershing Park and Daniel approached him and asked, “Have you ever fired your gun at someone?”

*Wednesday December 26, 1962.* I turned nine years old days before and was in Mrs. Lewis's fourth grade class. My mother was scheduled to undergo minor surgery at the Albert Einstein Hospital Southern Division in south Philadelphia. Coincidentally, that was the hospital where I was born. That morning my mother, sister, and Aunt Zelda, my mother's older sister, took a taxi from our house, in a neighborhood in the north of the city, to the hospital about seven miles away, riding down Broad Street. Broad Street is a major arterial street that runs for approximately 13 miles from the northern tip of Philadelphia in West Oak Lane, the neighborhood where we lived, to the southern tip of the city at the Navy Yard. The street cuts through center city Philadelphia and leads directly to city hall, a gargantuan Second Empire-style masonry structure with a high clock tower in what was formerly Center Square in the heart of the city. I remember that as we slowly approached city hall in the taxi the city hall clock tower loomed ever larger, slowly, and menacingly seeming to grow in height, like a slowly growing erection. Not infrequently as an adult I have anxiety dreams about city hall's clock tower. I wonder if those dreams harken back to that taxi ride the day after Christmas in 1962 when my emotions about my mother—her impending surgery and feared death as well as my several-days long separation from her—were running high.

In any event, Aunt Zelda and Uncle F. later drove my sister and me to their house in the suburbs—after lunch at a Hot Shoppes restaurant on North Broad Street, where our table location, adjacent to a wall-to-ceiling window, allowed me to gaze out on the falling snow of what would turn out to be a major east coast storm. My sister and I stayed with my aunt and uncle at their house till New Year's, off from school for Christmas break. I remember my mother had bought me a humongous box of crayons as a Christmas gift and I drew pictures at my aunt's house. I can still remember one of the pictures; I called it "The Rat Race." On New Year's Eve my aunt served sauerkraut at dinner. She said that she had read that eating sauerkraut on New Year's Eve would bring good luck in the New Year. Sadly, two months later, in February 1963 at age 49, my aunt suffered a near fatal heart attack yet survived to age 75.

*Monday, May 13, 1991.* I was 37 years old and worked as a paralegal at the Strauss firm. I had a first consult with Lawrence C. Sack, M.D., a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Dr. Sack had a portrait of Freud on a wall in his office. May 13 was the anniversary of Sigmund Freud's circumcision.

At the end of the consult I asked Dr. Sack if he thought I was psychotic and he replied, "We're all psychotic when we dream." I took that as a no.

*Friday, June 7, 1968.* I was a 14-year-old high school freshman. That evening my sister and her boyfriend, Eddie took me out to play miniature golf with them. That was highly unusual. To the best of my recollection this was the only time they took me “out on a date” with them. It had to have been my brother-in-law’s idea. My sister would never have initiated something like that. *Why?* Do you think my sister would have said, “Ed, let’s bring my brother with us?” I don’t think so. My father and I had plans to go to Atlantic City the following day.

*Monday, October 31, 2005.* I was 51 years old. I underwent a routine, screening colonoscopy at the George Washington University Medical center. A few weeks earlier I had met with my gastroenterologist, M. Amir Ali, M.D. to go over some preliminary matters. I was wearing a dark blue pullover emblazoned with the name *Michigan* in gold letters. Dr. Ali asked me: “What's with the top? Are you a Wolverines fan?” I said, “no, it's just a pullover.” I then met with the scheduler. She asked: “Is it OK if I set up your colonoscopy appointment for the morning of Halloween? Do you have a problem with that?” I said, “No, that's fine.” I had not celebrated Halloween since I was ten years old.

*Saturday, June 8, 1968.* I was a 14-year-old high school freshman. That afternoon my father and I traveled by bus to Atlantic City. In the morning, television networks broadcast the funeral service of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, a Requiem mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. On June 5, 1968, Kennedy was mortally wounded when he was shot at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles with a pistol by Sirhan Sirhan, a 24-year-old Palestinian, allegedly in retaliation for his support of Israel following the 1967 Six-Day War. Kennedy died the following morning. I watched some of Kennedy's funeral on television. I was especially moved by Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic in the slow movement of Gustav Mahler's fifth symphony. I had never heard this music before, and I was enraptured by its beauty. I wanted to watch the remainder of the service, but my father wanted to get going.

