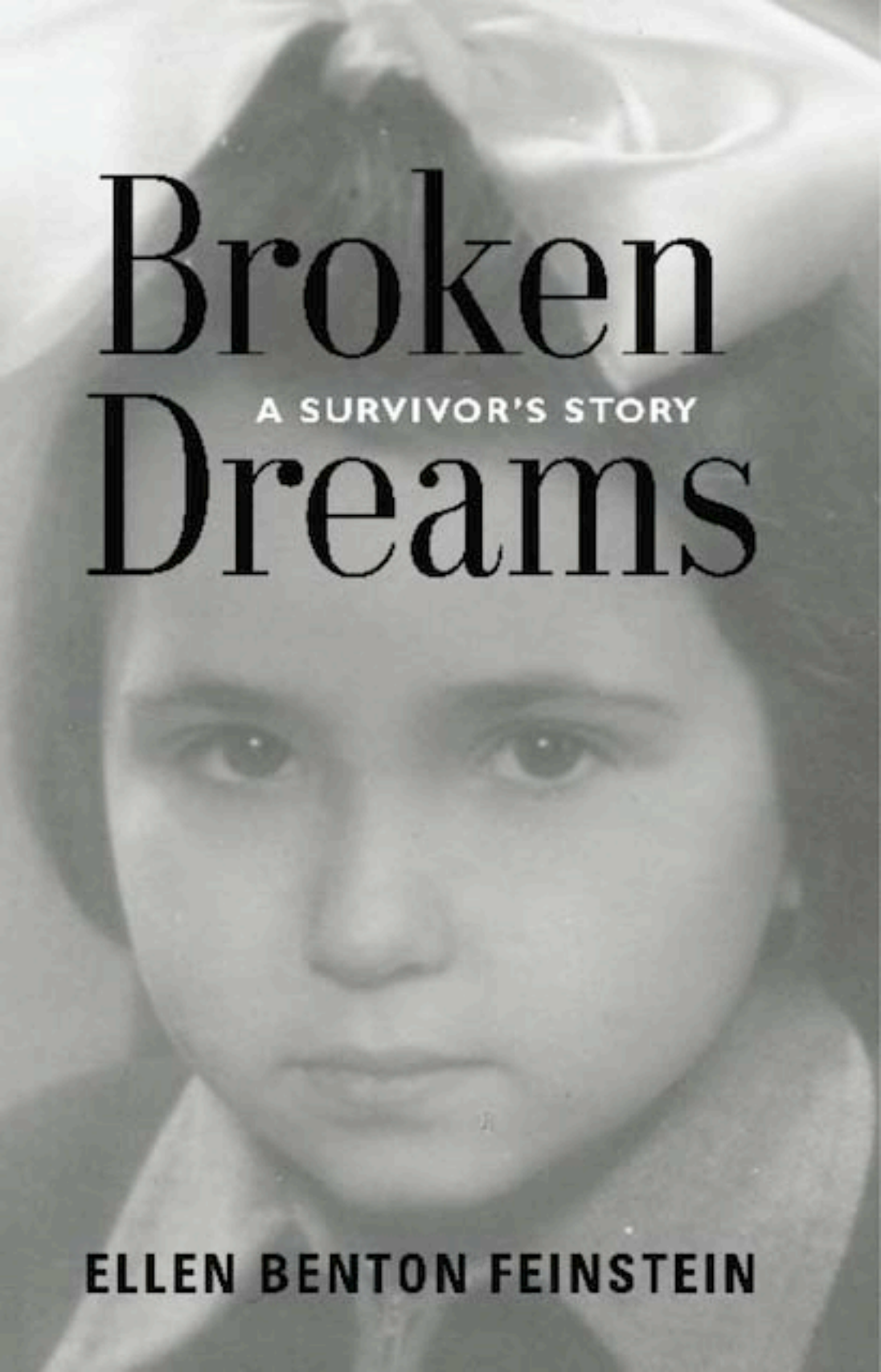
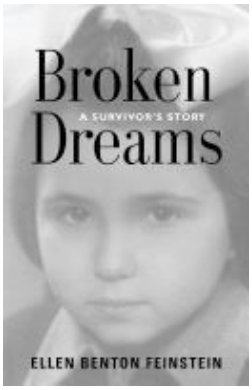

Broken Dreams
A SURVIVOR'S STORY
ELLEN BENTON FEINSTEIN



The physical and psychological damages of war can manifest themselves for several generations. This book tells the story of a family that experiences such aftereffects. At the heart of the book is the problematic relationship between the author and her adoptive mother, who felt obligated to raise her dead sister's child. The story culminates in the author's discovery, after more than seventy years, that she has a loving half-brother who is still alive.

Broken Dreams

BROKEN DREAMS

A Survivor's Story

Ellen Benton Feinstein

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First Edition

To my daughters, Lisa and Ami,
so that they may finally know who their mother really is

In dreams, fears are never overcome;
the tormented are always stuck in slow motion.
Thane Rosenbaum, *Second Hand Smoke*

TIMELINE

Throughout this book, I have recounted an event that happened to me when I was very young -- generally during wartime and immediately after the war -- and then I have tried to relate it to the aftermath -- how the experience affected my thinking/feeling/acting many years later. Therefore, the narrative alternates back and forth between different time periods. The reader may find this confusing, so I have included this timeline as a reference to when the various events in my life took place as well as what was happening in the world around me.

1939

May 13: *The SS* St. Louis *sets sail from Hamburg, Germany, to Cuba with 937 refugees (mostly Jews) seeking asylum from Nazi persecution. They were denied entry to Cuba, the United States and Canada, and the ship had to turn back. They were finally accepted by various countries of Europe. After their return to Europe, more than a quarter of the ship's passengers died in concentration camps, in internment camps, in hiding or trying to evade the Nazis.*

September 1*: The German army invades Poland and World War II begins.*

September 4: *Warsaw is cut off by the German army.*

September 27: *Warsaw surrenders.*

September 29*: Nazis and Soviets divide up Poland.*

October : *The Warsaw ghetto is established.*

November (?): Ellen (Olga, Ola) is born in Drohobycz, Poland.

November 15: *The Warsaw Ghetto, containing over 400,000 Jews, is sealed off.*

1940

Month and date unknown: Ellen is given to a Polish family for safekeeping.

May 20: *A concentration camp is established at Auschwitz, Poland.*

1941
Summer: *Nazis break the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and invade eastern Poland.*
September 23: *Soviet prisoners of war and Polish prisoners are killed in Nazi test of gas chambers at Auschwitz in occupied Poland.*
December 7: *Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.*
December 11*: Germany declares war on the United States. The U.S. enters war in Europe.*

1942
Summer: *Swiss representatives of the World Jewish Congress receive information from a German industrialist regarding the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews. They then pass the information on to London and Washington.*
Nazi extermination camps located in occupied Poland at Auschwitz, Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, and Majdanek-Lublin begin mass murder of Jews in gas chambers.
July 23: *Treblinka extermination camp opened in occupied Poland, east of Warsaw. The camp is fitted with two buildings containing 10 gas chambers, each holding 200 persons. Carbon monoxide gas is piped in from engines placed outside the chamber, but Zyklon-B will later be substituted. Bodies are burned in open pits.*
July 28: *Jewish fighting organizations established in the Warsaw ghetto.*

1943
April-May: *16 Jews in the Warsaw ghetto initiate resistance to deportation by the Germans to the death camps.*
April 19: *Waffen-SS attacks Jewish Resistance in Warsaw Ghetto*

April 19-30: *The Bermuda Conference takes place as representatives from the United States and Britain discuss the problem of refugees from Nazi-occupied countries. No action is taken with regard to the plight of the Jews.*
Spring: Bombing of house where Ellen is hidden.
November: *The U.S. Congress holds hearings regarding the U.S. State Department's inaction regarding European Jews, despite mounting reports of mass extermination.*

1944
January 24: The *War Refugee Board is established by President Franklin Roosevelt.*
March 24: *President Roosevelt issues a statement condemning German and Japanese ongoing "crimes against humanity."*
June 6: *The Allied Powers invade Normandy.*
August 4: *Anne Frank and family are arrested by the Gestapo in Amsterdam, then sent to Auschwitz. Later she is sent to Bergen-Belsen where she dies of typhus on March 15, 1945.*
German officers fail in an attempt to assassinate Hitler.
August 7: *The prisoners at Auschwitz-Birkenau rebel and blow up one crematorium.*
Okar Schindler saves 1200 Jews by moving them out of Plaszow labor camp.

1945
Nazis conduct death marches of concentration camp inmates ahead of the advance of Allied troops.
January 17: *Liberation of Warsaw by the Russians.*
January 27*: The Soviet army liberates Auschwitz.*
April 15: *The British liberate prisoners at Bergen-Belsen.*
April 29: *Troops from the United States liberate survivors from the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps.*
April 30: *Adolph Hitler commits suicide in his bunker in Berlin.*
May 7*: Germany surrenders and war in Europe is ended.*

Spring: Eda finds Ellen in home of Polish family.
Eda and Leon take Ellen to their home and begin adoption proceedings.
Summer: Eda takes Ellen to hospital for removal of adenoids.
Autumn: Eda and Leon decide to leave Poland; they hide in the home of a cousin in Krakow.
The family arrives in DP camp in Austria.
November 20*: The war crimes tribunal, composed of the U.S., Great Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R., is convened at Nuremberg, Germany.*

1946
Late spring: The family arrives in Gauting-bei-München, Germany, and moves into an apartment in theT.B. sanatorium where Leon works as a doctor.
Eda's brother Milek comes to live with us for a few weeks before emigrating to Australia.
Summer: The family rents a room in the home of the Heys.
Early autumn: Ellen starts first grade.

1949
September: Eda, Leon, and Ellen board the *General C. C. Ballou* and embark on their voyage to America.
The family moves into hotel(s) in uptown Manhattan.

1950
Spring: Ellen's first visit to a dentist.
Summer: Ellen goes to the Catskills with Uncle David and Aunt Genia
The family moves into a rent-controlled apartment.
December : Ellen stays with the Meyersons while Eda undergoes a mastectomy.

