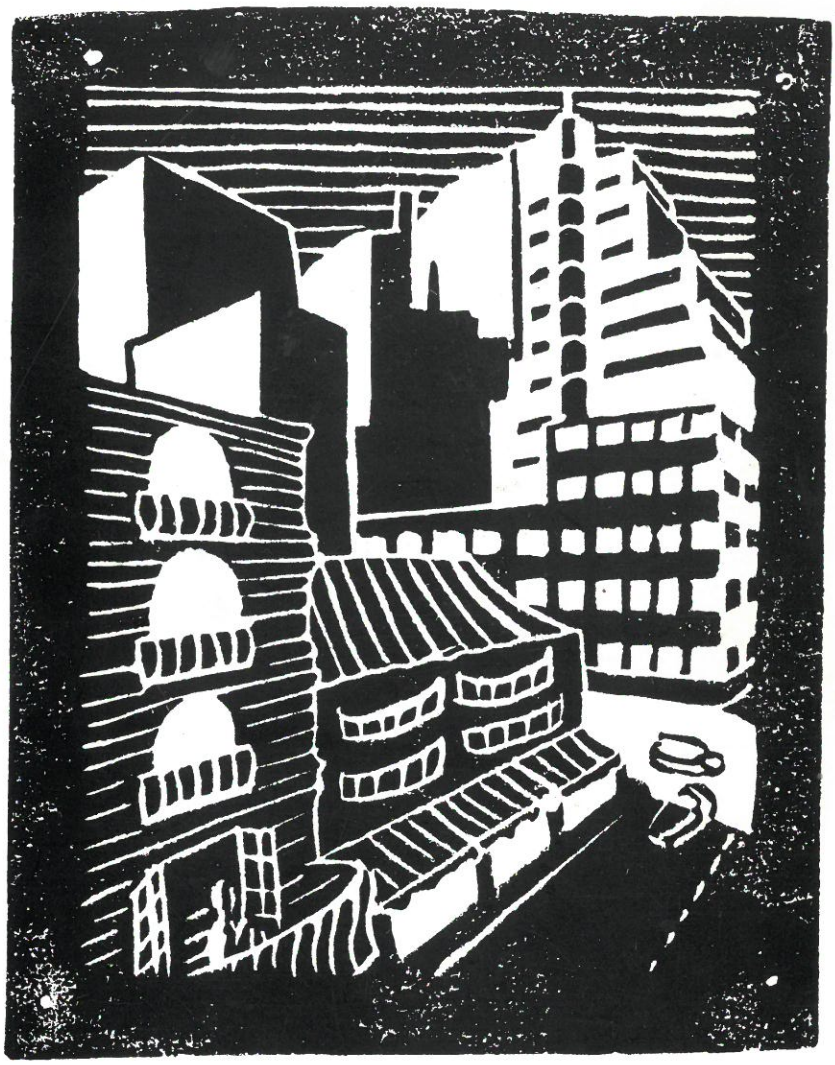
Johannesburg - A Memoir



by

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Acknowledgements

It takes a village to write a memoir.

My thanks are to the following:

My late mother, Ray Moss,
My Aunt and Uncle, Freda
and Hymie Gordon,
My brothers, Leon and Avron,
My cousins, Pam Sachs, Dolly
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and Mabel Horn.

And especially, I would like to thank my partner, Eugene Navias, for his support in so many ways.

- Stanley

Dedication

To Duncan and Gene

who know so little

about

my early life.

I: PINE STREET

When the war broke out, our lives changed completely. This was our war, the Second World War; South Africa joined with Britain, the mother country, in fighting Germany. Dad joined up. Mom, my older brother Leon and I moved from Pretoria, where I was born, to Johannesburg. The distance was only thirty-six miles but the move made all the difference to us. For Mom it meant giving up her life and house in Pretoria and moving back home. She had two small children and no means of supporting herself; we went to live with her parents.

Dad enlisted; it was one of those decisions that we never heard talked about later on. Because he was married with two children and already thirty-six years old, he did not have to enlist. But Mom in later years offered some explanations. As an immigrant to South Africa, he felt grateful to the country that had taken him in, and he wanted to "give something back." She also said that all the young Jewish men in Pretoria, a notoriously anti-Semitic and Afrikaans-speaking city, wanted to show the Afrikaners that the Jews were as good as they were. She said that everyone thought that the war was going to be over in a couple of months, and the idea of doing something different for a short period was appealing. Joining up gave the men a good excuse to get out of things for a while, away from the wife and children, away from debts and chores, being with "the boys."

Dad's family was from Pretoria and he had a job there, so after he and Mom married in 1931, that's where they lived. They started their married life in a flat, as most young couples did, and Leon was born in 1933 and I in 1936. When the family expanded to include me, they moved to Arcadia Street in the section of the city called Arcadia. Dad was an accountant, more properly a bookkeeper, and worked at Paramount Stores, a department store until 1938. When he left Paramount he was given a gift of a lamp in the shape of an airplane, with the light shining through the windows and a propeller that rotated; as children we thought it was delightful. After Paramount Dad worked in a soda-pop factory called "Shillings."

Mom spoke fondly of her years in Pretoria. She and Dad made friends with other couples at the same stage of life as themselves. Though Mom did not work outside her home, she kept the house, sewed, baked, saw that meals were prepared, went shopping, met with women friends in the afternoon for tea. She had a favorite cousin living nearby, who had also married a Pretorian. Mom was happy to have the status of marriage, and be out of her parents' home, where she'd had a daily responsibility of looking after and dealing with her mother, Rosie. Once Mom was married, Ann was able to get married, which she soon did (it wouldn't have done for a younger sister to get married before the older).

* * * * *

We moved to Granny and Grandpa's home at 2 Pine Street, Upper Houghton (which we pronounced "Howton"), Johannesburg. Pine Street had only two houses on it, facing each other, and we prided ourselves on the exclusiveness of this address. Even though the sides of these houses faced on the busy thoroughfare of Louis Botha Avenue, once you turned off that street, you were in a quiet enclave; the other side of the houses faced St. John's Road, and across that, the playing fields of St. John's School, whose honey-colored stone buildings framed the far end of the playing fields. St. Johns was an upper-class boys' Anglican boarding school. We didn't know anyone who went there, but it was constantly in our view and its bell chimed the quarter hours and tolled the hours. Grandpa was fascinated by simple natural phenomena, and he used the tower of St. John's as his marker for the point where the sun set, marveling at its arc of travel from winter to summer.

I lived at Pine Street for three years during the war, and visited often after we moved out. I remember it vividly. To get to the house, you opened the gate in the fence and walked down a pink cement path, bordered by flower beds. Grandpa was a keen gardener. Then up a few polished red steps onto the stoep and then to the front door, flanked on both sides by little alcoves sheltering crude plaster dogs. The front door was wood painted to look like wood grain, with a leaded glass panel fitted with colored glass pieces. Most of them were ripply or bumpy, but there was one clear red piece, and peering through it, you could see inside where the only movement was the pendulum of the grandfather clock, swinging back and forth.

Hearing the doorbell ring, some visiting family member would open the door with a cry of welcome, and then you'd step into the hall, which never changed over all the years. Underfoot was a flowered wall to wall carpet; to the right a modern veneered table with a glass top; beyond, the grandfather clock whose chimes were tied back, because it would otherwise have sounded the quarter hours, day and night, like Big Ben. The hall opened on the left into the living room, furnished with a large lounge suite and dark upright piano. Mom had been the one in the family to play the piano. Before she married, she stayed home to be with her mother. She entertained visitors, arranged flowers, and played the piano. She told me she had practiced for hours every day, but later in life, though she could rattle off a page or two of music she never touched the piano.

Across one corner of the lounge was a fireplace, but it was never used, because Granny was afraid that the house would burn down. We did once light a fire in the dining room fireplace but doused its embers with a kettleful of water when we went to bed, just to prevent such a conflagration.

Beyond the hall was an opening into the passage; it was screened with a portiere of crushed red velvet curtains hanging from a brass rod. As children we were warned not to touch the curtains in case the rod came down on our heads. The reason for this prohibition was this: one day, my cousin Pam (my age) and her sister Claire were playing in the hall. The doorbell rang and Claire went to answer it. Pam hid behind the curtains. When the door was opened, standing there was the Egg Man, an unshaven Jewish beggar who made the rounds of the neighborhood with a basket of eggs on his arm. No one ever bought the eggs, of course, for who knew how long they'd been there. But Pam, frightened at this apparition, wrapped the curtain around her to hide. And the brass rod came down on her head.

To the left of the portiere was Granny and Grandpa's bedroom, the largest one. It had a bedroom suite with two single beds separated by a night table, a wardrobe for each of them and a dressing table with mirrors for Granny. This room had a fireplace, too, a pretty one with green tiles, and also unused. Like all the bedrooms, the floor was covered with wall-to-wall linoleum with a carpet on it, so the lino formed a border around the room. At the foot of the beds, which were neatly made up each day by the maid, were rolled up eiderdowns. Eiderdowns were a superior kind of duvet and prized possessions of immigrants from the cold climates of

Europe. The finest ones were stuffed with the feathers of the breast of the eider duck, and quilted into bedcovers. Like most eiderdowns, these were covered in a satiny fabric, which looked luxurious but more often than not, slid off the bed during the night. But they kept one warm during cold winter nights in unheated houses.

Next down the passage was the middle bedroom, with two beds in which two of the three sisters had slept before they left the house to get married. During the war years, Mom and Leon slept in the two beds and I had a juvenile bed squeezed into the room. Also in the room was a large wardrobe in which Granny kept her linens. Like all the pieces of furniture in the house it was locked to prevent theft by the servants. Granny had a big bunch of keys to all these locks, and she was constantly losing them. There'd be a cry, "I can't find my keys," and we'd search the house, to find them in an apron or dressing gown pocket, tucked under a pillow or eiderdown, or even in the keyhole of a locked door.

The next room was Harry's room, a single room for the only son of the family. While he was away at the war, Leon slept there, but after Harry was killed, it went unused. In the room were two bookcases with leaded glass doors, one with Harry's books, the other with Grandpa's. I found on visits later that I could "borrow" Granny's keys during a time of their being lost, and find a key to open the bookcases. Harry's bookcase had a few books that I might look at, but mostly they were his law books. Grandpa's collection was the more impressive. He had rows of large volumes of the collected works of British writers now unfashionable, like Thackeray and Bulwer-Lytton, as well as row after row of the classics, in uniform series with gold embossed spines. Mom said that Grandpa had read them all. Some of these books have trickled down to the grandchildren: Leon has volume five of the works of Thackeray; I have *Pride and Prejudice.*

At the end of the passage was the kitchen, with both an electric stove and a cast iron coalburning stove that heated a big tank of water above and was used by the servants to cook their food. Before taking a bath, one would gingerly feel the tank to see if the water was hot. Also in the kitchen was a kitchen dresser, with (locked) glass doors above, in which a pretty unused tea set was displayed. A further door led to the scullery where dishes were washed and dried, and ironing done, and beyond it, the pantry, with bins of flour and sugar, and shelves of groceries. Granny was

suspicious of canned food and feared food poisoning, and about the only kind she'd have in the house was canned peaches.

In the passage hung two framed pictures: Napoleon at St. Helena, and a certificate of Grandpa's membership in a Masonic-like lodge, the Royal Order of Moose (perhaps for once my memory was faulty). Off the passage was the separate toilet, a common feature of South African houses. Originally there'd been an outside toilet, still there, but now used for storage, and this interior one was added after the family bought the house in 1922. Next, the bathroom, with a bracing smell of Grandpa's eye wash, and a big bathtub with taps and an optional sprayer on a flexible tube, great fun for little boys in their bath. Reachable from the bathtub was an electric bell suspended from the ceiling on its cord; most of the rooms in the house had similar bells, which sounded in the kitchen and once activated a board which showed where the bell had been rung. Having such a bell in the bathroom might have been thought a safety precaution if the lady of the house felt faint while in the bath; it also seemed a sure way to electrocute oneself. (We never used it; the only bell in use was in the dining room, so that the servant could be summoned to remove plates when a course was finished). The last room of the house was the breakfast room, where the family ate most of its meals and where the refrigerator stood; this room, too, had once been a bedroom.

The dining room was a large room with massive furniture. In the center was an expandable oval dining table, a good place to hide under and explore the mechanism for sliding the two halves apart so that extra leaves could be inserted. A sideboard for china had one of its doors unlocked so that one could find a dish of sticky sweets in it. On the top was a plaster ornament fascinating to us: a woman with a flowing dress restraining two greyhounds with a leash made of a real leather thong. Over in the bay window was a large leather sofa, an excellent place to hide behind, and two ample leather chairs, so deep that one's feet couldn't touch the floor.

The dining room was the scene of the family's festive meals at Rosh Hashanah and Pesach. Granny would light the holiday candles in two silver candlesticks shaped like miniature Corinthian columns, which Leon now has and uses every Friday and holiday nights. Grandpa or one of the sons-in-law would recite a kiddush while the men covered their heads with yarmulkes or improvise with handkerchiefs, and

then onto the meal brought in by the maid, and served by the women in the family. Granny would want to make sure that we all had enough to eat, and were taking second helpings. She'd hardly eat herself, and would be up and down, supervising the meal. "Sit down, Ma, and eat!" the daughters would exclaim, without expecting to be listened to.

At Passover, Grandpa would conduct the seder, reading the Hebrew rapidly, while the asking of the four questions, in halting Hebrew and fluent English, was passed down year after year to the youngest member at the table. All of the eight grandchildren were boys. We sang the songs we knew, and there was usually a die-hard group of singers led by Uncle Ike, who made it all the way through the Haggadah even after the meal. All of us, even the children, drank wine, and halfway through the evening, I'd lie down on the roomy sofa and drift off to sleep.

The house stood in the middle of its half-acre plot, and each side had its own delights. In front, on the Pine Street side, were flower beds along the walks and circular beds with small palm trees in the center of each. Because the land sloped, the garden was terraced (in South African parlance all of the yard was the garden, except for the back yard). At the highest terrace, a brick wall blocked out Louis Botha Avenue and its busy traffic. Here was a tall steel pole standing on a concrete pad with the date "1926" embossed in it. It was the wireless aerial. Mom told us that her brother Harry had made a "cat's whisker," a primitive early radio; I wonder if it was connected to this aerial. Also on the terrace was a large jacaranda tree, with fernlike leaves and blue-mauve flowers, used as specimens in Johannesburg and as street trees in Pretoria, famous for its jacarandas.

At the St. John's Road end of the lot was a tennis court, which had once been kept up, rolled and marked with white lines, but it had deteriorated by the time I came to play on it. The heavy roller still stood in the corner, and my cousin Geoffrey and I rolled the court a few times and once walked through the scratchy tall hedge at the end of the court, and found many long-lost tennis balls. The court had once served as a social setting for the marriageable daughters to meet eligible men, though I never heard that any of the three met their husbands that way.

Back of the house were vegetable beds and roses, and a thick triangle of parsley. There was also a grape arbor with an old vine yielding sour green grapes. We would

swing along the rusty iron frame until our hands hurt. And I still have a bump on my head where I impaled myself on a thorn when I stood up inside the spreading lemon tree. The house had a small, hot cellar, pungent with the smell of last year's marigolds, hung upside down to dry so that their seeds could be harvested.

On the Louis Botha Avenue side of the house was the back yard, separated from the garden on both sides by fences. It was the domain of the servants. Their little building of two rooms and a toilet stood to one side. One was John's room. He was the constant among the changing servants, an uncommunicative man, called "the boy" who did all the heavy house and yard work: he polished the floors, swept the walks, polished the stoep, cleaned the windows, washed the car, and was given occasional small sums of cash for extra things that he did as appreciation for putting up with Granny's complaints and demands. When the household was finally dismantled, John returned to his homeland, supported by a pension given to him by the family. The women servants, the maids, came and went. Granny couldn't stand them for long: they couldn't cook, they stole, they were cheeky, or else they wouldn't put up with her and left to work for a less demanding madam. Whatever names they arrived with, Granny called them all "Mary."

Against the back wall was the fowl *hok*, the fowl run, where Granny's chickens lived and laid their eggs, which one of us would pluck out of the dust, nervously eyeing the hens and rooster. Then there was a garage whose doors opened directly onto the pavement and street. Louis Botha Avenue was a relentlessly busy artery, the life line from the city towards the north, and Grandpa would have to back his car out into a gap of traffic. John would be sent out to help guide him and hold up any oncoming traffic. Grandpa went on driving well into his seventies, long after he should have stopped, a driver who was a threat to others on the road because he drove so slowly.

In the backyard lived a tribe of tailless Manx cats. Granny put out food for them, but you couldn't ever approach them, because they scattered and fled, hiding underneath sheets of corrugated iron and lumber in the alley behind the servants' rooms. And in the center of the paved back yard was a diminutive fig tree, its base surrounded by tea leaves. Someone had decided that tea leaves would nourish the tree and generations of tea pots were emptied in the small patch of earth.

The house is still as real to me as if I'd been there only yesterday. I am rolling marbles down the strip of floor between the carpet runner and the wall; or awakening in bed in the morning to see the beams of sunlight filtering through the air bricks; or counting the squares in the pressed tin ceiling; or wakening in the middle of the night to hear the measured footsteps of the elderly night watchman passing my window.

* * * * *

Although 2 Pine Street still stands, the people who lived in it are long gone, living on only in memory. Introductions are needed. My parents were Ray and David Moss, always called Mom and Dad by us children; we were not the kind of progressive family where the children called their parents by their first names. Mom's given name was Rachel, but it had been shortened to the breezier, Anglicized Ray. My grandparents, my mother's parents, were Eli and Rosie Goldberg, called Dad and Ma by their three daughters, though sometimes referred to by them as Eli and Rosie, but not called that to their faces.

Dad's family, the Mofsowitzes, figured much less in our lives than did Mom's. Dad was the youngest of five children, all of whom were born in Lithuania, and the whole family, parents and children, emigrated to South Africa in 1910. Dad was seven at the time. He never talked about his life "over there," but bore one mark of it: the tips of his ears were flattened where he once had frostbite.

The family settled in a little town called Premier Mine, east of Pretoria, and opened a country store. It's not clear how they came to go to Premier Mine; but small towns like it all over South Africa had a handful of Jewish families who ran the only hotel, clothing shop or country store. Premier Mine had one worldwide claim to fame -- it was where the Cullinan diamond was discovered in 1905. It was the largest lump of diamond ever found, weighing one and a half pounds. The Transvaal government bought it and presented it to King Edward VII on his birthday in 1907; two of the nine major jewels it was cut into ended up in the British crown jewels. But this fabulous find did not brush off on Dad's family; they made only a modest living.

Immigrant families helped one another. I knew only a few people in the following story, but they were part of our family's background and give some idea of the lives of immigrant families. Mabel Horn, Dad's niece, tells the story of her family as follows:

> My father, Harry Hack, was brought out to South Africa by my uncle Louis Hack, who had a huge farm near Premier Mine. Louis set my dad up in a small farm and trading store about forty miles from Premier Mine in a place called Cullinan; the farm was called Sybrandskraal. My preschooling was in Premier Mine, and when my two older brothers were ready for junior school in 1922, we moved to Pretoria. My father had a car and came to Pretoria on weekends, and when he finally gave up the farm he opened a grocery and fruit store in town. We had already built a house in Sunnyside. The Mofsowitzes, Avram and Cherna, my grandparents as well as yours, moved from Premier Mine at the same time. They settled in a semi-detached house on Proes Street on the fringes of downtown and opened a grocery store, and lived in the house behind the store.
>
> The Mofsowitz family had five children: Rachel, my mother; Jankel who died of miner's phthisis, a lung disease, at an early age; Maurice, married to Gittel, who died from pneumonia when he was thirty-six; Isaac, a butcher in Joh'burg; and David, the youngest, your father.

When the family moved to Pretoria, Dad would have been nineteen. It's unclear whether he completed high school; he might have taken courses in bookkeeping, building on his aptitude for numbers and his methodical mind. As a young man, Dad followed some of his interests. He had a nice tenor voice, untrained, and sang in choruses of amateur musical comedies put on in town. There are photos of him in Chinese get-up for the musical "San Toy," a popular show from England; and with an obviously fake beard he was Moses in another play.

In Jewish custom, a new-born addition to the family is named after a grandparent or other family member who has died; thus their memory is perpetuated. Dad's mother, who would have been my grandmother, died before I was born in 1936; her name was Cherna, and my intended name went through various permutations of Anglicized names beginning with "ch", such as Charles, until Stanley was settled

on. It's a name I've never particularly liked, as it has lower-class connotations to me (the only Stanley of note was the British prime minister, Stanley Baldwin). My middle name, Felix, was an inspiration of my mother. "It's such a lovely name," she'd say, "It means "happy." It never made me happy, however, since its mention when it was read out at school brought on catcalls and meows because of Felix the Cat. I've just started to use it now to distinguish myself from other Stanley Mosses, of whom there are more in the world than one would imagine.

Jewish children are also given a Hebrew name. Mine is Bezalel, who was "a skillful artificer raised up of God and appointed to work in gold, silver, and copper in the setting of precious stones, and the chief architect of the temple." I don't know why I have this name, but I like it.

Dad's family name was Mofsowitz. It was an awkward name to say and spell in English and sounded very foreign. It was often abbreviated, I'm told, to Moffs. My mother, I imagine, was not pleased to have the name of Ray Mofsowitz after being Ray Goldberg before marriage. I'm sure she was a strong influence on my father changing our name to Moss. This was done legally in 1938 when I was two; my birth certificate has the name Mofsowitz on it, and Dad glued the official newspaper announcement on it giving the name change.

Dad's older brother kept the name of Mofsowitz, but Dad and his nephews changed their names to Moss. Since Dad's other brothers had died long before, the only one I knew was Uncle Isaac, who seemed much older than Dad. He was a butcher who lived with his wife Sarah on Berea Road, where double-decker trams noisily swung by the house. Auntie Sarah was very deaf, and conversation or even communication with her was tenuous. Dad would drop by to see Isaac now and then, but though we knew the family and would attend weddings and funerals, we did not see them much. When Dad married Mom, he also married her family.

Mom did make friends with two of Dad's nieces who were more assimilated and worldly than other members of the Mofsowitz family. One was Rose Heyman, who after her young husband died, remarried to become Rose Barrett. The other was Mabel Kuper, who was also widowed, and after her remarriage became Mabel Horn. She was fond of Dad and became a loyal friend of the family; she's the only member of that family we're in touch with today.

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Mom's family was far more voluminous and we knew them all. Mom's mother was Rosie, and her maiden name was Rosenzweig, which means a rose twig. She and three sisters, Lottie, Anna and Mary, had come to South Africa about 1902. Their two brothers, Jacob and Willie, went to New York and Zurich respectively; Uncle Willy was an ultra-religious Jew who felt he could not keep up all the observances in the uncultivated land of South Africa. All of the sisters passed through Switzerland and Uncle Willy made the arrangements for their passage to Africa. I never heard why Jacob emigrated to the United States, and we eventually lost track of that branch of the family. The parents were left behind in Vidukle, Lithuania. My mother often commented on the courage of parents like these who sent their children off for a better life, knowing that they would never see them again. There must have been some communication between Vidukle and the daughters in Johannesburg to let them know that their mother Rachel and father Jacob had died, as there was a proliferation of Rachels and at least one Jack among the grandchildren, named after a deceased grandparent.

Anna was married in Switzerland before emigrating. Her husband, Herman Friedland (his name may have been Mindis), was a *yeshivah bocher,* a learned Jewish scholar. The family felt so honored to have him in the family that they moved out of the house into the barn, so that Anna and Herman could live more comfortably in the house.

Uncle Willie continued to be ultra-religious. One memorable visit by Gussie and Sharley Friedland occurred during *Pesach,* Passover, after Uncle Willie's multi-floor house had been purged of all leavening. Willie discovered that Sharley had brought along baby food to feed the infant Myrtle; the jars were taken away and the whole house had to be made ready for Pesach again.