While we were in Atlantic City my father and I went to the movies to see the blockbuster film, *Planet of the Apes*. The movie's concluding scene takes place on a deserted beach, the Atlantic Ocean lapping the shore.

We also stopped off to see Sylvia Lischin, a family friend, at her delicatessen on Oriental Avenue. The delicatessen's roots went back to the 1930s, when Sylvia's mother, Ethel Blum, an enterprising Jewish immigrant from Poland, had the idea to bake knishes in her home kitchen and hawk them to the nearby beach-going crowd, which was predominantly Jewish. Mrs. Blum, who was widowed in 1936, used to rent rooms in her large three-story house to summer boarders in the Depression years and later and it was as a paying guest in the 1930s that my father first encountered the Blum family. In important ways, my father's affiliation with the Blums paralleled his relationship in the 1930s with the Rossmans, whose Philadelphia home had "lots of people always dropping in" for good food and convivial banter. In the years before World War II, my unmarried and carefree father—in his late twenties to early thirties at the time—was a Jewish Falstaff in perennial pursuit of a Garter Inn. My father did not marry till age 40. When I was a kid, the four Freedmans journeyed to Atlantic City every July for a two weeks' stay at the Blum house at 231 Oriental Avenue. Those were happy times.



In her teenage years my sister jilted Sylvia's son, Roy. My father had the romantic notion that my sister had broken Roy's heart, and that's why he left college to join the Navy. He served in Viet Nam. Sylvia Lischin gave me Roy's military address in the Navy and asked me to write him. She said it would mean a lot to him to get word from home. I never wrote.

That evening in Atlantic City, while my father and I were walking on the boardwalk, I spotted my father's older brother, Lewie and his wife, Reggie. They drove us home. When we got back to Philadelphia, my aunt and uncle took us out to a restaurant on Limekiln Pike near our house where we had seafood. I think we had crabs.

Years later, on the night following my mother's death, January 9, 1980, I telephoned my uncle Lewie's wife, now a widow. She confided in me: "Lew used to say your father should never have gotten married. He wasn't marriage material. Before he got married his life centered on hanging out with his friends and playing cards."

*Friday, January 20, 1961.* I was a 7-year-old second grade student. I remember the events of this day because it was the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy. In the morning it was apparent that I had come down with chicken pox. Philadelphia, indeed, the whole east coast, was experiencing a fierce winter storm. My father was home from work because of the brutal weather. I assume his factory was closed. I recall my father watching the presidential inauguration on television. My mother telephoned the pediatrician and told him she suspected I had chicken pox. Dr. Bloom was in his office. Like Freud, Dr. Bloom's office was in his house. Dr. Bloom told my mother to bring me in for an examination. Of course, there is nothing that can be done for chicken pox; it is a viral infection. It does not respond to antibiotics. I doubt there were any antivirals in those days.

I was too ill to walk. My parents did not have a car. So, my mother bundled me up and carted me off in my snow sled to the doctor's office, which was several blocks away. We traveled through the snow drifts and high winds. At the office, Dr. Bloom confirmed chickenpox, and gave my mother some type of concoction – I vaguely recall it had the consistency of oatmeal; he told my mother to add this to my bath every day. I suppose he told my mother that all he could recommend was bed rest till the infection took its course.

In later years my mother used this incident in her ongoing marital battles with my father. "I always loved him more than you did. I took him to the doctor's office in a blizzard. *You* didn't do that. *I* did that!" I consistently took second stage in the family even in matters relating to me. Everything about me was used as fodder in the ongoing competitive struggles between my parents.

It is what happens in national politics. Politicians of either party do not really care about the issues that vitally concern ordinary citizens. Matters of importance to voters are simply *exploited* by Democratic and Republican politicians in their unending partisan conflicts with each other. I am struck by the fact that *that* was precisely the atmosphere in my family. From earliest childhood I saw play out in my family some of the same idle political tugs-of-war that consume lawmakers in Washington. I suppose that is why I am so fascinated by politics.

*Wednesday, July 14, 1965.* I was 11 years old and had just completed elementary school. I was about to enter junior high school in the fall. That spring my father put our house up for sale. I have the obscure recollection that the realtor, Stanley Goldberg put the sale sign on the house on June 1. My father was home on vacation. His neckwear factory closed the first two weeks of July every year. My father and I had gone to Atlantic City the first week of July. My mother had stayed home because my sister had started a summer job at Temple Law School; she had graduated high school on June 18, 1965. My mother did not want to leave my seventeen-year-old sister home alone.

