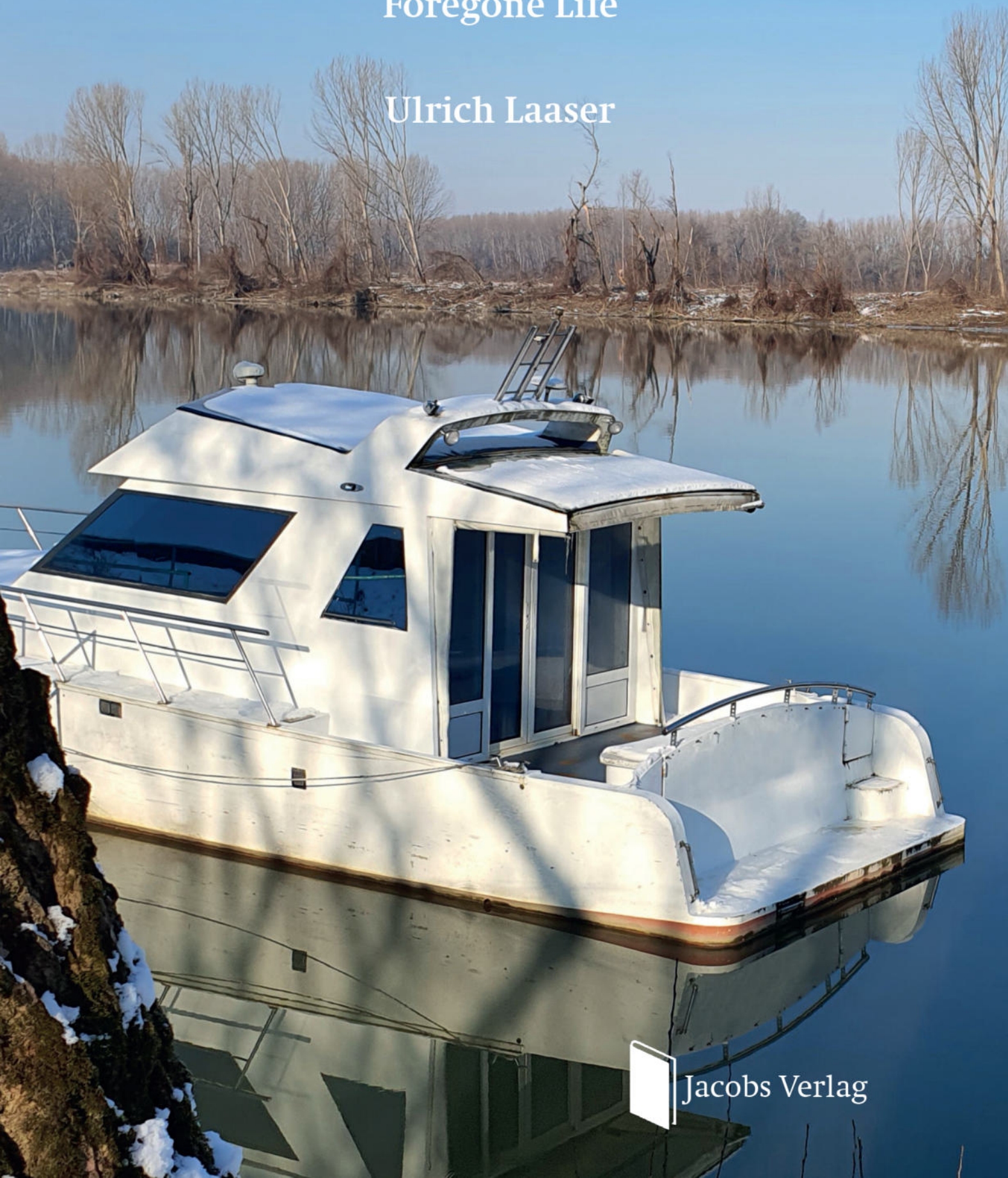


# A Breeze of Wind

Foregone Life

Ulrich Laaser



Jacobs Verlag

Fragments from the past, left lying on the meadow of blown away life. The book describes what remains of the ancestors after two and a half centuries, the first photographs at the end of the 19th century and some stories. The second part contains the author's attempts to recognize himself in poetic inventions.

The author, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Laaser, was born in 1941. His childhood was shaped by the walk from the Sudentenland to Berlin in May 1945 and the blockade of West Berlin in 1948.

He studied medicine and later worked worldwide between Gaza, Liberia and China.

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## Old legends

St. Ursula asked: "How do you know about such things?" and the girl answered: "You see, Saint Ursula, this shy and so terribly timid little plant, deep inside me, this inconspicuous, tortured, torn green that could not grow and could not wither either – constricted by a shell that grew harder and thicker with every year of life – I tore it out of me and threw it among the people – and the more they trampled on it, the more it grew."

## My life

I was born Ulrich Rudolf Laaser on 1 February 1941 in Berlin. Evacuated with my mother to Trautenau (Trutnov) in the Czech Republic in December 1943, we walked back to Berlin for six weeks in May 1945. My father was killed as a soldier during the last days of the war. I remember the blockade planes in 1949 and later a fulfilled time at the Kant-Gymnasium in Spandau. I wrote my doctoral thesis on heat acclimatisation at the Tropical Institute in Tübingen after a self-trial in the climate chamber, worked in a Swiss country doctor's practice, earned degrees in London, and - newly married - in Baltimore. Then I went with my family for two years to the German project hospital in Tahoua, Niger, Africa, and subsequently to the medical university hospital in Cologne for the five-year internal specialist training. In the early eighties, we lived in Neckargemünd near Heidelberg before I took over the management of a state health institute in Bielefeld from 1986 to 1994. I then moved to the Faculty of Health Sciences in Bielefeld, which I had helped to found in the early nineties, and became involved with long-term projects mainly in Palestine and South-Eastern Europe. When my two daughters grew up, I moved to the Faculty of Medicine in Belgrade as a visiting professor and lived primarily in a nearby village for the last few years.

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**Notes:**

- 1) *The following text is translated from German to English by the support of Google Translate*
- 2) *The trains with the Berlin Jews continued from the Grunewald city station to Auschwitz.*
- 3) *Poems without author/s are by Ulrich Laaser.*
- 4) *Texts repeated in different sections are intentional.*
- 5) *Verbatim quotations from letters and other documents are set in italics.*

## A breeze of wind

In a small Serbian town, in 2008: I'm sitting on our terrace - and yet I'm not at home. A breeze comes up from the Sava and rustles the withering leaves of the old cherry tree, which is too close to the covered terrace. What drove me to this place from which, if there weren't a walnut tree, you could see as far as Belgrade? At least the cherry, I'll ask our neighbors, will be felled in the fall, the trunk is already partially dead. What am I doing in this place, right here? But: How exposed in the cosmos and alone I have always felt, even when I am sure of the affection, even the love of my loved ones. Life has always seemed to me like the proverbial ride across Lake Constance: will the ice hold up? Now I think, isn't that an apt picture of my condition, fear of losing control, but fear that doesn't call for caution but to ride faster and faster, even to flee, even though what's behind me is also in front of me. Home nowhere! Not even in Berlin's Grunewald - closest to home. It's not the people there, I hardly knew the neighbors, it's the past. It's the little cross that my mother drew on my forehead when I left for Turkey in 1966, even though I didn't yet know where this initiation journey would lead me; It is the railway sleepers that she laid with her group of women at the Grunewald S-Bahn station, which is now the memorial of track 17<sup>1</sup>. I keep circling around these memories – key experiences.

Strangers in Bielefeld and Belgrade or Baric, a small town nearby, no painful pulling in Spandau of childhood, far away the days of school, although the topography reveals: Nikolei-, Marien-, Wilhelmkirche, the former Kant-Gymnasium, the Pichelsdorfer Street with the Südpark and the Freibücke. That was the world back then, with a tram - numbers 75 and 76 - to Berlin. Maybe home, after all, lost home? I can no longer piece together the fragments of my memory, so they remain stones on the way, not connected by mortar.

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<sup>1</sup> The trains with the Berlin Jews continued from the Grunewald city station



**Part I**  
**Two and a half centuries**  
**The past of my family**

*So, you know. Also, because over the years you have the feeling  
that you should know where you come from.*

*Jelena Bonner: mothers and daughters.*

*Piper, Munich 1992 (p. 30)*

## Where I came from

### The Laaser family

If I haven't miscounted, I was born in Königswusterhausen near Berlin in the thirteenth month of the war. I don't know whether my father Rudolf (Rudolf Otto Wilhelm, called Rudi, born October 15, 1916 in Berlin) was on leave from the front at the time, but I remember moments of our hike from Trautenau in the Sudetenland to Spandau, Folkunger Strasse 15, in the sixty-sixth and last Month of the war: We, my mother Inge, my grandmother Charlotte and my little brother Wolfram miraculously survived. At that time, we didn't know that - according to the report of his friend Friedrich Heer, who later became a left-wing Catholic writer - an American had shot my father off his motorbike near Torgau on the Elbe in the last days of the war (my mother had to declare him after the war for dead, the document shows a date of April 25, 1945). Sometimes, I think my father deliberately exposed himself; In the winter of 1944 he wrote to his wife Inge - my mother - that the most difficult time was coming for all of us.

In the year of the blockade of West Berlin by the Russians I was probably interested for the first time in the ancestors, but even more in the planes of the air bridge that flew over the Thomas Cemetery in Neuköln with the grave of my grandfather Lothar - long since dissolved. Later I often asked myself why I was the way I am but I didn't have any answers and I didn't get them from my dearly beloved mother either. I will now name the names if they make themselves known. Maybe it helps to understand myself.

The oldest known ancestor, the farmer and village mayor Michael La(a)ser, lived at the end of the 18th century in Neu Bukowitz (Polish: Nowy Bukowiec), located in the West Prussian district of Berent, part of today's Pomeranian Voivodeship (Polish: województwo pomorskie, and Kashubian: *Pòmòrszé wòjewództò*), not too far from Bromberg (Polish Bydgoszcz). The name may come from South Tyrol where there is a mountain peak Lazar. Tyroleans were invited to Brandenburg by the Great Elector at the time when the Bishop of Salzburg ordered them to be pressured because of their evangelical faith. My ancestor married a Florentina Schwartz, his son Jakob was born on September 20, 1797 and succeeded him as farmer and village mayor. He married Karoline Selle or Sill from Neu-Paleschken (Nowe Polaszki), born on March 29, 1810, and - probably after her death in childbirth - Catharine Hoffmann. But she could also have been his first wife. Their son Johann Jacob, born on August 24 or 27 or in September 1820 in Bendomin (Bedominek), became a blacksmith and married Eleonore Kapahnke from Hammerberg, also in the Berent district, probably born in 1826. His probably older brother Rudolf Julius lived as Farmer in Hammerberg and married on 8 April 1848 Caroline Pinske, a daughter of farmer Johann Pinske. In this generation, the place name Hammerberg appears for the first time, a place of residence in the former municipality of Prützenwalde in the district of Schlochau (Czluchow). Hammerberg is apparently still called that today because this area - the so-called Polish Corridor - came to Poland in 1919 (responsible registry office Niedamowo). During my visit in 1990 - immediately after the



reunification of Germany and together with Robert Laaser (scion of the American line of the Laasers and Protestant minister in Chicago) - I found no documents there, in the Gothic brick church from Prussian times, but by chance in the cemetery under the bordering bushes graves with broken German tombstones.

A son of Johann Jakob was called Julius August and was born on April 6, 1855. He married Juliane Auguste Steinhorst in 1863, we do not know more about this line of the family. Finally, in this generation there was also a Ferdinand Laaser, born in 1864 and married to Mathilde(a) (1870-1942), who apparently emigrated to the United States and founded the American branch of the family. The brother Rudolf Julius already mentioned had a son Otto Karl, born on September 10, 1890 in Hammerberg. He was a metal worker and apparently also an accountant. In 1913 he went to Berlin, where he died of cancer on July 25, 1942. After giving up his old homeland, he finally moved to Berlin. His brother then opted for Poland and changed his name, I can't find any traces of him. Otto Karl's first marriage was to Emma Margarete Else, née Prange, who died early of tuberculosis. I can still remember her mother "Oma Prange" well from family visits shortly after the war. The son from this first marriage was my father Rudolf; his stepbrother's name was Sigurd (Sike) from his father's second marriage to Margarete Amalie Agnes Zurek, born on September 6, 1894. I can also remember Sigurd and his mother, who lived near us in Spandau on Pichelsdorfer Strasse. Once my younger brother Wolfram (born October 3, 1943) and I ate so many potato pancakes at "Oma Laaser" that we barely made it home to Pichelsdorfer Str. 19. Sigurd or Sike was later an engineer at the Steglitz Clinic. Unfortunately, after his mother's death in 1962, we lost touch. He had looked after us like a father in the immediate post-war period and during the blockade.

Unfortunately, apart from a few letters and a few photos, I know very little about my father Rudolf. Like my brother Wolfram, he loved playing football. The marriage with my mother, concluded on April 26, 1940, lasted - added up - only a few months and was under the double risk of dying, for him as a soldier - although the longest time in the rather quiet Netherlands - and for my mother through the devastating Allied bombing raids - also on the outskirts of Spandau - as described in their letters.

The American branch of the family, who emigrated around the middle of the 19th century (probably founded by Johann Jacob La(a)ser (1820-1901), is also briefly named. There are two names, apparently related to each other: Reinhold (born 1887) and Ferdinand Laaser, the elder (born 1864 as already mentioned), with his son William (born October 27, 1888, married to Clara) and his children William, Thornton, Grevydon, Amanda, Herman, Theodor and Otto - the latter was probably the father of Robert Laaser <sup>2</sup> with whom I was in Hammerberg. This lineage spoke German at home until the beginning of World War II, but then understandably switched to American. Uncle Robert was an American military chaplain during the war and was apparently

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<sup>2</sup> Uncle Robert, born February 25, 1924, married Juanita Wilson

also deployed in West Germany in the first year after the war Robert had two sons, Mark (born July 5, 1950, married to Debra) and David (born August 22, 1956 and married to Janet). Mark and Janet have three C Help: Sarah, Jonathan and Benjamin.

Finally, with Hermann Laaser, there is another Baltic-East German branch. His son, the doctor Ernst Laaser (1863-1922), came to Eilenburg in 1891 from Memel (now Klaipeda in Lithuania). His son Rudolf (1893-1957) took over the practice in 1922 and married Annemarie Forstmann in 1933. I visited her daughter Inez Laaser (married to Christoph Deuchert) in Eilenburg in April 2015 in her listed [Villa Laaser](#).

### **The Weimar family**

My mother Ingeborg Gertrud Laaser was born in Berlin on January 22, 1919 - in the very difficult post-war period. She experienced war and its consequences twice. The oldest known ancestor is Jakob Weimar (spelled as Wimar or Weymar), who came to Berlin with his younger brother Johan around 1700 from Friesenheim in the Palatinate. Both were adherents of Reformed Protestantism. They came together with a larger group of Reformed Palatinate residents and received the town's citizenship in 1711.

In a second marriage (certainly common at the time due to the high maternal mortality rate) Johann Christian (born in 1758 as the son of Johann Weimar) married the 27-year-old Luise Frederike (also Friederike or Friedrita) Goetze or Goetzen (\*1774). The name Frederike appears here for the first time. Her mother's name was Bredereckin, perhaps as Brederecka of Polish origin. The already mentioned son of the two, Adolf Samuel (unlikely at that time that he was the only child) was born on December 30, 1810, he was a militiaman at the XX. Royal Prussian Landwehr Regiment and died of cholera in 1866. In 1844 he married Charlotte Emilie Auguste Schneider (1824-1912) at the age of 20. She is described as a small, petite, dark-haired woman with a beautifully

In 1718 Jakob bought a vineyard, the Kreuzberg, for 850 thalers. Wine was grown on the so-called "round vineyard" until 1840. Then the eldest descendant, Adolf Samuel Weimar, sold several parcels to the Treasury in 1862. The city of Berlin commissioned Karl Friedrich Schinkel to erect the monument that still exists today to commemorate the wars of liberation against Napoleon. But as late as the 20th century there was a remaining trellis on the house of the Gutedel variety, which in earlier decades was exported as far as Sweden and Russia.

proportioned face, an elegant, slightly curved nose, a somewhat large narrow mouth and dark eyes. She has been a very energetic woman. When the revolution broke out in 1848, she took her little one and a half year old daughter in her arms and ran from Kreuzberg to the castle to be there. When her husband Adolf Samuel had to pick up his shotgun, she cried out, according to tradition, *but man, you're not going to shoot at people!* The child in her arms was Bertha Emilie Luise Weimar, born December 18, 1846, died in 1929 after being bedridden for many years as a result of a stroke. On December 2, 1869, she married the widower Julius Otto Heilbron, born on October 5, 1825, in

the Luisenkirche. Bertha had seven siblings, including Frederike, Sophie Friederieke, who married Sips (she had no children). Another was Luise (Lise), she married Oskar Marquardt. Their son Bruno (Brünchen) Marquardt (1878-1916) was a painter and a favorite of my ancestors. He died in front of Verdun in 1916, perhaps also by his own side, because he didn't want to shoot at ... *his friends, the French*.

### **The Heilbron family**

We know little about the ancestors of Julius Otto Heilbron and their origins. At the beginning there is Ascher Abraham Heilbron (died 1857), who came to Brandenburg in 1837 as a particulier (ie alone). It seems that he lived as an inspector in Bärwalde<sup>3</sup> (i.e. Behrwalde or Beerwalde) on an estate of Baron Otto Theodor von Manteuffel<sup>4</sup> or in the family of his brother Georg Wilhelm in rather poor circumstances - together with his second wife Hanna Jakob, who was probably also Jewish (1783?-1842), later changed to Henriette Jacobi. She died of wasting from tuberculosis. A son, whose original name is unknown (perhaps Julius), is said to have come to Bärwalde almost two years earlier at the age of ten (born 1825). Later he protected the Friedrich-Werdersche Gymnasium in Berlin until 1845 and studied law at the University of Berlin until 1849. In 1853 he was baptized Julius Otto, while retaining the surname Heilbron. The christening ceremony took place in the presence of His Excellency, Prime Minister Otto Theodor von Manteuffel, General von Wrangel, President of the Court of Appeal von Strampf and General Superintendent Buechsel. It is reasonable to conclude from this late and high-ranking baptism that Julius Otto was an illegitimate child of Otto Theodor von Manteuffel with Henriette Jacobi, especially since the young man was given the baptismal name Otto after his presumed father. The mysterious origins of our family were very cleverly and day by day hidden. Julius was last a judge and died in 1904, described by his children Lene and Grete as a very fine, lovable old gentleman.

Julius had a total of 19 children from a first marriage to Maria Hellmich, documented in 1853, and his second marriage to Bertha Emilie Luise Weimar (1846-1929), which - concluded in 1869 - was divorced in 1883 at the request of the family. She had bought him out of a bad speculation. My maternal grandfather, Lothar Hans Maximilian, was born in 1880 as the penultimate child. Born in 1941 during the war, he had carved a small sailing boat for my bath tub before he died in 1943; I have kept a self-made mousetrap and now package it as a gift for one of my grandchildren. He only found out about his father after his return from Argentina in 1909 through the mediation of his eldest brother Friedrich (Fritz). In 1913 he married my grandmother, Charlotte Volland, whom he had met while playing tennis.

### **The Volland family**

The oldest fully documented ancestor of my grandmother Charlotte is Johann Thomas Volland,

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<sup>3</sup> The estate was probably on the Baerwalder See, at the extreme end of Brandenburg, about halfway between Hoyerswerda and Goerlitz (presumably the old Baerwalde is now part of Boxberg).

<sup>4</sup> Otto Theodor v. Manteuffel 1805-1882, Prussian Prime Minister 1850-1858

probably a farmer in Grossbrenbach in Thuringia, born in 1763 and died in 1821. He was married to Anna Barbara Roethe (1774-1820). One son is Johann Wilhelm Friedrich (1810-1886), married in 1833 to Johanna Luise Reichmuth (1812-1891). They were followed by Friedrich Emil Volland, born in 1835, as a farmer in Grossbrenbach. Married to Berta Therese Mende since 1836, he had a son named Edmund Robert, born in 1864, who became a master butcher. He married Laura Hedwig Nanny Etzold, called Uma by us, born in Leipzig Konnewitz in 1868 and died around 1955 in a retirement home in Berlin-Kladow. We used to visit them there when we were kids. A daughter of the couple was my grandmother Margarethe Charlotte Volland. Another daughter was Myrtha, married to Hugo Winzer, who died in Russian captivity in 1946. I took care of a daughter Karin Schreyer and her daughter Sandra (born around 1975) in Ilmenau in the nineties.

### The four families of ancestors

HEILBRON	WEIMAR	LAASER	VOLLAND
	Jakob and Johann Weimar (*d. 1680)		
	Johann Christian Weimar (*1758) o1o Johanna o2o 1801 Louis Frederick (Friedrita) Goetze(n) (*1774)	Michael La(a)ser (*1750?) oo Florentina Black	John Thomas Volland (1763-1821) o1o 1795 Anna Barbara Roethe (1774-1820)
Asher Abraham Heilbronn (1800?-1857) o1o Heine Judah o2o 1783 Hanna Jacob (Henriette Jacobi)	Adolf Samuel Weimar (1810-1866) oo 1844 Charlotte Emilie Auguste Schneider (1824-1912) Sophie Friederieke oo Sips	Jakob La(a)ser (*1797) o1o 1810 Carolina(e) Sell(e)/Sill o2o Catharine Hoffmann	Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Volland (1810-1886) oo 1833 Johanna Luise Reichmuth (1812-1891)
<b>Julius Otto Heilbron</b> (1825-1904) o1o 1853 Maria Hellmich (-1868) o2o 1869 (-1883) <b>Bertha Emilie Louise Weimar (1846-1929)</b>	Otto (1845-1866) Bert(h)a Emilie Louise (1846-1929) Paul (1858-1890) Louis William Adolphe Clara oo Hermann Limann	Johann Jacob La(a)ser (1820-1901) oo 1826 Eleonora Kapahnka Rudolf Julius Laser (until 1911) oo 1848 C(K)aroline Pinsk (until 1904)	Karl Friedrich Emil Volland (*1835) born 1857 Berta Teresa Mende (*1836)

<p>o1o Maria Hellmich, <i>children:</i> Emilie (Millie) Bianca Heinrich Wilhelm Johanna Hans Otto (1862-1923) Marianne</p>	<p>Luise (Lise) oo Oskar Marquardt, <i>children:</i> Bruno (Bruenchen) Marquardt (1878-1916)</p>	<p>Paul Karl La(a)ser/ Laserski (1893-1918, died in the war, area of the Vosges) Otto C(K)arl Laaser (1890-1942) o1o Emma Margareta <u>Elsa Prange</u> o2o 1923 Margarete Amalie Agnes Zurek (1894-ca.1962)</p>	<p>Edmund <u>Robert</u> Walland (*1864) oo 1890 Laura Hedwig Nanny (Uma) Etzold (1868-1955), <i>daughter:</i> MargaretCharlotte Volland (1892-1976)</p>
<p>o2o Bertha Emilie Luise Weimar, <i>children:</i> Lothar Hans Maximilian (1880-1943) <b>Friedrich Gottlieb Maximilian, (Uncle Fritz)</b> (1873-1954) oo Catherine Luise (-1943) <i>Daughter:</i> Brigitte (1904-1944)</p>		<p><b>Lothar Hans Maximilian</b> (1880-1943) oo 1913 <b>Margarete Charlotte (Lotte, Uimunzi ) Volland</b> (1892-1976)</p>	
<p>Clara (1870-1945) Adolf (1871-1949) Charlotte (Harrer) (1874-1962) Else (Koepke) (1876-1974) Margaret Ephrosina (inc. Marsop) (1876-1941) Paul (1878-1945)</p>	<p><b>Adolf (1871-1949) oo 1902 Olga Töpfer (1876-1959);</b> <i>6 children:</i> Kurt Heilbron (1903-1926) Erika Heilbron (*1908, née Eisenstein) Anneliese Heilbron (*1909) Ursula Heilbron</p>	<p>Liselotte Nanni Berta (1915-2010) oo Hans George Otto (1909-2000) <i>Children:</i> Hansjuergen (1942-) Corinna (1944-) Claudia (1952-) <b>Ingeborg ( Inge )</b></p>	<p><b>Ulrich (Ulle) Rudolf Laaser (1941-)</b> oo Hannelore (Anne, Lolo) Laaser née Fusch (1941-) <i>Children:</i> Frederike (Freddy) (1971-) Laaser, Stefanie (Steffi) (1973-)</p>

<p>The Twins:          Louise (1879-1952)          Magdalene (1879-1950) oo Leppin          and:          Julius (1882-1948),          emigrated to Argentina          in 1900</p>	<p>(*1912, oo Braese)          Friedrich Heilbron          (*1917, oo Christel)  <i>Daughter:</i> Rosemary  <b>Hans Heilbron (1905-1986) and Lisbeth (Lisy) Melnitzky (1913-2008)</b>  <i>2 children:</i>  <b>Peter Heilbron (1940-1999)</b>          Susanne Heilbron          (*1943)</p>	<p><b>Gertrude Charlotte (<i>Munzi</i>)</b>          (1919-2008) born          1940 <b>Rudolf Lasa</b> (1916-1945)  <i>Children:</i>  <b>Ulrich Rudolf Laaser</b>          (1941-)  <b>Wolfram Lothar Laaser</b> (1943-)</p>	
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Titles of four portraits:

Otto Theodor v. Manteuffel oo Bertha v. Stammer  
 Julius Heilbron oo Berta Weimar  
 Lothar Heilbron oo Charlotte Volland  
 Robert Volland oo Laura Hedwig Etzold

Winter night at the Hundekehlesee <sup>5</sup>

Dance on the snow  
 Without traces underneath  
 Softly singing the ice.  
 Fleeting shadowy figures  
 The fathers, so far away.  
 Her life is exhausted to death  
 And yet: dancing schemes,  
 You joke with us!

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<sup>5</sup> Close to the S-Bahn station Grunewald and our long-term apartment at Auerbacher Strasse 15/o in Berlin-Wilmersdorf.



## *Personalities from the past*

### *My great-grandfather Julius Heilbron 5 October 1825 - 7 February 1904*

Born perhaps in Baerwalde (i.e. Behrwalde, Beerwalde), Mark Brandenburg, on an estate owned by the von Manteuffel family, Julius allegedly came to Brandenburg alone at the age of ten. He later protected the Friedrich-Werdersche and Coelnische Gymnasium in Berlin until 1845 and the University of Berlin until 1849. Meanwhile a member of the Judiciary Council, he was baptized as a Protestant in 1853 by Superintendent Buechsel and given the name Otto. As already mentioned, the godparents were Prime Minister Otto Theodor von Manteuffel (1805-1882), General Friedrich Heinrich Ernst Graf von Wrangel (1784-1877) and President of the Superior Court Heinrich Leopold von Strampf (1800-1879). According to a transcript of December 21, 1936, the following are documented as parents: Asher Abraham Heilbron, died 1857 and Hanna, née Jacob, also Henriette Jacobi. His mother died of wasting in 1842. Julius Otto was promoted to Second Lieutenant in 1855 by the Highest Cabinet Ordre. He was probably an illegitimate child of Otto von Manteuffel (with Hanna Jacob?) and grew up with relatives on the estate in Baerwalde (probably in the family of Georg Wilhelm von Manteuffel, born in 1775; parents: Georg Stanislaus von Manteuffel and Auguste von Lettow - Vorbeck <sup>6</sup>). A large picture of his presumed father is said to have hung over Julius' desk. He also bore his first name Otto as a baptismal name.

In his second marriage, Julius Otto married Bertha Emilie Luise Weimar (1846-1929), the mother of my grandfather Lothar and his 10 siblings, in the Luisenkirche in Berlin in 1869. There were also 8 half-siblings from Julius Otto's first marriage, concluded in 1853 with Maria Hellmich (died 1868), altogether 19 children of our great-grandfather !

Great-grandmother Berta, born Weimar and Julius Otto Heilbron, died in 1869

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<sup>6</sup> A descendant, the German General Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870 – 1964) - called 'Lion of Africa' by the English fighting in German East Africa - while I was studying in Hamburg. When asked to participate by the Men of July 20th in early 1944, his reply was: "No, old Germany is lost and will not find its soul until we have paid the full price." I think he was right about that; It was only important that on July 20th a sign was set that a success would have been rather disadvantageous for the social modernization of Germany in my opinion. However, hundreds of thousands if not millions would have survived! The last year of the war cost by far the most victims.

Around 1883, Julius Otto had speculated with property purchases and for this he was apparently asking for ward money. He was in prison for a short time, but the rest of the family was put together under the condition of his mother-in-law that he divorced and disappeared from the children's field of vision.

Debris behind  
Dry tears  
Steps to Star Gate

From a letter from my mother Inge(-borg) to my father dated March 22, 1943: *The Jewish religion of Julius Otto Heilbron was admitted to us at the Berlin registration office, where he moved when he was 10 years old. In addition, the school he attended at the time was listed as a Mosaic religion. But whether he really belonged to the Jewish Church is not clear from a document. Nothing could be found about him in the 'Gesamt-Archiv' of the Jews in Germany.*

In the thirties she had summarized the question of parentage as follows (then about eighteen years old): *Julius Otto Heilbron, my grandfather, was a lawyer at the time of his second marriage, born in Bärwalde<sup>5</sup> October 1825 (this information is all very questionable). At first, he was blond and blue-eyed, of medium height... It was not until 1934 that we tried to get documents from him and his ancestors, for a long time without success. The alleged parents of Julius moved to Berlin in the fall of 1837, about a year and a half after their son. He later lived with them. The alleged father is listed as an inspector in the class registers of his school, and as a merchant in the officer rankings. The mother's name on this list is Henriette Jakobi<sup>7</sup>. Later we get the baptismal certificate of the grandfather. He was exhibited in 1853 at the age of 27. Julius was given the name "Julius Otto" when he was baptized (the name Heilbron has been retained) ... His alleged parents apparently lived in rather poor circumstances. The wife (Hanna née Jakob died in 1842, and her husband in 1857. ...Julius' children only got to know their father when they were already adults. He died in 1904 at the age of 79...Aunt Lene and Aunt Grete reported that he used to be a very fine, lovable old gentleman, finally a judge.*

My interpretation of the still available documents on the origin of the great-grandfather Julius more and more suggests that he was in fact an illegitimate son of the Prussian Prime Minister v. Manteuffel (possibly with Hanna Jakob/Henriette Jakobi, the first wife of Asher Abraham Heilbron - possibly not of Jewish descent). V. Manteuffel may later have given the child over to the (maternal?) family 'in lieu of a child'. Possibly hence the more Nordic appearance of Julius (in contrast to his alleged brothers) and the prominent evangelical baptism in 1853. Asher Heilbron did not come to Berlin until 1837, twelve years after the birth of Julius in October 1825.

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<sup>7</sup> Asher Abraham Heilbron, Particulier; oo 08/06/1783 Hanna Jakob later married Henriette Jacobi (died of "emaciation" according to the documentation of the Charite in Berlin).

Three years earlier, on August 21, 1940, my mother had written to Ingeborg: *Today I am sending you the pay slip you requested and something very special. It is a poem that my grandfather wrote to his wife in a book that he gave her for a special occasion. At that time, they had been married for eight years (i.e. around 1877), it was my grandfather's second marriage, therefore 'love's new song of praise'. Some of the nature of the poem suggests it was written more than 50 years ago, but it speaks of a deep, good feeling. I think it is a slight alienation or an inkling of how it led to the separation of these two ancestors after 2 more years (rather 6 years around 1883). It was never discussed in my family what made my grandmother and her eleven children leave her husband 8. It's a strange fate. You can imagine what struck me when I read this poem.*

Another line leads to Aunt Liese in the large picture. My grandmother Charlotte Heilbron writes: *Aunt Liese was the sister of Ulrich's great-grandmother Berta Weimar, who was born in 1846 and who later married Julius Otto Heilbron in 1869. In her first marriage she herself married a Mr. Marquardt, who ran the restaurant in the Berlin Zoo as a leaseholder, which had a very good reputation at the time. The zoo was just beginning and more of an addition to the restaurant. From this marriage comes the Mahler Bruno Marquardt already mentioned.*

Later, aunt Liese married a Mr. Adolphi. Her brother Paul Weimar was also a painter and drowned at the age of 32 (1890) while sailing on the Wannsee.

The yellow flower at the neckline of Aunt Liese's dress was later added by one of my patients in Cologne during the restoration, probably because he thought it needed an eye-catcher.

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<sup>8</sup>Apparently, my mother didn't know the circumstances - the unsuccessful land speculation!