Rosie, my grandmother, was a handsome woman. There's a family portrait taken about 1910 showing her seated in a high backed chair with husband Eli behind and two daughters clustered around. She's wearing a black silk dress and all the family are solemnly looking at the photographer. Rose never really assimilated to her new life in South Africa. Her heavily accented English was rudimentary, and she could read only enough English to make out the headlines in the paper. Her mother

tongue was Yiddish, and she'd talk volubly to her sister Mary every day, often while she was eating, and the telephone mouth piece accumulated crumbs of food. Her world centered on her family, and what happened to those outside the family, especially if they were non-Jews, scarcely made an impression.

When I first knew her, she was already sixty. She felt safe only at home. The only exceptions outside the house were trips to visit the local shops in Raleigh Street. For other trips -- to town to buy clothes or to go to the doctor -- she was always accompanied by one of the dutiful daughters. Rosie was no intellectual companion for Eli; she was uneducated and unable to talk about anything except family, food or household matters.

When Rosie was in a cheerful mood, she'd bustle about the house singing the first line of "T'was on the Isle of Capri that I met her," and hum the next few bars. She had a succession of cooks whom she would terrorize. She supervised the cooking herself, but not trusting the cook to salt the soup adequately, she'd add her own, and so we were accustomed to eating oversalted food. Traditional Jewish delicacies like kneidlach, gefilte fish, teiglach and pletzlach, she'd prepare herself.

Besides locking all the drawers and cupboard doors in the house, she'd lock us into our bedrooms at night so that if a burglar got in from the outside, he wouldn't be able to penetrate into the passage and the rest of the house. All of the windows in the house were screened with burglar-proofing mesh, so this seemed an unnecessary precaution. Granny was afraid of electricity, and if some appliance or plug needed repair, she was terrified that the person repairing it would get a shock.

As dusk came on, the cry would go up "Is the back gate locked?" and she'd send one of the servants or children to bolt the heavy wooden gate. It opened onto Louis Botha Avenue, along which ran double-decker electrical buses for whites and single-decker diesel green buses, packed with Africans. The white bus stop was a few steps from the back gate; a hundred yards further was the stop for the black buses, where waiting passengers pushed to get on the crowded buses, which at the same time were disgorging other passengers. This street was threatening and Rosie wanted it sealed off. "Come away from the street," she'd warn, "or the *amalaitas*, street thugs, will get you."

In later years, long after we'd lived there, Mom and I would sometimes drop in after dinner to see Granny and Grandpa, and when we were leaving, she'd would tearfully beg us to telephone when we got home, so that she'd know we'd got home safely. Ray would resist this; sometimes I'd agree to do it. If we didn't visit, Mom would often try to call after supper to see if Grandpa was all right (she'd already spoken to Granny at least once that day). But Johannesburg's telephone system was often overloaded and the circuits would be busy. Mom herself or one of us boys would sit down by the telephone, and dial over and over again in the hope of getting through. Because of these repeated attempts to connect and all the other times I would phone Pine Street, I still remember its phone number: 43-1569.

At the end of the work day, family members would gather at Pine Street. By the late 1940s, all three of the daughters and their families had moved to houses further out from town, so it was convenient to stop at the house. The sons-in-law might have a whiskey with Grandpa, while Granny would fuss around, talking enjoyably in Yiddish to Dad. Sometimes Mom, Freda or Ann would be there too. If I was coming home from town, from a piano lesson or later, university, I'd poise myself on the bus to catch a glimpse of the cars parked on Pine Street, and if our car was there, I barely had time to pull the cord and get the bus to stop near the back gate. Then I could get a lift home with Dad.

When Granny and Grandpa were away on holiday, David would stop at the house to check in with John to see that everything was all right and whether he needed anything. On one memorable occasion at which Myrtle Friedland and I were present, John told him that one of the cats had got trapped in the pantry. Though we could get into the house, we didn't have a key to the locked pantry which had its own Yale lock. And the pantry was the only room in the house with no burglar-proofing on the window but a heavy fly-screening on it. The hungry frightened cat was trying to get out, but we couldn't bend the screen back far enough to make an opening big enough for the cat to get through. All of Dad's frustration with Granny, and her habit of locking all the doors, came out in a burst of rage. Which wasn't helped by finding that he'd locked the car keys in the car, and they had to be fished out with a wire coat hanger. (John managed to release the cat by himself.)

Rosie had to be managed. She was fearful, anxious, fussy and easily alarmed. When, years later, Avron broke his elbow and was in a cast for weeks, the family

decided that Rosie should not be told about this accident. It would upset her too much. So for the time it took him to heal, he did not visit Pine Street, and we would steer the conversation away from him or outright lie about why he hadn't appeared for such and such an occasion. We were protecting Rosie, we said, but were really sparing ourselves from the tears and fuss that would have ensued.

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In contrast to Granny, whom the daughters faced with a certain amount of resignation, Grandpa was adored by his daughters. "I could talk to him about anything," said Freda, "Boyfriends, school problems, Rosie." He was a short man, seventy years old when I got to know him, and quiet-spoken and modest. He had a fixed daily routine of going to the office in the morning, home for lunch, a nap on the hard horsehair settee on the verandah, then back to the office and home for dinner, often preceded by an informal family gathering as the menfolk dropped by on their way back from work. He kept on going to work well into his eighties, if only to sign a few checks and see what was happening. There was no need for him to keep on going to the shop, but it was what he had done all his life, there was nothing for him to do at home, and he surely would not have wanted to stay home where Granny would have wanted to talk to him all day.

Grandpa followed regimens that he believed would keep him healthy. He did exercises every morning in the lounge, wearing his long underwear. Geoffrey and I found the spectacle of his morning exercises in the living room very funny, and one morning we hid behind the curtain with a piece of cloth that we ripped as he bent to touch his toes. But our prank was prospectively funnier to us than in reality, because Grandpa did not think he'd split his underwear, as he was supposed to, and was only mildly amused when he learnt what was supposed to happen. Grandpa also believed in the healthiness of nude sunbathing, and he'd had constructed three wooden screens covered with hessian (burlap) which hid him from view as he exposed his skin to the early morning sun.

Grandpa's conscientiously regulated his eating habits. He was the proverbial person who chewed each mouthful thirty-two times, making a meal with him painfully slow. It was a testament of son-in-law Hymie's fondness of him that later on in life, he'd stop by in the morning to take Grandpa to work, and sit through breakfast with

him; a true gift of Hymie's who couldn't sit still for very long for anything. Grandpa would drink his freshly-squeezed orange juice, eat his grated carrots, slowly consume his hot porridge sprinkled with wheat germ and glucose, a powdery white sweetener which came out of the light blue tin labeled "Glucolin," eat eggs with toast, and slowly drink a cup of tea. Then he'd go to the office.

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The two Goldberg men, Eli Victor, my grandfather, and his brother Louis, arrived in South Africa in 1896. They were born in Veksna, Lithuania -- Eli in 1874, Louis a couple of years later. They did not emigrate to South Africa directly, but went to Dublin, Ireland, where they spent six years. Eli went first, and then was joined by Louis. Some of our older family members believe that the family name was Medalie, not Goldberg, but there's no evidence one way or another. A recent interpretation of their Irish detour is that the Jewish Immigrant Shelter in London tried to disperse emigrants from Eastern Europe so that they did not settle in large groups, inviting anti-semitism. In Dublin, Eli and Louis became peddlers hawking goods and religious pictures to housewives in the rural areas. To communicate with their customers, they learned a new language, English, to supplement their mother tongue of Yiddish. For the rest of his life Eli's English bore some Irish pronunciations. But after a few years, Eli and Louis felt that Ireland was not the place where they were to settle. They wrote -- so the family story goes -- to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, the noted newspaper of English Jewry, and asked: "We want to move on from Ireland. What do you think of India as a place for us?" The editor replied: "Don't go to India. Go to South Africa." And so they did.

These bare bones of my forebears' stories are all that have come down to us. My grandparents never talked about the past to their grandchildren, and if my parents knew more about their early lives, I never heard it. And so their experiences, feelings and thoughts at leaving their homes and parents and coming to a strange country will go forever unrecorded.

Their reasons for leaving home and for choosing South Africa are, however, perfectly clear. By the 1880s, the Jews of Russia and its possessions, of which Lithuania was one, lived in a disastrous condition. In 1772 the Tsar had confined Jews to the Pale of Settlement, a broad region of lands stretching from the Baltic to

the Black Sea. Successive Tsars had reduced the area of the Pale, enacted military conscription for Jews with service lasting for 25 years, and withdrawn the self-rule of Jewish communities. Then in 1881 the moderate Tsar Alexander II was assassinated. The new regime clamped down on liberal movements, and encouraged violent raids of rape and pillage on Jewish communities, first in the Ukraine and then elsewhere, introducing a new word to the language: pogrom. More restrictions followed: the expulsion of Jews from villages and rural areas into the towns, where trade by Jews was further limited, and the imposition of quotas on Jewish enrollment in high schools. In 1890, the Jews in Russia were looking ahead to a future of poverty, oppression, and mob violence. And so, encouraged by their parents who foresaw no future for them, young people left. Most went to the United States, and smaller streams flowed to Europe, Palestine, Britain, Canada, South America, Australia, and South Africa.

Exerting a pull from the other end of the world, South Africa in 1890s was the new El Dorado. Gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886, and what followed was the greatest gold rush in history. On an exposed plateau in the Transvaal, Johannesburg grew from a mining camp to a bustling town within a few years as mining companies marshaled capital, expertise and labor to extract gold from the reef. News of the world's richest gold strike headlined European and American newspapers, a claim that for once proved to be true, and thousands of fortune-seekers from all over the world poured into Johannesburg and other towns of the Witwatersrand. Among them were Jews ready to leave Russia, eager to see a world beyond the unpromising one at home. In particular a flow of Lithuanian Jews headed for South Africa, most probably responding to the heady letters from *landsleit*, compatriots, that had gone ahead, telling of gold strikes, boom and prosperity.

Eli and Louis settled first in Cape Town, the end point of their sea voyage. Eli worked as a waiter, a traditional job for the unskilled. Louis hawked slippers in the Malay (Muslim) quarter. He traveled back to Ireland two or three times, claiming that he missed Ireland when he was in South Africa, and missed the sun when he was in Ireland.

Eli traveled by train to Johannesburg, sharing a compartment with a soldier. In the morning the soldier was gone, and so were Eli's boots; he arrived in Joh'burg

barefoot. Shortly after his arrival, he was scanning a notice board listing jobs, when the town was shaken by a tremendous explosion. "What kind of wild place have I come to?" he wondered. It was the huge dynamite explosion in Braamfontein on February 19, 1896. Eli shared a hotel room with Henry Bradlow, a fellow-immigrant; the two of them went out every day to look for work. They each had a few pounds on them. Eli's money ran out and he was left with only a few pence. The next morning the two young men shared some bread and went out as usual. Eli put his hands in his coat pocket and found a pound coin, obviously slipped in by Bradlow. Another anecdote that has come down about Eli -- amusing though improbable -- was that he was caught up in the Boer War, and enlisted on the Boer side. But when told to hitch up a horse to a cart, the young man who had never handled horses accomplished the task with the horse facing the cart. This ended his military career.

* * * * *

The two brothers married in Cape Town in the first years of this century, first Louis, and then Eli. Louis married Slata (Charlotte or Lottie), the second of the Rosenzweig sisters, and Eli married Rosie, the third of the sisters. The circumstance of two brothers marrying two sisters was unusual. It created a large closely-related family of "double cousins" who took great pride in their extensive family, and the women, which most of them were, were gratified to be recognized as Goldbergs, even though they might not be recognized for themselves. To differentiate the different branches, the shorthand of the brothers' initials came into family currency: the LG's for the family of Louis Goldberg, and the EVG's for that of Eli Victor Goldberg.

Eli and Rosie, my grandparents, as newly-weds in about 1904 set up housekeeping in one of the close-in neighborhoods rapidly growing up near the center of town. By chance, I have the address of one place where Eli and Rosie lived, stamped in red in his copy of Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution: A History*, that I took from his bookshelf. The address was 37 Fountain Road, Fordsburg. Fordsburg was an area of brick row houses laid out in a tight grid of streets next to a gold mine property. Years later, Fordsburg became an Indian area, and the butt of jokes and derisive comments. Louis and Lottie lived in Mayfair, a similar respectable but modest

neighborhood not a mile away; their last address before moving to Houghton was 123 9th Avenue.

My mother, Ray, was born in 1906. By then, the family lived on Melle Street in Braamfontein, another such neighborhood, and one that I came to know because the University was nearby. A second daughter, Ann, was born eighteen months later. Then the family picked up and moved to Krugersdorp, a mining town of the West Rand, twenty miles from Johannesburg. There Eli went into business in a second-hand furniture store called "Goldberg Bros." Eli and Rosie had two more children, Harry, born in 1912, and Freda, 1918.

Louis and Lottie remained in Mayfair and kept adding to their family. The first-born child, Rachel, died, but the other nine lived. In order, they were: Sophie -- older than my mother, Lily, Harry (Sonny), Frieda, Esther, Deborah (Dolly), Sarah (Poonie), Juliette (Bubsy) and Benjamin (Benjy). Lottie died in 1920 giving birth to Benjy; as in the Bible, Benjamin was the name given to the last-born in a family.

Lottie's death was a catastrophe: the LG's had a family of nine children ranging from infants to late teenagers who needed mothering. In 1922, Eli, Rosie and family moved back to Johannesburg. By this time, Ray and Ann had finished their schooling. Eli bought a house at 2 Pine Street, Upper Houghton, a block away from the LG's house on Elm Street. The houses on Pine Street and Elm Street were the two poles of the cousins' lives for the next twenty years. The LG children were always fond of Rosie. When their mother Lottie died, Rosie took on a mothering role in their lives.

The physical closeness of the family's houses in Pine and Elm Streets allowed friendships to develop among the cousins which lasted a lifetime. Dolly recounts this story:

> We [the LGs] had a dog at Elm Street. Every afternoon this dog, Paddy by name, would come and sit in front of whoever was at home, mainly Frieda, Esther and me, with those begging eyes requesting us to take him for a walk. We would walk down St. John's Road towards Houghton Drive, and when walking past Pine Street, Ray and Ann happily joined us in the walk to the Wilds and back. Hard to believe, but Ann walked far faster than Ray, which

resulted in Ann, Frieda and Esther being well ahead of Ray and me, Paddy often running between them and us. Well, this resulted in Ray confiding in me about her romances. It was refreshing for her to get away and slowly along the tree-lined St. John's Road in the direction of Houghton Drive in the late afternoon and that was the beginning of my friendship with Ray.

Within the year, Louis remarried but it was not a successful marriage because his new wife, who worked in his office, was the same age as the oldest LG daughter. Eventually the new Mrs. Goldberg moved out of the house with her two children. Louis continued to support this second family, and after his death, Sonny saw to their financial needs. Both of the children became doctors.

I was often over at the Elm Street house; with the large LG family coming and going, it was a jollier place than Pine Street. When I went to kindergarten, I'd walk the block to Elm Street, sometimes have a second breakfast there, and together with my cousin Pam, we'd set off for school. Some adult would see us across Louis Botha Avenue and meet us at the end of the morning. Our teacher at kindergarten was Genia Ludwin, through whose hands every Jewish child in Yeoville must have passed. Pam did not like Mrs. Ludwin, who once humiliated her in front of the class.

Eli and Louis were to make their fortunes in South Africa, if not directly in gold mining but in providing for the tangible needs of a growing, prospering population. They went into business. The origins of the family's furniture business are obscure; they may have had a shoe store first, which they sold to Cuthberts, a major shoe chain. The two brothers first traded in used furniture and then went on to new. Eli was in Krugersdorp from 1908 to 1922 running a furniture store called "Goldberg Bros." In the same period, Louis bought or opened Ellis and Co., a furniture store that was traded on the public stock exchange. A third brother, much younger than Eli and Louis, came out with his sister, Becky (Abie's family became known, naturally enough, as the AGs.) After 1922, the three brothers owned and ran Barnett's Furnishers, in addition to Ellis's. Barnett's was a large shop on Eloff Street, the city's main street. Some who flocked to Johannesburg made their fortunes in investments and property; most didn't, and those whom prosperity had passed by would say "I could have bought a farm on Eloff Street and been a

millionaire." It wasn't a beautiful or wide street, but its sidewalks, arcaded and sheltered from the hot sun or sudden rain, was busy with shoppers.

Eli and Louis built a building, Mansfield House, in two stages (1932 and 1936) on President Street, just around the corner from Barnett's and established Ellis and Co. in it. It was bigger than Barnett's and became the flagship store of a number of branches, several of them managed by a family member. Ellis's keynote product was a cast-iron coal-burning stove, sold to families in the rural areas without electricity. The stoves were made in Hamilton, Ontario, and imported into South Africa. As an advertising come-on, the company had also produced a miniature version of the stove, which was displayed in the shop window.

But there occurred a rupture in the family business in 1942. There was dissension among the three brothers and Eli and Louis left Barnett's to Abie and his sons; Eli never talked to Abie for years, but they met and spoke briefly at Leon's wedding, and when Eli was on his deathbed, Abie came to visit.

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After 1940, by which time we were living at Pine Street, the war, though being fought thousands of miles away, was a constant presence. Several family members were directly caught up in the war. Dad was stationed in his unit in Nairobi; he was in the departments of the paymaster and quartermaster, where his systematic mind and trustworthiness served him well. Other of the menfolk were in local reserve units. Benjy, the youngest of the LG's, was in an Italian prisoner of war camp for the five-year duration of the war. Another of the LG children, Bubsy, was a nurse in a rehabilitation hospital; she would tell with relish how she went on a motorbike ride with one of the recovering patients who had had an ear reattached, and how it came off during the bumpy ride.

The women of the family rallied to the war effort. They knitted warm woolen socks for the soldiers, rolled bandages, and even jointly made blankets of knitted squares stitched together like a patchwork quilt. Possibly these knitted articles were sent to Benjy during his internment. There were big fetes held to raise money for the soldiers. At one memorable crowded event at Joubert Park, Ray lost sight of Leon, then about seven or eight, and had his name broadcast: "Will Leon Moss come up to

the stage. Your mother is looking for you." But Leon never showed up there; he had somehow got out of the park and couldn't get back in. He went home on his own -- he had sixpence on him for the fare, took a tram home, and walked back from the tram stop. When Ray phoned home in distress, Leon was already there. Ray, who'd been filled with alarm at losing him, was now filled with admiration at his common sense.

The war was felt in other ways. We had rationing, and for the duration ate brown bread and used brown sugar. Hoarding of groceries was forbidden; the story went around that a housewife had buried a store of canned goods in a hole in her garden, and on one hot day, they exploded. Petrol was rationed too, and on Sunday drives, Grandpa used to turn off the engine to coast down long hills, an excruciatingly slow experience. We also had black-out practice; a German submarine was spotted in Durban harbor, and the threat was now at our doorstep (though it came no closer).

Harry Goldberg, Mom's brother, also joined up. He had weak eyes and wore glasses, and so was excluded from any combat role, but he joined the Signal Corps, the important, well-trained unit that set up mobile communications to transmit messages by telegraph in the days before the kind of instant world-wide communications we're used to. South African troops went "Up North" -- north of South Africa, which was most of the rest of Africa. Harry's unit was posted in Egypt.

At home, the newspapers were black with dire headlines, filled with war news (Leon kept a scrapbook of clippings during the war) and the wireless broadcast solemn news at six o'clock each evening, after the six pips of sound: "This is the South African Broadcasting Corporation and here is the news."

Lists of soldiers missing or killed were broadcast daily. Late one afternoon, Ray and Freda heard Harry's name read out among those "missing in action." Shocked and trembling, they hurried across the street to the neighbor's house, and Mrs. Wainer comforted them and wrapped blankets around them while they waited for Eli to come home from work, so they could tell him and he could tell Rosie. Then later, in another broadcast, it was confirmed. Harry had been killed. Leon remembers that there was a call from the Red Cross informing the family that Harry was

missing, followed by a second call a few days later confirming the sad fact of his death.

I was in bed when the news came through. I heard the grownups crying, and even Leon cried when he came to bed. Later we learned what had happened: Harry was on a hospital ship for some reason connected to his eye problem, and the ship was bombed in the Mediterranean. Hospital ships had special markings to identify them and ward off attack, but it hadn't helped in this case. The date was May 10th, 1942.

I don't recall the grief and heartbreak that must have followed this news, but I do remember Freda and Hymie's wedding. It was only years later that I realized that the wedding took place three weeks after Harry's death. But one never delays a wedding, even for a death in the family, and it went ahead. The *chuppah* was set up in the dining room, and guests crowded around the couple and rabbi and witnessed a traditional wedding ceremony with the groom crushing a glass underfoot amid cries of "*mazeltov*!" And though in mourning and anguish at her son's death, Rosie danced at the wedding. Wedding gifts were displayed on tables around the rooms. Leon and I had bought Freda and Hymie a gift of a china ashtray decorated with a delicate flower, and we were quite annoyed to see that someone had crushed a cigarette butt in it. We both had chickenpox at the time of the wedding and weren't supposed to mingle with the guests, but did anyway.

Freda's new husband, Hymie Gordon, was also caught up in the war. Freda lived some of the time at Pine Street, and some at her mother-in-law's hotel in Hendrina, a tiny *dorp*, village, in the eastern Transvaal. Freda was twelve years younger than Mom, and because of the half generation difference between her age and Leon's and mine, as well as her light-hearted spirit, did not seem like an aunt, and we never called her Aunt Freda. She drove Harry's green Morris 10 while he was away and would take us on errands or for drives, passing out peanut candy on the way. Her boisterous husband, Hymie, was fond of the Woodpecker Song and would pay me sixpence to play it for him on the piano.

> He's up each morning bright and early
> To wake up all the neighborhood
> And give to every boy and girlie
> His happy serenade on wood.

I nearly died myself. I developed scarlet fever and because of its infectious nature -- it was the time before antibiotics -- I was sent to the Fever Hospital on Hospital Hill. On the day I was to be released, a nurse came to my ward on her way to give a bath to the child in the bed next to mine and she thought she would save time by fetching the child on the way to the bathroom. She had in her hands the bath towels, and had to help the child take off his pyjamas to leave them on his bed. She placed the Lysol container on the table between the beds. Thinking it was my medicine, I drank some of it, gave a loud scream and fell unconscious on my bed. When the nurse knelt at Ray's feet begging her for forgiveness, Ray said: "Please don't ask me to forgive you while my son's life is in such danger; give me time to answer you". Ray spent the day by my bed, joined by Dolly, as they waited in terrible suspense to see if I would survive. I did, with no noticeable after effects.

After my bout of scarlet fever Mom and I went for a holiday to Durban and stayed with Lily (another LG cousin) and Harry Galgut. They lived in a sixth floor flat overlooking the beach. Mom hired a twelve-year-old black boy, a piccanin, to look after me and take me to the beach. One day, coming back to the flat with Lily, she looked up and saw me standing on the sill of the open un-burglarproofed window, six floors up, with the boy's arm loosely draped around my legs. There were some anxious moments as they mounted up in the lift, and rushed into the flat. But I was quite all right.

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I grew very close to my mother when we lived at Pine Street. We would go for afternoon walks in the blocks around St. Johns College, cutting through the dirt road closed to cars that ran between two clay playing fields, and coming out in an area of houses that seemed more secluded, more inviting than our own house. We made up names for houses on our route. One was the Red Pot House because the garden and steps and verandah were scattered with red flower pots, large and small, filled with flowers. Another was the Fish Fry House, because we smelled fish being fried in the kitchen one time when we walked by. In another direction, we walked down St. John's Road, sometimes with Leon, to a leftover piece of land next to a busy road, but planted with grass and poplar trees. In autumn, we'd joyfully roll down the slope getting covered with the fallen leaves.