1951
Summer: Ellen goes to Camp Ranger.
The family moves to Clinton, NY, where Leon sets up a private practice.
Ellen starts seventh grade at Clinton Central School.

1957
June: Ellen graduates from Clinton Central School.
September: Ellen becomes a freshman at The University of Michigan.

1986
July: Eda and Leon arrive in St. Louis and move into Chesterfield Garden Villas.

1987
April 17: Leon dies.

2001
July 19: Eda suffers massive stroke.

2009
November 10: Eda dies.

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PREFACE

When the idea to write this book germinated in my mind, I intended to do extensive research so that I could be certain that all the facts were correct. However, the more I read and heard, the more confused I became about whether my reflections were my own memories or concepts I had acquired through my reading. Memories, especially the tenuous memories from childhood and the unpleasant ones we want to repress, are extremely fragile. As Marianne Fredriksson said in *Hannah's Daughters*, "She had realized there are only fragments, that 'memories' always consist of fragments the mind puts together into a pattern, adapts to a picture staked out early without the need for a connection with anything that really happened. A great deal is misunderstood by small children." That is why I have divided this memoir into those things that (I think) I remember and those that have been told to me by others.

A number of well-meaning people have urged me to read books and/or take classes on how to write, how to write a memoir in particular. The more I read, the more confused I became. Should I change the format or the sequencing? Should I cut some of the material or add more? I became so entangled in stylistic technicalities that I was no longer able to put any thoughts on paper. Reason prevailed when I asked myself what my objective was in writing this book. I came to the realization that my purpose is simply to tell my story as it flowed from my mind and my heart, without the imposition of formal regulations. I like to think of this as a literary counterpart of primitive art; it may ignore the rules of line, shading, and perspective, but it still manages to convey a world of feeling.

I make no claim to the irrefutable accuracy of the places, dates, and events presented here. I am simply trying to share with the reader my childhood memories and the bits and pieces of family history that I was able to glean, as perceived from the vantage point of this septuagenarian. I have also included quotes from a number of references I came across in the course of my reading because I find it reassuring that others share my thoughts and feelings and experiences -- that I am not alone.

PART I - I REMEMBER

The Earliest Years

My life is a lie. My mother and father are not the people who were present at my conception. My name is something I picked out of a Manhattan phone book. My birthday is not the real anniversary of the day I made my entry into this world. Even my status as an only child is not entirely accurate. No, I'm not in the witness protection program, nor am I an undercover agent or a spy. Nothing mysterious or glamorous. I am the product of consummate evil, a survivor of such monstrous cruelties that their devastation, more than sixty years later, still scars the lives of millions.

You may ask yourself, "Why would anyone want to write -- let alone read! -- another book about the Holocaust when so many have been written already?" I think it's for the same reason that we keep reading romance novels and war stories. Even if we know the outcome (Romeo and Juliet, Camelot), we never tire of telling and retelling these tales. The basic theme may be the same, but each person sees the events from a different perspective. It's like a group of people standing in a circle around a sculpture and trying to describe it to a blind man. Everyone is looking at the same statue, yet every person sees a slightly different part of it. The more descriptions he receives, the better will be the blind man's "vision" of the sculpture. Besides, people love stories. Long before we had written history, the continuity of civilizations was preserved through the stories that were passed down from generation to generation.

I was reluctant to write my history because everyone else's story seemed so much more interesting than mine.

Then I read this thought in Joan Anderson's *A Walk on the Beach*: "Everyone wants to hear the voice of someone who has gone through something real." Each of us, from the mightiest emperor to the poorest inhabitant of the tiniest village, embodies a fragment of history in his DNA and thus has a story that needs to be heard. So I will add my story to the mix in the hope that it will help future generations gain a better understanding of life during the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Why have I waited so long to write about all this? That is an integral part of the story. I could not make my memories public while my mother was still aware of the world around her because living under the Nazis made her so paranoid that she firmly believed that if the secrets she harbored were revealed, the authorities would come pounding on her door, drag her out of bed in the middle of the night, and deport her -- as well as me and my family -- to Siberia, or they would send us to prison, where we would be forced to do hard labor for the rest of our lives. No amount of reasoning could convince her that we were safe here in America. But we are dying out, we survivors, and lately I have realized that I, too, am getting somewhat long in the tooth. With increasing frequency, the words that are right on the tip of my tongue evaporate before I can get them out, and they don't come back to me for hours or days. So it seems the time has come to put these memories on paper.

My first real memory (at least it seems like a real memory to me rather than a figment of my imagination) is of lying in a baby carriage. In the background I see a deep blue-black, velvety sky studded with bright pinpoints of starlight. Over the handlebar of the carriage I see a face leaning toward me, smiling with her full mouth and her dark eyes. The face is round, framed by dark hair combed back on top and wavy at the sides, curling under just below the ears. How was I to

know that this would be the image of my mother I would carry around with me for the rest of my life?

This image is also the last memory I have of my life with my birth parents, except for one encounter with my biological father, which took place in a courtroom many years later when I was in college.

I was born one day (I don't know exactly which day) in November 1939, in Drohobycz, Poland. It was not an auspicious time for a Jewish baby to make her debut in that particular part of the world. Drohobycz is one of those towns that belonged to Poland one day, to Ukraine the next, then to Russia, then to Poland again. Mendelsohn gives an amusing illustration of this phenomenon in *The Found*: "There is a joke that people from this part of Eastern Europe like to tell, which suggests why the pronunciation and the spelling [of the name of the town] keep shifting: it's about a man who's born in Austria, goes to school in Poland, gets married in Germany, has children in the Soviet Union, and dies in Ukraine. *Through all that,* the joke goes, *he never left his village!*" Without being aware of it, when I started talking, I learned to speak in all three languages (Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian), and I suppose that's the reason I've always had a proficiency with languages. A few years ago Eda, my adoptive mother, said something that made me burst out laughing. When she asked me what was so funny, I told her that she had just uttered a sentence with five words, and each word was in a different language! Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Yiddish, English, with a little French or Spanish thrown in for good measure -- all were fair game in our home. But regardless of which country claimed sovereignty over my birthplace, there was a marked lack of affection for Jews there. When World War II broke out, realizing that our chances for survival as a family were slim to none, my parents found a Polish Catholic family who -- for a substantial sum of money -- would take me in and hide and protect me, in the hope that at least I, the

youngest member of our family, would somehow survive the war.

Except for the one dim memory of my birth mother pushing me in a baby carriage, I remember nothing about the time between my birth and the time I found myself with this Polish family. I don't even know the names of the Polish husband and wife who gave me shelter, so I will call them Stan (Stanislaw) and Anna. Probably I called them by the Polish equivalent of "mom" and "dad", although I have no idea how they managed the logistics of having a child suddenly appear in their home. I am certain that they went to great lengths to give the appearance of normalcy, since the slightest suspicion that they were harboring a Jewish (or gypsy or any other "undesirable") child would have put their lives in grave danger.

I knew they were not my real parents because I had a wallet-sized picture of my mother that I carried around with me for a long time. I don't know where I got that photo; perhaps my birth mother gave it to Anna to give to me when I was old enough to hold on to it. I also don't know what happened to that picture, but I wish with all my heart that I still had it today. However, I have always kept the image of that face in my mind, though over the years it has faded. Strangely, since I have been working on this book and have stirred up some long-buried contents of my subconscious, I had a dream last week. My mother and I were in a beautiful field of wildflowers. She was laughing joyfully as she chased a yellow butterfly, her long hair, becomingly dyed blond, flowing out behind her. And I said, "Now I know where I get my silliness!" Some little boys in the adjacent park threw a ball, which flew over the fence and landed close to my mother. She picked it up and threw it back with amazing force for such a small person. And I said, "Now I know where I get my strength." In my dream, the next morning at breakfast, my mother looked rather frumpy, with floppy slippers, a frayed

bathrobe, frizzy brown hair, and no makeup. And I said, “I wish I had taken your picture yesterday when you were all dressed up. You looked soooooo lovely!” Apparently my psyche needs to be reassured that the genes my biological mother passed on to me endowed me with some good qualities.

Stan, my Polish Catholic "father," was a cobbler. When he was not drunk, he made and repaired shoes. I assume he had a shop somewhere, since he did not work at home. All I remember about this home is a front room with a cot in the front left corner where I slept, Stan and Anna’s bedroom (all tiny and very sparsely furnished), and the basement. I’m sure there must have been a kitchen and a bathroom, but I can’t picture these. The basement stands out in my mind -- a huge area with a gray concrete floor and a big ping-pong table in the middle and bars on the windows -- because that is where I spent so much of my time. There was also a small tool shed, which was always crammed with junk of all sorts. This shed played an important role during one of the bombings. But I’m getting ahead of myself, as frequently happens when you try to recapture memories that are not stored neatly in chronological order but that come tumbling out, all on top of each other.

I know that I must have played and interacted with other children, but I have no recollection of doing so. I have a vague memory of the anguish I felt when other children made fun of me because my head was shaved to get rid of lice. Apparently there was an outbreak of head lice and, while other children’s mothers washed their hair in special solutions and picked through their hair to kill the nits, Anna chose the easy way out and shaved my head. It was not until I acquired my third mother (Eda) that someone took the trouble to kill the lice and save my hair. I remember answering the door in my nightgown, with my head shaved, barefoot in the dead of winter. The reason I was wearing a nightgown and walking barefoot in the dead of winter was that there was not enough

money to buy me clothes and shoes. I was answering the door because angry customers, tired of waiting for their shoes to be repaired, were pounding on the door. Afraid to face these angry people, Stan and Anna made me open the door in the hope that this mob would not attack a little girl. The reason the shoes were not fixed was that whenever Stan got a few zlotys (Polish currency) in his pocket, he spent them on liquor.