*My great-grandmother Bertha Heilbron, born Weimar  
18 December 1846 - 6 February 1929*

Around 1700, the already mentioned group of Reformed Palatinate emigrated to Berlin. Berta Emilie Luise's father was Adolph Samuel Weimar (1810-1866), he died of cholera. In 1844 he married Charlotte Emilie Auguste Schneider (1824-1912), who later insisted on the divorce of her daughter Berta.

My mother Inge wrote in the 1930s as part of the necessary genealogical research: *Bertha Emilie Luise Weimar/Heilbron (1846-1929) was a tall, blond to the pictures and reportedly, beautiful girl. When she was old she still had a beautiful, infinitely kind face.*

Bertha Emilie Louise  
Heilbronn, born in Weimar

At the age of 71 - as my mother continues to write - Berta suffered a severe stroke that paralyzed the entire right side, took away her speech and tied her to her bed until her death in 1929, she, the always vigorous one, who was just about to could run like a weasel and was held younger for ten years. She was a great storyteller. At the family celebrations, we children all came to her bed and kissed her on the forehead, then she smiled. In me as the youngest granddaughter - I was ten years old when the grandmother died - the emaciated, pale woman with the wreath of braided gray hair aroused great respect and awe. She was the true ancestor of the family, revered by all.

A blink of an eye  
the narrow path  
in the white snow  
forgotten so soon

*My uncle Friedrich (Fritz) Heilbronn  
November 2, 1873 - September 23, 1954*

The two old photos, probably taken in the mid-1920s, show my uncle Friedrich Heilbron, called Fritz, with his daughter Brigitte and below with the petite siblings. He was born in Berlin on November 2, 1873 and died there in 1954. After my mother, Uncle Fritz was probably the most important person in my life, even if we only had a few post-war years together.

Friedrich Heilbron with his daughter Brigitte

I remember that Uncle Fritz introduced me to Wilhelm Raabe (1831-1910), the author of Sperlingsgasse, reading to me from his large bookshelf on the side wall of the living room.

When he became bedridden, he asked my mother to send me to look after him in bed at Bayreuther Strasse 20, near Wittenbergplatz. The journey time on the 75/76 tram from Spandau was probably around an hour. But I had a positive experience of being together for a whole day. Many friends and colleagues, as well as the surviving siblings and our family, came to his funeral in the East Berlin Suedwestkirchhof in Stahnsdorf, ie my mother with her two children Ulrich and Wolfram and my grandmother Charlotte Heilbron.

### The Heilbron family<sup>9</sup>

He was a man well-versed in classical literature, knew Latin and Greek, and met up with interested friends regularly even after the war. I still have the thick dictionaries with his annotations. Probably because of these touches I also chose Greek in the 7th grade (besides English and Latin), but I was somewhere between four and five in the Abitur (one is very good).

During the war, Uncle Fritz lost his wife Katharina (Kaethe) Luise (born 1869) in 1943 and his

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<sup>9</sup> From left to right, top row: Klara, Catherine Luise (Frau von FH), Friedrich (Fritz) Heilbron, Marianne (Mieze), Paul, Bruno Marsop, Adolf; middle row: Lene, Margarete, Otto, Leni Rabbin, Olga Toepfer, Luise; bottom row: Max Leppin, Charlotte Harrer, Lothar, Charlotte Volland.

beloved daughter Brigitte (born 1904) in early 1944 <sup>10</sup>  
 August 12, 1944

The little ash heap lying down there,  
 It's not you.  
 The pollen that flies before the wind  
 It's not you.  
 The butterfly swaying on the thistle  
 It's not you.

The face, marked with pain, oh, so deep,  
 It's you!  
 The voice that called in vain to the mother  
 It was you!  
 who clasped my hand when she slept,  
 It was you!

Who hovers sadly through my dream,  
 you still are  
 who speaks to me at night as if she were alive,  
 you still are  
 who raises her hands to wave goodbye,  
 you stay with me<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> After the war, he lived with his twin siblings Magdalene Leppin (1879-1952) and Luise Heilbron (1879-1950) until her death.

<sup>11</sup>Das Aschenhäuflein, das dort unten liegt,  
 Du bist es nicht.  
 Der Blütenstaub, der vor dem Winde fliegt,  
 Du bist es nicht.  
 Der Falter, der sich auf der Distel wiegt,  
 Du bist es nicht.  
 Das Antlitz, schmerzgezeichnet, ach, so tief,  
 Du bist es doch!  
 Die Stimme, die umsonst der Mutter rief,  
 Du warst es doch!  
 Die meine Hand umklammert, wenn sie schlief,  
 Du warst es doch!  
 Die todestraurig durch den Traum mir schwebt,  
 Du bist es noch.  
 Die nächtens zu mir spricht, als ob sie lebt,  
 Du bist es noch.  
 Die Abschied winkend ihre Hände hebt,  
 Du bleibst mir doch!



Uncle Fritz was the third oldest of 11 siblings from the second marriage of his father Julius Heilbron (1825-1904), who married in December 1869 in the Luisenkirche with Bertha Emilie Luise Weimar (1846-1929). At that time the family lived at Alexanderstrasse 45, which was destroyed in World War II. The career path started promisingly. The document is countersigned by Reich Chancellor Bernhard von Buelow. The appointment as real legation counselor took place in 1915 (countersigned by Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg). In 1926 the appointment as Consul General of the German Reich in Switzerland by the Reich President von Hindenburg, seven years later in 1933 the transfer into permanent retirement brought about the end of his career (National Socialist law to restore the professional civil service) with a - probably regrettable - Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Freiherr von Neurath. Below is a selection of the corresponding documents:

Appointment to Legation Council by Kaiser Wilhelm II, June 29, 1907

My grandmother Charlotte Heilbron, wife of his brother Lothar, wrote several pages about him after World War II:

*Fritz then studied law for a few semesters and then became private secretary to Chancellor von Buelow. In 1912, on the occasion of Charlotte's engagement to Lothar Heilbron, the engaged couple visited the "Fritzens" in Lichterfelde-Ost and were warmly welcomed by Fritz and Kaethe. Brigitte was 10 years old then. Cousin Bruno Marquardt, called Bruenchen, was there too, as he probably does every Sunday, and did puppet theater for Brigitte. There was probably no ancient drama that was not performed. At a later dinner, Kaethe suddenly exclaimed: Oh Fritz, you just looked exactly like Papa! Fritz was probably the son who took care of his father Julius the most.*

Letter from the Reichs-Chancellor Cuno dated August 13, 1923, with thanks for the work done as head of the press office of the German Reich.

*My grandmother continues: Lothar and Bruno were drafted into the war, Bruno fell before Verdun while Lothar was deployed in Romania and Serbia under General von Mackensen, and he survived. Shortly before the end, we were all saddened that Brigitte contracted polio in August 1918, and almost at the same time her mother-in-law suffered a severe stroke. At the end of the war, Fritz was Reich Press Chief under enormous official and private pressure. Charlotte felt even more sorry for Brigitte's mother Kaethe, who was also concerned about finances since she kept hearing that the money was being devalued and "that she would need it very much right now in*

*order to give Brigitte all the possible relief. In this regard she found no support from Fritz, he was typical Heilbronsch in this regard...*

*At that time, Lothar's sister Lene and her husband Max lived nearby, about 5 minutes by public transport, but about 16 km as the crow flies from Fritz's new address on Michaelkirchplatz to Prinzregentenstrasse. The two families still saw each other more often. Since there was no transport, no electricity, but glass splinters as a result of the unrest, we had to walk. Mainly there were fights between Spartacists and communists. "Then came 1933 and Fritz was put on 'disposition', about which he was very unhappy. Klara (his sister) told us and could not understand Fritz. She comforted him with the fact that he could read, but his answer was: That's about it peace as if you are peeling potatoes.*

At the end of the war, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg was Chancellor. Years later Fritz spent some time in Hohenfinow to help him write his memoirs. *Käthe liked to talk about the stunned face of the valet there when only a nightgown came out of the suitcase instead of pyjamas.* Fritz also married Gustav Stresemann. The pension payments for Fritz continued until the end of World War II. At the end my grandmother Charlotte writes: *I loved Fritz until he died and I think he liked me too.*

In June 2009, in Belgrade, I delved into the online documents that Jochen Förster had given me<sup>12</sup>. Uncle Fritz's 25-page report about May 1945<sup>13</sup> was completely unknown to me. So many deaths, so many suicides around him. Nor did I know how close he was to the plot of July 20, 1944 (letter of June 6, 1945):

*Yesterday, surprisingly, my old friends, the former Reich Minister Albert<sup>14</sup> and his wife, came to see me; I assumed she was still on her forest estate, the Zotzen in the Priesacker area. Albert has been in custody for five months on charges of taking part in Stauffenberg's assassination. In the absence of any evidence, he was released under certain conditions around the turn of the year. Thierack<sup>15</sup> had recently considered his re-arrest because of alleged suspicions. Had it come to*

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<sup>12</sup>It is astonishing how they got to him, probably via my grandmother Charlotte Heilbron, who certainly gave them to my aunt Charlotte Foerster, née Harrer, Jochen's mother, on request. Aunt Lotti <sup>12</sup>died on October 9, 2006 in Frankfurt.

<sup>13</sup> Report on the siege of Berlin by Uncle Fritz from May 8, 1945

<sup>14</sup> Heinrich Friedrich Albert (born February 12, 1874 in Magdeburg; † November 1, 1960 in Wiesbaden) was Minister of the Weimar Republic (non-party) in Wilhelm Cuno's cabinet, First State Secretary of the Reich Chancellery of the Weimar Republic, commercial attaché of the Empire in New York, lawyer and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ford Motor Company AG from 1937 to 1945.

<sup>15</sup> German politician and lawyer, born April 19, 1889 in Wurzen, Saxony. As president of the Volksgerichtshof (1936-42) and Reichsjustizminister (1942-45) he was instrumental in bending justice to the requirements of the Nazi regime. He committed suicide in 1946. Ever since coming to office as Reich Minister of Justice in August 1942, Thierack had seen to it that the lengthy paperwork involved in clemency proceedings for those sentenced to death was greatly shortened. At Thierack's instigation, the execution shed at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin was outfitted with

*that, he would have grown up and shared the fate of those who, while the fighting was still going on in Berlin, were taken out of the air-raid shelter on Lehrter Strasse and shot in the neck - on orders! Among them, whose number I do not yet know, are two good friends of mine, Count Benstorff-Stintenburg, who has been imprisoned almost constantly for years, and Privy Councilor Kuenzer (?), formerly in the Foreign Office. Also in the same basement was former Minister of Agriculture Hermes, a Center figure who had also been in detention for a long time. He probably only owes his rescue to a merciful coincidence. He is currently in charge of trying to fix the nutritional situation so that we are spared the worst. November will probably be the critical month. - Gessler, the War-Minister of various post-war cabinets<sup>16</sup>, with whom I have always had good relations, also escaped with his life. He is said to have been subjected to torture with thumbscrews during his repeated interrogations. I tried to draw up an inventory of the friends killed by the Hitler regime with Albert; The closest thing to me was the hanging of my friend Kempner and the suicide of my friend Hamm, who fell out of an open window in Lehrter Strasse before an interrogation, after which he probably no longer felt physically and mentally fit. Other victims from among those we know in common: Planck and the temporary Social Democratic government president v. Harnack, one son of the famous physicist, who had turned to Hitler with a vain plea for clemency for his son, the other a son of the famous theologian. A cousin of this had fallen victim earlier. Also killed Kiep, after a suicide attempt that failed because his cell was overhauled during an air raid. The fate of Langbehn, the leading lawyer in her office, was very painful for me and, of course, for Brigitte as well. He was killed with so many others, whose names and numbers I hope will eventually be known, after the failed assassination attempt of July 20th, although he could not be directly linked to it as he had been with Jemem Seinkut for many months imprisonment. I was often surprised that I wasn't examined myself. In the interrogations of my friends, I was repeatedly asked about a possible role, but no trace with a prospect of a result was discovered. Until the last days of her existence, Brigitte was afraid that I would be "taken".*

*It was a bloody regime from beginning to end, suffered by a madman, with the complicity of at least abnormal, sadists, bloody people of every degree and officials with executioner's feelings, who were ready for any contribution to this regime, which gave them plenty of nourishment. It will be the task of the next few years to shed light on the details of this terrible tyranny, which works with a perfect organization and with the sharpest means of coercion, and at the same time not to forget how the time after the war until Hitler came to power laid the groundwork for the mass psychosis, which gripped the German people almost without resistance.*

*Today the first partial acknowledgment of the victorious states was shown to us, and their flags, issued by order of the vanquished, flutter over the destroyed city. A pathetically dressed-up corpse! I hear today that another acquaintance of mine, former Secretary of State for economic affairs*

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eight iron hooks in December 1942 so that several people could be put to death at once, by hanging (there had already been a guillotine there for quite a while).

<http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/16522/Otto-Georg-Thierack.html#ixzz0Hpw2WcOm&D>

<sup>16</sup> What is meant is the time after the First World War

*Trendelenburg, was shot dead by the (Russian) attacker while trying to protect his daughter from rape.*

And then I found another note from July 3, 1945 in these papers, which moved me a lot, as it reflects my own early history through different eyes and puts it in the right dimension in its brevity, just one of so many incomprehensible fates:

*From Czechoslovakia, i.e. from the German part, where they had evacuated to relatives, the widow of my brother Lothar arrived in Berlin again with her daughter and her two small children. The man is missing, perhaps in English captivity. They have been on the "trek" for five weeks since being expelled from the Czech Republic.*

Brigitte Heilbron<sup>17</sup>

Oh why did you create this world of dying  
 All these things that belong to death  
 All these torments in wild choruses  
 Calling for an end to doom?

World soul, you were lonely in the rooms  
 And infinitely lost in the times  
 you dizzy before your eternities,  
 Before your nature's unknown borders.

You were everything. But the desire blossomed  
 Up to nothing for your dark reasons  
 And became the world, and in the world death.

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<sup>17</sup>Brigitte Heilbron, from Abozzo, autumn 1921, page 81; ed. of Wolfram and me as heirs through my mother. Abozzo: A rough sketch or draft (as of a picture or a poem), Appendices 20 and 21: Brigitte with her mother around 1930

*MEDALLIONS OF MY LIFE*

*My grandfather Lothar Heilbron  
November 27, 1880 - April 18, 1943*

My maternal grandfather had learned to cook in one of the finest hotels in Berlin, the Kaiserhof. From 1899-1909 he stayed first in New York (tea trade) and then in the West Indies and Argentina. From April 1915 to December 26, 1918 he was at war (mainly in Romania and Serbia, together with a very young lieutenant Radoslavov, son of the Bulgarian prime minister Wassil Christow Radoslavov ) in the regiment of Her Majesty the Queen of England and Ireland (!), Gardedragoner (stationed on Yorkstrasse at Nollendorfplatz, Berlin). He had married Margarethe Charlotte "Uimunzi" Volland (1892-1976) in 1913. I still have your engagement ring a year earlier (on November 2nd, 1912).

Lothar was quite adventurous in his youth. In Argentina, together with his younger brother Julius, he worked in the field of a huge farm, which his eldest brother Otto managed as administrator. He was particularly busy with the rearing and utilization of livestock, cattle, horses, mules - a total of about 12,000 head. The primitiveness and loneliness of life there prompted him to accept the favorable offer of an English railway company for three years. In 1909, driven by sudden homesickness, he traveled back to Germany. Due to his knowledge of the country and language, after a while he found a job with the German-Argentinian Business Association, later responsible for South and Central America. From 1920 to 1943 he was employed in the Reich emigration office, but in the end he was only allowed to work at home because of his (supposed?) Jewish origin.

In Argentina he managed a finca and played horse polo. One of the many brothers of this generation, Otto<sup>18</sup>, had stayed and had a son, Julio, by Elvira Cisneros, a mestizo<sup>19</sup>. Uncle Julio Heilbron became a religious priest<sup>20</sup> and headed the seminary in Tucuman, the same city where Eichmann was able to hide for years before being kidnapped by the Israeli secret service. I protected uncle Julio in April 1992 in connection with a congress in Buenos Aires and he himself was in Germany several times and met with us.

My grandfather was probably more of this world, but was still dearly loved by my mother Ingeborg. Most recently - he died in 1943 of a malignant stomach tumor - he was apparently very sad, perhaps desperate. Did he, like his brother, my uncle Friedrich Heilbron, know about the impending doom because of our Jewish roots, or did he anticipate the horrors of the last two years

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<sup>18</sup>Hans Otto Heilbron (Director of a sugar factory in Tucuman) 1862 (or 1866) - 1923

<sup>19</sup>Julius Heilbron (Uncle Julio), educated in Garaison, Spain: 05/24/1912-10/24/1995; his sister Maria Carlota died in 1993. She had been living in a home in Tucuman.

<sup>20</sup>Fraternity of Our Lady of *Lourdes*

of the war? Certainly nothing was left of his light-heartedness, as she speaks from one of his war letters to my grandmother from November 1st, 1918 (copy by me).

*my dear Lotte,*

*Since Saturday I've been through some war again. So I should go forward as the diary leader. With a good horse (Salzburg) I was put across the Danube and rode off to the quarters of our staff, about 35 km down the Danube from Turu Severin but on the Serbian side. I arrived at 10 a.m. and had to go straight on to the (?) patrol (?) of v. Sydow (?), which had moved into an alarm bivouac (?) 10 km further downstream. Pat. Gersdorff had meanwhile scattered, Lt. V. Gersdorff seriously wounded (lung shot) 1 man missing. 12 at night I arrived. At 7 in the morning we went to the mountains, a wonderful area. We also immediately had contact with the enemy. 1 small French patrol We routed the cuerassiers. One officer was apparently wounded. Then a stronger patrol with a machine gun came and we had to scrape out as quickly as possible. Nobody was wounded. Well and that's how it went on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Two more times we received fire from a village without result. The day before yesterday it rained all day and night, so we only got dry again during the day yesterday. Today we are calm. In the meantime, another squadron of hussars has arrived, which we are guiding over the area today. We may be recalled. So don't worry. Today I also received your dear letter of the 22nd with the 5 M. Many thanks for that. You don't need to send me anything else for the time being, because there is no opportunity to buy anything here. I am happy if you sometimes afford a bottle of wine, we also have plenty of it. Good wine that has been requisitioned here by us. We don't live badly at all when we are in peace, because there are (!) pigs and poultry in abundance here. Today another requisition command is going off.*

*I had a lot of fun playing war again, even if it is sometimes serious. We also have enough tobacco, so it's bearable. It would be better if there was finally an armistice, because I don't think there's much point in hanging around here. So darling, there is nothing further to report from here at the moment. May you continue to have a good time. Maybe next time I'll write from across the Danube.*

Note from my grandmother:

*Last letter, then telegram from December 4th. from Hungary, return on 12/26/18, on January 22, 1919 our daughter Inge was born.*

A 1969 tape interview with my grandmother Charlotte Heilbron, transcribed by my mother, contains some surprising, almost unbelievable passages. The first statements about the Jewish roots of our family are as expected:

*Charlotte (grandmother)<sup>21</sup>:*

*...When the Nuremberg Laws came out, the half-Jews were allowed to stay in their jobs, and grandpa (Lothar) had the Iron Cross and had been in the war, the boss immediately rushed down*

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<sup>21</sup>Tape interview with 'Uimunzi' Charlotte Heilbron, Lothar Heilbron's widow



to him and said: "You think so not how happy I am, Mr. Heilbron, that we can keep you!"  
 ...So Father (Lothar) sometimes wrote for the newsletter <sup>22</sup>, so he wasn't allowed to sign his articles anymore. And all that stuff...  
 ...but it could have ended badly for grandpa (Lothar).

Ulrich:

...But he played it down in front of you, this whole Jewish problem. Were you really scared about that?

Inge (Ulrich's mother Ingeborg, daughter of Charlotte Heilbron):

Yes, it came up from time to time, but dad (Lothar) kept us believing that it was understandable that the Germans didn't want the Jews anymore <sup>23</sup>, and although we didn't feel like we belonged, we felt completely like Germans, that is as with Ginsberg <sup>24</sup>. And meanwhile it was back for papa, more than a generation and only through Aryan research did he know that his father (Julius) was a Jew....But papa always said the Jews behaved like that, that's closed understand that the Germans want them out <sup>25</sup>. Because they sat down everywhere and couldn't bear to be so intelligently superior. I say that now. And so they acted up in such a way that they just had to attract attention. And that exaggerated by rushing and exaggerating, that could awaken understanding.... Papa was the only one <sup>26</sup> who was so enthusiastic about the matter <sup>27</sup>.

Charlotte:

Grandfather (Lothar) was abroad for a long time, 9 years, and then you become so proud of your country.... In 1933 it was always said that if you don't come in now, you can't come in, he was then in too the SA gone. And in 1934 we found out about the father (Julius). Then we got the baptismal certificates. He researched everywhere about his grandfather (Asher Abraham Heilbron) in the state archives, etc. <sup>28</sup>. I don't think that really affected him that much. In any case, we didn't say to each other that we were afraid and accepted it as fate... Grandfather went there as soon as he had this certificate of baptism and paid it to the SA and I to the women's association. And so they left. Then after that there was some folk festival and then they marched up too, the SA etc. And there we were at the side of the road and everyone said hello to grandfather... He had no enemies

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22What is meant is probably the paper of the Reich Emigration Office

23Handwritten note from my grandmother: But he never thought it would happen in such a horrible way. He would have been horrified.

24Maybe: Bertha Anna Ginsberg was born on April 8, 1876 in Berlin. As was clear at the time, the busy teacher gave up her job after she got engaged to her colleague Hermann Falkenberg. Married in 1902, their two children were born in 1903 and 1905: One of the first women in the representative assembly of the Jewish community in Berlin (<http://www.berlin-judentum.de/frauen/falkenberg.htm>).

25Handwritten note from my grandmother: He certainly didn't say it that way.

26The only one of the siblings

27The cause of National Socialism

28Handwritten note from my grandmother: ... because no one wanted to say anything about the siblings. They were all alive then!

*except for that horrible Adolf*<sup>29</sup>.

*I still have to tell one thing about great-grandfather Julius: Yes, when grandfather (Lothar) came back from England in 1901*<sup>30</sup>*to go to the ambassador, Uncle Fritz (Friedrich Heilbron) told him for the first time that his father was still alive and had him taken to father Julius [Ulrich: But he was already out of prison, wasn't he?] He wasn't in there long at all. He wanted to take it upon himself, but the family stood up for everything. The siblings put it all together. Grandmother's siblings*<sup>31</sup>*... He had just bought property through which a railway was to be laid near Marzahn near Berlin and the railway didn't go through there*<sup>32</sup>*. ... Grandfather (Lothar) told me it was so terribly difficult, he was 21 at the time and saw a very old man: That's your father [Ulrich: couldn't he remember his father at all? Didn't he even get to know him?] ...No, he was only a year or so... Then they (the parents) got divorced... [Ulrich: In any case, then the catastrophe happened and then there's the father disappeared from the children's field of vision]. Completely gone, me. And in the family, you don't talk about it, only when the children aren't around. The older ones were 10 or 12 years old, maybe they heard something earlier, I don't know, but he (Lothar) didn't. As a small boy, he always went to the cemeteries with his mother and grandmother (on his mother's side: Charlotte, née Schneider) and then he asked why they didn't go to dad, and then his mother cried so much. That was the only time he noticed...and then he never asked again.*

My grandfather Lothar died on April 19, a few months before we were evacuated from Berlin to Trautenau in 1943. I still have his walking stick, in Baric by the way, a gnarled thing, too short for my height, it was obviously smaller. In the bathtub on Folkunger Strasse I played with a sailing ship he had carved out of light-colored wood. Judging by its long, blunt shape, it was more like a sailing steamer. My mother Inge wrote on January 17, 1943: *Papa did a great job on Ulrich's sailing boat, white sails, red keel, blue belly with yellow portholes, it's brown on top with a yellow bench, it has a red, moveable rudder and the name slip. An expression that Ulrich uses with every noise. Slurp or slurp, pupp, bluff, whoop etc. As with Wilhelm Busch.*

I have shaken myself by this boat all my life and would have liked to find it again somewhere, but my search was in vain.

My brother Wolfram has an oil painting of grandfather Lothar, with a sun hat and a pipe, perhaps by Bruno Marquardt<sup>33</sup>. Wolfram's middle name is Lothar, while my middle name is named after our father Rudolf. I rarely use this name, except as an initial in the US, where Ulrich R. Laaser

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<sup>29</sup>Adolf Mueller, the last superior of my grandfather (Lothar Heilbron) in the Reich Emigration Office, probably from 1941; My grandfather worked until his death, most recently at home.

<sup>30</sup>welfare of the United States

<sup>31</sup>So apparently the siblings of Bertha Luise Weimar, his second wife

<sup>32</sup>Handwritten note from my grandmother: ...grandfather's father was a judiciary and probably had ward money, which was replaced.

<sup>33</sup>Bruno Marquardt, Mahler, grandson of Julius Otto Heilbron, killed off Verdun in 1916

sounds better than plain Ulrich L.

I took a thick file with the war letters between my parents from Bielefeld to Baric. One of them, dated August 28th, 1943, says: *Mutti (Charlotte Heilbron) In case we continue and friends come to the apartment, I have <sup>34</sup>packed together all the important papers, especially those relating to descent, the collection in the green cover, the expression of our soul, is also there (lost!). Hans George (elder sister Liselotte's husband) wants to seal the package and lock it in a safe at the institute.*

On September 29, 1940, my mother wrote to her husband: *So, you already have a medal. A few days ago (Lothar) received a silver Cross of Merit from the Führer for 25 years of loyal service with a certificate signed by Meisner. He didn't believe at all that he would get it, Papa said to us. Tears entered my eyes.*

The inclusion in the Napola, the silver Cross of Merit for my grandfather, Hitler's order, which was canceled in 1945, to keep my mother in the Bund Deutscher Maedchen in 1936, everything indicates that the dictatorship made many exceptions, for whatever reason.

My mother writes relatively little about the death of my grandfather, although or because she loved him the most, for example on April 15, 1943: *Dad spoke for the first time today about where and how he wanted to be buried. It was awful for mom. Since you've been gone, she's often so full of tears. The Pope also wants to go to the cemetery where your father ( Otto Karl Laaser, deceased a year earlier) lies ... That was the Thomas Cemetery in Neukölln with the Heilbron/Volland family grave (near the Herrmannstrasse underground station), later closed by my mother.*

*April 16: Dad's life is coming to an end. It's excruciating. But it was nice, I told him today. Ah, my father! On April 18: The Pope is now very weak, he can no longer stand up on his own. He is the same in death as in life. He is touchingly grateful for every handout and only has kind words for us. His whole love for us is so visibly expressed. Aunt Lene (married Leppin) was here yesterday, and her deceased husband Papa got on so well with her. He said to her: "I'll greet Max from you, maybe we'll build a paddle boat again."*

*Uncle Max had 2 paddle boats built, which the parents and Uncle Max often rode with Aunt Lene. Because he always doesn't know how to quench his thirst, Liselotte said today how it would be with champagne. Oh, he said, we'll keep it and drink it when I'm at the end. He said to me the other day: That you have to torture yourself like that, someone would just have to smack you in the face to get away.*

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<sup>34</sup>What is apparently meant is not the apartment on Folkunger Strasse in Spandau/Weinmeisterhoehe, from which my mother, her mother and I (Wolfram was born on October 3, 1943) were soon evacuated to Trautenau, but rather the one on Wartburgstrasse or on Michaelskirchplatz (?).

My grandfather died on April 19, 1943, and my mother wrote to her husband Rudolf on April 20: *You called yesterday evening. That night Mom didn't go to bed and Liselotte stayed downstairs. In the late afternoon Papa lost consciousness for the first time. We put him up and later I helped him lie down, then he talked to Mom twice more, and then he closed his eyes and breathed irregularly. About half past three he fell asleep completely and got cold. Mom woke me up and I saw him again as he looked in real life. It turned yellow all too soon. Then later we changed him and wrapped him up. Now he will probably be picked up soon.*

We only borrowed our life on earth  
borrowed from the unknown and  
pay with our suffering;  
nevertheless in the end  
life returns  
back into the unknown!

I've always wished for a conscious death like that, and I'm extremely proud of my grandfather and our family, the way they closed around him back then.

*My grandmother Margarethe Charlotte Heilbron, née Volland  
February 25, 1892 - February 25, 1979*

Charlotte Heilbron, called grandmother by her grandchildren, called Uimunzi by her great-grandchildren, on the veranda at Auerbacher Strasse 15/o, around 1976 (pictured with Frederike)

My idea of immortality is memory, not of events, experiences, people but of the feelings and colors that are associated with them. They remain in us in traces from the beginning of time, through the endless series of generations. We humans are similar businesses, outside of time and space, so geared to something outside of the world (Paul Claudel, analogous) and so I feel connected to all the dead in my life,

in a very special way with my grandmother, whose small, slightly hunched figure is captured next to the Citroen limousine of uncle Hans-George - on July 10, 1971 during a visit to Tuerkheim (also on the picture: Anne's mother Maria Barth). The photo hung in the Berlin apartment until it was sold, next to the many pictures of loneliness, painted by her misunderstood daughter Ingeborg, my mother.

Would it have been possible to escape from Trautenau in May 1945 without my grandmother? My mother obviously went through this time bravely, as if in a dream. In reality, my grandmother fought for herself and us to survive once the decision had been made to attempt the walk to Berlin. In the last days of Trautenau, however, she had suggested that we should all take potassium cyanide, but my mother had vehemently opposed it. But they carried the poison with them just in case.

My grandmother and grandfather Lothar met each other while playing tennis. I found the wedding rings in my mother's estate. The larger one - my grandfather's - was once made over with a stone for me I seem to remember, but I don't think I wore it long, if at all. With my grandmother's magnifying glass I could see the date on the inside. At first I thought it was the wedding date. But it is November 2, 1912, a year earlier and therefore probably the engagement date. When I checked my calendar, thinking I might have transferred it, I found Florian's birthday 2004 instead. He was born on the same day his great-great-grandparents got engaged, as is Uncle Fritz's ( *Friedrich Heilbron* ) date of birth. , November 2, 1875! In March 2011 I also noticed that my daughter Stefanie and my grandfather Lothar were born on the same day, November 27th, she in 1973 and he in 1880.

My grandmother loved her husband, my grandfather, very much, while she never really warmed

to my mother, her younger daughter, who was so terribly longing. In a certain way she was on this side, my mother on the other side, but the post-war years forced them together and when it came down to it they were also reliable.

Perhaps their turbulent relationship can be explained not only by the hard times of the two world wars but also by grandmother's experience with her own mother Laura Hedwig Nanny Etzold ("Uma") (born 1868 in Leipzig-Konnewitz), who came into a farming family in Grossbrennbach/Thuringia (the man was a master butcher). She died in the retirement home in Berlin-Kladow, probably in 1955.

In the first two decades after the war, my grandmother conducted an extensive correspondence, with the closer family but also with the Pausewangs, companions of our escape from Trautenau, and with the family of Hans and Lisy Heilbron who were deported to Russia.

My grandmother during her vacation in East Westphalia in 1953:

*...on 15.9. is near the horse market. In earlier years, mainly large crowds of gypsies gathered here. And even though it's no longer just a horse market, but a large folk festival and market for agricultural equipment, the gypsies, who have received ample compensation, feel very attracted here again. Last Sunday some settled here in a meadow. They came in 3 passenger cars, 2 of which were pulling egg-shaped caravans....*

*Then we also went to Uncle Fritz's once, but he was quite frail again. It really saddens me. - Ilse Helmholtz was also with us once. ...She is in charge of the department for social affairs and that is already exhausting enough, especially in the zone, in addition to the difficult conditions at home...and the letter with its 6 sheets is certainly quite exhausting for you. But we had to catch up again. I've been writing at home all morning today, and now I'm writing at the "Deutsches Haus" in Schieder, where I want to try the food for the first time....*

*... Can you give us 1 tin of Nescafe and maybe 3 packs of cigarettes before we move? But please state the price... Please send the stamp on the envelope back. Ulle (Ulrich) got them. If Hajue (Hansjuergen Otto) would like it too, I'll send another one.*

From a letter from my grandmother to her daughter Liselotte dated September 21, 1953:

*... now came the exchange of apartments, as I already wrote. So I quickly grabbed the Pichelsdorfer and have already prepared all sorts of things. Exchange form from the housing office, Kammerjaeger report that we don't have any bugs, etc. Tomorrow our new exchange partner wants to come and then arrange everything with Gehag. Then I have to do the same with Richter and Schaedel in Pichelsdorferstr. Do, and then the housing office has to give its stamp. So everything is already in flux, and the apartment is very pretty. My only sorrow is that the children*

*now have another way to get to school and a very ugly one, always along the main road, which is very busy. 4 bus lines, and one crosses them, and the 75. Inge is less afraid of it than I am, although she doesn't appreciate the road when she's cycling either. Ulle should ride his bike and Wolfram should run in the morning, about 40 minutes, and I want to pay him the fare at noon. Then there is another tricky point, the electric stove, since we probably have to buy some pots for it. But we are now looking forward to a little more freedom of movement and very much hope that nothing will come between us.*

*Dear Hans George! Your lovely card made us very happy. Yes, that was a nice time at Lake Constance back then! At that time we had no idea what else we would experience and how mercifully and graciously God would guide us through it all, even if it sometimes seemed very, very difficult to us. I can well imagine how happy you are with Claudia, but of course I would like to see her and all of you again. As soon as we have the move behind us, I start to save in the travel budget.*

Charlotte Heilbron on August 31, 1969  
with her two daughters (Liselotte,  
Ingeborg) and Ulrich in  
Berlin-Grunewald.

