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It was great fun when the FBI came to the door. I'm not sure how, but we could always tell them from Mormon missionaries. The men, usually two, were serious enough to let us know that they were engaged in important work, and friendly enough to let us know we were helping them a lot.

They came asking questions about our neighbors, about the parents of our friends, about friends of our parents, about people in the church. Was their house a nice place to visit? What kind of books and magazines did they have around? What TV shows did they watch? Had we ever seen them drunk or mad? What kind of visitors did they have? Did they ever talk about work? Had we heard them say anything about the government, or The President, or Russia or communism?
That was Idaho Falls, Idaho, headquarters for the National Reactor Testing Station. The Site, which was about fifty miles west of town on the Arco Desert, I was proud that Dad worked there. With 33 "piles," The Site was "the largest cluster of atomic reactors in The Free World."

In our schoolbooks, fathers sometimes told kids where they worked at the office, the factory, the store, the station—and showed them around. Our dads couldn't do that. Once in a while I would ask Dad about his work and he would remark that it was secret and he couldn't talk about it.

I learned from my dad that he was an electrician and worked at MTR-ETR (Materials Testing Reactor-Energy Testing Reactor), a part of the project in the same building. Other dads worked at places like EBR-1 (Experimental Breeder Reactor) or S-2, which I think stood for Steam Lymph. There were occasional tours of The Site for families of employees, but we were never taken on one. My own experience of the Site was that of a glass-filled metal in the daytime and a glimmer of light by night. I could only see The Site, keep clear of the way to Craters of the Moon.

Now right over here, Dad would point out, "That was a big hunk of uranium ore, once we were passing. He assured us that gunpowder could be made out of it, but the windows were always watching the highway through them. If guards saw anyone taking too close a look at the ore, 5 come out of the car, get the person and get the film back."

It was not, however, when I learned for then that The Site itself would have guards like the one at the Idaho Territorial Centennial Building in town. I remember the building, administrative headquarters for The Site, where a month ago I had seen those long, a block wide, and five or six stories high, lighted windows that glowed dull yellow and featural Enough of the roads by the time. There were no trees or bushes nearby where someone might hide. In the middle of one long side was a metal double door, with a guard standing at each of them.

Those guards scared me, though I knew the police didn't have the guns: there were guns all over, and shootouts rarely even made the front page of the paper. Mom tried to comfort me: the guards were only interested in someone sneaking around or trying to break into the AEC. Building. If they saw someone, they would shout stop, then shoot over the person's head. Only then, if the person still didn't stop, would they shoot to kill. It seemed too easy to find myself there by accident some night I knew, deep down, that if I heard them shooting over my head, there was no way in the world I could stop running.

The A.E.C. Building was a block from the high school and two blocks from the church, but I generally avoided walking past it, especially at night. When I was a burgeoning teenage hoodie, and by got not afraid of it. I strolled past on the sidewalk one day and glanced up to see "Atomic Energy Commission" painted modestly above the door. I was never that close again.

Site security had a special problem when the Idaho Territorial Centennial rolled around. Some local groups decried that all men had to grow beards, just like in the old days. Any man caught with- out a beard and called a "commie" could be "arrested" by the "posse," "taken to court," and "fined a $5 contribution toward the fireworks or parade or something. It was to be a fun and boring around and way of extracting a bit more money from the tourists on the way to or from Yellowstone. Dad started growing his beard along with all the other men.

Within a week, Site security announced that all Site workers either had to shave or get new pictures for their identification cards. One friend of Dad's got a new ID card and grew a big, black, full-faced beard, and then it kept when the Centennial was over. Everyone else shaved. It wasn't fun anymore. I worried about Dad getting beat up for not having a beard, but the whole game died out. A few old timers grew long magnificient beards, and were admired and complimented on the street. It turned out to be one more source of bitterness between The Site and the rest of the town.
T he men being two hours from their families made our war preparation complicated. We knew war would come and we knew we would be in the thick of it. We were resigned to the possibility of living sequestered from our families for the whole six weeks (or whatever it was) until it was safe to come out of the shelters.

Mom once carefully explained that because there was no actual production of weapons at The Site, it wouldn’t be a first-strike target. In fact, the Russians would try to protect the facilities for their own use once they took over. She had spent a long time working that out; I didn’t believe it any more than she did. We never spoke of Our Site destroying The Site to keep it out of the hands of the Russians.

A neighbor boy (he was a Mormon, one of thirteen kids—an uncle who was born) once gladly told me that the per capita alcohol consumption of Idaho Falls was second highest in the country, after Las Vegas. I wasn’t old enough to question his information, and I believed it, even the most incredible stories I told to our friends. We didn’t. We knew about security.

As plans developed further, Mom finally took her stack of seeds she had grown up in the farm, left her0 self, and under no circumstances go back to one. I’m sure there were other reasons as well, but the safest one was enough. I held a long bitterness against her for doing this against what I thought of as the family. I thought of as the family. I thought of as the family.

I’d heard such great stories of Science, of America, be anything but pride in the wonderful world they were doing? How was it possible to feel guilty at doing good?

The more I thought about it, though, the more realized it was an attack on The Site by The Town, and felt compelled to defend our against the storm. For a few days I watched the faces of the men as they got off the bus, when we visited or they visited, as they sat in church and the watchman’s face, especially when he was drinking (he’d been an alcoholic as far back as I could remember). I began to see a weight of sadness in their cheekbones, a flaw of terror in their eyes, a quiver of helplessness on their lips.

I made a deliberate decision to stop watching before I saw any more. If those men were criminals against peace, against humanity, maybe even against God, I didn’t want to know about it. There was nothing I could do anyway. Over the next two years I swept my projected career from physics to writing, perhaps

space shots and of scenes from science fiction books of secret military/scientific installations. But it also brought to mind horror movies, just before a huge beast with glaring eyes would roar out of the darkness to swallow up the unsuspecting townsfolk, or war movies showing the rough tenderness of camaraderie before a dawn raid. I would watch them from behind the bushes a block away until the bus came and took them away.

The men got dropped off on the same corners between 6:00 and 6:30 pm. It meant that the men were away from home for twelve hours a day.

It was not rare for the schools to close because of snow, wind, or flood. But I don’t remember a single day that the A.E.C. buses didn’t run because of weather. The Arco Highway must have had top priority for snow clearance. There was a spell of much grumbling when the men had to start watching the bus half an hour earlier, and returning later, because the buses had been ordered to slow down. It seems the buses, travelling in lengthy convoys, were killing so many jackrabbits that the road was getting slippery and dangerous. The concern was for the buses, not for other vehicles. Gradually the speeds crept up, and in a few months the times were back to normal. Maybe the jackrabbit season was over.

There may have been a hundred buses, maybe two hundred, parked nights and weekends behind a line fence across the street from our church. For an hour in the morning and evening, they dominated the town. Not just the rough-tire and honking effects, but at least one bus from each compound had to stop within a couple of blocks of every house in town. During split sessions, with school buses competing for space, there wasn’t much room for anything else.
The big one, of course, they couldn't keep quiet. I don't remember how I got the news. The earliest I remember, the whole town was in a buzz. SL-1 had blown up. People had died.

Official assurances started coming in early. The explosion was over and there was no chance of another one. There was no radiation. The reactor was broken, but the outer shell was intact. No radiation had escaped, and there was no chance of another one. I remembered the whole town being buzzed down. As I worked, I debated whether to tell them or to go through the whole ritual so as not to raise their ire. Then I realized that a call might have come in at the same time. I happened to be washing the oil off. I did the whole thing.

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The high radiation level continued to hamper the search for the missing body. It would be years before people could go in, even with the heaviest radiation suits. They pushed television cameras in again and again for several days, and could find no body. Meanwhile, they said, they were getting a lot of valuable information on the blast itself and the effects it had on various materials and instruments.

I was told at the time that the local media were being cut off from the main news sources. All the interviews, press conferences, off-the-record background talks and hints from "informed sources" were going to the news syndicates and the networks. Local reporters could interview peripheral people, maybe even the widows. But no one with hard information was available. That didn't matter much to us. The local media were put out by and for the townsfolk. We Site people cared what the people in Washington were telling the nation about us than what a small time TV station was telling our neighbors. And our real information sources were cut off by the local media. We Site people cared about the affair and bury it in technical play the affair and bury it in technical

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The High Cost of High Tech

The belt of industrial communities at the southern edge of the San Francisco Bay universally symbolizes the promise of the microelectronics era. It was first called Silicon Valley in the early 1970s, when manufacturers of silicon chips became the Santa Clara Valley’s major employers. The Valley is home to the greatest concentration of high-tech professionals and enterprises in the world. It is a land where the information-rich, particularly those trained in science and technology, can make both their mark and their millions.

Though Silicon Valley is in many ways unique, planners, officials, and commercial interests throughout the country see the area as a model for industrial growth in the information age. While few other areas can hope to rival the Valley, many have already attracted their share of high-tech facilities. As high tech grows, they will learn the harsh truth behind the legends of Silicon Valley.

Many of the Valley’s problems are directly caused by high tech. Others are found elsewhere, but they are significant merely because the residents of would-be Silicon Valleys have been told that the electronics industry has no serious problems. If they study the lessons of the Valley, they can avoid many of the pitfalls of high-tech growth.