I remember one evening when he came in, fell across the bed (I have no idea why the bed, stripped of sheets, was in front of the door. Maybe it had been moved there during one of the bombing raids), and vomited. This was not unusual, but what really upset me was that his false teeth fell out. Of course, I didn't realize they were false and I remember asking Anna over and over again, "But how will he chew? Will we have to mash up all his food from now on?" I was terribly concerned for Stan, and at the same time, I was fascinated by the way all his teeth fell out together. I knew that children lost their baby teeth, and I wondered whether all of mine would fall out at the same time the way his did. The next day I was relieved that his teeth had somehow grown back in his mouth and he was able to eat solid food again. Since Stan bought alcohol with whatever money he managed to collect during his sober working moments, there was not enough money for clothes and shoes. So instead of dressing me and feeding me, he and Anna kept me locked in the basement all day, naked, with a bowl of cottage cheese for nourishment. That's how I was when Eda found me at the end of the war in 1945.

I think it is important to explain that Stan and Anna were not cruel people, though when Stan was drunk, he was mean, and he and Anna fought bitterly. As a rule, they confined themselves to their bedroom during these fights, but sometimes they exploded into the "living room." One night Stan, shouting obscenities, chased Anna into the front room and urinated all over her nightgown while I watched in horror. I learned quickly to keep very still at those times and to make

myself invisible in my little corner. Stan never touched me, but I am quite sure that if I had not been rescued until I was older, I would have been abused sexually, like those sad little girls who tell their stories in the stirring documentary *Diamonds in the Snow*. Stan and Anna had to leave me alone because there was no such thing as nursery school or baby sitters, and even if these had been available, there was no money for them. Mine was not a unique case. According to several accounts, families that took in Jewish children often kept them hidden in cellars or attics because if anyone became suspicious that a Jewish child was being sheltered, the entire family -- as well as the child -- would have been killed. Even though people must have been aware of my existence (the customers who came to the door when I answered it, the neighbors who shared our bomb shelter, other people who came to the house), I could not be left to wander around at will because I could not be trusted to stick to whatever story Stan and Anna used to explain my presence. I was not an obedient little girl, and I would not have stayed in the house. I had a mischievous streak, and I was not good at doing what I was told. So I'm sure they locked me up for my own protection. I am equally sure that this is a psychologically damaging way for a young child to spend her formative years.

But I know they were good to me because I have vague memories of Anna trying to comfort me during the bombings that occurred periodically from the time I was about three years old. The bombings -- how can I tell you what a ghastly ordeal they were for me? I would wake up in my little corner bed to the sound of the air raid siren, followed soon by the sound of hammering as Stan boarded up the windows with plywood in an effort to keep the glass from being shattered by the concussion from the exploding bombs. I would then have to get out of bed, use the bathroom, and hurry with Stan and Anna across the dark back yard, through an opening in the back fence and, after Stan lifted the cover, we would descend into a narrow tunnel in the ground until we reached a sort of

man-made cave. Usually other neighbors would already be there. Try to envision a group of frightened people in the middle of the night, crowded into a cold, dark, fetid hole underground. I suspect that's how it would feel to be buried alive. I was not allowed to cry or make any noise. Only the adults sometimes talked in hushed whispers about what might be happening above ground. Their fear was evident in their voices, in their body language, in the smell of their cold sweat, in everything about them. Terror does not begin to describe my feelings at those times. We would stay in this shelter -- sometimes only minutes, sometimes for hours -- until the all clear sounded, then file back into our homes -- if we were lucky enough to still have a home to go to.

One episode does stand out in my mind with special clarity, for this time the drill occurred during daylight rather than the usual nighttime hours. We had been in the underground shelter for several hours when I just *had* to go to the bathroom. Stan and Anna pleaded with me to wait just a little longer, but I simply *had* to use the bathroom. Finally, Stan agreed to take me out of the shelter and into the house. As we started to head back, we suddenly heard the scream of warplanes approaching. We had gone too far to make it back to the shelter and we were still too far away from the house, so Stan pulled me into the tool shed, grabbed a steel bucket and a metal wash basin, put them over our heads, and pulled me down with him on the floor of the shed. There we were, the two of us, huddled face down amidst the rubble in the shed, with Stan's arm thrown protectively across my shoulders, when suddenly there was a series of tremendous explosions. The concussion shattered the panes in the small window, sending glass shards flying. Debris pelted our bodies and bounced against our improvised metal head coverings, causing them to resound deafeningly in our ears. Surely, between the urgency of my need and the terrible fear, I must have wet myself. It was all over in just moments, and then there was a strange silence.

We got up shakily, brushed ourselves off, walked out of the shed, and surveyed the landscape. There was rubble everywhere. The back of the house had been heavily damaged, and the back porch was reduced to splintered wood and broken glass. In dismay, Stan and I stood there looking, turned to each other -- and burst out laughing! Both of us must have felt an overwhelming relief at having survived such a close brush with death. Although it was a nightmarish experience, the memory of this episode always makes me feel contented and comforted. It's strange how the feelings associated with an event are sometimes completely at odds with the nature of the event itself. I think the reason I have such warm feelings when I recollect that frightening event is because of the close, almost loving human contact with Stan at that moment. Fear and shared relief wove us together with a common thread, and for the first time in my young life, I bonded with another human being. At age three, I was hungry for any scrap of caring, kind physical contact.

I would like to cite another example of this phenomenon. This event took place many years later, after we had arrived in New York in 1949. I must have been about ten years old when Eda went into the hospital for a few days to have a mastectomy. According to what she tells me, she did not have a malignancy, only a large fluid-filled cyst in her breast. In those days (1950), treatment was much more aggressive and radical; when she had the same condition in the remaining breast several years later, they simply aspirated the fluid. At any rate, Leon, her husband, had to spend time with her in the hospital (in those pre-HMO days they kept you in the hospital for several days after surgery) and I was too young to be left home alone, so they farmed me out to some distant cousins, the Meyersons, who lived in the Bronx.

I don't remember much about the rest of the family, but I do remember the daughter named Rita. She must have been a junior or senior in high school at the time, and I thought she was the most beautiful person I had ever seen, with her

sparkling dark eyes and her tall, slim figure. Rita had endless patience with me, and she used her artistic talents to make costumes for paper dolls for me; these are dolls drawn on the soft cardboard covers of books, which you can cut out with scissors. Inside the books are paper pages with costumes that can also be cut out. Each of the costumes and accessories has tabs sticking out, which you bend over behind the doll to hold the garment in place (it took me a few mistakes to learn not to cut off the tabs or the clothes would be useless). Nothing in my life has ever fascinated me more and has held my attention for more hours than these dolls with their variety of costumes, both the ones in the books (Rita bought me a couple of these) and the ones she made for me. We spent countless hours dressing and undressing these dolls, accessorizing their outfits with miniature gloves and tiny hats and shoes, tabbing jackets and sweaters and coats over their dresses until the dolls grew so bulky that the clothes would no longer stay on.

Rita made me feel that she enjoyed spending time with me. She talked to me about school and boys, she fixed my hair, she taught me how to play checkers and Chinese checkers. She was the first person who ever read me a story at bedtime. It was Christmas week and for once, there was clean white snow on the city streets. Rita went for walks with me to show me the lovely decorations, and we threw snowballs at each other and shrieked with laughter. I worshiped Rita. For the first time in my life, I was having a good time with someone who was close to my age, and a very guilty part of me hoped that Eda would leave me there forever.

And then came Saturday night, December 23, the day before Christmas Eve, and Rita had a date. While the whole world was celebrating the holidays, I was left alone (Rita's parents stayed in the apartment, but they paid no attention to me), abandoned by the only person who had ever made me feel that she actually liked being with me. From the moment

Rita walked out the door with her date, looking more gorgeous than ever, I got that empty, blue, hollow-chested, lump-in-my-throat, weepy feeling -- the same feeling I now get when my daughters leave after a visit and I walk into their empty rooms. All evening long the radio played *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*, over and over and over again. Even today I can't listen to that song without getting that same blue, weepy feeling, and I can't sing along to it without choking up. So although the week I spent at the Meyersons' was one of the happiest times in my life up to that point, incongruously the feeling evoked by the memory is that of a bittersweet sadness.

In a similar way, whenever I recollect the terror of the day when the bombs came so close to killing Stan and me, I feel an incongruous sensation of warmth and comfort because of the common bond between Stan and myself at that moment.

Did these experiences scar me for life? Who can say? I am not claustrophobic, nor am I afraid of the dark, as one would expect. On the other hand, the sound of a civil defense siren can produce a visceral response in me, sending goose-bumpy shivers all through me. I am not afraid of lightning, even though I know that is the dangerous component of a thunderstorm, but I have an irrational fear of the sound of thunder. And decades later, when I was an adult living in Galveston, I insisted that we have a carpenter make up a set of plywood shutters that fit on the outside of our large windows with a cumbersome set of hooks and eyes, instead of boarding up the windows with plywood the way our neighbors did every time there was a hurricane threat. Even the sound of the hammering from neighborhood houses made me cover my ears with a pillow, uneasy about more than the imminent storm.

One day in 1945, when I was about five years old, as I was playing my lonely games in the basement, a face appeared at the window above me. It was a rather pretty, dark-haired lady, and she started speaking to me. I wasn't

particularly interested until she held a Hershey bar through the bars on the window. Hurriedly I pulled a chair over to the window, climbed on the chair, and snatched the candy out of the lady's hand. Although a small warning voice at the back of my head told me that I shouldn't be taking it, there was no way I was going to pass up that heavenly treat! (I don't know how I knew what it was or how it would taste, since I don't recall ever having had a chocolate bar before; maybe the love of chocolate is an inborn trait?) It seems to me that she said something about being my mother, which confused me somewhat, but how can a question of mere motherhood compete for attention with a Hershey bar with almonds?! I have a mental picture of myself: a skinny naked little kid with a round face and a shaved head, tearing into that candy bar like a starving wild animal. It's a wonder Eda didn't turn on her heels and leave me there. But she had promised her dying sister that she would take care of her little girl if both of us should survive the war and miraculously find each other again.

