Journey Around My Flat

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Journey Around My Flat

An Essay of Informal Inventory

Anthony Rudolf

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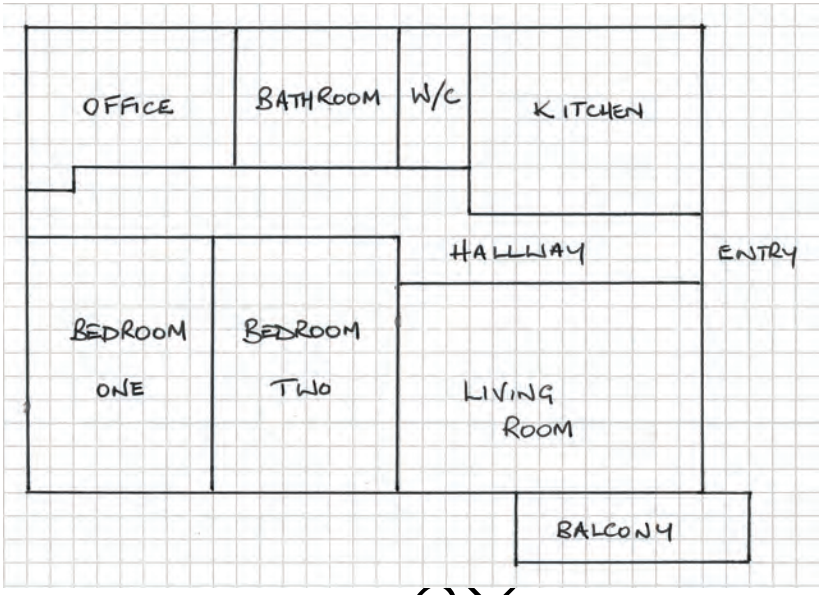
For Paula, who loves (a drink on) the balcony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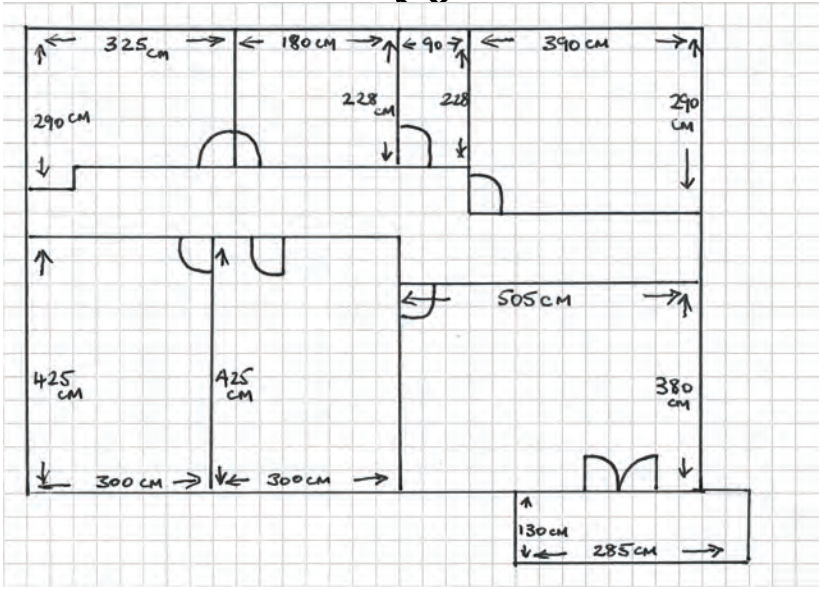
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Author's Note

The book is largely as written between 2004 and 2009. The main revision took place during lockdown in 2020. With the benefit of hindsight (2020 vision, ha ha), bestowed by the lengthy gap between date of publication and original composition of the manuscript, I have made various changes and updates. Where they are not explicit, I hope they are seamless and for the best.

Not everything in the flat has remained unchanged visually over the years but I have left most of the descriptions of objects and possessions as they were at the time of the 2004–2009 manuscript. I did not make any changes or even look at the text again until 2015/2016, that is to say after the writing and (in 2013) publication of my memoir *Silent Conversations*, a lengthy account of my books. *Silent Conversations* was originally intended to be a chapter in the present work, but the tail (tale) wagged the dog.