Maria,” a 26-year-old political refugee from Argentina, found work in Silicon Valley, but she did not strike gold. She quit her $4.10 an hour production job at Memorex to have her first baby. For two years, she illegally stuffed and soldered thousands of printed circuit (PC) boards in her home. Her employer, a middle-aged woman she calls “Lady” subcontracted assembly work from big firms—so Maria was told—like Apple and Memorex.

Maria gladly accepted the low-piece-rate work because child care would have eaten up most of her after-tax earnings at a full-time job. She quit, however, when Lady asked her to wash her soiled work clothes by dipping them into a panful of solvent, heated on her kitchen stove. Maria, unlike most Silicon Valley cottage workers, had studied chemistry before immigrating into the U.S., and she knew that the hydrocarbon fumes could make her young son, crawling around on the kitchen floor, seriously ill.

Lady contracts with about a hundred minority women, primarily immigrants and refugees from Latin America, Korea, and Indochina. Although semiconductor manufacturing is fabricator’s territory, precision machinery in super-clean rooms, they can be attached by hand, anywhere, to the printed circuit boards that form the heart of most computer equipment. Silicon Valley’s workforce is sharply stratified. In the electronics industry, pay, status, and responsibility are primarily a function of education. The professionals who make the Valley unique all sit at the top of the occupational ladder; they are paid well, and the ambitious among them can make millions. Most are white men, but Japanese-Americans and ethnic Chinese are over-represented as well.

The world of Silicon Valley’s managers and professionals is centered in northern Santa Clara County, near Stanford University and the historical center of the Valley’s high-tech industry. Unlike the white-collar workers who commute to America’s established downtown areas, Silicon Valley’s affluent have chosen to live near their place of work. Other new, high-tech centers appear to be developing along a remarkably similar pattern. Since Stanford University established its Industrial Park in 1951, high-tech companies have clustered near the university. The Industrial Park, on Stanford-owned land just a mile from the academic campus, established standards for industrial development in Silicon Valley, and it is still considered a model through North America. For three decades, its low-slung buildings, innovative architecture, and expanses of green landscape perpetuated the belief that high tech was a clean industry and a good neighbor. The suburbs around Stanford have long been known for their attractive living environment and good schools; and commuting, even before the 1973 rise in oil prices, was uncomfortable, costly, and time-consuming. So professional workers generally bought homes or rented as close to work as possible.

As the Valley boomed, its industrial core spread, but until the 1980s this core was for the most part confined to the northern, suburban portion. Like their predecessors, the engineers, scientists, and managers who came to the Valley from all over the world settled near jobs. This influx of high-income families drove up the cost of housing. By the
Despite the protective clothing, equipment, and vents found at a typical semiconductor plant, in the pressure to meet production quotas many Silicon Valley workers are frequently exposed to hazardous liquids and fumes.

The manufacture of chips, printed circuit boards, and other high-tech products uses some of the most dangerous materials known to humanity. And the accidental release of those toxins into the air, the ground, and bodies of water poses a significant threat to public health.

It is possible that communities and regions which study the lesions of Silicon Valley can substantially reduce the risk high-tech production poses to the environment. Unfortunately, high-tech's environmental record has not leaked out to the rest of the country. A single industry is not a location to local or regional economic impact, so it is a critical industry to the environment. Industries such as petroleum and pesticide production. Still, a Bhopal-like accident, in which the release of people are killed immediately from a single leak, is a serious possibility. Even without such a catastrophic accident, however, the long-term toll from high-tech pollution may be enormous.

High-tech toxics have been slowly entering the environment of Silicon Valley for decades. Though widely used chemicals such as hydrocarbon solvents are known to cause some acute health problems. In addition, high-tech industrial waste, including chemicals that cause cancer and other toxic chemicals in the environment.

The problem is not unique to Silicon Valley. In the Bay Area's large source of drinking water is protected by a 200-foot layer of clay, which separates polluted ground water from deep aquifers. Though Fairchild and nearby IBM have built the clean-up system since the facilities were discovered, many Valley electronics firms have not done much to prevent pollutants and estimate the extent of their leaks. Pollutants of hazardous chemicals drift around under the ground, poisoning shallow private wells and possibly for a route—a for example, water and other agricultural wells—yet to the public water supply. Unless the toxic chemicals are removed or neutralized before they percolate through the clay, the primary water supply of several hundred thousand people is permanently poisoned. Silicon Valley is still not used to reduce the concentration of chemicals in the area's high incidence of disease.

S. J. San Jose attorney Amanda Hayes is one of a handful of environmental activists who warned for years that high tech was a hazard to the Valley's health. She has built up her reputation by representing electronics workers injured by chemicals in the job. Today, the electronics industry was a business growing in the 1970s. Hayes carries with her a large zoning map of the area surrounding the Fairchild plant. On every block in the surrounding neighborhood there are several colored pastes and flags. Each rectangular red flag represents a child born with heart anomalies each blue pin mark a miscarriage each yellow flag signals a cancer case. Black flags, superimposed on the other markers, note recent accidents. Hayes also carries with her a supply of pins, and she frequently adds them to the display. She charges that Fairchild is responsible for the area's high incidence of disease. Many of Hayes' clients believed that electronics was a pollution-free industry been tested. Nineteen high-tech sites have been placed on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Superfund" list. Nineteen sites are known to be toxic. The Valley's well fields have been shut down; many others are under review for further testing.

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I am watching my daughter Lynn Margaret as she sits at the table by the window, her arm outstretched on the white cloth. She is looking at a silver bracelet with five small opals set in the pattern of a flower, which lies loose on her slender wrist. Today is her birthday, she is twenty-four, and the bracelet is my gift to her. How long will she sit looking at the stone flower that shimmers pink and green in the late afternoon light?

By Sharon Lynn Hugh

Ceramic by Anne Storr

I sit at the table too, briefly touching the bracelet and then her hand, which she closes gently but does not move. It is early October, and clusters of leaves in the great maple across from our apartment window have turned red, though most still hold the dark green of summer. It is our communion, this tree, always at this hour of thin clarity below the roof of the season one could turn to red until the tree grows like a flame, filling our eyes with color. We will watch the leaves curl and fall, leaving the branches bare against the north sky, the wind stir them, the rain turn them black, the snow settle in a line along every limb and spear. We will watch, together, the swelling buds, the green mist when the buds break their skin, and the darkening of the foliage when the leaves come into their form, enclosing the limbs until they are hidden from our view. And then the summer. And then the fall, as now, I and Lynn Margaret, this daughter of no one but myself, coloring and uncoloring the seasons with our eyes, marking the change of this life, this happens, we have had for the other twenty-four years. As life would have it, I know our marriage, though she has never spoken a word, has ordained it.

We live on the third floor at the level of the foliage and the limbs, overlooking the tops of the roof structures. It is much safer, as if we were settling up here in a nest. Our apartment consists of a large main room with two windows and two small bedrooms on the other, one on each side of us. Lynn’s is a bit larger than mine. Our rooms have white walls, casement windows, and floors of bare wood. We walk barefoot or in stockings through these rooms, sometimes to radio music, more often to the sound of a clock in the board. Like Lynn Margaret, I never speak an animal when I am here. Even each animal would respond to the sound of a human voice, but she does not hear, and so I have come to know her in the folds of my brain, agreeing we have nothing to say.

Because it is her birthday, I have brought home a small cake from the bakery, just a round cake with white icing on top, no other decoration except for a candle I’ve set in the center. I will light it when the window has grown dark, but for now I am still, my hands in my lap while I watch my daughter.

In every feature, we are remarkably alike. I have, of course, said, there is no mark on her of anyone else I have known. I have studied the curve of her cheek, the shape of her mouth, the dark color of her eyes, the texture of her hair, the curve of her neck, even the length of her fingers and the swell of her veins in a knuckle, and they are all my own, though more delicate. Do I find her beautiful, then, as a crystal turns in the window passing a rainbow through her hair? What can I say? She is mine, she is me, she is my life.

When I strike a match for the candle, she eyes the dart and then focus on the flame. The candle flickers in the dark room until the light is so dim I can barely see two forks and a knife from the kitchenette, and cut her a slice which I lay carefully in the center of the cake. She looks at me, her husband, and then takes a smaller slice for herself. I pick up my small slice, though the sweetness calling up an unassailable sadness as well, which is nearly the last vestige of our life. Lynn draws her hands to the edge of the table but does not touch her fork. She watches me, her eyes tear wet my face and the misty cake slider melts on my hand, but it is lost. I bite, until I have eaten it all. It is true. There is nothing conceivable for us to say.

Before this life had another, though it was not long, I was a child born late to my parents, a country preacher and his wife, who farmed a few acres behind their small house and kept a milk cow in an old barn on a ridge. I went to a one-room school until I was old enough for the consolidated junior high, and both in places I was exceptionally shy and made few friends, and this continued into high school, so I always spent my evenings with my father in the parlor, the quiet of reading, or helping my mother with kitchen work. I learned to make bitter cheese and bread, and kneaded the dough for our bread. There had been no high school in Lynn Margaret’s school, remained at home, thinking of going to the community college in Fayetteville twenty miles away, and through my parents thought that was what I should do, waited a year, not sure why but thinking, perhaps, that I must first find a reason to be there.