Life With Eda and Leon in Poland

I have no recollection of the transition from Stan and Anna's house to Eda and Leon's apartment. I don't even know in what city it was located. I picture a room with two windows, draped in rich burgundy velvet curtains; the fancy gold tiebacks were never used because the drapes were always pulled tightly together, shielding the view from inside and from outside. My overall impression is of a dark room filled with dark wood furniture and beautiful trinkets, but to a five-year old who was raised in bare subsistence, the look was one of wealth and good taste. Eda told me that on one occasion, she saw two soldiers knocking on doors and entering the apartments. She knew that if they got into our apartment, they would take away all the valuables. So she told me to stay quiet, and when the soldiers knocked on our door, she went out into the hallway, shutting the door behind her, and convinced them that there was a child inside who was very sick with a communicable disease; thus she was able to save our belongings by using her wits.

At first Eda and Leon told me that they were my real mother (*matka)* and father (*ojciec*). After some time, they told me to call them Aunt (*Ciocia*) Eda and Uncle (*Wujek*) Lonek. I learned much later that when Eda found me, she and her husband Leon (Lonek, as Eda called him) already had their precious visas to come to America. Because they didn't have any papers to show that I was their legal ward, they had to go through the adoption procedure and then try to get new visas, an extremely difficult process because the U.S. was not exactly greeting Jewish refugees with open arms. Contrary to the general impression that America welcomed the "huddled masses," the National Origins Quota of 1924 -- which limited the number of immigrants allowed into America to no more

than 2% of the number of each nationality residing in the U.S. in 1890 -- was still in effect, severely restricting the number of Jews allowed into this country. To receive a visa, you needed to have a sponsor who would guarantee your financial solvency and you had to be in a profession that was considered essential. Entry visas were almost impossible to obtain, and it was unthinkable that someone would give up a visa and remain in a country where Jews were despised and were frequently taunted and sometimes even shot simply out of hatred. For this unfathomable sacrifice, I will always owe Leon and Eda a debt greater than anything I could ever do to repay them. To a large extent, being aware of this debt has helped me deal with many of the conflicts I've had with Eda. I bit my tongue and kept my angry thoughts to myself because I always told myself that I could do at least this much for her. Of course, it was like an albatross around my neck, a constant source of guilt for me. Helen Fremont expressed my feelings perfectly in her book *After Long Silence*: "...I know what it is ... to receive the gift of sacrifice, to spend a life swimming in a fishbowl of guilt, looking frantically for a way to break through the glass."

During the period I lived with them in Poland, they always took me with them to adult functions, since babysitters were either unavailable or unaffordable. After the initial pleasantries, I was expected to sit quietly and entertain myself (the old "children should be seen and not heard" routine). Since I was accustomed to entertaining myself, this was not too hard for me. But I did devise one strategy that caused Eda no end of embarrassment. I would case the living room and zero in on one target, usually a piece of bric-a-brac in a display case. Then I would make such a show of admiring this object that the hostess felt compelled to insist that I take it. I acquired a number of treasures in this way. The prettiest was a little porcelain figurine of a blonde girl wearing a flowered hat, a blue bodice, and a full multi-flowered skirt swinging out over ruffled pantaloons trimmed with lace, all executed with

such delicacy that I am amazed that I didn't break it immediately, unaccustomed as I was to handling fine things. The first time I used this ploy, I was simply admiring something pretty in one of the homes, but I quickly realized that I had a winning gimmick. Whenever Eda berated me after we got home, with my ill-begotten prize of the evening clutched to my chest, I would reply with mock innocence, “But I didn’t ask her to give it to me. I was just being polite and telling her how much I liked it.”

Shortly before I turned six, a pivotal incident took place that had a profound impact on my life-long emotional development, my relationship with Eda, and my enduring code of ethics. Apparently I had been prone to frequent upper respiratory and inner ear infections. One day Eda dressed me in my only good dress -- which she had starched and pressed carefully -- and my stockings, tied a big bow in my hair with great care, and told me that we were going to a birthday party. I was giddy with anticipation. We climbed onto the back of an army jeep, the most common mode of transportation, and drove for a long distance over bumpy mud tracks. And then the jeep pulled up in front of a hospital. The next thing I remember is lying on an operating table and having an ether mask (sort of like a catcher’s mask padded with pink cotton and soaked in ether) clamped over my face. I fought with all my might, but I was being restrained. The smell was making me nauseous and I couldn’t breathe, I felt like I was suffocating, and I knew I was going to die.

When I woke up, my throat was terribly painful and I was vomiting blood; my adenoids had been removed. Eda was sitting by my bedside but I could barely stand to look at her. What an overwhelming sense of betrayal! The earth had opened up beneath me and swallowed my fledgling faith in the goodness and honesty of people. To look forward to the pleasure of the promised party and to wake up like this! Though I was not able to articulate what I felt, I sensed that I would never again have confidence in her word. This

deception, this betrayal by the person I was just learning to trust and depend on, was more destructive to me than all the horrors of the war. Once more, the foundation beneath me had shifted, and I felt somehow that my feet would never again find solid ground. Eda could not understand this because she believed it was OK to tell little white lies to spare someone's feelings or to keep them from being scared or worried. I strongly disagree with her. I believe firmly that once you find out that someone has lied to you, your trust in that person is broken forever and you can never again take what she or he tells you at face value. This belief is something I have stressed to my daughters from the time they were very small: the worst thing you can ever do to someone you love is to be dishonest, no matter how small the fib or how noble your motives. My husband and I have had many contentious battles over this concept. Whenever he has forgotten or neglected to do something he promised to do, I tend to overreact. To his way of thinking, "What's the big deal? So I didn't mail the letter/get the car washed/pick up the papers. Nothing bad happened. Life goes on." In my eyes, it's "another broken promise. How can I ever trust him to keep his word in the future?" If I make a promise to you, you can be sure that I will not break that promise.

To be fair to Eda, I was not an easy child to deal with. I had grown up like a little animal, undisciplined, uneducated in the finer points of human interaction, uncared for, unloved. Eda did her best to tutor me in all these areas. She even taught me the rudiments of reading and writing. Teaching me to write the alphabet was quite a challenge. When we got to the letter "g," I dug in my heels and cried impatiently, "I'll never learn this! I'm not going to try anymore!" But Eda prevailed, and eventually I did manage to master the Polish alphabet.

You may have noticed that I have not mentioned Leon in any of these interactions. There is a good reason for that.

Leon was an extraordinary man who could win over even the meanest, grumpiest, least tolerant individuals. He was a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, but he was a quiet, soft-spoken man who was content to retreat into the background and let Eda do all the talking. My daughters and I still laugh about one particular incident. Eda and Leon used to call us every week when we lived in Galveston and they lived in upstate New York. We would each get on an extension and everyone would take turns talking and listening -- everyone, that is, except Eda, who always did the talking. One day she paused and offered uncharacteristically, “Lonek, why don’t you say something?” There was a slight pause, and then Leon said sheepishly, “Now that I have the floor, I don’t know what to say.” But don’t get the false impression that he was not smart and witty. Whenever Leon made a remark, it was always something that was appropriate to inject at that point in the conversation, never unkind, always clever. The girls used to fight for the privilege of sitting next to him at the dinner table so that they could hear his *sotto voce* commentary on the conversation.

Let me illustrate my relationship with him by telling you about another of my recollections. In the south of Poland, at the foot of the Tatra Mountains was a ski resort town called Zakopane. We went there once for a short vacation, and I remember hiking on one of the gorgeous snow-capped mountains. I have a vague sense that we were with other people -- friends of Eda and Leon’s. What I remember clearly is my astonishment that even though we were walking in the snow, the sun was warm on our bodies and we didn’t need our coats. Until then I had always associated snow with bitter cold. I may have been strong-willed, but I was not a strong child physically (small wonder, considering that I had spent my early years malnourished and without any physical exercise). It was not long before I tired and couldn’t climb any farther. Leon picked me up and carried me on his shoulders. Eda trotted at his side, fussing and fretting that I was too

heavy and that he would get a hernia, but he ignored her and carried me the rest of the way, which could not have been easy for him. There have been numerous references in literature to the joyful, powerful feeling a child experiences riding on a father's shoulders. To me this meant much more: it was an affirmation that even though he customarily deferred to Eda, I could always count on Leon's quiet strength when I really needed it.

By this time I had started thinking of Eda and Leon as my parents (*rodzici*). I began calling them mama and daddy (*tatus*) when Eda told me that they truly were my real parents. Many years later, when I asked her why I was told to call them "aunt" and "uncle" at first, she said it was only because of the legal requirements for getting a visa to emigrate. She got one of those funny little smiles on her face that she always had whenever she was not being truthful, and she told me that someday I would understand. That was a ploy she used to the very end: any time she didn't want to explain something to me, she would say that someday I would understand. That "someday" has never arrived because there are still a great many things I don't understand. Although I had my doubts about what she told me (I still carried around the mental image of my biological mother), I wanted so badly to have parents, to belong to someone, that I didn't challenge her. She perpetuated this falsehood until the time I was in college, when my biological father resurfaced and she was forced to tell me the truth. Eda spent several sleepless nights trying to figure out how to break the news to me without shattering me emotionally. She was surprised that I was not surprised.

From the time I came to live with them in 1945, my parents had very different styles of disciplining me. Eda used lectures, oblique references, little morality stories, histrionics, guilt, nagging -- any tool at her disposal to manipulate me into doing what she wanted. Whenever I asked for something, Eda's immediate response would be "no." It didn't take me

long to figure out that if I persisted long enough, she would eventually give in, but she would not do so graciously. On the other hand, Leon would ask a few pertinent questions and if my answers were satisfactory, he would usually grant me his permission. However -- and here's the big difference -- if in his judgment my request was inappropriate and he said "no," that was the end of the story. I knew that no amount of pleading, wheedling, or arguing would make him change his mind. I had great respect for his reasonable approach and his adherence to his principles. Eda could rant and call me names and tell me how foolish my opinions were, and my response would be, "You just don't understand!" Leon could bring me to my knees with just a gentle, "You're a silly billy."