While we still lived at Pine Street, I learned to ride a bike. Mom had taught Leon, and when he was launched, she took me on. Mom must have ridden a bike herself, although I never saw her do it, but she was able to instruct me how to keep my balance, and encourage me to pick myself up and try again for a longer distance. Once I could ride, I'd go on longer and longer rides with Leon or by myself. Leon acquired practical knowledge about taking wheels off and fixing punctures, and we had little bags hanging at the back of our saddles with the paraphernalia of patches and tubes of cement to take care of emergencies. These were basic bikes, "Raleigh" being the favored durable brand, and foot brakes were considered safer than handbrakes. Bikes had to have safety features such as reflectors, lamps and bells, and we had to stop in at the police station to have them inspected.

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One day Dad came home from the war. He'd spent his war years in Kenya. Because of his age and dependents, he was not eligible for the "red tabs," meaning he could not serve in a combat sphere. He entered the army as a bookkeeper, was given the rank of sergeant and posted to Salisbury Camp, a large training base outside Nairobi. He worked in the quartermaster's store or paymaster's department. When he returned home he had risen to the rank of sergeant-major, the highest rank of a non-commissioned officer.

Mom and I were at my cousins, the Steins on Regent Street, when he got home. He telephoned to us, and we walked to meet him halfway. How happy we were to see him!

Dad moved in with us at Pine Street. The war was still on, Harry had recently died, and the family drew closer. There was never any talk of moving back to Pretoria. Dad, and with him, Mom and us children, were brought into the orbit of the family, and Dad never worked outside the family business again.

But we continued to live at Pine Street, all of us. Dad and Mom took the middle bedroom, and Leon and I moved to the bedroom next door (the room that forever would be known as Harry's room). Years later, Ray told me this was a terrible time for her. "David was happy to go on staying there, he was comfortable, he had his

meals cooked for him," she said, but she couldn't stand it any longer. There she was, cooped up in the house with two children, a husband, her father and demanding mother. "I was ready to do something terrible if we didn't move out."

The undefined terrible thing drove David and Ray to buy their own house, scarcely a dozen houses away, but across Louis Botha Avenue, a move from the good address of Upper Houghton to the dense neighborhood of small houses on pocket handkerchief lots called Yeoville. We lived at 18 Dunbar Street for five years. Ray described the house later as "a horrible little house" but to me it seemed fine, and as I was to start primary school, my whole world changed. And of course we often visited at Pine Street.

II: YEOVILLE

We moved to 18 Dunbar Street, Yeoville, one of a row of houses on small lots each with a patch of garden in front, a back yard behind, a driveway at the side and garage and servants' rooms at the back of the lot. The house faced north, a significant feature of its comfort, since houses in South Africa were unheated, and in the cold winter months we looked to the plentiful sunshine to warm up the house. The living room and main bedroom faced north, and so did the stoep, much used by the family. Mom would sit on the stoep in the winter sunshine, reading or knitting or having her tea there. Having her own house, she could garden again and grew dahlias in the summer, sweet peas in the winter. A rigid red concrete path and wide steps led up to the stoep, all of red granolithic that needed and received frequent polishing, done by the male servant.

We settled in at Dunbar Street. Dad went to work every day by car. Leon and I walked to school. Mom stayed home, and ran the house, shopped, planned meals, and knitted, sewed, darned and gardened.

It was a compact little house, far from the sprawling house and garden at Pine Street. But it had its own charms, like the narrow alley behind the servants' rooms, where Leon and I lobbed bottles and light bulbs so that they landed at the far end with a satisfying crash; or the shale that came to the surface in the back yard, making it almost impossible to grow things there -- I had a three by five garden plot where I grew radishes, bachelors buttons, nasturtiums and linaria. At night, howling cats in heat would rend the air, and Mom would throw old shoes out of the back windows to chase them away. The living room had a fireplace, which was often made up with a coal fire on winter nights, and Mom would bask in its warmth. Leon and I shared a room, one of several occasions of sharing of which I remember most his draping the reading lamp with a piece of cloth to cut off the spill of light onto my side of the room, since I as the younger child went to bed earlier than he did.

Once taken into the family business, Dad became the manager, in succession, of three furniture stores on the edge of the business area, Brooklyn Furnishers on Sauer Street opposite the library, Bree Street Furnishers on Bree Street, and Waverly Furnishers at the far end of Eloff Street. The shops sold household furniture to working people -- bedroom, lounge and dining room suites, and kitchen furniture, mattresses, and other household goods. His final assignment was Livingstones, a small shop selling small appliances and articles of furniture from its location on Joubert Street just around the corner from Ellis's. These were businesses where trade had to be nurtured, and Dad was successful at it, cultivating loyal customers with his friendly manner, helpfulness and honesty. Dad hated the introduction of Hire Purchase, the installment plan; it meant that customers paid a fraction of the cost of purchases weekly, and when they failed to pay, the articles had to be repossessed. Dad could talk to his customers in both English and Afrikaans. The shops all had heaps of mattresses, and we'd climb to the top of the pile while waiting for the shop to close.

Other sons and sons-in-law were taken into the business. Harry (Sonny) Goldberg, the older son in the nine-children LG family, took over his father Louis' share and place at Ellis & Co.; Benjy, after he came back from the Italian prisoner-of-war camp joined Ellis's; Hymie Gordon, Freda's husband, found a place there, too. Uncle Abie took his son, Harold, into Barnett's. Only Uncle Ike, the third son-in-law, stayed out of the circle. He joined with his brother-in-law, Harry Levy, in a furniture store called City Furnishers down Joubert Street, next to a favorite haunt, Vanguard Booksellers.

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Mom never worked outside the home. She was the eldest daughter and before she married, was expected to stay home to greet visitors, arrange the flowers and help her mother. Once, when Grandpa was away on a trip, she enrolled in secretarial school, but when he came back, he pulled her out of it. So from the time she finished high school, about 1922, till she got married in 1931 she was at home, doing all the things expected of her, and spending time with friends and cousins. This was the time when Mom practiced the piano for hours and hours a day. She raised the third daughter in the family, Freda, who was twelve years younger than her. Freda has said "Ray was my mother. She took me to lessons and shopping for clothes and

to the dentist and doctor; Rosie did none of that for me." Ray and Freda were very close all their lives; Ray would try to bully Freda, but she just laughed it off.

Ray was a fine sewer and knitter. I became fascinated by her techniques of sewing and knitting. To sew on a button, she'd select the right-sized needle, thread it, bite off the length of thread, pull the ends together; then she'd lick her finger tip, twist the thread around it a couple of times, then roll it off and pull it taut, making a perfect knot at the end of the thread. I still use this technique on the rare occasions I sew on a button; my knots are ragged.

She was also a tireless knitter. Every autumn she'd knit jerseys for Dad, Leon and me, and later for Avron. They were sleeveless pullovers or V-necked jerseys, in colors considered suitable for men in those days: gray, navy, blue, or maroon. She'd measure us before starting, select her knitting needles, cast on the first row and then knit even flawless fronts, backs and sleeves, which she'd stitch together to make the garments. We never bought jerseys. "Shop-bought jerseys just don't have the same warmth as home-made ones," she'd say. My contribution to this operation was to hold the new skein of wool stretched out between my hands as she rapidly unwound it to make a ball of wool. Later on, she got tired of her seasonal production, and found a woman with a knitting machine, who'd machine-knit satisfactory jerseys made with wool that Mom bought. I still have one of these garments: a sleeveless pullover in an approved shade of medium blue, which I can still wear.

Mom taught Leon and me to knit; it was a useful pastime for sick children. We would knit shapeless scarves. We also learned to do French knitting. One takes a wooden cotton reel, tacks in four small nails with small heads in a square around the hole and somehow produces a knitted rope that grows out of the bottom hole to form a long cord. Mom showed us how to do that too.

Another domestic task that she'd do, without great enthusiasm, was darning socks. The three (and later four) men or boy-children in the house wore woolen socks every day, and that meant holes. Mom would accumulate a lot of holey socks in a basket and when she was listening to the wireless or talking to one of us would darn them. She had a wooden mushroom-shaped implement that she'd push into the

sock, pull the sock over it so that the hole was centered, and then with her usual even stitches, weave a little patch over the hole, extending the sock's useful life.

Mom sewed too, turning shirt collars, putting the frayed edge where it would be hidden by the folded-over collar; reattaching buttons; repairing tears; and hemming dresses of hers that were too long. One task of mine was to measure an even hem length from the floor with a yardstick and place pins at the same height as she slowly turned around. She also did embroidery. She'd embroidered a picture of a cottage surrounded by tree, with a curving path leading to the front door; it was framed and made into a fire screen. She did cross-stitch embroidery squares of cloth, printed with a pattern, which she neatly followed, making clusters of pink roses and green leaves. She also made some of her own clothes but didn't always like the results. She was adept at using her Singer hand-operated sewing machine, which had its own wooden carrying case, the top of which unlocked to reveal the machine. Mom knew the intricacies of filling the bobbin, slipping it under the stainless steel plate with a thread running out and catching it with the downward stroke of the moving needle. She'd mastered all these intricate techniques of knitting and sewing and I grew fascinated with them too. But boys didn't sew or knit (except for little boys who needed something to do in a sickbed) so I watched, asked and admired, but never did. I can sew on a button now, that's all.

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The nearby primary school to our house in Dunbar Street was Yeoville Boys' School. Leon, three years older than I, had started there while we were still living at Pine Street. I was nearly seven when I started school, and went directly into Grade Two. Our school years were divided up this way: Primary School was seven years: Grades One and Two, and Standards One to Five. High School was five years, Forms One to Five.

For school I had to get my first uniform: black lace-up shoes, gray socks, short gray pants; white shirt, gray jacket, gray school cap. Yeoville Boys' school colors were navy and yellow, and so one had a tie with horizontal alternating stripes, a band of colors near the top of one's socks, folded over so the colors showed. and a long or short-sleeved jersey with the colors outlining the V-neck.

School was a few blocks away. The only busy street on the way to school was Bedford Road, where the double-decker trams ran. I could walk up Dunbar Street to Bedford, turn right past the library and Catholic girls' school, and a block further, I was there. Or I could vary the route by filtering down one of the other of the side streets. At the beginning I walked with Leon, but soon could go and come back on my own. Both boys and girls had once gone to this school, and there were still two entrances, designated for boys and girls. Freda had gone to it as a child; but now it was for boys only so that the values that would make us men could be inculcated: discipline, steady habits, and participation in sports.

The school day would begin, three days a week, with assembly. We'd line up outside in pairs, by class, and walk into the hall to a lively march thumped by Miss Alpert on the upright piano on the stage. There'd be announcements or exhortations by the headmaster, a forbidding distant figure. Then we'd sing a hymn, to Miss Alpert's accompaniment. We built up a repertoire of Anglican hymns, singing:

> From Greenland's icy mountains,
> From India's coral strand,
> Where Afric's sunny fountains,
> Roll down their golden sand.

and

> All things bright and beautiful,
> All creatures great and small,
> All things wise and wonderful.,
> The Lord God made them all.

and on those solemn days when British ships were torpedoed, we'd sing:

> Almighty Father, strong to save,
> Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
> Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep,
> Its own appointed limits keep:
> O hear us when we cry to thee
> For those in peril on the sea.

We'd end assembly with the Lord's Prayer. Though Yeoville was a heavily Jewish area, none of this Christian liturgy seemed strange; we knew that the world outside was not Jewish and we didn't expect it to be.

At school we learned Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English, beginning Afrikaans, and later Geography and History, Art, Physical Training (PT), and in one of the early years, tended the flowers in the school garden. We also had Musical Appreciation (taught by Mr. Chosack, a minor celebrity in our eyes because he played "music to do exercises by" on the wireless every morning at six o'clock). We learnt to write first with pencils, printing our letters, then later learned "proper writing." As we advanced in our classes, we progressed to ink, using nibs dipped in the inkwells set in the corners of our graffiti-scratched desks. Splatters and blobs on the page of the exercise book were frowned on and circled in red. Fountain pens were forbidden, as they would ruin our handwriting; ball point pens hadn't even entered our consciousness.

The school day had two breaks, during which we ran and ran around wildly in the tarmacked playground. There was one playground for the younger boys and one for the older ones. I'd sometimes slip over into the older boys area and visit my brother Leon. Geoffrey Stein, my first cousin and close friend, just about my age, was in my class all the way through Yeoville Boys; I often spent the breaks with him.

Across Bedford Road was the dusty playing field for soccer. I played on teams a few times, but it didn't interest me and consequently I was not much use to my side. Across Hunter Street were the school's tennis courts. Mom was keen on my learning tennis. "A social game," she said, "You'll meet people through tennis" and my first tennis lessons were there. But I was not a good tennis player, though later on, when the Steins had the use of a court up Delarey Street we had a few exhilarating games.

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My closest comrades at this time were my first cousins, Geoffrey, Colin and Alan Stein, the children of Aunty Ann and Uncle Ike. They lived about a mile away at 156 Regent Street, in a house with a large expanse at the back, planted with a single example of many fruit trees -- mulberry, peach, apricot, almond, fig. I was often

over there on weekends or holidays; it was much more fun than being at my house. Geoffrey would invent entertaining things to do -- climbing the trees, swinging on the willow branches, putting on plays, and once, even making a movie, "The Bride of Frankenstein." Colin, the most sports-minded of us all would rope us into cricket games. In the middle of the morning, Aunty Ann, my mother's sister, would come out of the house with a plate of cut up oranges, to give us energy to go on doing what we were doing.

Leon gathered his own group of friends in the surrounding streets: Norman and Esme Cohen, their cousin Donny, Norma Lee, Neville Cohen. They -- and sometimes I was allowed to join in -- played primitive games of baseball on the street, and also a game called kennetjie, a local game in which a piece of wood about five inches long was placed over a groove in the dirt, and one player hit it with a stick while the other players had to catch it, first standing on two feet, then one, then with an arm thrust between one's legs and so on. It was supposed to be a dangerous game because the kennetjie could hit one's eye, but I never saw anyone get hurt.

Leon and I sometimes played a game at night. I don't know who invented it. Standing in front of our house, I'd close my eyes and Leon would turn me around until I lost all sense of direction. Then, taking my arm, he would lead me on a walk with frequent twists and turns so that I had no idea where I was. When I finally could open my eyes, we might be standing in front of our house or be blocks away in some unusual place.

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It was in Dunbar Street that I started learning to play the piano. My first memory of doing this happened on a day when I was four. Mom was sitting chatting on the verandah at Pine Street, and I went and asked her what note "God Save the King" started on. She told me it was the white note before the two black ones. Striking the keys I worked out the tune. I suppose I continued to puzzle out tunes on the piano, but didn't start lessons until I was seven. Mom got advice on this delay from someone, probably Esther Papert, a piano-teaching friend of the family. My first teacher was Mona Goldblatt, the wife of Dad's accountant. She'd come to the house to give lessons. I (and Leon too) learnt how to read music and play simple pieces.

My music book, "The Little Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach," dates from this period. It had pieces enjoyable to play and delightful to listen to.

When Mrs. Goldblatt retired to have a baby, I started lessons with Evelyn Palca. Leon didn't continue, but Geoffrey also took lessons from her. We both adored her. Evelyn was a pretty, blond young woman, who came to our houses for lessons. Once on a Sunday morning she had her pupils to her flat on Harrow Road in Doornfontein and played for us, one of Chopin's polonaises, with her eyes cast up at the ceiling. We were impressed. Then one day, Evelyn announced that she was getting married and would henceforth be Mrs. Alec Rathouse. But more crushing was the news that she and her new husband were going to settle on a kibbutz in Israel. I wrote to her once or twice, and she wrote back; I kept her letters for years.

We -- Geoffrey and I -- transferred to Evelyn's older sister, Eugenie Shapshak. We faced this news with some trepidation, since Eugenie was said to be strict. She was a short plump decisive person with bright red hair piled on the top of her head. Her husband was an artist, Rene Shapshak. The family was Russian, via France, I think, and though Evelyn had seemed just like us, Eugenie and Rene were definitely foreign.

We went to the Shapshak's house for lessons. They lived in Yeoville up towards the water tower, but now that I was riding my bike, I could easily get there. The house seemed old even then; it sat on a double lot with an overgrown garden and it was a little run down. We were warned not to walk on the verandah because the floor boards were rotted. Inside, the house was filled with interesting art works, all Rene's and the first original art works I'd seen: a carved wooden headless figure of a woman; ink and watercolor sketches of Parisian streets, with Rene's characteristic squishy buildings; a mural of vegetables over the kitchen sink; and over the piano, a reclining Titian-haired female nude, whom Geoffrey maintained was Eugenie. She was a stricter teacher than her affectionate sister, but my musical progress continued. She'd have an end of year concert of her pupils in the living room to which parents would be invited. The only musical piece that I remember from those days was this: waiting for my lesson one day I heard the pupil ahead of me playing the most beautiful piece and I begged Mrs. Shapshak to let me learn it. It was Beethoven's "Fur Elise." I now find this piece grating and repetitive -- but everyone has to hear "Fur Elise" for the first time.

Lessons with Mrs. Shapshak came to an end, and I started lessons with Bruno Raikin. He was a professional pianist, distantly connected to my father by marriage. Bruno had a studio in town down Commissioner Street, and every week I'd take the bus in and walk the many blocks to get there. I was ten. After the lesson, I'd go to Dad's shop and get a lift home with him. I studied with Bruno for a short time, and then, finding the trip there and back too onerous, I switched again, to a teacher recommended by Rose Kretzmer.

Each generation of our family was friendly with the respective members of the Kretzmer family. Granny was friendly with Mrs. Benjamin, Rose's mother, a refined woman who would occasionally visit Granny for tea. Though they must have known each other for decades, they still addressed each other as "Mrs. Goldberg" and "Mrs. Benjamin." Rose Kretzmer was friendly with Mom and Auntie Ann, and they and their husbands would "have each other over" after dinner; the men and women would socialize separately, the men usually playing cards. And the Kretzmer girls, Natalie and Ruth, and Geoffrey and I were thrown together on occasion. Natalie was having piano lessons with Adelaide Newman, and through the Kretzmer connection, I came to be a student of Adelaide's too.

Mom accompanied me on my first visit, Adelaide was gracious -- over-gracious, really -- and wanted to hear me play. I was eleven, and had been learning the piano for four years. I played "The Sick Doll" from Tchaikowsky's *Album for the Young* on her impressive grand piano. She listened closely, complimented me, and made some suggestions in phrasing and dynamics, which I tried to incorporate as I played the piece again. It was settled that I would have weekly lessons, I would come to her flat, and the cost would be such and such (it seemed a lot in comparison with previous teachers). Then we had tea, with some delicious thing to eat.

And so I started on a term of studying the piano which went on for six years, and then more years of visiting after that. I got to know Adelaide very well.

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Up a few blocks from Dunbar Street was Raleigh Street, the shopping street of Yeoville. Like a big cardboard foldout I once had of an English village street, each

shop on Raleigh Street sold one kind of goods. I started going to Raleigh Street with Granny when we lived at Pine Street, continued with Mom from Dunbar Street, and eventually could go there on my own. One destination of mine was the Apollo Milk Bar, whose chief attraction for me was the penny sweets -- pale pink or yellow flabby fish, strings of liquorice, "nigger balls," which started black but rang the changes of color as one sucked them, lollipops, including a favorite buttermilk flavor and small bars of chocolate. Other shops I patronized were the barber shop where Mr. Nel gave one a "short back and sides" haircut. My hair was absolutely straight, and as I had a double crown, I always had a tuft standing up at the back. The CNA -- Central News Agency -- had books and magazines, even for children.

The Yeoville Swimming Baths had its entrance on the corner of Raleigh and Kenmere Road. We spent many hours there. In Joh'burg's dry climate with no natural bodies of water, and in the days before private people had their own pools, this was the only place we could go to swim. The swimming season started about September, but Mom considered it prudent to wait for the first rains before we could go swimming. I had swimming lessons here as part of a school activity, and learnt to float, dog paddle, do the breast stroke and a few strokes of crawl, but though I loved the water, I was not a strong swimmer and didn't learn to dive until much later. We'd amuse ourselves by jumping in the water, climbing out, and doing it over and over again -- the "we" was probably Leon at an early stage, the Stein boys later -- and then lie on towels on the concrete edge or grass and toast and tan ourselves. During the polio epidemic of 1947 the swimming baths were closed, as they were thought to be a source of transmission. But I never knew anyone who had polio.

Another attraction of Raleigh Street was the Yeoville Bioscope, "bioscope" being the word we used for cinema or movies. It was popularly known as the Bughouse, and rudimentary in its comforts -- it had a continuous metal floor, so that if one dropped a round sweet, it would roll to the front of the house. Bioscopes then, and as long as I can remember, had a set program which filled a whole afternoon: it started with still advertisements, followed by moving advertisements, a newsreel or two, which could have been British or home grown, the African News, produced at Killarney Studios in Johannesburg, all in black-and-white with upbeat music, then a cartoon and often a "short," such as Candid Camera or a travelogue. After the interval, the sequence of adverts ran again, and finally the main feature. a British or American

film. At the end we stood up as an image of King George VI was projected on the screen and "God Save the King" played.

For grown-ups Raleigh Street provided all of their shopping needs. There was the Garden Butchery, run by Mr. Rudman, whose son, Harold was in my class at school. It had sawdust on the floor and glazed tiles depicting the heads of animals whose flesh we would be eating. A frequent destination for my mother was Emdins, a haberdashery shop selling fabric, sewing goods, notions, wool for knitting and small articles of clothing. The Yeoville Post Office stood midblock with its two entrances leading to two waiting spaces, one for whites, one for non-Europeans, but served by the same clerks through grilles on either side of the dividing wall. An American visitor once tried to get service in the non-European section, as he claimed he was not European, but he was told to go to the "white" side.

Next to the post office was Mr. Sapire's chemist shop, run by a family who attended our shul. Rounding out all of one's needs were a busy delicatessen, hairdressers, a small department store, and of special interest to me, Yeoville Home Industries, which sold cakes and biscuits baked by women in their homes. I can still taste the biscuits iced with lemon icing and the cakes iced with black-speckled grenadilla seeds.

Around the corner on Hunter Street was the Portuguese greengrocer, where we'd buy fruit and vegetables, including a popular mix called a "sixpence" soupgreens, which provided a small bunch of celery, green onions (as we called scallions), carrot and parsnip as the vegetable makings of a soup. When I was sent on an errand to the greengrocer, Mom always told me to ask for "nice" tomatoes, but I suppose that I was given the same kind of tomatoes as everyone else.

Apart from the shops at Raleigh Street, we had provisions delivered to us: delicious brown bread from the bakery; milk from the dairy truck; and once a week, the "Sammy" would come around, an Indian with his cart and horse, selling fruit and vegetables. Once a tinker came around, and he mended the holes in our pots and pans.

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The Yeoville Synagogue was another fixed point on our orbit. Next to Yeoville Boys' playing field, across from the police station, a block from Raleigh Street, its prominent building and frequent services proclaimed Yeoville a very Jewish area. This was the shul that all our immediate family attended. We regarded ourselves as Orthodox Jews, but that description corresponded closely to Conservative U.S. Judaism. To the right of us, religiously speaking, were the "Ultra-Orthodox," who lived in by-passed suburbs like Doornfontein and wore old-fashioned clothes and hats. To the left were the Reform, a minor slice of Johannesburg Jewry who attended Temple Emanuel in Hillbrow, ministered to by an American rabbi.

At the Yeoville Shul services were long, mainly in Hebrew with sermons in English and prayer books with facing Hebrew and English text. Men sat on the main floor, women in the gallery, and the choir sat hidden behind a grille in a room above the Ark. Senior members of my family attended on the High Holidays, while we youngsters, especially in the year before our barmitzvahs, went every Saturday morning. In the High Holiday services, young people would desert the shul during the sermon or some other lengthy part of the service, and socialize on the sidewalk, standing or sitting on the retaining wall.

For the family not to have belonged to a shul as members would have been unthinkable; it was a declaration that they were Jews and members of the Jewish community. Going to shul on these holidays, especially for the men, connected them with their youth, when they would have gone to shul with their parents and sung the same melodies. But though we took going to shul seriously, I never heard any talk of faith or belief. Granny was the most observant of all of us; she had her own *mahzor*, prayer book, encased in an ivory cover that could be locked. She kept a kosher household, keeping separate meat and milk dishes and cutlery, and would be upset if one mixed the two; but she did no go to the extreme of koshering meat herself. She observed Shabbat strictures, not breaking twigs or picking flowers or sewing, but cooking and use of electricity went on as usual.