Sep 24, 1953

.... Personally, I like Multor's best of all the swap partners we've met, so I think everything will be fine. The Lindbergs will probably get us 2 cooking pots from Siemens, and I'll probably swap the frying pan with Frau Multor. If we then need another pot, we might want it from you as a joint family present for Christmas, if HG (Hans George) has cheaper shopping opportunities. But if you can, send the curtain fabric samples as soon as possible.  
In a hurry, Mom!

My grandmother on October 5th, 1954 to her daughter Liselotte Otto:

...You are now asking about Uncle Fritz's last party. She was very impressive and everything was organized in the best possible way. Miss Dr. Von Erffa, Brigitte's girlfriend and Uncle Fritz's executor, arranged everything. A book with 160 addresses was found at Uncle Fritz's, but the mourners weren't as large as I had assumed afterwards. In front of the coffin

lay a large wreath (among other things) with a black, red and gold ribbon from the Foreign Office, but unfortunately there was no opportunity to decipher it. Among the mourners, who were also known to Liselotte, I only found Lotte Koepke, Uncle Max Koepke's sister, Anneliese and Erika. Aunt Leni, I, Inge and Ulle (Wolfram was still away) represented the next of kin, which wasn't easy for me. A representative of the Foreign Office and a gentleman from Uncle Fritz's Greek circle introduced themselves to me and the latter excused the other gentlemen with colds. Everything else was unknown to me, and there were a lot of old ladies. We're the ones who have lived longer. Ulle was very close. The will hasn't been opened yet, so we don't know what's going to happen next. I had only contacted Grieneisen and asked for information as to when Uncle Fritz's urn would be buried in Stahnsdorf. Then we want to get passes and we want to share them with the boys. If it's possible, we want to go to Lore (uncle Hans George's sister).

...just wants to wait for Uncle Fritz' will - Aunt Trude Leppin wasn't there and she hasn't been heard from until now.

My grandmother on March 4th, 1974 to her daughter Liselotte Otto: ...I got a very interesting book from Ms. Eisen, which she devoured like an exciting novel, by Gruhl: Ein Planet wird plundered. I was interested too, but my vision is getting worse and worse. I keep having to take my glasses off to read this letter. --- The pretty picture that Steffi painted of Steffi the sun (sic) framed with her little hands always makes me and other sisters happy (sic). Did you paint them all by yourself? You will find it difficult to read this letter, unfortunately I cannot write better...

Wikipedia: Herbert Gruhl, member of the CDU Bundestag at the time, presented his book to the press on September 25, 1975, explaining that he had to differentiate between nature's long-term production methods and "man's short-term production", which, with their "gigantic successes" create their own 'defeats'.... The book received a mostly positive response across party lines (total circulation over 400,000 copies). Even today, many politicians from the ecologically oriented spectrum say that this book was the trigger for their commitment to environmental protection.



*... The article by Herr von Freeden, Hermann, could be about Father's colleague, because I don't know anything about his death. He also had many connections to South America and was there several times during his tenure. But he also had several brothers and two sons. Oh yeah, it's a nasty thing with all the corruption. I spoke to a gentleman today who had just returned from Brazil and had been there for several years. He also talked about it and would like to go to Canada because this is supposed to be the country with the cleanest government. I am afraid that here in Berlin there is also a lot to be desired.*

But I was very moved by the following letter from Aunt Lisy's mother Mimi <sup>35</sup>to my grandmother in February 1948 (received on April 8, 1948) from Moscow:

*My dear Lotte,*

*For so long I have had the need and intention to chat with you for a while, but with a lot of work and duties from early morning to late in the evening, time flies so quickly that it is often difficult to keep still and blow your breath. But now Hans tells me that your birthday is coming up - on February 26th. I would also like to be with you as a congratulator, dearest Lotte, and to say my best and most heartfelt wishes to you from the bottom of my heart. Stay healthy with all your near and far and stay as agile and fresh despite everything and - ....., as we know you and always carry your dear nature within us in faithful memory. You won't believe how often my thoughts are occupied with you and how nice it would be if we could once again have a nice little chat like in our beloved Trautenau. I am immensely pleased that you are in fairly regular written contact with Hilda and Hilda always writes about it very happily. - How often do I think of our cozy get-together, when you came to us for a while in the evening or we sat in Lisy's nice corner. What were the problems discussed and the pros and cons considered. The memory remains deepest in my heart when you had to leave the country road so poorly and yet so bravely on May 18th, 1945. Your dear, sad face, Inge brave, devoted and resolute to the ignorant little children. I will never forget the pain of that day - and my gratitude that I was allowed to keep Lisy and the children. Soon 3 years have passed and what has everyone experienced in the meantime! thank god. hopefully be allowed to stay connected even when crying. You can't imagine how happy every letter and line from home makes us. You already know that we are doing well here and we are also grateful for that, but the homesickness for all loved ones remains and is often very great. But we must hold our hearts tight and be very strong in the hope of a healthy, happy reunion! Dearest Lotte, I haven't told you anything about our life here today. There would be many little things to tell - but essentially there is nothing new. Hans wants to write you a detailed letter soon. Lisy will also be writing again soon. Today I am also sending you many love and good wishes from you on your birthday. I send my warmest regards to your dear children from all of us, especially Inge, we were so happy to receive your letter.*

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<sup>35</sup>Mimi Melnitzki went to Moscow with her daughter and her family

*I hug you dearest Lotte in heartfelt remembrance of our beautiful time together in Trautenau and remain your Mimi*

So, my grandmother was embedded in a large circle of family, friends and acquaintances until the 1960s. But the last few years meant retreat. In October 2003, my mother told me about something my grandmother said that had obviously touched her very much: *Nobody is happy about me anymore!*

This corresponds to one of my mother's last written statements, with which she probably wanted to comply with my requests to write down her life story at the last minute, in shaky scrawled, faulty handwriting (taken from my mother and copied on April 03, 2004: *When I was in the When I woke up in the night, I remembered the time I was taking care of Mom. I had given up my job after 50 years because Mom ran away from hospitals, even in her nightgown, she no longer understood the world there, she scolded us I was the nurse, because Liselotte couldn't give up her job that easily. I tried to learn to drive a car, but that didn't work. Mum sometimes still clung to my arm and later liked to stay in bed until that didn't work anymore. I remember Liselotte saying: "Mum would have been much friendlier and that would be my merit. Nursing allowance didn't exist yet and I didn't want it either. Liselotte advised finding a student to read and that was a very good thing.*

*Mom sometimes said: You are particularly nice to me in the evenings. To observe that. Yes, I then felt a great wave flow through me, which emanated a great lightness into me A miracle of love. At night I looked after her and often took off the sheet because there were no diapers. The doctor finally came and gave an injection even though we begged her to put her to sleep. That soon happened.*

My grandmother appointed her daughter Ingeborg as her universal heir in 1954. She wrote the following for the pastor:

*God gave me the best life companion for over 30 years.*

*God gave me two good and grateful daughters and two faithful sons-in-law, even if only for a short time.*

*God gave me five grandchildren with good gifts (here she later added: "and great-granddaughter Esther and Frederike and Stefanie and Marco", the latter on December 12, 1973).*

*I thank Him for this undeserved happiness and ask His blessings for children and grandchildren (supplement: 'and great-grandchildren').*

*I ask for the 10th verse of the 19th Psalm: The fear of the LORD is good, it will never fail. The commandments that the LORD has given are right, perfect, and just.*

On 12 December she also wrote the letter copied below and with addendums dated July 1975 appointed Hanns-George Otto, the husband of her parent daughter Liselotte, as executor. She

also wrote down how much money everyone should get from their savings. The last addendum from December 2, 1975 particularly surprised me: *my grandson Wolfram should receive an additional 2000 if his situation (unemployment) has not improved* . She was always very strict, especially with Wolfram (Wolfram's characterization as a little boy: *We don't have a dad but a grandmother who hits us!*)

Berlin, am 12.12.73.

Meine sehr Lieben!

Dies sind ,leider in Eile ,meine letzten Wünsche, weil ich mich plötzlich sehr elend fühle. Warum, ach, warum, habe ich es immer wieder aufgeschoben! Bitte verzeiht mir. Inge soll meine Universalerbin sein. Sie hat es nicht immer leicht mit mir gehabt und mich getreulich gepflegt. Auch Ihre Kinder standen mir näher, da die Umstände ergaben, daß ich während ihrer Jugendinnig an ihrem Leben teilnehmen konnte. Sie konnten mir auch heute noch mehr Liebe und Anteilnahme erweisen, als die Enkel von meiner anderen Tochter, obgleich auch diese mir Liebe gaben. Meiner gesamten Familie möchte ich danken für all die Liebe und Fürsorge, die sie mir immer gaben.

Meine Tochter Liselotte soll 1000.-Dm bekommen.

meine fünf Enkel sollen je 500.-Dm. bekommen.

meine drei Urenkelinnen je 300.-.

*10. 6. 1975 Auch Marva soll 300.- D. M. bekommen und auch die Ehefrauen meines Enkel, Metke und Euse.*

*Mein Schwiegersohn Dr. Hanns-George Olla möchte bitte Testamentverwalter sein und soll selbstverständlich auch 300.- D. M. bekommen!*

*Charlote Heibron.*

*10. 6. 1975.*

*Mein Enkel Wolfram wenn sich seine Lage (Arbeitslosigkeit) nicht gebessert hat, 2000.- erhalten. Zunächstlich erhalten*

*Charlote Heibron,*

*20. 12. 1975.*

*The abducted family*  
*Hans and Lisbeth Heilbron, born Otto*

On the Memel (Nemunas) 1993

leaf fire smoke  
swings towards me  
the broad river  
is insurmountable.  
From the banks of the Memel  
I think back  
what was.

Death and displacement was the experience of the 20th century. I was always very moved by the story of the wolf children <sup>36</sup> in Lithuania. In Memel, now Klaipeda again, there is a small museum, or rather institute, on this subject. When the Russians conquered, the children fled with their mothers or alone into the woods, across the border to Memel, today in Lithuania. Many of them died. But some survived, grew up on Lithuanian farms and forgot their origins. It was only in the 1990s that they 'stumbled' over a few chunks of their old German children's language and asked questions.

Or the story of the two Volga-German brothers who came to my institute, the Idis in Bielefeld, with their large families from the Soviet-Chinese border in the early 1990s and told them about their father, who was a soldier in the Russian army in Brest-Litovsk was separated from his brother and was allowed to see him again half a century later in Bielefeld through an accidental notice in one of the revived German-language newspapers in what is now Ukraine. The brother had been run over by German tanks and had lost a leg, but had been hospitalized because of his German stammering and had survived in Germany. About a year after their reunion, both had died. Those tales of ancestral loss! Can that still be important in postmodernism? Maybe yes. Someone once said that in times of war blood ties are much stronger than any other human connection, friendships, marriages, and notorious contacts anyway. Early human heritage emerging in times of mortal danger?

The story of Hans and Lisy Heilbron is a German expulsion story <sup>37</sup>. The two married in 1939, in 1940 Peter was born and Susanne was born in April 1943. In August 1943 the family was evacuated to Trautenau in the Sudetenland, the home of Lisy's parents Otto. We, Charlotte Heilbron, Inge Laaser together with Ulrich and Wolfram, followed at the end of the winter. Barely two years later, the Sudeten Germans were expelled in the summer of 1945, we immediately after the occupation in May 1945, and the Heilbron family a year later. Aunt Lisy had arranged for a

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<sup>36</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolf\\_children](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolf_children)

<sup>37</sup> Annotation:

Susanne called Susi (later Olga), the daughter of Hans and Lisbeth Heilbron, had entrusted me with letters and a version of her book project about the family's Russia experiences in the 1940s and 1950s, but was now concerned and has forbidden the further distribution of these texts. This does not exclude letters from the Heilbron family from Russia to Charlotte Heilbron, Ingeborg Laaser and Ulrich Laaser or other sources. Quotations are therefore not restricted.

car and received a travel permit. With the usual bottle of poison in her pocket, she avoided the large streams of refugees and massacres of Sudeten German refugees on side roads, such as in Ústí nad Labem (Aussig on the Elbe). Her husband, Uncle Hans, had worked at Siemens on autopilots for airplanes and found work at RABE <sup>38</sup> in Thuringia in July 1946. finally reunited at the end of 1946 in nearby Sondershausen. But in mid-October 1946, the Russians were at the door early in the morning and took the whole family, together with Lisy's mother Mimi (Melnitzki), to a heavily guarded camp near Moscow. The family had to stay in Russia until 1956 before they returned to (West) Germany via the Friedland camp after Adenauer's visit in 1955. Uncle Hans and his family finally found peace in Spremlingen near Frankfurt, where Uncle Hans had accepted a position at the Batelle Institute for Nuclear Physics until 1970.

The more than three million Germans from Czechoslovakia - mostly from the Sudetenland - were expelled in 1945/6.

Aunt Lisy wrote the comprehensive description of the expulsion from Trautenau in her letter to my mother and grandmother - dated November 11, 1947 - from Monino near Moscow, about a year after the deportation by the Russians:

*Dear Aunt Lotte, dear Inge,*

*My conscience weighs heavily on me that I have not written to you once, we have not even answered your very dear letter so far...*

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<sup>38</sup>RABE: Rocket construction and development, Bleicherode, Thuringia near Nordhausen where Albert Speer had built the so-called rocket tunnel with forced laborers from the Dora Mittelbau concentration camp.



Monino, den 11.11.1947

Liebe Tante Lotte, liebe Inge!

Mein Gewissen drückt mich schon sehr, dass ich an Euch noch nicht ein einziges mal geschrieben habe, nicht mal Deinen so lieben Brief haben wir bis jetzt beantwortet. Aber meine Gedanken sind sehr viel bei Euch und in unseren Gesprächen seid Ihr meist mit anwesend. Die Trautenauer Zeiten stehen uns noch ganz deutlich vor Augen, die netten Stunden und gemütlichen Abende, die wir gemeinsam da verlebt haben. Unter all dem ist jetzt ein dicker Strich gezogen, allerdings ist dieser Strich nur rein äusserlich. Die Erinnerungen an alles Schöne kann einem ja doch niemand und nichts nehmen.

Hans hat Dir ja schon alles Nähere von uns und unserem Tun und Treiben berichtet, nun lese ich mir eben noch einmal Deinen Brief durch und will Dir gerne noch berichten, was Du von Trautenau wissen möchtest. Zuerst will ich Dir aber noch Deine Frage nach unserem "blauen Dunst" beantworten. Wir sind glücklich, damit hier reichlich versorgt zu sein, seit unerer Abfahrt in Deutschland ist kein Grund mehr vorhanden, dass diese Dingerchen ausgehen könnten. Es ist so lieb von Dir, auch daran zu denken.

Bald nach Eurem Abschied von Trautenau hat alles sehr schnell ein ganz anderes Gesicht bekommen. In unsere Wohnung am Markt bin ich erst gar nicht mehr eingezogen. Die Schlüsse bekam ich allerdings wieder heraus und der lebenswürdige Herr, der sie uns damals abnahm bekam sogar noch einen Ruffel wegen seines Übergriffes. So bin ich mit allem nach oben in die Rognitzerstrasse übersiedelt, da war ja nun auch Platz geworden. Auch Eure Sachen, die zurückgeblieben waren hatten wir sortiert und mitgenommen und die Beruhigung kann ich Euch geben, dass von persönlichen Dingen von Euch nichts in andere Hände gelangt ist, wir haben es genau wie mit unseren eigenen Dingen gemacht - verbrannt. Euren grossen Koffer mit allen guten Sachen hatten wir dann bei uns am Boden stehen, wurde dann aber auch, wie alles im Hause ausgeplündert. Ettliche Dinge fanden sich dann wieder noch an, besonders ein paar Kindersachen, die ich auch mit nach Deutschland gebracht hatte, um sie Euch zu schicken, lieber noch wollte ich diese letzten Habseligkeiten selber bringen,

*von Hans liegt am liebsten für bei, hat ihm auch gut bekommen, in Danneberg  
mird ein paar Kopie bekommen!*



-2-

und nun ist alles so anders gekommen und von hier aus kann ich Euch die Sachen nicht schicken. Tante Lotte, Deinen Wunsch, mich Deiner schöner Daunendecke anzunehmen, hatte ich gerne getan und ich hatte mich so gefreut, dass es mir auch geglückt war sie ebenfalls mit über die Grenze zu bringen und stellte mir schon Deine Freude vor, bis ich Dir dieses schöne Stück übergeben konnte. Nun ist sie in Russland gelandet und ich gestehe Dir, dass sie mich hier wärmt und ich jeden Abend mit dem Gedanken an Dich in mein Bett unter die Decke krieche.-

Juni und Juli waren dann wohl die ärgsten Monate überhaupt. Wir mussten Panzersperren abbauen, wurden andauernd auf der Strasse zu den unmöglichsten Arbeiten geschleppt und waren keine Minute unseres Lebens sicher. Gleich damals, es war Anfang Juni, entschloss ich mich und verdingte mich bei den Partisanen als Köchin, was zuerst von allen als leise wahnsinnig betrachtet wurde, sich aber immer mehr als das einzig Richtige herausstellte, denn ich konnte doch so mancherlei Vorteile und Schutz für die ganze Familie damit erreichen.

Von meinen ganzen Freundinnen war da auch keine mehr in ihrer eigenen Wohnung. Elli mit den Kindern war wieder bei den Eltern im Hotel, wo die ganze Familie auch nur mehr geduldet und zum arbeiten gebraucht wurde. Sie sind dann Ende Februar 1946 ausgesiedelt worden und sind irgendwo in Hessen. Ich habe direkt noch nichts von ihnen gehört, doch soll es ihnen nicht besonders gehen. Ille Patzak bekam auf Umwegen noch im Sommer 45 Nachricht von ihrem Mann, der sich dann, aus amerikanischer Gefangenschaft entlassen, zu ihrer Schwester nach Unterkochen in Wttbg. durchschlug; mit ihr bin ich schon wieder längere Zeit in Verbindung, die Familie ist wieder beisammen, auch mit Schwiegereltern und sie haben sich wieder einigermaßen eingerichtet. Ihr Mann arbeitet als Hilfsarbeiter, aber sie haben ihr Auskommen. Sie war noch Ende August 45 von Trautenau, nur mit dem Allernötigsten weg. Hilde Köhler (Erben) hatte auch in Trautenau noch einiges zu erleben, schlug sich aber auch brav und wacker durch, setzte wie wir die Aussiedlung auf Permit in die amerikanische Zone durch und lebt jetzt sehr bescheiden in Oberbayern in einem kleinen Dorf. Ihre Mutter ist zu einer verheirateten Tochter nach Amerika. Mit Hilde bin ich auch schon wieder lange in Verbindung. Wir waren uns, als letzte Hinterbliebenen in Trautenau noch sehr nahe gekommen und ich konnte sie noch als besonders hilfsbereiten und einsatzbereiten Menschen kennen lernen. Marta Bormann (Wagenknecht) aus dem

*Im Herbst war tot, aber  
 Na mit Kindern und Anna  
 wieder in Verbindung sein!*







neu ich bin hier auch nach nachhause kommen. Hoffentlich ist das nicht mehr  
 Familie auch alle kommt auch in letzter Spannung gelassen. - Dann kommt die  
 haben alle gut, besonders auch an den das Ang derer ist viel mit Hilfe nun ja, da

sie schon alle drei unaussprechliche Misshandlungen und namenloses Leid zu ertragen. Fast ein Jahr lang hat Grete vor ihrer Aussiedlung ins Lager in einer Spinnerei als Tagelöhnerin gearbeitet. Es ist mir immer so schrecklich, dass man den armen Menschen so in gar keiner Weise helfen kann. Das einzige ist, dass ich ihr recht oft schreibe, so hat sie wenigstens eine kleine Freude.

Es ist wohl ein recht trauriger Bericht, den ich Dir hier habe geben müssen. Alle Erinnerungen an Einzelheiten sind auch immer in uns noch wach und trotzdem sagen wir oft mit Mutti müssen wir noch froh und dankbar sein, dass unsere Familie noch einigermaßen durchgekommen ist im Verhältnis zu anderen.

Hier in unserem Wohnzimmerchen haben wir ein altes Bildchen vom Trautenuer Markt hängen, ebenso das Gebirgsbild, das in Hilächens Zimmer hing (allerdings alles ohne Rahmen) und unsere Gedankenspaziergänge durch die alte Heimat gehen darüber hin. Aber meinen Optimismus kennst Du ja auch, er hat sich in den letzten Jahren nicht geändert und ich gebe nach wie vor die Hoffnung nicht auf, doch noch einmal in die alte Heimat zurückzukommen.

Was Du von den Kinderchens geschrieben hast, hat uns sehr interessiert und gefreut und zu gerne würden wir sie, wie auch Euch alle einmal wiedersehen. Die beiden sind sicher schon recht grosse und kräftige Burschen und werden keine grosse Ruhe um Euch aufkommen lassen. Unser Frösche würde ich Euch ja auch gerne wieder einmal vorführen; Peter ist ein rechter Lauser geworden und geht fleissig beim Vater in die Schule, was er recht gerne tut, aber wenn der Unterricht mal ausfällt, ist es ihm doch noch lieber. Er lernt aber gut und fasst sehr schnell auf, besonders im Rechnen ist er recht fest und seine Handschrift ist ordentlich und zügig. - Susi ist schon ein erwachsenes Fräulein mit zwei kleinen Schwänzchen hinter den Ohren und immer noch das brave, ruhige Kind, das sich stundenlang allein beschäftigen kann. Den Vater hat sie sehr ins Herz geschlossen, obzwar sie in doch kaum kannte. Hans hat bei unserem Wiedersehen auch erst fragen müssen, ob das tatsächlich seine Susi ist. - Ob Ihr uns bitte einmal die Schuhgrössen Eurer beiden Burschen schreiben würdet? Wenn es irgend geht möchten wir Euch gerne einmal Schuhe für die beiden schicken. Ich denke, dass werden sie sicher brauchen können.

Liebelike haben sie für ihren 11. letzten Brief auch schon gar nicht bedankt die bitten. Euch sehr das in der

During the tough early years in Moscow, the abducted managed to send aid packages to my family in West Berlin. Here is a photocopy of the customs declaration with reverse side:

In the first post-war years, I had a closer connection with Peter, the son in the family. I learned some Russian from him at the time through correspondence, but not in this surviving letter:

May 17, 1954 (from Sukhumi on the Black Sea)

*Dear Ulrich,*

*Thank you very much for your letter. I've been very happy about it. In the one photograph you sent me I saw that you have a railway. I also noticed that it can be pulled up because the rails don't have a middle rail. I also have a train, but an electric one. You wrote that you collect stamps. I also collect stamps. I'll send you some on the letter. And I would ask you if you could send me some too. I would like to have German. I'll send you some more often. Keep the stamps that I send you, because I will send you individual stamps from series individually. Now we have an exam soon. On May 21st we have the first. Today it is raining. Otherwise, the weather is very nice. We worked in the garden yesterday. My dad is on vacation now. I have the first day of vacation on June 3rd. Then I have 3 months off and won't go back to school until September 1st. Say hello to your mom and grandma and your brother*

*From your Peter.*

His father, Uncle Hans, left detailed memories of the time in the Soviet Union, of the stays in Monino and later in Tushino, but no longer of the concluding time in Sukhumi on the Black Sea. It contains many details that give a vivid impression of daily life in Russia and the very important exchange of letters with relatives in Germany. Compared to the first post-war years of my family in (West) Berlin and certainly also to the general Russian population at that time, Uncle Hans and his family were not doing badly. But, of course, the separation from other relatives in Germany and the prison-like confinement in fenced-off facilities reinforced with barbed wire, as well as the constant guarding by "interpreters" and "companions" who prevented any contact with the Russian population, outweighed the above. The memoirs are written without reflective passages, only as an impressive list of everyday experiences, from illnesses to birthdays, actually as if under secret service supervision. Perhaps there is a (at least psychological) connection with the confidentiality agreement signed before the return?

Explaining the world of thought in the immediate post-war period was the daily need, ie food and accommodation back as well as ignorance or defense against the terrible information that now came to light up to the Nuremberg trials <sup>39</sup>. All this probably did not reach the Heilbrons in Russia at all or distorted. A little of this can be seen in the letters of Uncle Fritz (Uncle Hans' younger brother), who had spent the war at the front. I got to know him, he had the typical Heilbron face, <sup>40</sup>like Uncle Julio, for example. In a letter dated January 26, 1949 to my grandmother Charlotte Heilbron, he writes:

*...Since the currency reform (on June 20th, 1948) the living conditions here in general have*

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<sup>39</sup>In addition, a very well-written story with terrible Odelstijnen: The well-meaning (Jonathan Littel, Berliner Taschenbuchverlag, from the French 2009).

<sup>40</sup>A face with that big hooked nose that was supposed to be typical of the Jewish heritage.

*improved a lot...The fact that we are still miles away from the pre-war standard of living and that we will probably not reach it again in the next few years is common knowledge Insightful clear. After all, we have totally lost a total war and the old "Vae Victis" is still valid, even if it is often whitewashed with nice words... In the beginning I had reservations about working for an occupying power. I would have had the opportunity to work for the Americans as early as 1945. At the time, however, I didn't attach any importance to it. Anyway, I still couldn't believe at the time that we should have lost the war - I came from Courland, where we had successfully defended ourselves to the end against overwhelming odds, and regarded all the occupying powers as my very personal enemies. In the meantime, everything has cleared up a bit and I gradually got a different impression of the Americans. I also considered that we Germans would definitely have to pay for occupation costs. And if the workers employed by the occupying powers are paid from the money we have to raise, why shouldn't I be there too...*

Four days later, on January 30th, he also wrote to my mother, who had apparently mentioned "a new ideal basis of life" to him:

*...to build a new ideal basis for life, which we urgently need after pretty much everything that previously seemed valuable and right to us has turned out to be wrong and void. For us, who almost to the bitter end, despite all the setbacks, still believed in victory and who were convinced of the correctness of the teachings presented to us (even if we had personal difficulties as a result - see Aryan descent!) broke with us. At the end of the war not only a system collapsed but the foundations of our worldview collapsed. Personally, long after the collapse, I felt as if I were standing empty-handed in front of a heap of shards, to which new ones were constantly being added. The Nuremberg trial, the pathetic behavior of many former greats, every revelation and publication showed me more and more how clay the feet were on which the whole of National Socialism stood.*

*MEDALLIONS OF MY LIFE*

*The parents*

*My mother Ingeborg (Inge, Munzi) Gertrud Charlotte Laaser born Heilbron  
January 22, 1919 - April 26, 2008*

*My father Rudolph Laaser  
15 October 1916 - 29 April 1945*

Homer: Odysseus in Hades

These were my mother's words.  
Without knowing whether I  
could, I yearned to embrace her  
spirit, dead though she was. Three  
times, in my eagerness to clasp  
her to me, I started forward.

*Three times, like a shadow or a  
dream, she slipped through my  
hands and left me pierced by an  
even sharper pain.*

“Mother!” I cried with words that  
winged their way to her. “Why do  
you not wait for me? *I long to  
reach you, so that even in hell we  
may throw our loving arms round  
each other and draw cold comfort  
from our tears.* Or is this a mere  
phantom that august Persephone  
has sent me to increase my  
grief?”



I have only a vague memory of my father, more of a longing to have a father, especially in the late 1950's when the surviving POWs were returning from Russia. There were still around six thousand that Adenauer negotiated freely in Moscow in 1956. They arrived at the Friedland reception camp for months and I thought that my father would knock or ring the doorbell at some point, at that time it was already on Zweibrücker Strasse. Even now, as I write it, tears well up in my eyes. A little later a stamp was issued showing a gaunt head with barbed wire in the background. I got them from Wolfram now, because years ago I had left my own stamp collection to my school friend Friedhelm.

What you are to me -  
I just realized  
when you were away from me  
for a long time than my feeling  
on white longing ships  
went looking for you on the edge  
of eternity.

Heinrich Anacker<sup>41</sup>

After reunification - why did some left-wing ideologues only want to use the word unification - I drove to Torgau in the summer of 1994, where my father, as far as I know from the<sup>42</sup> information passed on by Friedrich Heer, was shot off his motorbike, allegedly it was an American. The Western Allies met there for the first time with the Soviet units. But I couldn't find anything at the cemetery in Torgau, just as my preliminary inquiries to the search service of the German Red Cross in Munich had been unsuccessful. From the report of October 2, 1978 and its reasoning:

'The result of all investigations led to the conclusion that Rudolf Laaser was very probably killed in the fighting that took place in March and April 1945 during the retreat from Cottbus and Gubenin to the area south of Berlin.'

'For some of them the investigation shows that they fell. Many others died in the confusing terrain interspersed with lakes and forests, without the surviving comrades noticing.'

Maybe I was looking in the wrong place back then in 1994, because in the official Fuer-Tot-Declaration (of January 27, 1947, see next page) Pretsch (correct: Pretzsch), lying a little further

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41 Heinrich Anacker (1901-1971 was a Swiss- [German author](#) . Anacker entered National Socialist circles in [Vienna](#) in 1922, joined the [SA](#) , and after 1933 lived in [Berlin](#) as a [freelance writer](#) . He wrote a spate of SA and [Hitler Youth](#) songs and was considered the "lyricist of the Brown Front".

42Friedrich Heer was connected to Catholic resistance groups, was in prison from 1938 to 1940 and was drafted in 1940. In the 1950s he became a well-known left-wing Catholic writer with titles such as "The Rise of Europe", "The Tragedy of the Holy Empire", "European Intellectual History", The Faith of Adolf Hitler (Anatomy of a Political Religion), God's First Love (2000 Years of Judaism and Christianity, Genesis of the Austrian Catholic Adolf Hitler). He brought my mother to Catholicism over years of correspondence. On October 4th, 1940 she left the Evangelical Church, probably in connection with her marriage (and - I believe - joined the so-called German Church together with my father.

north on the Elbe, is named, via the main road 182 connected to Torgau (to the west is Eilenburg with Villa Laaser: <https://www.leipzig-days.de/villa-laaser-eilenburg/>).

I remember as if it were yesterday, no today, that my mother, after the affidavit on January 27, 1947, returned from the district court in Spandau, crying on a chair in the kitchen and I - almost seven years old - streaming tears consoling her. Kneee ompasste. She was almost 29 years old at the time.

***The affidavit of January 27, 1947 (requirement for the war widow's pension)***

Sometimes, when my mother woke up in the morning, she thought she was sleeping in a strange bed - on the way. Then she thought that was impossible, because they had always stayed in barns or plundered properties. Where were her two boys? Then she realized that she was no longer young - and alone. A terrible longing came over her every time: I'd rather be out and about on the endless streets with her children and her mother, hungry and afraid, more than half a century ago, not left like now, in a hospice bed. Yes, she had asked her children if she could be with them or near them for the past few years, but the two women had refused and she had gone silent. Very quiet - with the canoe in her windpipe she couldn't speak or sing much anyway, like she used to not at all in the church choir. She had loved to sing, hummed the old hymn melodies now too - and moved herself: *When you left me, my heart trembled, at the station, strewn with soldiers. In the time of hunger I had many visions, a mountain fell on me, in the kitchen, by the only stove. It's been a long time, the hard times are over and nothing is easier. Say goodbye to love and being loved as you understand it!* She had remained restless, unchanged in her futile search for security, even if she endured life after the war. Earlier, before the turning point in her life in May 1945, she had written, thought and felt so differently, even if in her letters from the war years a premonition of what was to come rumbled in the depths.

My mother left me her memoirs and letters. When I let these texts pass me by, I have to shake my head again and again. She made such an energetic and powerful, cheerful and forward-looking impression; she was happier than ever before, blessed with her first child and full of admonitions for the man in the field but also with a deep and touching longing for him. The two were hardly together between their marriage in April 1940 and his death at the end of April 1945. But her trust in the 'Fuehrer', this naïve patriotism, is unbelievable, if explainable, because she grew up in the family of a German who had returned from abroad. Father Lothar Heilbron spent years in Argentina with German emigrants, some of them from his own family. She simply wanted to be a particularly good German, at around twenty-two years of age, after she was allowed to remain in the Bund Deutscher Maedchen through a letter from the Führer and her father - to his own surprise - shortly before his death received a silver Cross of Merit for 25 years of loyal service - from the Führer awarded - in spite of the Jewish line of descent, which was considered certain at the time.