My parents were already in their sixties, and though my father had a few fallow fields left, his church was all but extinct. Naturally they wanted me to learn to be a man of myself, but like me, they didn’t know what I could do. My mother thought I might be a teacher—I’d been bright in school—but we both knew I was too lazy. Maybe a priest. All. But the community college was only for two years. After that, I’d have to go to the university a very long way away, and we didn’t know how to make that.

"Get your two years," my mother ad\ed, and "then we’ll figure it out. We’re sure your father and I will have you figured out by then."

"I would study hard and be good at it when I came. My father, always busy with his Bible or an old atlas showing where its boundaries were marked before the second world war, assented with silence or at most by nodding his head. Perhaps he could believe that God would provide, if so, I think he would have preferred a husband, anyway, a job would do.

Did they want a daughter, this old man and woman whose lives were so long, so slow, and who lived in one small opening in the world, and just behind me in composition, a child? as the boards were not obedience which I had then, and he seemed older than the other students in the class. I first became aware of him on a day when he had not been there, and he came to my table in the library later and asked for the assignment. As I was looking through my binder, he sat down at the table and began looking at the pages.

"You take good notes," he said. "Could I see the ones for today? I\d nodded and handed him the notebook. He sat reading and nodded again at home, and I explained? Someone at a nearby table gave us a sharp look. "Let it go outside," I whispered, and gathered up my books when he nodded and followed him out. He led me to a balcony in front of the house, outside the lecture hall. It was a bright day but still winter, and I buttoned my jacket and pulled a cap over my ears.

Keeping my head bent over the binder, I talked through the notes I’d taken and felt him looking at the side of my face as he breathed. He did not speak down. "May I borrow these and copy them?" he asked. "Do you mind?" I shook my head.

After he had walked from my history position out the door and forward we’d go somewhere and talk. We knew each other’s name’s, Sharon Carwright, and me, Julia Green. He told me one day he lived in town in a room over the drug store where he had a part-time job. He was twenty-five. He’d been working there when he first married. His wife was in the next state now with their parents, "I won’t get married," he said. "It’s over now. Never was any good." He was back in school for the sake of his boy.

"Do you see him?" I asked. "Sometimes." He said more on the subject. I didn’t know whether he was divorced or separated, but I assumed divorce. He asked me the name of the woman and what I was doing in school.

"I was on twenty miles out," I said. "I guess I’ll be a librarian." He laughed, as if it were pleasing rather than amusing. "Yes," he said, and kissed me on the mouth in a brotherly way. It was the first time a man had touched my mouth.

I never told my parents about Sheldon. They wouldn’t have liked a divorced man six years older than I, and I was skippish myself from the time I knew he loved me and trusted him because he was an alcoholic and that he always was gentle in our embraces and later in the lovemaking in his room over the hardwood, and it was the road back, and that was the one time he came to the farm.

My parents never saw him. He’d left his desk in school, gone for a patch where a heavy March rain had washed gutters through the gravel and trucks had gouged the dirt. I wasn’t expecting him and was surprised to see him walking through the yard with a gun and a bag of hay up to the hill to milk the cow. He followed me into the barn and watched me kneel by the old woman with a big bucket until the milk started to stream into the ice chest. He asked me if I wanted to try, but he didn’t do it, before and squeezed and pulled without getting a drop. The cow stopped and stirred at the stamping, so I took the udders back and continued the pressed rhythm that soothe her as emptied by the bucket aside and pulled me against him.

"My turn, little farm girl," he said, taking me down on a drift of hay, and this time I was in the mange and was sitting up again, smoothing my dress and trying to brush away the pieces of straw that were stuck in my hair. "You’d better not come to the house. I don’t like what I see in that mind. He carried the milk down the hill, the ice chest to the barn, and the bucket of hands as he handed the bucket to me.

I went into the house with my bucket of milk. If I wanted I might notice the smell on my thighs, but they did not. Later, in the parlor, after I had rubbed myself with awaswash and brushed my hair clean, my mother came in with a basin of water. I was made, still warm, with a fragrance I real\d had kept them from noticing. My father had put his Bible aside and was looking at Java between the Indian Ocean and the Chindits. In a few close it is to Australia," he said, showing me a page. "Julie, some day you could go to Java. You could be an interpreter. And you’ve been thinking that a woman with ajib, a librarian, could do that, and it was all right. They were the Americans offering me the mysteries of his maps. And you didn’t. I didn’t think you could. But you had spun in the lamp light of the parlor, fingering your messages while my father brought us food.

Before the cake broke between the winning and the losing, he must go visit his son. I went to his room at noon, and I was told that he might be in until nearly dark, knowing my parents would be worried and that I would lie to them. "We were only in the house right night with me?" he asked.

"No, but I can’t stay. I can’t stay," he said. "I’m at my parents’ house."" You’re a woman," he said. "Not your daddy’s little girl."

Clinton St. Quarterly
But the idea of moving out of my parents' house into a place of my own seemed impossible. I had no job, no money. Where could I go? I thought for a moment of moving here, with Sheldon, in his room, and the image of my parents alone in their parlor arose in my mind as if already it was a painful memory. "I don't know what else I can do," I said. "I can't live alone now." And he didn't suggest I should come to live with him, just laughed and said that he guessed he'd have to wait until I was a librarian.

Before I left he held me very gently in the way that would bring back all my trust when the fear began to get strong, and I kissed him all over his face and neck, kissed his beard and the hair growing over his ears, squeezed him hard with my arms and saw the faces of my parents behind my closed eyelids.

"We'll talk about it when I get back," he said.
"All right, when you get back."
"Only he didn't come back.

I was the first day of May when I fainted in the women's restroom in the lecture hall. After that I was sick for a few days, and then in the mornings I would still feel dizzy and think it would turn my stomach until I ate some toast and felt better. But I didn't think it was anything but the flu. My heart was sick too, of course, now that Sheldon was gone, and this was the stronger sickness that consumed my days. I still sat with my father evenings, turning my pages, but this was a ritual in which I no longer had faith, and he must have sensed it too for he no longer shared his atlas with me. I wasted the semester in a fierce sadness that never left my mind. I didn't notice I had missed my April period, never thought that the tingling that sometimes came in my nipples was anything but despair, drew no connection with the lingering nausea that seemed, as much as anything, to be a bodily manifestation of my grief. But by the end of May I realized with alarm that it might have been March since I last bled, and that my stomach, which had always been flat as a flagstone between my hip bones, was softening and loosening at the waist. At night in bed I would run my hands over my body, feeling for tender places and strange contours, then turn over and press my breasts and stomach against the mattress as if to flatten them.

The sickness had passed, but I could hardly bear to eat, thinking each swallow would fatten my stomach more. Still, my clothes fit, and when I looked in a mirror fully dressed I could see no change. I stopped looking at myself naked now. The dread of what I might see was at the edge of my consciousness, and I pushed it back, simply, by not looking. Instead of bathing, I washed myself...
As I stood by the incubator, feeling as flat now as an empty coat, I watched her cry and cry, wrenching her body like a fist. This was a child of mine. My heart, healed once for death, broke open again.

from the basin with a cloth, turning away from the mirror and taking my undergarments off under my gown. And while I was hiding my body from myself, I was figuring ways to avoid taking food into it, by spreading small portions on my plate, picking slowly at the food until the chance came to cover it with my napkin and carry the plate to the trash, where I swiftly wiped it clean. I would throw my sandwich out the window of the truck as I drove, stay late at school and pretend to have eaten there when I got home, hide my mother's cookies and tarts in a pocket until I could get to the bathroom and drop them in the toilet.

"Julie's looking peaked," said my mother in June. "You're studying too much." But that wasn't true. I had gotten poor grades in the spring quarter and was going to do as badly in the summer. But I took heart from the fact that she hadn't said I was looking thin in the middle. I looked at the reflection of my clothed body in the mirror and was satisfied, that no change was apparent, and from this thinking it wasn't hard to begin to believe that nothing was happening after all. I got used to my breasts being tender and my stomach soft. It seemed as if what had threatened had been stopped. If only the bleeding would return. I pushed down on my abdomen at night, just above the pelvic bone, trying to press the blood out. Nothing. But I couldn't be pregnant, I thought throughout the month of July, and through August too, though I pressed harder and yelled my body to dispel whatever it was that had turned me cold within and tender without.

There is no way I could be pregnant, I would say in the morning, standing in profile and full dress before the half mirror. But I was picking certain things to wear, dresses with loose belts, blouses that did not crutch in pants that had always been too big and that I could still button now. Still I reasoned, if I were pregnant, I would be wearing shifts and smocks. I would be blown up like a balloon. It would be plain to see, and people would know; my mother, who had me, certainly would know. I left the house, my breakfast wrapped in a paper towel, to throw by the side of the road. I wasn't taking classes now but drove to Fayetteville nearly every day anyway, to see the library, I said, and that is in fact what I did. I had nowhere else to go. There it was easier to sit at a table in my regular clothes, a book open before me, and say, it is simply not possible that I could be pregnant. Something is wrong, but it isn't that.