The menfolk, especially the older generations were adept at rattling through the lengthy, repetitive prayers. They had learnt them as children and young men at *cheder*, their Hebrew schools in the old or new country. Apart from attending services on the major holidays, they were not on committees or involved in any of the other activities of the shul. Mom and her sisters, being girls, had not been sent

to Hebrew School and couldn't read or understand Hebrew. For them, shul was pretty boring. They'd follow along the English translation and listen to the choir and *chazzan*, the cantor, and to the sermon. Mom's frequent comment after a service was on Rabbi Lapin's sermon, which she often considered weak, or in her words, *schwak*.

Freda did not go to shul, for an interesting reason. She found the whole activity hypocritical. "Everyone dresses up in their best clothes, prays their heads off, then goes off and does the same things they've always done." She felt that there should be more to religion than the ritualized observances she saw. Later in her life, she tried to find her own path to a spiritual life.

When my barmitzvah was a year away, I went, as Leon had done before me, to Mr. Pollack, a Hebrew teacher who lived across the street from the shul. He had set up a back room of his house as a small classroom, and taught several of us together with individual coaching as one's barmitzvah drew nearer. We learnt to identify the totally strange Hebrew letters, and put them together in words, marveling that they were read from right to left. We studied prayers and readings that we would be tested on by Rabbi Lapin before the barmitzvah. We learnt the reading from the Torah that we were assigned for the day of our barmitzvah, and studied how to sing it in the traditional chant. But we did not learn the language as such, and could not translate the Hebrew words except for some that occurred frequently in liturgical formulations. During the lesson, a glass of tea in a silver holder would be brought in, and Mr. Pollack would drink it, alternating his sips with spoonfuls of cherry jam. Once I had a pang about reciting the Christian Lord's Prayer at school, and asked Mr. Pollack if I should be saying it. I recited it to him; he pronounced it "all right."

My barmitzvah was on March 12, 1949. The celebration after the service was to take the form of a lunch in the garden of our new house in Highlands North. We had rented a marquee, tables and chairs, and hired a caterer for the event. I had always been very shy about standing up and speaking in class, "making a speech," and was equally nervous about the whole performance in shul, when I would be standing up alone on the *bimah*, the platform, to chant the prayers and sing my Torah portion. There were three barmitzvahs that day, and in turn we sang our portions of the Torah reading. I managed to do a credible reading.

Then after the Torah had been put away in the Ark, and the velvet curtains drawn closed, the custom was that the barmitzvah boy be addressed by the rabbi in his sermon. The three of us stood in front of the front row of seats, and Rabbi Lapin started his usual exhortatory sermon about being a good and observant Jew and taking part in community life. Then happened what must be the most mortifying event in my life. I stopped listening, my attention wandered, and I started scanning the faces of people sitting in the side rows, looking for persons I knew. "Stanley, I'm speaking to you, too," said Rabbi Lapin, I'm told my face went red as I wrenched my gaze back to his face. It was an awful moment; I wanted to sink through the floor.

After the sermon, he told us not to go upstairs to receive our mothers' kisses, but wait till after the service, and I had to go up and shake his hand, along with the other two boys. I greeted Mom in the lobby, countering her "mazeltov" with a tearful "that was so awful." She said "It doesn't matter." And no one ever mentioned it again (except for Geoff, who, years later, instructed his sons on their barmitzvah days, "Keep your eyes on the rabbi.") At my barmitzvah lunch I made a well-rehearsed speech, thanking the guests for sharing the occasion and for their gifts. Mom had cautioned me not to "thank my parents" for what they had done for me, which was a well-worn phrase from barmitzvah speeches. Then it was over.

Some of my barmitzvah gifts are still lingering in drawers and bookcases: a Schaeffer fountain pen, long rusted, with my name on it; a pair of gold cufflinks with my initials; a book of Haydn piano sonatas given by my piano teacher, Adelaide; and a gardening book called "Garden Flowers in Color" (I was already an enthusiastic gardener). For a year or two I continued to go to shul on Saturday mornings, and joined first Rabbi Lapin's after-shul class, and then Mrs. Lapin's youth class. Eventually that fell away. Later I did attend Hebrew classes and learnt what the words meant.

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By 1948, we had outgrown the house on Dunbar Street. We now had another family member, Avron, born in 1945, and growing into a happy, active toddler. He was named after Dad's father, but given an Anglicized version of the original Avram (Abram). Mom was chafing to get out of the cramped house and garden on Dunbar Street, Leon had already started high school at Highlands North High School, and I

was in my last year at Yeoville Boys'. Following the post-war trend to the suburbs, even in Johannesburg, we began to look for a new house further out of town. As a way of exploring this new territory, Dad, on a Sunday morning, with one or more of us boys, would take a bus out to the end of the line -- to Sydenham or Orange Grove or Norwood -- to look at the new suburbs. In 1948, we moved out of our small house in Yeoville to a larger one in Highlands North, six miles from town.

III: HIGHLANDS NORTH

The house we bought was still being built when we first saw it. It was in Highlands North, a suburb six miles out of town (though still within the city limits), rapidly becoming built up with houses on quarter-acre lots. There were only a few open grassy stands among the houses already finished. The builder of the house we were interested in was Mr. Valle, who'd built several houses in the area. Dad knew nothing about what constituted good construction or whether the builder was "cutting corners." For advice, he did what the members of the family did when they wanted advice on building: he asked Mr. Van to look at the house he was considering. Mr. Van, whose name must have been Van de Merwe or Van Wyk or some other Afrikaner name, worked for Ellis's and was consulted in cases where knowledge of building technology was needed, since Jewish men of that generation did not know that sort of thing. Mr. Van looked at the house in progress, and pronounced it sound. As the building was not yet finished, we were able to get some changes made to the standard plan of the house.

Highlands North was one of the "yellow brick suburbs." All houses in Johannesburg were built of brick. Timber was scarce in the grassy region of the High Veld; and even if it could be obtained, it would have been considered prone to the ravages of fire and termites. Clay for bricks, on the other hand, was plentiful, and from its earliest days, all the houses in the city were brick -- the older houses had red face brick on the outside or crumbly common bricks that were plastered or stuccoed. Even internal walls were brick. The only timber in a house was in the roof trusses. Some brick-manufacturing innovator started making yellow bricks, and this building fad was taken up in the new suburbs. Although advertised as "golden facebrick" ("gold" being a word to get a favorable response in Johannesburg), the bricks were yellow, and a harsh color in the brilliant sunlight. Together with design touches such as porthole windows, or horizontal windows with a rounded edge, the whole framed by a square plaster moulding, or plastered panels in pale green or beige, these were graceless houses.

Our house, though, was better-looking than most. The bricks that Mr. Valle chose were a warmer, browner color, flecked with dark blue, and the design was plain, with no decorative touches or rounded windows. The roof was covered with red clay tiles. Older houses in Johannesburg, like the ones we had lived in on Pine Street and Dunbar Street, had roofs of corrugated iron, painted red, black, silver, or green. But it was considered an old-fashioned material, connected to the city's early mining days, when it was imported to form the exterior covering -- walls and roofs -- of readily constructed buildings of all sorts. Corrugated iron roofs needed painting, and could make a house insufferably hot. The newer residential areas, which aimed at a higher tone, would not allow corrugated iron roofs; roofs had to be covered with clay tiles or slate. Thus, in moving out of an older house into a better class of neighborhood, one gave up the delightful sensation of being indoors in a heavy rainstorm, with a noisy drumming overhead.

Our house at 34 Seventh Avenue faced north (Mom would not have chosen any other because of the sunny warmth that poured into the north-facing rooms in winter). The house had a three foot high brick wall stepping down the property line to match the slope of the street, with piers at the front gate and driveway, both gated with iron gates in the favored sunburst pattern. The front gate opened onto a straight paved path which led to the stoep and front door. Inside was a small hall, leading to the lounge on right and passage ahead. Other rooms were the dining room, separated from the lounge by two doors with panels of frosted glass; three bedrooms; a bathroom with a separate w.c.; a kitchen, with a small scullery off it; and, a luxury to us, a small breakfast room. The house had no basement or attic; for storage it had three cupboards in the passage, one for groceries, one for hanging clothes, and one for linens. None of the bedrooms had built-in cupboards (later generations of houses adapted the innovations of built-in closets, additional bathrooms, fitted out kitchens, and family rooms).

Back of the house was a paved area, the "back yard," with wash lines and outdoor sinks. Flanking it were the two servants' rooms and a third room that we used as a storeroom, all with high windows, and the servants' bathroom, which had a hole-in-the-floor squatting toilet and a shower nozzle overhead. A garage completed the set of outbuildings.

Highlands North was still unfinished when we moved there. Our street, Seventh Avenue, was not paved, and clouds of dust flew up when a car passed. In the next block from us lived an elderly man and woman in a corrugated iron shack, nestled under tall eucalyptus trees, whose bark hung down in great strips. The suburb had encroached on their once remote small-holding. Then one day they and the trees were gone and new house foundations mapped out on their land.

Since Dad took the car to work every day, Mom and us kids were dependent on buses. To get to the terminus of the Norwood bus, our closest public transportation, you followed an indirect route. Down to the foot of Seventh Avenue, over a little hump, and you were in the Portuguese market garden, on a path bordered by rows of potato plants. You hurried along this path, past a square muddy pool where crates of newly-picked carrots were dumped to remove the earth, and where a small dog often swam. Then more walking down towards the "dip," a small fluctuating stream bordered by willows. Then up a few blocks to where the bus waited. All this time you could see the bus standing there, and how annoying it was to rush along the paths and see the bus pull off before you could reach it. Later, a street was carved through the market gardens, and in time, the bus came through, too. But the charm of this agricultural patch in our suburban grid, though inconvenient and a source of flies, was gone.

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Since the house was new, the garden had to be laid out and planted from scratch in the red earth. Mom, longing to have a larger canvas in which to have her garden, planned it herself and had it constructed by a landscaper. She disliked straight lines and formal beds, and so designed an asymmetrical layout. To take care of the slope, she planned a large somewhat triangular terrace across the front corner of the stand, held in place by a rockery, a meandering chain of large rocks supporting pockets of earth. Stone steps led up to a wire arch and onto the upper terrace, which was planted with flowering shrubs, and known to us as the "shrubbery." The rockery, soon filled with colorful perennials and annuals became the garden's main feature. Besides the rockery was a lawn, into which other planting areas were introduced: a rose garden towards the back; a semi-circular bed in front of the bedrooms, in which Mom planted dahlias in summer and sweetpeas in winter; and a red-flowering

hibiscus by the front stoep. At the back of the house was another rockery, which became mine to take care of, and a bed for growing annuals from seed.

Mom grew only flowers. Fresh vegetables were easily had and locally grown, and there was no need to grow one's own. The warm weather, the English love of gardening transported to South Africa, and servants on hand to dig, plant and water the garden, made the growing of flowers a favorite pastime.

Flowers could be grown all year round. Our winter garden would feature sweet peas, which grew lavishly in the warm sunshine and cool dry air of the High Veld; iceland poppies, whose colored cups of white, yellow, orange and pink petals, swayed on bare stems above a cluster of pale green leaves at the ground, and mauve primulas. In spring Mom grew ranunculus. And in summer, everything grew: the flowering shrubs, which Mom chose for their durability, such as Australian bottlebrushes, cestrum, feathery tamarisk, and mauve acacias; roses in the rose garden, and as a crimson climber on the wire arch; dahlias for show and cutting; perennial phlox, penstemon, chrysanthemum, gladiolus, and Barberton daisies (Gerbera), then a modest brick-red daisy before the hybridizers got their hands on them; and splashy annuals like petunias, phlox, and Namaqualand daisies, which she usually planted as a forty-foot long edging at the foot of the rockery.

On the wire fence between us and our upstream neighbors, the Hermans, Mom planted a honeysuckle vine. Dad would walk around the garden after work, and would always comment on the fragrance of the honeysuckle, which he loved.

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At the house-warming party at Seventh Avenue, Dad had a heart attack, not his first. Dad had been diagnosed with high blood pressure during the war, and for the rest of his life he was subject to a heart condition, which incidentally, others of his siblings also suffered from. But in those days, the common medications that we now have for hypertension did not exist. His doctors suggested various diets, the most rigorous one of which was an all-rice diet, in which he ate only white rice, with varying toppings for three meals a day. That regimen did not last long. He also had an operation called a "sympathectomy" whose purpose was to lower his blood pressure.

When we first moved to Highlands North, we had no telephone as telephones and lines were scarce. After Dad's heart attack, Mom got a doctor's certificate stating that we needed a phone for emergencies, and we got one.

Dad's health was a worry for the rest of his life. He had several heart attacks, for which he was taken to the hospital. The fear of another one occurring marked his life and Mom's. He did not do any activities that would have caused exertion, and Mom vigilantly oversaw his health. Once, when we were out driving, Dad slowed down at an intersection, and a drunk man came up to his open window, stuck his head in, and started punching Dad in the face. "Stop doing that," Mom cried, "He's a sick man." I think that as children growing up, we didn't realize how Dad's health curtailed his activities, and cast a cloud over our lives.

* * * * *

The school that I was to go to, and which Leon already attended, was Highlands North High School. It was very near to our house, a few minutes walk, almost too close to ride a bike to. The school, had been built in 1938, a two-story ivy-covered building with a slate roof, overlooking the rugby field and some open land that was waiting to be developed into a second field. By the time I got there in 1949, the school was bursting with pupils from the growing suburbs around it. Classroom space ran out. At one time a large tent was set up in the quadrangle, and basement rooms were used, one known as the Black Hole of Calcutta. For years there was no assembly hall; one was built in time for my last year there. Up to then, assembly or all-school gatherings were infrequent events, and of course held outdoors.

The vacation before I started high school our family all went away to Muizenberg for a three-week holiday and I got back to my new school a few days after it had started. I felt conspicuous in my first class which was run by Mr. De Villiers (a common South African name, Anglicized as De Vill-yers). He was to be my Latin teacher for five years; in that first class I was awed by his posh Oxford-sounding accent and wanted to giggle, but of course I didn't. I looked around the class of about thirty pupils. I recognized some of the boys from Yeoville Boys', one being Aubrey Lurie, who was to become a close friend all through high school. My cousin Geoffrey went to Athlone Boys' High, which was closer to his home than Highlands North.

But there was a new element here -- girls. Yeoville had been an all-boys school, and most of our schools were sex-segregated, but Highlands North was experimentally co-ed. South African schools were sports-mad, and mixing boys and girls was thought to have a deleterious effect on such activities, since boys and girls played different games, and one school could not properly provide all the facilities needed. Highlands North, as one of the newer high schools in the outlying areas, was one of the few schools that both sexes attended.

Compared to U.S. schools, our schools gave little choice of subjects. In fact, the only choices were the subjects of Latin, French, Art and Geography, and among the sciences, Physics and Chemistry or Biology. You chose your subjects and stuck with them for five years. The Latin classes attracted the brightest academic students. Latin was thought to be helpful if one was going to become a doctor (it would help with medical terms in Latin) or a lawyer (South Africa had a unique system of law called Roman-Dutch law). The study of Latin was also said to promote logical, systematic thinking, a useful foundation for studying other languages and for life in general. The Latin class was heavily Jewish.

The other three tracks progressively declined in prestige. French was all right but usually taught by dithery, weak teachers who couldn't control a class. Art was taken by students with a special aptitude for drawing and painting, and no interest in a professional career. Geography was for the academically hopeless. Apart from these choices, every one took the same subjects: English, Afrikaans, Science, Maths and History. We all attended the same science classes for the first two years, and then there was a split into Physics and Chemistry, and Biology. Boys did the former, girls the latter. A few boys took biology out of their own special interest, but I never heard of a girl taking Physics and Chemistry.

South African schools (for whites, that is) were divided into two language tracks, depending on the language one spoke at home. If it was English, one attended a school that taught English as a first language, Afrikaans as a second. For Afrikaans-speaking students it was the opposite. The area we live in, as was much of the northern suburbs of Johannesburg was English-speaking; We didn't know people who spoke Afrikaans. But since South Africa had the two official languages, everyone was supposed to be bilingual. Children learned the other language all the

way through school -- that is, for twelve years. But since we never spoke it, our knowledge of Afrikaans was weak, and accents laughable. As English speakers we looked down on it as a childish, uncultured language and paid as little attention as we could. Although it had a grammatical structure much simplified from the original Dutch by distance and time, Afrikaans was a very idiomatic language and English speakers, however well they learnt it, seldom achieved the rapid racy sound of the language. Those people, such as businessmen like my father, for instance, who dealt with Afrikaner customers, learnt to speak Afrikaans well enough to do business in it and tell a few jokes. The men in our family could speak it much better than the women. Since Afrikaans became an official language only in 1925, Mom had learnt Dutch at school, but retained none of it, and her understanding of Afrikaans was just about non-existent.

Afrikaans words, however, had slipped into English; and went with the soupy mixture of daily speech along with British slang, Yiddish and even African words. So we might say "I'm in a complete *dwaal* today" when we were feeling scatterbrained; or "I had a *lekker* time" after enjoying an outing; or a hostess would ask, as you left her house, "Do you want some *padkos*?"offering you a snack to take along with you. And some literal translations of Afrikaans formulations were endemic in English: "Can I come with?" a child would ask, or threaten "I'll throw you with a stone." My mother tried without success to get us to say "yes" instead of *ja*..

African words, too, had become part of our lingo; "There's a *gogga* crawling down your neck," one would say, brushing the insect off; or "They live way off in the *bundu*" was said of someone living in a forsaken remote place -- someone who lived "in the sticks." Jews had the additional range of Yiddish words to use: "I'm sleepy -- I think I'll have a *schloff* after lunch," or "That's not true, its a *bubbe meister*," or "She runs her household well, she's a real *baleboster*." We drew on this rich vocabulary of cosy, casual in-group words, while at school English teachers struggled to impart correct British ways of speech.

School was a formal affair. Pupils, both boys and girls, were addressed by their last names -- I was "Moss" for five years, just as Leon had been. Teachers were Mr., Mrs., or Miss. Since the Transvaal Education Department frowned on married women working, they could not be permanent employees and there were not many Mrs.'s

unless they were widowed or divorced. We were in awe of our teachers -- at least I was -- and would have been embarrassed and nervous to encounter them outside of school.

Most of the teaching we had over the five years was quite traditional, if uninspiring, following British models, and in fact, if one paid attention, one got a good grounding in languages, mathematics and science. But it was history that was the bugbear in our curriculum. The reason was that no controversial topics could be taught. The motto that we lived by was "Geen politieke nie" -- "No politics." Seeing that both relations between blacks and whites, and British and Afrikaners were the poles of our current world, avoiding these subjects drained history of any meaning for us. Thus we never discussed the current state of our world or how it got to be that way. Was this an explicit policy, written somewhere, or did our teachers avoid these discussions because they feared that someone might report them to the headmaster for discussing politics?

History in those high school classes consisted of South African and European history. It seems to me that European history started with the French Revolution and ended with the Scramble for Africa, when the European powers carved up pieces of Africa as colonies. At least this last topic had the virtue of relating to Africa, and to us in South Africa. We learned a lot of the history of France in that period, and the unification of Germany and Italy, and English reform movements. Somehow, we also learned about the federation of Canada and Australia, though nothing about the United States.

South African history was a particular chore for us. We found it uninteresting, with little to do with us. In high school we probably started with the British taking over the Cape from the Dutch in 1795, the 1820 settlers from Britain, emancipation of the slaves, the Great Trek, founding of the interior republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal and the Kaffer Wars. But we stopped short of the discovery of gold and the Boer War, which might have led to discussion about Britain's imperial role in South Africa. And all of this history was taught in the most boring way, as if this was the only way one could view it and that peoples of other backgrounds might have a different opinion about it. It took me many years to come to understand that what we call history is an interpretation of what happened and not a static recital of facts. And as children of immigrants, we felt no particular ties to England, except

culturally, and none to the Afrikaner people, the *volk*, and we, children of immigrants, didn't figure in "history" at all.

One year, however, we had a substitute teacher in some subject, English or History, who dared to open the closed doors. She covered three random topics of current concern: The Poor White Problem, the Native Problem, and Soil Erosion. We, or at least I, found them interesting. Poor whites were Afrikaners who had been reduced to poverty when large farms were divided among several heirs into small farms; none was big enough to be successful economically. Drought and the Depression added their toll. So in the 1930s and 40s they drifted into the towns looking for work, moved into the small houses our immigrant ancestors had occupied, in Mayfair and Fordsburg and Braamfontein. They became marooned on islands of Afrikanerdom in the English-speaking city of Johannesburg. The native problem touched on the racial divisions in the country, started off by the European, i.e., white, encroachment into the interior, and exacerbated by the discovery of gold, when cheap labor was needed to work the mines, and black workers were recruited from the marginal countryside.

Soil erosion, the third of our topical topics, started when farmers drove their cattle along the same paths daily, creating ruts that became gullies along which torrents of water rushed, washing the top soil down to the sea. The annual ritual of burning the dry grass also weakened the layer of top soil held in place by roots. The solution to this problem was contour ploughing and no veld fires. That a teacher presented these topics in class and encouraged us to discuss them was memorable; I, at least, have remembered them for forty years. But this type of nourishment for what could have been eager minds was rare.

Pupils at the school were assigned to one of four "houses," mainly for sports competition. Sports was the main preoccupation: rugby in winter and cricket, in summer for the boys; field hockey and netball for the girls. I was not good at sports nor interested. I joined the second rugby team one year and bought boots and played in a few games. But I had little interest and would get bored and stare into space. Besides I was not good with a ball, would fumble or drop the ball if it came my way, and so I was no help to the team, and didn't last long on it. I also played tennis, not very well, but I do remember playing tennis with Lionel Hinwood.

One school activity that was taken seriously was cadets, premilitary training, held every Thursday morning. We -- and only the boys took part in this -- were issued with our khaki uniforms, belts and boots. Belt buckles had to shine, leather had to be polished. We'd form up in units, march up and down, the upperclass men as corporals, sergeants and lieutenants. This soldierly training was taken for granted as a necessary part of schooling for boys -- to instill discipline and obedience to authority and preparation for who knows what. Once in a while, perhaps once or twice a year, we'd have rifle practice, learning how to aim and fire at paper targets. And once a year there'd be a route march through the streets of Highlands North, led by the band. I was not a good cadet, and apt to turn left when I should have turned right. I did not progress up through the ranks and found myself in Form Five still a private. The officers were often friends of Leon, whom I'd encounter outside of the cadet setting. Instead of cadets, one could become a signaller or join the band. I didn't go for either of these because it would have taken up more time than cadets, and I needed afternoons for practicing the piano and doing homework.

While the boys were doing cadets , the girls learned domestic science. Then after a an hour and a half we'd regroup in our normal classes. We wore our uniforms the whole day on Thursday.

The five years of high school seem eventless. We went to class, did homework, took tests, read setbooks, and wrote exams. As the age to get a driver's license was eighteen, no one drove to school; we walked, took buses or rode bicycles. We wore school uniforms: the boys, royal blue blazers with an eagle badge on the top left hand pocket, gray shorts or long pants, white shirts and striped tie. The girls had both winter and summer uniforms: the winter garb included a royal blue beret, the summer a panama hat. We were supposed to carry the school's good name out into the world, and rowdy behavior on the bus got reported back to the school. Control over this adolescent throng moving from class to class every fifty minutes was kept by the prefects -- the elite of the Fifth Form: they oversaw the energetic behavior of the boys and girls, and could give detentions for minor infractions -- talking or misbehaving in class, not getting to class promptly. More serious misbehavior might be punished by caning -- this did not happen often, and only the boys got caned.

On one occasion Mr. Barnes, annoyed that the boys in his class were standing outside his classroom talking and laughing instead of coming into the class, caned a number of boys in front of the class. I might have been one of them, but I'd drifted into the room a minute or so earlier. The most serious infractions were dealt with by the headmaster, Mr. Wynne; being sent to his office was regarded as a notable event. But by and large, high school students in those days were an orderly lot, and teachers did not have a struggle to keep discipline in their classes.