A few quotes from the letter: *Today is Saturday (in April 1941) and I still have to write something about it. So, our troops are marching into Yugoslavia and Greece. And you're sitting up there in Holland playing football. Oh, how sorry I am that you can't be in a more interesting theater of*

*war. In Africa things are now also moving forward rapidly. My cousin could have been there too, his company left while he was on vacation in Traunstein in Bavaria. It's not nice to think that the Italians can't do anything on their own, but go back everywhere. If you look at the map of where we are now, it's immeasurable. Lucky that we don't have the Russians against us this time. But how can a people be as blinded as the Serbs after everything that has already happened. The English must have unbelievable persuaders. After all, nobody can overlook the fact that we have finished with France and Poland and still have a part of our army free, which should be enough for Serbia. It's a pity that it has to cost human lives again there, but with our weapons it won't be that many. But you shouldn't let such depression control you. Who knows if you will stay there much longer; perhaps you will soon be used against England. The Russian campaign doesn't seem to be coming soon. My uncle wrote to my aunt that the war in Russia was much more cruel, more brutal than any other campaign. Terrible atrocities must have happened. Ah, if only the killing would end soon!*

But as early as November 1942, my mother wrote to her husband: *The matter of winning weighs heavily on my stomach. Your optimism is incomprehensible to me. You always count on "after the war". I mean, we have to put up with the state of war for many years and prepare for it. You can listen wherever you want, no one has a glimmer of hope. So why always want to look so far ahead...* and in July 1943: *Sometimes, I'm very afraid of losing you. I didn't know that before. Now such ideas sometimes plague me; but it passes.*

Now, in October 1942, it's always about eating, starving, freezing, clothing, money and packages: *Yesterday we dug up the potatoes, I did most of it with my hands, we didn't have any hoes, that was perhaps difficult. I felt like a mole and my hands still hurt today. But they tasted great, even though they're mostly just small marbles. We carried 1 ¼ hundredweight in three bags and two sacks to the bus and then ten pounds of elderberries.*

A year later, in August 1943, she writes to her husband and it is worth reading every word: *The war seems to have reached a very serious point. But I'm not afraid at all. It is the crisis at the end of the 4th year of the war, like in the (First) World War. And again one must be more concerned about the attitude of the homeland than that of the front. Oh, that the rumor-mongers and inciters should fall prey to the penalties at times. I could imagine that now, after a heavy attack on Berlin, the masses, supported by inciters and agitators, would seethe and be capable of violent riots. What you hear from the excited Berliners is not exactly reassuring. After all, most of them seem to be leaving and the rest, as long as they are not forced to stay here (the working people), will be quite sensible, I hope. What makes me stay here is bad: 1. We live in a large area with arcades. 2. When firebombs fall, it's best to be indoors. If possible, phosphorus canisters and high-explosive bombs will be dropped in more worthwhile parts of the city, with us at most sporadically. 3. The Buchenbuehler will already have the house full of anxious relatives, I don't like my aunt in Traunstein, I hardly ever wrote to her and didn't have a cordial relationship with*



*her. Aunt Lene and Klara are probably moving to Sieversdorf. We wrote to Mutti about Brembach, but there won't be any room there either. 4. I don't want to go to strangers in my condition, I feel safer and happier with my family. 5. I don't shy away from the excitement of alarms, they will be no more offensive than the attitude towards strangers and strangers' extremely uncomfortable home. 6. It is to be feared that strangers will be accommodated in vacant apartments. 7. In the event of an overthrow, the safest place to stay is with family and friends. That would be my thoughts.*

The letter deals with the relocation of schools from Berlin to the surrounding area as far as East Prussia and the repeated picking of blackberries and raspberries in the forest. In general, a large part of the correspondence is devoted to the sending of food stamps and mutual requests for certain foodstuffs or items of clothing or also small sums of money, because some things were obviously better in occupied Holland (where her husband was deployed at the time) and some things were better in Berlin of course. The postal service seems to have worked well at this time. And, a lot revolves around the pregnancy with the second son, Wolfram, who was born in 1943.

*Then, at the end of 1943: We in Berlin still have the alarming nights. I'm not scared for my sake. I always think if it hits me, it's over; if it doesn't happen, I'm just lucky, and the good Lord wants to continue my life and that of Buebchen in the future... It now looks as if a lot has been done wrong, and when I hear the explanations of my uncle (Friedrich Heilbron) . . . , I also really think that this experienced man may be right about some things (he was in Africa and America). If I'm here a long time, I might lose my faith a little... Don't you agree that after the war we'll have to scale back our needs to the most primitive level. There will be no housing, no laundry, no shoes, etc., just work and little money... On the evening of the happy day (December 18, 1943) we had this terrible attack, which seems to have raged so badly in Spandau in particular. The bombs just popped around us. I was trembling all over, although I wasn't that scared; but my nerves have become very sensitive after the difficult last year. When I think back, I have to say that it was the hardest year for me so far; but that was it for many others as well. My sister was much calmer. A few fire candles fell in our garden and the air mine closest to us fell in Vinzerstrasse. Many houses have been completely torn down. We had to spend the night in the basement, ie we were in the lowest apartment, the others could use a room. It was a terrible night, until 12 o'clock I was still carrying shards out with my mother. Then we tried to sleep. But the tumbling didn't let me rest, I had to feed him twice and pack him up fresh, he was so restless. The next day we put my room in order with cardboard windows. We don't have daylight anymore. In the dining room the whole frame with the case and all the windows lay in the room, a huge hole. The large glass door, which was already broken, no longer closes and the wooden shutter was broken. Yesterday two men put the window frame back in place and today we stuffed the cracks with paper, a large cardboard disc closes the gap. Of the sixteen double windows in all the rooms, three were already broken and therefore scratched out, I used a glass knife and hammer to clean all the others today and yesterday, so that sometimes sparks flew, because the glass on the outside windows is inserted in*

*such a way that you need a lot of strength and skill that nothing splashes into your eyes. Four are now complete with cardboard inserted very carefully and nailed down with strips. We got 1 cm thick cardboard from our acquaintance, which insulates well. The wall in the kitchen is very damaged. But it's still possible. Anyway, we worked like crazy. The men have to take care of the roof, which has suffered a lot. Mom had just been down with the flu for two days and was up a bit on the third when the attack came. Contrary to expectations, she recovered and immediately started helping. I don't know how things are otherwise with us. In addition, the gas hardly burned at all and cooking was therefore difficult. For the Tuckele (wolfram) I have to cook three times. It's very sweet again now, and it looks so rosy.*

It's quiet around me, around six in the morning, in Baric near Belgrade, in January 2015. The last few days the sky has been clear, no snow, Belgrade is clearly visible on the horizon - thirty kilometers away. Absently I leaf through the documents that have been preserved - letters and testimonials that have survived in our family over the last century, signs of a lost time. Who would ever look at them and interpret them again?

My father with his school class around 1934 and at the beginning of the war

Who was my father? He fell at the age of 29. A single image sticks, maybe only in my dreams: I'm lying at night, probably in a child's bed, my father is sitting on the edge of the bed. Then the vain expectation that he would come back with those who had returned from the war in 1956, then the search for his grave in Torgau on the Elbe in 1994, again hopeless. Earlier, in 1947, my mother's heartrending tears in the kitchen on Folkunger Strasse when she had to declare him dead. A few letters left from the field to his and my mother, collected wisdom and poems, some photos, probably after the wedding, and the usual military stills. And my unconscious longing to have a father. His much younger stepbrother Sigurd, called Sike, with a decidedly sanguine temperament, appropriated the role of protector, my mother probably felt marginalized. Father's mother Margarete lived with Sigurd nearby in Spandau after we moved, Wolfram and I went to her for potato pancakes, once we each ate more than ten - smaller ones - and were very proud. Sigurd later became a technical director o.ae. in the Steglitzer Klinikum, the relationship broke up when my mother did not go to his mother Margarete's funeral because of a disagreement. Wolfram probably tried to mend the relationship later, his temperament was much closer to Sigurd's than mine, but was unsuccessful. Sigurd then died early from a brain tumor and a connection with his wife was no longer established. I had tried in vain to locate her.

I started leafing through one of my father's medium-sized notebooks <sup>43</sup>. On the first page is Rudolf Laaser, L11270 (the number on his soldier's stamp?) and the location Amsterdam via Bentheim. He was about 26 years old at the time. On the inside of the lid, he glued in large Gothic letters: The victory of life is the meaning of the world. There then follow pages with references to books, often underlaid with newspaper clippings and divided into the sections: economics, politics, by far the most extensive fine literature (including titles such as "Constitution of Race"), autobiographies, philosophy, race, foreign languages, records, special. In addition to the timeless classics, there are well-known names such as Hans Carossa, Werner Bergengruen, Peter Bamm, but also Balzac and Dostojewski. Political and military names that became known in the early Federal Republic also appear, such as Mueller-Armack (genealogy of the economic style) or Friedrich Foertsch (art of war of today and tomorrow). The chapter on race covers two pages, but only a few books on the concept of race at the time (e.g. The mental systems of Nordic people, Nibelungen-Verlag). Runes on the last page.

This is followed by notes, for example, of a lecture on Zarathustra (Nietzsche) and rhymed texts that deal with death in battle, for example:

I've never loved you so much  
 Never embrace yourself in longing  
 As if in fear  
 Seconds where death is close to me.  
 And you were always suddenly yes  
 And have with your whole world  
 put you between me and him

The author of these verses, Juergen Hahn-Butry, is characterized as follows in Wikipedia: Hahn-Butry was less to be attributed to [National Socialism](#) - he was never a member of the NSDAP - but to a soldier's nationalism, the focus of which, similar to [Ernst Jünger](#), was the idealization of the trench community of the First World Wars stood.

But there also follows a translation of a few lines by Sappho (!), certainly not a leading figure of the dictatorship. Then on April 29, 1943 three pages of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: From the letters of two lovers (*Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*) and many poems: ... Who knows no nights, knows nothing of the day...

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<sup>43</sup> In the meantime, I have given it to my brother Wolfram on the occasion of his golden wedding anniversary on April 26, 2015.

**Stronger than death...**<sup>44</sup>

Should I not come back  
 Dear wife and dear child,  
 Listen in a quiet, pious  
 hour on the evening wind.

...

Yes, I took your actions  
 Dear wife and dear child,  
 My hands rest forever,  
 stronger than death still are.

It's hard to grasp what's going on inside me while reading, or isn't anything moving inside me - more? I am older, old, disinterested, cynical, just old. And yet everything moves so quickly that I always hope to find something else that I could do to document the superfluous correspondence of my parents that was left to me. My mother was twenty-one when she got married in April 1940, a war marriage, they didn't see each other for twelve months! She, a diligent child, tries to get everything in order in difficult times, unaffected by the horror of the bombing in Berlin - but the Weinmeisterhoehe in Spandau is not a particularly worthwhile bombing target either. Sometimes I thought, if my father had come back, the marriage would probably not have lasted: she has often been reproached, admonished and he, with his comrades, in Holland, keeps asking for money, which is sent in letters in the order of 20 Reichsmark, often given by my grandmother, saved from purchases that are not needed in Spandau and spent on celebrations or, better yet, feasting with his regiment.

Two quotes from letters:

In July 1941 about a year after the wedding:

*Now I really need to seek consolation from you. For the first time in a long time I just couldn't contain myself, I had to cry terribly. I am so saddened by your last letter. You're going away for a week to recover? Why don't you explain to me at all why you can't go home this week...Oh, I have the feeling that you no longer let me participate in everything that moves you. And I even think that you no longer respond to my letters in detail... In the last few days I've gone swimming twice, to the Badewiese (in Spandau)...*

From a letter from my mother Inge to her husband from April 1942:

*...I'm sending you Hanneles' letter, which brought me joy and astonishment in equal measure.*

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<sup>44</sup>From my father's exercise book, in which he collected poems and texts that were important to him. I don't know if he wrote this poem himself. I couldn't find an author on the internet.

*Wolfgang* <sup>45</sup>*on the Haff* <sup>46</sup>*! I wrote her a long letter, mainly to find out whether the boy really didn't have any difficulties because of his great-grandfather. I am very curious about the answer. I'm really puzzle.*

More than a year later - in November 1942 - my mother had written a strange sentence next to an approximate paper cut: *That's a bit stylized for men's loyalty... How I get it; I don't know either. Maybe I mean to say that I'm faithful to my husband, but that doesn't ruin you.*

More fundamentally, I, the later-born, ask myself the question: How could one, she, he, all, think it was right that certificates of descent were required in order to become an officer or that my father could not become one because he had married a quarter Jew. Did my mother already know when I got married? It has not penetrated deeper into her presence! Did her husband know, did her father or his older brother tell him beforehand? In any case, they were happy and grateful that this marriage came about like that of their older sister? Both daughters with Aryan men - supposedly - in safety, while the father could no longer carry out his activities to the full; somewhere it said he was only allowed to do internal work.

My mother wrote to her husband about the parentage problem in January 1943: *We have to take some very serious advice. We should have worked out your explanation and worked it out together. The error with the wrong year of birth would not have been made. It was too bad that I didn't attend your conversation with my great-uncle from the beginning. This can no longer be changed. So, let's talk about what remains to be done. I place some hope in the last 6 points of your statement. The other cannot be proved. If you have to write another application, you will have to submit all my papers as well. I have already prepared them in full. As soon as you write about it, I'll send it off.*

The correspondence with my father ends in 1943. His letters are almost completely missing from the extensive correspondence. I think my mother took them to Trautenau and there they got lost in a suitcase left behind in the attic or were neglected by Aunt Liszy, who was able to stay a little longer. Her own letters must have been sent to her after her husband's death, probably by relatives. When I was in Trautenau in the summer of 1964 and looked up the corner building on the market square, I didn't know anything about a suitcase in the attic, there's a lot of junk under the roofs. But in May 2015 I protected Trautenau again - there was nothing left!

My mother sometimes made a very hard impression on me, hardened by experience. But when her

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<sup>45</sup>Wolfgang Koepke (1912-1944, fallen), son of Else Koepke born Heilbron, one of Lothar's sisters. Wolfgang's sister Hanna/Hannele (born 1906) committed suicide together with three children after being raped in 1945 (one, Karoline, survived).

<sup>46</sup>Half for *Nationalpolitik Lehranstalt* (meaning National Political Institution of Teaching) were [secondary boarding schools](#) in [Nazi Germany](#). They were founded as "community education sites" after the [National Socialist seizure of power](#) in 1933.

father died in 1943, there were tears in her eyes; she loved him very much. I think. This naivety shows up in her younger sister, especially when she assumes in her letters that "we" will hopefully soon "wear down" England after the part-human destruction of London and land on the island and occupy it. Not a word about the victims of the attrition! Even before her marriage in March 1940, she had stuck a saying from Hitler in her diary: 'No matter how great the task, if it has to be solved, it will be solved. Here, too, the eternal principle applies that where there is an indomitable will, a need can also be overcome'. Unfortunately, he kept to that, but without breaking the necessity, on the contrary. I can think of an answer from the German General von Lettow-Vorbeck (lieutenant colonel, fought heroically in German East Africa/Tanzania until 1918) when he was asked for his cooperation by the men of July 20th in early 1944: *No, the old Germany is lost and will not find his soul again until we have paid the full price* <sup>47</sup>.

The prize had to be paid in the summer of 1945 when my mother, then very young at twenty-six, was expelled from Trautenau (today Trutnov) in Sudetenland. As already mentioned, she had evacuated with her mother and two children from bomb-stricken Berlin to visit relatives at the end of 1943 <sup>48</sup>.

The journey starts on May 18th walking down the street to Liegnitz (arrival on June 1st) and then further towards Cottbus (June 11th), arrival in Luebbenau on June 14th and finally home in Spandau on June 20th. I had found the map on the country road, wrapping paper for a loaf of bread, almost more valuable than the map.

Along the way, the family had joined forces with another—a mother with four children (the Pausewang family) and a handcart. The experience of persistent existential danger for weeks remained decisive for my mother's post-war life and also for me. Gudrun Pausewang quotes (slightly abridged) in a handwritten letter dated January 8, 2018 from her book "Fern von der Rosinkawiese", based on a lengthy interview with my mother (alias: Ms. Laaser):

Wednesday May 30, 1945: *Mrs. Laaser was a very quiet person. I was very impressed by her calmness. She never lost her nerve. She kept her thoughts, feelings and desires hidden. But she was anything but a dreamer. In difficult situations, she could act at lightning speed. There was no lack of samples of their presence of mind. It has also often benefited my family.*

*... Right on the first night our travel alliance proved to be extremely useful. Because if Ms. Laaser hadn't stood by me, I would have had a hard time. We had no idea that Polish officers had set up a kind of casino in this domain. All night long, hiding in the hay, we heard the noise of their merry carousing. We didn't suspect anything good. Early in the morning we got ready to leave. Go away while they are still asleep! But a soldier, probably one of the officers' boys, came into the barn just*

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<sup>47</sup>William Stevenson "The Ghosts of Africa", 1980

<sup>48</sup>See also p. 83 ff.

*as we were loading our luggage onto the handcart. He grinned at me (Gudrun Pausewang), took my hand and spoke to me in Polish. He pointed unequivocally to the hayloft. My mother (Mrs. Pausewang) held my other hand and tried to convince the soldier that I was still a child. But he took no notice of her and tried to pull me in the direction of the hayloft. I smelled his liquor breath and started to cry.*

*Mrs. Laaser showed incredible courage. She ran over to the casino to draw attention to what was about to happen in the barn. She risked putting herself in the situation I was in. But she was lucky: a young officer followed her and appeared in the barn. He kept talking to the soldier until he let me go. Then he made signs for us to leave as soon as possible. I still remember, forty-two years later, with gratitude the Polish officer and Frau Laaser who rescued me from my dangerous situation.*

*A few days later: a young Russian offered to go to his quarters and come back the next morning with bread and meat. However, he made it absolutely clear to Ms. Laaser that he would want to sleep with her too. At dawn on June 3, my mother (Ms. Pausewang), fetched the eldest sister Freia and me (Gudrun) down from the attic. Much later she told me about a fundamental discussion that had taken place between the three women that night: one had urged them to leave before the Russians returned. But Mrs. Laaser had hesitated. She had felt that the children unconditionally needed something strong in their stomachs if they were not going to get sick. Shouldn't she go into the trade after all? After all, this young lad is not one to use brute force... We left in a hurry to be gone when the Russian came back...*

*On June 5, Ms. Laaser did another bravura act: With both children in the car, she drove to the Russian command and came back with a piece of bread. I admired her. I found her so on top of things so admirable and that she didn't even mention her own behaviors and qualities.*

The last picture before the departure from Trautenau (Trutnov), glued in the calendar somewhat belatedly by my daughter Stefanie in the month of June, is a central picture of my life and my memory of it. It appears here and then again at the end of this collection.

Trautenau, on the day of departure (May 18, 1945 <sup>49</sup>) and on the right the map with parts of Silesia, which I found on a country road when I was four years old.

Life slowly returned to normal. In 1953 my mother wrote to her older sister:

*I can certainly still use the suit, especially the pants, slippers are also urgently needed for our youngest. He only has a few very old worn ones. I'm also looking forward to the shirt fabric for my birthday. You always have slightly different patterns over there (in West Germany) . I've been*

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<sup>49</sup>Letter dated April 8, 1948 from Aunt Mimi (Aunt Lisy's mother, who went to Russia with the family in 1946): "... What remains deepest in my heart is the memory of you on May 18, 1945, so miserable and yet had to pull off so bravely on the country road ( *from Trautenau* ). Your dear, sad face, Inge brave, devoted and determined in. the ignorant little children. I will never forget the pain of that day."

*busy sewing now. 2 dresses for little girls and 2 shirts for the older ones. Now he should get a pair of green velvet trousers. His suspicion of scarlet fever has made me very uneasy. I got different information about the incubation period from different sides. The doctor took 3 smears, the 3rd was positive, now 3 new smears are made, which we have to bring to Charlottenburg for examination each time. As I see now, an unnecessary effort. I just follow the regulation of the health department and let him go to school 8 days after disinfection. Whether he can go to the Landschulheim may depend on the findings of the smears. For days he spent days building the railway and building all the great toys, countries, islands, ports, mines. In general, geography is probably his main area of interest. He now draws maps for his amusement. To my astonishment, he made individual drawings of all the former German colonies in Africa. In general, both children have a strong sense of nationality, whether this is encouraged by the school I don't know. I was like that as a child too. But now I would like to do something about it with my children.*

After several years in a nursery, my mother trained as a welfare worker and bought a terraced house in the social housing sector not far from the Gruewald city train station. There she found safety again for a few years and even learned to drive a car. In 1957, with a women's group in the Protestant church community, she pushed through the original, much more modest memorial next to the later superstructure - crossed railway sleepers - for the Berlin Jews, who in the early morning hours at platform 17 were crammed into the freight trains to Auschwitz, against the resistance of the Berlin Senate were, among them bearers of her birth name. The enthusiasm of the first years of the war had given way to a deep terror.

<p>The ash pond in Auschwitz (opposite the house of the camp commandant with his family)</p>
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The memorial at the Berlin-Grunewald freight station with the staircase on the right to platform 17.



The original monument on the left with crossed railway sleepers and on the right again the entrance to platform 17.

Two years after the war, my mother Inge had experienced a first schizophrenic phase, in this time of a tremendous spiritual upheaval, when Friedrich Heer <sup>50</sup>, a war comrade of my father, began to write from a left-Catholic position like Ignace Lepp and the Jesuit and founder of the Catholic social teaching Oswald by Nell Breuning. But the decisive factor at the time was probably the need to draw a line and have my father and her husband declared dead by a court of law.

Two years after the Wall went up - in January 1963 - my mother's spirit had departed a second time, curling in on an imagined pregnancy, with no access for her children. Verses, a piece of paper between old newspapers, written back then, express my feelings: You don't want to be tormented, see standing on the railway embankment like biers of coal wagons...

Much later, in the autumn of 1994, I spoke in an official capacity in Kraków about my family and described the intricate drama: My father invaded Poland as a soldier in the German army while his family was under the shadow of the approaching Holocaust. I think she only escaped the rage of the regime in the last year of the war by evacuating her to the outskirts of Trautenau.

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<sup>50</sup>Friedrich Heer, born April 10, 1916, died September 18, 1983 in Vienna was a war comrade of her husband and brought the news of his death at the end of 1945 or beginning of 1946. She later said that shortly before the end of the war he was shot off a motorbike by an American soldier near Torgau on the Elbe. Perhaps he had sought death? Friedrich Heer was connected to Catholic resistance groups, was in prison from 1938 to 1940 and was drafted in 1940. In the 1950s he became a well-known left-wing Catholic writer with titles such as "The Rise of Europe", "The Tragedy of the Holy Empire", "European Intellectual History" and "The Faith of Adolf Hitler". He had converted her to Catholicism over years of correspondence. On October 4th, 1940 she left the Evangelical Church, probably in connection with her marriage (and - I believe - joined the so-called German Church together with her husband.

***Opening address, ASPHER conference in Krakow, October 24, 1994  
(screenshot of closing words)***

Finally I want to make a very personal statement, way beyond the issue of public health, which is our common interest and also a professional ideal for many of us. I want to refer to the relationships between the people, their cultures, nations and territories in „Mitteleuropa“. Over the centuries there has been continuous change in central Europe which in spite of all violence also gave birth to a unique and marvellous fabric of cultures. Two world wars and German arrogance and criminal force have destroyed this texture. We are now on search for the bits and pieces left in our individual and collective memories and slowly we find out about our descent. So my own family's provenance may not be atypical for a people in Mitteleuropa.

What I know from my fathers father living south of Koscierzyna/Berent in the later corridor, is that his brother in 1920 opted for Poland and separated in enmity. He went to Torun/Thorn, polonized his name and was lost to our family, whereas my grandfather moved from the village of even today Hammerberg to Berlin. History went on: In my possession are still some photographs taken by my father during the „Polenfeldzug“ in September 1939. Shortly before the end of the war he was killed in action at the Elbe. Then in late May of 1945 my mother and grandmother marched with two children from Trutnow/Trautenau in Chechia through Jelenia Gora/Hirschberg and through emptied Slaska/Schlesien in 6 weeks back to Berlin which they had left 2 years ago because of the massive bombardements.

Those were my paternal familie's ties to Poland! I repeat this history because it must never come back.

Today we have the luck of a second chance and this chance has the name of Europe, - to me it seems the only chance we have. But history cannot be simply ignored, it is there as a burden and as a gift and somebody guilty or not has to take it up. It therefore was right to organize the Polish/German symposia between Kraków and Bielefeld on „Psychiatry after Auschwitz“. I also welcome the offer of our hosts to visit Auschwitz, not as a touristic attraction but as an attempt to accept the past. At the occasion of my first visit in Cracow more than a year ago I visited Oswiecim and when I stood at the pool of ashes, in my mind I built a bridge across time and distance to a place in Berlin where my mother lives now, the S-Bahnhof Grunewald. This city train station is known for the deportation of the jews of Berlin, some of them bearing the maiden name of my mother. So complicated and difficult and faceted is our past.

## The long years of dying

A dream: I'm standing in front of the S-Bahn, but probably not in Berlin. My mother walked a little further to look or look for something. It toots and I have to get in. She comes back quickly to say goodbye. But the door closes before then. To escape the grief that overcomes me, I decide to wake up. It was maybe the last time I saw her. In a dream! In reality, she had to endure the agonizing extinction of life, the end of which I refused her, for more than a decade.

Two letters from the very last years of my mother's life - in the stack of documents that I left behind - touched me very much. The experiences on the flight in May 1945 penetrate again and again into consciousness.

*Dear Ulrich!*

*Now comes a letter that may be the last. I have a lot to thank you for. As my first child, you carried a lot with me, your little one... about your body and your development towards strength. Your brother was already on the hike when he was lying in bed in Trautenau, he stroked me with his tiny hands as if he knew everything. The Russian soldiers <sup>51</sup>with the rifles in the --- quietly left the room. I think of the long way to Berlin. The country we walked through: Your little brother coughed, the stroller broke. In the way only I farmstead was still inhabited. A strong man saw us - asked - pushed in a board, hammered, we got to the shot-up bridge in... brought the car home. Almost nothing was missing in the apartment. How do I get bread. Soldiers begging at the car of Russian soldiers. I had discovered half a bottle of petrol, they suggested I should drink from it - I refused... They gave me ½ bread. At home I planted tomatoes - cabbage, mum always with me - then grandmother came, bombed out. Normal life began \_ with 1/8 l milk per famil .*

A year before my mother died , im March 2007, Mary wrote : *Dearest Frau Inge, I wish you all the best that you and your soul live forever, that all future generations can take strength and love from you! Kiss , Your Mary .* a year later she sang one at her bedside of their most touching Poems and wrote : This is the song, which I was singing to your mother, the last time. I would wish to be a bird from the song in her endless life. Time, which is passing is so sad and I will never be able to deal with .

All little birds, all little birds...  
 from the forest hill  
 left to the blue sea...  
 only one, only one  
 is staying...  
 to take care for others

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<sup>51</sup> Here, my mother is probably synchronizing various events. In my opinion, Russian soldiers were never in Trautenau

to sing for Inge  
forever...

When my mother died in her hospice bed, her eyes seemed to remain mobile. Even if they went back and forth slowly, it was regular, like the eyes of a small child, and for 89 years they were very large and clear, but not like the clear monochromatic lakes in the eyes of year-olds, but like a weather-beaten landscape with cracks and cliffs and play of colors, a rich life lay in it and what was heard was reflected in the eyes, in the pain, in the joy, it passes over it like the wind. The eyes are not wise, they agree with you, embrace you, absorb you, there are no sharp criticism old age eyes, only the eyes, everything else is dead, gone, the eyes survive, have become independent, have absorbed all life.

we just came to see a dream image we  
only came to dream, not really, we didn't  
come to live on earth.

Tochihuitzin Coyolchiuhqui, Aztec poet  
around 1419 i.e. long before the Spanish  
conquistadors.

*Ulrich Rudolf Laaser: Futile escapes*

From a letter dated October 4th, 1953 to my relatives who are almost the same age:

*Dear Hansjuergen and dear Corinna,*

*I have now been in the Landschulheim for 10 days. It was very nice there. The Landschulheim is very close to the border. East is on three sides. But this East has never bothered us. There is a lot of forest and old buildings in Gross-Glienike...*

Three years later the mood has changed and for the next few years the hopelessness of life weighs on me.

October 1956

Arrival at high tide. The sea is gray like the wide sky, which weighs leaden over the earth and in me, (and) which yet has a feeling of beauty in God. It stretches in a wide arc from the horizon to my heart. A seagull screeches. Through the salty, wet haze that lies over the flat waves, the eye sees the mighty, primitive forms of the Neuwerk lighthouse:

gray mud on the beach,  
Lone Seagull Scream.  
A narrow strip only on land  
Has little white sand.  
This is the leaden sea  
Gray, salty sea in the lee.

Sunset:

The wide arc of heaven stands out purple from the horizon, slowly fading into pink and then into blue. Glowing stands the ball of the sun in the firmament, it quickly sinks deeper. A wide golden stripe lies over the green Wadden Sea. The tide has just gone out. Colored by the sunlight, the puddles lie gleaming red-gold in the dull gray mud, which is interspersed with countless little silvery dots. Between the sun and the sea lies a small violet cloud. Soon she, the tiny one, will split the huge ball of embers in two. All splendor of the sun will fail on this little cloud.

During this time, as a 15-year-old, I wrote a diary, almost twenty exercise books until the mid-1980s, addressed to an imaginary friend, apparently Anne Frank <sup>52</sup>:

... Through empty ridges I walk  
where is the way to you

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<sup>52</sup>Diary of Anne Frank, first published in 1947/paperback 1955.

You should guide me, you! ...

December 21, 1956

My main linocut...that it should express my inner self is clear. My soul is a great longing. So this linocut has become an expression of a longing. In front of the big sun a coniferous tree, reaching into the heart of the sun, but not reaching the middle. The tree stands on a ledge. Everything is jagged rock, but on the right a warm fire licks up high on a stone slab, it rages up over the sun, but it is only a fire, not the sun itself, God himself, truth itself. But a chalice flows full from God Mercy and victory into the flames. The shadows of life stand out sharply from God's face - cold night air blows around my dullness, but the night sky was still an answer to me.

March 31, 1957

Dear Anne...You were wonderful in today's production by Boleslaw Barlog. It is now 0:25. In Johanna von Koczian I saw for the first time that my girlfriend must be an Anne, a jolly, lively, bubbly and - serious one. I will definitely write a drama about your death. It can only be a drama, otherwise I would have to write too much (novel). Only in drama - without the connecting words - can I create you alive.

December 22, 1956

I have never received such a nice letter. Fraulein Forsblom writes to me (a friend of Uncle Fritz, *Friedrich Heilbro*, in Vaasa, Finland, +1957) at the crucial point: *How nice that you keep a diary, you won't regret it when you get old, you can look so beautiful remember everything that moved you as a boy...not only grow physically and you certainly have the talent and the desire, I believe in you, don't rush anything... 'I believe in you!'*, has always happened to me said one such words. How well do they match my needs...

In the 5th grade, me in the middle in front and in front of me my lifetime and best friend Friedhelm (+18 *September 1919*).

At that time I probably also read a lot of crime novels, the series with the German agent Mr. Dynamit by CH Guenther appealed to me in particular. A quote <sup>53</sup>- written down then - still has some truths today: *I don't think the Germans are stupid. They are no longer a developing country. But as for her past," said the CIA agent, "They never process them. Not in the generation after next. Before that they have a tremendous horror"*.

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53 CH Guenther: Mr. Dynamite No. 581-178, p. 48

At times I had very many dreams, very well etched when I woke up, but could not interpret them. After the death of my mother in 2008, I dreamed of going home:

I would like to go home at night, maybe after a class evening in Spandau. I hang onto the rear hatch of a smaller truck, but it continues to drive via Spandauer Damm until I see the Memorial Church in the city center in the distance and jump off at a red traffic light, hoping for a tram from there (like line 75 used to be) to get back to Spandau (now that's my goal, i.e. the old home in Pichelsdorfer Strasse). At dawn I walk along an asphalt curve in a country road to a dark garden gate (a real gate) where several young people are standing. I don't want to ask the boys and turn to a girl with a white blouse, who roughly describes the direction to the Memorial Church with left-right-left. I turn onto a hedge-lined dirt road that runs along the hillside, far below one of Berlin's lakes...I don't know which way leads to central Berlin. At the edge of the path on the left behind an embankment there are many wine bottles... A woman with a handbag comes towards me on the street and - with a cursive look around - lets a bottle disappear in it. I'm holding a bottle in my hand that says 1776. But it's the year the winery was founded, not the vintage. I put the bottle back and ask a waiter in the restaurant who isn't busy at the moment for directions to the city centre. It answers friendly that he can drive me.