On this day, the realtor picked up my parents and me in his car at our house to go house hunting. The reason I remember this date is that my mother said to Stanley Goldberg in the car, “Did you hear? Adlai Stevenson just died.” Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson had been the Democratic nominee for President in 1952 and 1956. Stanley Goldberg said it was a shame, but he was not interested in talking about Adlai Stevenson. He was interested in finding my parents a house. I felt embarrassed. I thought, “Why on earth would a realtor be interested in getting into a conversation about Adlai Stevenson?” My mother persisted in making inane chit-chat with the agent. She told Goldberg that he should get married. Goldberg was a bachelor; I suppose he was in his 30s. Goldberg mentioned that he had just returned from vacation in Atlantic City; he said he had stayed at the Deauville. Goldberg said words to the effect, “I do have fun in my life.” I was mortified by my mother’s behavior. As an adult, in retrospect, I wonder if my mother’s behavior was passive aggressive in nature. Perhaps she was not really interested in moving. It had been my father’s idea to move, after all.

*Tuesday, September 29, 2015.* I was 61 years old. I had an appointment with my new primary care doctor, Jonathan A. Page, M.D. When he walked into the examining room, I greeted him by saying, “I’m being treated for hypothyroidism and hyperlipidemia.” I was an overweight, middle aged man. Dr. Page was a young doctor who had only recently completed his Family Practice residency. *An odd thought flashed through my mind: the meeting of the buffoonish, superannuated, and overweight Falstaff and the young Prince Hal, two Shakespearean characters that fate had brought together at the Garter Inn in London, or in my case, within the confines of a clinic examining room.*

I asked Dr. Page to check my testosterone level. He refused. He said that he did not prescribe testosterone and explained that it had serious side effects like heart attack. He asked me if I ever had a heart attack. I said no and added, “I’ve never had heart disease of any kind.” The issue of heart attack came up at the consult, but Dr. Page did not suggest that I take a daily baby aspirin as a preventative. Oddly, months later, at a consult in early 2016, Dr. Page did suggest that I take baby aspirin. It was right after his nephew was born. Did the birth of his nephew trigger his suggestion that I take “baby aspirin?” Strange. Dr. Page told me that he wanted to have my blood drawn. I interjected, “But I had breakfast this morning.” The doctor said, “That’s fine. As long as you didn’t have a high fatty breakfast like eggs and sausages.” On a later occasion Dr. Page mentioned that he sometimes had nightmares about a man breaking into his house with the doctor coming down the stairs to find him eating eggs and sausages, and that Dr. Page associated that dream with me. *That was peculiar.*

*Thursday, July 4, 1974.* I was 20 years old and had just completed my junior year of college. I had a summer job at the Franklin Institute where I worked with Catherine Ingraham, Sid D. and Hilliard C. Catherine, whom we called Cat, was about 23 and a granddaughter of the renowned architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. She went on to have a remarkable career in architecture and is currently a professor of architecture at the Pratt Institute in New York. Sid and Hilliard – who, coincidentally, was working on a degree in architecture at the time at Temple University – were about six years older than me. I believe Sid had a friend who was working on a graduate degree in international relations theory at the University of Michigan. Hilliard's sister, Donna was a law student at Tulane.

On Independence Day, Hilliard's parents had a cookout at their home in Cheltenham, a neighboring suburb of Philadelphia. Hilliard's father, Meyer, was an ear, nose, and throat doctor. He grew up in the same neighborhood as my father in north Philadelphia, which, in earlier years, was an immigrant Jewish locale. I wasn't invited to Hilliard's party, but, then, I couldn't have attended; I was in Atlantic City with my father. I heard about the party, though my recollections about it are vague. Cat and Sid were guests. Sid brought his girlfriend, and later wife, Judy. Cat had a prodigious knowledge of literature. She pointed out an arcane fact about a French novel, I can't remember which one, which amazed Judy.

Several recollections about Cat spring to mind. She once mentioned that she had seen the recently released movie, *The Parallax View*, starring Warren Beatty, and was really taken in with the story. It concerned a reporter's investigation into a secretive organization, the Parallax Corporation, whose primary focus was political assassination. On another occasion she asked me what I thought about a possible impeachment of then President Nixon. I said that from a legal perspective it would be good to develop the body of law relating to presidential impeachment, that there was a paucity of legal precedent in that area.