I was a good student with an excellent memory, interested in learning, conscientious about homework. So I usually knew the answer to most questions, but I'd hold back on raising my hand too often because I didn't want to appear too clever or eager. But I couldn't hide my intelligence and diligence, and was the top student in almost every class I took.

Avron's schooling took a different path from that of mine and Leon's. He attended a primary school, the H.A. Jack School, a few blocks away, but when it came time for him to go to high school, he went to a Jewish day school in Linksfield, King David High School, because my parents thought he would get a better education there than at a government school like Highlands North. They were probably influenced by Hymie, who was friendly with King David's principal, Norman Sandler. Avron met his future wife, Avrille Epstein, at King David.

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We took vacations as a family until Leon started going to Habonim camp, and I followed a few years later. One of the resorts we went to a few times was East London, on the south-east coast. It had a fine beach and warmer water than the Cape, and a tropical feel with hedges of hibiscus. Mom and Dad had congenial friends there. We would travel by train, an enjoyable part of the vacation itself, and once sent our car on ahead on the Autotrain so that we'd have a car to use in East London. Apart from the beach, one could visit one of the Union Castle liners that sailed from England round the Cape, stopping at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and terminating in Durban. One could tour the ship while it was docked in the harbor, and collect free postcards showing the fleet of Union Castle liners, which was the only means of travel to Europe before the introduction of jet airplanes. (Mom and Dad had taken one of the liners, the Arundel Castle, from Durban to

Cape Town on their honeymoon.) One year the Steins were there at the same time as us; Geoffrey and I heard about a performance of *The Messiah* and decided to go (although it was midsummer, it was Messiah time in our hemisphere). Uncle Ike was not pleased that we were going to a performance in a church and told us to sit at the back so that we could do what the rest of the audience was doing.

We also spent some vacations together in Muizenberg, a resort at the head of False Bay at the Cape. Muizenberg's beach is probably the finest in the world, with nothing between it and Antarctica. The water was not quite as cold as on the Seapoint side of the Cape as there was still some influence of the Indian Ocean. The waves could be high, but they were regular and parallel to the beach, with no cross currents. It was safe and very popular. Our visits to Muizenberg always included trips along Marine Drive with the sea on one side and mountains on the other, and we inlanders were captivated by the sheer beauty of the setting and envious of the local inhabitants who could see these marvels every day.

Part of the enjoyment of our vacation to the Cape was the train trip, which took thirty six hours: two nights and one day or two days and one night. It depended on whether one wanted to pass through the Karoo, the hot baking semi-desert, by day or night. We would have a compartment that would sleep six; the two upper bunks on either side would fold down at night. Between the two fixed seats was a table that folded down over the sink. We'd play cards or board games or read. All meals were taken in the dining car which impressed us with a printed menu, table cloths and dinner-ware embossed with the South African Railways logo. In the middle of the night the train might come to a complete stop, with a sudden silence as water tanks on the engine car were filled. One would look out at the deserted platform and wonder who lived in the little town and why.

Granny and Grandpa sometimes took separate vacations, and one of their destinations was Warmbaths, a spa in the Transvaal. To call Warmbaths a spa might conjure up images of an urban elegant place; it was not like that at all.

Granny and Grandpa and any of us who accompanied them always drove to Warmbaths. It was a trip of perhaps two and a half hours, but it seemed like a major expedition. When Grandpa went to Warmbaths, he drove; when Granny went, Mom or Freda drove (Ann didn't learn to drive until much later). We'd load up

the car, take the Pretoria Road which as Louis Botha Avenue, passed by their house. A busy thoroughfare, it ran through the older suburbs, passing landmarks like the Orange Grove Hotel, and through newer suburban areas like Highlands North, passing Balfour Park, the Jewish sports club and Alexandra, the black township that came to be surrounded by white suburbs. Then one was in the veld, with the road bordered by eucalyptus trees. We'd pass Halfway House, a hotel and minor resort halfway between Joh'burg and Pretoria; we'd gape at the Voortrekker Monument, high on a hill outside Pretoria. It commemorated the triumphs and tribulations of the Voortrekkers, white pioneer families of Dutch descent, who chose to leave the civilized fringe of the Cape and trek in ox-wagons into the interior, struggling over rocky mountains, fighting off indigenous tribes. We had never visited it, but it held a sacred place in the hearts of Afrikaners, whose forebears had struggled into the interior and founded their own republics. Pretoria was the capital of one of these republics, the Transvaal.

Then, on our journey we'd pass through the streets of Pretoria, a low slung city, South Africa's capital, streets lined with jacaranda trees (an import from Brazil), nestled in a bowl of hills that collected and distilled the heat. Northwards across the city, and out through rocky passes into the lower, hotter, unbuilt Northern Transvaal.

Warmbaths was a village, a dusty place whose reason for being was the hot springs with curative powers for rheumatism and other afflictions of the joints. Though there were several hotels we always stayed at the Warmbaths Hotel. Its food was said by Granny to be better than the nearby kosher hotel.

Leon and I accompanied our grandparents several times; sometimes we were there together. We loved the ceremony of going into the dining room three times a day, announced by a roving waiter who played a little tune on a three-key xylophone he carried about. We enjoyed selecting from the menu. We were allowed to place drink orders with the bar waiter, my treat there being passion fruit and lemonade -- the latter being the equivalent of a Sprite. The grownups would order kola tonic, a more sophisticated version (to our thinking) of a coca-cola. Day times were given over to swimming at the Pavilion, which had an array of mudbaths, and other esoteric treatments; we went to the pools, divided into the shallow baby pool, a very hot chest-level pool, where elderly persons plodded about, inhaling the vapors and

absorbing the salts in the water. The big pool is where we spent most time -- its water not quite cold, but refreshing enough. We'd swim as best we could, splash around, jump, and dry out on the hot paving and ticklish grass.

Other pastimes were few. One could go to the shops, and a visit with Granny might produce a simple game or boys' paper. The adults would encounter acquaintances they'd met there before, or whom they knew from Joh'burg or business. Once there was a gymkhana, a horse race around a dusty track. Leon, who was always one for experimenting with new discoveries, was going through a trick-photography phase. We went and waited on a railway bridge, then keeping the camera steady, he snapped a shot of the train passing below and then a shot in the same position of the tracks (this was with a baby brownie camera, which did not advance the film to the next frame once a shot had been taken). Leon told me that we'd be able to see through the train, but when the film was developed, we saw the roof of the train superimposed on the tracks. I was quite disappointed that the interior of the train did not show. Another pastime was to hang around the door of the bar, trying to see the billiards game going on; we weren't allowed in the bar, of course, and would be shooed off by the barman or one of the Indian waiters.

Warmbaths has happy memories for me. We were alternatively indulged and left alone, a desirable combination. And the heat of the still afternoons drained away any pretense of effort or expending energy.

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Apart from school, two other activities filled my life during those high school years. One was Habonim, the other my piano lessons.

Habonim filled a large part of our adolescent lives, and all three of us -- Leon, Avron, and I -- passed through its various stages. "*Habonim*," a Hebrew word meaning "the builders," started off as a Jewish scouting movement, and there were vestiges of its beginnings in some of its trappings. We wore uniforms to meetings, bright royal blue shortsleeved shirts, scarves folded into triangles around our necks, and the ends secured by a leather woggle, long or short khaki pants, a leather belt with the Habonim emblem on it, and a blue beret. And among the handbooks passed around was one with a succession of badges for various accomplishments.

By the time I started going, the tests had fallen away, though the uniforms were still being worn. Leon must have discovered Habonim through school friends, and he was very active, going to meetings, gatherings and camps. He graduated from "'Bonim" to "Shomrim ("the watchers") and became a *madrich*, a leader. I followed suit, and also graduated to the senior level, but did not become a madrich.

The time we joined was in the late 1940s, after we'd moved to Highlands North. The great event in the Jewish community at that time was of course the founding of the State of Israel in May of 1948. After the annihilations of the Holocaust (though we were not calling it that, then) and the mass expulsions and migrations from Europe, the founding of a Jewish state was seen as a hope of permanent security for Jews henceforth in their own country. Zionism, the return to Zion, had come about. But the small new nation was immediately attacked by the surrounding Arab countries, and a call went out to the Jewish Diaspora -- the worldwide dispersed community of Jews who'd left their homeland two thousand years ago -- to lend their support in money and person power. Young persons were wanted to settle the land, to live on a kibbutz that would establish a new order of communal living and contribute to the country's agricultural base and security.

Two members of our family heeded the call. One was Maisie Mofsowitz, Dad's niece, who "ran off" with a man to Israel (she didn't marry him.) The other was Dolly, Mom's close cousin and friend. Dolly had been involved in Zionist causes, and had been briefly married to and worked with a prominent leader in the Jewish Board of Deputies. Dolly's second marriage was to an older man, Reuben Skuy, a Hebrew scholar and called by Mom "the grammarian" because of his pedantic approach to language. Dolly settled with him on a remote northern kibbutz, Kfar Giladi. She had three children there, the first-born named Yehuda; "Medina" which means "state"; and Alterai, who later changed her name to Sara. The family changed their name to Sinai.

Habonim became an active vehicle for encouraging aliyah, "going up," emigrating from a lowly Diaspora state to the higher Zionist one. The movement aimed at encouraging not only aliyah, but joining a kibbutz, that experiment of communal living devised by East European Jews to take Jews from ancient congested urban ghettoes where they engaged in craft and trade and place them in a healthy outdoor

life on a farm. Here, in a communal enterprise, Jews would be self-sufficient and participate in the normal agricultural life of a modern society.

Habonim, then, rested on three legs; scouting, Zionism and socialism, inculcated by training, education and propaganda. But this analysis makes it sound a heavy and earnest enterprise. It did not seem that way at all. Habonim provided fellowship, activities and fun. We had weekly meetings, which might combine a talk, games, singing and folk dancing. The talks might be about the history of the development of the state of Israel or current South African affairs. Songs -- and we developed a big repertoire, sung on trips or at meetings -- were Hebrew: "The finyan," sitting around a fire drinking coffee; universal campsongs; or American union songs: "I once was a union maid"; or spirituals, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"; or show tunes "Everything's up to date in Kansas City,"or European folk songs "My hat it has three corners" or "There was Peter, Peter, Peter in the store, in the store, in the store, There was Peter, Peter, Peter in the store, in the quartermaster's store. My eyes are dim, I cannot see, I have not brought my specs with me, I-have-not-brought-my-specs-with me," or the worldwide socialist (communist) anthem, the Internationale; we also sang a song of resistance, "The partisans' song" with Yiddish words. The incongruity of this mixture never struck us. Singing bonded us, made us feel for a time that we were not separate bricks, but a building made up out of the individual units. Building imagery was strong in Habonim; we constructed decorated bricks, as one activity; mine had a glass front with the diorama of an imagined land of Israel inside.

Habonim tried to keep wholesome values in front of us. Girls were discouraged from using makeup. Folk dancing was a major cultural import from Israel. We learnt the basic dance, the hora, and many other dances created for the new culture of Israel or borrowed from European circle dances. We came to know the array of songs coming out of Israel.

Habonim was a co-ed activity -- both boys and girls joined and in fact many of the girls from my classes at Highlands North High School and a few of the boys were part of the group. The problem, as I remember it, was to get more boys to join and as time went on, the boys started to take their chances at meeting girls outside Habonim, while girls continued to come to the group. There were a few boys who persisted -- I was one of them. I was not out there dating, and found Habonim a

place where I could be among others who were not quite friends but familiar acquaintances. I remember one meeting to plan some event, where I was the only boy among several girls, and I started to get the picture that I was getting left behind by the boys to be classed among the girls.

Leon and I went to several camps together. He started going first and I followed. Camps were held in East London, over the summer holidays. Camp was a three-week affair, first to a place called Nahoon, where I never went, and then to Leaches Bay, where I went quite a few times. As a camping experience it in some ways resembled American summer camps, but in other ways was more primitive.

Our preparation started with the list of things we were to take and Mom sewing labels onto or marking clothes with an indelible pencil. Then we piled into railway coaches at Joh'burg station, met our compartment-mates, stowed our belongings for an overnight train journey which ended with glimpses of the sea, a thrilling sight for dwellers from the interior cities, hundreds of miles from the sea. Leaches Bay was on a hillside sloping towards the beach, though separated from it by a quarter mile of shrubby bushes and trees that we walked through daily to get to the beach. The tents had all been set up before we arrived -- an advance guard of "older" boys and girls had done it. These were khaki ex-army tents, with a central pole, sleeping six. Now we met our tent-mates, and claimed spaces for ourselves, looked for pebbles to remove in the spaces we were to sleep, and laid out our blankets, folded and pinned in a special way (this was a time before sleeping bags or air mattresses). Another preparation was to dig a trench around the upland side of the tent to divert water from running through the tent when it rained (it always did). We secured the tent pegs, and did the other chores of good camp practice.

Once settled into our tents, camp provided a life of fixed and floating events. There were three meals a day, eaten at long wooden tables with benches, outdoors, using one's own tin plate and mug, knife, fork and spoon. There was morning assembly, at which the flag was raised -- the new blue and white flag of Israel, together with Habonim's own flag, and a talk by the camp leader on the rules that made this temporary community workable. Then, if the weather was good -- and I remember only the sunny days -- we'd go to the beach, winding down a path through the wide swathe of oceanside woods, loud with the insistent racket of cicadas, past vegetation that grew only by the seaside. Then across the hot paved road to the beach, with its

tumbling surf. The currents at Leaches Bay could be powerful; a year or so before, a camper had been drowned, an anguishing event for the mostly young people who ran the camp. The swimming area was marked by a rope with older boys and girls manning its perimeter. We'd swim and dive under the waves, then dry off in the sun, getting more tanned and burnt as the season went on, till our skin peeled off to reveal a tender layer beneath. Who knew about skin cancer or suntan lotion in those days?

Back at camp we'd take part in a number of activities devised by our imaginative madrichim, "officers" -- talks, singing, folk dancing, overnight *tiyulim*, hikes, war games, *tochniyout*, "campcraft," and talent shows. The days would end, after supper, with a campfire, around which we sat on the hillside, starting from taps, as the flags were lowered, then joining in a bonding sing song of familiar songs. Once, our group, inspired by some contagious madness that takes hold in camp communities, planned and built a *migdal*, a watchtower, out of timber overnight, and proudly marched into the assembly next morning singing (to the tune of "See the conquering hero comes...") "We built a migdal . . ."

Being a member of the group relieved me of some loneliness, and I had one special friend, Alfie Abramson, that I hung out with. Alfie became aggrieved with the other members of our tent, and moved out one night to sleep in one of the large communal tents, used on raining days, Torn between showing my loyalty to him and leaving (even though I did not share his grievance) or letting him go by himself and staying with my tentmates, I chose to leave and felt sheepish when he explained his grievance next morning to our madrich, and I had no grievance to vent but had merely gone along with him. And the older boys and girls were pairing off, slipping away from the campfire into the dark, doing who knows what (but those were innocent days) while I noticed and felt that I should be doing likewise, but not having the pull to go off with a girl myself.

At the end of three weeks, we packed up, piled into our train, and were delivered back to our nuclear families, tanned, dirty and happy.

Since aliyah to Israel was an espoused goal of the movement, those who felt the call prepared for life on a kibbutz by moving to *hachshara*, a training camp, to live out the rules of shared property, agricultural labor, and group decision making.

Habonim's hachshara was a farm near Brits, northwest of Pretoria. I, with my group, spent a few days there. It was the only time in my life when I did any manual labor. We picked tobacco, learning which leaves were ready for picking, and working in rows in the hot, still sun. Our few days there ended in a *tiyul*, a hike along roads and field paths to an escarpment overlooking Hartebeespoort Dam, a huge (it seemed) manmade reservoir storing water to irrigate the surrounding farmland, an amazing sight in that country of tenuous rivers and dry stream beds.

For those making aliyah, the hachshara was an important preparation, and in fact a number of people passed through the ranks of Habonim, emigrated to Israel and founded Kibbutz Tzora, a long-lasting kibbutz that drew mainly English-speaking volunteers from all over the world. South African Jewry was strongly Zionist; many South African Jews moved to Israel, early on to kibbutzim and later into the secular towns, and used their enterprise and education to make their mark in Israeli society.

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Although Habonim supplied most of my social life in the first years of high school, my piano lessons were to be more influential on my life, because of my contact with Adelaide Newman, with whom I had started lessons at the age of eleven. Adelaide was a shortish woman, well-groomed, with carefully dyed blond hair and beautiful clothes. Her professional name was her maiden name, Adelaide Newman. Being now married to Max Kramer (pronounced in the German or South African way, "Kraamer"), I called her Mrs. Kramer. She had a story to tell about her life, which I grew to know well from its frequent recountings.

She was a child prodigy, a fine young pianist, who at the age of twelve, traveled from Cape Town to London with her mother, entered the "Daily Mirror" contest and won it. They stayed on there -- she said her mother remained in London for two years -- and Adelaide embarked on the training to become a professional pianist. She studied with Tobias Matthay, a famous teacher with his own method of teaching and playing. She still had books of music with his pencilled markings, and to the left of the piano was a photo of him, signed, in his listening pose. As she devoted all her time to the piano, she never had proper schooling and described herself as ignorant. She also studied at the Royal College of Music along with other

aspiring pianists, some of whom went on to become renowned performers. Adelaide acquired a better accent, good clothes sense and other stylish ways that would fit her for the artistic life and social set she was preparing for.

As she was a vivacious and gregarious person, she had a lively social life, I imagine, and in her early twenties met and married a man from a wealthy London family. She told me that his mother warned her before the marriage not to marry him, but she was in love, went ahead and married, and had a baby boy. Her husband turned out to be cold and repressive; she described how she and the baby and his nanny would be having a lovely time, and when the husband would walk in, he'd cast a pall on the fun. Then the War broke out in 1939, and she and the baby left by ship for South Africa to be safely away from danger. Once at home, she knew she couldn't go back to her husband, and when he joined them on a visit, asked for a divorce and custody of the child. He said he would agree to the divorce only if he could keep the boy. She couldn't go back "to his bed," she said, so she divorced him and gave up her son. The boy was being looked after by a German woman, whom her former husband married when they returned to England. Adelaide kept in touch with her son through letters, presents, and visits, but his father and stepmother subtly turned him against her, and she carried this sorrow with her. Her son was a year or two younger than me.

Adelaide landed a job as pianist at the South African Broadcasting Corporation in Durban, rebuilt her life, and met Max Kramer, a few years younger than her. He was German, from Hanover, an assimilated non-observant Jew (as was Adelaide), who'd left Europe for obvious reasons. He worked, for all the time I knew him, at Progress Electric, selling lighting fixtures. He'd been taken into the business by a German compatriot, who became both his employer and friend. Max too was well-groomed. He had an elegant foreign accent, dressed well and knew how to give good parties. He was also a decorator with a discriminating eye, and had furnished their succession of flats in a European style, unlike anything I was used to: the dining area was a wrought iron banquette with a glass topped table, the living room had sleek blond wood fittings along the walls, there were original prints and drawings on the walls, including one of Rene Shapshak's watery Parisian cul-de-sacs, and the room was lit by interesting floor and table lamps. Though he sold ceiling light fittings, he despised most of them and never allowed them into his own living space. There were always beautiful flowers in the rooms, arranged by Max.

I was terribly impressed by all of this. Max and Adelaide's way of life was as different as could be from my family's. They rented their flat, didn't own a car, took taxis, had no children, and went to a night club. For amusement they did crossword and jigsaw puzzles and read detective stories. They knew or met all the famous performers who came to Johannesburg (when Anna Russell came to perform, Adelaide phoned her up and invited her to a party — and she came), and dropped their names into her conversation.

Adelaide grew attached to me and took it on herself to wean me away from my staid family and prepare me for a higher-class way of life. She would correct my speech: if I said "My mom did such and such," she'd want me to say "My mother." When I grew older, she'd be concerned that I didn't smoke, that I was quiet in company, that I didn't eat bacon or prawns.

Adelaide was a fine pianist. If she'd stayed in England, she'd would have had a more stellar career. Opportunities in the cultural backwater of South Africa were few. But she performed on the wireless regularly, appeared on occasion with the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra, and played in concerts now and then. She practiced daily with great concentration, and set high standards for herself.

She also had great expectations of her students. She always had a few, not the unmusical or uninterested ones who would soon drop by the wayside at her demands, but musical, motivated ones like me. She'd take my lesson seriously (though she had an annoying habit of answering the phone during the lesson -- this was the day before answering machines, and she couldn't have stood not to answer the phone). She'd explain what effect she was looking for and how to get it ("loosen your arms!" "play from the shoulder!" "curve your fingers in!") and would pencil in her markings on the printed pages of music and write instructions in a hard covered notebook, with great emphasis, and a lot of underlinings and exclamation points!

I was captivated by her strong personality, flattered by her attentions and intimidated by her temperamental moods. Not so my mother. She did not approve of Adelaide, though she'd express it obliquely. "And how's Mrs. Kramer?" She disapproved of her dyed hair, her divorce, her giving up her son, her way of life

("they're bohemians -- they probably sit on the floor"). But I was obviously blossoming in my musical studies and I continued to take lessons and practice daily, climbing the ladder of piano literature from Bach and Scarlatti to Haydn and Mozart, and among the Romantics, Schumann and Debussy. I worked for and took piano exams, administered by the Associated Board in London, working my way yearly from intermediate to advanced status, learning the specified and elective pieces and practicing sight reading, which I was never really good at ("Look ahead of what you're playing!" Adelaide would cry).

I was a good pianist, a sensitive interpreter, musical, technically quite accomplished, but with deficiencies that would limit me to pieces that were not too difficult. It was obvious that I would not make a career out of music; besides the fact that I didn't have the inclination or temperament, I was destined for a more professional career, one where I could make a good living. Nevertheless, over the years, I devoted huge amounts of time to practicing and playing the piano

As I got to my matric year -- that all-important last year of school focused on public exams -- I cut back on lessons, and after I started university, I stopped altogether. But I continued to see Adelaide, would go to an occasional lunch-time concert with her, have lunch, go to a matinee or spend an evening with her, always when Max was away. She'd talk about her past life (which is why I remember all the details) and her present one, dropping names and gossiping about friends. Some of this was her need for companionship or a male (though juvenile) escort. Some of this, I suspect, was to make herself available as an older woman who would open a young man to new experiences.

As part of the artsy crowd, Max and Adelaide knew quite a few homosexual men -- it is anachronistic to call them gay men -- and included some among their closer friends. Even though they knew these men well, their attitude was not much more enlightened than the population at large, veering between pity and ridicule. Adelaide had one friend, a well-known pianist, who would stay over at their flat, but needed constant shoring up to keep him from sliding into depression. Another acquaintance, who carried a purse, was named by them "Miss Wallaby." Adelaide told me about the suicide of Noel Mewton-Wood, an upcoming British pianist, "over a love affair" in a tone that expressed disdain that men like him weren't strong enough to weather the emotional tides that normal people could. In fact,

much of the gossip they enjoyed and passed on was about homosexuals, an attitude that Adelaide had surely picked up in England. South African attitudes about homosexuals were so primitive that only the bravest would dare to reveal themselves.

Adelaide steered me towards my next musical experience. It was obvious that I would not have a career in music, so that continued study at the piano began to seem pointless. But it was a shame to let my love for music and well-developed abilities go to waste. She suggested chamber music, and sent me to Betty Pack after I finished university.

* * * * *

On the domestic front, we engaged two new servants when we moved to Highlands North, Caroline and Edwin, since Lena and the manservant did not move with us from Yeoville. My mother and father were good employers, fair, consistent and not over-demanding, and we had the same servants for years. (Other households had a constant turnover of servants, because of the erratic nature of the madam.) Caroline was a Basuto woman, very handsome with her light brown skin and high cheekbones. She covered her short hair with a *doek*, a head scarf; African women never exposed their hair, using a doek indoors, or berets or hats when they went out. In the house, the maids would wear uniforms, a housecoat tied around the waist with an apron over that.