Do all these nocturnal phenomena have a meaning? Do you say something about me? I would like to know. But in any case, the following dreams say something about the deep, deep relationship with my mother and the longing to stay in touch with her. In the morning, on July 7, 2009 in Baric near Belgrade, I woke up at seven o'clock and then fell asleep again. Just before waking up at eleven my mother appeared to me in a dream, I had been waiting for this since her death on April 24, 2008:

I walk with my mother - as old as she was last - on my arm up an uphill street on the right-hand side, the weather is sunny. I'm looking for a courtyard where Erik Rorban lives, but I seem to have walked by. We want to visit my mother's neighbor's child, almost her foster son. Further up we meet a young woman Spantek, who is taller and doesn't actually look like our Catholic neighbors in Spandau from the 1950s. While we are thinking up presents, Erik comes up the street, but turns out to be Mrs. Spantek's grandson, perhaps a son of the middle of her three sons, Wolfgang (Johannes, Wolfgang, Bodo), with whom my mother was very much in love and who then how the elder Johannes also became a priest. I ask Erik if we could visit him instead of his grandmother, who has to go away, although we hadn't announced it. But he hesitates because he will be traveling with his family tonight and everyone is busy packing. So, I say that I just want to show my mother his house in the courtyard and we walk down the street together.

I had already called home to get the house number and asked Steffi to look it up in my private phone book. However, I know that the Spantek family is not in it. Further down, on the left side,

an archway opens into the dark. On the wall in front is a large black graffiti: "Kramer <sup>54</sup>and Erik, suppressed" (by ....?). So, it would have been easy, but it was the lower entrance wall that you don't get to see directly when you go up.

We go slightly downhill through old unrestored colonnades and then the huge rectangle of a castle-like, sunlit inner courtyard with late classical facades opens up. However, there is no house in it, but a St. Mass celebrated and further back there are large dining tables for the families living there, including Erik's. My mother slips on her knees through the devotees into the first row (there are no benches) and then suddenly very quickly further to the altar where she sits down to the right of a fat priest who, together with two other priests, is sitting with his back to the altar in the crowd looks. I run after and, to a slight frown from the priestly neighbor, pull her up and quickly lead her away. We come to the tables that are served (you don't have to cook yourself). Erik's table is empty, the next table belongs to an Iranian family. The women with black headscarves give us a friendly look. After looking around we slowly walk back. Erik has apparently disappeared to his family's room.

On the way back, my mother sees tempting plastic glasses with pieces of fruit (yellow, red, green) in jelly. As we walk on, an elderly woman comes and gives her a glass to eat. mother is happy. The connection between the Spantek family in Spandau and the Rorban family in Grunewald spanned my mother's entire post-war life. Is the old castle courtyard with the many people of all denominations finally protected heaven? We didn't leave him in the dream.

Now I dreamed again of my mother, who seems to be calling me: I'm sitting in a lecture at the University of Bielefeld in the early evening when I receive a small torn scrap from a piece of paper with pre-printed lines for Suetterlin writing. On it are several times for tonight written in a blue ballpoint pen, obviously I should visit my mother in the hospice urgently, she is probably dying. I leave the lecture immediately, but then find myself in the long corridors of a swimming pool in daylight, since there is still time with my mother. I can't find number 105 because odd and even sequences are swapped and broken. I turn around because I've lost a ball of undershirt and shirt, it's on the way and it's being picked up by two or three young people who first want to know if I can prove that the things belong to me.

Then I walk with Mary to the back entrance of a nearby hotel, behind us a slender, balding young man with a blond girlfriend, whose hand is fingering my right back pocket. I'm outraged and ask what that's supposed to mean. Maybe he had seen me taking out a 500 EURO note beforehand, but I don't have it anymore, and it was only a copy! But then I have to go to my mother. The thought that she could die without me suddenly weighs me down. I picture the dead woman in her hospital bed. Then I have an airplane accident – apparently on the way to my mother's home – and am carried out on a stretcher, seriously injured. Somehow, I don't think it's right that this happened

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54 My coordinating partner for many years in a large study



to me.

In June 2013 I wrote that it would be difficult for me to clear out the terraced house in Berlin on Auerbacher Strasse and rent it out, as was the case after my mother's death in 2008. But a little later I was in the middle of the notarial process of selling to the father of Mrs. Martens, our neighbor in Berlin. Why did I accept the offer? A few weeks earlier, when I cleared out my private room, the room where my grandmother died, the connection with the place broke. I will never go back to where I thought I would find my home. Where do I belong? Where am I? I felt a boundless placelessness.

In August 2013, farewell to Auerbacher Strasse 15/o

Hometown!

The farewell, so long  
 The swallows fly high  
 Over the dog's throat.  
 tears, petrified,  
 Stalactites of Sorrow.  
 The sluggish steps  
 The ancestors at the memorial  
 my mother's beam cross,  
 Your ashes in the lake.  
 homeless now  
 At the end,  
 the last years  
 Strange.  
 Oh, the melancholy  
 When I left the house!

Now I feel my way associatively from one memory to the next, across times and spaces, just as I tidy up, create order in the chaos, which I like to do, for example I like washing up, coffee cups, dinner plates, glasses, of course knives and forks. Order, protection against the chaos that lurks under the ice of Lake Constance.

The photo of my old mother and me on a bench on the Havel, Kleiner Wannsee or at least in the Grunewald overwhelms me, it was probably the last trip with her, we drove there in a rental car, also to see the beautiful lake landscape in Mary to show Berlin. We are happy, but as always, I'm standing next to myself and I'm crying out, 'More on. Go on, go on'. I've searched all my life, but I've never arrived - a search in the wrong direction? The Tuareg say 'Fortune never pitches its tent

within sight, but misfortune does'. It's always now and happiness is always tomorrow - or yesterday.

Shortly before Christmas 2013, I had another dream in Bielefeld, which I still have: I find the thin figure of my mother slumped in the corner behind a door and carry her somewhere, probably to a bed. I've always hoped to see her again in a dream - after the intense dream in the courtyard - but the current dream was oddly lifeless, as if it all meant nothing.

Then, in February 2014, at night in Baric, I dreamed a third time about my mother, but only very briefly, and again she was strangely lifeless, like the Greek dead in Hades. In the dream I noticed dementia symptoms in myself - I can't remember which ones anymore, eg misplacing things or pouring the coffee wrong. I laid my head in her lap and spoke of my fears. But she didn't answer and sat there like a statue, motionless.

A letter from her (June 1949) contains, as so often in this early period, detailed information about food and the following passage - otherwise my mother does not let her feelings be noticed: ... *I also miss a word - be it favorable or critical - about my Ulrich, which betrays a deeper sympathy for him! - But please don't be mad at me. But I miss so much what Rudi might say to the children. If he were here, my tungsten would be different, I know that* . I feel very clearly how these ten years from 1940-1950 shaped my family, it was always about having enough food and clothing and coal or food stamps and money, to help yourself and to unravel the post-war fate! There wasn't much time for feelings.

My idea of immortality is memory, not of events, experiences, people but of the feelings and colors that are associated with them. They remain in us in traces from the beginning of time, through the endless series of generations that have been conceived. The idea that a connection with my mother is no longer possible, that she no longer exists, is unbearable to me, seems inhuman to me. Is our reality here real, or 'have we only come to see a dream image' as the Aztec poet wrote seven hundred years ago, as close as if he had lived in the neighborhood and not almost a hundred years before contact with the ancient world. We humans are similar except for time and space <sup>55</sup>and I will always be connected to the dead from my life. So, in another dream, I go into the perhaps Jewish past of the Heilbron family, which is emotionally so much closer to me than the paternal line of Tyrolean farmers in West Prussia, they too were expelled, wanderers in time. My dream: I'm approaching a rather lonely roundabout in Paris on my bike with construction sites and detours. First I turn into a wide street, which is completely closed a short time later. I turn around and a guard teases me by pointing out that I am driving with unusual care. I was told to turn off one exit earlier and then keep left to get into the center. Instead, I end up in old winding streets with small houses, let myself down on a wall and am now without a bike. It seems that someone is accompanying me, a shadow that must be my mother. A larger street with car traffic is recognizable, but before that we turn into a gloomy, narrow cemetery, which is full of Jewish

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<sup>55</sup>Paul Claudel analogously: ...fishing for something out of the world.

tombstones that have been thrown together and were apparently reassembled here after the destruction by the Germans. I can still see the weather-worn Hebrew inscriptions clearly before me, look for the name of Aunt Helene Leppin (née Heilbron), but only find the name of the head of the Jewish community in Paris, whom I know.

What do I remember from my early years? Of course, only individual images, still photos of the first perceptions. From the time in Trautenau<sup>56</sup>(now Trutnov): How Wolfram and I played hairdresser and his hair then had to be trimmed by our mother or Aunt Lisy. I don't remember how I got the scissors. We lived with Aunt Lisy's family (she with Peter and Susanne) for a year and a half in a corner house on the first floor on the market square in Trautenau in the Czech Republic. Aunt Lisy was Sudeten German and Uncle Hans, her husband, worked at the rocket station in Peenemuende , fortunately not in the field like my father. I can still see the colonnades on the ground floor; In 1964, during my study exchange in Prague, I rode the motorcycle of one of the doctors in the women's clinic to Trautenau and parked it on this same market square. Howell with a Prague number plate, I found a handwritten note in German on my return: 'You are not allowed to park here'. The family picture in the grass <sup>57</sup>was taken back then - on May 18, 1945 in Trautenau, a few hours before the march <sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> In the Czech Republic, today the Czech Republic, in the course of evacuation measures from January 1944

<sup>57</sup>Steffi found Hoelderlin's poem.

<sup>58</sup>See also p. 67 ff.

JUNI



Da ich noch ein stilles Kind war und von dem abstarb, was uns  
umgibt, nichts wusste, war ich da nicht mehr, als jetzt,  
nach all den Nerven des Herzens und all den Sinnen und Ringen?

Ja! Ein göttlich Wesen ist das Kind, solange es nicht in die  
Umweltfarbe der Menschen getaucht ist.

Es ist ganz, was es ist, und darum ist es so schön.

Der Zwang des Gesetzes und des Schicksals betastet es nicht;  
im Kind ist Freiheit allein. In ihm ist Frieden,

es ist noch mit sich selber nicht zerfallen. Reichtum ist in ihm  
es kennt sein Herz, die Blühtigkeit des Lebens nicht.

Es ist unsterblich, denn es weiß vom Tode nichts.

(Friedrich Hölderlin: Hyperion)

## Market square in Trautenau April 2015

Some experiences during our expulsion hike from Trautenau to Berlin still frighten me today, for example when (Polish) marauders - the country was empty after the Russian armies had passed through - came into our barn at night, but I think the three women probably managed to get them to get rid of again <sup>59</sup>. On the other hand, we were

soon in Jueterbog, from where we could take a train the last way to Berlin. My mother pointed to some downed planes in a nearby field and said the war was lost. All I knew at the time was that it was bad. While I had to walk the whole distance with Gudrun and was only able to rest occasionally in Pausewang's car, Wolfram was being pushed in a pram. Since there was hardly any milk to be had, he developed rickets, fortunately without serious consequences later. I don't know if you can see anything on his x-rays of the growth plates, he's definitely smaller than me, although otherwise more like our tall father.

Back then after the war
On the country road
Poison hidden in the pocket
Hardships until you drop my
consciousness
Floated somewhere
Outside of me above me...
I thought:
When I go up
With mom and the kids
And dear God
Said to me:
I had that there ready for you
And you have it thrown away!!!

On April 1, 1948, my mother wrote to her friend Friedl. I only found the letter now.

*My dear Friedl!*

*I was very happy about your dear long letter. By the way, it was February 11 when you thought of me. Later you may realize why this day is so meaningful to some people. It also has to do with my job; but in a figurative sense, perhaps one has to say that it is a calling. - I'm sad with you about the Bucki, but I hope you will save the blessing of this suffering. Wasn't it primarily a lack of trust in God that prompted you to do that act? What an awful emptiness we had from relying on people. Only slowly can the suprapersonal grow again. At that time in Trautenau I also had a fast-acting poison (cyanide) for all of us. My mother tried to persuade me to use it. Our way to Berlin over 400 km on foot through the destroyed area occupied by Poles and Russians with the small children was, even by human standards, an almost unmanageable risk. But there was still a remnant of a*

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<sup>59</sup>See p. 67 for how this experience actually happened

*compelling sense of responsibility towards God in me. Perhaps the love of my brothers (?) held me without my realizing it. At any rate, back when I left and during the six weeks of our torturous journey, I began the crossroads of my life.*

In her book "Fern von der Rosinkawiese" Gudrun Pausewang described our journey together <sup>60</sup> from the Bohemian-Silesian border, where the two families met, to Jueterbog. The Pausewangs then moved further west with their cart and I had contact with the younger children Gothild and Volker, who were more or less the same age, until they were still studying, but then no longer. During my visit to Gudrun in 1992, I also met her son Martin - she was never married. Then there were one or two more letters, also with Wolfram, but the relationship petered out for many years like so many others. Nothing after my speech in Kraków in October 1994. At that time in Kraków I had spoken of my family, in which the father invaded Poland as a soldier in the German army and at the same time his family by marriage lived under the shadow of the approaching Holocaust. I often think we only escaped by evacuating to the outskirts of Trautenau in today's Czech Republic, perhaps on the advice of Uncle Fritz, who may have had less in mind the bomb threat than the transports from Grunewald S-Bahn station.

But maybe that's also legend building. Later, in Jad Vashem's electronic archive, I found the name Heilbron among the transports from platform 17 (at Grunewald S-Bahn station), even if they were at best very distant relatives from Charlottenburg. How could there be a time when a deadly rift ran right through families? No, it was not uncommon in the 20th century; Such experiences have also become known from the GDR when looking through the Stasi archives. Those stories of loss! Can that still be important in postmodernism? Someone once said that in times of war blood ties are much stronger than any other human connection, friendship, marriage; business contacts anyway. Early human heritage emerging in times of mortal danger?

In January 2017 I protected Gudrun again, meanwhile in a retirement home near her son Martin Wilcke near Bamberg. The decades disappeared in the warm air of the sweltering May of 1945, and she must have told the child holding her hand several times a day the Grimm fairy tale of the little brother and sister.

Back in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, I re-read your old book , *The Rise and Fall of Delfina Island* <sup>61</sup>, with renewed enthusiasm . *At that time, Isidro and Bepa appealed to me and now they inspire me. As a young woman, how much infinite, loving imagination you put into it, as if you were really there, it must have been you! ... The visit comforted me and reconciled me to the distant past* , I wrote to her after my visit.

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<sup>60</sup>Gudrun Pausewang: *Far from the Rosinkawiese: the story of an escape* . Maier, Ravensburg 1989, ISBN 3-473-35099-060 ISBN: 9783936819021, 1966 edition

Did these experiences shape me? I think so. At least all the stories from the war and post-war period touch me more than usual. After the capitulation of the Schoerner army in Bohemia, we returned in June 1945, coming from Jueterbog, to the house on Folkunger Strasse (No. 15)<sup>62</sup> near the Weinmeisterhoehe in Spandau. In the meantime, other families had<sup>63</sup> occupied it, but we were given rooms on the ground floor. After an official denazification procedure - probably based on a neighbor's complaint - two years later my mother and grandmother found the cheaper apartment in Zweibruecker Strasse (No. 52), from which we later moved to Pichelsdorfer Strasse 19. We had 2 rooms there and I know that I at least slept with my mother for a while.

I'm not tired of life, but I'm constantly thinking about death, when it will come, what it will be like, whether I'm in pain... I've had to learn so much in my life, because nobody has taught me except Uncle Fritz (Friedrich Heilbron) who 1954 died. My mother gave me everything, but she couldn't advise me professionally and I probably wouldn't have thought of it any better. The little cross I wrote on my forehead with my thumb when I left for Turkey, it still haunts me to this day. Where did she find the strength to let her son go, so much could have happened and some things were dangerous, for example the night in the Kurdish mountains when armed soldiers picked me up. Now I have started a deeply moving book, *Searching for the Life of Natasha Vodin's Mother*<sup>64</sup> (She came from Mariupol). It was only when she was old that she found clues about the fate of the millions of Ostarbeiter (hidden from German perception) that she could follow.

At the beginning of November 2014, I still dreamed of the horror of the first years:

*During the war under bombardment in deep cellars, invading Russians, fleeing through long corridors, always with the doors locked behind me, up to the deep cellar at the extreme end, in which, similar to Anne Frank's secret annex, various people came together have found protection. The roar of the planes and the bombs, the kinked vertical escape shaft is sealed from above by a hand grenade. It's totally dark, the very different people hold hands and expect death, but it doesn't come, obviously they will survive and I think that they are so welded together by this experience that they later always have total trust in each other will. This group experience under extreme danger determines their whole future, namely a common future.*

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<sup>62</sup>The Heilbrons had originally lived at Michaelskirchplatz 10 and had moved to Sedanstrasse in Eichwalde (today Grenzstrasse) in 1923, and finally in the summer of 1943 to Folkunger Strasse in Spandau. Both houses were still standing in 1990.

<sup>63</sup>This family mW denounced us to the Allied authorities, so that my mother and grandmother had to undergo "denazification".

<sup>64</sup> Natasha Wodin: [She came from Mariupol](#). Rowohlt, Reinbek 2017. [ISBN 978-3-498-07389-3](#)



## War memorial near Trautenau

In the desperation of the 1980s and 1990s, I had terrible - no actually sober, accepted without excitement - nightmares, for example in September 1989 about the fire from Akira Kurosawa's dream <sup>65</sup>:

...

Growing up there  
the monster,  
the seething  
black storm,  
red tiger lilies  
scared...

In April 2015, I visited Trautenau again with Mary. The photo from the market square shows the corner house where we lived on the 1st floor from January 1944 to May 1945. The restored 1866 war memorial is amazing with the old German inscriptions and a description of the Battle of Trautenau on June 26th. As a small child we had visited the old war memorial from 1866 nearby and I remember very clearly that a rabbit hopped out from behind the monument.

However, a healing stop was a long time ago (December 9, 1987), near Trier, the place was called Neumuehle. You also have to do some work, I volunteered to clean the toilets. The course leader was probably a bit surprised, presumably this work was always the last one that could be awarded. But I found a certain satisfaction in humiliating myself as much as possible. There I drew the picture of the mysterious fat woman behind trees in the deepest forest. I'm hanging in the front as a puppet in the barbed wire that protects the property.

I also kneaded this figure out of clay, it was in the basement in Bielefeld (now in my study in Baric). What does this mythical figure mean? Somehow, I have to think of Ruebezahl and the Sudentendutsch song <sup>66</sup>, maybe from the Trautenau area. I've been singing it to my mother for the last few days, from my tattered self-typed songbook from when I was a Boy Scout. The song expresses typical German longings of the old days for unity and also the direct recourse to violence. "Unity and justice and freedom..." it says in the third stanza of the Deutschlandlied. With freedom was never the inner, always only the outer national freedom.

In January 2012 I wrote:

After Death: Nothing?

Just the memory  
the ones left behind,

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<sup>65</sup>See Volume II: The steles of the Kinder p. 58

<sup>66</sup>Songtext: Tall fir trees indicate the stars on the Isar's leaping tide, the camp is also far away, but you Rubezahl guard it well./Come to us at the campfire, in the mountains on a stormy night, shield the tents from home the dear ones, come and keep watch with us. / You have given yourself to us, whose legends and fairy tales you weave and in the deepest forest grounds as a giant figure you live for us. / Hear Rubezahl what we say: People and homeland are no longer there Free. Swing the mace as in the old days, cleave strife and discord.

a time long,  
In the fog.

After that I had added quotes from the praise of God: "The day will come, which will not be followed by a night, when God will dry the tears in the eyes, death will not come again, nor sorrow, lamentation, pain, because what is transitory has passed". And contrary to the wishes of most people: Save us from a sudden and unexpected death, O Lord. I wish for a conscious death with enough time to reconsider my life.

I'm not dead, I'm just swapping rooms.  
I live in you and go through your dreams.

Michelangelo

Death, especially death in the Middle Ages, when extended family and friends stood around the deathbed, has always touched me deeply. Where this fascination comes from, maybe it has a connection to the ride across Lake Constance. In Oswiecim - the Polish and German names are so similar (!), but in the world only the German one is valid - I sat for a long time at the edge of the small pond <sup>67</sup> into which the ashes from the furnaces were dumped. Over the fence you can see the house where the camp commander lived with his family. The water is very idyllic with the trees all around.

In Auschwitz the railway line ends at the selection ramp. It starts at Grunewald S-Bahn station. The memory of the monument - initiated by my mother - has never left me, right down to a group of candles carried by the menorah in my study. Why did I live, survive? I can't answer this question. I have not lived up to my potential and now for the first time I feel clearly that my strength is waning, even if I can bridge a lot with routine, which is said to come with age. Is the question of the meaning of life justified at all? Anyway, I can only imagine a meaning as a great task, a social or political, that is, societal effort. But does that answer the question of meaning? The answer cannot be immanent in the world, unless the living out of possibilities and talents could already be recognized as meaning.

As already quoted, Paul Claudel says that man is designed for something above the world. Of course, I don't believe in a god enthroned above the clouds but something before time and space, something absolute, there has to be a fixed point of reference, even if it's beyond our horizon. My perception of this is contained in the quote from Michelangelo... I'm just changing the rooms... A basic deontological trust that I probably owe to my mother. Monasticism lives this other-worldly relationship most consistently, the rest of us seek all earnest recognition in the world. That's why my trek through the Athos Peninsula in 1964 was so impressive. I had to get a visa in Athens.

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<sup>67</sup> 1994 alone before the ASPHER conference in Krakow and then again with Mary in May 2012. I also brought a piece of birch bark from the trees on the edge. It may well contain the ashes of the Heilbrons listed at Yad Vashem.

Then: hiking along the coast and spending the night in the monasteries! Serbian orthodoxy also sees its origins there, in Hilandar, the Serbian monastery in Chalkidike. Was it there that a third-century copy of a lost text by Aristotle was found after a fire? My obsession with history - rarely interested in the future! The recognition of patterns, the continuing effect, of structures and forces, the almost Buddhist circling repetition of suffering. Periodic reflection and reflection in the present

68.

Guardian angel, comforting companion in life and in death, medieval, close. The book by Isolde Ohlbaum "Because all desire wants eternity" with its photographs of angelic figures in cemeteries appealed to me, as did this kneeling figure on the Acropolis, whose ancient art photo I inherited from Uncle Fritz (Friedrich Heilbron).

In January 2012

A dream (November 1988) in which I climbed onto a narrow flat roof. The building is about 4 floors high. I did it knowing my tendency to vertigo reactions (from previous dreams!). Now I can't come down. Below is written very small grandfather Vollandt (Uma's husband). I want to call him for help, but then I don't. There is a trapdoor in the flat roof, which I open, but the entrance is too small for me. The roof is so narrow that I can hold the edges in front of me with both hands without spreading my arms. Finally, I decide to crawl backwards to the narrow side. There is a ladder over the top rung of which I push my legs and, after reaching the groin in the hip joint, lower them down so that my feet can feel one of the rungs. My mother holds down the ladder that saves me'.

The dream saves me from many dreams of flying these years where I can fly fast, up and down with my own arm movements. Dreams of flying and dreams of fire and dreams of corpses (of the corpse in the basement that I had cemented in, also absolutely realistic)! What do these dreams mean in retrospect? The close bond with my mother, of course, and also my reliance on her help when I had ventured too far, on the roofs of this life, flying over the valleys and again and again being threatened by fire or my own secret guilt, the corpse in the basement; I still remember this horror very clearly and closely.

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68" I see the past more clearly than the present. After all, what is only makes sense when it's over." Andrzej Stasiuk: The East. Suhrkamp 2016; p. 253.

I'm in Baltimore for a conference in 1991 and dream of looking out of the hotel window: Suddenly an airplane fuselage appears and sails majestically down the street. He brushes against a truck and squeezes it - it's a car transporter - at the back, then he sails further down the street with swerving movements. I still think there was an accident, maybe the pilot is still in there and trying to avoid the worst by flying down the street and not hitting the houses. A huge black cloud has formed in the sky above, apparently from the plane explosion that caused the fuselage. It has huge red zones spreading downward...

The explosion image in the sky made me very reminiscent of Kurosawa's dream <sup>69</sup>, in which a firestorm with black smoke and tongues of red lilies drove my family and I down a mountain road. At that time, it was a gas explosion, but the colors and the arrangement of the picture are very similar, practically identical. A day later I dreamed of someone in a fire suit and face mask - me? After about 35 years, I read Yasushi Inoue's *Hunting Rifle* again in one go. It is the old Suhrkamp edition from 1979 with my pencil marks on the right margin. It is the book of my life and when I read it at the time, I did not understand how much the tale of horizon-wide loneliness and betrayal could apply to the following decades, only subconsciously my feeling was addressed:

...

Why does my heart move so  
The back of this big one, coincidentally  
passing hunters?

I have an increasing feeling of being empty, burned out like a house whose soot-blackened walls are only partially standing and will soon break down piecemeal. And then again, the almost uncanny urge to have to do something, to want to. Why can't I sit back, enjoy the simple existence and wait for the night? Some unknown vacuum in my depths is sucking me dry. It was never accessible to others. Is it a lack of love ability? Except for Fredi and Steffi, I don't love anyone in this present world with such a painful ache in the heart - or in the soul; I do not know. But! I loved my mother as well, she is dead. Soon I will be with her at the price of parting from the children, from what fate has in store for them. Now I'm startled: "soon" already? No, that's the strange thing: I would like to live unconditionally, to be there, to live with... But what if I don't have the strength?

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<sup>69</sup>See p. 87 and Volume II p. 58

Below the harmoniously perfect semicircle of the theater in Epidaurus, my photo, half a century old. In the middle Fischer in the evening on the Havel in Berlin, painted by my mother. On the right - opposite on the wall in Baric - the fishermen under the full moon. A cancer patient on the Cologne ward signed it, 'Hearing the night rain raining in Kowasaki', I can't remember his name. When was it? At least before 1978 when we went to Heidelberg. He also restored the painting of Aunt Liese (p. 17) <sup>70</sup>. The painting is now more than 150 years old. In Baric I gathered a lot of things that I thought I would surely have gathered in Berlin, gave up, and in part transferred them to Serbia! Will the pictures ever return to my children? After death, what happens to me, my thoughts, my loved ones, my estate? Even if I still had the strength, I couldn't bring myself to leave something out! Everything seems too important and at the same time so terribly unimportant to me. But I can't compete with Stefanie's ability to speak to describe it!

I look at the ruddy young man's face painted by my mother and still think it is the head of Christ as she saw it, full of love and erotic attraction, with full lips and soft hair, turned inside out, undeterred in following his destiny.

In the whole book "Old Filth" by Jane Gardam, written with very English humour, about the life of an old magistrate with memories of the past Empire, two words startled me: "Remembrance and Longing". Those two words describe exactly how I feel. I remember my mother, my grandmother, my children with longing, and I think fondly of Anne, who now lives in her room in the old people's home in Stuttgart. But the present knows no longing, nor does the future, only what is past, what we know from the past, has this aura. Maybe it's the regret of not having lived more awake. But the present draws no lessons from this! I push into the future - to give the present the missing aura? There are probably people who are different.

I'm slowly going out of the world  
 in a landscape beyond all distances  
 and what I was and am  
 and what I stay  
 go with me without impatience or haste  
 in a not yet  
 entered country

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<sup>70</sup>See page 17

I'm slowly running out of time  
to a future beyond the stars  
and what I was and am  
and will always stay  
go with me without impatience or haste  
as if I had never been -  
or hardly<sup>71</sup>

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71 Hans Sahl (\*May 20, 1902, +April 27, 1993) at the "Berlin Lessons in the Renaissance Theater.

Ducks on the Hundekehlesee in Berlin-Grünwald

### **Ingeborg Laaser: Family-stories**

Ulrich and Corinna (daughter of Ingeborg's sister Liselotte) demand me to write down my memories. Corinna thinks it should only sayings and experiences that come to mind spontaneously. Ulrich wants prefer to have it chronologically. I feel like starting today.

The most important person in my life was my father. As a child he was for me the most lovable, reliable, smartest person. came later add his bravery, self-discipline, sincerity, humility and his respect for every human being.

Right now, the Yugoslav Empire is falling apart and the First World War falls to me a. My father was deferred as a soldier because of his weak eyesight. He volunteered in 1916 and came to the Balkan front. in the deep winter, the mounted troops had to climb several meters high snowy pass. They couldn't go any further that night and laid themselves among their horses. Nobody froze to death. Papa was the eldest and became "Papachen" called, he kept the regimental (company?) diary. enemy touch there was only once seriously. The company commander was very insecure and "Papachen" told him what orders to give. He got the EK I and said to dad: "I only have you to thank for that." Me don't even know what lower rank dad had? In trench warfare lay that Troupe often spent a long time in a village and made friends with the population. They sat around the campfire and listened to stories about bear hunts to. Dad brought beautiful embroidery patterns from the local folk costumes with. I think that war was a natural event for people back then, that they accepted.

Papa had been abroad for 10 years, mainly in South America and loved his fatherland very much. When he came back he learned my mother at the tennis club know and married her. He was 33 years old, she was 21. She said that at that time he often had to search for German words. Came



recently I wondered what the word "Basta" meant, which he liked to use. I sang a Spanish song at the Evangelical Church Congress. Analogous: Nothing should frighten you, nothing excites you, God holds you, God alone enough. "Sole dios basta". In Dad's sense: That's enough, no arguments.

When we, his two daughters, were almost grown up, Mutti demanded that we should call him daddy. But she was unsuccessful. she found the more affectionate, but we didn't want him to be downsized (belittled) like that. It took me a long time to stop idealizing him. He was yes a child of his time.

He had a very sporty tall and slim Ge122 shape He lost his hair early. Liselotte is closed when she is three years old told him: "You don't have any hair anymore!" and when he was sad: "A little you still have it." He had contracted malaria in South America, during the war in Serbia flared up again. He was also very thin-skinned and yet used to hardships endure in silence. As a child, he had three older brothers and one younger one, whom the family later forced into gambling debts to embark and emigrate to the USA, where he temporarily disappeared but later led a normal life in Argentina. this brother, who was born after the separation of the grandparents was probably difficult and papa said he always got hit when Julius did something wrong would have. Papa was never ill during his married years after the war, but he was had a weak constitution, he often had rheumatic complaints, which he called lumbago or a bad cold. That was what was expected at the time not as a disease. It was said of Mutti that she had a weak heart, but that means she is 87 years old grown old. I think she had weak nerves and not good ones Education. Her parents had a butcher shop and both worked and she was difficult with diet from the start and was given to the staff leave. So no education at all. She often said that her only the family of her friend Hilde Winter helped her get an education. At Winters there were about seven children and all were gifted. Aunt Hilde later married a general. Mom loved old Mrs. Winter very much and always visited her until her death. My maternal grandmother wanted - when earned enough money had been - definitely buy a house and retire. Grandpa did it too, but was badly advised. I think it was the house at Michaelkirchplatz 10 in Berlin-Mitte. The Engelufer used to be nearby times a channel I found the name so interesting. The grandparents lost in the post-war inflation everything and kept only a small apartment in the house. As a representative for meat products, grandpa had to work hard earn his money and always had very bad feet with corns and calluses. I saw him in our basement with a big file on it He got welfare and probably had no health care. He received 25 DM a month from his father, voluntarily. Even then were Sons-in-law not obligated to alimony. Grandpa was a younger farmer's son, he learned the trade of butcher. He had to leave the farm to earn his own money. He joined the military and almost died there of typhus. With the rigorous treatment he lost his beautiful hair. We all loved him very much, he was very sensitive and always friendly. He often came to Eichwalde and worked in our garden. In the evening there was often a round of card games.

Grandpa loved animals and plants, he had a soft heart and liked to walk walk with our little black dog Wulli, d. H. the dog went with him, he determined the way.