Monday, January 15, 1990. I turned 36 the previous month. I telephoned Stanley R. Palombo, M.D., a psychiatrist, to make an appointment. Dr. Palombo was also a psychoanalyst. I had been referred to Dr. Palombo by Albert Rothenberg, M.D., an authority on creativity. Dr. Rothenberg had given me the names of two psychiatrists. I chose Dr. Palombo because I recognized his name from a book about creativity I had read by the British psychiatrist, Anthony Storr, *Solitude: A Return to the Self*. Storr had quoted a passage about dreaming from a book Dr. Palombo had written titled, *Dreaming and Memory*. I had an interest in dream analysis, so the chance to see a psychoanalyst who had expertise in that area attracted me. I was off from work that day; January 15 happened to be Martin Luther King's birthday. *I have a dream . . .* When I told Dr. Palombo my telephone number he said, "You live in this neighborhood." The first three digits of our telephone numbers were the same.

*Week of July 5, 1965:* I was 11 years old and about to enter junior high school in the fall. My father and I were spending the week in Atlantic City with the Lischin family. Roy Lischin and I were sitting on the outside front porch at the Oriental Avenue house. He was starting Rutgers University in the fall and had purchased some books that had been assigned in the freshman courses he would be taking. He wanted to be ahead of the game when he started college. Roy was reading a book by Freud. I do not remember which book it was, but it may have been *The Future of an Illusion*, which contained Freud's speculations about religion. I asked to see the book and I started to read the first page. I said to Roy, "I understand this." Roy said: "You don't understand that. You may understand the words, but you don't know what he's talking about." Ethel Blum, Roy's grandmother, came out onto the porch. Something we were talking about clued Mrs. Blum into the fact that we were talking about Freud. She mentioned that Freud was Jewish. Roy said he did not know that. Or he pretended not to know that.

Wednesday, May 3, 1989. I was a 35-year-old paralegal working at the Strauss firm. That evening firm managers had arranged a dinner at the Westin Hotel in downtown Washington for partners and employees billed as “The All Attorneys Dinner.” I attended. Before dinner, guests mingled in an atrium garden where I noticed two gentlemen chatting. I later learned that they were hiring partner, Dennis Race and firm co-founder, Malcolm Lassman. I sensed they were important people. I had seen Lassman before at the office and he looked like he owned the place. In fact, Lassman co-founded the Washington office of the Dallas-based firm together with the partnership's founder, Bob Strauss, in 1971. Lassman was a flamboyant lawyer, “someone who might show up at the office in a cape, smoked cigars, and used coarse language,” as a published biography of Strauss recounts. He had a self-important air.

As the dinner was about to begin, a fellow paralegal, Jesse R., asked me to join him at his table. During the evening, Jesse sat on my right and another paralegal, Clay Bailey—who, with his southern accent, reminded me of a character from a Thomas Wolfe novel—was on my left. Looking homeward, I chatted with Bailey about Philadelphia, the city where I grew up. I suppose I was in a literary mood because I recall Bailey and I got to talking about *The Beast in the Jungle*, a novella by Henry James. I told Bailey that I identified with the main character, John Marcher, a man who was seized with the belief that his life was to be defined by some catastrophic or spectacular event, lying in wait for him like a “beast in the jungle.” At the end of the novella, after years of leading an emotionally unrewarding life, Marcher has the realization that his unique destiny was to be the one man in history who never did anything with his life—nothing at all. Jesse had grown up Jewish in the south, where he contended with the hatred and ignorance of antisemitism. He talked about Israel (he had lived there briefly), the demographics of the country, and said that eventually the Arab population would overtake the Jewish population. I said to Jesse, “did you hear the rumor about me at the firm?” He replied, “You mean the rumor that you’re a homosexual? Yeah, I heard about that.” Jennifer M., a paralegal, sat across from me. I vaguely recall that she mentioned she had relatives in Haifa. Also, at the table were the paralegals, Gary Z. and Antony P.