To reduce clutter in the main body of the text, I have end-noted published texts of mine that go into greater detail on the subject in question. (Why can't I reduce clutter in the flat itself? Answering that question might involve men in white coats.) Any readers that this book finds will have no problem deploying Google for details of significant third-party books quoted from or mentioned. Many pictures, etc. that I refer to can be Googled.

As for objects, do they begin or end in the imagination? A question for Wallace Stevens, who supplies my three epigraphs; a question for all of us.

– Anthony Rudolf, Woodside Park, 2020

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A great disorder is an order
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After the leaves have fallen, we return
To a plain sense of things. It is as if
We had come to an end of the imagination.
Wallace Stevens, *'The Plain Sense of Things'*

SAMPLER

SECTION ONE

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Introduction

I want to explore – in this journey around my flat – aspects of my life as an adult, what I like to think of as my *arrière-pays*, to deploy the neologistic English-language title of Yves Bonnefoy's book, translated by Stephen Romer. Kafka's phrase, 'world history of my soul', comes to mind or, less grandly, certain continuities of feeling and thought that can be discerned in the impasto pentimentos of memory conjured up before my person is discontinued, whether from natural causes, terminal illness, human failings, terrorism or nuclear war. Another possibility is that my paper-laden flat will be destroyed in a fire, and, along with it, those documents and possessions which chart the life of a person whose course, apart from his day jobs, has been mainly on the page, even if much of the time – with all the translating and editing – the page is the page of others. I am not a philosopher or a theologian, a neurologist or a biochemist, or even Ian Dury's ticket man at Fulham Broadway Station. I am a writer, a human being who writes things down, and the time has come to pay attention to the endotic or infra-ordinary landscape of my *arrière-pays*. My early old-timer friends – Jonathan and Kathleen Griffin, George Buchanan, Geoffrey and Joyce Bridson – are long dead, and people who were in their forties when I first knew them in my mid-twenties – including Michael Hamburger and Hyam Maccoby – have joined the original old-timers. Now I am about to join the ranks of the old-timers or am already among them. [*Later: some of my contemporaries, younger and older than me, have died (I have written memorial notices elsewhere), and some have serious cancers; a few have dementia.*]

In an earlier memoir,[1] the rule of the game was to generate memories without reference to documentation or objects or the diaries I would keep for two or three weeks before abandoning them. This time I intend to use

my possessions – apart from my books which are discussed in a second earlier memoir[2] – to generate memory and story. I don't often leave this flat, and now that I have a cross trainer exercise machine, I have fewer reasons to go out: thus, no more runs in the park, with cheery hellos to and from the woman with the two collies, no more pebbles picked up and aimed at passing bins and trees, no more fantasies about that couple's sex life, this dog-walking pipe smoker's day job; no more trips to Finchley Lido swimming pool where my races against myself would involve complicated combinations of strokes and lengths to stave off boredom – and no more Lido bonuses: athlete's foot and irritated bladder. Here in this flat, during the self-employed years following the end of my day jobs, I spend/save my life, except for time spent with my lady friend: sitting for her in the studio, taking her to the Barbican Cinema and the adjacent Côte Brasserie, drinking together in the Freemasons Arms, attending private views… and visiting my granddaughter Leah in East Finchley… and Skype time with grandsons Charlie and Jamie in New Zealand: as I said, here in this flat…

What does the future hold? Mental or physical infirmity? I know, we all know, or – along a broader spectrum – know *of*, people who have endured Alzheimer's, with its concomitant physical and mental distress, as I witnessed when visiting my comrade, Daniel Weissbort, who has since died. Later, Lucy Bonnefoy near Paris, in the same condition, has finally left the conversation, in the phrase of her husband Yves about another friend. My San Francisco friend, George Oppen, before being struck down by this terrible affliction, used to say quite beautifully of old age: 'What a strange thing to happen to a little boy.' He chose his epithet to qualify the word 'thing' with the unerring accuracy characteristic of a great poet, which is what he was. Oppen used this phrase (a variant of earlier versions) in a telephone conversation with Paul Auster. So struck was Auster by its power that he in turn phoned me from America, and we marvelled at it together, before agreeing that I should publish it on a MenCard, a Menard Press postcard [*fig. 1*],[3] which I did: twice. On one occasion, according to Donald Davie, Hugh Kenner tried to console George by saying that his poems were out there in the world. 'I would swap places with them any day,' said the afflicted poet. Around the same time I tried to get a translation for the MenCard series from Thom Gunn but failed [*fig. 2*].