When he was younger, Grandfather Volland liked to bet on horses set. He must have lost money there too. He also smoked a lot Gladly – cigars or a pipe with dad. Our house in Eichwalde had large rooms, so you didn't notice the smoke. Also lived we directly at a piece of forest that extends to the lady and its many lakes attracted. On Sedanstrasse, now called Grenzstrasse, there were only

one side Plots with larger houses and z .T. still undeveloped but fenced surfaces. The forest was very familiar to me with its pines, the Hills, swamps, raspberry hedges, mushrooms and spring catkins on the pastures. Sometimes rare flowers were also found. I often went to the Look for berries or mushrooms in the forest. In winter we went sledding with dad or Skiing, where I was often very cold and got frostbite on my hands and got feet, which were then treated with petroleum. Sporting activity was a great joy for my father, because he could listen to my whining don't worry about freezing. But then he washed me lovingly feet in the evening and laughed at my round toes who saw like Knobländer sausages. My father was very skilled with his hands, he once gave me one for Christmas Figures sawn from wood and painted; to the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood". One day "Little Red Riding Hood" disappeared and didn't come either again. When asked, I said: "Little Red Riding Hood went into the forest." Once I got a homemade one from my favorite aunt Lene rag doll. I didn't think she was very beautiful. But when Uncle Max (Lenes man) nor said she looked like Mrs. Cohn, I cried. Of course, it could I didn't know at the time - at the end of the 1920s - what was going on in my head already haunted. But it was early sorrow. So, dad had a nice workshop in the basement and I often helped him and wanted to help him. I got a piece of wood and was allowed to put it in the Clamp in a vise (if my hands could do it) and then I was allowed to hammer in nails. Dad used to soled shoes sometimes too. His Salary was small and it was said: A civil servant is humble and serves Country.

When I was a child, the bread was made by a woman and brought from Wernsdorf. She came in a little cart, drawn by herself 1 At that time, "Ms. Cohn" was a synonym for a Jewess. 124 and a puny German shepherd. We had a big mailbox into which she threw the bread. It was probably enough for a week, was still in the wood-fired oven baked, with a bark torn open like pine logs and it tasted delicious.

The beer was delivered by horse and cart and (it) came out the faucet of the barrel light and dark beer in the pail, which (then) my Parents filled bottles that had to stand for some time. In addition, I can still think of the linseed oil man who walked the long distances with a can and filled with a measuring cup. We also had a milkman some time. All of that soon disappeared.

Papa often went to the aunts (Liese and Klara) to help them move their beds from her mother to help. Mutti was from her mother-in-law too been very well received. She lay for many years after a stroke in bed, could not walk and could hardly speak. When she died said Dad to his wife: "Now you are my best friend."

The care of the garden in Eichwalde by dad and grandpa caused that beautiful fertility returned. Mom took care of her flower borders and determined the division of the garden. Of all plants she knew the Latin ones names. She had little luck with roses, they would have needed clay. Fertilizers were scarce at the time and were perhaps too expensive. Now and then you bought a load of crap. Grandpa fertilized with the content from the septic tank, which the parents didn't like very much. And he is fell in, he was already old by then. I found him lying in bed and he showed me a bruise on my elbow. He was also very shocked I suffered with him. Mom was probably at the spa. Grandma was called. she came out the Mitte district, Michaelkirchplatz, was very concerned. She later said I would have a good hand to care for. After school I wanted to be a nurse but my father didn't want it at all. In the end he gave in. But then it failed because of the non-Aryan descent. Of

course, I filled out the questionnaire correctly. Grandpa was then already died. That was the darkest time for us.

According to Papa's in the church book of the Luisenstadt parish entries found, his father was baptized at the age of 27, previously Mosaic religion. At baptism he was given the name Otto und was then called Julius Otto Heilbron. His father was in another document Asher called Abraham Heilbron<sup>11</sup>, his wife Heine, née Judah, Daughter of the protected Jew Judah Jacob. Which means that this 200 thaler for this had paid protection and got civil rights. Later the Heine "Hanna Jakob", sometimes called "Henriette Jakobi". About this woman there is a document in which her death from wasting by the Berlin Charité is noted. She is survived by husband Ascher Abraham Heilbron and three (?) children.

125 At the age of 10, Julius Otto was brought to Berlin by his parents from Bärwalde. Accommodation given so that he could attend a grammar school, the Parents are said to have followed later. At his baptism he had four highest dignitaries of Prussia as godfather. Grandfather looked blond and blue-eyed, but his brothers were dark of Jewish type. They should see the grandfather, who had become a judge, often asked for money. But he had eight children from his first marriage, and from his second Marriage to support eleven (children).

Aunt Lene said her father may have been an illegitimate child of Mr. v. been Manteuffel. He adored this one very much and a big one A portrait of him hung above his desk. He got from this man received a lot of help. There is also an excerpt from the officer ranking list, where the grandfather is designated as a reserve officer, married with Marie Hellmich and 1 child (Uncle Otto). Julius Otto then married Bertha Weimar from the farm on Kreuzberg, his wife had died. Bertha's mother had promised her daughter she with her eleven children, including the youngest from her first marriage with Aunt Mieze (Marie) belonged to support and in the farmhouse record. She had had to give up land to the Treasury and a lot of money to get. Her husband had died young and so she was later able to move in move into better housing and give their children a good education.

The men in the Weimar family were also vineyard workers and wagon builders been. Grandmother Bertha is said to have never laughed, but told hers Children like fairy tales. She is said to have later regretted the divorce very much. I had read a letter from grandfather to my father in which he writes of his travels in his youth and also that he of his Window from Mom and the girls seen on the street. aunt Grete often visited him when he was old, and my father too guided. Now we know that grandfather Heilbron according to the papers was Jewish, and there were unexpected consequences. My father was very nationalistic. He loved his fatherland and even volunteered in World War I. One had it of his Deferred due to weak eyes. He came to Serbia, his in Malaria that broke out in South America flared up and he was hospitalized and then back to use. Apparently, he had the stay abroad through his brothers of 10 years and the late marriage, again and again longing for male companionship. So, I explain to myself that he is the "Fuhrer" who revered Germany against the background of the Peace of Versailles like<sup>126</sup> who wanted to make great and powerful. He joined the SA. After the Reichskristallnacht fences were also torn down on three properties in Eichwalde and windows shattered. We were all very serious and a vague fear was in the air.

Dad wanted to show his proof of Aryan origins and made the discovery that that he was half-Jewish. He had to leave the SA. I was an agricultural apprentice on a farm in Saxony, was taken advantage of a lot and didn't feel comfortable. I came after one year home. Chicken and pig slaughter - that concerned me the kidneys. My arms had gotten bigger.

During the Nazi era, Mutti distributed groceries to poor families, the womanhood. Once she adopted a 9 year old during the school holidays, a girl from a large family. The child was a bedwetter and mother was overwhelmed. She probably didn't have house help anymore. I had fallen in love twice, but only from a far and could myself not communicate with the housekeeper and the nanny. My parents picked me up from a Berlin train station and on the way to Eichwalde my dad told me about the genealogy surprise. (Uncle Fritz had told him earlier that he should leave it alone, nothing good will come of it.)

I couldn't believe it right away. I had signed up for the moves with the Torches excited, for the solstice celebrations, for the trips with the BDM to East Prussia and the island of Rügen. And I had national pride too. Anything political appealed to me. But then I prayed: Dear God, make me strong against the many influences from outside. I had almost like-minded young people found. For the first time I felt accepted - and now this. Terrible grief. father with the help of Herta Kretschmer, made a request to the Führer to let me in to let BDM. One day a confirmation came directly signed by Hitler. Before that, my parents had to take photos from the front and in profile send in But I wasn't allowed to have any leadership positions.

My already weak self-confidence was badly damaged. Once I signed up for a Red Cross First Aid course. we came to a camp in beautiful nature. A doctor said right at the beginning her introduction to the group, if she found anyone who didn't purely Aryan would be thrown out immediately. She would recognize everyone immediately. The blood rushed to my head. My heart was beating wildly. Not long then I slipped on a slope and broke my wrist. Then I lay in the tent and the next day I was in the car home brought. My wrists have me twice from worse preserved. 127

As a child, I often went to the train station with Dad. He went to his office I went to school. I once asked him what the name Heilbron was mean. He considered and then said: Holy well. I found later a possible relationship to the city of Hebron in Israel-Palestine. I was with Ulrich six days there. My sympathy for the people there is very great.

Now it became difficult for me with a job. I was so upset. When I came back from the year in Saxony, I was open everywhere scrubbed kneeling on the ground (exactly) like I do on the farm had to. Mom was very angry - it wasn't dirty at all!

I didn't make it as a nurse because of "2nd degree mixed breed". Eventually I went to a home economics school. I couldn't very much there learn, I could do almost everything and was also the oldest there. Then I did training as an estate secretary at the Lette association. There were most of them pupils from noble families and accordingly proud. Just a miss I have good memories of Rennkamp. She came from the Baltic States. I liked the training, but I couldn't find a job.

Dad went with me to the Reichsnahrungstand. They said I was allowed on one "Erbhof" not work. These should remain purebred. Then I gave up. I found a job as a typist in Marienfelde at Siemens!

1/2 hour drive. Later I came to AEG in Schöneeweide as an assistant calculator. Labor costs had to be calculated. Once in a while I miscalculated.

In the meantime, I spent a summer in the Allgäu with the Kretschmers on her farm. It was a nice time. Working with the hay harvest and in the house was beautiful. In the evenings I often walked in the semi-darkness Forest to the Tobel, a stream that even formed a small waterfall. There I dove into the water and was deliciously refreshed. As it got even darker, the area seemed strange to me and I hurried to come home I was a bit scared too, but that was unnecessary. Sometimes I went to the village to dance. I think I rode the bike down the mountain, which was also not without danger. I remember) nor a thunderstorm where the thunder echoed from all sides. At night there were countless fireflies that also sat on the clothes. It was a wondrous experience.

Ignaz had fallen a little in love with me, with his clumsy Art. We met more often. At one point I did a community college course in economics. They were only male students and I was looking for a boyfriend. two that I liked, didn't, but a third did. He lived in Spandau, I in Eichwalde. We met in the middle. He was very sincere. once said he: "You don't have any self-confidence." What he didn't like, he said freely out. I had learned to live with suffering and grief, but now came the fear of losing him. I had to give him the parentage to say. He was against the Nazis from his father, (because) he was an SPD man, son of a farmer and had become the head of department in a large company worked up. When his son wanted to study, he had to secretly go to start evening classes.

I talked to my favorite aunt Lene (Magdalene) about my fear. She said, "This is a good test for your love." Later she said once: "A woman only thinks of herself during intercourse!" Another saying from that time was: "Longing is more beautiful than fulfilment." She saw the war years ahead. In the family she was somewhat unusual. She had married Uncle Max, who contracted syphilis as a young man had infected. Her mother was against it. But they still had nice years together. He had a great sense of humor and warmth.

Like my parents, they had a paddle boat. One boat was called "Mum", the other "Pitz". Other paddlers read that with pleasure. uncle Max then died much mourned under Lene's care. It was also Aunt Lene who gave me a beautiful children's dress made of apricot-colored, soft fabric and decorated with blue smock threads. I have never forgotten your life lessons.

Tante Mieke, as a nurse during the war, had texts from Bulgaria brought along, which Lene translated without language skills and in the form of poems or brought into narration. She and her twin sister Liese were after 1945 again asked to serve in the school at the age of 70, because so many teachers were missing. There were no books. You had to be with the kids create your own textbooks. Liese also worked in a ration card Place and was surprised that all the people came to her, fewer to the other colleagues. It was because she looked at everyone who came in. Lene liked to tell how she felt as a young teacher. The School Board came and Lene was supposed to ask the children about the Holy Spirit. It reported no one, just a little boy she knew was him had not understood. Among other things, she had said: "The Holy Spirit has no body." Eventually she had to take him. He burst out: "At the Kopp it's the turn of the Beene." A mother from Berlin came outraged to school because she had been asked to delouse her child to let. She scolded: "And anyway, everyone has a louse!"

Yes, my dear aunts are still vivid in my mind. Aunt Trude (Uncle Max's sister) celebrated many children's birthdays with us and played. She was quite fat and squat, had no husband got and is said to have always been dissatisfied. She moved to Waldsiefersdorf, where she and Lene had a summer apartment. Lena called her little house the furnished bushes. Once she had not been there for a long time. And guess what, the down comforter was a bit torn and there was a lovely mouse's nest in it, with many little cubs. My Mother expressed no understanding, I did.

I sometimes visited Aunt Trude in the GDR era. She was already very old when she had found her lovely girly smile again and looked so beautiful. She also felt comfortable, because roommates took care of her care for her lovingly. The medical care was very good.

Aunt Grete had a different fate. She has with her husband Bruno Marsop committed suicide in 1941. She didn't suit my father very much vicinity. There were so many siblings. My dad had a deal with one entertained a gentleman from a family friend and he had said: "The Jews have pushed their way into the good spots so much that it will gotten very badly from my fellow believers." He was with one Aryan woman married, had to give up his business and work in a factory work. He didn't survive the war long.

Papa also had to advise Jews who were emigrating in his office wanted to. They had to pay a sum of 500 RM for the permit. Every rich Jew should pay for a poor Jew. That it was hard to get that across to them. Dad suffered a lot when the wind opposed the soldiers in the Russian campaign. We all had to do ours Hand over skis and (also) warm things. Papa said, "The poor leader." He then died in 1943, on April 20 (Fuhrer's birthday). i had him cared for in the last few weeks. Mom was too concerned.

In the meantime, we had both daughters married. The authorities had (us) given permission despite the lack of a list of arias. My Marriage consisted only of a few military vacations and a few trips to Husum, even from the Sudetenland, where I went with the children in the fall of 1943 had fled. I was able to stay in Lisy's aunt's apartment, which was quite large for her with two children and me. Unfortunately rented the aunt sent the apartment from Vienna to a widow of the Hofrats, who moved in after a while with a lot of furniture.

It was a feat how Lisy divided the apartment - for three parties. Unfortunately, the lady then brought a lawsuit against us, but she lost because we had the right to live in Berlin because we were in danger of being bombed.

In Berlin, all the windows were in the rented apartment in which I lived with my parents had lived, and we had last sat in the dark - with cardboard windows. Mom came to me afterwards and for a while to Liselotte, she fled from Berlin to Falkenhain in Silesia.

## Part II

### Verses on the way<sup>2, 78</sup>

#### Ancestors

**March 9, 2010**

**Winter night at the Hundekhelesee<sup>9</sup>**

Dance on the snow  
without traces, underneath  
softly sings the ice.  
Fleeting shadowy figures  
the ancestors, so far away,  
exhausted her life to death,  
and yet: dancing schemes,  
you joke with us!

**Nov. 26, 1991**

**At the St. Thomas Cemetery Neukölln**

Peacefully takes  
the old City  
the dead  
in the arm.

Ebony  
tombstone,  
rampant  
shrub.

Cloddy moisture,  
Iris there  
in the spring  
was standing.

Now your  
face  
so bright,  
so close,  
that I have to caress you  
and my hand lowers -  
ah, dark earth only touched!  
From there now flows



the old's imago  
 who once has carved  
 the bark before  
 infinitely long past time.

But under the branches  
 protected, bloom now  
 Liverworts from the oak forest  
 after half a century  
 because everything returns transformed.  
 You are closer than ever  
 and under the noise trail  
 low flying machines,  
 who started west,  
 you give me comfort  
 Back then in a mirrored image  
 they came from there landing  
 appeared to the anxious cower  
 child so much heavier -  
 From cold and strangers' eyes  
 keep my spruce branch for you now.  
 The Hatzfeld Rondo  
 calls you back  
 floating shadows.  
 In the tall houses  
 probably rang out often  
 the stop  
 of the fortepiano.  
 God's crying  
 surrounds us  
 like gentle rain  
 on the morning of creation.

**In the summer of 1994**  
**Torgau on the Elbe: futile search for the father's grave,**  
**fallen in the last days of the war.**  
**Requiescat in Pacem**

In the corner a cross  
 Withered oak leaves.  
 The eternal light, red.  
 find the father  
 Here?  
 empty water glasses,  
 the old wooden cross hammered.  
 I don't break up

wait for the past:  
 air base:  
 Herrel April 45,  
 Luschke 42.  
 attempts at interpretation:  
 The dark asters.  
 I am waiting for you  
 in peace  
 Beyond the iron gate.  
 you will follow.  
 On the Elbe here  
 I lie dead:  
 chrysanthemums.  
 Ms Marile Kofra,  
 castle road,  
 Pretzsch;  
 Mrs Autumn,  
 war dead project,  
 cemetery administration,  
 Torgau.

**July 10, 2014**  
**Far away I**

Busy neighbors  
 But lonely  
 The yellow house  
 Before the wind  
 The first leaves  
 fall  
 Still billows  
 the top  
 Dense green  
 I left everything  
 And go  
 Alone  
 what i loved  
 stayed behind  
 Without protection  
 The children, the grandchildren  
 The mother  
 The old  
 The lovers  
 The woman  
 And Jarna  
 I remember everyone

No tears  
only silence  
Amen

**August 13, 2017**  
**Far Away II**

whisper –  
breath of the ancestors  
from far away.  
my heart beats  
no more,  
how to protect you  
from far away?  
Hands  
feel in vain  
an enraptured world  
eyes do not recognize them.

**Facing the mother**

*Alexandra:*  
*"Believe in luck*  
*Because otherwise it will fly away!"*

**January 22, 1963**  
**Berlin-Grunewald**  
**At night at the Hundekehlesee - Fears about my mother.**

You don't want to be tormented  
see standing on the railway embankment  
like biers coal wagons  
You don't want to open up  
see the passing train  
Lights and shadows empty me  
You don't want to search alone  
look like damp leaves  
glowing smoke blows down into the lake  
See I've become quiet  
stand in the sharp frost  
into my scabby heart  
stare as stars  
from cloud holes  
the eyes of God  
and scares me  
the stray dog

It scared me  
 the roar of the plane  
 rushed across the shadows  
 my eye jumps  
 the rattling of the tram  
 becomes my heartbeat  
 Where oh where  
 do you drive  
 who I am  
 I can you  
 not follow

*July 19, 1998 at the Hundeklehsee  
 One on the lake with herons and  
 Swallows: my longing returns.*

You give  
 Your hand  
 not over  
 but now you're laughing  
 stranger to you  
 Oh why - you separate us both  
 oh why - you go alone  
 see I am tormented  
 see you lock me up  
 see you let me  
 suddenly alone

**July 16, 1968**  
**Old lonely woman**

The sacred wild music - has fallen silent:  
 The mirror in your heart fogs up  
 and carelessly adds the breath of death  
 the shard together.  
 Your hope is gone  
 like a pack of starving wolves in winter  
 and how the Shirokko blows out the bottom  
 so fear grinds your consciousness to sand.  
 But your curiosity squirms plially  
 and will die last.

**December 6, 1998**  
**mother's dream**

you were looking for me  
 in the mountains,  
 the appointment  
 did not take place.  
 One  
 pregnant woman  
 stepped  
 next to you.  
 Will  
 a child  
 born?

*My mother in  
 younger years*

**March 28, 1998**  
**summer haiku**

has melted  
 the harsh snow  
 glitter in the sun  
 ice gullies.

**February 24, 2001**  
**Snow**

the heavy snow;  
 fell yesterday  
 without sound the  
 soft flakes –  
 almost fifty years earlier.  
 am i the kid  
 shy and narrow,  
 introverted?  
 Or was it you  
 twenty years ago?  
 you take me  
 to the hand  
 or I you -  
 sixty years later?  
 The old photos  
 have turned pale  
 hardly differentiated

black and white.  
 we have both  
 inherited the deepest fear  
 and hidden within us.  
 Today kicks  
 your picture out  
 the innermost doll,  
 but the colors  
 are no longer liable.  
 However, don't cry

step next to you  
 I speak to you  
 or you to me?

soon!

*Snow fir*

### **My mother**

Today  
 That was yesterday  
 Morning

In the cool morning  
 Remains  
 My heart behind  
 If you leave tomorrow  
 I am today  
 Already alone and  
 Greened the beech yesterday  
 Is there snow today?  
 On the trunk  
 The wind has  
 The Flakes  
 Yesterday  
 Blown  
 Has life  
 Hurt  
 Don't say anything  
 The silence is the answer.

**February 29, 2004**

**Diacony Wilmersdorf**

**The mother's way to the other end of the world**

**The way of the mother to the world's other end**

What to say  
We are silent, both!  
So much has happened  
Between us  
Since!  
Currents in the depths' darkness,  
Unsayable words.  
Your face too  
Doesn't mirror your inner self,  
Already frozen  
Under the breath  
Of the narrowing death.  
Unmoved it lets  
The night come inside.  
Only the mean hand  
Touches lightly  
My shoulder,  
Searching protection  
And consoling,  
Tenderness,  
Fluttering like vivid.  
Another summer,  
Not more,  
Go to sleep  
You looked  
For long after me.  
My heart is lost  
In tears.  
I don't come with you  
To the garden door,  
You said  
Like an excuse.  
An amicable death  
Be your fate.  
The band is not cut.  
You are right  
Not to wait any longer!  
Don't hesitate  
Go without fear  
This bravery  
I learned  
From you



**December 26, 2006**  
**The Hilliard Ensemble heard:**  
**Moriemur I**

After your death  
 after your death  
 all hindrances will fall off  
 Then you will speak to me  
 as before  
 Dancing wants you to turn around  
 as before  
 In other worlds, you will be  
 as before  
 But near the rails, I'm left behind  
 as before  
 Your painful desires fulfilled now  
 over there  
 Your wish for love gets an appearance  
 over there  
 All vein is now rewarded  
 over there  
 But when will I see you again -  
 over there?  
 You want to go now  
 from here  
 Leave out my hand forever  
 quiet here  
 You cannot grasp it nor say  
 this here  
 Yet angels came to you before  
 here  
 Their wings shall protect you  
 on your way  
 from here to there.

**March 10, 2018**  
**Moriemur II**

Far away  
 Past  
 Vague memory  
 Fleeting wisps of fog  
 abandoned  
 In Neukoelln  
 The tomb of the ancestors  
 To forget

The liverworts  
 on the edge  
 so strange now  
 The Wasteland  
 Without consolation  
 And return  
 At the end  
 Aimless

**January 5, 2007**

**Visit to my mother in Protestant Berlin Wannsee Hospice  
 Nightly Waters**

Almost my aching feelings,  
 written on a bit of paper,  
 at the bridge between us,  
 were blown by the nightly winds  
 to the shadowed ducks  
 into the waters so dark  
 of the Wannsee.

Like an embryo looking for  
 protection, bowed you laid  
 in the hospice bed, the lids  
 closed, sleeping perhaps.

I am forced to suffer with you  
 as I saw in your eyes the dying,  
 the death, to which succumbed  
 throughout the centuries  
 all creatures.

Tears rise from my heart,  
 when I think how with a CD  
 you tried to sing the Ave Maria.

You missed the higher tones  
 which years ago you formed  
 at ease so happily.

*My mother with a tracheostomy tube*

**In February 2007**

Snow,  
 left behind  
 your breath  
 like dancing leaves  
 gone.

**February 11, 2007**

**In the Hospice Wannsee**

Today I left you, earlier,  
 you wanted to sleep  
 quiet, some daylight was -  
 a winter day.

You got weaker  
 during this week  
 the nurses told me.

I hold your hands  
 the fingers so thin and cold  
 like the snowy air outside  
 the tilted window.

It seemed to me  
 that you withdrew  
 your fingers from  
 my hands' embrace.

You want to go and turn  
 your face aside; soon  
 it will fall to ashes  
 and only in my dreams  
 you will appear.

**June 2, 2007**

**Sarajevo – after a phone call with my mother  
 in the Protestant Diakony, Berlin-Wannsee.**

**Missing words**

Branches of green in the window  
 in the dawn already,  
 the sunlight shining far away  
 over the rim of the mountains.

"Don't be sad," you said, the  
 intonation of your voice as long ago  
 when drawing a cross above my eyes  
 saying goodbye and letting me go.

Now you are the one who goes,  
 Your heart full of selfless love  
 like in the early years, when  
 Your desires were unfulfilled.

O wait for the light of the morning,  
 when all the blossoms open!

Your heart is still the same as ever  
 and sometimes you speak to me  
 as before

**July 4, 2007**  
**Sarajevo, 1554 km from Berlin**  
**child-mother – mother-child**

Your fainting shape,  
 a bow in the bedsheets.  
 Will you ever rotate  
 again in a lonely dance?  
 Your singing voice  
 will never again  
 divide the silence.  
 Bowed and broken  
 since long the bike  
 which you taught  
 me to ride.  
 How much did you love  
 the flowers and birds,  
 to swim in the lake,  
 though too often alone:  
 When your father died,  
 and the mother  
 when the man died  
 now you are going to die  
 alone in the hospice.  
 All your loved ones left you alone,  
 grandpa, daddy, and me  
 with your cross above my brows,  
 for Naharya, for Sarajevo.  
 Your lovers? None remained.  
 only your terrible longing,  
 which no one could bear.  
 And you, challenged tenfold,  
 you say: "Don't be sad!",  
 you ask: "Do you have time?".  
 Now never again I can  
 speak with you  
 You ask what our farewell  
 means?  
 what was, don't you remember  
 only the longing remained  
 to feel the sky  
 when will it be  
 Then I won't anymore  
 cry?  
 to ask what our departure means?  
 What was, you do not remember,

only your desire remained to touch  
 the sky.  
 When will it be?  
 Will I then stop crying?

**May 2, 2008**  
**Grunewald**  
**Farewell**

The leaves are fallen,  
 the blossom's dust gone with the wind;  
 the old vase  
 gray in the dawn.  
 Pale-red tulips there were,  
 they don't need water any more.

Tell me just one word by night  
 so my soul will recover –  
 an echo of the old sound,  
 which through tears did you learn the child?  
 Domine, non sum dignus,  
 ut entrabis sub tectum meum.

You are sleeping so gently,  
 The wasted limbs are bent.  
 No vinegar I have for you,  
 I water only your lips -  
 your breath so feather light,  
 as if you need it not anymore.

Now, span your wings  
 and don't have fear  
 deep below you, the sea  
 and the past  
 and side to side the others,  
 and our blessings too  
 and our love's smile.

**June 09, 2011**  
**Vesna Bjegovic-Mikanovic**  
**To our mothers**

Speak to me from heaven's other side,  
 speak! give me your hand  
 appear to me in my dreams.

I see you.  
 Take a rope to span the ages  
 not to descend to the abyss!

**May 25, 2008**  
**Grunewald**

When we scattered her ashes on the shore  
 of the Hundekehlesee...

Were the birds silent?

I thought the ashes would sink  
 Scattered like sand in the lake  
 Under the low trees in May  
 But it stayed with you  
 For a world time  
 The gray blistered veil  
 The one without the granddaughter's flowers  
 Taken from your garden  
 In memory of eternal sorrow  
 would be frozen  
 Because your soul flew one last time  
 With the light dust  
 In the wind away.  
 When we went home  
 Everyone started singing  
 As you loved to do  
 When your voice was even more  
 As a low hum  
 In church we still listened  
 The cello, her bird sounds  
 Far from the choir - and wept.  
 Smoothly lay in the sun  
 dog throat lake.

**September 7, 2008**  
**Grunewald**  
**A water lily**

Amidst her sisters  
 The white swimmer  
 Is swaying quiet  
 On the waves of the  
 dog throat

And doesn't try to  
 Escape from my hands.  
 Did motherly ashes  
 Nourish you too?  
 You shut yourself  
 At night and only once  
 You spread your blossom  
 In the cup with water,  
 late in the morning,  
 Then never again.  
 Your golden heart  
 Remains disguised.  
 Yes, your beauty absconds -  
 Closed are Your eyes.

**October 19, 2008**  
**Berlin-Grunewald**  
**At the Hundekhlesee**

Lost six times  
 since then the full moon.  
 I stand where I stood then  
 but the flowers  
 the veil of ash, sunk.  
 Only the eternal water  
 in the dim light of  
 beginning evening.  
 When will you at night  
 speak with me?

**August 3, 2013**  
**Berlin-Grunewald**  
**Hometown!**

The farewell, so long  
 The swallows fly high  
 Above the dog's throat  
 tears, petrified  
 stalactites of sadness  
 The sluggish steps  
 The ancestors at the memorial  
 My mother's cross  
 Your ashes in the lake  
 homeless now  
 At the end  
 the last few years



Strange  
 Oh the melancholy  
 When I left the house!

**September 15, 2013**  
**Alone near Belgrade**

The anchor cable snapped  
 By own hand  
 So close to death  
 The ship moves on  
 Blue-grey billows  
 How peaceful lay  
 The dog throat  
 In the evening light.  
 The little cottage  
 she whispered  
 carry me up the stairs  
 Down please!  
 I didn't dare  
 My mother died.  
 Where am I?  
 The bowl  
 The figurine  
 From the Sahara  
 Is empty!

*Niger, figurine around 1970*

**July 2014**  
**Berlin-Grunewald**  
**Ad Matrem**

The carpeting  
 azure,  
 or is it green?  
 torn out,  
 as I was told.  
 The pictures hung  
 myself from the wall  
 brought them to the country  
 at the edge of the world -  
 in another city,  
 the archives.  
 Ah, the memory  
 colorless; only the lake

shines in the autumn sun,  
 the water lilies have faded.  
 The rails stay forever:  
 the marked platform  
 of horror!  
 The little house  
 is empty, nothing  
 reminiscent of the woman  
 whose spirit died here.

**December 10, 2020**

**Haiku**

Today and tomorrow  
 In yesterday's sunk  
 Leaves blown by the wind

**March 16, 2000**

**my mother's eulogy**

**Her message left behind**

*(After J. Ringelnatz)*

When I die  
 You must not mourn  
 My love will  
 survive me  
 And in unknown clothes  
 meet you  
 And bless you.

**August 18, 2013**

**At night**

When the time was fulfilled  
 she went as quietly as she came  
 accompanied only by her angel

**Veronica Strelerte**

**(born in Latvia, 1912-1995)**

Once you asked: on that foggy morning,  
 When we meet quietly in the afterlife,  
 How am I supposed to recognize you among all  
 The shade?

I said:

– Remember, I will be the one  
The weary step slowly, without haste  
The face will pass you by  
concealed.

## First loves

*I can come anytime!  
you fell asleep  
when I came.*

**April 7, 1957**

### Loneliness

White clouds  
Surrounded by delicate blue  
Sunny the walls of the houses –  
Over there  
Winds gently pull  
Through green wood  
Awakened by longing for spring  
Laughter and funny shouts  
push up to me –  
... from underneath!

**July 9, 1967**

Like roaring surf  
Return to the sea  
We beg for a transformation  
feeling safe  
In whose hands?  
We are thought structures  
Filigree in front of nothing  
Because lost'n experienced  
In Hells of Judgment  
We our origin.  
...  
Storm torn, bushy windgrass  
Wet cold fog blows over it  
Makes you shudder, crushes you  
And touches the salt  
From your face

**October 19, 1960**  
**Calluna**

Tearing breaks  
 the soul's image  
 your face  
 glows gifted  
 pulls me hesitantly  
 senseless longing.  
 walk entwined  
 blow oppressively  
 wanting to surrender  
 sucking life  
 we have to kiss  
 it fails  
 muggy sinks  
 green hair  
 smooth face.  
 The alp fades  
 fearfully departs  
 my heart back  
 our luck  
 only radiates renunciation.

**Nov. 17, 1990**  
**Recognition**

*Nine days later*  
*golden hair*

in awakening  
 to grab  
 my hands  
 after you,  
 between the fingers  
 fly away  
 the scraps  
 of the dream image.  
 The Early Call  
 the birds  
 cuts to the heart.

*Eighteen days later*  
*Lamentation*

thirty times  
 I buried  
 the longing,  
 thirty times  
 took me  
 the clay  
 the air.  
 so  
 I tow  
 you  
 out,  
 on a bent back.  
 you are rigid  
 and cold and dead!  
 No more  
 I see your face -  
 only for seconds  
 glowed  
 the horizon,  
 the Thunder  
 power

my heart  
 tremble.  
 Yet  
 twenty times  
 I bury  
 you  
 then  
 nevermore!

*Twenty-four days later*  
*Resurrection*

God's hands  
 caress us  
 beyond  
 of the iron gate.  
 There was snow on your hair  
 when we parted  
 underneath shimmered  
 remnants of gold.

*Fifty-seven days later*  
*Sunday night at Lake Diana*

Shock waves generated  
 every sound, I mean  
 you would be back and  
 you interpret the riddle of  
 cruel Sphinx me,  
 the approaching far  
 stays and sweetness always in  
 bitterness changes.  
 What a comfort that  
 runs of the stone ones  
 pet the rabbits  
 glittering surfaces  
 of ice where Diana  
 royally hunted,  
 in the moonlight  
 to look!

**October 18, 2003**

**late encounter**

**By the sea I**

The waves in the sand  
 Infinitely equal:  
 The scab was bloody  
 when you left

**By the sea II**

star rock,  
 Half hidden in the sand:  
 my crying  
 Gone the wind.

**By the sea III**

As the sea  
 Touched the pain:  
 The horizon became open -  
 Forever.