There is another occasion that -- even though it occurred many years later -- demonstrates my father's direct way of dealing with me. When we came to America in 1949, I needed to have some dental work done. Not only had I never heard of fluoride during my formative early years, but my diet lacked the basic nutrients, and I don't remember ever having seen a toothbrush; we simply rinsed our mouths with water after eating. In New York, my father took me to an acquaintance from Europe who was a dentist. Seated in the big dentist chair, I suddenly became so scared that I clamped my jaws shut. No amount of coaxing could convince me to open my mouth. When the dentist tried to pry my jaws open, I bit his finger so hard that I drew blood. I didn't mean to be bad, I was just scared. After we left the dentist's office, while we were waiting for the bus to take us home, my father said grimly, "Boy, are you going get it when we get home!" And I thought to myself, "I'm going to have to go back and get this done at some point anyway. So why get a spanking and make daddy mad and make mother upset? I might as well go back right now and get it over with." I asked my father to take me back, and I faced the ordeal like a trooper. Even today, so many years later, whenever I'm confronted with a task that I really don't want to do, I think of this incident and I tell myself, "You

might as well get it over with instead of procrastinating and having it hanging over your head and maybe even paying a penalty for not getting it done on time."

No, I was not an easy child to deal with. Meal times were a daily battleground for Eda and me. You would think that after so much deprivation, so much real hunger -- at times even bordering on starvation -- I would be ravenous for any food I could get my hands on. But that's not how it was. My taste buds had never developed an appreciation for fine flavors, and my system had never developed a tolerance for any sort of quantity or variety. Trying to build up my strength, Eda would go to a great deal of trouble to obtain and prepare dishes that she thought I would enjoy. She would coax me and feed me like a little child, one spoonful at a time. She would fall asleep at the table, wake up, reheat my food, and start again. More often than not, by the time I had finished eating what she had prepared, everything would come up again. Most discouraging! She tried to boost my immune system by making me swallow a tablespoon of cod liver oil every morning. What a horrible ordeal! I gagged and wretched violently, and the oily coating and fishy taste would stay in my mouth all day, even after I had brushed my teeth. For many years, I was unable to eat any fish without becoming intensely sick to my stomach, and I still can't stand any fish that's oily or has a strong flavor.

Food was an issue repeatedly during my childhood. The final episode with my picky eating happened after we had moved into our apartment in New York City. Eda served tomato soup with rice, and there was no way I was going to eat *that*! Leon had had enough of this nonsense and decided to end this manipulation on my part once and for all. The bowl of tomato soup sat on the counter and then in the refrigerator, and I was not allowed to touch anything else until I finished it. My hunger strike lasted for two and one-half days with nothing except water crossing my lips. Eda was hysterical. Dad

insisted that “no child has ever starved to death willingly. When she gets hungry enough, she’ll eat it.” After almost three days, anything would have tasted good, and I finally broke down and devoured the tomato soup. From that moment on, I was no longer a picky eater. In fact, now I like all foods so much that I have to restrain myself from overeating and gaining weight.

Leon was a physician. He was what today would be the equivalent of a board certified radiologist. (In those days, he was known as a “roentgenologist,” since “Roentgen” is the German word for “X-ray,” named after its discoverer, Wilhelm Roentgen, a German physicist.) Since tuberculosis was quite prevalent at the time around World War II, his profession was held in high esteem and was in constant demand. He often traveled to Zakopane (a resort town at the foot of the Tatra Mountains, which was known for its antituberculitic sanatorium and its hydrotherapeutic institutions [spas], all of which were closed down after World War II) to serve as a consultant and a teacher.

Eda’s job was to take care of the household and of me and to serve as a decorative element on Leon’s arm. The former function she performed because it was expected of her; the latter she executed with relish. Petite, stylish, and charming, she basked in the status accorded to her as Mrs. Dr. Zwilling (later Benton). Her social gatherings, with the artistic flourishes she imparted to everything she served, were legendary. Throughout her life, elegance was her hallmark.

After I had lived with them for about six months, Eda and Leon, realizing that there was no chance that we would ever get to America from Poland because Polish émigrés were not being admitted, decided to leave Poland. Roosevelt had turned away a ship filled with Jews from Poland, who then had to go to Israel, because the quota was filled. My parents had heard that Jews could go to Germany and that it was easier to get into the U.S. from there. Eda has told me that

when we were trying to flee Poland, a distant cousin hid us in his home in Krakow. While we were there, a neighboring woman, who didn't realize we were Jewish, remarked one day, "Jews are sprouting up everywhere like mushrooms." I know this woman's words made a lasting impression on Eda because she repeated them to me several times. Under the blanket of silence that followed the war, hatred for the Jews did not diminish, and many atrocities continued to take place.

Thus began our long journey in search of freedom and a better life, though we would have to suffer through much privation before we embarked on the home stretch.

Transition

And so we filled a couple of small suitcases with the essentials and, like the proverbial refugees with nothing but the clothes on their backs, we started our journey. It was dark when we arrived at the railroad station and boarded a train bound for Czechoslovakia. As you can imagine, we did not ride in first class! We were packed into a freight car with a mass of other people trying to escape. No seats, no sanitation facilities, no windows, no air. Just the dirty floor of the boxcar and the huddled, frightened people headed for an uncertain destination. I have only a dim memory of our travels, the first part of a harrowing ordeal. Only one episode stands out in my mind.

Refugees were not allowed to bring any valuables across the border, and if they tried to carry anything of value, it would most likely be stolen or confiscated. Afraid of being completely destitute, Eda sewed a few small gold nuggets into the lining of my coat. She told me it was for some dental work that she needed, but I suspect it was intended as a bargaining/bribery chip in case the need arose. We arrived at the Czech border in the middle of the night and were unloaded from the train. Each of us was then searched thoroughly by the border guards, who were very intimidating with their uniforms, their rifles, and their barked orders. They finished searching the three of us and waved us on. I turned to my mother and said in my loud, piping little voice, “See, I told you they wouldn’t find anything on me.” The guard turned back toward us, my mother turned white and gasped, my father’s eyes opened wide in terror. At that instant I knew I had done something very bad. Instead of pointing his rifle to shoot us, as we fully expected at the time, the guard gave a small wink, turned back, and started walking away.

I was a child and didn't understand that my slip of the tongue could have had fatal consequences for all of us. But as Henry Roth quotes his mother saying: "A *mensch* is a *mensch*, *goy* or Jew." Every race, every nation, every group, almost every family consists of good people, not so good people, and downright evil people. That is why I have little empathy for those who lump together an entire race or nationality and assign stereotyped characteristics to them. I can't empathize with Jews who refuse to buy any German-made product or a Japanese car because of what the Germans and the Japanese did during the war. It's a natural tendency to lay blame at someone's doorstep; after all, that's how the Jews came to be persecuted in the first place. I know that there were kindhearted Germans and Poles who risked their lives to help victims and, sad to say, there were greedy Jews who informed on their *landsmen* for personal gain.

It's true that during the war a mass mentality prevailed that united the German people in a hatred of the Jews, and in this context I refer to "the Germans" or "the Poles" as a unified entity. This wartime phenomenon is common to all nations: a people united in hatred of the enemy, a hatred whipped up by propaganda and by the fact that "our boys over there" are being killed by the enemy, whoever the enemy may be at the time. Although America has not been subjected to international conflict on its shores (9/11 was not a prolonged conflict on American soil), one has only to witness the internment of the Japanese, many of whom were loyal American citizens, in prison camps (as described so poignantly by David Guterson in his novel *Snow Falling on Cedars*) to recognize how easily a nation can be goaded into a mentality of hatred. Or think about the Civil War: brother ready to kill brother, the North pitted against the South, one group of people ready to kill those whom they embraced just before the madness took hold. And each side believed that the cause for which it was fighting was just and righteous.

Someone once said that war does not determine who's right, the only thing war determines is who's left. How true!

One of the most disturbing aspects of war and the one that is most difficult to comprehend during peacetime when life follows a pattern is the complete disorientation of time, place, and person that occurs. The film *Europa Europa* gives some excellent insights into the capricious, arbitrary, unpredictable way life changes from moment to moment. The protagonist puts up his hands to surrender, fully convinced that he is going to die, and instead, he is credited with winning an important battle and becomes a hero in the German military. He drifts from place to place, never knowing whether the kind lady in whom he confides, out of his need to talk to someone, will turn him in as soon as he walks away. That's the way it is during wartime. You are perpetually kept off balance, and logical thinking and planning are virtually impossible. There is no support system, no safe haven to which you can retreat for a time-out, it's not possible to distinguish -- other than the obvious uniforms and Hitler salutes (and some of those were faked as well for self-preservation) -- who is friend and who is foe. Time has no meaning, nothing makes any sense. You exist in a kind of limbo, wandering from place to place, trying to stay hidden, reacting only to danger from any source -- including starvation (I have heard of people fighting aggressively over little bits of plant roots dug up from the frozen ground). If there were a way to know when and how the war was going to end, it would be much easier to endure; it's the uncertainty that makes it so unbearable.

After passing through Czechoslovakia, we wound up in a camp for displaced persons (DPs) in Austria. These camps were set up by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in several European countries for the 250,000 refugees fleeing persecution in their native land and hoping to find a better life elsewhere. Ravaged by the long

war, these countries were able to provide only the barest necessities for these “huddled masses.” “Displaced persons”--what a genteel euphemism for souls in limbo, for emaciated bodies that nobody knows what to do with! A large number of people were packed dormitory-style into makeshift tent-like structures. The mattresses on the floor were only a few feet apart. The plumbing was woefully inadequate and there was no heat. In these appalling conditions, infectious diseases were frequently passed from person to person and back again. Medications were scarce. Rats and head lice were commonplace. Often Eda would run a fine-toothed comb through my hair and pick through my scalp for nits, which she would squash between the nails of her thumbs (she was always adept at nitpicking, both literally and figuratively!).

My parents tried to get to Ulm, where Eda's brother Milek (Samuel) was the director of a DP camp, but because of the harsh weather, they were forced to stay in the camp near Vienna. The most dreadful memory for me is standing in the food line. It was an especially severe winter, and we did not have sufficient warm clothing or footwear. We stood for hours (at least, it seemed like hours), single-file, in a queue that stretched on and on, each of us -- including the very young, the very old, and the infirm -- holding a wooden bowl and a spoon. When we finally reached the head of the line, a skimpy amount of soup -- a thin, watery liquid with some fat “eyes” and a few minuscule pieces of unidentifiable vegetables floating in it -- was ladled into our bowls from a huge kettle heating over an open fire. Not exactly gourmet cuisine, but at least it was warm, or sometimes only tepid. This and a piece of bread were our daily staples.