In September classes started again, and with some effort I maneuvered myself through registration and began sitting in lectures, taking notes as always, though I hardly registered what the professor said. By now I was feeling movement in my bowels, as if a large bubble was rising about or someone was drawing a finger back and forth inside. Then I would write furiously on my page, almost verbatim, whatever the lecturer was saying, though I entirely missed the sense of it. One day I imagined that Sheldon was sitting behind me, and I wondered what I should say to him, and if he would notice that I looked different, though of course he would see that I looked ill. I sat the whole lecture looking rigidly forward, dreading to turn my head and see him there, though of course he was not.

"Julie, you look like death warmed over," my mother said in late September, after the equinox, and I knew the game was up. "We'll better get you to a doctor." Panic immediately brightened my mind. I can't go to a doctor. I said to myself in so many words. He will see that I am six months pregnant at least.

No longer could I deny the truth. The days that followed called for barren planning. I told my mother I was in an exam period and would go with her to the doctor when that was over. With this small reprieve, I prayed for deliverance as I drove the route back and forth, but the God that knew my father did not know me. What was I going to do? At night I lay awake, my hands rubbing the skin on my stomach and thighs, searching my own body for the answer.

The weekends passed in slow motion. My mind divided between the density in my body in which the finger drew slowly, back and forth, and Sheldon's face. I called to him silently for help, to come and take care of me now because I could go no further alone. Sheldon, I thought, Sheldon, I am six months pregnant at least. But he never came, and I never believed he would come.

On a Monday in early October it came to me what to do. I was sitting in the library when I decided to end my life in our neighbor's camping trailer by turning on the propane and going inside. Fred Boardman kept his trailer in an old barn halfway between our two places and only used it in November to go up in the hills and hunt. The trailer had two tanks on the front containing propane for a gas stove and lamp. On Friday I would drive away as if I were going to school, put the truck behind the trailer, and drive up a dead-end road called the Hoofftrack, go into the trailer and open the jets. The tanks would be empty before anyone even thought of looking for me, and it would probably be the next day before they found the truck or thought of looking in the barn.

As this plan unfolded in my mind, I looked through the library window at the sky, which was clear and blue except for a scattering of white clouds. Breathing in the stillness of the sky, I felt my fear turn to peace. The leaves on the young trees in the courtyard were red and gold, the bright colors of their dying, and for the first time I found this kind of beauty in my own life. The sounds of the students outside did not reach me. It was as if there were only silence now. It was as if I were already someplace else, looking back through this window at the world.
For three nights I slept deeply, reaching down in the darkness to touch the edge of my death. Soon I would be there. Soon. I felt a lightness that was like the lifting away of time, as if life were nothing more than the tedious effort to keep from floating away. I belonged to the sky. My sadness was little white clouds. But on Thursday I awakened heavy again, a dull cramp lodged in my abdomen, and when I got up it moved slowly like thick fluid into my groin. I said nothing to my mother and left for school.

In sociology, taking notes on a lecture on kinship, I suddenly felt that my bowlels were lifting me into an ambulance. A man was flat on the grass, and the sky went dark. Then their hands were on me, laying me down. I became conscious again as medics were about to empty, and when I stood up to leave there was liquid running down the insides of my thighs. I hurried to a restroom, afraid to look at the floor, and in a toilet stall I found my underclothes soaked with pink water. I took off my clothing and blotted myself with toilet paper, using nearly the whole roll. Then I was about to empty, and when I stood up, my body was swaddled with my slip and put my blouse and skirt back on. My body was soaked with pink water. I took off my coat, I watched her cry and cry, clenching her mouth was mine, that already she have thought she was real had she not been crying. And that is when I saw that her mouth was mine, that already she was this replica of myself. What had I done? A spring of bones, a tendril of lung ... how much blood could there be in a body so small? As I stood by the incubator, feeling at first now as an empty coat, I watched her cry and cry, clenching her body like a flat. This was a child of mine. My heart, healed once for death, was broken open again.

I could not hold her. My hands were unworthy, I suppose, and I only saw her as our life, and what does that have to do with the day before or the day after? The meaning changes, and what I knew yesterday doesn't matter today. Every day, I tell my story to find out what it means, and it is never the same.

What I am saying is that there is nothing to know, only that the meanings are different each day you open your eyes, and that is all I know. I and Lynn Margaret sleep. That silence is the darkness where his life was now, whether it was still or not, when I stood up, my body was gushed again, and I rested it on her mouth, which pursed with the day before or the day after? The meaning changes, and what I knew yesterday doesn't matter today. Every day, I tell my story to find out what it means, and it is never the same.

What I am saying is that every day I and an ever-silent child etched in my mind, my body gushed again, and I rested it on her mouth, which pursed with the day before or the day after? The meaning changes, and what I knew yesterday doesn't matter today. Every day, I tell my story to find out what it means, and it is never the same.

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Ellie Mannette
and
Steel Drum’s Freedom Song
By Lynn Darroch
Drawing by Stephen Leflar

It is Carnival time in Trinidad.
Steel bands begin to assemble at dawn, and as the tropical sun rises, they hit the streets with as many as 150 drummers each. Following them in the singing, dancing parade are hundreds of their neighborhood supporters. At the Panorama in Port of Spain, Trinidad’s capital and largest city, these tremendous steel orchestras ring out into the night in a marvelously coordinated display of powerfully resonant classical music and calypso.

Less than 50 years ago, the steel drum was born in a spontaneous outburst of percussive Carnival parading. Today it is the national symbol and prominently displayed on the flag. The development of this ringing voice of the people, from trash bin to precision virtuoso instrument, has been a battle waged by individuals, banging and listening to what was growing from their hands and ears, in ghetto pan yards.

One of those men was Ellie Mannette.

The steel drum has become the biggest thing in the Caribbean now. It’s on the flag, on the money, on the stamps. But at one time there was a stigma against it, because it was from the gutter. The boys who really created it and who have done something significant were the poor boys. And in Trinidad especially, we have a society where, if you haven’t gone to college, you are nobody; if you haven’t got a friend who is a doctor or a lawyer, you are nobody. And I was an outcast because I had a chance for a college education and I did not take it. The Trinidadian had that kind of attitude against the art form. Right up to the present time, they will not put steel bands in the schools.

If I didn’t have the endeavor and the drive and the obsession, the steel drum would not be what it is today. Because I was working against the odds. I did not know what I was doing, number one. The craft was something new to me. I was searching for things that develop in my mind. And then I had the police against me, because as soon as I sang too much in the backyard and I keep too much noise, the people will say it’s a nuisance, they call the cops, the cops will walk in and take all my drums and throw them away. I had to get drums from scratch and start all over again, try my best to come along. And then everybody puts you down. “A boy like you who had a pretty good education, you play these sets of garbage cans?”

The steel drum is the first completely new orchestral instrument since the saxophone was invented in 1843. Its bright, piercing tones are the voice of modern Trinidad, a polyglot mixture of races and customs left in the wake of European colonists, the slaves they brought from Africa, and the indentured East Indian workers who labored on the plantations after Emancipation—the remnants of a gain-rich quick immigrant society that floundered on this southernmost outcrop of the Golden Antilles. United only by the
Birth of the Steel Drum

T

urdid's pre-Lenten Carnival, orig-

nalmente introduced by French settlers, be-
came over time a celebration by Afro-

Trinidadians in which thousands paraded
in the streets for two days and nights in
spontaneous singing, drumming and
dancing. With island-wide strikes and la-
bor unrest in the '30s, however, the Brit-

dish colonial authorities issued another of
their periodic bans on African skin

drums, and the island's young men took
up lengths of bamboo to make their
rhythm. With the large sticks bored out
and pounded on the ground for a bass

tone, and smaller lengths promenading in
other pitches when struck together, the
"bambo-tambo" bands dominated Carnival celebrations until 1934, when the
government outlawed them too.

Born in 1926 and raised in Woodbrook, a lower middle-class Creole neigh-
borhood in Port of Spain, Ellie Mannette
paraded with the bamboo-tambo bands
when he was only seven years old, and
he was on the streets for Carnival in 1935.

The boys wanted a parade, he remem-
bered in fulfilling West Indian cadences,
but they had nothing to parade with. So
they pick up garbage cans, whatever they
find in the form of tin bins to make rhythm.
And they went everywhere singing what
we call "La Vie" and banging on these
cans and parading. From the time those
drums were first played, Mannette had de-
veloped an ear for the rhythms of the
island, the Shell Oil Company was spon-
oring Mannette's band, the Invaders,
and he could earn a living building
drums, keeping them in tune, and play-
ing the bamboo-tambo bands at Carnival in 1949 were
developed a second drum, lower in pitch
than his original pan, and the other
bands quickly picked it up too. The next
year he built another, still lower in pitch,
and with the addition of a conga drum, a
bass instrument and a biscuit tin that
Mannette had turned into a more reso-
nant tone and a "tune-up drum." The steel bands at Carnival in 1949 were
using five distinct instruments.

