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Scene Two

Ann

A reflection on romance and travel

The target of my infatuation - Ann, for the purposes of this account - had departed Boston for London a week before the Michaud trial. By prior arrangement we agreed to meet in Paris at 2 p.m. on September 23rd.¹ I don't recall where, but likely at the offices of American Express, a familiar traveler's landmark in those days.² After Paris we planned an itinerary by rail within France and then, via the Orient Express, to Yugoslavia, and finally across the Adriatic back to Italy by ferry. From Rome Ann would continue alone to other parts of Europe and North Africa, and I would join Tod in Stockholm to visit members of the resister community before returning to New York. That political work is well documented, but there is but scant reference in the record to these travels with Ann, four weeks in all. A few snapshots in a photo album frame portals for retrieving mostly pleasurable details about our destinations, and alternately, for unlocking the memory of intense emotions that would burn their way through our brief relationship.

The photos also enshrine facts. Ann appears as she was eager and fresh, a shapely, pretty girl of 22. That past June she had graduated from Wellesley College with honors in economics. Gone were the days when grads of the Seven Sisters were being finished as brides for the Ivy League. Second Wave Feminism had arrived just in time for this generation of able and privileged young women. They were now positioned to become subjects of their own lives, not

merely enablers of a husband's career through self-sacrifice of their talents and ambitions. Like the majority of students in elite colleges at the time, Ann opposed the war; but not the system that spawned it. She flirted with political radicalism, but never bit the hook. The momentum of her training and accomplishments destined her for a job where she could advance through patterns of institutional competition. From early girlhood in an affluent suburb of Detroit, she ice skated and dived competitively. She played classical clarinet in chamber ensembles, and learned Spanish as an exchange student in Buenos Aires. And she could grind out the grades. I was freelance material, a consummate outsider; Ann was not.

The same photographs showcase my cocky, swashbuckling persona. At 28, I was never more physically attractive, tall and lean, long haired and mustachioed, and in a costume I seldom altered from the ankle boots up to the light Levy denim jacket over a tie-dyed shirt well opened at the chest. Despite the anxieties I have complained of, life had never been more glorious or more serious, and these were the energies I'm certain that drew Ann to me. The world I inhabited, urbane, peripatetic, rebellious but above all idealistic and purposeful appealed to both her curiosity to sample experiences not sanctioned by convention, and to her own goal driven personality. Ann admired the fact that Safe Return's activities gained public recognition with one dramatic action after another. Left wing radicals have not again attained the cultural celebrity we enjoyed - even two relatively small potatoes like Tod and I - within a broad universe of our peers from the mid-sixties through the Seventies, and stretching into the early Eighties, the Reagan years when the country again made a strong turn to the Right.

There's no denying there was something of the awestruck groupie in Ann, but that trait was easily checked by a fiercely independent nature. This was our common ground. We both pulled against the straightjacket roles that middle class mobility had mapped out for us, but her

gripe was with the system that limited women's empowerment, whereas my alienation ran deeper and sought to reject all authority but that of my own choosing.

As I say, there is no written record of our time in Europe. But I do have much of Ann's correspondence, forty-plus letters, all carefully re-read.³ Revisiting this one-sided chronicle was, in part, a tedious exercise that captures us mired in continual conflict. These tensions notwithstanding, Ann acknowledges in these letters repeatedly my formative influences on her in that period. And sometimes the words of love just spilled from her pen, and I know I felt loved when I read them, and utterly disarmed in that tormented swoon of romantic love that can never endure.

What disturbed me most about my own behavior was, not how domineering I could be - we were fairly matched on that ground - but how moonstruck possessive I remained, as if nothing of the true spirit of emancipation could penetrate that dark core common to us all which seems impervious to the good news of consciousness. Why was it so difficult to accept that girls too had wild oats to sow? Still, a desire to possess did not imply a reciprocal need to be possessed. I was, you might say, no easy catch for intimacy. And so, for three years Ann and I pulled - and pushed - against each other, and, as her correspondence demonstrates both concretely as well as convincingly we had good and honest reasons for coming together and good and honest reasons in the end to part. But that's getting ahead of my tale.

I met Ann in the summer of 1971 while living in D.C. She was an intern for Larry O'Brien, director of the Democratic National Committee in the very suite of the Watergate complex where, not a year later, Nixon's Republican Plumbers were caught in the act of breaking and entering to install electronic listening devices for spying on their party rivals. The intensity of the previous spring's antiwar mobilization now behind us, Jeremy Rifkin and I

would frequently wander over to the Dems' headquarters that summer to rap politics with the fast track young interns who'd also been radicalized by Vietnam.⁴ We would cajole them into volunteering the office Xerox machine for the many paged copies of veterans' war crimes testimonies we continued to distribute. I began to date Ann almost immediately after meeting her, even though she already had a steady up in Cambridge. Our first date consisted of downing a good bottle of Bordeaux and some heavy petting; I was smitten silly.⁵

Two months later, Ann joined me on trip to Haiti. I sometimes hung out with Tod after work at Boomer's, a Village jazz bistro where we'd met a guy with a fledgling travel business assembling package tours to Port Au Prince. The deal was so cheap that we easily convinced our women friends Pam and Ann, along with Tod's younger sister, Deborah, to join us on this exotic escapade. The several days we spent in a modest Gasthaus not far from the legendary Olafsson Hotel that Graham Greene memorializes in *The Comedians* were pleasant without obscuring the harsh scenes of desperate poverty we witnessed whenever we ventured beyond this protected enclave. The only moment I felt personally vulnerable was a dark night we accompanied Deborah's date, Gary, a very handsome upper class Haitian, to join a bunch of rough looking characters at a voodoo ceremony where, in the end, I was completely tranquilized by the drumming. It was the best I'd heard since my college year in Rio de Janeiro when I would stand transfixed before the intricate rhythms of the *batucada* bands of the *favelados* rehearsing for *Carnaval* near the house in Copacabana where I boarded. But my strongest memory of Haiti is a near donnybrook Ann and I staged on a bus ride to a strand near Port Au Prince, followed by a bout of love making of roughly the same intensity beneath our beach towels.