Henry Cohen, the Director of Camp Foehrenwald in Germany, describes the conditions in one DP camp and the attitude of the American soldiers as follows (even though this camp was in Germany, similar conditions existed in Austria): "Many of you are not aware of the moderate, but distinct, anti-Semitism that existed in the United States in the 1930s and

1940s when I was growing up. The anti-Semitism often manifested itself in our relations with the American occupying force. The United States Army, particularly at the local level, was responsible for maintaining order in Germany. Many officers were unsettled by the population flows. In a rather strange way many of the soldiers on the ground felt more comfortable with the defeated Germans than they did with the unkempt Jewish survivors. 'There have been numerous incidents involving Jewish DPs. ...This, in its turn, has a definitely bad effect on the German population, who, when conscious of such situations, rather incline toward their belief Hitler was not such a bad judge of the Jew, after all.' ...These were American officers writing these lines in 1946. ...[T]he lack of understanding and empathy on the part of these American officers is, to this day, beyond my comprehension. ...The anguish of survival was etched on everyone's face: the persisting painful memories of relatives and friends killed; the horrendous memories of one's own survival experience; the sight of children quiet and unsmiling. Managing the Camp was often impossibly difficult. In January, when the camp was most congested, a Bavarian frost froze the pipes and resulted in the complete or partial damage to 400 of the 600 toilets in the camp. The sanitary conditions in the toilets was appalling. A month or two later, explosives at the I.G. Farben plant cracked open the main pipe line bringing water to the Camp. For five days the camp was without water. No plumbing, no drinking water. No hot food could be cooked. The hospital was without water. The army provided merely token assistance. ...There was a black market in food. The army at the field level was obsessed with the black market and the number of Jews involved in it. Actually the numbers of Jews involved was small, and considering the quality of the food we were serving, it would have been surprising if there were no efforts to improve it."

From time to time, the Bakenroders, friends of my parents from Poland, sent powdered eggs and powdered milk to

provide me with some nourishment. I couldn't stand the taste or the consistency of those powdered eggs -- they made me gag. On rare occasions a care package, sent by cousins in France who had heard of our situation, actually reached us. These packages contained fabrics and clothing and food, and one contained a sealskin coat for Eda to keep her from freezing during that cold winter. Sometimes these packages contained real eggs, sometimes cheese or other tidbits. The eggs and all the nourishing items were always given to me. Not once did my parents eat one of those precious eggs, though I'm sure they were very tempted. Although Eda was always hungry, from time to time she gave a little of the food we received to Leon so that he could keep on performing his duties as the camp doctor.

This unselfishness on their part has become symbolic for me of all the sacrifices they made on my behalf. It goes without saying that I am everlastingly grateful to them for having saved me and protected me to the best of their ability, but it also saddled me with an immense burden of guilt. How could I ever repay them? How could I be worthy of all their sacrifices by living up to their (especially Eda's) impossibly high expectations of me? How could I ever deny them anything or hurt them or make them angry? On the other hand, how could I be perfect? Whenever I let them down, the guilt I felt was overwhelming, and I spent most of my growing-up years berating myself for being such an ungrateful, heartless, inconsiderate, insensitive, lazy, obstinate, incorrigible daughter, a belief that was often reinforced by Eda's caustic comments and harsh judgments. In many subtle -- and often not so subtle -- ways, she never let me forget the sacrifices she had made for me.

During the six months we spent in this camp, there were a few bright moments. Once my parents took me to Vienna (I don't know the circumstances behind this ride in a military vehicle), where I saw Sonja Henie skating in an outdoor rink. It was my first encounter with something so beautiful in the

midst of the squalor to which I was accustomed, and I was enthralled. The city, the buildings, the shops, the trees, the open spaces, the flawless grace of this gifted skater were almost more than I could take in, and I felt as if I would burst with emotions I couldn't express.

Since education is of vital importance in Jewish life, schools were set up and teachers came from other countries, including Israel and America. Along with a few other children in the camp, I attended a makeshift Hebrew school taught by one of these teachers. My native ability with languages stood me in good stead, and in no time at all I was prattling in Hebrew. I remember coming back to our barracks one day and announcing to my parents that since we were Jewish, we should be speaking Hebrew, not German. That didn't last long. At holiday time, the Hebrew school decided to put on a little skit for the parents. I was to sing a solo as part of the play. Everything went fine during rehearsals, and I warbled out my song in my little high-pitched child's voice like a pro. Then came the night of the play, and suddenly there was an audience out there. I walked onto the stage, took one look at the audience, and froze. I curled one leg behind the other, stuck my index finger in my nose, and just stood there until they had to carry me off bodily. So much for a career on the stage!

True, the living conditions in the displaced persons camp were harsh, but they were certainly better than in the concentration camps. We were being warehoused, but we were not being exterminated.

I don't remember making the trip, but I do know that after six months in the DP camp, we were able to leave Austria and continue on the next leg of our trek, once more traveling by train.

Germany

From the time in 1946 when we arrived in the small hospital/sanatorium for tuberculosis patients, where Leon was the radiologist, my memories become more numerous and more coherent. By this time I was six years old and was better able to understand what was happening to and around me. The hospital was located in a clearing in a large forest. How I loved those woods -- mostly because for the first time, I had some freedom to roam, away from Eda's watchful eye.

Compared to my barren years in the cellar, this forest and the adjacent meadow offered a wealth of treasures to explore. I gathered the first violets (those wild wood violets had a perfume unlike any violets I have ever smelled since) and brought a little bouquet to my mother as a harbinger of spring. I picked mushrooms and feasted on wild blueberries and raspberries. I played with the insects on the woodland floor. I went for walks on the paths, listening to the birds and watching the scurrying little creatures. I made daisy chains and clover wreaths and investigated every flower and plant. This knowledge proved to be useful many years later: during the summers between my years in college, I worked as a social hostess and children's counselor in a resort hotel in upstate New York. When I took groups of children for hikes in the wooded and mountainous areas, I was able to entertain the kids for long periods of time -- even the little ones -- by showing them which plants made a pop when you broke them on the back of your hand, which ones rattled, which ones made dyes, which ones could be used like miniature saws, how the backs of fern fronds were spotted with spores, how to whistle through a blade of grass, and many other plant tricks.

As a child, I spent most of my waking hours when we lived in the hospital playing in those woods and the meadow that

lay in front of them. I even tried to plant a little garden, though I didn't leave enough roots on the plants I stuck into little holes I dug. I only watered them once or twice with a glass of water that I brought from our room, and they didn't get enough sun, so not surprisingly, they all died. But I am certain that this is where I learned to love nature, a love affair that has persisted throughout my life and one that I passed on to my husband, a Brooklyn boy who didn't know a tree from a daisy when I met him.

This was also where I met my first "boyfriend," Peter. He was the son of one of the doctors who worked with my father at the sanatorium. We would ramble through the woods together, and I taught him about all the plants and creatures that I had discovered. As I look at a photograph of us, taken by one of my parents' friends, I can understand why everyone thought we were "adorable" together. Peter, blond with what is considered typical Aryan features, is wearing leather shorts (*Lederhosen*) with suspenders and a vest over a short-sleeved white shirt. I have a white apron over my dirndl dress and the ever-present big white bow in my short dark hair. It must have been torture for Eda to keep her mouth shut when she saw us together.

Our apartment in the T.B. hospital in Gauting was small but quite comfortable. There were two bedrooms, so I even had a tiny room of my own for the first time in my life. I recall that we had a little balcony, which was the scene of another one of my near-fatal indiscretions. First, I need to fill in some background.

It was here in the small town of Gauting, a suburb of Munich (Gauting-bei-München) that I got to know Eda's surviving brother, Milek (Samuel). It turned out that Milek had been in charge of another DP camp in Ulm at the same time that we were interned in ours, but Eda and Milek had lost touch with each other and neither knew whether the other one was still alive and if so, where the other one was. Somehow they reestablished contact and found out that, while we were

headed for America because Leon's skill as a physician made him a valuable asset, as an engineer Milek was unable to get a visa, so he was emigrating to Australia.

Our paths crossed in Gauting, and he stayed with us for a couple of weeks. He and I had to share my bed, and he complained every morning that I had kicked him all night long. He had a wonderful sense of humor. We'd be waiting at the train station and he'd cry excitedly, "The train, the train!" and when, filled with impatience, I asked eagerly, "Where?" he'd answer, "It's not coming!" I fell for it every time, and everyone would get a good laugh at my expense. It doesn't sound so funny now, but at the time, I thought he was the wittiest man alive (my sentiments about him were confirmed when my husband and I visited our Australian family many, many years later, not long before Milek passed away; he made us feel very welcome and kept us both smiling with his warmth and humor).

During the time we lived in Gauting, on many nights I heard a volley of distant but distinct pops. When I asked about it, I was told that it was hunters shooting deer or rabbits. One night when Milek and I were about to go to sleep, I asked him what those noises were, and for the first time I was told the truth: it was Germans who had rounded up trucks full of Jews and were shooting them at the edge of the forest. Sometimes in the early evening I would see those big army trucks covered with green canvas passing by and, from time to time, I would catch a glimpse of a face through an opening. I think those were the Jews who were headed for execution. People have said to me, "But this was AFTER the war!" Sometimes we are very naive in our thinking. In the silence after the war about the atrocities perpetrated during the war, there was a sort of tacit impression -- especially in this country -- that once the war ended, the Germans (and the Poles, who also hated Jews, as attested by the many pogroms) started to treat the remaining Jews with respect and dignity. Nothing could be further from the truth. The

humiliation suffered by the Germans and the Poles upon losing the war was seen as tangible proof that they had been right all along, that the "dirty Jews" were the ones who were bringing misery to their people. Even after the war, the Germans and the Poles still hated the Jews, all the more so because in their minds, the Jews had caused them to go to war, had caused them to lose the war, and thus the Jews were the ones who were now bringing censure and shame upon their people. Hitler had convinced the Germans that the Jews were responsible for every evil, unfair, intolerable thing that happened to them and that therefore the Jews deserved to be scorned, tortured, and exterminated. Can anyone really believe that simply because the Allied armed forces defeated the armies of Hitler and his allies, the Germans suddenly had a change of heart and started thinking of the Jews as brothers? Long after World War II was over, hatred for Jews thrived in Germany and in Poland. Even today, there is no shortage of skinheads and neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers. For the most part, they operate under the radar because today it is not a popular viewpoint. But in Hitler's Germany, any show of sympathy for the Jews was considered treasonous and punishable by death. Such depth of feeling does not cease just because a defeated nation signs a treaty to bring the war to an end.