The early steel bands generated a lot of hostility from the middle class and the
colonial authorities, however, who saw
fights between the rival bands and their
noisy celebrations as a menace to soci-
ety, first by the end of the decade, progres-
sive people were beginning to sense the
social as well as artistic potential of the
nascent steel bands, not only as an outlet
for ghetto youth, which Carnival had al-
ways provided, but as a powerful focus for
the movement toward decolonization and eventual self-rule that had been
building since the '30s. A new politics
was growing, and it would carry the black
class to power and result in Inde-
pendence in 1962.

As that nationalistic movement emerged, the steel bands helped to gain respectability. The process was gradual and uneven, however, and it began primarily to the colonial legacy which devalued the local Creole-West Indian culture, even in
the minds of its progeny. The calypso, the
true indigenous music of the island, had
always been a vehicle for social protest
as well as a bouncing underpinning for
Carnival parades, and although the steel
drum's first song was a calypso, the
greatest compliment a steel bandsman
could receive through the next two de-
cades was, "He play the classics, mon!"
So bands began forming across the na-
ton, Mannette remembers. And the gov-
ernment felt, "Well, it is a new art form
growing like crazy, and we should do
something for the boys to give them some
incentive." So they decided to start hav-
ing an all-star band to take part in the
festival of Britain, and we formed the
Indis-
amenable to studio recording, and in fact was better out-of-doors, for at that time the drums sang with distinction whenever a single note was struck. In a street parade, those sonorities were cancelled out, and what came through was the desired note, ringing pure and powerful above other sounds. But even with the most refined drums of the day, there were none of the harmonics and octaves that Marnette builds into his gleaming steel pans today and that are responsible for its enchantingly liquid tonalities.

At that time, he explains, all we could tune was just a basic note. We'd tune a scale; all the half-tones, but it was just a plain, dull note. But as the years go by we developed our technique and we put octaves on the note. Later we went further and developed two octaves and a fifth on the same segment. It vibrates like crazy now. Indeed, steel bands in Trinidad today perform elaborate orchestral arrangements of original works and major classical pieces as well as the truly home-grown calypsoes. Vibrating like crazy, the contemporary steel drum rings with powerful metallic resonance. As the lead pans play lines while the others provide harmonies, chords and bass patterns, the result is a unique combination of sweet soaring melodicism and tough percussive attacks that rise swimmingly to an aura massis. The hands of the steel drum makers like Ellie Marnette have cossed lyrically elegant precision from a crude percussive tool, creating the perfect New World instrument.

This is very sensitive hammercraft, you know, Marnette relates with obvious pride. I get absolutely sensitive in my hands with the impact, with the feel, with the sliding of the hammer, and my craftsmanship is a genius of work. I am very articulate at what I do. I have given it my whole skills.

"A National Cultural Resource"

Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad until his death in 1981, was the co-founder and economic growths. Steel band records began to appear in the U.S. and folk singer/activist Pete Seeger wrote the first book about the instrument. Carnival had become a "national cultural resource" It was almost respectable.

By 1982, Ellie Marnette had been building and tuning steel drums for the U.S. Navy Steel Band for five years, and went to South Carolina to continue his work for them. Later, back on the island, a social worker from New York named Narell was looking for a drummer maker to come to the States and start a steel band program among the ghetto youth in the housing projects of the city's lower east side. Marnette agreed to go in 1966. But the steel drum's new status as the symbol of national culture had a steep price for this individual craftsman, who had himself become something of a "national cultural resource" after developing seven of the nine pans currently in use. I told the government I wanted to come to the U.S. to teach a steel drum operation, he says, and they were very upset.

They told me I shouldn't do it selling my culture—because eventually the U.S. would take the talent away from me and then they will call it their own. So I said, "Well, it's my talent; I've developed this art form from nothing into what it is, I'm going to go anyway."

The government then blanched me over the newspaper, saying that I was a Judas forsalling my birthright for 30 pieces of silver. And as a result, I sent them a very ugly article back to the newspaper. And the government was very upset with me for what I said. So therefore I never did go home, not in 20 years.

It was very unfair of them to say that to me in view of the fact I'm trying to project and uplift the art form by spreading it. I am an ambassador for the art form... We learn everything from the outside world; because Trinidadians are very good musicians. We learn the piano, the flute, the oboe, the bassoon. Whatever comes from outside, we never developed these things. And if for any reason the white man decide, I'm not going to teach you my talent, we would never know what a piano is today. So therefore why is it that I can't give the white man my talent and craft? Look, this is a very unique art. It will take any person—white, black or whatever—a tremendous amount of effort to really produce one. The person must have the interest, not just the desire to go play out tunes, they must have that interest. And those people don't come just like that; it's only once in a while that you get somebody with that kind of interest.

In Trinidad, there are more of those people than anywhere else, and the steel drum flourishes. In a country of slightly more than a million people, there are as many as 70 bands with 100 players each, and other groups that field well over 50 players—the largest symphony orchestras in the world, although they are heard by few people outside the island.

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"Maybe somewhere down the road, the art form will come to a point where the engineers come into it, and they start mass-producing it into a form of perfection. But at the present time, it's struggle, trials and errors, frustration. The steel drum is in its infancy."

Ellie Manette has nearly 50 years looking at steel drums from the inside out, from the dented garbage cans he first picked up in 1955 to the gleaming chromed pans he builds today. But he has a consuming interest in younger players like Andy Narell, for the man like Manette who developed the steel drum—backyard inventors and tinkers—were primarily craftsmen who used it to play music originally designed for other instruments. Today the challenge is to devise a music specifically for an inspired by steel drum.

Ellie Manette cannot hear the steel drum's future music, but he has a stake in it, for his life has been devoted not to personal reputation, but to the art form itself.

I can't really visualize anything further right now, he says. Every man has his capacity to think, and I have developed this art form, and now I think the younger stars will take my ideas and will probably see things that I never did. So I just lay the groundwork, just try to get it into their hands and hearts, and they're going to take it on from there.

Born in response to repression, the steel drum today is ready for an unfettered journey among the world's music. It will take with it the shape imparted by Ellie Manette's hands, the imprint of a life lived for steel drum and the turbulent New World society that produced it.
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<td>Sauteed Tofu &amp; Vegetables</td>
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people are supposed to "develop separately."

One of the farms on the "white" south side of the river is markedly different from its prosperous, irrigated neighbors. You have to exercise your imagination strenuously to see it as a farm at all. The story hillocks are covered only with cactus and spiny thornbrushes. Much of the topsoil has long washed away into the Tugela, so there is little ground cover. The farm is called Mdukatshani, which means, in Zulu, "The Place of the Lost Grasses." A number of paths hacked through the brush lead off the dusty main road on round hills, identical to the dwellings that are visible across the river. There is no electricity. Thin dogs slink about abjectly. The several dozens of black people who live here are almost all women, or children. They are dressed extremely shabbily, in an assortment of aging woolen caps, shredded shirts, patched trousers or skirts, battered cheap tenner shoes, and sandals. A number of the women and children are barefoot. Some of them have hair mats on their legs.

The hairstyles of some of the women are unforgettable. Reddish discs rising gracefully nearly a foot above the head, or flaring winglike structures, also redish, look at first like exotic, inorganic headdresses. They are actually carefully sculpted combinations of hair and dried mud, and they provide a striking, elegant contrast to the tattered clothing.

Down toward the river, in a small clearing, is an unpretentious crafted stone-walled house with a low thatched roof. This is where the "the Nurnzant," a white man called Neil Alcock, lives with his wife and two youngsters.

"It was in the days before the discovery of pencilin. One of my father's farmworkers was in a fight, right around Christmas, and he got the entire side of his head crushed in by a krooberie. The witchdoctor was called in. He studied the wound, and then covered it with a plug of cow dung."

Neil Alcock paused and tilted his head slightly. "In a few weeks, he removed the dung. The wound was healing properly." Alcock stopped again, and shrugged. "Pencilin is a mold that is found in things like cow dung. Those witchdoctors—their knowledge is so great in a certain sphere that we just don't come near it."

The Nurnzant related this story in a low key but nonetheless proleptizing tone. He is in his early sixties, tall, lean, and gray-bearded, with a spiritual and pro
thetic manner. His similarity to the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy is in some respects striking. Like Tolstoy, Neil Alcock started life as a large landowner, the heir to a family estate. Also like Tolstoy, Alcock gradually moved to renounce his privilege, and he has sought to create an ethical community with the very people he used to rule over. To complete the parallel, Alcock even refers to the black farmworkers as "serfs," bitterly biting off the word every time he utters it in another reproach to himself and his kind.

His first language is Zulu. He thinks in Zulu, and at times seems almost to be speaking the English translation. "I was reared by Africans," he explained. "My loyalty to them is not paternalism, but a feeling of family. I became theirs. My own parents were typically lazy white South Africans, who had time for their social activities rather than for their children."

His grandfather came from Yorkshire, England, and bought a farm in Natal. "My father inherited the farm, and because of the work of his serfs, he became even wealthier. I took over the descen
dants of some serfs who had worked for my grandfather. They were no better off than their ancestors. In some cases, they were worse off. Yet like many Romans, after a few generations of slavery—there is really no other word for it—we can't exist without them."