*Saturday, October 9, 1965.* I was an 11-year-old seventh grader. My parents had been invited to attend a party that night—a birthday party for my Aunt Rose at her apartment. Aunt Rose was my father’s older sister. I am guessing that she was turning 65 years old, which means that she was born in 1900. That sounds about right since my father was born in 1906. My father said his mother had a child every year and he had five older siblings.

My sister’s boyfriend, Eddie paid a visit to our house after dinner and spent the evening with my sister. They were 18 years old. My sister was in her first year of college. My parents had said to me, “You be their chaperon.” They had started dating on February 4, 1965, when my sister was a senior in high school. Perhaps this was the first time they were alone together at our house for the evening, but I do not recall. My parents did not usually go out.

I have two recollections. My sister and Eddie sat in the living room, while I retreated to the adjoining indoor porch. There was an old TV on the porch, and I watched that. At one point Eddie showed me a trick using match sticks. He smoked cigarettes.

*Sunday, October 10, 1965.* I was an 11-year-old seventh grade student. My mother and I got up early that morning to catch the train at North Philadelphia Station to Flushing Meadows Park, Queens, New York. We made an expedition to the New York World's Fair, which had opened in May 1964. The Fair would close the following Sunday, on October 17, 1965. This was the next to last week of the Fair, and there were colossal crowds. All our time was spent visiting the big pavilions, like General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler as well as the United States Pavilion where we saw all manner of things. We had to wait in long lines at these attractions. Such a waste of time! But I enjoyed the trip.

We caught the train back to Philadelphia late at night. I spotted my sister's friend, Joyce W. and her parents. The three of them drove my mother and me home from the North Philadelphia train station.

When we got home, I watched a television broadcast of the movie, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, one of my favorite movies from childhood. My mother let me stay up late that night because she had consented to let me stay home from school the following day. In the movie, a professor leads his intrepid party on an expedition to the center of the earth, via a volcano in Iceland, encountering all manner of prehistoric monsters and life-threatening hazards on the way.

*Saturday, December 25, 1965.* I had just turned twelve. I was in seventh grade. It was Christmas Day. My Uncle Lewie visited in the evening. He was newly single. He had recently divorced his second wife, Lillian.

My father's mother had died on New Year's Day, 1933 (Tevet 3 on the Hebrew Calendar). December 25, 1965 was Tevet 2 on the Hebrew calendar, and the eve of Tevet 3. My father and uncle visited the synagogue on Smedley Street around the corner from our house early that evening for their mother's *yahrzeit*, a Jewish memorial for a deceased relative.

Monday, September 25, 1972. I was 18 years old. It was the beginning of the fall term at Penn State, where I was beginning my sophomore year. My grandmother – my mother’s 79-year-old, cancer-stricken mother – died at her home that morning. She had suffered from colon cancer for more than a year. My mother had brought her bed down to the dining room of her house where she had settled in months earlier.

Incidental note: When the 83-year-old Sigmund Freud was dying of cancer in 1939, he had his bed moved down to the living quarters of his house in London so that he could gaze out onto the garden. He loved that garden! He died on September 23, 1939 in London, an exile from Nazi-occupied Vienna. I remember during the summer of 1972 I had read a magazine article about Max Schur’s newly-published book titled *Freud: Living and Dying*. Max Schur, M.D. had been Freud’s physician and administered euthanasia. It was in September 1972 that I purchased an anthology of a selection of Freud’s nonclinical essays, *Character and Culture*, so Freud was on my mind in that time period.

My only memory of September 25, 1972 is coming home at about 6:00 PM, my father in the kitchen, alone. My mother was away; I suppose she was tending to issues surrounding her mother’s death. My father’s first words to me at the kitchen sink were “Did you hear the news? Grand mom died.” My father hated his mother-in-law. His reaction to her death didn’t surprise me.

Recently, I jogged my memory for any memories of Sunday, the 24th, the previous day. I recalled being alone with my father in the evening. My mother was probably with her mother whose condition was deteriorating. My father and I watched TV at our house. I remembered it was a movie starring the actor Jack Lemmon. *What was the movie title? What was it about?* I couldn’t recall. I know it was a comedy. I laughed furiously. I found the movie unbelievably funny. I could remember only two things: a scene in Central Park with Jack Lemmon and his wife (portrayed by Sandy Dennis) as visitors to New York. I Googled “movie + Central Park + comedy – Lemmon” and came up with Neil Simon’s 1970 comedy, *The Out of Towners*, which follows the adventures of a married couple as they

are vexed by misfortune while in New York City for a job interview. I thought, “*That’s it! That’s the movie!*” I confirmed by checking the *Philadelphia Inquirer’s* Sunday edition television page, which included a listing: “ABC Movie, *The Out of Towners*, 9:00 PM.” So I had to have watched television on Sunday evening between 9:00 PM and 11:00 PM on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Then my next recollection is standing in the kitchen the following day and my father telling me that my grandmother had died earlier that morning.