The old man and the little boy are not the same person and yet 'at the same time' they are the same person. 'Old man, or lad's love', wrote Edward Thomas: two names for the same flower. I heard Maxim Vengerov on Radio Three explaining that his violin, the Kreisler Stradivarius, was once played in Beethoven's presence. For Vengerov and for this listener too, the association brought out what he called 'goose bumps'. Yes, I know, *the way* Vengerov plays the Kreutzer Sonata would have meant more to Beethoven than the fact it is played on that particular violin, but all the same, these accidental continuities matter, and why they matter shall emerge on this journey, with any luck.

Other Abodes

I have lived in this Woodside Park flat in London N12 since my marriage ended in 1981. Before moving to a top-floor flat at 1 Primrose Gardens off Englands Lane in Belsize Park, I lived for a year in a small flat in Granville Park, a road which leads from Lewisham to Blackheath, and before that in a room at 2 Powis Square, Notting Hill. I lived in Primrose Gardens from 1968 till 1974. In October 1974, my wife Brenda and I, with our infant son Nathaniel, moved to a house in what used to be known as Upper Holloway. It had an Anderson Shelter in the garden. Nathaniel had been born during the famous or infamous 'three-day week' of February 1974, brought about by the confrontation between the government of Edward Heath and the miners. (I wrote a one-line poem for the birth announcement, calligraphed by Janet Berg of Oxford and Jerusalem [*fig. 3*].

In stark contrast, our daughter Naomi was born in August 1976, a summer even hotter than the run of hot summers London has experienced in recent years. A few days before she was born, we visited London Zoo in the company of our friends Hans and Mira Sonderling from Los Angeles. A high point was the Penguin House, designed by the celebrated architect Berthold Lubetkin; I drove the party past another high point, Highpoint, a block of flats in Highgate, not far from Upper Holloway, a rare building by this fascinating radical who gave up architecture to become a farmer. Only once, around 1988, have I been inside Highpoint:

on the insistent recommendation of my then girl friend, the painter Audrey Jones, I went there for an Alexander Technique lesson with Peggy Williams, the last surviving practitioner trained by the founder of the eponymous movement. Peggy passed me on to a colleague of hers in Hampstead. I like the way Alexander practitioners describe the relationship as teacher/student rather than therapist/ patient and note that friends of mine, distinguished musicians Naomi Gerecht and Carola Grindea, have used versions of it in combination with their own techniques for improving the breathing and posture of students.

I took over the Primrose Gardens flat from a university friend Nicholas Strauss (now a senior QC and part-time judge), with whom, towards the end of our three years, I used to play early-morning tennis on the Cambridge Backs every day before he went off to study efficiently for finals, unlike me. Primrose Gardens and Upper Holloway both hosted my early work as a writer, poetry translator and editor, while I subsidised these activities with a succession of day jobs which did not engage me.

I have always resisted describing myself as a poet although I may have written – against the grain of my mental inclinations as an abstractionist and conceptualiser – a few poems worthy of the name. Some were even written in direct reaction to recent events in my life, such as the birth of Nathaniel. One was triggered by the times I fed him bottled milk when Brenda went to her evening class in typography and design at the London School of Printing. Now that I have reinvented myself as a short-story writer and autobiographer, I hope that a large assortment of short texts will find publishers: verse and prose poems, literary and other essays, miscellaneous verse translations, interviews and obituaries; oh yes, and a Menard Press anthology. But before those books can even be considered, unpublished and published texts will have to be found or turn up in my chaos of a flat. The present journey to the heart of that chaos might enable me to garner them as a bonus or by-product of my primary concern in this manuscript, which is, as I have said, to generate memory and story from documentation and objects. But what if chaos – inner and outer – is a psychic given for some people, including yours truly? What if without it I would have done nothing at all? This question came up many years later in psychotherapy, four years ostensibly centred on sorting out my complex and complicated mid-life *folie à deux* relationship, the relationship being the theme the experienced therapist the late Deryck

Dyne used as a hook to hang other themes on. If I could decipher my notes written immediately after those sessions, I would learn a lot…

I know, and deeply regret, that I left behind at Primrose Gardens the pair of binoculars my uncle and aunt Isidore and Ethel Rudolf gave me on the occasion of my barmitzvah; it was suitably inscribed. One evening, I was looking through the bedroom window and trained my binoculars on the back of a house in Belsize Park Gardens – as you do – and to the left, quite by chance, saw a young woman in a second-floor bedroom in her underwear, brushing her hair. It was an intimate and intriguing experience. I have a poem[4] about a parallel experience at the Hayward Gallery during a Frank Auerbach exhibition, when I caught sight of a clothed woman reflected in the glass of a painting.