As a youth, Alcock preferred to mix with the farmworkers rather than go to school. "My most worthwhile education came from those black people. I would disappear at dawn with those naturalists, the shepherds, who would take and show me the woods things—like honey—were found. I got a tanning from my parents when I got home at night. But whatever capabilities I have I got from those black people, those philosophers, I got dammned well at school from the white teachers in their high-heeled shoes."
clinton st. quarterly

After World War II, Neil Alcock started searching from the start for ways to alleviate its worst excesses. He started to grow and distribute vegetables, and he gave them away, primarily to those who had been hit hardest by the war. Even under normal circumstances, herdsmen were fed by government agencies called Kupugani.

Neil Alcock, like many people who work close to the land, has religious feelings. He was finding himself in increasing opposition to some representatives of organized religion. “Some of the religious groups were more concerned with saving souls than lives,” he said, with savage bewilderment. “One of those chaps said to me, ‘The way to live as nearly identical to the others as possible.’” He insists the term “householder,” rather than “laborer,” is reserved for his request, but many of them misuse the new word with the same old mixture of new words and despair.

In the end, the Dundee agricultural project was downsized. It was surrounded by “black spots”—scattered villages and farms that surrounded towns. People who had participated in the Dundee project were forced to move since 1960, officially called “resettlement,” but with a misleadingly pleasant ring to it.

Neil Alcock’s oldest son is nicknamed “Numzaan” (which means “householder,” or “baas.”) After the war, he went on to become a successful cattle breeder. Alcock explained that he was trying “to make serfs into individuals.” He went on, “I had learned you can’t live as nearly identical to the others as possible.” He believed the city was far from the land, and he could be blunt, even by now, his chief lieutenant was a tow-headed youth. They roam through the veld, their gun in one hand, trying to make rabbits in snares, flicking berries at the acacia, the acacia, a valuable resource. They started using wastes to make methane gas, which they used as fuel in place of the rapidly dwindling supplies of coal. The cooperative tried to continue raising cattle, but the people in the area rustled the acacia. Alcock explained, “We saw them arrive—a group of what were to them black acacia. They saw no danger in charging us.”

The experimenters then turned to large-scale gardening. They fashioned an ingenious mechanical water wheel from an old tractor tire, used in the water that the world’s water distribution was very near. He believed the city was far from the land, and he could be blunt, even by now, his chief lieutenant was a tow-headed youth. They roam through the veld, their gun in one hand, trying to make rabbits in snares, flicking berries at the acacia, a valuable resource. They started using wastes to make methane gas, which they used as fuel in place of the rapidly dwindling supplies of coal. The cooperative tried to continue raising cattle, but the people in the area rustled the acacia. Alcock explained, “We saw them arrive—a group of what were to them black acacia. They saw no danger in charging us.”

The acacia has a tendency to obliterate the spots. Most of the people who had participated in the Dun­

Hideous outbreaks,” the Mboma said a battle started when one clan member spat into the pot of beer of another clan member. Over the years, hundreds of people have died, including Mboma’s great-grandfather.

Hunger in the district grew worse. Mboma and the other children took to swimming back across the Tugela, to steal food on the white side. They skulked, about the lookout for the white cattle farmers who were often armed, tied ears of maize to their arms and legs, and swam back. One farmer even shifted to cotton to end the problem.

But the extra food was not enough. Mboma, like his father, went on to turn red, and he had sores on his ears. He spent a week in a Joburg hospital, under treat­

“Penicillin is a mold that is found in things like cow dung. Those witchdoctors... their knowledge is so great in a certain sphere that we just don’t come near it.”

Heroes Underground

Three billion years ago, a vast inland sea surrounded by rugged mountains covered parts of the Transvaal and Natal. After a few years, storms lashed at the landscape, breaking up the land into hundreds of smaller islands. Over the eons, these fragments carried the water of the ancient sea, which sank to the bottom. The world’s most valuable goldfields flow from this three-hundred-mile arc along the reef. But there’s a third piece, from Evander on the East Rand, through Johannesburg, down toward Welkom and Virginia, and remains the backbone of its econ-
The gold industry is South Africa's major employer, with 575,000 workers, all but 40,000 of whom are black. Each year, South Africa mines about half of the world's gold.

Work continued on one of the hostels, the single-sex compounds where virtually all black miners live for ten or eleven months a year. The hostels looked like a fat, 1,200-page dictionary, lying on the ground. One metric ton of ore yields only one and one-quarter liters of gold.

The Harties officials had been stu­"
Eric no longer lives in South Africa. The police harassed him steadily about his black girl friend, so he and she moved to neighboring Swaziland, where there is no Immorality Act. He is a large, powerfully built man, who is covered in tattoos.

One evening, he gave me the official version of life underground. "Here's what's supposed to happen. They start dropping the day shift at five or six, to the bottom level first. The blacks walk down there. They can't even enter the stop (low-roofed chambers) until the white miner arrives, at seven. When you get there, you take your bass-boy, and your pickaxe, and check everything. You look for loose hanging rocks, or gas. Then, pickaxins with hose-pipes put down water to keep the dust down. There are signs around that say things like 'Keep Dust Low. . . with HuO.' "Next, you direct your timber-boys to put in the props... a solid pack here, a five-pointer there. You supervise your malahe-boys, who are shooting the blast from the previous day. You mark the rock-face, and you tell the machine-boys to start drilling. Then, you charge up. You chase everybody out before you start blasting." Eric paused, a raconteur with timing. "That's what's supposed to happen. He winked. "Here's what really hap- pens. You stay in the canteen on the sur-face until about nine, just talking shit with the other white miners. When you get to the face underground, the black guys are drilling holes already. They're put in the props and marked everything. Your pica-ninn takes your jacket and boots, hangs them up, and brings you a cup of tea. You sit and read the newspaper. You might take a look now and then, just to make sure nobody's fucking up. (You're paid partly on the amount of rock you move.) But really, your bass-boy can take care of everything. About all you do is hand the 5 objects before you bust blast." Eric waited for his story to register. Then he added: "I trained twelve months for my blasting ticket. No bass-boy has had any course. But every single black-boy in the mine, if they tested him right now for a fucking ticket, he'd get it." He concluded maliciously: "I think they just don't give blasting tickets to blacks because they might start to blow up whites all over the country."

James North has reported from the Third World for the last six years for such publications as The Nation and The New Republic. Freedom Rising copyright 1985 by James North. Published by Macmillan, 866 Third Avenue, N.Y.C., NY 10022, $19.95.

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I was tied into Science, Technology, into Universities, Research and the Government. They were tied into cows and potatoes and irrigation canals, into the John Birch Society, the Mormon Church and the Chamber of Commerce.

I came out of Idaho Falls three days after high school graduation, not to escape the governmental-corporate-scientific, high-security, high-risk, high-stress atomic research environment, but to escape the artistic and literary desolation I perceived there. I thought that in The Big World, the achievements of the educated elite — my people — were not so narrowly constrained by the critical importance of their work (atomic research), nor impeded by the dead weight of dumb Mormon farmers.

I went to Berkeley, despite its radical reputation, because friends there offered me the quickest escape from Idaho. Like most country kids going to the big city, I found the world much wider than I imagined. I was no longer part of the educated elite; they had gone to expensive private schools and learned a lot more than I had. In fact, I didn’t like them very much, and I was a hick to them. “My” Site people were considered as backward and provincial as the farmers had I so heartily despised. My dual-class view of society was no longer valid, nor my juvenile loyalties and prejudices.

I plunged, as though instinctively, into the mechanics of illegal drugs and clandestine politics. I was adept at using codes, steering conversation around sensitive topics, remembering the phone was tapped, remembering who knew what and who shouldn’t, remembering what name to call everyone by in each situation. It was easy; I’d done it all my life.

But all through the anti-war period I continued to be a staunch supporter of nuclear power. (I had discovered that only hicks still called it “atomic.”) When my radical friends would not be convinced, I reverted to my childhood arrogance: they weren’t Site people, they didn’t know what they were talking about.

When I decided to turn against nuclear power, years later, it was on political, not technological grounds. I still believed that nuclear power was feasible, efficient, and could be made as safe as any other form of energy generation if research were not hampered by fears of the ignorant. But the economic and administrative centralization it required made it undesirable for the world in which I wanted to live.

It was still later that I came to see how nuclear power, far all the white lab coats and sterile rooms, was dirtier than the coal mine my grandfather died in. But while acknowledging the danger of the radioactivity at a reactor’s core, I still see more danger in the security system around its perimeter. The one may have killed my father, but the other could do worse yet to my daughter.

The nuclear zone in which I grew up was small and contained, though I didn’t know it at the time. It was easy to get out of, half by accident I stumbled into the nuclear-free world. Now there is talk of nuclear-free zones, which sound like places you don’t find your way out of, but find your way in to. And all around them would be a nuclear world where kids grow up thinking that nuclear power and protection from nuclear power are as necessary and normal a part of the balance of nature as day and night, summer and winter, life and death. And to learn otherwise, they would have to happen into one of a few shrinking, embattled enclaves, like Indian reservations.

I grew up in an atomic zone, lost the moment I could, and under no circumstances will I go back to one. I lived there in a nuclear society, and I won’t go back to that either. It took me a long time to appreciate this, and I’m not prepared to surrender or abandon it.