My next recollection is my grandmother’s church funeral on Thursday, September 28, 1972. It was raining lightly. I recall carrying an umbrella. As we left the church after the service, my mother – noticing the sun was coming out – said to the priest as he walked us to the limousine, “Maybe that’s a good sign.” The priest replied, “Yes, it is a good sign.”

That afternoon, my sister, who had taken the day off from teaching to attend the funeral, drove me to the Penn State Abington campus. I had to take care of an administrative matter. I was dropping the section of the Public Speaking course I had signed up for and registering for a different section of the course, taught by one Stanley Cutler.

Stanley was the name of my grandmother’s husband (my grandfather) who died in the 1918 swine flu pandemic. My grandmother had emigrated in 1910 from Poland to the United States at age eighteen and had no contact with her family again. She had no relatives in the United States. She spoke broken English when I knew her in old age and my father used to ask rhetorically, “how can a person live in a country for fifty years and never learn the language?” My grandmother’s husband, a coal miner, who brought her to the United States, died when she was twenty-six, leaving her in poverty with two young children in the years before social welfare programs. All my grandmother’s tribulations in the U.S. appeared to begin with Stanley’s death, upon whom she had apparently been dependent. *Did she have nostalgic feelings for her homeland? Did she ever wish to return? Did she ever think, “How am I going to get back home?”*

Was *The Out of Towners* a symbolic reference in my mind to my grandmother's tortured status as an out-of-place Polish immigrant who never acculturated? Did I view my grandmother as a symbolic out-of-towner? Who knows? But why did I remember that movie from the evening before my grandmother's death?

On the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup>, following my grandmother's morning funeral service, I met with the Penn State Public Speaking instructor whose course I was dropping. I had signed up for an appointment on his office door. When I presented myself as Gary Freedman, the instructor (whose name I no longer recall) said good-naturedly, "So you're Gary Freedman! I had no idea why somebody named Gary Freedman would want to see me."

A coincidence: In the fall of 1972 at Penn State I had a choice between the campus's two male speech instructors, one of whom was named Stanley. (Public Speaking is a requirement at Penn State). I chose Stanley. Stanley Cutler. The odd thing is that *that* was only the first time in my life that I was given a choice between two men, one of whom was named Stanley. It happened a second time. In November 1989, Albert Rothenberg, M.D. gave me two referrals to Washington, DC psychiatrists, one of whom was Stanley Palombo, M.D. Again, as in September 1972, I chose the man named Stanley. Stanley Palombo - the same given name as my grandfather, my mother's father, who died when my mother was three years old.

*Sunday, July 4, 1965.* I was 11 years old and had completed the sixth grade about two weeks before. My father took me to Independence Hall. Philadelphia Mayor James Tate and Nicholas Katzenbach, then U.S. Attorney General in the Johnson Administration, were featured speakers. Katzenbach was a Philadelphia native.

I had brought a camera with me and breached a barricade to get a picture of Katzenbach. Someone said, "You can't go through here." Another person said, "Let him go, you never know who he might be when he grows up."

*Wednesday, February 1, 1989.* The Strauss firm held a lunch seminar for paralegals hosted by an associate, Gary Rubin, Ph.D. Rubin had taught English at Hofstra before he embarked on a second career in the law. The subject of the seminar was proper English usage. It was held in the large second-floor conference room of the firm's office. I sat at a table with Jesse R. and Mike S., two paralegals. That day was unusually warm. I had dropped off a six-pack of beer on the doorstep of Craig D.'s residence, near the office, hoping for a social get together. I later sensed that Craig thought I was railroading him into socializing, and he was a little ticked off. He never called me. When I subsequently asked him what he did with the beer, he said, "I drank it."