The True Inflections

1

I stand before an Auerbach picture.
She stands before an Auerbach picture.
She moves on to the space
in a partition where the door should be.
Behind her, through the window, realistic
buses cross the bridge.

2

She walks towards a picture;
she views it from some angles:
Participant observer, unaware,
in a voyeur's network of perception,
she is Auerbach's mirror,
reflected in his mind's eye.

Hayward Gallery, London June 1978

I suspect that the intellectual erotics involved in these experiences tie in with my enduring fascination for paintings in which someone is seen reading. Indeed, some thirty years after the episode at the bedroom

window, I proposed to Colin Wiggins of the National Gallery that I curate an exhibition of the Gallery's pictures on this theme, of which there are more than fifty; he politely turned down the idea on the grounds that it would be better realised in a book. While mentally plotting an essay on the pictures, I rationalised to myself that they absorb the viewer into their texture in a peculiar way, that they are centripetal inward-bound pictures par excellence. I experience a sense of intrusion when looking at them, which is the paradox of portrayed private reading. (I have written about readers in paintings in other books.)[5] In his forthcoming Covid diary, *One Hundred Days*, Gabriel Josipovici casts severe doubt on the usefulness or even existence of the mind's eye. My poem is unrepentant.

One of the greatest paintings in the world is Poussin's *The Ashes of Phocion Gathered by his Widow*, at the Walker Gallery in Liverpool. As its title makes plain, the widow is not reading, but is deeply engaged and indeed risking her life in an act of great courage, what Gillian Rose in her best book *Mourning Becomes the Law* – which uses this picture on its cover – calls 'a delegitimate act of tending the dead'. Like pictures of people reading, Poussin's is a study of inwardness, of love destroyed but surviving in an impersonal and hostile world which has moved on: wherever a woman's place was, it was not *there*. The woman acting as the widow's lookout is in the picture to remind the painter and to tell the painting's readers that to look at the widow is at best a privilege we must live up to, at worst an invasion that shames us. And so, as with many of Poussin's pictures – *Landscape with Man Killed by a Snake*, in the National Gallery, is another example – we look away from the main focus. We have, in the modern cliché, intruded on private grief.

Primrose Gardens was a busy place. Paul Auster and three other New York poets, Judith Thurman, Michael O'Brien and Bill Zavatsky, turned up on the doorstep in 1968, via heaven knows which mediating friend(s). Mike remained a marvellous poet of the *lyric absolute*,[6] who belatedly received due attention, and sadly died in 2016. Judith became a biographer, Paul a novelist, Bill an educationist. Around 1970, Zavatsky produced a magazine called *Roy Rogers*, the One-Line Poems edition for which I gathered poems on this side of the pond, and which I also set as a *New Statesman* competition. Later, Paul Auster came to stay with us in Upper Holloway with a French girlfriend, after his marriage to Lydia Davis broke up. He read *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and one of Bernard

Stone's Mouse books to my children. Ten or twelve years later, my daughter, at secondary school, said: 'Hey, dad, didn't we know Paul Auster?' 'Yes,' I said, 'why?' 'All my friends are reading him,' she informed me. This was a perfect moment to influence Naomi, since children of literary parents often react against over-insistent recommendations. I told her that Paul was an old friend and that I was his first UK publisher. I then wrote to him in Brooklyn saying please send a card to insert in an Auster book I will give her. He sent a Danish translation of one of his books, remembering in the inscription 'a little girl with tomato soup all over her face'. Some years later he sent me yet another sighting of Pierre Menard, that multi-faceted personality who gave his name to my Menard Press. The various Pierre Menards ended up on a MenCard [*fig. 4*].