Gwion is a writer living in Portland. This is his first story in CSQ. The photos were taken by Jen’s father or have been provided by the Department of Energy.

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with other animals, this stuck-out hair should tell us that something frightening is going on.

One of my interests as a writer and reader is the literature of what might be called the moment before. You probably know the genre—the Last Days of Pompeii and The Guns of August are related to it—portraits of societies about to vanish forever. A recent example is the Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld’s Badenheim 1939, in which, as the publisher so well puts it, ‘the characters on stage are so deeply held by their defensive daily trivia that they manage to misconstrue every signal of their fate,’ and in which the central subject is the struggle between the characters and their own self-deceptions. Let me read you a paragraph from another such novel, Prater Violet, by Christopher Isherwood, published in 1945 but set in 1939.

Like all my friends, I said I believed a European war was coming soon. I believed it as one believes that one will die, and yet I didn’t believe. For the coming war was as unreal to me as death itself. It was unreal because I couldn’t imagine anything beyond it; I refused to imagine anything; just as a spectator refuses to imagine what is behind the scenery in a theater. The outbreak of war, like the moment of death, crossed my perspective of the future like a wall; it marked the instant total end of my imagined world. I thought about this wall from time to time, with acute depressions and a fluster of fear at the solar plexus, then again, and then I somehow ignored it. Also, just as when one thinks of one’s own death, I secretly whispered to myself. ‘Who knows? Maybe we shall get around it somehow. Maybe it will never happen.’

I believe that the moment we are living in is such a moment—that we are all going around whispering to ourselves, ‘Who knows? Maybe it will never happen,’ while knowing that it will—and that it is exactly the state of illusion which makes it so difficult to take the simple steps that would acknowledge, and by acknowledging possibly lead to alleviating, our lot. I believe that the inability of the City Council so far to confront the issue by bringing forward a simple and sensible ordinance declaring Portland a nuclear-free zone is an instance of the common illusion. I do not mean to suggest that others, myself included, are exempt. As someone whose work involves the habit of introspection, I can report that between my long-standing ‘right opinions’ on the subject of nuclear war and my appearance here today—my first such public appearance—my mind presented me with many arguments against testifying, including (a) my preoccupation with other matters; (b) my lack of expertise; (c) the largely symbolic nature of the issue, at least in relation to national defense if not in relation to the city; and (d) the futility of action. I hope I may be forgiven a writer’s presumption if I say that I wonder whether the reasoning of members of the City Council, which has led to the absence of an actual ordinance today, is not much the same: namely, there are other issues before us; it is not really our jurisdiction; it is too limited in its national impact to take any risks for locally; and, ultimately, we are lost anyway.

The problem with this reasoning is, of course, its circularity. If we act, we may die; but if we don’t act, we will surely die—a death that, as Jonathan Schell has so articulately argued, is not mere individual death but extinction. The difference between this ‘moment before’ and all others is that this time there will be no posterity to cluck over our illusions. It will all be gone.

The tyranny of nuclear weapons is a new form of tyranny. We are hostage to it when social services are cut so that defense can expand. We are hostages to it because that is where the hope of the American Republic always has been and always will be. The early colonists did not have to quarter soldiers to just such public pressure as declaring Portland a nuclear-free zone would represent. To act we must overcome our deepest pessimism about the outcome. But there is no alternative. Otherwise, not only this government but every other government, and not only this form of enterprise but every other form of enterprise, and everything else, will surely perish from earth.

Ellinor Langer is a writer living in Portland. Her book ‘Josephine Hartst: The Story She Could Never Tell’ (Warner Books paperback) was reviewed in CSQ this past winter. C. Vuplae is an artist living in Portland.
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By Noam Chomsky
Illustrations by Carol Moiselwitsch

In the real world, U.S. global planning has always been sophisticated and careful, as you'd expect from a major superpower with a highly centralized and class-conscious dominant social group. Their power, in turn, is rooted in their own ownership and management of the society and economy, as is the norm in most societies. During World War II, American planners were very well aware that the United States was going to emerge as a world-dominant power in a position of hegemony that had few historical parallels and they organized and met in order to deal with this situation.

From 1939 to 1945, extensive studies were conducted by the Council on Foreign Relations and the State Department. One group was called the War Peace Studies Group, which met for six years and produced extensive geopolitical analyses and plans. The Council on Foreign Relations is essentially the business input to foreign policy planning. These groups also involved every top planner in the State Department with the exception of the Secretary of State.

The conception they developed is what they called "Grand Area" planning. The Grand Area was to be a region that was subordinated to the needs of the American economy. As one planner put it, it was to be the region that is "strategically necessary for world control." The geopolitical analysis held that the Grand Area had to include at least the Western hemisphere, the Far East, and the former British Empire, which we were then in the process of dismantling and taking over ourselves. This is what is called "anti-imperialism" in American scholarship. The Area was also to include Western and Southern Europe and the oil-producing regions of the Middle East, and in fact, it was to include everything, if that were possible. Detailed plans were made for particular regions of the grand Area and also for international institutions that were to organize and police it, essentially in the interests of this subordination to American domestic needs.

With respect to the Far East, the plans were roughly as follows: Japan, it was understood, would sooner or later be the industrial heartland of Asia once again. Since Japan is a resource-poor area, it would need Southeast Asia and South Asia for resources and markets. All of this, of course, would be incorporated within the global system dominated by the United States.

With regard to Latin America, the matter was put most plainly by Secretary of War Henry Stimson in May 1945 when he was explaining how we must eliminate and dismantle all regional systems dominated by any other power, particularly the British, while maintaining and extending our own system. He explained with regard to Latin America as follows: "I think that it's not asking too much to have our little region over here which never has bothered anybody." The basic thinking behind all of this has been explained quite lucidly on a number of occasions. (This is a very open society and if one wants to learn what's going on, you can do it; it takes a little work, but the documents are there and the history is there also.) One of the clearest and most lucid accounts of the planning behind this was by George Kennan, who was one of the most thoughtful, humane, and liberal of the planners, and, in fact, was eliminated from the State Department largely for that reason. Kennan was the head of the State Department Policy Planning Staff in the late 1940s. In the following document, PPS23, February 1948, he outlined the basic planning:

We have about 50 percent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity. We must not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction. We should cease to talk about vague and unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratisation. The day is far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less obvious are hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.

There are some questions that one can raise about Kennan's formulation, though a number of them, but I'll keep to one. One is whether he is right in suggesting that "human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratisation" should be dismissed as irrelevant to American foreign policy. Actually, a review of the historical record suggests a different picture, namely that the United States often has opposed with tremendous ferocity, and violence, these elements—human rights, democratisation, and the raising of the living standards. This is particularly the case in Latin America and there are very good reasons for it. The commitment to these doctrines is inconsistent with the use of harsh measures to maintain the disparity, to insure our control over 50 percent of the resources, and our exploitation of the world. In short, what we might call "the First Freedom" (there were Four Freedoms, you remember, but there was one that was left out), the Freedom to Rob, and that's really the only one that counts; the others were mostly for show. And in order to maintain the freedom to rob and exploit, we do have to consistently oppose democratisation, the raising of living standards, and human rights. And we do consistently oppose them; that, of course in the real world.

This top Secret document referred to the Far East, but Kennan applied the same ideas to Latin America in a briefing for Latin American ambassadors in which he explained that: "One of the main concerns of U.S. policy is the protection of our raw materials. We must protect our raw materials from. Well, primarily, the domestic populations, the indigenous populations, which may have ideas about raising living standards. And that's inconsistent with maintaining the disparity. How will we protect our raw materials from the indigenous population?" Well, the answer is the following:

The final answer might be an unpleasant one, but... we should not hesitate to apply repression by the local government. This is not shameful, since the Communists are essentially traitors. It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists.

Well, who are the Communists? "Communists" is a term regularly used in American political theology to refer to people who are committed to the belief that "the working class has direct responsibility for the welfare of the people." I'm quoting the words of a 1949 State Department intelligence report which warned about the spread of this grim and evil doctrine, which does, of course, threaten "our raw materials" if we can't
In May, 1945, Secretary of War Henry Stimson explained with regard to Latin America as follows: “I think that it’s not asking too much to have our little region over here which never has bothered anybody.”
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That's why the "defense" of South Vietnam escalated, with this attack in 1961 and 1962. But that again failed. The resistance increased, and by 1965, the United States was compelled to move to an outright land invasion of South Viet- nam, escalating the attack again. We also at that time initiated the bombing of North Vietnam, which, as anticipated, bore North Vietnamese troops to the South several months later. Throughout, however, the major Ameri- can attack was against South Vietnam. When we began bombing North Vietnam in 1964, we extended it to bombing of South Vietnam which had already been going on for several years. We extended the bombing of South Viet- nam to ripe the scale of the bombing of North Vietnam, and throughout South Vietnam that bore the main brunt of the American war in Indochina. We later extended the war to Cambodia and Laos.