At the seminar Rubin critiqued a piece of legal writing. He noted a split infinitive but said that nobody cared about split infinitives anymore. He made a peculiar religious reference; he mentioned "Elijah's Cup," the fifth ceremonial cup of wine poured during the family Seder dinner on Passover. Jesse R., then about 22 years old, asked me how old I was. I said 35. He said I looked younger than my years. I replied, "I take vitamin E every morning, with a formaldehyde chaser."



*Week of April 8, 1968.* I was 14 years old and a freshman at Central High School in Philadelphia, an all-boys school with rigorous academic standards. Central, founded in 1836, is the second oldest public high school in the United States. Easter that year was Sunday April 14. I had the previous week off from school for spring break. One day, my sister, age 20, and a junior in college, and I, went to the Cheltenham Shopping Center, about two miles away. My sister had hatched a plan to paint my bedroom and she volunteered to purchase the paint. My bedroom had been tan and I repainted it a light green. I am guessing we went to the mall to purchase the paint early in the week. I happened to see David Rosenbaum, who was a year ahead of me at Central, walking with a friend at the mall. Rosenbaum waved at me. We were not acquainted but he no doubt recognized me from the school orchestra. He played in the first violin section and I played in the second. That was my one interaction with David Rosenbaum—a wave from him at the Cheltenham Mall early in the week of April 8, 1968.

Rosenbaum is now a professor of psychology at the University of California at Riverside. He is also an accomplished amateur violinist.

*Thursday, April 6, 1989.* I was 34 years old and worked at the Strauss firm, a law firm founded in 1941 by Bob Strauss, one time Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, U.S. Trade Representative, a friend of presidents, Ambassador to Russia during the George H.W. Bush Administration, and poker buddy of notable figures including federal appeals court judge, David B. Sentelle, as well as the late Chief Justice of the United States, William Rehnquist.

This morning the firm scheduled a meet-and-greet for paralegals billed as a “Breakfast with Bob Strauss.” The breakfast spread appeared to come from a Jewish-style deli and featured bagels with lox and cream cheese as well as an assortment of smoked fish. I remember standing next to Strauss as we both filled up our paper plates and him saying: “This is better than the cereal I get at home.” Strauss talked to the assembled group for a while, mostly about politics, then opened the get-together for questions.

At one point Strauss said, “I just got back from Paris. People rave about Paris. But I think Washington is the most exciting city in the world. Why, the whole time I was in Paris I couldn’t wait to get back home to Washington.” That moment in time stayed with me.

## Afterword

Ithiel De Sola Pool was the chair and founder of the MIT political science department. He was often pulled away from MIT to advise the United States and other governments on various matters. In 1965, he wrote “The Kaiser, the Tsar, and the Computer,” an essay about a computer-simulated international crisis.

In the winter of 1978, forty years ago, when I was 24 years old, I took an evening graduate course in International Relations Theory at Temple University. Lloyd Jensen, Ph.D. was the instructor.

The course readings were from an anthology of papers about international relations theory, edited by James N. Rosenau. I discarded the book years ago, but I remember it included a paper by Harvard Professor and later Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that critically analyzed the relationship between a state’s domestic politics and political structure and that state’s international relations.

I specifically recall one paper that intrigued me: the aforementioned 1965 paper by Ithiel de Sola Pool titled, “The Kaiser, the Tsar, and the Computer.” de Sola Pool did a detailed analysis of newspaper stories that would have come to the attention of the Kaiser and the Tsar in the days leading up to the declaration of World War I. He used a computer simulation of national decision makers’ processing of information during a crisis based on cognitive process models drawing on basic assumptions, such as, the fact that people’s attention is drawn more to things that interest them than to things that don’t interest them, people remember things that interest them but not things that don’t interest them, etc. For example, the computer simulation would assume that a newspaper article about Russian troop movements would stand out in the Kaiser’s mind, whereas an article about, say, an international tennis tournament in Berlin would not stand out in the Kaiser’s mind. de Sola Pool used the cognitive process approach to explain and predict the behavior of the Kaiser and the Tsar in the days leading up to World War I.

Be that as it may.

I wonder why I remember certain things with clarity out of the mass of sense impressions I have experienced in my life. Why do I recall certain events, people, and statements but not others? Is there an overall gestalt to my memories? Psychoanalysts investigate the contents of the unconscious to understand a person. But another question interests me as well: What is the universe of things present in a person's consciousness, why are those things conscious, and is there an overall gestalt to those recollections that can tell us important things about a person?