During the years I lived in Belsize Park and Upper Holloway, and until 1996, I had a parallel life of salaried or contract day jobs alongside a frenetically busy life of the mind, which was too widely cast to concentrate on the essential – supposedly the writing of poetry and then fiction – and involved too many editorial and other time-consuming matters to permit growth as a husband, which is a reason but not an excuse for what I now construe as selfishness. However, being a father was hugely important to me. I was present at the births of my two children – for years and years my daughter loved hearing how I knew she was a girl before her mother did – in University College Hospital where some years later I had two minor operations. (During the unforgettable night of Nao's birth I was reading Octavio Paz's *Alternating Current*.) Looking after children was something fathers ought to do, I knew that. What came as a surprise was that, some of the time at least, it was *interesting*. What's more, of all the forms of love we are privileged to experience, this one requires the greatest sensitivity to the responsibility of power, apart from decisions involving aged parents who cannot make their own any more.

In 1974, I participated in a research project of the now famous linguistician, David Crystal, then based at the University of Reading. We were required to record the early sounds of children. I lay on the floor, spool tape on, encouraging Nathaniel to talk. Recently, he and Naomi recalled that he was inspired to become a barrister after watching *LA Law* on television from around 1986. At Warwick University he was accepted for work experience at the Bar in Mike Mansfield's chambers. His excitement was palpable when he reported to me that Mansfield had got

a man off the death penalty in the Court of Appeal for Jamaica heard in London and, from that moment, his professional ambition crystallised. Maybe he's good at talking because he participated in Crystal's researches. My father too wanted to be a barrister but, back then – from a poor background – it was impossible for financial reasons: you had to pay a premium. Sadly he did not live to see his grandson in action. [*17 Dec 2020: Nathaniel has been appointed QC.*]

'Life of the mind' is a grand phrase. As I said, it was a 'frenetically busy' mind, in an equally busy body, which rushed around afraid of the silence that was a pre-requisite for plucking the centripetals of the flowers of creative thinking. I was a literary and cultural boy scout, an attendant lord, editing and guest-editing magazines, co-founding and running a small press, discovering for myself and then translating French and Russian and other poets, involving myself in the activities of the Poetry Society, and in general trying to make sense of the arts, which along with politics and to a lesser extent religion, was what most preoccupied me. Outside the inner circle of family and friends of my own age, I looked for and found people to hero worship or try to impress or both – I salute parental figures or older sibling substitutes who put up with my neediness, such as Octavio Paz, George Oppen, Jonathan Griffin, Eugene Heimler, Donald Davie, Christopher Middleton, Kathleen Raine, Elaine Feinstein, Moris Farhi, Alberto de Lacerda, Yves Bonnefoy, Andrew Glaze, Claude Vigée, Peter Hoy, Edmond and Arlette Jabès, Miron Grindea, Felek Scharf, Albert and Evelyn Friedlander, Michael and Jacqueline Goulston, Lionel Blue and surely others who are sadly beyond awareness that I have omitted their names.

An aspect of associating with older people is that obituaries eventually enter into the loop. When Edmond Jabès died in 1990, my old friend David Gascoyne was asked by the *Independent* to write his obituary. He advised them that he was not up to the task and that I was the person to do it. I was fortunate in one sense: the kind of personalised essay I knew I wanted to write was what Jamie Fergusson at the paper's obituary desk (known as the gazette) wanted to publish. The one on Jabès was the first of about twenty obituaries, parting gifts to friends, which I wrote for Fergusson, a stellar editor who revolutionised broadsheet obituaries. Following the closure of the *Independent* in March 2016, he followed his star and is now one of the last writers of traditional, learned and

entertaining book-dealer catalogues, a highly personal genre ripe for analysis in the style of Georges Perec.

Yes, being a boy scout was a way of avoiding the essential: as the Portuguese saying has it, the arse runs away from the syringe. But Michael Schmidt of Carcanet Press liked my work enough to publish books of poems in 1976, 2010 and 2017[7] and, say I defensively, I recently noticed on an old CV that Christopher Ricks had deemed a manuscript of mine good enough to put on the short list for the Leeds New Poetry award in 1970. I shall maintain a dignified silence about a much earlier pamphlet – which I buy from secondhand bookshops and websites and throw away – but the 1976 volume has its moments. This book received one very good review, by George Mackay Brown, which in black moods I would look at over the years, in order to rediscover that I did exist as a writer, perhaps even as a poet. Three years later, Howard Schwartz, in the USA, invited me to publish a volume at his press[8] and I made a new selection, mainly from the Carcanet book. I cut many of them down to the bone against the advice of a colleague of Michael Schmidt's, the poet Val Warner, a good friend and serious reader, who insisted that in all cases the longer versions were better than the shorter ones. But poetry was beginning to nourish me less than it had before. Correction: I was beginning to nourish poetry less than I had before. I was losing courage, I was lazy. And I took refuge more and more in translation, which had always been a temptation. [*While working on a final edit of this book in October 2020, I learned that Val, a troubled and lonely woman with a great heart, had died.*]