So now, having set the stage and explained how the Germans felt about Jews, I can get back to telling you about my devilish deed. Because we had a German name (Zwilling, which means "twin" in German) and because none of us looked particularly Jewish, we were able to "pass." The doctors in the hospital didn't know that Leon was Jewish or, if they did, they were willing to look the other way because my father was such a skilled physician and his services were so valuable. Eda always loved to entertain and show off her skills as a hostess. She felt that as a doctor's wife, it was her duty to impress her husband's colleagues (and to bask in his reflected glory). One warm spring day, she was entertaining a

few of Leon's colleagues from the hospital, who were seated on the little balcony. She asked me to carry some beverages out to the guests. I remember putting them on the table and turning to go back inside through the glass door. Suddenly possessed by a mischievous streak, I started singing "Bei mir bist du shoen" in Yiddish. I have never known Eda to react so quickly; hardly had the first couple of notes left my mouth when she flew across the room, eyes blazing, and clamped her hand over my mouth! Here was another time when I carelessly put all our lives in grave danger, but by now I understood that what I was doing was very bad, though a child of six does not fully comprehend what could happen. I was just bored and wanted to create a little excitement. Luckily for us, either the German doctors did not hear me (I had my back to them and was inside the door when I started singing softly) or they chose to ignore what they heard because my father was such an excellent doctor (the hospital administrators even sent him to courses in other countries so that he could come back and teach the new procedures to the rest of the staff; I have a priceless black-and-white photograph of him during one of these teaching sessions). Once again, our lives had been spared -- no thanks to me.

I'd like to digress for a moment to explain my theory of what possessed me to do things that I knew would get me in trouble and why children often disobey their parents, even when they are aware of unpleasant consequences. I believe that all our actions are determined to some degree by two opposing drives: the quest for adventure and the need for security. The need for security inspires us to put money into retirement accounts, to install fire and burglar alarms in our homes, to buckle our seat belts and obey traffic laws, to avoid anything that could make us sick or cause injury. The desire for adventure, on the other hand, is what leads people to explore caves, to climb Mount Everest, to parachute from skyscrapers, to engage in extreme sports, and to participate in activities that have some element of danger and/or

excitement. Children can't go off to bungee jump or sail across the ocean or partake in any of the thrilling adventures that are available for adults. So they get their adrenaline rush by acting out, by doing those things that they know are forbidden and will bring some sort of punishment down upon them. The lure of the forbidden is irresistible for children and often for adults as well.

Case in point: many years later, when I was a student at the University of Michigan, a very strict alcohol ban was in effect. Any female student caught with alcohol, especially if she was under the legal age of 21, was summarily expelled. We came up with all kinds of creative ways to consume alcohol without being caught: we injected vodka into watermelons or oranges and smuggled them into the football stadium, we rolled up whiskey bottles in the rugs at fraternity dances, we dispensed spiked coffee from the coffee urns at parties. My best subterfuge was to go to the apartment of one of my boyfriends and make Jell-o using half water and half bourbon (I think today they're called "Jell-o shots," but in the 50s they were unknown). You couldn't tell by looking at this Jell-o or by smelling it, so I would carry a bowl of it into the dorm on many evenings, and it was funny to see a bunch of girls sitting around eating Jell-o and getting high. When I went to graduate school at Yale, I found myself in the elevator with the house mother one day. I asked her whether it was OK to keep beer in the little refrigerators on our floor, and her answer was, "You're a big girl now." At that point, all the excitement and adventure went out of drinking alcohol, and I decided that I really didn't like the taste and anyway, I'd rather eat my calories.

As children and young adults starting to make our way in the world, our desire for adventure and exploration often outweighs our need for security and comfort, so we frequently do the very things we were warned against: we touch the hot stove, climb the tall tree, jump off the barn roof, run out into the street. As we get older, we become increasingly aware of

our mortality, and so our need for security starts to outweigh our desire for that thrill of discovery or conquest. In different people, one of the two drives is more pronounced than the other one during their entire lifetime. That is why some people, from the time they are quite young, are “nest builders” and tend not to venture far from home; they are grounded in practicality. Others, even in their 80s and 90s, jump out of airplanes, ride motorcycles, or ski on dangerous slopes; they are the dreamers, the explorers.

Comfortable as was our little walk-up apartment in the hospital, my parents were afraid that I would contract tuberculosis from such continual close exposure to the infected patients. So when they met a German artist named Paul Hey and asked him to rent us a room in his house, he agreed to do so. It was a large, farmhouse-style, two-story house. The ground floor was occupied by a family with four children. Mr. Hey and his wife lived on the second floor, where he had a studio in which he painted. They were willing to let us live in a large room on the second floor. The floor of the room was covered with an olive green linoleum, worn in many spots. There was a fireplace at one end of the room, opposite the door. My parents’ bed was by the window, which had an outside fire escape. They placed a large beige folding screen down the middle of the room to separate my bed from theirs, giving them a little privacy. The bathroom, which we shared with the Heys, was a couple of doors down the hall, but there was a small washstand in one corner of our room. Compared to what I was accustomed to, this was real luxury.

Since heat was scarce and wood was plentiful, we often built a fire in the fireplace. One day my parents were taking me to a grownup affair, which they considered to be really important. Eda dressed me with great care in my one good dress, blue with tiny pale pink flowers on it, and combed my hair, carefully tying a big white bow on the top of my head. (To digress for a moment, I have seen a number of photos of little Jewish refugees, and they all have the same big white

bow on top of their heads. The thought has crossed my mind that little Jewish boys can be identified by their circumcisions, and little Jewish girls can be identified by their pageboy haircuts with big white bows on top of their heads.) So here I am, all spiffed up, waiting for my parents to come back from an errand and to take me on this outing. Growing bored and restless, I noticed that the fireplace was full of burned-out bits of wood and quite dirty, so I decided to be helpful. By the time Eda and Leon returned, I was covered from head to toe with soot and ashes, as was most of the room around the fireplace. I have an indelible memory of the scolding I received that day.

As I mentioned before, I was a terribly picky eater. At her wits' end, Eda came up with a clever ruse. She would make a salad with grated carrots, grated apples, raisins, a little lemon juice, and brown sugar -- all healthy ingredients that would provide me with much-needed vitamins and minerals. It was not until years later that I found out that Eda used to prepare the salad and take it next door so that I would eat something nourishing. Since we lived in one room, she had to wait until I was asleep, then quietly grate the fruit and vegetables and take the salad next door. Mrs. Hey would invite me in from time to time, and I would come back home, raving about the delicious salad Mrs. Hey had served me (when Eda had tried to feed me the same salad some time earlier, I wouldn't touch it!). I never noticed my mother's expression when I would tell her about this wonderful treat that our neighbor had given me. With Mrs. Hey's kind cooperation, Eda got me to eat quite a number of nourishing foods that I would never eat at home. Mrs. Hey also had a trick that always fascinated me. She would say, "I am going to look at the ceiling and then I will tell you everything you had for breakfast." She would then roll her eyes toward the ceiling and proceed to intone, "I see soft-boiled eggs, strawberry jam, and milk." I could never figure out how she did that, completely unaware that I was wearing my breakfast all over my face and my clothes.

There was one food that I would eat without any coaxing. Espaliered on the side of the house was a peach tree. You could just reach out of the window and pick the biggest, juiciest, warmest, sun-ripened peaches I have ever seen. I still remember the way it felt to bite into one of those tender peaches, with the warm sweet juice running down your chin. Definitely no coaxing required. And there was yet another favorite: Eda made a delectable dish of sautéed mushroom and onions in a sour cream sauce. How I loved that dish! I would devour my portion of those mushrooms in record time, then I would ask Dad if I could “borrow” some of his. He would always ask me when I would pay him back, and I would always reply, playfully, “After the war” (meaning "never").

The Heys were very kind to us in a number of ways. Every Christmas they would invite us over and give us a few little presents. I was the star of the show, invited to sing all three stanzas of *Stille Nacht* (*Silent Night*), all of which I remember to this day. In Germany, instead of carolers, it was traditional for young people to come around dressed up in costumes (St. Nick, the devil, and other characters) and wish everyone a merry Christmas. I was terrified of these costumed characters. In a panic, I couldn’t stop screaming, even when they took off their masks and revealed themselves to be older children whom I knew. I have no idea why they scared me so, but I still feel a twinge of the old panic when I think about those carnival figures.

There was another Christmas custom: if you had been good, St. Nick and his elves would leave you presents, but if you had been bad, the devil would leave you a willow rod or a lump of coal. Every Christmas morning I woke up with keen anticipation. The first thing that would catch my eye would be a willow twig tied with a red ribbon, resting accusingly on my pillow. Of course, I knew that I had been naughty, so I resigned myself to not getting any presents. Then I would slide my foot into a slipper by the side of my bed, and there would be something in the toe of the slipper. And here and

there I would find little presents all day long. My parents couldn't afford big, expensive presents, but they always made sure I had a few little surprises to make my holiday an exciting one.