Caroline's day began at about 6:30 a.m. She had a key to the back door, but as it was locked from inside at night, it had to be unlocked in the morning. She would walk around to my parents' bedroom and tap on the window. Dad, always an early riser, would get up and unlock the back door so that she could get in, and then he'd go back into the house and wash. Caroline would prepare breakfast for herself and Edwin, and for us. After breakfast she'd wash the dishes, make the beds, and do some dusting, perhaps go on an errand to buy vegetables, but most of our food -- milk, bread, meat and groceries -- came in separate deliveries. Mom and Caroline would confer about what to have for dinner. She'd prepare lunch for Mom, usually the only one home during the day, and then retire to her room until it was time to make the evening meal. She'd set the table, and bring the food to the table where Dad would carve the meat and Mom serve up. After dinner, she'd do the dishes

and her day was over. Caroline could read and write, and would take messages on the phone, if Mom was out. Edwin would help with the drying; there'd be a lot of chatter in an African tongue; none of use knew the languages Africans spoke, except for a few words that had passed into our English.

Edwin was a darkskinned man from Nyasaland, one of the British colonies far north of South Africa. His English was fragmentary and hard to understand, but he did his work well, was eminently trustworthy and stayed for many years. He'd keep the car clean, do the heavy household work like polishing the floors, mopping the kitchen floor, cleaning the windows, and polishing our shoes which we left in the kitchen each night. He too had his Thursday afternoons and alternate Sunday afternoons off. If he wanted to go out into the evenings, he'd need a special pass, and would come and ask for "a special," which my parents or even I as a teenager would write out for him, giving him permission to be away from the house for a specified time, in case he was stopped by the police.

Away from the house, servants had to always carry their passbooks, an identity book, or they could be arrested and put in jail. This was a frequent occurrence, and it happened only to men, as far as I know. The police could and did stop any black man and demand to see his pass. Edwin was never arrested, but the Gordons' manservant had this happen: there was some incident outside the property -- perhaps a car accident, or a fire in a neighboring house. Out of curiosity he went out into the street to see what was happening and didn't have his pass on him, as he wasn't going anywhere. He was accosted by a policeman, and even though he pointed to the house he worked in and said he'd just stepped out to see the excitement, he was arrested, put in jail, and Hymie had to go down to the police station next morning and bail him out. The pass system was a very real and ever-present means of control.

In addition to Caroline and Edwin, we and most households had a washerwoman, who'd come to the house two days a week to do the laundry (we had no washing machine). Monday was the traditional washday. Dora would arrive, set up her galvanized zinc tub on some sturdy wooden crate, fill it with hot water drawn from the outdoor taps, and scrub the clothes on a washboard. She'd use washing blue to get the white wash white, a process that always fascinated me, as how could a bright blue substance make clothes whiter. She'd wash with the ubiquitous Sunlight soap,

a cheesy yellow unwrapped soap that came in bars that were then broken in half. Dora would wash all our shirts, all white in those days before diversification, and there could be over twenty of them for the four men folk in the family (Mom would wash her own "smalls" in the bathroom). As well as the plentiful shirts, Dora would wash underwear and socks, and towels and sheets -- though these latter items were later sent out to the laundry. The washed articles would be hung out on the washlines that stretched across the back yard, and fastened with wooden clothes pegs. In the hot sunshine and dry air, they'd be dry by the end of the day; Dora would have left by then, and Caroline, Mom, or we boys would gather them in; when rain threatened, this became an emergency task. Dora would appear the next day to do the ironing. She'd pull out the kitchen table, cover it with an old blanket and clean sheets, and iron the many shirts and sheets, sprinkling them with water to dampen them, getting the same effect as a steam iron.

Dora's weekly visit was also a social occasion in the kitchen, and there would be gales of laughter and much chatter between her and Caroline. Dora lived in Alexandra, and occasionally if the car was at home, Mom or one of us would drive her home, dropping her at the entrance to the township (she'd sit in the back seat for the ride). Once Mom asked Dora how she'd got home and she said that Edwin had taken her in the car. We'd never known that he could drive or that he would borrow the car.

Those who've never had servants can't imagine the restrictions they put on one's life. Yes, they took care of all the mundane tasks of domestic life, though with appliances like dishwashers, washers and dryers, these would have been made easier (someone would still have to make use of these appliances, and it would not be the white males). And anyway, much more cleaning went on than was needed; South African white housewives had extraordinary notions of how clean a house should be. But the drawbacks were very present: there were two people in the house who were not part of the family; one could or did not speak freely in front of them, especially about money and how much something cost. Jewish families had the resort of using Yiddish words, which the servants probably knew. One did not leave money, even small coins, lying around. "They have so little," Mom would say, "It's wrong to put temptation in front of them." Dad would periodically burn all his old checks and checkbook stubs in a metal trash can outside, so that they didn't go into the dustbin and be found by who knows who. (All of this was part of

the white paranoia, with perhaps some guilt mixed in.) The whites had so much in comparison with the blacks, and tried to conceal it or minimize it -- a vain attempt, I'm sure, since our comparative affluence was evident in every aspect of our lives. Another stricture that servants imposed was the need to keep to schedule. One had to eat early, so that the servants could finish washing up; this was most pressing on those Sunday afternoons when the servants were off.

Perhaps the most restrictive aspect imposed by servants, or rather taken by whites on themselves because of fears of pilfering, was the constant locking of everything. Drawers in my mother's dressing table were locked; the wardrobe doors were locked; the cupboards were locked. When Caroline needed groceries, she'd go to Mom and ask for them. Mom would unlock the grocery cupboard, and give her the needed items. There was a suspicion among housewives that their maids, on their days off, would walk away with supplies for their families in the township, whom they were going to visit. The staple items in question were tea, sugar, candles and soap. Housewives (not Mom, though) would petulantly complain "I'm feeding the whole location." Mom would give Caroline some of these items to take with her, either to forestall her removing them from the kitchen supplies or as a kind-hearted measure.

Whites did not fear the familiar blacks they knew in their own households, but they were afraid of the nameless unattached men who might be lurking in the streets. White women and girl-children would never ever walk alone after dark; the fear was of assault and rape. But one seldom heard of such assaults, either because there were no white women on the streets to accost, or because such attacks did not take place. Mom once embarrassed me when she found out that I had walked Lynette Licht home from a Habonim meeting. "You're no protection to her if a gang attacked you," she said, and she phoned Mrs. Licht to tell her that this was not safe for Lynette. She should be picked up by car.

Houses were locked with multiple locks, windows were barred, and curtains and blinds promptly shut when the lights were turned on so that no prying and calculating eyes could see one's possessions inside the house and mark it for a robbery. Burglaries were not uncommon; the robbers would break into a house through a less than impervious door or window if the owners were away or even if

they were in the house; or they'd use hooks on poles to snag clothing and pull it through the burglar bars; this method was known as "fishing."

But it was an internal theft in our house that led to a painful episode. Mom was a member of the Highlands North branch of the Women's Zionist League. This group of women met monthly one morning at one of the member's houses and discussed their business or learnt about the charitable causes they supported -- the local one being the Jewish Benevolent Society, the international one being the Jewish National Fund which planted trees to forest the arid regions of Israel, or other causes. An important part of their job was fundraising for these causes -- bake sales, card parties and other events were put on, as well as collecting money directly from supporters. There were also clothing drives, in which coats, jerseys, shoes and other articles of clothing were bundled together to be sent to refugees in Israel.

Each of the women on the committee was assigned a street, and went to the Jewish households and asked for an annual pledge, which was collected monthly. Mom did Seventh Avenue, the street we lived on. Once a month, usually on a Sunday morning, she'd walk from house to house collecting the donations, usually in cash and often in small amounts. She groaned at having to do this job because of the women who'd pretend not to be at home or not have money on them. But as a dutiful, responsible person she'd do her route and bring back her collection, which she'd total and get ready for handing in. She started noticing that her cash was short, not by a lot, but less than it should be. So Dad was enlisted to help her count and check the total, which she locked up as usual in the cupboard in the passage. When she was ready to hand it in at her next meeting, it was short. Dad checked it and confirmed it. So it was evident that someone had pilfered it. The suspicion fell on Caroline. Mom and Dad knew that I and Avron, then living in the house, had not taken the money, and also that Edwin had not done it (why they were sure of this I don't remember). So Mom undertook the unpleasant task of confronting Caroline, who denied that she'd done it. But there was no getting around it -- she must have taken it. Mom felt that she couldn't continue to have her in the house and had to "let her go." Caroline asked for a reference, and Mom wrote her one. "I can't say that you're honest, because you took the money," she said. Otherwise the reference was excellent. Mom said to us that any future Madam would notice the omission of the word "honest." But Caroline did not seem to have difficulty finding another place, and we heard from Edwin that she was working in the next

street, a few blocks away. When Dad was sick later on, Caroline came by to inquire about him. "She always liked Dad," Mom said.

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Another interest of mine was drawing and painting, a small talent that I had which led to the career I chose. From early years, I was attracted to colors, shapes, and illustrations. My first creation that I remember was at nursery school, where in Mrs. Ludwin's class I stitched a menorah in colored wools on a piece of embroidery canvas. The colors were magenta, bright blue and green. Through my school years I did some drawing and painting; one place was my anthologies of poetry which we compiled -- verses or prose extracts we liked and learnt by heart. And a lot of my artistic urges went in to the toy theaters I made and the stage sets created for them. Art was part of our curriculum at primary school, but not high school; somewhere in this latter period I took art classes at the Witwatersrand Technical College, located at the foot of Eloff Street opposite the station. In this class I learnt, I suppose, the basics of design and drawing. I had an appreciative eye, and an affinity for art, but my skills and talent were mediocre.

The only piece of work that I really liked was a lino-cut I did, which I drew looking out of the third floor of the Tech up the narrow canyon of Joubert Street. I have it still and I still like it. It's reproduced on the cover of this book. I translated the heavy shadows and brilliant sunshine into blacks and whites. In a lino-cut, of course, an uncut area will print as black, and incised areas and lines will show as the white paper.

This picture foreshadows many of my interests and tastes. It shows a city street with only one person visible. Lino cuts do not lend themselves to delicate work, and I wasn't interested in drawing people, anyway. But I like the way this person, I think it was a woman, had come out of her room to stand on the verandah, looking at the street. Few people lived in town, and one felt sorry for their imagined lonely lives. Then there is the car, sliding from shadow into sunlight, which I conveyed by reversing the black and white lines. The passage of the car and its driver is an appealing image suggesting movement. The buildings convey the changing history of Joh'burg, with low-rise, corrugated roofed buildings in front, being encroached on by what we took for skyscrapers. The building on the left is Anstey's, a department

store of Moderne design, white with flat areas of wall and a quarter circle of stairway between the two flanking wings. It stepped back at the top floors in a ziggurat fashion made popular by Art Deco design. A lino cut print reduces all of the scene to the two elements of black and white, and the sky -- perhaps it had puffy white clouds against a blue sky -- rendered in white lines.

But there is something wrong with the scene. Everyone knows that if you looked south down Joubert Street from my vantage point, Anstey's would be on the right, not on the left. I hadn't realized that the image would be reversed in the print, and now, forever caught in a pristine world, Joubert Street is back to front. I was quite surprised when I saw the print emerge. But I'm happy that it survived continental moves and other upheavals, and that I have it still. It was the favorite of my artistic production. I never did much drawing or creative work later (except in architecture). But it was work like this and a taste for things artistic that led Mom to suggest architecture as a career for me and for me to acquiesce.

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As I neared the end of high school a problem was looming. It was not the problem of doing well in my matric -- the public matriculation examination taken by all students in the Transvaal at the same time on the same day with the same questions (in English and Afrikaans, of course). Our last two years of school were focused on the curriculum for the few hours of these exams, and pupils wouldn't pay attention to any lessons unless there were going to be a questions on them in the exams. I was a very good student, I swotted for the exams, and any apprehension was directed towards how well I would do. I passed first class with distinctions in Mathematics, English, Latin and Science, and with B's in History and Afrikaans; I was the top student in the graduating class of my school.

My problem, rather, was what was I going to do. Obviously I would go to university and train for some profession. In South Africa, in my particular Jewish second generation community, graduating high school students didn't take a liberal arts degree to see what interests it would lead to. One had to choose a life career out of high school. I went and took an aptitude test at the Jewish Vocational Services, and was told "that I could do anything I wanted to do," not a very useful piece of advice. We did not have guidance counselors at the school; I did not have a mentor, an

older person who might have talked to me about my future; and my father being a businessman, we did not know many professionals. We also did not know how to get help on this important question.

The choices of profession seemed limited: medicine -- but I was squeamish about blood and that wouldn't work (and that went for dentistry, too); law -- I was too shy to be able and stand up and speak in court; engineering -- I didn't see any interest in it. I did actually meet and speak to a chemical engineer (the brother of our optician) and he described what he did; it didn't appeal to me. I had at one time or another wanted to be a landscape gardener or stage designer; these occupations didn't appear to my parents to offer the kind of security and status they wanted for their son, and I never pushed for them. I think, in retrospect, if I had a passionate desire to study for some unusual occupation, that I could have persuaded my parents to sanction that choice, even if it did not fall within the normal acceptable professions. But I didn't know myself what I wanted to do, and had many interests.

My mother came up with the idea that I should become an architect. I had always shown an interest in art and artistic things. I'd dabbled in painting (watercolors) and sketching. Mom thought it would be wonderful to design buildings "that will still be there after one is gone." We didn't know any architects, but Leon had gone into an allied profession, quantity surveying. He too hadn't known what to do when he left school, and he'd had to seek out a profession.

Dad did not make strong points on many topics, but he was determined that his sons would be professionals. "Then you can pick up and go anywhere and be able to earn a living." He was a businessman, as was almost every other man we knew: Dad's brothers-in-law, Ike (soft goods) and Hymie (furniture), his friends Harry Klassnik (furniture), Percy Forman (tires) and Jack Fanaroff (manager of a parking garage). Dad knew the dependency of businessmen on the fluctuating state of the economy ("How's business? Can't complain -- well, I could but what good would that do?"), the need for capital to start a business, the *tsoris*,, aggravation, the constant worries of business -- deliveries, cash flow, repossessions, the staff), and in his case, his dependency on Mom's family, who'd become his own, whom he loved, but who were also his employers. The idea of an independent, unencumbered, pick-up-and-start again profession was an ideal that was his ambition for us.

Leon cast around for his life's work;. He thought he might be a pharmacist, and worked for a month (during a school holiday) for Mr. Shakinovsky, our chemist and the husband of Nessie, Freda's lifelong friend. Leon worked at Highlands North Pharmacy for a month, not knowing that Dad was paying his employer for his wages. But he concluded that a chemist was a glorified shopkeeper, and in truth, the chemist shop sold a variety of goods besides prescriptions and potions.

Then he heard of the profession of quantity surveying It's an occupation in Britain and British places, close to what we know as a building estimator. After a building has been designed and contract documents drawn up, the quantity surveyor prepares a lengthy document called a bill of quantities specifying every item of labor and material needed to get the building built; then contractors bidding on the job insert their costs and turn in a bid, thus ensuring that all bids are made on the same basis. Quantity surveyors needed to know a great deal about building construction, materials, methods and costs.

Leon entered his five-year course at Wits University, an academic course with heavy doses of practical work in a quantity surveyor's office. He worked for years for a firm called Venn and Milford. In their studies, quantity surveying and architectural students take many of the same courses, so Leon had an entree into the arcane and technical world of building and this gave me and Mom and Dad some connection to the profession of architecture.

It was taken for granted that I would go to Wits, since almost all students, except those living in the country, lived at home and went to the university in their city. I applied to the Faculty of Architecture and started university in March of 1954.

IV. UNIVERSITY

As it was supposed to be, university was an unfolding and broadening experience from the limited world of high school. My days were now my own, though taken up with classes and courses.

The trip from home to the university and back was part of my new experience of the city. Mostly I took the bus to Hillbrow, or Dad would drop me there on his way to work. The one-mile downhill walk started in Hillbrow, on Kotze Street. Hillbrow was the most lively, most cosmopolitan section of Johannesburg, built up with apartment buildings; Kotze Street was the main street, lined with shops, cafes and restaurants. Stepping away from Hillbrow, the street grew quieter. One would walk by the Florence Nightingale nursing home -- a nursing home, in South Africa, was a private hospital. A little further on, across the street, was The Fort, Johannesburg's high security prison, built into the side of a hill, so that on the street side all that was visible was the entrance, often busy with police vans and officious-looking policemen, unloading arrestees or prisoners, usually black. A row of tall, spiky green and yellow aloes separated the parking lot from the street. The Fever Hospital, which I'd been isolated in when I had scarlet fever, was just over the hill. I'd pass the Non-European hospital (the hospital for people of color), its buildings walled in from the street, but there were often family members or friends sitting on the sidewalk, waiting for visiting hours; sometimes in the late afternoon, a guitar player on the roof could be heard. At the end of that block was a large feathery pepper tree overhanging the pavement, its peppercorns sheathed in papery pink shells.

The street changed its name here to Ameshoff, as one entered Braamfontein, one of Joh'burg's old residential areas. Before Johannesburg became a city, the barren grassy lands of the Transvaal had been surveyed into hundreds of holdings; some of those names lived on in sections of the city. Braamfontein meant, I suppose, Abraham's fountain. It was an area of attached small single story houses, with corrugated iron roofs and narrow stoeps. If the front door stood open one could see

right through the house into the back yard. These were houses for people on the way up or down. My mother had been born in such a house on Melle Street, a few blocks away. Now these houses were occupied by poor white families who'd come into the city from the *platteland*, the rural areas, often suffering from drought. Pale shoeless crewcut children would stand on the stoeps, watching the world go by. Approaching Wits, one might smell hops, as the Lion Brewery stood across the street; its neon sign of a lion and later, lion cubs with tails that wagged jerkily up and down was an endearing sight at night. On the left, one would pass Pop's, a cafe popular with students, local residents and workers; among the dishes served, the piece de resistance was the mixed grill: a piece of steak, sausage, a lamb chop, a fried egg and french fries. Then across busy Jan Smuts Avenue was the entrance of Wits.

The university had been laid out with a symmetrical plan, its older core of buildings classical in design. The center piece at the top of the rise was the Main Building and Great Hall, approached by a wide flight of steps facing north, a favorite gathering place for students to sun themselves at lunch or between classes. Opposite was a series of terraces with a central walkway and steps going down, culminating in a semicircular amphitheater and swimming pool. As returning soldiers from the War swelled the student body, prefabricated temporary huts were built on the terraces on the way down the hill side. One of these for a long time was the cafeteria, another the first year architecture studio.

First year architecture was an eye-opener for me. I'd been used at high school to be on top of all that we were taught. Here I realized that my academic prowess did not serve me well and that I had chosen a profession whose main aspects, design and drafting, required skills that I would never have.

A major part of our classes for all the years I was studying architecture was the Design Studio, the place where we learned the craft of drafting, leading towards the art of design. We needed to acquire the delightful paraphernalia of architects: a drawing board, T-square, adjustable triangle, and a box of drawing instruments -- mine was a Swiss-made set by Wild, encased in a dull black instrument case; inside were gleaming compasses, and other mysterious implements we would learn to use, each with its place in the black velvet liner. We also bought paper, thumb tacks, pencils, inks, and watercolors, and erasers, brushes and benzene to clean our instruments.

We had a rigorous instruction in drafting; our first year instructor being Jacques Morgenstern. We learned to handle the T-square, making sure to hold it firmly against the left-hand edge of the board so that lines drawn against its edge would be strictly parallel. We learnt to fix the paper to the board; to draw faint parallel lines to guide our printing, to draw lines in pencil so that the ends of the line would be slightly heavier than the middle sections, giving the lines "character." Where two lines at a corner crossed, they had to extend just a little bit beyond each other. We learnt how to use a scale. All of these skills required much application at first; later they would become second nature. We were learning drafting following a centuries-old tradition; it was a time before press-on letters and stencils, and long before Computer-Aided Design.

Our first sheets were done in pencil. I found that I was not particular adept at drafting; rather, that I could do it competently enough, but without the style and flair of some class members, who produced tidy sheets of even, characterful printing on well-laid out sheets. Ink drawing was next. An early exercise was the construction of an alphabet in Roman script with letters an inch-and-a-half high. The letters had serifs, those little embellishments and swellings at the end of straight pieces of a letter, and the width of strokes in a single letter varied (an N has two thin vertical strokes and a broad diagonal one; the outside shape of the O is circular, the inside space oval). We used small ink compasses to draw the small curves of the serifs and a bigger one for large circular features. Straight lines were drawn with a bow pen. One piece of advice we were given was to draw the curves first and join the straight pieces to them, not the other way around. I was astonished that we were expected to do this, and pleased to accomplish it, though I never achieved the neatness or excellent sense of design shown by some students in the sheets they turned in.

We went from one technique to anothernext being Chinese ink, an ink that one mixed to a desired transparency and overlaid coat after coat. We had the exercise of representing the shadow formed on a curved surface, built up of dozens of layers of ink, each coat a little smaller than the previous one, till an effect of curvature was reached. We learned theories of color and represented increasing hues, tones and tints on complicated color wheels.

As well as learning to draft, we were given design assignments, starting with a bus shelter, and progressing as the year went on, to more complex structures, such as a small house, a restaurant in a park, and a nursery school. We also took classes in Building Construction, Physics, Math, Orthography (the representation of three-dimensional objects on two dimensional paper) and History of Fine Arts.

After that first year, the design studio became the focus of our studies, and our lives driven by the next deadline for handing in a project. Over the five and a half year course, we had a very good education in the practical aspects of being an architect; we studied structures, materials, building construction, surveying, cost estimating, professional ethics. The artistic side of architecture was not neglected: after the first year's history of fine arts, we devoted courses each year to the history of architecture, and later, town planning and landscape design.

Instruction in design, which I needed, was weak. I struggled throughout the course, getting C's and F's for such projects as a pleasure craft station, a house for a doctor, an exhibition layout and a riding school. In my third year I failed design and repeated it in the following year, when we developed our practical skills working in an architect's office.

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During my first year at university, a notice appeared for a meeting of the University Players -- as most of the students lived at home, many activities and events were held in the lunch hour. I was drawn to the meeting because of my interest in theater, and at the end of the meeting at which I suppose activities past and future were described, I went down to the speaker and offered my services doing backstage work, designing sets, etc. I was immediately snapped up, was soon secretary of the committee and involved with a group of lively people who formed a clique that I was on the fringes of. Joining the University Players was the first of many organizations I've attached myself to over the years; being shy and not having the knack of making friends, I've used committees to provide me with a circle of acquaintances.

The University Players gave me a home for my 'varsity years'. The core of the group was the foursome of Ora Kark, Michael Picardie, Edwin Quail and Marna

Greenstein, all doing their BA's and taking the same classes. Other people came and went over the years, involved in one play or another, then withdrawing to another life.

I became a sometime set designer, painter, carpenter, decorator and stage hand. My first effort was a creche-like setting for a lunch-time performance of "The Second Shepherd's Play." I also designed the sets for "The Devil's Disciple," the George Bernard Shaw play set in New Hampshire (how little I knew about New England architecture!), and for "The Male Animal." These were performed in the Great Hall, the university's main assembly place; it had a large auditorium, with a wide stage, unsuited to small plays. Often audiences for our productions were sparse. As we became more organized;, we hired professional directors, and occasionally the lead actors were also professional.

One of our greatest successes was a production of "Dark of the Moon," staged at the Library Theater in town, directed by Taubie Kushlick, producer of many of Johannesburg's box-office hits. She had wanted to do this play for years, but it had a big cast and would have cost too much to put on professionally. It's set in the Appalachians, tells the story of Barbara Allen, who's bewitched and cast out of her village. It has a cast of hillbillies and locals, played by our middle-class students, a witch-boy, played by John Templar (now a successful architect in Atlanta), two witches, one dark (the sultry Molly Seftel) and one blond, and Mickey Stein as Barbara Allen. The sets, designed by Berenice Michelow, who'd studied in London, had changing village locales, framed by knotty menacing barren trees; the costumes were colorfully ragged; and the music was rousing: tuneful spirituals like "Gimme that Old Time Religion" and folk tunes like "On Top of Old Smoky." My role, as so much of the backstage work was professional, was front of house -- opening the doors, ushering, closing up. "Dark of the Moon" was a great happy success.