Back in 1968, the young Michael Schmidt had invited me to read my Bonnefoy translations at the Oxford Poetry Society he chaired as an undergraduate. In addition to my own poetry, he has also published my some of my books of translations. I can only envy the prodigious Michael whose level of activity, in the same areas as my own, reminds me that one could do so much more or so much better if one was more organised. The chaos in this flat and the equivalent in my mind which is always digressing have cost me at least an hour a day for thirty years. Tot that up over a lifetime, and you have several books and/or improved relationships. As a poetry translator I have worked directly from the French of many twentieth-century poets, four in particular: Bonnefoy (and all the poets in this paragraph),[9] Vigée, Jabès and Deguy – plus a few Russians, two in

particular, Vinokurov and Tvardovsky. I have also translated from several languages in collaboration with the poet, such as Ifigenija Simonovic from the Slovenian and Miriam Neiger-Fleischmann from the Hebrew. Such collaborations, once done by fax, are natural beneficiaries of email.

My entire life, in the interstices of day jobs and family, has been a mental roller coaster swaying between the drive to write poetry and, later, fiction and autobiography, and the conflicting or complementary drive to be an editor and publisher, at the service of others. But the fulcrum of this seesaw, the synthesis of this process has, I now see, been literary criticism and criticism's most intense mutation, poetry translation. The latter sometimes brings both drives together in a fascinating, compelling and dangerously obsessive sidetrack, for me at least, a sidetrack where introvert and extrovert are at one, and therefore combine in an irresistible or, more modestly, immoveable force.[10] As a critic, I have tended to focus on writers and other creators I associate with World War II, such as Primo Levi, Piotr Rawicz, Bruno Schulz, Jakov Lind, Arnost Lustig, Jorge Semprun, Paul Celan, Claude Lanzmann, even R.B.Kitaj.

One of the best things about living in Upper Holloway was our proximity to Waterlow Park. I see them now: Naomi in her pram clutching some Fisher-Price toy, Nathaniel trotting along beside us. Unable to pronounce her brother's name, she would call him 'boy', and later 'Faniel'. We got to know Charlie the myna bird, who could speak his own name and, prompted by his audience of several parents with young children, say, 'Show us your knickers.' We would play hide and seek and cricket. Then we would walk up to Lauderdale House at the top of the park, where one is encouraged to reflect on the subject of time before the sundial in the garden, or the plaque on the wall to Andrew Marvell, who lived in a cottage on the estate. We also went to Kenwood, one of my favourite places in London [*fig. 5*], rephrase that: in the world. The children would run to the orangery to look at their favourite painting, Stubbs's *Whistlejacket*, now in the National Gallery after a sojourn at Gainsborough's House in Suffolk. Once a week my late mother and her friend Leonie Westbury would come round to take the children out for tea. Leonie – later lost to us through Alzheimer's – lived until 2015 in the same sheltered accommodation where my mother lived (and died in 2011), very close to this special treasure of suburban London.

At the 1981 Cambridge Poetry Festival (founded in 1975 by Richard

Berengarten), there was a glorious moment in a pub when Vasko Popa produced a short untitled poem in memory of his main translator the late Anne Pennington, which he had written very recently, perhaps even there and then. Weissbort, Peter Jay and I co-translated it on the spot.[11] In 1965 or 1966, I met Pablo Neruda at the house of Miron Grindea and was ticked off by Rosemary Tonks for daring to ask him if he intended to translate a second Shakespeare play. He himself had no objection to my question for, a couple of years later, in a green-ink letter he happily agreed ('Yes, dear Anthony, yes, yes') to translations by Jonathan Griffin being included in the magazine that was the forerunner of Menard Press,[12] *The Journals of Pierre Menard*. In the early 1980s, Rosemary Tonks appeared to have vanished: there were rumours that she was chilling out in India; John Horder claimed she was a nun in Eastbourne. Editors of anthologies were looking for her, to authorise reprints of poems. Finally Neil Astley tracked her down and persuaded her family to allow Bloodaxe to publish her collected poems. She was one of many people I met through Miron Grindea, who was the nuttiest and most infuriating of the mentors whose memory I cherish; I retain great affection and respect for him, wrote his obituary, and defend him when something hostile comes up in the press, such as the correspondence columns of the *Times Literary Supplement*.