The family who lived downstairs, the Schmid-Burghs, had four children: Johann, Vroni, Peter, and Steffi. The youngest and closest to my age was Steffi, and she became my friend -- or at least, we played together. Friendship was an alien concept to me and was not part of my repertoire. It is difficult for people who have lived a normal life and who take relationships for granted to understand how foreign some of these concepts are to someone who has never experienced them. For instance, when Bob and I were married, we sort of eloped (that's a long story) and had invited only the closest family members: our parents, Bob's mother (his father had remarried, so I had two mothers-in-law for several years -- that's another long story!), Bob's brother and sister-in-law. When we returned from our weekend honeymoon, it was made clear to me that his family was displeased because we had not invited Bob's grandparents. How could I ever make them understand that the idea of grandparents never even entered my mind, since I had never known or heard about mine and did not understand the nature of that relationship? Of course I would have invited them -- if I had been aware of their existence.

Though the children in the house in Gauting tolerated me, especially the two younger ones, they often hurt me with their cruelty, which was sometimes unintentional, at other times deliberate. They often made disparaging remarks about Jews, about foreigners, about poor people, about the way I dressed and talked (I had learned to express myself in German while we were in the DP camp in Austria, but my German was certainly not of native fluency). One poignant example comes to mind. White flour was a scarce commodity at the time, and few people could afford white bread. Usually we ate the dark, thick peasant bread. One day, as Steffi and I were playing

outside, her mother called her to come in. Turning to me, Steffi said, “We’re going to eat white bread with butter and jam, but you can’t have any.” I know it’s not unusual for children that age to be insensitive and mean at times, but this exclusion (when I needed so desperately to have some sense of belonging), this flaunting of superiority, this affirmation of the difference between us made a psychic wound that still throbs when I probe it with my tongue of consciousness.

Then again, I also did my share of damage. There was the time when the children got a doll carriage and a doll. This was the first real doll I had ever seen, and it filled me with amazement because it would open and close its blue china eyes and when you tilted it forward, it cried, “Mama.” Was there ever anything more astounding in this world? Doll and carriage were left outside unattended one day. Drawn to it irresistibly, I lifted the doll out of the carriage and made it go through its paces a few times. I wanted to see how those magical eyes worked and, alas, I must have poked them a little too hard because suddenly they popped inside the doll. I tried my best to make them go back where they belonged but was not able to do so. I was much too frightened to tell anyone what I had done, so I tucked the doll back into the carriage and pulled the blanket up over her face, hoping against hope that by some miracle everything would be all right. I went inside and cowered in our room, waiting for the lightning to strike. I must have repressed the outcome because I honestly don’t remember how things turned out.

Some time later the kids received a bicycle, all blue and shiny. One of the older children (I think it was the older boy, Johann) let me get on it while he held on to the back and let me pedal for a few feet. What joy! Then one day I saw the bicycle lying outside with no one around. I picked it up and, balancing on one foot, I put the other foot on the pedal -- just to get the feel of it. The temptation was too great. I found myself depressing the pedal and placing the other foot on the other pedal and my seat on the bike seat. Without meaning

to, I found myself riding down the path. The back yard of the house had a sort of island of trees, surrounded by a wide semicircular gravel path. I was doing fine on the straight part and was starting to feel confident and to enjoy the feeling of locomotion. Then came the curve, and I didn't make it. Over I went, with the bicycle crashing down on me. Ignoring the pain in my knees and elbow, I disentangled myself and picked up the bicycle. But when I tried to push it back to where I had found it, I couldn't get the wheels to turn. The rim of the wheel had been dented in such a way that it was hitting the rear wheel, keeping it from turning. With great difficulty I half carried, half dragged the injured bike back and leaned it against the house. I was too scared to confess what I had done, and for several days I lived in torment, hoping for a miracle: maybe the siblings would blame each other and my crime would never be discovered. Predictably, their parents confronted mine, and some arrangement was worked out between them so that my parents would pay off the cost of the bike in installments. I don't remember what my punishment was, but I do know that Eda never forgot and forgave this incident -- she mentioned it not long ago as an example of what a difficult child I was.

The German elementary school was approximately two miles from our house. Children attended school either from 8:00 a.m. to noon or from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on alternate weeks. Because it was such a long distance and because we often had to walk in the dark, I was given special permission to skip kindergarten (which was in session during different hours) so that I could attend first grade with Steffi and walk with her. To describe the discipline in the school as strict is to understate the truth by at least half. The children were expected to sit absolutely still, eyes front, hands folded on their desks for hours on end. If you fidgeted or if your attention wandered, whap! the ruler came down hard on your knuckles. Your full concentration had to be on the teacher at all times because everything was taught orally and you had to

be prepared to respond with lightning speed if you were called upon. All math calculations were done in your head and had to be performed with rapid-fire precision. For me, this was pure torture; I can still feel the sting of my raw knuckles when I think about it. That's probably why math is so difficult for me to this day. The only redeeming grace was that the teacher liked my handwriting, so I was frequently the one who got to write on the blackboard. While this eased the pain of having to sit still in my seat, it presented a whole new set of torments. For one thing, it exposed me to the constant malevolent scrutiny of my fellow students, always an uncomfortable situation, especially since my parents couldn't afford nice clothes for me. Also, it was very hard for me to write beautifully and still keep up with the teacher's pace; listening intently and writing at the same time was a real challenge for me. And if I made a mistake -- you guessed it: whap! Excruciating embarrassment in front of the entire class, not to speak of the physical pain. So I lived in a continual state of ambivalence, both hoping to be called to the blackboard and dreading it.

There was no such thing as recess -- such frivolity had no place in the serious business of learning. We must have had bathroom breaks, though I don't recollect how that worked. Did we learn the material? Yes indeed; the price of not keeping up with the class was too high. As a matter of fact, when we arrived in New York, I was so far ahead of my American contemporaries that, without knowing a word of English, I started out in the fourth grade but was quickly promoted into the second half of the fifth grade, ahead of my age group.

Even though my German teacher was a rigorous taskmaster who wielded her ruler with cruelty, she was not heartless or without compassion. One morning Steffi and I had a late start. As we began to run down the long, steep hill, I tripped and fell and slid all the rest of the way on my face and hands. By the time I reached the bottom, I was one

scraped-up, bloody mess. There was no question of turning back, so I trudged on beside Steffi, crying all the way. The teacher took one look at me, rushed me into the bathroom, and gently tried to wash off as much of the debris as she could. When we got back to the classroom, she gave me a picture she had on her desk. It was an outdoor scene printed on a special paper so that when it was dry and sunny, the clouds in the picture were pink, but when it was rainy, they turned blue. I was so completely captivated by this bit of magic that I forgot all about my poor face and was able to sit through the whole morning of classes and to walk back home.

Eda became hysterical when she saw me, and my father was summoned at once. The debridement was an acutely painful process because I had large amounts of mud, pebbles, and shards of all kinds lodged in the wounds on my face and hands. Throughout, I kept looking at my wondrous picture, a gift from the woman who, until that day, had only given me whacks with the ruler. My father then determined that I needed a tetanus shot. Scared out of my mind, I grabbed his tie and kept pulling. To my horrified fascination, Leon's face turned from pink to red to purple, but I hung on to that tie with all my terrified strength. Gasping for air, he was finally able to dislodge my stranglehold in time to recover his breath. He didn't even rebuke me because he felt so sorry for my pain and fear, but I was smitten by terrible guilt about what I had done to my poor, kind father.

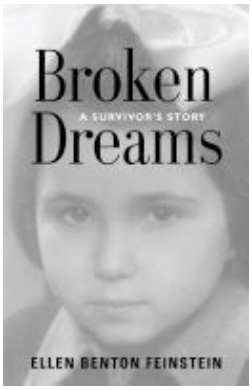
In spite of the difficult circumstances of our lives during the post-war years, there were moments of levity and laughter. The Polish expression for "good night" is "dobranoc." In a moment of silliness, we twisted the expression around into nonsense syllables, and this became our special saying when we were in a good mood. As I went to bed, if I said "nocibracala" (pronounced something like "notzibratzalla") and my parents responded with "bracinocala," I knew all was well in my little world, and I went to sleep with a smile on my face.

There was no public transportation to speak of and, of course, we couldn't afford a car, so we didn't travel much. I do remember that once we took the train to Munich and walked around the streets. At that time, Munich was a bombed-out city, the streets filled with the rubble of the many buildings that had been leveled to the ground. I had the opportunity to see Munich a few years ago, and I cannot believe what a beautiful city it is, completely rebuilt. When my husband and I visited Munich, we took the train to Gauting and tried to find the house where I had lived. We had gotten the address from a kind person in the Chamber of Commerce, who looked up Paul Hey's residence for us. On the corner of the street, next door to where I had lived, there was an American army base at that time. The Army base and Paul Hey's home are gone now, converted to an apartment complex. The street has been renamed to *Paul Hey Strasse*, a tribute to the painter who lived there (there is also a Paul-Hey-*Hauptschule* listed under "schools"). Many of the original houses on adjoining streets were still standing just as they had been -- pale yellow or light tan stucco with tile roofs; some had colorful murals painted on the walls. We didn't make it all the way down the hill to where my school had been because we got distracted by the sound of a young girl and some children speaking English; it turns out that there is a large English language school located nearby.

One more note about Paul Hey: at the time we lived in his house, he was beginning to acquire some renown in Germany. With great kindness, he presented us with several postcards and a small painting, on which he wrote little tributes addressed to my parents (*Den lieben Zwillingen zur Errinerung an Gauting und Heys* ["To the dear Zwillings as a souvenir of Gauting and the Heys"]). They were delighted to receive these samples of his work as remembrances of the few good things that happened to us in Germany, but I was distressed by the fact that he had written on the post cards and "spoiled" them so that we couldn't send them to anyone.

Today they are museum mounted and hang proudly on the walls of my dining room.

Two and one-half years passed in this way, and then I was told that we were leaving for America. Once again we packed our meager belongings in a couple of suitcases and set off for new adventures, with no idea of what lay ahead for us.



The physical and psychological damages of war can manifest themselves for several generations. This book tells the story of a family that experiences such aftereffects. At the heart of the book is the problematic relationship between the author and her adoptive mother, who felt obligated to raise her dead sister's child. The story culminates in the author's discovery, after more than seventy years, that she has a loving half-brother who is still alive.

Broken Dreams