Another one of our American plays was "The Male Animal," by James Thurber and Elliot Nugent. It was directed by another well-known director, Anna Romain Hoffman; the committee did not get on well with her. I must have had less involvement with this play as I don't remember much about it, except for the set that I designed.

The Great Hall at Wits was in the main building, which had a classical portico with tall, fluted Corinthian columns, approached by a grand flight of steps. "Just the place to do "Julius Caesar," we thought and staged an outdoor production there. No sets were needed, but music and lighting enhanced the setting. Each evening the lights dimmed, the fanfares of Respighi's "Roman Festival Overture" resounded, and friends, Romans and countrymen strode up and tumbled down the stairs. Caesar was played by Jonathan Friedman, a flamboyant student, part of the inner circle. Calpurnia and Portia were played by Valerie Sachs and Janet Suzman (or vice versa); they both went on to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. I don't know what happened to Val, but Janet became a great actress of the British stage. Perhaps the audiences of "Julius Caesar" weren't as enthralled as those of us who'd put together this production; we thought it was good.

The University Players had constructed years before, the Elizabethan set, a reproduction of the Globe Theatre of Shakespeare's time. Though monstrously heavy , it could be assembled and dismantled and stored backstage. We chose to stage "The Duchess of Malfi," directed by Alan Hall, an English professor, who kept on correcting our pronunciation of the word "Duchess." "It's not a Netherlands sibilant," he would say. His wife, Barrie Hall, played the Duchess and suffered graciously; students played the other roles.

The Elizabethan set had the look of a half-timbered inner court of an inn, with dark wood framing white panels; we thought they looked too plain for the courtly horrors that were to be enacted in front of them, so Janet Suzman and I painted them. Our decorative motif was to use our initials, writ large and elaborately, with touches of gold and red and intertwining decoration. Alan, the director, inspected them and said "Ah, the Hitchcock touch."

The play on opening night took an unexpected turn. As a good Jacobean play should, a number of the characters, good and bad, came to untimely ends. Once the audience cottoned on to this, each new murder brought forth an increasing ripple of laughter from the audience and the actors, I'm afraid, played into this. We hadn't planned it as a comedy.

My involvement in the University Players was a major distraction from my architectural studies, since the process of putting on a play is all-absorbing. The

team working on a production formed a strong bond, which dissipated when the play was over. But it was enjoyable to have rehearsals to go to, some of which, as the opening night got near, ended in the early hours of the morning. We felt that we were a special group of students, doing something more important than going to lectures and carrying out assignments.

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I had heard about Rose from the University Players circle. They were all doing English I, and they predicted "Oh, Rose -- she'll get a First." Which she did. Her name was Rose Rappoport, but I didn't know who she was.

One evening I went to the Ruth Oppenheim Theatre to see "Six Characters in Search of an Author." Ruth Oppenheim was a German emigre who'd started an avant-garde theatre in a small makeshift hall on the edge of the business district. She also taught drama to private students, and placed them in minor roles in her productions. That evening I read the cast list in the program, and saw that Rose Rappoport was the Prompt. "Six Characters" is a play in which six strangers insert themselves into a theatre company as it rehearses a play. The actors are warming up to their parts, the director is directing, and the Prompt, at least in this version, pokes her head out of the sidelines and says "Do I have to read all this?" Rose was wearing a light blue dress with long sleeves, and I recognized her from seeing her on the campus.

We found we were taking a class together. The architecture students studied successively History of Art, History of Architecture I and II. As a fine arts major (as well as English), Rose was taking History of Architecture II, and we began to sit together in class. As she was peripherally connected to the University Players clique, as was I, we would encounter each other at a group table in the cafeteria, or in passing on the campus. I was drawn to Rose. She was a friendly and warm person, a great talker who reveled in discussion; she knew literature and art, and combined many enthusiasms with doses of cynicism.

One long, long discussion I remember was the day after I heard an impassioned plea for young Jews to drop everything and go to Israel to fight in what turned out to be the 1956 war. I'd been deeply affected by this talk, and needed to be talked out of

throwing over my university studies to put my life on the line. (Would I have done it? Probably not.) But that morning I was feeling a strong tug, and Rose talked to me for hours, at first in a stand-up conversation in one of the hallways, and later on the lawn in front of the library. Rose explained how nationalism -- which included Zionism -- was on the way out, and internationalism the coming thing. I was very impressed. Her arguments, knowledge, and opinions were like nothing I had ever experienced. My family conversed. We didn't discuss or argue. But Rose's family did.

Her family, when I met them, were foreign, born in Lithuania but they didn't immigrate to South Africa until the 1930s. David, her father, came as the advance guard in 1929, but it took him seven years to gather together the money for the passage of Yetta and their son Simon. They were reunited in Johannesburg in 1936, and Rose was born a year later They were not a happy family; David had been a brilliant student, but an illness affected his purposefulness and direction. He kept inventing new ways of making money, some of which succeeded, but he never stuck with one thing. Yetta was more practical; she started her own little business of a sandwich shop in town. She told me once that she went around to different eating places to see how sandwiches and other take-aways were made, as they were foreign to her. Her shop, called "Maison," did a thriving business in sandwiches and pastries. But David found it hard to enjoy her success. By the time Rose started university, they'd moved to Cape Town to be near Simon, who had married and settled there. Rose lived at University Residence or boarded at friends' houses. Rose and I became good friends, talking about our lives and life in general, listening to music, going to the movies.

At the end of Rose's B.A, a three-year course in South Africa, she found a job teaching English at Roma, Pius XII University College in Basutoland, a mountainous enclave surrounded by South Africa but administered as a territory of the High Commissioner. For the next few years, Rose took jobs at various schools in Pietermaritzburg and Durban in Natal until she found a permanent position at the University of South Africa in Pretoria.

The place that made the biggest impression on her was Roma, and she invited me to visit, but I never got there. I didn't have a car, and never worked out another way of getting there. She described her life there -- how cold it was in winter, how she

had to break the ice in a bucket of water to wash, but also how beautiful it was, the brilliant stars at night, the mountains. She told of a trip into the mountains with some people from the university, and going into a remote hut, which contained an elaborate Victorian wardrobe. She also told of a German woman at Roma, who had adopted two African boys, whom she'd taught to speak German with her. She talked about the Irish nuns at Roma who encountered exotic fruits and vegetables they'd never seen, and on being given an avocado pear, boiled it, turning it into something that tasted like turpentine. Most, if not all of the students, were African, either from South Africa or adjoining countries. Rose taught English and remarked how little of a cultural background the black students had in common with whites who'd been educated in the British tradition. Referring to shorthand explanations like "It's a Cinderella story," or other fairy tales we'd all assimilated from early on drew a blank.

While at Roma, Rose underwent a religious conversion to Catholicism. The Rappoports were Jewish and not only non-observant but atheists (at least that meant they had thought about the central fact of Judaism). Rose's father, David, had studied at *cheder* and maybe at a *yeshiva*; he could read and write Hebrew (I know this because he once corrected my spelling of the Hebrew word for Israel). Simon, Rose's brother, had a barmitzvah at the Doornfontein shul (always a bit of a card, he'd predicted that on his barmitzvah it would snow -- and it did, a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence in Joh'burg).

Rose had no Jewish orientation or education herself. She became drawn to Catholicism -- for its faith, its ritual, its history, its expression in art and literature -- and decided to convert. This news came to me in a letter. It was a bombshell. I'd never before heard of a Jewish person converting, but because of our distance from non-Jews and fear of Christianity and our inward-looking community, I knew it would be regarded as a scandal. I wrote back to her, however, saying that if that was what she wanted to do, she should do it. It turned out that I was the only one of her close friends and relatives who gave her encouragement. Her parents threatened to commit suicide; friends like Ora were horrified, citing the Index, the now-discredited list of books banned to Catholic readers, as an example of the repressive nature of Catholicism, never mind its history of intolerance -- the Inquisition, the Pope's behavior during the war, its anti-Semitic stance; others thought she was crazy (I think the idea of her attachment to what they saw as a fundamentalist cause was

as abhorrent as the particular cause she'd chosen). There were some friends and acquaintances, probably not Jewish, who were more neutral about her conversion.

But Rose did it. She became a practicing and lifelong devout believer, and found allies with friends such as Heather Boyd, who'd taught her Old English at Wits, and her husband Charles, and other Catholic friends of theirs.

For her job at the University of South Africa, an institution based in Pretoria, which conducted most of its education through correspondence courses, Rose worked with a group of academics. She moved to Pretoria, a place she grew to dislike intensely. She had few friends there, and was lonely and unstimulated. Although we now lived nearer to each other than the years she'd been in Pietermaritzburg or Roma, we did not see each other often. Pretoria was only thirty-six miles from Johannesburg -- three quarters of an hour in today's world, but far apart in mindset and ease of travel in the 1950s. The Pretoria-Johannesburg road was narrow, train connection indirect, telephone calls difficult, since Rose didn't have a phone. We continued writing letters, a voluminous correspondence that lasted from 1957 to 1961.

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I had stopped taking piano lessons with Adelaide Newman by the time I got to university. It was evident that music was not going to be my career, and I began to feel it was pointless to go on having lessons and practicing. But music was important to me, and I had had an excellent musical training. Adelaide suggested that I would find chamber music enjoyable, and directed me to Betty Pack.

Betty Pack was a cellist who, by the time I met her in 1959, was earning a living for the family by teaching individual students, but more importantly conducting and training a youth string orchestra and running chamber music groups. Betty was the acknowledged leader of the family and earlier on, had formed the Pack sisters who performed in salons and hotel dining rooms. The other sisters were Mrs. Pack-Lewin (there must have been a Mr. Lewin, but he was nowhere in evidence); Sophie and Sara. None of the sisters, except Mrs. Lewin, had married, as far as I knew.

On Adelaide's referral she auditioned me, and placed me in a group. Her method was to lead the group in learning and practicing one chamber work for the entire year, and then have it perform at her end-of year concert. The work she chose for me was the Schumann Piano Quintet. The other players were Alan Solomon, first violin, a second violinist, Marian Pack-Lewin cellist, and Sara Pack a weak violist, drafted to fill the slot. I was the only paying member; the rewards for Alan, almost a member of the family, and Marian were their education and practice in the chamber music literature.

The group met on Saturday afternoons at the Pack's house in Orange Grove. The music room, added on to a small house, was itself not large, and it had to contain a grand piano, five players and Betty. She was a handsome lively woman, with jet black hair (she was no longer young), plump and given to wearing frilly blouses, flouncy skirts and honeysuckle scent. The combination of crowding, crashing music and perfumed air was overpowering on a warm day.

But nothing comes close to the exhilaration of joining the sounds you make to those of the other players to create a living whole, especially when the players are good, which enough of us were. During the year Betty arranged concerts and carloads of us would travel to Dutch Reformed churches in outlying places I'd never been to, and play for appreciative local audience. Betty's high spirits made these trips fun. The next year we studied the Brahms G Minor Quartet, harder technically and less satisfying to play.

Betty once told me that when she was six, she saw a cello in a shop-window, and determined that she would devote her life to that instrument. The sisters had never been out of South Africa. They wanted to visit Europe and hear great music, but Betty said "I don't want to do a two-week trip and rush from place to place. I want to stay for a while." I hope she got her wish.

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The center of Johannesburg, town as we called it, was a crowded, vital place. The city was young. Before 1886, when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, it was a treeless, grassy place of rolling hills and rocky descents. It became overnight the focus of the world's greatest gold rush, and a gridded city of small blocks was laid

out with streets running due north and south, due east and west. In fact there were two grids of slightly different size which gave an awkward offset along one of the east-west streets. Johannesburg may be the only major city named after the two surveyors who laid it out, both named Johannes.

When I got to know the downtown, it was sixty or so years old. The original corrugated iron buildings were gone, but many of the second generation of Victorian and Edwardian buildings stood. Most of the sidewalks were covered with a canopy to protect pedestrians from the hot sun or pouring rain. In the older buildings, they were supported by cast iron columns near the sidewalk's edge; in time cantilevered canopies took their place. Through some of the blocks there were two-story arcades, roofed with glass set in Victorian cast iron, and lined with small businesses: dry cleaners, stamp shops, candy stores and so on. But as Johannesburg modernized, they vanished in the rubble of the building being torn down.

The streets were filled with white shoppers, and in those days, one dressed up to go to town. The African presence gave an exotic touch to the scene. We were in Africa, but we were not of Africa, and Africans all around us gave town an identity different from the English cities that it derived from. At lunchtime African men on their break lounged on the curb or on improvised seats made out of wooden fruit crates. A popular game board was marked out on the pavement in chalk, with bottle caps used as the playing pieces. Women carried their babies on their backs in a sling of blankets, with the baby pressed against the mother's warm body and leaving the mother's hands free for carrying things. Sometimes one would see a line of new recruits to the mines, dressed in tribal or rural costume, being led from the railroad station across town to their new lodgings at the mines. On Saturday mornings, when crowds were thicker, trios of picanninies, African boys, performed piercing irresistible music on their penny whistles, surrounded by circles of white people who tossed coins to them, relieved for a few minutes from their pressing tasks.

There were beggars, one particularly horrific one who was merely a torso on a skateboard (but the whites hated beggars, and stories were passed around about how rich they really were, and how at the end of the day, they'd go around the block and get into a car to be driven home by their chauffeurs).

In and among the hard-edged city of streets and buildings were a few blocks set aside for parks. The City Hall had been built on one of these, facing the Old Post Office, a neo-classical pile. The Public Library was fronted with a landscaped setting of immaculate lawns and flower beds, fenced off, and approached by a broad walkway lined with benches. But these amenities were controversial, as the benches were often occupied by drunks, white men and women, collapsed on them, dozing, drinking out of bottles in paper bags. What to do about these disreputable people? Remove the benches!

The flower stands near the Library were the domain of Indians, mostly women, who presided over banks of brilliantly colored flowers, quite cheap, which they'd deftly wrap in a paper cone for the purchaser. Behind the Library was the Indian quarter, several overused blocks of thriving shops and crowded flats above. White people, as well as blacks, did some of their shopping there. One large men's clothing store was known as a place for good merchandise at an attractive price. Since Joh'burg was laid out on a grid, any deviation from it was notable, and Diagonal Street was well known as the center of the Indian area. It was lined with open fronted shops selling fruit and vegetables, foodstuffs and goods for the African trade. Dad had a favorite shop there that he patronized. On Thursdays after work, he'd drive there to shop for bulk fruit and vegetables, If I was with him, I'd sit in the car, looking at the barrels of gaudy spices, lentils and beans, nuts and dried fruit, while Dad bought wooden crates of pawpaws, mangos and oranges which the vendor would load into the boot of the car. Just next to the Indian area was the massive bulk of Anglo-American's building, which owned and operated the mines.

From the main north-south streets in town, one could glimpse the mine dumps to the south. These were raw yellow in color, man-made hills of tailings from the mine processes, but so polluted with cyanide that for years nothing would grow on them. Only the oldest ones supported thin stalks of grass. Their sloping sides eroded over the years, and those unlucky people who lived in the Southern suburbs endured wind storms of gritty dust. Children were warned not to play on them, but there were occasional stories of boys buried in sand as they sledded down the inviting slopes. The mines in the center of Joh'burg were worked out by the fifties and fields further and further away in the gigantic rim of gold-bearing rock were being worked by more modern methods.

The deepest mine, Western Deep, was six thousand feet deep, the same distance that Joh'burg sat above sea level, so the bottom of the mine was level with the sea, though hundreds of miles away from it. The center of Joh'burg was undermined by many tunnels at different levels. We'd feel the ground shudder under our feet and call it an earth tremor, a rock fall. There'd be a major collapse and hundreds of miners could be trapped. Rescue efforts would be strenuous, sometimes successful, but there were times when the collapse of branching corridors entombed the miners. One of the most devastating was at Brookhaven, about 1960, when 400 miners died. All black. But it was an event mourned in the papers, and even noted in a sermon at shul.

The center of town was commercial, but its fringes revealed the power that ran the city. To the south the mines, to the west, the Stock Exchange, Anglo-American and the main police headquarters at Marshall Square. To the north was the railroad, which cut across the city east to west and comprised both the long-distance lines and the electrified lines that served the towns on the East and West Rand and the vast and growing black township of Soweto (a concocted African-sounding name that stood for South West Townships).

At the end of a university day, I would sometimes walk from Wits to Dad's shop in town to get a lift home. The main thoroughfare past the university, Jan Smuts Avenue, would be thick with traffic flowing from the city; there were a few blocks of small apartments and old-fashioned houses, then three huge cooling towers emitting steam from electricity production would loom across the railroad tracks. When the sun was low in winter, the red glow from a sunset in a dusty country would reflect in the branching steel tracks disappearing to the west, which one would see through the wire fences on the side of the bridges designed to prevent men from urinating on the tracks and getting electrocuted as their stream of piss connected with electrified catenary wires. I would see the crowded trains hurtling underneath carrying workers home,

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As whites we lived in a world; parallel to that of the blacks. Black Africans were known by whites by a number of names, ranging from the derogatory to the bureaucratic. The worst name was "kaffer," a word that came from the Arabic *kafir*,

which meant infidel. It must have come down the east coast of Africa. "Nigger" was not much used, through sometimes "nig" or "the nigs" was. Jews would slip into the Yiddish word *shvartzes*, blacks, as a way, they thought, of hiding what they talked about. "Natives" was a neutral term, but as it meant those born in the place, it would have applied to many whites, too. "Africans" later became a polite word used by liberals. "Non-Whites" (in Afrikaans, "Nie Blankes") and "Non-Europeans" were the official terms, defining the blacks by what they were not. The collective ethnographic word used was "Bantu," as one might talk of Caucasians or Semitic peoples. And what the black people called themselves, I don't know; probably by the tribal names, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, and so on.

When I say that we lived in a parallel world to blacks, I mean that the two worlds existed in the same place at the same time. There was of course much connection between the two worlds, but it was strictly defined in terms a master-servant, employer-workers or consumer-server.

There was strict residential segregation: whites lived in residential areas, suburbs; blacks lived in townships or locations -- two designations of areas that must have had some official origin and maybe there was a distinction between them, but everyone used them interchangeably. Blacks also lived in squatter settlements and slums and rural areas and the reserves. In Joh'burg some of the black areas were so well known that their mere names were enough to conjure up an image, even though few whites had been into them. Sophiatown was an area of small houses and shacks, a physical catastrophe with unpaved streets, minimal services, bad lighting at night, and violence, but with the rich community life of a slum. Shamefully it was bulldozed in the 1950s and supplanted by a white Afrikaner suburb called Triomf.

In the same southwestern direction was the vast housing scheme of Soweto. I went there on a tour with some visiting architectural dignitary and was appalled at the soulless carpet of diminutive single family houses of concrete block and corrugated asbestos roofs, which spread to the horizon and beyond, with unpaved treeless streets and few street lights, a low density undifferentiated orderly wilderness of houses. Best known to residents of the northern suburbs was Alexandra, an anomaly among black areas as it was a freehold area where blacks could own a plot of land and house. Alexandra, or at least the turn-off to it, cold be seen from the

main Johannesburg-Pretoria road; and the crowded green PUTCO buses that roared down Louis Botha Avenue, spewing diesel fumes had Alexandra as their destination, along with the many bicyclists riding the ten-mile distance to town starting in the early hours of the morning. Alexandra was once well beyond any white area, but as white Joh'burg spread its own carpet of houses with lawns, gardens, and swimming pools, the two worlds met.

Blacks lived in these and other areas set aside for them, but of course many blacks lived in white areas, as servants in rooms behind the main house. Even families of modest means employed one and more commonly two servants, a man to do the heavy work polishing floors, washing the cars, digging and watering the garden, cleaning windows, polishing the outdoor steps and stoep. The woman servant would be the cook and dishwasher, bedmaker and duster, nanny to young children and sometimes washer of clothes. The servants were paid monthly in cash, and provided with food and their rooms.

As well as domestic servants, black men were the delivery "boys," pedaling on their bicycles to deliver groceries, meat and newspapers. They did the twice-weekly runs of picking up the dustbins in backyards, running with them up the driveways to dump their contents in the garbage truck and running back to leave them in the backyards, a scramble to keep up with the truck moving slowly up the street. They delivered coal in heavy sacks on their backs, they moved furniture, they repaired streets with picks and shovels, they swept the streets and sidewalks, they carried the sack of mail that the postman would deliver, they pumped gas and washed windshields.

In short, all manual labor was done by blacks. But it was a system accepted seemingly by all: whites expected all of this labor to be done by blacks and paid scantily for it; blacks needed work and most were not educated for anything else and had no skills, except for those needed to perform their tasks of cooking, cleaning, gardening and the attributes of deference, cheerfulness and reliability they needed to keep their jobs.

Most families' closest acquaintance with blacks was with their servants (the men folk also knew them as workers at the office, shop or factory.) We employed two servants both in Dunbar Street and Highlands North. Some white families

maintained a degree of friendliness with the servants, a friendliness belied by the complete power the family had of the servant's job and abode. We maintained a formal distance from our servants. Mom would teach a new woman servant how to cook the way she wanted, following the dictates of *kashrut*, keeping kosher, and sometimes how to bake, although she usually did the baking herself. She'd instruct the man servant on the kind of cleaning she wanted, and set the regimes of cleaning. As children, we were told to be polite and never cheeky to the servants. Mom was addressed as "Madam," Dad as "Master" and we children as "Master Leon, Stanley or Avron."

From the time we established our own home in Dunbar Street, we always had two servants. In Dunbar Street, they lived in the servants' rooms at the back of the backyard. Each had his or own room, about ten by ten feet, with cement floor and high up windows near the roof so that one could not see in. The employers would provide an iron bedstead, a cupboard for clothes and a chair. In our later house, the servants' rooms had electricity, and were provided with electric heaters, though at Dunbar Street, the servants went to bed by candlelight. To the basic furnishings the employer provided, the servants added their own touches. They always stood the legs of the bed on a couple of bricks to raise it off the floor; why they did this, I don't know. There'd be a night table made of a wooden fruit crate, covered with an embroidered tray cloth, calendars on the walls, suitcases used as tables. We never went into the servants' rooms, though we could peep in when the doors stood open.

The servants customarily had Thursday afternoons off, and alternate Sunday afternoons. They worked from early in the morning starting before breakfast and ending after they had cleaned up from the evening meal. There were, of course, a number of hours in the afternoon when they'd finished their work, and went back to their rooms or sat in the sun. They prepared their own meals, which consisted of a staple amount of mielie meal, the finely ground white corn meal which they cooked to a stiff porridge, and ate with a meaty sauce in the evening, and plain, I believe, at other meals. They drank strong cups of tea with milk and sugar, as we all did, and cut thick slices of brown bread which they slathered with jams out of cans, the same as we did. They would not eat eggs or fish. Sometimes, after our meals, Mom would tell them to take what was left over. They had their own eating utensils; once at Dunbar Street I went into the kitchen for a soup spoon, took Lena's,

and used it to eat with. When I discovered whose spoon in was, I went and washed my mouth out thoroughly.

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Grandpa, who'd been healthy all of his life, developed a hateful ailment two or three years before he died. He started hiccoughing, from what cause no one knew, and couldn't stop. Doctors of all kinds were consulted, various medications and treatments tried, but nothing really helped. So from being a vigorous independent elderly man, he was reduced to a pitiful figure with rheumy eyes, incapable of much conversation with anyone, without interest in anything. A sad ending to his life.

Grandpa died on May 10, 1959, seventeen years to the day on which Harry had died. When a tombstone was set over his grave a year later, according to Jewish custom, a plaque was added commemorating Harry's death, as he had never had a grave but only a watery resting place somewhere in the Mediterranean. When Leon last visited the grave, the plaque was gone.