**July 22, 1962 11:00 p.m**

**Berlin**

**Magdalena**

Forgive me sir  
 it's so new to me!  
 I am weak in this grace.  
 Pray Lena

a candle for you  
 is awake at the icon now.  
 You know, the candlestick gave birth  
 radiant waves of fire,  
 from whose flames was  
 brought us happiness and sorrow.  
 Five holders stood, glued with wax,  
 in which pains and joys  
 of people burned down.  
 We want to waste ourselves there  
 then we are related to heaven  
 and everything in us lives.  
 My light, carelessly set up,  
 leaned first.  
 I thought: if it falls  
 no supplication rises higher.  
 I thanked him quietly, hoping  
 and then left quickly.  
 The fire has wavered no more,  
 my heart is still trapped  
 from your warm hand.

**Without a date**

**Bee**

The simple movements  
 the round children's fingers  
 hide unconscious thoughts,  
 never decrypted.  
 Like under glass  
 are the veins  
 visible to your soul  
 and yet untouchable.  
 The groping hand  
 leaves a haze.  
 where is the stone  
 who tears you open  
 you pain and truth  
 lets feel?

**September 13, 1966**

**Freiburg**

**Judith**

The shovel hands of an acacia branch  
 brushed my fingers

they took him with them  
while walking.  
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**September 24, 2018**  
**Dortmund**

Are you there  
From my past  
retrieved  
Climbed like the triangle figure  
On the puppet ropes  
I sent them back to you  
After so many decades  
As a reminder not as  
Farewell again  
You called her now  
Climbing maxe, from back then  
I don't remember  
Attached to the package  
A small triangle stone -  
with my face? end of August  
I found him on the North Sea beach  
Now you are silent, no longer answering  
Majestically as I wrote to you  
After our reunion  
Have you already arrived over there?  
Beyond the iron gate  
You never hassled me  
you loved me  
And - I left you  
Thank you, that was me  
When I saw you again  
I'm thankful now too  
that I could know you

**Mersine**

*autumn wind blows –  
We live and we can  
see each other, you and me  
Masaoka Shiki*



**Nov 1994**  
**In Barcelona**

Our boat takes water –  
 the rudder in pieces,  
 eaten away by the borer.  
 I see us drowning  
 clamped in twos  
 like children, frightened,  
 to descend alone  
 in blue-black depth.  
 Should we?  
 from the rubble  
 tie a raft together?

**May 14, 1995**  
**Paris**  
**Demise**

On the dark edge of the world  
 drift the fragments,  
 who are me  
 and you.  
 A faint tremor  
 still reaches us  
 Pulse of the deep -  
 but the fire  
 at the bottom of the sea  
 dies.  
 We will be orphans  
 yet,  
 behind the gods  
 beyond the iron gate,  
 another god is waiting:  
 mutilated and mute,  
 hands and feet chopped off,  
 blind with tears in his eyes  
 he listens to us.

**October 7, 1995**  
**change time!**

uncertain much,  
 scary,  
 paralyzing.  
 Steady, however

and always,  
are you standing  
to me.

**May 12, 2006**  
**Chengdu, China**

Don't forget the tears  
she cried  
when you left  
Lord redeem us!

**January 12, 2005**  
**Bratislava, Slovakia**  
**Past**

What was is forever.  
What we find again  
is as it is;  
just remembering  
is changeable.  
Torn out  
we die  
with the roots;  
only the promise  
has remained.  
Maybe we can  
since we broke up  
talk like leaves  
talk to each other  
in the wind on the same branch.  
Your pride touches me  
the desperation, your courage,  
your weeping and cry,  
the terrible lament  
to be humble.  
touch my hands  
the old worn out skin  
my ear is listening  
to the noises in the bathroom.  
Why is it the way it is?  
land of no return,  
black scrub,  
Plumes of ash in the wind.  
bring our tears  
flowers out.

We hike there  
 to our death  
 life didn't lie  
 on the way or us  
 didn't see it lying.  
 I always thought  
 that with the death of the mother  
 the child dies too  
 if the umbilical cord  
 was never cut.  
 You never have  
 together with me  
 the blue lilies  
 plucked from longing.  
 We have always been  
 orphans, lonely,  
 seeking protection  
 pushed together.  
 our dream is  
 Like a wide river:  
 You don't see the other shore.  
 Whether you stay or swim  
 apocalyptic riders  
 reach you here or there.

**June 26, 2011**

**Salvation**

In vain and  
 bittersweet the experience  
 ephemeral your silhouette.  
 On the dike  
 hopeless luck,  
 the children the grandchildren.  
 Together too  
 the tears  
 of farewell.  
 clouds are forever  
 water and wind.  
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**November 23, 2011**

**On the way to Belgrade**

Black Mittens  
 bobble hat

i didn't see you  
 chasing me  
 At the train station  
 The doors are still closing  
 Don't - I'm looking back  
 your faithful face  
 breathless - you turn around  
 The train starts  
 After - tears

**December 23, 2014**  
**where to stay**

hometown  
 Neither you nor I have  
 we flee  
 Where?  
 Together  
 Are we alone  
 Alone we are  
 Without hope!  
 if no heaven  
 us  
 Where will we  
 Remain?  
 In the dark  
 To live  
 That's brave!  
 courage and honor  
 Only that is us  
 gift  
 we swear  
 each other only that  
 grazing water lilies  
 My face  
 And your hair  
 Flow  
 If the water  
 hugged

**Without a date**  
**Mersine**

the shaky figure,  
 she was hugged.

With a laugh  
 Does she ignore her desperation  
 She doesn't like the new.  
 loneliness, self-chosen,  
 retreat inwards,  
 Announced the end.  
 And yet in relation to life  
 bravery and devotion.

**December 15, 2020 (born April 25, 2012)  
 A Poem for Mersine by Leoparda**

Snow  
 Snow flurries everywhere  
 And the snow in Christmas Valley  
 And the white flows from mountain to valley  
 And past the young Karl.  
 The groundhog hardly understands it  
 It knows only one green tree.  
 Even the mountain sheep is surprised:  
 Where's the forget-me-not?

**Without a date  
 Melancholy**

Grief -  
 Lonliness -  
 at night between clouds the moon,  
 In the dark silence.  
 days? How often?  
 How often alone?  
 Alone!  
 when are you coming back  
 Just beyond the gate  
 Let's meet  
 As at the beginning.  
 To forget?  
 How?  
 Not possible!

**December 7, 2015  
 Far from Paderborn**

I walked

Far  
 Into the future  
 But my heart  
 stayed  
 In the street  
 Lie  
 I hear it  
 at night  
 From far away  
 Quietly  
 Beat  
 The past  
 has passed  
 Inaccessible  
 The regret  
 The dispute  
 Is not  
 Arranged  
 The future  
 Speechless

**March 27, 2016**  
**Paderborn edge**

the way unlit,  
 unrecognizable in the dark,  
 you stop  
 helpless, hope  
 that one is coming.  
 Also the lights  
 far behind you  
 extinguish  
 but pretend  
 like you would  
 just ask,  
 to make sure  
 if one comes  
 I never have myself  
 felt closer to you  
 when i came  
 and your fear  
 the heart me  
 clutched.  
 you fight back  
 Wounded,  
 desperate,

inconsolable on this side  
of the iron gate.

**February 25, 2020**  
**spoken to her**

She is much better  
She is cheerful on the phone  
For weeks now  
She hid  
In one world  
that belongs only to her  
She doesn't ask anymore  
What will be  
Next year  
The fear is gone  
Your companions are mute  
But they look back  
Will she follow?  
It's a brighter land  
As she says in which she  
Live and dream now  
She doesn't speak anymore  
From her death wish  
to end life  
she is somewhere else  
gone along  
But I stay behind  
This side in the twilight  
And guilty

**August 5, 2016**

When I am dead  
I will write to you  
come to me soon  
Life was too hard for you  
You were good and faithful  
All tasks in life  
You fulfilled, but you stayed  
Without trusting you  
You've been wounded ever since  
You could never forgive  
Cretins became your people  
And you got lonely  
When I am dead

I will write to you  
 come to me soon  
 Life was too hard for you  
*Mersine's answers:*  
 I want to be mine  
 And be nobody else.  
 As long as I can still do this  
 I still want to be myself.  
 Then I don't give a fuck about the rules  
 Always behind me  
 And spread the sails  
 who are further than here.  
*Mersine's death spell*  
 What's left when I'm gone  
 A word, a joke, a picture - completely uninhibited.  
 The way you live is entirely yours  
 You're doing the right thing, even if it's just something new  
 Every life is transient  
 But you should celebrate it.

### Stelae of the children

*A sparrow on the high balcony,  
 can he stay to comfort me?*

#### **June 27, 2001** **On the thirtieth birthday**

We stood in the sunlight  
 there you jump forward  
 and hug  
 the shaggy beast,  
 the old dog  
 who suddenly approached  
 from the past  
 and I felt:  
 that is her  
 Volunteer!

#### **June 26, 1993** **Stella graduated from the Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld**

departure.  
 You are free!  
 The world is for you  
 become brand new



different from how I saw them.  
 belongs to you  
 the next century  
 you write his sign  
 in the wood of the ash  
 Ygdrasil.  
 my blessings  
 follow the shadow  
 that you, invisible, throw  
 at night and in the glow of the  
 Sahara.  
 hugs  
 the weak if you  
 return and stay  
 facing the stars.

**May 1, 1999**  
**Portland, California**  
**A haiku flies 10,000 kilometers**

Beyond the night  
 shouts of applause  
 Stella's cello  
 like solar wind.

**September 10, 1989**  
**Akira Kurosawa's dream**

Happiness:  
 in the sun  
 under azure sky  
 Afternoon tea,  
 all four in the garden  
 around the wooden table -  
 family idyll.  
 It never was  
 but longed for!  
 Just a faint roar  
 flying shadows -  
 above.  
 I'll go ahead  
 to the street,  
 which opens the view  
 North,  
 up the stretched slope,  
 lined with

holiday homes.  
Growing up there  
the monster,  
the seething  
black storm,  
red tiger lilies  
infected.  
people come  
over the mountain,  
hurry up  
a hurricane  
of burning gas!  
The car is up  
round trip  
I couldn't do it anymore:  
the escape is  
misaligned.  
You are still sitting  
at the table,  
the wind is increasing -  
smell of gas.  
we hurry  
over stairs,  
through gardens  
downhill.  
No fear,  
agreement  
and the quiet  
hope in me:  
perhaps  
only reached us  
the outermost  
foothills -  
perhaps.  
We run  
side by side,  
entwined,  
Stella left.  
She will be the first  
cough and wheeze.  
Then she says:  
"I can't stand gas".  
Nonetheless,  
we are together  
and also the flames  
don't scare me.

perhaps  
 we will  
 crouch,  
 heads bowed  
 to each other.

**November 8, 1992**  
**soul mate**

everyone I knew  
 in the maelstrom of time  
 drift, shredded  
 your pictures  
 and are forgotten.  
 With huge waves  
 floods me  
 the sadness  
 is in vain  
 the remembering.  
 Untouched only  
 remain  
 all the way inside  
 the stelae  
 of the children.

**Late 1993**  
**Cologne**

Ringling of bells  
 the heavy tower  
 trembles like the flame,  
 that I before you  
 Holy Mother,  
 light for us.  
 Indistinguishable  
 urges them with many  
 at the same time upwards,  
 where the tops of the cathedral  
 touch the sky.

*(Stella's Wedding July 14, 2014)*

## Jarna

*You turn the stone  
of habituation  
the animals of the night  
are escaping*

*May 04, 1999*

**March 03, 2002**

**Chimera**

I suddenly see  
A stranger's face  
In the otherwise dark  
Mirrors made  
Of lead  
By unknown Gods  
Before  
I was

Your fire's light  
Flares up on wood  
Illuminates  
Your joy

The stack  
will go  
To whom  
to speak  
If night again  
Embrace me  
And you alone  
Lonesome with  
Chimera

*Chimaira was a monster in ancient Lykia mentioned in the Iliad, a sister of Kerberos and Hydra. She had three heads, a lion, a goat, and a serpent.*

**March 12, 2002**

Jarna, your name  
so unexpected  
the stream of waters  
from under the sands.

They swell my heart  
 until its beating  
 crack my ribs  
 to pieces.

Where to hide  
 in the sunlight  
 where to warm up  
 in the freezing nights?

Exposed on the cape  
 four arms  
 embrace us  
 forever.

**April 28, 2002**

A smile on your face  
 the whole day and yet:  
 I long for more  
 as I hear your voice  
 when it whispers  
 "and" and again "and?"  
 I need to touch  
 your rugged hands,  
 I want to sense  
 your fingertips,  
 I have to taste  
 the open lips,  
 splitting your body  
 and face.

**May 20, 2002**

I can't see  
 Where you put your feet  
 But in the fog  
 I hold your hand  
 And hope there is  
 No rift in front.  
 From time to time  
 Your shoulder touches mine:  
 Warmth spills over,  
 Dries the wetting cold

**June 2, 2002**  
**Foregone**

High in the tree  
 I was close to the clouds  
 and to the fruits  
 to still my desire.  
 When I fell  
 all my bones  
 were broken and -  
 so, my heart.  
 Restless longing  
 Your hands  
 birds in the wind  
 soon far from me.

Nemirna čežnja  
 Tvoje ruke  
 ptice na vetru  
 daleko.

**June 13, 2002**  
**Alexander**

Birds up in the spheres  
 fly roller coaster  
 almost invisible,  
 in the darkness of rain  
 blackish spots only  
 against the sky  
 when the lightning strikes.

You flee from the flood  
 to the mountains' top,  
 breathless yet  
 you will reach the refuge  
 a child in your arms.

A future comes close  
 when it rides on a pony  
 gleaming all white  
 down to the fountains  
 where shadows and sunlight meet.

**28 June 2002**  
**Before leaving for Subotica**

Jarná, moja ljubav  
 Springtime, full of life  
 You sing the song  
 Of my heart  
 Nightingale in the night  
 Seagull during the day  
 I explore with you  
 The margins of the world  
 Going forward forever  
 Ich liebe dich  
 Moya ljubav

You're  
 A haiku  
 Unfinished  
 Like our life  
 Always is!

Ti - Nezavršeni haiku Kao sve U nasem Životu!
--

**2002**

My dear,  
 we are  
 In the hands  
 Of the God  
 Who connects us  
 Since the beginning  
 Whether we are  
 Or sacrifice  
 Ourselves  
 We are in  
 His hands  
 And cannot escape.

**August 3, 2002**  
**To Jarna**

Such feeble cord,  
 hardly pulsing,  
 exposed to the  
 midwife's knife.  
 To eternity it connects



the newborn's life  
 but after birth  
 the mystical origin,  
 cut off forever.

**August 10, 2002**  
**Starmoonsun I**

Dancing stars  
 Only a few are  
 In the cosmos  
 But many appear  
 To be volatile  
 If rags of fog  
 Are blown by  
 the storm  
 Into heaven

**September 2, 2002**  
**Starmoonsun II**

The growing moon  
 Enlightens my despair  
 In a fearful night.  
 Nourished by the sun  
 The promise of a blue sky -  
 Tomorrow?  
 How shall I be  
 In a week's time  
 If only the stars  
 Give this far away light?  
 Did I meet our eyes  
 In this golden round mirror -  
 last night

**12./13. Aug 2002**

Your soul is kissing mine  
 While foreign language  
 Longs to be heard  
 Your tears run into mine  
 While your hands  
 Caress me to death  
 But too tiny the hut of mine  
 Swept by northern winds  
 It will burn in an open fire

Hot glowing ashes of mine  
 Will cover your heart  
 But protect you from turmoil  
 Too narrowed the road of mine  
 I cannot see what's beyond  
 A child is waving to pass  
 Do believe in the love of mine  
 Eternity is so cold and dark  
 In subterranean Hades

**January 5, 2003**

**Loneliness**

Only the Milanovka  
 still warms the blood,  
 an armor of ice is my skin.  
 I wait for none on the steps  
 of the door with rich stucco,  
 - it's locked.

The bottle helped emptied.  
 An angel passes and  
 leaves a golden coin  
 in the hollow of my hand.  
 Can I hold it to buy  
 back my luck from the past?

Should I ask the Gods  
 to send their angels again,  
 their treasures are never enough.  
 Be my bird and let me ride  
 on your shoulders  
     to the horizon.

**January 9, 2003**

**Caught**

Lone, loneliness  
 shadows, pale,  
 suck your blood  
 get reddish  
 a little like  
 the gliding cars  
 outside your window.

Posed, exposed and

caught in cages  
 to hungry eyes.  
 Most feathers  
 lost in futile  
 attempts to escape,  
 blunt the beak.

Why didn't you fly  
 far enough over  
 the swampy lands  
 where landings  
 don't leave traces.  
 Why didn't you cross  
 the rocky mount,  
 where the valleys are  
 tracks on my body.

**February 02, 2003**  
**Serbian song**

My good angel,  
 I cannot be  
 without you.  
 People here  
 don't give us  
 a peace please  
 wait for me  
 in heavenly  
 Heaven!  
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**September 30, 2003**  
**To Jarna**

Where is the soil  
 Where we shall sleep without desire  
 Where is the cave  
 Where's protected our love?

Why so endless is the horizon  
 Why do clouds are hiding the coast  
 Why our boat doesn't have leaks  
 Why don't we sink to calm our cry?

When our hopes will fade away  
 When won't be felt pulse anymore

When shall we pass the gate to the dark  
 When will the GOD bow down to us?

**March 16, 2003**  
**Serbia after March 12**

You laugh as ever  
 Like the fountain wells  
 But quailing lips  
 And watered eyes  
 Another story do they tell  
 About the generations' dreams  
 Flown up like birds  
 A moment just too short  
 To breathe before the bullets  
 Tear to pieces: the breast,  
 The feathers and the bones

Don't bow to your feet  
 In the funeral march  
 Look at the fleecy clouds!

Down, feathers left  
 May hang in the air  
 To dry your tears.

**March 18, 2005**  
**Departing from a dream**

I lost my heart - myself  
 Where it was, the waves  
 Of darkness emanate  
 Slithery, oily  
 Under the starlight

I welcomed your hands  
 Embracing my heart  
 But they squeezed my blood  
 Into drainage

I'm going to die  
 Very soon: Then peace!  
 The horizon comes close -  
 Beyond it, the moon?

**June 09, 2005**

**Jump**

Your buds they promise  
 Summer's heat and  
 Ice is carried away  
 By bubbling brooklets

Come here, I kiss  
 And open the bloom  
 And wish forever  
 The spring to be here

**20th September of 2006**

**For Jarna**

When the sky darkens,  
 my angels come.

When the sky darkens  
 in the twilight  
 of the dusk  
 shooting stars may cross  
 otherwise, unseen.

When the sky darkens  
 all creatures seek  
 to hide  
 and swallow the fear,  
 their heartbeat fast.

When the sky darkens,  
 death may pass  
 or stay  
 but moonlight caresses  
 the hares' bridge lake.

My angels come  
 they carry the truth  
 and will not tell  
 but close their wings  
 around your back  
 and warm your skin

so moist and shivering.

My angels come  
 in the twilight's dawn  
 and blow their horns  
 and the battle begins:  
 You may lose it or win  
 but to live is the promise of death  
 and death is part of life.

My angels come  
 and carry my tears  
 to wash your breast:  
 all pain is removed.  
 Sleep my dear, until the sun  
 enlightens the darkened sky  
 and wakes you up to see the day.

**September 20, 2006**  
**The answer of the angels**

I believe,  
 you could die  
 before the time.  
 I believe,  
 You'll see  
 the eternity.  
 I believe,  
 You love Me  
 here as there.  
 I believe,  
 Your voice  
 is not very far away.

**November 15, 2008**  
**Near Vozdovac 21:00**

They complain to me  
 nocturnal clouds,  
 far away the familiar ones  
 Stars.

*Vojvode Stepe in Vozdovac*

### **Christmas Eve near Vozdovac**

From lonesomeness  
 we came  
 to lonesomeness  
 we return  
 Fragments stay  
 of remembrance,  
 wild flowers  
 on the way  
 for the descendants.

An extraneous God  
 is observing us,  
 the face unmoved.  
 His angels are far,  
 did he ever  
 send them here?

I remain caught  
 in my grief,  
 until behind  
 the still locked gate  
 dawn is shining  
 and the darkness here  
 fades away. Then  
 I shall see –  
 the way behind me.

### **06. January 2008**

Serbia  
 Holy history  
 It's the past!  
 St. Sava gave the escort  
 Throughout the centuries  
 Rocky island  
 In the Ottoman flood  
 Orthodox Serbia

Now the cathedral  
 Above the white city  
 Stupendous the sight  
 Inside new

The ancient icons  
 Still in the making  
 First believers' worship

But on the broader round  
 Spiraling fog  
 Of voices and bodies  
 In an empty universe  
 They don't know  
 Of devotion, of what  
 Has been and will become

**August 31, 2008**  
**Farewell (by Jarna)**

The longest journey you began today.  
 The last but one! your own decision,  
 before the fifth, the very last.  
 Farewell, my dear, as long as only  
 my heart can go with you, connected  
 to yours like Siamese twins.

Always when dangerous roads are up front,  
 in your ear, you will hear my whispering voice.  
 Allow it and do not shield yourself, I beg you.  
 We shall not regret what happened to us,  
 though different it was for you and me.  
 We both enjoy our love, under tears even now.

We cannot be alone nor together, too late we met.  
 In summerly Baric, my past sprang up and haunted you.  
 However, I know we shall meet again  
 there or here, but shining in the light  
 of the rising sun, burning to ashes  
 the earthly appearance, freeing us to eternity.

**April 5, 2009**  
**Sunset**

A relative of death,  
 more than ever in my life.  
 Saint Sava illuminated like  
 the white city times ago.  
 To whom does my sadness  
 belong? Where can I turn?



It always was in front  
 what today is behind.  
 Was I aware of how heavy  
 desire's burden last?  
 Only the road sounds the same,  
 whether leading there or here.

Can you forgive, norns,  
 what was? Please,  
 deliver me to the angels,  
 the gate is so dark!  
 Does it lock heaven  
 or the empty nil?

Under the evening's light  
 what the castle's yard  
 when we entered. we  
 with the friendly strangers,  
 You stayed; what happened  
 with me, shall I return?

### **Hatchet & Sickel**

On other stars, we lived  
 and saw the same moon,  
 pale before the blue light.  
 Couldn't we rest in its crescent  
 cutting sharp but closer  
 to desired places, what happiness!

I know where you come from,  
 You don't know of me.  
 You were alone nearby  
 I was away and unfamiliar.

To win the other all for you,  
 Does it mean to lose your heart?  
 Flames of fear shiver in me,  
 collision of stars, the moon boat  
 destroyed, and we  
 in the empty space,  
 no way back nor towards the earth.

Dreaming of tying the stars together  
 and to fill the sky?  
 You will leave me

if I stay and if you stay,  
I am alone.

I beg you on my knees, don't hate  
what I was, I want to be with you.  
Is love this too: Forget? endurance?  
Don't try the hatchet on my roots,  
already so many branches  
are broken, may I stay,  
don't leave already now!

Embrace me, don't let me fall,  
wrap the cloth of love  
closer around me  
tighten the last ropes to the pine!  
What will you do alone on the moon?

**Vozdovac, February 12, 2013**

**Vozdovac antiphony**

The moon behind the clouds, my eyes are blind.  
Look at my heart's desire, guide me, you can see!  
What's written in your deepest waters?  
I trust your reading of the secrets, only read!  
I love the Unknown without thinking,  
not caring for the risks, my life is ending.  
I walk, my hands are on your shoulders:  
You will not freeze as they are warm!

Can you feel the vein on my neck?  
It beats so almost, like a birds' pulse.  
No! You are far away; your hands are an illusion.  
Will your fingers ever touch me again?  
They are only for me, don't forget!  
My dreams are like bugs, invisible flyers!  
O, could I follow them to another life,  
to sleep and to dream the dream of my life.

**May 20, 2013**

**Geneva**

**Condemned**

It hurts so much  
I cannot say  
How much it hurts  
I felt the storm

It's coming close  
 Since time ago  
 The crossing road  
 familiar us  
 The East  
 The West  
 And straight  
 The dead end road  
 So dark and narrow  
 At the end  
 The gate from iron  
 Locked

It hurts so much  
 I cannot say  
 How much it hurts  
 Sticky the melting tar  
 Our steps  
 So slowly  
 Only a minute  
 For a moment only  
 Leave your shoes  
 Come to the roadside  
 Barefoot together  
 The grass so soft  
 kissing your feet  
 And healing  
 The wounds

It hurts so much  
 I cannot say  
 How much it hurts  
 You left me there  
 And grabbed your shoes  
 But don't you know  
 For Siamese twins  
 Their heart is only one  
 My ljubav: Goodbye  
 I shall stay  
 Perhaps you will  
 Return my heart  
 But the love  
 Of your life  
 You can live  
 Without?

**Aug 30, 2014**

**At the end of August on the terrace in Baric**

Fall crackling  
 dry leaves  
 From the walnut  
 The meadow slope  
 His floral decoration  
 Mowed so soon  
 A branch of acacia  
 At the edge of the garden  
 Moves in the breeze  
 Back and forth  
 Over the distant city  
 morning haze

**June 14, 2014**

Turn around  
 My ljubavica  
 Turnaround!  
 I feel lonesome  
 Without you  
 Lost in the night  
 Where is your smile?  
 i miss it  
 so much

**November 15, 2015**

The gust of wind carries the leaves  
 rustling away  
 Walnuts still in the grass.

**February 9, 2016**

**Sleeping**

In the night  
 behind  
 the thin  
 curtains  
 At the horizon  
 Shadowed  
 But visible  
 In the window

The row of lights  
 From the big city  
 All beauty  
 Is diminished  
 We cannot  
 otherwise  
 Bear  
 In the daylight  
 The lights  
 Fadeaway

Autumn winds blow  
 Yellowed leaves fall  
 I am alone - I miss you

**April 24, 2017**  
**Tomorrow's dreams 2001/2014**

Many wishes  
 Too many memories  
 So many smiles  
 Too few words  
 No reason why!

Do you know?  
 The baby bird –  
 It cannot fly  
 Our folded hands  
 Must hold the nest  
 In thunderstorms  
 We are together  
 To save its life

Our love can fly  
 Sometimes far  
 To a horizon  
 Beyond the clouds  
 Trust, it's eternal!

**June 9, 2018**  
**Jarna's Birthday**

I listen for your car  
 When it turns in to me  
 So often, I run  
 But they passed

The sound was different  
 But I wanted to be sure  
 Then you get out  
 Your smile melts my heart  
 I take the sachets and bags  
 Indoors we embrace each other  
 I know I live from you  
 Please, do not recede from me  
 Where should I remain  
 I know I'm connected  
 To the past, the remembrance  
 I thank you for being with me

**February 16, 2019**

**Fear**

I have learned  
 Not to be considered  
 The opinion of the many  
 Around me  
 these last few years  
 I follow myself alone  
 And I'm scared  
 before what is to come  
 Inevitably  
 Nevertheless, I go the way  
 Until the end  
 A gate of iron awaits there  
 It will open

If I were a bird, I would fly  
 far into the night  
 Breakthroughs crying  
 The course of the dark clouds  
 But I have no wings  
 Just have the feathers for it  
 Can't find her order  
 I don't know rest without you!

**Darkness**

Carpets of clouds, reflecting  
 the lights at the edge of my view,  
 remain without colours.  
 Stars alternate  
 in the cracks of the sky.

So different the truth:  
 we long for  
 leaving the night  
 into the daylight  
 a day which may come.

**March 15, 2018**  
**Alone near Vozdovac**

March  
 Two weeks ago  
 Fallen here  
 Since then pain  
 In the back  
 So don't lift anything  
 In the garden  
 tired and  
 No new one  
 Thought  
 At the desk  
 No progress  
 The work is missing  
 the other  
 nothing can  
 I do  
 trapped here  
 My car  
 Not ready  
 Why so  
 Unbearable  
 Loneliness  
 The Serbian  
 textbook  
 One and only  
 consolation  
 If too  
 Unsuccessful  
 Why not  
 Pray  
 There is no  
 heaven  
 To me  
 Only slowly  
 vanishing  
 With my  
 fault

Can I  
To forget  
205

**April 27, 2019**  
**Near Vozdovac**

I forgot  
In the garden  
to cut the roses

I forgot  
Last  
Death

I forgot  
The emptiness  
After that

I forgot  
the hoping  
on God

I forgot  
That I  
must die -  
Maybe later

Everything  
Is me  
secret

The words are strange  
And some have disappeared  
Where?

**November 7, 2019**  
**At a wedding in Vozdovac**

Weird do I feel the  
twitching electric shock  
of the band tonight.  
lost curiosity,  
to drop me



I am a stranger, alone  
 in the crowd of Serbian  
 youth. My last grip:  
 Life with Jarna - through her!  
 Ah, could I cry, grieve  
 and feel my pain:  
 in me, only emptiness and wait.

The unsaid comes towards me,  
 but I want to persevere - to care  
 for those entrusted to me.

Female figures flutter now  
 stomping before my eyes,  
 ecstatic dance,  
 I can't sort them out.  
 red dressed and naked,  
 young and already trapped in death,  
 in glistening flashes of light.

My tears drip  
 bloody now on the stones  
 at my feet,  
 far away from the stars.  
 Jarna, don't slip out!

**February 16, 2020 in Novi Sad**  
**A weekend**

Quiet, very quiet  
 it roars in me  
 delayed,  
 slowed down!  
 Is life enough?  
 Or is it enough?  
 I know well:  
 the rounded arrow  
 finds the beginning  
 at the end.

you stay  
 what the war child  
 two combs  
 planted,  
 wordless longing,  
 now named,

as long as you are

Could I  
embrace  
all the dead  
so close to my heart  
for decades!  
do you recognize me  
Leveled graves.  
liverwort  
stay, bloom  
early in the year.

### **Our Bishon**

play with me  
lordy  
Childish soul  
Don't leave me  
alone  
Yes, of course, run  
Keep the strangers  
Outside  
Only we  
lordy  
play with me

## **Troubled Tales**

Why does my heart move so  
the back of this big, coincidentally  
passing hunter?

*From: Yasushi Inoue's Hunting Rifle*

**September 29, 1957**

### **Trust**

Come, brother wind  
Woe to me my grief for it  
Is it also late in the evening  
Don't you rustle through soft leaves?  
Storm through my heart!

Is my shoe in the brackish water  
My eye sees through black branches  
I'll soon rest in the swelling grass

A small star moves above  
Lonely his way ...

I am part  
The unknown expanse  
that pervades all souls  
Am I burning up too?

**In September 1961**  
**Leverkusen**

*Chemical factory*  
Hissing spray of steam  
in small white fountains  
against bright night  
at the high tower  
from rods  
from pipes  
braced green  
stuffy biting air  
gas mask faces  
from men  
out of hate  
out of desire  
from tendon and muscle  
without thinking  
ash calm  
smoldering  
the kettle wind  
just raises the dust  
and single rare flames.

**October 10, 1992**  
**Lisbon**

*Madre de Deus*  
Leaving the marble stairs,  
Look at gold and ceramics  
strangers.  
You lie on the wooden fence  
under black braid  
bent your face,  
the brown wrinkled hand  
exposed and silent.  
The Silence of the Country Woman  
bring me back

i bend my fingers  
 about soft paper about coins -  
 and feel me  
 misery.

### **Gaza**

#### **Late Summer 1994**

Marna House

The black birds' of hatred  
 restless departures,  
 from the ruins of Gaza;  
 but melodies heard,  
 under the tree of Marna House.

#### **Gaza in early September 2000**

##### **Stella Maris**

In the warm sea at night  
 the lights of the boats  
 nested behind the blackish waves.  
 Dump sites of plastic fly  
 in the glittering winds of the sun.  
 The dried sorrows of Yad Vashem  
 mutate to Roadblocks.  
 On the side of the highway:  
 mute, the stretched-out dog.  
 The hard singsong  
 from the white minaret  
 embraces the stars.

#### **Gaza, late August 2001**

##### **Descriptions**

I  
 I entered cheerfully  
 The Vengeance Room  
 graffiti and dirt  
 On a chalky white wall  
 The hot noon  
 In the empty window  
 Glittered  
 Shattered glass

II.  
 do you have palm trees  
 planted with you

In Eretz Israel?  
 is the water  
 Cleaned, yes  
 Full of memories?  
 you must yourselves  
 feel at home  
 In Abraham's country  
 That was once home  
 For your blood -  
 So close to Gaza.

III.  
 faeces flood  
 Through Wadi Gaza  
 Into the sea  
 excrement of Israel.  
 select settlers  
 At checkpoints people  
 The mental holocaust!

IV  
 Silent and white  
 Stands above Rafah  
 the tall mushroom,  
 Deja vu of my dreams  
 at his feet  
 How many dead

*The lattice tunnel at Erez,  
 access to Gaza Strip.*

Probably kneel there  
 In the swirling dust?  
 My heart is serene  
 But the voice  
 drown me  
 in tears

V  
 Bengali fig, beauty tree  
 In the garden of Marna  
 The branches broken  
 This year

By my own hand  
 The prophecy of death  
 Al-Aqsa Intifada.  
 The Pyramids of Giza  
 messages from one  
 Another world, near that  
 Distant giant city.