In translation, the primary creative impetus is given: Elaine Feinstein's Tsvetayeva, Ifigenija Simonović's Carol-Anne Duffy, Bonnefoy's Yeats, Weissbort's Zabolotsky, Hamburger's Hölderlin, Tarn's Neruda, Bosley's and Weinfield's and Coffey's Mallarmé, Griffin's Pessoa: how many such combos there are in the creative lives of friends residing in this particular room in the mansion of literature! A PhD student once asked me if I knew any cases where a translation was an improvement on the original. My reply was no, because improvement would only happen if you were translating a bad poem and why would you want to translate a bad poem? A good poem must be turned into, *listened* into a parallel good poem, as Pierre Leyris put it: that is the bottom line. A good poem has an aura, and that aura encompasses its translations and critiques.

In literary criticism and biography, a different kind of primary impetus is given, and I name only a few favourites by friends residing in another room of the mansion: Bonnefoy's Rimbaud, Prince's Milton, Vigée's Bible studies, Josipovici's Kafka, Hindus's Reznikoff, Kathi Diamant's Dora Diamant. John Felstiner's book on Celan, *Poet Survivor Jew*, is a rare

perhaps unique example of a virtual merging of translation and criticism that has wrongly been criticised for self-centredness. I wrote a long letter to the editor of a magazine in protest against a harsh review of the book by David Constantine, a fine poet and translator. To his great credit, Constantine, editor for some years (with his wife Helen) of *Modern Poetry in Translation*, did not hold this against me.

Translators inhabit the paradoxical role, at once hubristic and humble, of *becoming* the poet in the time and space of the poem. How many poets have produced *only* translations? If Arthur Waley and Pierre Leyris (see the latter's Hopkins, Shakespeare and Eliot for examples of a great French poet at work) produced 'original' work of their own, I am not aware of it. Some of my poetry translation was plausible and effective work evasion, plausible and effective as evasion because it was patently worthwhile – always the most fatal technique of evasion. This was not work evasion through the booze, not work evasion through travel, not work evasion through sexual misdemeanours: this was work evasion through work, this was a good cause, *this was translation of poetry*. And yet Paula Rego, the most focused artist I have been privileged to know, always says that in the end you do what you *want* to do, and so maybe it was what I wanted to do, and that, as I suggested earlier, the alternative was not to write more and better stuff of my own, but to do nothing – if being a full time editor and publisher would have been doing nothing – and know my place in the scheme of things.

In 1970, I was appointed literary editor of the cultural magazine *European Judaism* and in 1972, managing editor. The three-year editorship of *European Judaism* ended in tears, after the mother of all rows. In charge for one more issue, I signed off with an editorial containing a phrase I was proud of: 'the ten lost diatribes of Israel', later quoted in the press. Twenty five years later, thanks to Rabbi Aviva Kipen, now back in her native Australia, I made peace with Albert Friedlander and *EJ* and more than forty years later wrote a memoir for the magazine's fiftieth-birthday issue, remembering its original publisher, the rich, gay, brilliant, hypochondriacal and deeply insecure Dutch bookshop-owner and classical scholar who had been at school with Anne Frank: Johan Polak.

In 1975, I found myself more involved with the *Jewish Quarterly* and its first editor the late Jacob Sonntag, a singular and single-minded personality who had much in common with his rival and my closer friend

Miron Grindea, equally single-minded and even more singular. Louis Littman, the wealthy backer of the *Quarterly*, took me to lunch at the Reform Club, and over the cheese told me that the club's dairy produce came from his farm. He asked if I would like to work with Sonntag and hinted I could be Jacob's successor, but the job on offer turned out to be reviews assistant, not what I had in mind after already editing a magazine. In any case, Sonntag, like Grindea, could not work with someone else, least of all a much younger person who would be a perpetual reminder of mortality. Sonntag's magazine, however, has survived his demise, unlike Grindea's his. [*Later: the fate of the* Jewish Quarterly *is not certain at the time of this revision.*] Although the *JQ* reflected Sonntag's personality it was not completely identified with it, as was Grindea's with *Adam*, so it could survive his passing. Jacob edited the *Jewish Quarterly* for more than thirty years. In the years since his death in 1984, there have been six editors.