Grandpa left a large estate. The family was not happy that a notice about it appeared in the newspaper as they did not want strangers to know about it. The will turned out to be one of Byzantine complexity. He left the bulk of his estate to support his widow and daughters. On the death of each daughter, money was then released to the children of that daughter. Almost forty years later, the estate is still in effect, having been administered all these years by one or more family representatives, guided by an accountant who became the expert on understanding the intricacies.

Granny bore up through Eli's illness, putting up with the stream of nurses hired to look after him. She hated having strangers in the house, and the sons-in-law and daughters put in a lot of coaching and support to any of the nurses who looked as if they would stay.

After Grandpa died, after the days of sitting shiva and greeting the stream of family visitors, there was the question of what Granny would do. The answer came immediately after the question. None of the daughters would consider for a minute having Granny live with them; she would be best off staying on in the house. But

she couldn't stay by herself; so a companion was the solution. Granny went through a number of elderly companions reduced by straitened circumstances to taking on the job of living with elderly women of means. But just as Granny had hated having nurses in the house, she found the presence of these necessary strangers equally hateful. The women were not Jewish, and Granny was not comfortable with that; and their attempts at conversation with her were awkward. Again the sons-in-law and daughters talked to the companions on the side, soothing and encouraging them and probably adding to their pay. But Granny couldn't abide them; accusations flew, brooches were believed to be missing, and the companions would depart, leaving the problem of finding, interviewing and introducing a new party to this fretful household.

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How did we -- as white middle-class South Africans -- tolerate this system of segregation? We knew it was unjust, and believed that it would come to an end at some time in the future. But that time was remote. The cheap labor made the lives of white South Africans comfortable, the Africans needed jobs, and changing the system seemed a monumental and impossible task. But acting on a liberal impulse, organizations sprang up to feed, provide clothing, educate or offer legal assistance to Africans caught in the thicket of laws and regulations. At Wits, students established the African Night School to teach black employees of the university to read. There were organizations that took part in the African Feeding Schemes, which took meals to places like Alexandra to feed hungry inhabitants. Segregation continued, becoming more rigorous as the Nationalist Party became entrenched. The Nationalists came into power in 1948, and though the color bar and other customs and laws of separation of the races had existed under previous governments, the Nationalists introduced the towering system of apartheid, in which all aspects of life for Africans were subjected to more and more control and repression.

There were people, black and white, who opposed and struggled again apartheid, impossible as it seemed to us to make a dent in its iron curtain. There was a small communist party, hounded by the police; there was the larger Liberal Party, which tried to bring about change through legal and legislative means; among people of

color there was the African National Congress becoming more militant as the Nats became more intransigent; and numerous other organizations.

Wits was regarded as a university with a liberal tradition. It accepted a small number of black or other colored students; mostly they did a liberal arts degree, preparatory to becoming teachers or lawyers. There were none studying architecture. There were two Chinese students in my classes, however. Given South Africa's system of segregation, I had never met anyone of Chinese extraction, but found "they were just like everyone else." One of the active organizations at Wits was the SLA, Students' Liberal Association, which held lunch time meetings featuring speakers or organizing protests. A speaker I heard one lunchtime was Father Trevor Huddleston, an English missionary whose ideas of equality made him a thorn in the flesh of the authorities. Liberal views, resolutions, and protests also surfaced in the large meetings held in the Great Hall and run by the SRC, the Student Representative Council. In these meetings engineering students occupied the back left-hand block of seats and heckled and disrupted the meetings, a mixture of conviction and entertainment for them.

Some students became caught up in these anti-government activities promoted by the different parties and factions. I was not one of them; though interested in the fight against apartheid, my interest did not lead to participation.

Although apartheid wrought real hardship on the lives of people of color -- and it would get worse -- the government's fanatical desire to extend segregation to all aspects of life led to some ridiculous results. I was working at Kennedy, Furner, Irvine-Smith and Joubert, architects for the new railway station. South African Railways was engaged in a huge project to add onto the old station, and provide more tracks and amenities than the old one did. The old station, at the foot of Eloff Street, was a graceful building with steps down to a large atrium with four scalloped ponds with goldfish in them and far above, corresponding openings in the roof open to the sky. The station was a gracious entry to the city and had a restaurant thought prestigious enough to dine in, even when one wasn't on a journey.

The new station was built behind the old; it had an entrance approached by car and taxi; plenty of parking; and all amenities like waiting areas, notice boards, toilets, eating places and everything one might need. Johannesburg's station was not a

terminal but stood above the tracks that ran underneath; one descended by stair or lift to the platforms below. But the architects for whom I worked did not have the flair of the architects of the original station; they introduced too many patterns into the fabric of the huge vaulted space so that the floor, window walls, and ceiling each had its own individual pattern and materials, making the place visually confusing and unattractive.

Since apartheid was the country's policy, different races could, of course, not use the same facilities, and Africans and other people of color, to use the modern phrase, had their own station, parallel to the "white one," a few hundred yards east. Africans were major users of the commuter trains that rushed back and forth from Soweto, the vast spread-out residential area southwest of Johannesburg's center. The new station for this large traveling population was also grand, though not as grandiose as the white one. And one quaint feature of the arrangement was that on long distance trains, whites descended to platforms and boarded the front coaches of a train; while blacks descended to their platforms and got onto the rear coaches *of the same train*! But short of running two trains separated by race, too expensive for South African Railways to contemplate, what was one to do?

Most of my work, as I recall, was on an innovative building in the station complex, the Air Terminal. Here, if one was going to Jan Smuts Airport, twenty miles away, one could check in and ride a bus to the airport. The Air Terminal was circular, with a domed roof, a little like a mushroom. Travelers being dropped off by car entered on one side of the circular waiting area, where they could check their luggage, be ticketed, have a snack, use the toilet facilities, and wait for the bus which picked them up on the opposite side from where they had entered. This entrance-wait-sequence, as architects might call it, did have a problem under apartheid rules; although blacks could enter and exit at the same places as whites, what to do about the intervening space? This was solved by having black travelers (of which there were few) diverted at the entrance lobby and proceed through a series of rooms along the periphery of the circular building to emerge at the station exit and board the bus.

Now I mention "toilet facilities" above, because I spent a lot of time doing working drawings for them. There were toilets for whites, toilets for blacks, toilets for coloreds, and toilets for Asiatic. And of course they were each separated by men and

women. So this building had eight toilets. We laughed about it at the office, but nevertheless incorporated them into the design.

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All of what I described above was my public life, but I had a private life as well. My Secret (of being attracted to men rather than women) became more and more painful as my adolescence went on. At high school and Habonim, in the earlier years at least, boys and girls could be friends and form part of a group in which one's sexuality was in the background. But by the end of high school, when we were seventeen or eighteen, dating was starting to happen, usually not among boys and girls who saw each other every day. At university, there was definite pairing off, and by the end of my long architecture course in 1959, I found that most of my former male companions and acquaintances were getting married. My cousin Geoffrey met Cynthia Katz, a bright, warm and friendly girl and they married. Leon brought Ann Prosser, a pretty dark-haired girl for lunch on Sunday, and they got married at the end of 1958. Aubrey Lurie, whom I hadn't really seen for a number of years as our paths of medicine and architecture diverged, married; friends in my class, Markie Berns, Sid Feitelberg, Mike Shoul got married in the last years of our course. I began to feel isolated and lonely, and would have nothing to do on a Saturday evening except go to a movie with my parents and Aunty Ann and Uncle Ike, feeling conspicuous and hoping not to bump into anyone I knew during the evening.

My most constant companion during these last years of the 1950s was Stan Peskin. He was a boy a year or two older than me; I must have met him through the University Players crowd. Stan was passionate about movies and opera; a visit to his flat, where he lived with his parents, usually had an overloud background accompaniment of Wagner or Verdi; we frequently went to the movies and analyzed and discussed them ad nauseam afterwards. Stan had a good deal of charm, mixed with some aggressiveness. He too was not dating, though he had intense friendships with women, some of whom were married. In our friendship, I let him talk a lot; he was a great talker. We were constant companions, but not intimate ones, and I did not tell him about my Secret.

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One day I got a phone call from Glenda Meltzer, a Habonim friend. She told me about an African musical that was being written and produced, and asked if I would like to work backstage on it. Yes, I would. I found out that Stan Peskin was doing backstage work, too. The musical was "King Kong," and it turned out to be a stunning success, with tours after its South African run to London and New York.

The story, which I think was true, was about a heavyweight boxer, King Kong, who cleans up all his competition in South Africa and applies to go overseas to find a true competitor. But the authorities won't allow him to leave. Years ago, an undefeated African boxer travelled overseas and killed his British counterpart in the ring. On his return home the local African population gave him a hero's welcome. The authorities were not going to risk this again. So King Kong frustrated by this ban, took to drink and strangled his girl friend because he thought she was cheating on him.

In the stage version of the story the girl friend was played by Miriam Makeba, well known to Africans from her prolific recordings but not known to whites at all. The scene in "King Kong" I remember most vividly was in the shebeen, "Back of the Moon." Shebeens were the illegal, cosy drinking places in the townships; and the queen was played by Makeba. "Back of the Moon," had an infectious music of jazz and African rhythms, and out of the dancing crowd doing the *kwela,* a dance to the music of African penny whistles, emerged Miriam Makeba, a curvaceous figure in a tight white dress, dancing and twitching her bottom.

In this production, all the actors were black, and except for the composer, all the production staff were white: Todd Matchekeza was the composer and pianist, aided by Stanley Myers; the director was Leon Gluckman, a well-known theatrical director in Joh'burg; the stage designer was Arthur Goldreich; and the choreographer was Arnold Dover. I spent many evenings shifting sets, which was not arduous, and loved being connected to this successful, uniquely South African show. Ironically, in the backstage world, there was not much mixing between blacks and whites, except for the leading performers and production directors, but it was clear that in this case, the black actors and singers were in the superior position above the white backstage staff.

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The only person I had told about my secret was Rose. I was on vacation in Cape Town and saw Rose, who was visiting her parents. She wanted to go to the University of Pietermaritzburg to take a B.A. Honours degree in English, but needed to go to that city for an interview. It was about 1500 miles from Cape Town and she didn't have the means to get there. So she asked me if I would hitchhike there with her. I said "yes." It sounded like an adventure, but on thinking about it, I began to feel apprehensive about the intimate situations we might get into with each other on these travels, and I thought the best way to forestall any discomfort was to tell Rose that I thought I was a homosexual. We successfully hitchhiked to Pietermaritzburg and back along the Garden Route, getting short and long rides from farmers, commercial travelers, Africans and a varied assortment of people. One of these drivers wanted to sleep, so he lay down on the back seat, and Rose and I were up front. Our longest wait for a ride was in a place called Humansdorp where we stayed overnight in a service station, and were fed pineapples by the attendant, as they were starting to rot in the fields. Rose persuaded me to consult a psychiatrist about my "problem," and I went to see Dr. Max Feldman when I got back to Joh'burg. He was the brother of Jackie, Simon's wife (Simon was Rose's brother). I saw Dr. Feldman for a number of years, off and on; these sessions did not do much to change my sexual orientation.

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I drifted through my last few years in South Africa, working at a job I was not enchanted with, having a sparse social life, not knowing where my life was going. Then I decided I needed to make a future for myself.

PART V: LEAVING

How did I get the idea that I should leave South Africa and study abroad? It's hard to remember now. But at my job the days were long, the work unvaried, the amount of detail to be kept track of had to be accurate. I could do it all, I did it all. But the prospect of doing this for the rest of my life was daunting. I was not going to rise up in this firm; I was never going to design buildings; I was not good at the easy sociability that would bring me clients, if I decided to go on my own. So I began to think of ways of escaping from this career I had prepared for. The only route I could see was to go into city planning. We'd had a planning course in the last year of architecture school. I found it fascinating, or rather, found the study of town and city history, fascinating because it was already a passion of mine.

Our course at Wits had been called "Town Planning," which was the British name of this field. But English architecture and town design seemed dreary to me; the post-war British New Towns had dull uninspired buildings. I didn't want to study that. So I set my sights on the United States, and planned to do a master's degree in city planning at one of the schools that offered such a course. I scouted around for information on planning schools in the U.S., consulting the U.S. Information Agency in town, and sent away for information from several schools. There was one lecturer at Wits who'd studied in the U.S., Julian Beinart. I went to see him; he was dressed in the latest ivy league fashion: crew cut, narrow suit and jacket, button-down collar. But I didn't learn anything useful from him. Then, as any student has to, I completed the applications for Yale, MIT and Berkeley. I was accepted at Yale and MIT and chose MIT as it was in Boston, a wise choice, as it turned out, since New Haven is a dull place. My application to MIT included an essay on Lewis Mumford, a writer on urban history and planning who must have inspired generations of would-be planners. In retrospect, I did not have the slightest idea of what this course of study or life choice would mean. I saw it as an escape -- from my boring job and my repressed life. It was a chance to restart my life.

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What did it mean to be a South African? More to the point, what did it mean to us (the Jewish community) and me to be a South African? South Africa was and is a complex society made up of Blacks with many tribal loyalties, Coloureds -- people of mixed race, Indians and Whites. The white community had a major division of English and Afrikaans speaking persons, and within the former, a sprinkling of ethnic groups -- though we did not know the word yet -- but used national identities to denote different types of people -- Portuguese, Greeks, Italians. Being Jewish, the group I belonged to seemed the most distinct of the subgroups. There was no attempt, at a national level, to assimilate or acculturate the groups to form a nation. Someone remarked on the irony of South Africa's motto "Eendracht Maakt Macht," a Dutch adage meaning "Unity is Strength" coined when the four provinces formed the Union of South Africa in 1910. But that unity was belied by a country with two official languages, two national anthems, and three capitals.

South Africa's national anthems are instructive. For English speakers, "God save the King" (later Queen) upheld a distant monarchy, which had little to do with our lives, but gave solace to those transported Britons who still called England "home."

God save our gracious Queen,
Long life our gracious Queen,
God save the Queen.
Send her victorious
Happy and glorious
Long to reign over us.
God save the Queen.

For Afrikaans speakers, "Die Stem," expressed the sacrifice that their forebears had made to form their own distinctive nationality. Here are the words of "Die Stem," the Voice, the Call.

From the blue of our heaven,
From the depth of the sea,
From our far-flung plains
Where the cliffs give back an echo
With the creaking of ox wagons,

Rises the call of our beloved,
Of our land South Africa.
We will answer your call.
We will sacrifice what you want.
We will live, we will die
For you, South Africa.

Well, perhaps the Afrikaners, especially the older ones, did feel that they would sacrifice all for South Africa, because of the suffering their forebears had gone through to forge a white nation in the interior of South Africa. Their founding myth was that of independent farmers, boers, who'd picked up and left the British-ruled fringes of the country in the Cape, and made an arduous trek over mountains and plains, fighting off indigenous tribes, to set up their own republics, giving a new word to the English language, "trek."

But to us, that call for sacrifice didn't mean a thing; saving the king (or queen) meant a little more because it connected us to civilization, currently centered in England.

South Africa presented us with no ideology. It offered us, its white inhabitants, the famed "South African way of life": sunshine, beauty and comfort, freedom from chores. But it was a poor substitute for an ideology. Americans offered its citizens "the land of the free and the home of the brave," a promise of equality and liberty (however unevenly worked out); and France offered Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, equally noble ideals. South Africa offered only geography and climate, and for whites, cheap labor. It's revealing that immigrants to New York were greeted by the Statue of Liberty, the lady with a lamp, offering refuge to the "huddled masses yearning to be free"; immigrants arriving at Cape Town saw only the magnificent spectacle of Table Mountain, promising a land of scenic marvels but enigmatic in its welcome.

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I finished my architecture course when I was 23, and embarked on a few short-term jobs in architects' offices before finding a more stable one. I was still living at home and didn't have a car. It was customary in our community for young men and

women to continue living at home with their parents until they married. Leon had escaped this by taking a job in Pretoria.

So on the occasions that I went out on a Saturday night, I had to make arrangements to borrow my parent's car. That in itself was usually not a problem. What was a problem was that Mom would not go to sleep until I got home, and on those occasions when I got into a protracted conversation or gave someone a ride home and the time slipped by, I would get home to be greeted by Mom, pale and furious.

So going against all the practice in my family, and encouraged by Rose, I rented a studio apartment in Hillbrow. Dad was very upset, Granny cried -- I suppose they saw it as a rejection of my own home and an opportunity for licentiousness.

I was working at Kennedy, Furner, Irvine-Smith and Joubert, the station architects, and could walk from there to the office where I worked -- office being a grandiose name for the temporary hut that had been set up on the edge of the Johannesburg Railway Station on Wanderer's Street.

My work, and that of the other juniors in the office was to produce working drawings for the new station building and the many other aspects of the station complex. The main drafting room had drawing stations for six draftsmen; it was presided over by an older man, Oliver Young who'd lost an eye in the war and had a black eye-patch (we called him Mr. Young). Our daily work was in front of a drawing board, which we did all day, with few field trips out of the office. There was some chatter in the drafting room, usually at tea time; tea and biscuits were served twice a day by the black office "boy," an adult man who cleaned the offices and ran errands.

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Once I knew that I'd be leaving, I moved home from my flat to save money. I was still working. My classes at MIT were to begin September 5, but I planned a trip so that I'd fly to London, spend a few weeks in England and then take a ship to the United States. Ocean liners, even then were on the way out; I wanted the experience of going on one.

Towards the end of June, Dad had been ill and in bed; he recovered and was bursting with pride about my imminent departure to study overseas. He bought me a book on London, so that I could start deciding what to see and visit. And touchingly, he learned how to pronounce the words that MIT stood for, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He'd always had a struggle to pronounce difficult words, and must have practiced these particular ones in private so that he could tell people what MIT, or "mitt," as some called it, stood for.

One Saturday morning, July the first, he and Mom discussed whether he and I should go into town to do some shopping or stay at home. "Make up your own mind for once," Mom snapped, uncharacteristically. He decided to stay home. Mom was in the kitchen, I was playing the piano and Avron was in his room.

We heard a crash and thud in the hallway, and all rushed there from where we were. Dad had dropped like a tree, dead.

Mom took charge. She yelled to me to call the doctor, reciting the phone numbers she'd memorized. He wasn't there. I called the clinic where he sometimes worked. Not there either. I left urgent messages. And called again a minute later. I called Leon and Ann's house, leaving frantic messages.

In the meantime, Edwin and our maid carried Dad and laid him on his bed. Then they drew the blinds and made sympathetic noises. "Open the blinds," Mom ordered, "The doctor's coming." But Dad was obviously gone.

In a while our doctor Herbert Segal pulled up and strode into the house. "Herbert, he's gone," Mom greeted him, the other guardian who'd shared the care of this man's long illnesses. Leon and Ann rushed into the house, pale, expecting the worst from the urgency of the messages I'd left.

We consoled each other, and went off privately to cry, tears of released shock rather than grief, at this point. We gathered together again to talk about this shattering event, about Dad's illnesses, about recent revelations about his condition which was worse than I knew. We called the inner circle of relations -- the Steins, the Gordons, Granny, and Dad's nieces. We had a somber lunch in the dining room. Dad's seat

at the head of the table was conspicuously empty. Mom looked at it, and with a suppressed groan, moved into it. She was now the head of the household.

We were struck dumb. There was nothing to be done. The Chevra Kadisha, the Burial Society, had been called; they would take away the body after Shabbat ended and prepare it in the traditional way for burial the next day.

Then the first car pulled up. "Here they come," Mom said with resignation; "they", the trickle of relatives and friends would have to be consoled and talked to, just at the time she'd have wanted to be alone. I called my cousin Mabel in Pretoria and asked her to get a message to Rose, who had no phone, so that she could get a lift to Joh'burg with her.

The funeral was on Sunday, at two o'clock at Westpark Cemetery, the main Jewish cemetery in Johannesburg. We gathered in the assembly place. Leon, Avron and I were the chief mourners; the rabbi put us at the head of the procession behind the simple coffin sitting on its trolley. He slit the front of our shirts, behind our ties, a symbolic vestige of rending one's garments. Menfolk from the mourners, in order of closeness of relationship to Dad, took turns as pallbearers, guiding the coffin on its trolley rather than carrying it.

The site was the next available space in the line of graves; it had been dug in the red earth, now piled at its side. The coffin was lowered by ropes into the grave, and an unknown rabbi conducted a brief service. Then, in order of precedence, Leon, then I, then Avron took a shovelful of earth and threw it on the lid of the coffin. The thud of falling earth was the most awful sound I'd heard.

Then when the men had added the shovelfuls of earth into the hole, we left. African workers at the cemetery would complete the work. People scattered to look for and visit the graves of their lost ones, often hard to find in the dense rows of gray granite tombstones and slabs that edged up the hillside. As a token of their visit, they would leave a pebble on the gravestone.

As a last rite, we washed our hands before returning to our cars and the living world.

Friends and relatives came back to the house for tea. This gathering was disturbed when our friends the Ludwins arrived. No one had called them, and they had just dropped in to see how Dad was.

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I was supposed to leave Joh'burg at the end of July for England and the United States. Of course I wanted to go, but also felt that I should stay now that Dad had died and the family was in mourning. But friends and relatives said "You must go. He was so proud of you. He would have wanted you to go." Mom, too, said, "Go, life has to go on. Go on with your plans. There's nothing you can do here." I was relieved.

I didn't know what to make of my feelings. Had I loved Dad? Had we been close? My memories of him at the time was that of a sick man, with no energy to spare, at a loose end about the house, sitting in the lounge breathing heavily. I had found his presence irritating. There was little to talk to him about.

After our week of mourning in which we sat Shiva, and received visitors who came to pay respects to Mom -- all of her cousins and their spouses visited at least once. We held prayers at the house once. Granny who'd spent a lifetime of being fearful and anxious was for once subdued, weepy, but resigned to this loss.

The few weeks before I left are a blank in my memory. I shopped for clothes. Since there were currency restrictions on how much money one could take out of South Africa, it seemed sensible to stock up on clothes at home so I would not have to spend money on them in the U.S. As it turned out, the clothes I bought were quite unsuitable. I bought heavy woolen clothes for winter, not knowing about America's overheated buildings. I couldn't wear any of them in the U.S. Also I didn't know about the tie-less T-shirted culture of M.I.T., and my clothes were too formal. I never wore them.

I remember hanging out, as we'd call it now, with Rose, Stan Peskin and Evelyn Lazarus. And I remember packing my suitcase. Freda declared herself a master packer and came over to refold clothes and fill my suitcase.

I also drove around the city taking slides of places and people that I thought would represent South Africa to those who knew nothing about it: the mine dumps, penny-whistlers on a downtown sidewalk, African women carrying their babies in a blanket on their backs, as well as some of the better examples of modern architecture in the city. I don't think I ever showed these slides.

But I am puzzled by this empty space in my memory of these few weeks.

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I was booked to fly from Joh'burg to London on the same plane as Auntie Ann and Uncle Ike; they were going on a trip to Europe and would be in London at the same time as me, an outpost of the family till I left for the U.S. The plane we were supposed to take was canceled, so we scurried around to rebook. In the end I didn't travel on the same flight as the Steins did.

The day came. A small group of family and friends came to see me off. I wasn't leaving for ever -- just two years. I hugged Mom and kissed her good-bye. "I'll be back," I said. She may have known better, because this was in fact my departure from South Africa for good. I'd visit but never live there again.

Once in the plane, the mixture of excitement and sadness I was feeling drained away as I settled into the comfortable cocoon of my seat. I could see the terrace of the airport where my well-wishers would be standing to watch the plane take off, although they were too far away to make out.

Then we were off, ascending over scattered houses and trees and folded hills, a bleached winter landscape. We made a stop in Nairobi, where all the passengers got off into a night fragrant with grassy breezes, while Kenyan officials entered the plane to spray it ineffectively against insects traveling with us.

After Nairobi, we settled into an uncomfortable sleep. In the morning, while waiting for breakfast to come around, I looked out of the window. We were just crossing into the Mediterranean. As I watched, the top of Africa edged away out of sight.

[the end]