**July 07, 2014**  
**Bombs on Rafah, Gaza**

My hands are empty  
 Nothing I have for you  
 Brothers and sisters  
 To help!

On the screen, I see  
 The clouds of fire  
 Filling my eyes  
 With tears!

As I have nothing else  
 I send from my cheeks  
 The salt I scratched off  
 With strains of my blood!

The world is turning over  
 Corpses cover the soil  
 The children of victims  
 Murderers now  
 Burn alive  
 The other faith.

Even I cannot  
 embrace your shoulders,  
 hold your hands  
 I'm so far!

**February 28, 1998**  
**Kobe, Japan**

Portopia Hotel, room 1803. View from the window on Saturday morning.  
 Electronic bells ring at nine, ten, eleven and twelve o'clock, one in Russian  
 Folk song is played: Kalinka Kalinka.

*1st stanza: Paralysis*

In the gray haze  
 unrecognizable the stones of Kobe:  
 my innermost being, frozen in fog.

*2nd stanza: Uncertainty*

When did I write my last poem?  
 Where did the step get lost in the white night?  
 When will the Aar return that was just over the towers?

*3rd stanza: Fear*

blowhole,  
 Collapse,  
 black water, freezing cold.

*4th stanza: Gone?*

How far do I have to  
 the escape route  
 run back,  
 to know  
 how cowardly i was  
 when I left?

*5th stanza: Speak!*

Do you say to me that I was once beautiful?  
 Do you recognize me under the yellowish layers of sadness?  
 Do I wake up under your touch? -  
 Why did you come to me on the banks of the Hesperides 80 –  
 Does the lava start to flow brighter?

*Last verse: singsong*

Oh, I want to know everything  
 will I trust you then?  
 will you really love me  
 that I can leave myself?  
 Against the overcast sky  
 the Aar is not back yet.

**February 22, 1999**

**Athens**

Philopappus:  
 dragons stand  
 above the castle.  
 On the Pnyx  
 enjoy themselves

Children.

I recognize calmly  
 the lifeless masks  
 fallen warrior  
 in the deeper walls.  
 Finally returned home:  
 Theotokos.

On strong wings  
 sink  
 from the icons  
 angel down,  
 the shadows  
 the dead  
 dim in semicircle.  
 How echo booms  
 the sacred heartbeat

*The Acropolis*

**August 1, 2004**  
**Beijing**

I saw what had been -  
 on the steps  
 of the Otani Chang Fu Gong  
 my heart was so heavy.  
 Then Lord Niu came  
 back again  
 and explained the way home  
 however: the night hid  
 the shape again.

When the sun went down  
 on the edge of Tiananmen  
 and the red flag dropped,  
 children sat on their shoulders  
 and dragons stood so high!  
 My heart flew up light as a feather.  
 When the people left



it got dark.

**October 27, 2006**

**Damascus**

A child sitting on the side of the road.

The dead, yes  
were in my life  
now there are more  
become and then:  
I do with them  
common cause.

My shoes are now  
as blank as that  
gray head was gray  
layer by layer  
applied to my feet.

I gave him more  
but the beggar child  
that hides his face  
I give nothing -  
it didn't smile.

**June 12, 2006**

**Podgorica, Montenegro**

**Outside**

Outside the umbrella of light  
I went and  
I returned  
Where from and where to  
Is not known  
Whom I loved, they are lost.  
What answer do I have  
For you, my heart,  
What beat is pressing me?  
Attentive I was never,  
Fleet like clouds  
Passing the empty sky.  
What do I give you  
When the flowers dry,  
The grave has no name

And the ashes whirl in the wind.

**April 27, 2012**

**Addis Ababa**

*The 13th Congress of the World Federation of Public Health Associations*

Seven days like a dream  
 the dream of a better life,  
 a life free of disease and mutilation,  
 all over the world shared by so many.  
 In Abyssinia, the ancient kings,  
 in their golden mirror, they saw it.  
 We are still blind but soon, we shall feel  
 the heartbeat of a blessed and healthy world.

**The sky over Pristina, full of stars**

Into the folds  
 desperation sinks  
 The unlived crusts  
 With the tears  
 Incompatible  
 Is the irrecoverable  
 From before with now.

Later there will be darkness,  
 Can I there  
 Feel your hands  
 Or shall we  
 Pass each other  
 Without recognition  
 Before the breath  
 Of your movement  
 Touches my cheeks?

**September 11, 2016**

**Monrovia, in the Compound**

The Barred Villa,  
 The bareness  
 I flee towards  
 The swoosh  
 of the ocean,  
 Up narrow  
 Dirty stairs  
 In the darkness appears

The white wild surf  
 Above the wall  
 Armed with  
 Rusty wire  
 Embracing my life.

### **Haiku on the Atlantic**

The noisy ocean -  
 I find peace  
 In the protection of the wall?

*Atlantic coast near Monrovia*

**28 January 2017**

### **My Liberian driver marries**

driving towards marriage,  
 Driver, that you are!  
 Driving a family  
 through life,  
 Your family!

But without you  
 passengers  
 on the front seat,  
 right next to you  
 would you find  
 the way? Without her?

It is easy, of course,  
 On a sunny day!

But where to go  
 In the dark?  
 Glaring lights up front,  
 And sudden wholes  
 Shuttering your grip  
 on the wheel

She wants to be there  
 And you will steer  
 Your family car  
 Throughout life  
 Together

*My driver and his family along with me***January 26, 2017****Dusk**

Days I fade away  
 With myself  
 Find the door  
 A window only  
 Grateful for each  
 need  
 distract me  
 From the horror  
 persuading me  
 That everything is like this  
 But as before  
 It is not true  
 Naked and alone  
 As at the beginning  
 father, mother why  
 have you left me

*The kitchen window***March 4, 2017****With Jarna**

He walked for a long time  
 next to us  
 on the dark  
 walkway, tried  
 to reach us  
 with his story  
 of hunger and need.  
 Michael, 'Mikel',  
 he knows me  
 Others came out of the night  
 he shooed her away  
 still kept pace:  
 One dollar please!  
 watch your bag,  
 I said, on the right  
 to the street, there  
 where he struggled

to follow us in the light  
 the headlight.  
 You are hungry Mikel  
 I said to myself  
 and was scared.  
 we went home  
 undeterred step by step  
 on the pavement,  
 holey and crooked.  
 The dull feeling  
 of guilt  
 didn't leave us  
 when we were behind the gate  
 were safe.

*Monrovia*

**August 19, 2018**  
**Petten, Holland**  
**Night way to the sea**

Under gray skies  
 Swaying in the wind  
 Does the path lead me  
 Over the top of the dyke  
 Down to the tide  
 Black wavy backs  
 Walen equal, then  
 White rearing up  
 you invite me  
 Go on, straight ahead  
 I stand waiting  
 Now walk a few steps  
 And turn back  
 Come up to the dyke  
 Contrary to a few  
 The woman clutches  
 Not a word, his left  
 Later my shadow before me  
 Dissolves in the light  
 And then in the dark

**German guilt**  
**February 28, 2016**

*I found  
 a shamrock.  
 Since the war  
 between the letters  
 long dried up.*

**December 14, 2012**

**Matthias Wegehaupt: Black reed (Aufbau Verlag 2012: p. 28)**

A memorial for the murdered Jews in the middle of Berlin. No, that was no memorial for the victims, it was a monument to the horrible deed. Terrible order. Gaping Holocaust wound in the heart of the city that should never heal. Parking lot of symbolic coffins. those who look all power is taken.

*I thought as I read: When children play on the stones like me, relieved at the time, observed that this is a gift from the dead to the living, sign of cheerfulness sent out of the horror. No memorial to the victims, signs of horrific act? Suddenly the laughing children have a wrong meaning: ignorance of the living, history of crimes against humanity, forget the dead!*

**After the Berlin demonstration  
 the evening before November 9, 1992**

Now return  
 the memory again  
 and everything starts over.  
 they sing  
 the old songs  
 and the weak  
 the sick, the strangers,  
 they are lost.

The flames rise  
 to the dark night sky  
 before my inner eyes:  
 the golden dome shatters  
 for the second time.

And when it comes  
 then we burn ourselves  
 and under the rubble

we lie dead  
forever!

**July 14 and 24, 1993**  
**Oswiecim**

Exaudi nos domine!  
In the ruined  
landscape of death  
lies an eternal dignity  
that of my soul  
gives peace.

Reflect in the ash pond  
deceased ancestors  
their faces,  
far from the ramp  
in Grunewald.  
Ah, their mouths  
torn in  
silent shrine,  
are never still

Miserere nobis!

Oswiecim everyone  
Oswiecim dwa.

**Cologne, late 1993**  
**Käthe Kollwitz,**  
**died April 22, 1945**

fallen your son  
Your grandson too  
your husband is dead  
And Germany dies

you dig your grave  
And whispering he stands  
Beside you and grabs  
After your hem  
And tired you sink  
towards him.

**October 27, 2011**

**After reading the book by Timothy Snyder 76**

**Bloodlands**

You said farewell alone  
to yourself and vanished,  
no angel was with you  
in the closed chambers of death,  
but perhaps you remembered  
how it was in the arms  
of your mother, not more,  
only an eyelashes' move.

I beg you: climb out  
of the pits, you were thrown  
and forgive us  
that we are allowed to live  
where the night has given  
way to the daylight.  
Forgive, my tears  
are used up – and too late.

**Without a date**

faces now  
Related from the beginning  
Comforting  
ephemeral  
Drawn  
accompaniment  
For life  
The secret  
What's coming  
to decipher  
What was  
Vain  
Together  
survived  
In the century  
of terror

**July 3, 2020**

Around 6am this morning I saw - for less than a minute - a deep red  
Morning red band from left to right on the horizon in Vozdovac.



**Morning dawn**

Blackish purple  
 A band soaked with blood  
 Cuts our world  
 Crossing between the horizons  
 The edges darken  
 Ashes of our existence  
 Only one moment  
 The prophecy  
 To take a picture  
 I'm too late

**Try to go the last way*****Gudrun***

*What could I say?  
 What did remain of you?  
 A memory? No!  
 Moments only.*

**November 8, 1992 Fulda after a visit to Gudrun Pausewang  
 The second day**

Decades now  
 edge over each other,  
 I step  
 out of the time  
 and before the exchange  
 of words, single images  
 and feelings merge  
 as if the past would be today.  
 In front of the face  
 of the old lady  
 the girl steps  
 with blonde maids.  
 At her hand  
 I felt safe  
 on the road  
 of devastation  
 in the East.  
 little brother and  
 sister, we  
 were then!  
 two children  
 Grimm's fairy tales.  
 A thousand times

this tale she told  
 To the four-year-old boy.  
 Today I forgot  
 the day and the year.  
 As then I knew  
 only yesterday  
 but there is no hand  
 so warm and firm  
 and the silhouette  
 of your figure  
 denies the touch.

**December 9, 1987**

**In the new mill**

Hermaphrodite,  
 rigid and big,  
 unborn.  
 your drawing stick,  
 homeless he towers  
 protection of the clearing.  
 In the silver of the moonlight  
 do you see the sun  
 their rays turn away from you.  
 Well shines  
 the broad avenue  
 but who goes  
 out of the light  
 to the realm of shadows!  
 Just the fugitive  
 comes to you  
 But he freezes  
 like you, he  
 that of death in thorns  
 escaped  
 there his cry sounds  
 indefinitely.  
 Who dares this way out!  
 You stay  
 like the country  
 where you came from  
 only with yourself.

*My design of the mysterious  
 Goddess in the Thorns  
 molded from clay.*

**February 6, 1996**

**Paula**

we never thought  
that you are the first to leave us  
so full of life as you were  
and stay in memory  
and bridge are  
to distant lost time,  
from which the hard-tense  
drums pound softly,

-  
-  
-

up to the sky!  
But at the ninth hour in the morning  
are the drums  
then remained silent  
and took in silence  
the angel your hand  
and brought you back  
we never thought  
that you are the first to leave us:  
become from now on  
all follow you  
one, the other –  
until ourselves  
to return.  
How strange and how beautiful  
will that be  
to see you again  
Then the drums  
speak again  
at the ninth hour in the morning.

**End of September 2019**

**Helmfried (1941-2019)**

Dream images pass like clouds,  
to skies beyond the horizon.  
you went with them  
steady, your step without hesitation.

We were, we are now  
friends as they say

for life, because among the living  
you have been my friend for the longest time.

how to deal with it, life,  
we said to ourselves we didn't need  
to discuss a friendship that already existed  
when our first decade came to an end.

We never talked about feelings  
Faith held you, trust held me,  
ready to take anything. Far away  
I think of you, past what was.

Between us there was nothing to thank  
or to forgive, was unadorned  
our friendship and steady, never  
questioned, never embarrassed to speak.

My friend, bye! See you  
beyond the iron gate.  
Death does not interrupt life  
it just changes the light!

**January 17, 2004**  
**Perhaps**

Perhaps  
In April  
If the wind  
Rattles at  
The sevenfold  
locked gate  
Perhaps  
The guardian  
Cautiously  
Opens

Perhaps  
You saw through  
The hole for the cleft  
The transparent  
Pomegranate tree  
Perhaps  
You recognized  
Perhaps  
In a red crystal

The idea of your  
Original design

You hear  
Perhaps  
Your April heart bump  
Before the guard  
Is closing  
The gate again

### **Alone**

How boring it is  
not to know  
what one could do as the next  
except for the very grand things  
for which I lack the force.  
How good it would be  
not to the lonesome,  
cared for by the beloved,  
but I left them  
and they became strangers to me.  
How holy is the life  
a dark abyss.  
The bridge over it is broken.  
Perhaps the clouds will open  
and moonlight falls on me.

### **Goodman Death**

What are you standing there  
looking at me  
Having this smile  
On your lips?  
Will you from now on  
Always be with me  
With your cold hands  
Holding me up?  
This last ascend  
So burdensome  
My body cannot  
Walk as before!  
So please be patient  
Allow me to look  
At the wayside grass  
Though my eyes can hardly see.

**May 2, 2010**  
**awakening**

hug the dead  
 Now – is still the time  
 Dissolve soon  
 the shadows  
 In the dark!

Beyond the Styx  
 The bloodless shadow  
 endless row  
 What does the heart know  
 When the rhythm ebbs?  
 Does the mother recognize it -  
 Ancestors bathed in moonlight?

Come back  
 And can the women  
 With those lucky  
 you shared  
 still comfort?

Dry tears  
 Do we have to cry?  
 Because we humans  
 are not gods  
 And have to die.

**Accounting**

Does it come to an end,  
 the restless desire  
 of earlier years?  
 The future is past  
 what was: present always.  
 Wish-less today, happy?  
 What do I want? Nothing Else!  
 Only to be and embrace  
 The beloved with me,  
 today and yet tomorrow too!

Is that all that was?  
 The traumatic fear

of my childhood remains,  
 the icy cover so thin,  
 but it was thick enough.  
 The mother has fought  
 the battles of mine,  
 the world of delusion  
 she swapped for faith.  
 When shall we see each other  
 again? Soon?

### **The Death and I**

Are you sad, my friend?  
 hasten please  
 the gate stays wide open.

I am not in dread of you,  
 I go alone  
 and my sadness stays behind?

Should I take with me  
 those who shall mourn for you?  
 No! Please let them live.

May I stay longer,  
 if I'm happy here?  
 Perhaps? A little.

### **August 18, 2013**

#### **The past - lost?**

ancient waters standing,  
 I wander  
 along the ditches  
 nothing grows here –  
 dead silence.

Behind me where  
 flowers bloomed,  
 bird calls,  
 life, past.

Before me, lightless  
 the horizon,  
 Hometown?

Your warmth,  
Does it reach  
me?

**November 7, 2017**  
**Where?**

Abandoned in the stream  
The boat sways  
Without a rudder  
Is he drifting there?  
Abandoned on the shore  
the loved ones  
which I  
inflicted wounds  
Still they wave  
me

**September 27, 2013**  
**There**

Why don't they come back  
Whose life have I shared?  
In what heavens lives  
my mother, her mother,  
The fathers who went before me  
how long will I be  
my loved ones in front of me?  
I couldn't stay longer.  
My life was happy -  
At times I can say:  
It's done?  
what will come

**June 12, 2014**  
**Hades**

when I dream  
Then I am  
Among the dead  
entwined with ivy  
The past  
everlasting  
love that  
Blooms during the day  
when I dream



I am alone  
 you are finished  
 Thereby when the day  
 Transforms  
 In the night

**May 25, 2015**  
**Alone**

Like a stone  
 Broods  
 loneliness  
 my inner  
 silence  
 stretches  
 Eternally  
 Blind I look  
 Back beyond  
 The armed  
 Wall which  
 From the life  
 disjoins  
 the death  
 None  
 hearing my  
 stutter  
 Never I shall  
 Arrive at home

**September 2, 2016**  
**Retour**

**Back?**  
 the red roses,  
 fading soon.  
 Who does console  
 the dead,  
 gone before  
 it all began?  
 Do you there  
 return?  
 Is the end  
 the beginning?  
 my soul  
 doesn't speak  
 anymore

to me and  
 the horizon  
 it's so far away  
 untouchable -  
 behind me  
 breaks the ice

**July 7, 2017**

**Blind**

The night gives birth to the past  
 Bleeding, stillborn, giving birth to the dead  
 The dawn, graying in the fog  
 It drips wet from autumn leaves  
 Brave in solitude, staggering towards the end  
 With no knowledge of the path, no expectation  
 The iron gate still closed  
 Sit and wait, rest

**March 5, 2020**

**Timeless**

the days pass  
 Equal to  
 Timeless  
 Twins  
 Outside  
 The world  
 sinks  
 In balance  
 Of peace  
 How long?  
 My heart trembles.

**March 5, 2020**

**Still here**

The dead cry out from beyond  
 But I don't hear the voices.  
 You are there, I know it, I feel it  
 A tremor, a murmur in the air around me.  
 But the mountains loom between there and here  
 White and silent up to the sky  
 There is only one pass route to them  
 I don't want to go, not now, sometime  
 Maybe if I have to. I will upstairs

Softly hear the screams, they will me  
Crying hugs, thankful I came?

### **3 November 2020**

Char everything  
past  
Still twitching  
flame  
shadowy  
your shape  
At night  
Barely lit  
death is near  
In this winter  
They say  
Vain  
what else we  
wanted to  
forgiveness  
we ask

### **March 07, 2006**

#### **Life and death - a journey into the unknown.**

What to do when everything is done  
When everyone's gone  
Where to go  
What to do when everything is done  
If everybody is gone  
where to go  
If everything was in vain  
Why am I here?  
If the wind scatters  
What has been protected  
If what I loved cannot last  
Two candles burn down,  
Faster if close to each other.  
AgiOS o theos, the tune trails away.

#### **That's it**

Where the future already  
became past  
Where something was wanted  
And now it is told

where it gets lonely  
around me, inside me  
Where a soldier stands  
around him the dead  
And waiting for the ball  
where peace comes  
So in dead silence  
leave me alone  
I flee from myself  
Along the narrow street  
Ending in the unknown  
let me go  
Don't go ahead  
just tell me  
That love stays

And when I finally  
put me to sleep  
All worries fall  
From me like the leaves  
From the trees in autumn

I will see you again  
Even if you come much later  
My soul will then rejoice  
As said in the ancient scriptures  
I will hug you all  
My life, my joy, my happiness

*my childhood belief*

## Verses of my mother

Ingeborg Laser, born Heilbron  
(January 22, 1919 – April 25, 2008)

**September 1942**

### Haymaking

Summer is in the country.  
The mountain peak wears a robe of vapor,  
blurring, blending into the pale sky.  
A light mist rises from the forest,  
heralding the last rain, rising steeply,  
betraying the brook, secret and cold  
its water leads to the meadows below.

how to feel it  
that soon the embers of the sun will touch the ground.  
She will slurp the dew off the wet grass  
before our scythes catch it.  
We will be allowed to mow vigorously today;  
the summer sun is our dearest guest.  
O what momentum fills the sharp scythes.

The bare feet cools  
the tear that still falls from every stalk,  
who sinks to wither close by  
until our fork catches him in a dance of death  
twirling him where his lighter weight  
descends on red clover and whole  
surrenders to the sun that oppresses him.

O how the sun scorches  
like every ray of sunshine catches a blade of grass.  
If we turn the grass again, it's hay.  
But cool moisture soon rises from the earth  
and the rake draws thick rows true to our hand.  
Now the field is ready for the night;  
may the sky protect us from the rain. –  
And today it's retracted.  
The weather signs are good, the clearest  
no tower of clouds appears in the clear firmament.  
We can safely load up our wagon;  
a windstorm throws the scent of withered flowers

still back and have all Heuer  
the blessing and happiness of work in their eyes.

**October 1979**

**Ronchamps**

small church

On the mountain ridge  
Further view of the country  
trees  
Of a special kind –  
White towers soft and silent  
Steep  
In the flat roof –  
Gently curved  
Do you show Indian:  
Lingam and Yoni  
Ancient Signs  
The power  
Here as a church  
Of the love  
249

**Behind India**

**(circa 1970)**

Soft, gently colored morning sky  
Trees with umbrella crowns  
big birds fly away  
when people wake up

Poona smiles in the morning  
swept the streets early  
Cows trot familiar paths  
Rickshaws turn out

bicycles, people, dogs,  
trucks, goats, sheep,  
wealthy cars  
Street all sorts with vegetables

Evening dresses are orange  
those who aspire to the Ashram  
Those who have arrived hardly leave him  
Europeans with caste order

Turn off the mind  
 the ego is a hindrance  
 be empty and let them do with you  
 what we want

ecstasy and hysteria  
 almost unaccustomed to Europeans  
 celebrate resurrection  
 the "new" man is coming

Strong in colors  
 and slow  
 the sky darkens  
 Bats and owl time

**February 1, 1980**  
**For Ulrich on his birthday**  
**The earth**

encircling the earth  
 Chasing through the sky  
 generating ideas, pursuing them

Man rushes  
 Because of the short span  
 Which is measured for him

accepts honors  
 Deserved and undeserved  
 Intoxicated by success

success and power  
 drug and danger  
 Joy too and liberation

deliverance from addiction  
 Means pausing, becoming still  
 Is resignation and calm  
 The world is newborn

The idea and the visibility  
 embracing the earth

**March 31, 1980**  
**The moon is full today**

The moon is full today  
 In the spring sky  
 I stretched out  
 In its rays.  
 You said: I am the moon!  
 The yes and the no  
 shone above us  
 And you decide.

**April 8, 1980**

The little bird is sitting  
 in his cage,  
 He knows and loves it.

Do you know where your cage is?  
 Yes, it's your heart!  
 And my heart is your cage  
 And when you want,  
 that I love someone else  
 you let me fly  
 You know I'm coming back

**May 20, 1980**

Back then after the war  
 On the country road  
 Poison hidden in the pocket  
 Hardships until you drop  
 my consciousness  
 Floated somewhere  
 Outside of me, above me...  
 I thought:  
 When I go up  
 With mom and the kids  
 And dear God  
 Said to me:  
 I had that there  
 prepared for you  
 And you have it  
 thrown away?



**Elbuferstrasse**

On the dike  
 sit in the grass  
 water, meadows,  
 sky clouds,  
 width –  
 oh this width!  
 solitude and closeness.

gentleness,  
 sometimes a bird –  
 Oh the ducks  
 they flew  
 two together  
 circled each other  
 merged  
 in a  
 Body.

**The scarf**

The scarf is for him  
 The scarf should warm you up nicely  
 The scarf is our umbilical cord  
 The scarf is going back  
 Acceptance refused –

Did you wrap the scarf around you?  
 I wrapped the scarf around me  
 The scarf smells  
 After you and me

**June 18, 1980****Three ponds**

small meadow  
 Next to the highway  
 Almost undriven  
 Lined up poplars  
 Play wind in leaves  
 Like closeness to God

Three water eyes  
 In the meadow face  
 Shaped by humans  
 And let yourself go

For a dark reason  
 Small flowers unfolding  
 On water surfaces

frog sounds  
 Answer to human mouth  
 dragonfly shine  
 Small islands of grass  
 sunday peace  
 Like closeness to God

**July 6, 1980**

everything I do  
 is employment  
 what I really do  
 is waiting  
 in faith  
 in devotion  
 in the blue dress

**July 8, 1980**

...  
 If the peach  
 is not ripe  
 he cannot be shared  
 becomes the core  
 not visible

**Late summer 1980**  
**sky meadow**

The mountain consists of rubble  
 of the almost forgotten war  
 with diligence and sweat  
 piled up –  
 a sign of atonement.

Be on the road early in the morning  
 rare experience  
 the feet are still heavy  
 the heart has only  
 sleep power.

Bushes fragrant in spring  
 fragrance sent to the beloved  
 nightingale songs

I told you  
back then.

On top of the Teufelsberg  
the meadows are blooming now  
Mulleins glow  
blue, white, reddish colors –  
eye lust.

Alone - in pairs  
on the heavenly meadow  
blessed vision  
the mind and the chest  
together - alone.

**August 3, 1980**

Give after the pain  
don't fight back  
drop everything  
what you thought  
be very open  
think nothing.

**Autumn 1980**  
**Sign**

Sun over the Elbe  
over the meadow green  
the cuddle trees  
tenderly cool the wind

The gaze wanders up  
sees three suns or  
beginning and end  
of the rainbow?

darkness in the sky  
the full moon  
radiates cross-shaped  
sign of Christ?

Two bright moonspots  
to repeat  
the sun sign -  
just humidity?

**October 18, 1980**

Little Buddha  
 true and whole  
 in every move  
 smile and cry  
 almost the same  
 expression in the face  
 of the little angel  
 so tender  
 on the farewell day  
 your little body

**August 24, 1982**

This brave woman  
 delicate  
 in woodcut  
 300 years ago  
 I was once  
 in her body  
 different than others  
 pursued as a witch  
 I went to the forest  
 where it is deepest  
 into a small hut  
 baked gingerbread  
 layered them  
 in my humpback basket  
 carried them to market  
 had to perish  
 300 years  
 denounced as a witch  
 as a child killer.

**October 13, 1982**

The not-I that is the soul.

**1982****Schwänenwerder**

Leafless poplar  
 on the Havel

hazy morning  
 soft blue sky  
 Icy shimmer on the water  
 frozen today  
 thawed in the evening  
 under the glowing  
 afterglow sky

in the house  
 happy laughter  
 maybe a clue  
 too loud today  
 who is completely open  
 is considerate  
 on the already  
 existing noise  
 gives priority  
 the thoughts  
 of the heart

Are you exploring –  
 I fathom myself  
 do you give yourself  
 so I give myself  
 if you are open  
 I take a deep breath  
 the stream  
 of your heart  
 want to accept  
 the liability

### **Without a date**

Another spring with you!  
 So wonderful again  
 your voice in my heart  
 Invite me to coffee and cake  
 You show me the blue lake in the sun  
 The first ducks  
 look at my garden  
 Small lush wilderness  
 With the spring  
 white and yellow  
 Green tips and blue  
 And the happy birds  
 Even a robin

You need a big turf  
 That's why it's so rare  
 They pulled the nails  
 From the cross of Jesus  
 Hence the red chest patch  
 role model for me  
 Covertly raises the forehead of love  
 Two lips to comfort  
 Which is sore and scabbed.

**Autumn 1983**  
**Nandita**

Soul of a dog  
 Always ready for tenderness  
 None anymore  
 so can express  
 Like you, little dog!

You look at us  
 Ready to play  
 your eyes say  
 What are you people doing?  
 with your time.

I am in timelessness  
 Between morning and evening  
 my world is small  
 Any allowance  
 I assume.

Radiant, happy, grateful  
 Recorded  
 In my little head  
 I never forget  
 What good is done to me.

In every movement  
 am I devotion  
 am I soul  
 just my bone  
 I hold on!

**October 31, 1984**  
**golden eye**

Seeing the invisible  
 Looks gold eye shine

Feeling into the inauthentic  
 Feels rose mouth kiss

speaking into the inaudible  
 Hear human heart response

Taste the untasteable  
 Is sweeter than anything known

pure being  
 Find the Eternity Flower  
 In the eternal forest

**July 25, 1984**  
**A rose for Monica**

Only who loves  
 can  
 the message of the rose  
 decipher,  
 White,  
 she blooms again  
 when the first splendor  
 has passed.  
 She is created  
 with her secret  
 before it becomes visible.  
 your blueprint is  
 preserved forever  
 in love.

**December 24, 1984**  
**Eternal life?**

The crib is empty  
 The cross decays  
 The Christmas tree  
 We still have it in the room

The pastures are empty

The forest cut down  
 Nobody asks  
 After eternal life  
 The hearts are empty  
 No talk of God  
 Pleasure is our principle –  
 I have no desire

Here and there a hope  
 A force here and there  
 Here and there a longing  
 Come Lord Jesus

### **Christmas 1989**

When we leave everything behind  
 when we leave  
 into the kingdom - prepared for us  
 as the world in the beginning  
 when the curtain is raised  
 is not torn  
 and we see  
 in the dark,  
 because our eyes are light  
 clean our hearts  
 surrendered our will  
 hears our ear,  
 that we don't die.

### **Without a date spring garden**

Small garden  
 consolation of my soul  
 and hope  
 full every year  
 new joy  
 sheet by sheet  
 from germ  
 and onion  
 white and yellow  
 the first colors  
 after the winter  
 snow and cold  
 soon the glow  
 bright summer



eye candy  
gentle and tender  
devoted  
to the light day

soul garden  
most beautiful, quieter  
motionless you  
with heart roses  
do you decorate yourself  
for your loved one  
every day  
and every hour  
are you already singing  
in the early morning  
your loved one  
love songs  
with the birds  
without age  
without time

**Without a date**  
**Christmas celebration**

Far too many words  
From too many mouths  
Who else knows  
The divine word

Where is ours  
soul fled  
Before the many things  
that we don't need

human soul  
United with the divine word  
Be aware  
Of the New World

**April 1992**  
**Haikus**

Merry like a child,  
From the breathing of my heart  
Winds go through the world.

In a lake, the moon  
 Its image tenderly blurred,  
 Purity of the heart.

After the hike  
 From the depths of the world time  
 return to me

**July 24, 1993**

**seasons**

.....

Transformation,  
 Heaven and Earth  
 you unite  
 autumnal leaves,  
 gently floating and falling  
 will you be food  
 passing  
 under the tree soul.  
 white sleep,  
 white sheet future,  
 still undescribed,  
 white rose without a thorn,  
 Transition - where to?

**November 1995**

**Too short**

**Rose Ausländer**

snow in hair  
 I come to you  
 at feet

You  
 sad like me  
 because the day is too short  
 the year too short  
 life too short  
 for the perfect  
 to say yes

My mother answers  
 dedicated to Rose Ausländer

wind in your hair  
 I go with you  
 in your shoes

you happy like me  
 no time lost  
 every hour of happiness and sorrow  
 every day a whole yes  
 every year without time  
 every life eternity

**Aug. 7, 1997**  
**Farm in Arnsdorf**

A fenced place  
 old reddish walls  
 blocked entrance  
 Entrance for man, beast and wagon  
 - a gamble -  
 - the thing to dare -  
 in the cold world  
 coals piled up  
 nor for pig feed  
 - over -  
 extinct the former use  
 the spacious stables  
 spent wealth  
 the contents crumble into dirt  
 the people emigrated  
 left only  
 unused leftovers  
 like on the run  
 dirt, wilderness

A cracked cherry tree  
 gives away fruit  
 you can here again  
 awaken life  
 make the time fruitful  
 a weaker human being  
 more to death than to life  
 belonged?

Anyone who dares must  
 have staying power and strength  
 from the energy of the heart

which renews itself

**July 20, 1997**  
**An apple tree**

At the edge of the road  
 suddenly in spring  
 a miserable one  
 crooked little tree  
 with beautiful apple blossoms

Each year  
 was it like that  
 at the entrance of the forest

But this year  
 what happened  
 a heavy truck  
 had destroyed it  
 down to the root  
 destroyed

Down in the soil  
 nor the power  
 the root  
 will she arise?

years later  
 hidden by nettles  
 I look at an apple tree  
 Yes, here is the spot  
 I see saplings  
 branches, a strong trunk  
 a small  
 shapely  
 apple tree crown  
 and -  
 close together  
 two or three tiny apples

Which surprise  
 in this fertile summer

**February 26, 1999**

**Past**

**(of unknown origin, preserved by my mother)**

I wore the stones many times  
from the hills of Samarkand,  
made from the stones  
a spear  
or a necklace  
for my favorite slave.

I wove people many times  
into a tent  
or in a pillow.