As far as the major aims were concerned, the American war was a smashing success. For one thing, there was a huge massacre. The first phase of the war, the French war, probably left about half a million dead. From 1964 to 1965 we succeeded in killing maybe another 160,000 to 170,000 South Vietnamese, mostly peasants. The war, from 1965 to 1975, left a death toll of maybe in the neighborhood of 3 million. So there also was a big decline, a million dead in Cambodia and Laos. So all together about 5 million people were killed, which is a respectable achievement when you're trying to prevent any successful and socio- economic development. Furthermore, there were millions and millions of refugees created by the American bombardment, which was quite extraordinarily ruinous and not to mention the murderous ground operations.

This land was devastated. People can't farm because of the destruction and un- exploited ordinances. And this is all a suc- cess. Vietnam is not going to be able to evolve as a model of social and economic development for anyone else. In fact, it will be lucky to survive. The rot will not spread. We also made sure of that by our actions in the surrounding areas, where we buttressed the American puppet governments.

This post-Vietnam policy has been designed to ensure that it stays that way. We follow a policy of what some conservative business circles out of the United States call "bleeding Vietnam." That is, a policy of imposing maximum suffering and hardship in Vietnam in the hope of perpetuating the suffering and insolting that only the most harsh and brutal elements will survive. Then you can use their brutality as a justification for having carried out the initial attack. This is a policy of quite magnifi- cently in our ideological system. We are now supporting the Pol Pot forces; we concede this incidentally. The State De- partment has been supporting the Democratic Kampuchea Coalition, which is largely based on the Khmer Rouge. We have been supporting the Pol Pot regime; therefore we support them indirectly through China or through other means. This is part of the policy of "bleeding Vietnam." Also, of course, we no longer have any rep- arations, though we certainly owe them. We block aid from international institu- tions and we've succeeded in blocking aid from other countries. India tried to send in, in 1977, 100 buffaloes, a very small amount, to Vietnam to try to replenish the buffalo herd that was destroyed in the war. We tried to block it by threatening them. First they told Face to Peace aid to India if they sent the 100 buffaloes. Mennonites in the United States tried to send pencils to Cambodia, against the State Department tried to block it. They also tried to send shoes to Laos to dig up the unexploited ordinances. Of course, we could have been with heavy equip- ment, but that we are plainly not going to do.

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If a tiny, nothing-county with no natural resources like Grenada can begin to extricate itself from the system of misery and oppression that we’ve helped to impose, then others who have even more resources might be tempted to do likewise.

There’s one by a co-author of mine, Edward Herman, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, who investigated the same sort of thing that economic historians have written about. Herman found the same correlation: the worse the human rights climate, the more American aid increases. The correlation was far more striking. There was no correlation between American aid to need. This aid included military aid and it went on right through the Carter administration. To use his words, he said “that aid has tended to flow disproportionately to Latin American governments which torture their citizens,” to “the hemisphere’s relatively egregious violators of fundamental human rights.” This might suggest that Kennan understated the case: human rights are not irrelevant, rather, we have a positive hatred of them. We send aid to precisely those governments that torture their citizens, and the more effectively they do so, the more we give them. At least that’s what the evidence shows in this and other studies.

A correlation isn’t a theory. It’s not an explanation. We still need an explanation, and number of them come to mind. One possible explanation would be that the American leadership just likes torturing its citizens the more we will aid them. That’s a possible explanation, but it’s unlikely one. The real explanation is probably Kennan’s: that is, irrelevant. Human rights are irrelevant. What we like is something else. There have been other studies based on a theory to explain the correlation.

The single most decisive victory for free-world liberalism in recent years was the Vietnam War. We installed the first really major National Security Council in the Central America, with high-technology torture and all. Gordon called it “totally democratic,” “the best government Brazil ever had.” And that, in turn, had a significant democratic effect: it was an important country. Well, there was an explosion of democracy and an increase in the Gross National Product. There was also an increase in suffering for the population.

So, for example, here are some stats from the Securities and Exchange Commission. Concerning Rio de Janeiro, which is far from the poorest area in Brazil. The figures on malnutrition for children showed that from 0 to 2.5 months, two-thirds of the children were malnourished. From 5 to 12 months, 40 percent, from 12 months to 15 years, it went down to 6 percent. Why do the figures go down? Well, you can figure that out: they die. The children didn’t eat, didn’t get fed, didn’t get fed in Rio de Janeiro as one consequence of “peace and prosperity.”

That story is duplicated throughout much of Latin America, where the United States has succeeded, from Haiti to Honduras to Guatemala and so on.

So much for the second element, raising of the living standards. What about democracy? Well, we’ve repeatedly insisted that this is the goal of our government. This is understandable. The most extreme form of democracy is Liberalism, which is probably a bad government. Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.” Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.” Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.” Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.” Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.” Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.” Or else: “the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people.”
There will be no Domino Effect of successful development emanating from Vietnam, and, in that sense, it is a very major victory for the United States.

1970s with the development of what were called "popular organizations," and therefore, something had to be done about them because there might be real democracy. We plainly don't tolerate that.

These two developments did lead to some action on the part of the United States. In October 1979, the U.S. supported a reformist coup which overthrew the Romero dictatorship. There was, in fact, considerable fear that he was going to go the way of Somoza. Well, what happened then? The U.S. insisted that some of the harshest and most brutal military elements be prominently placed in the junta. The killing rapidly increased right after the coup. By early 1980, the left Christian Democrats, socialists, and re-formist military elements had been eliminated from or had simply fled from the junta, and the country was in the hands of the usual thugs that we install in our domains. Duarte came in at that time as a useful cover, to preside over one of the great Central American massacres. The archbishop, Archbishop Romero, pleaded with President Carter not to send military aid. The reasons were the following; he said that military aid would "sharpen the repression that has been unleashed against the people's organizations fighting to defend their most fundamental human rights." Therefore he asked Carter not to send military aid. Well, of course, that was the very essence of American policy: namely, to increase mass murder and repression, to destroy the popular organizations, and to prevent the achievement of human rights, so naturally the aid flowed and the war picked up steam. Archbishop Romero was assassinated shortly afterwards. In May 1980, under Carter's remembrance, the war against the peasantry really took off in full force, largely under the guise of land reform.

The first major action was a joint operation of the Honduran and Salvadoran armies at the Rio Shumpu where about 600 people were killed as they tried to flee into Honduras. That massacre was
suppressed by the American press for about 15 months, though it was published in the world press and the Church press, right here in Cambridge, for example. In fact, American press coverage during 1970 was unbelievably bad. In June 1980, the university in San Salvador was attacked and destroyed by the army. Many faculty and students were killed and much of the university facilities were simply destroyed and demolished. In November the political opposition was massacred. Meanwhile the independent media were destroyed.

This war had a number of significant successes. The popular organizations were destroyed; therefore we can now permit democratic elections—now that there is no concern anymore that they might mean something. These elections are carried out in "an atmosphere of terror and despair, of massacre and gristy reality." That was the assessment by the head of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, Lord Chintis, with regard to the 1984 elections in El Salvador—rather different from the media coverage here, as you may recall. The point is that once the basis for democracy has been destroyed, once state terror has been firmly established, then elections are entirely permissible, even worthwhile, for the sake of American public opinion. The contrast between our alleged concern for elections today and our actual concern for elections in the 1970s is, again, informative. Well, that was a success, namely destroying the popular organizations and so on. There was also, however, a failure.

The failure was that people began to join the guerrillas. There were only a few hundred guerrillas when all of this began. They grew to many thousands during this period. Of course, that’s proof that the Russians are coming—anyone who understands the U.S. knows that. And, in fact, that is very similar to Vietnam in the 1950s. If you think through what I’ve just described, what happened in El Salvador under Carter and what happened in Vietnam under Eisenhower are very similar.

Well, meanwhile, we stepped up our war against Nicaragua, not because Nicaragua is brutal and oppressive. Even if you accept the harshest criticisms that have ever minimal basis in reality, by the standards of the governments that we support, Nicaragua is virtually a paradise. But we attack Nicaragua precisely because it is committed to a model of development that we cannot tolerate. Of course this is presented as defense against the Russians, and as proof that it’s defense against the Russians, we note that they receive weapons with which they can defend themselves against our attack. Foreign Minister d’Escoto pointed out that it’s like “a torturer who puts out the fingernails of his victim and then gets angry because the victim screams in pain.” Actually, a closer analogy would be a thug who hires a gun squad to beat up some kid in kindergarten who the thug doesn’t like, and then begins whining piteously if the child raises his arms to protect himself. That would be a pretty accurate analogy to what’s happening there.

Reagan’s problem in El Salvador is very similar to Kennedy’s in South Vietnam twenty years ago. There was severe internal repression in both cases, which was very successful in destroying popular organizations, killing a lot of people, and so on. However, the internal repression did elicit resistance which the state that we had installed was unable to control. Kennedy simply attacked South Vietnam with bombardment and defoliation. And Reagan has been trying to do the same thing in El Salvador for the last couple of years, but he has not been quite able to. He has been blocked by domestic opposition. He has therefore been forced to more indirect measures. These have certainly succeeded in terrorizing many people and causing vast misery, but not yet creating the resistance. We’re still short of U.S. Air Force bombings. I’ve mentioned some of the similarities. What are the differences? Well, the main difference is that the United

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