Ann returned from Haiti to finish her last year at Wellesley, and kept up with both her steady and me, and the occasional dalliance of opportunity; she was the-tell-all type, but always

smart enough to hold back a few well kept secrets I suspect - certainly enough to fuel suspicion. I was hardly monogamous, or, better, I was congenitally non-monogamous. But I didn't want to talk about it. There was a lot of sexual experimentation going around. I can't deny that the two main things on my mind at all times were sex and politics, politics and sex. In one twenty-four hour period, which would culminate several hours after Ann's arrival at my Fifth Street apartment, I slept with three women, including her. It's a modest record for a rake, I know, but the truth is, I could have saved myself the inevitable self-recriminations (and subsequent enmity of the other women), since the only one I made love to that day was Ann. Casual sex left me feeling empty rather than pleased or relieved. But lust was a hard vice to turn-off, and there were so many opportunities.

Ann's letters, rarely dated, were mostly written between late 1971 and early summer of 1973 according to their postmarked envelopes. After that we lived together, first in Cambridge, then in New York - at which point the trail of letters quickly thins - until our breakup early the following year. There were periods, while Ann traveled alone in Europe for example, when the letters were maddeningly sporadic. Other times, late at night in her dormitory room, possessed of a longing that local stimuli could not relieve, letters might come in bunches, three or four in a row, one of which might even lament, 'I tried to call you, but you weren't home.' The same disappointments ran in reverse when I attempted to get through on the ever busy dormitory pay phone.

We sometimes used a collect call, refused by design, to send a signal. It was cost-free, a gap in Ma Bell's business plan, and hardly unique to Ann and I. The practice was in universal use. The refused collect call could only express a single, simple piece of information. You were asked by the operator if you accepted charges or not. But the refusal was not the signal, it was

the call itself. It meant something different each time according to a prior arrangement. I'm coming. Or, alternately, I'm not coming. I've landed at the airport. Or, call me back. Our courtship was balanced by heat and ambivalence, the need for reassurance, mutual and constant. We could not long resist hearing each others' voices.

Boston being relatively close to New York, Ann and I also managed to see each other every few weeks during that seemingly endless stretch we dated long distance. Ann mostly escaped to New York to see this "older man," this "radical," and was subjected often to the sisterly criticism of friends and roommates for doing so, a fact she doesn't fail to mention in her letters, suggesting, on occasion, that maybe they are right. Ann was discovering New York in well-guided increments, and was always conscious of the education she was getting during these interludes. She was not, however, urban, in her truest nature. Ann was most at home outdoors, and enjoyed above all else strenuous sport and activity. We'd often spend our weekends outside New York exploring new hiking grounds, or, if in wintertime, on the slopes skiing.

It was Ann who turned me on to real hiking while we were both still living in Washington. I don't recall the context, but we were in the Shenandoah Valley, the "best camping trip in my life," Ann would comment a year later in one of her letters. I'm glad she thought so, but I can't begin to provide a single detail about it other than that I learned for the first time that a hike was not just a short walk on a nature trail. Even in Vietnam I'd never had to "hump the boonies" as the saying went; my limited patrolling was by day on targeted intelligence missions hunting Viet Cong cadres through the grasslands and paddies of the flat coastal plains.

Now I watched with delighted eyes as Ann bounded ahead, a lusty denizen of the woodlands. I tired quickly but she urged me on until that critical second-wind kicked in, a

physical state I had not really understood before, but have long since recognized as one of life's most valuable lessons. In short order and with steady practice I soon became confident in my ability to walk and climb over rugged terrain for hours. I think it took us thirteen exhausting hours, up and back, to scale Katahdin a year later, and nine hours for Mount Washington.

Not that I had ever avoided exercise or athletics. Far from it. I was a frequent and zealous basketball player from grade school until well into my forties, and even played some club lacrosse in college. I could often be relied upon to pull a rope down the left field line in softball, and was generally one of the more reliable gloves in some community or sandlot pick-up game. We all played football as boys; I never cared much for it and still don't. And anyone who doesn't think there's body contact in basketball hasn't really played the game. In my early thirties I took up modern dance and acrobatics, and learned to walk on my hands. Then there's been yoga, tennis and t'ai chi, haying, house renovations, bucking-up and splitting firewood, serious gardening and skating in fields on frozen ponds. An active life. But that discovery of the second-wind while hiking in the Shenandoah parklands with Ann also delivered a balm for my TB damaged lungs, just what I needed to rebuild breath and stamina. It is not generally in my skeptical makeup to advertize a cure-all, but I confess to the long held belief that incomparable benefits for mind and body are to be gained from a habit of regular and extended walking.

The longest-distance I covered back then was our courtship, and really the nineteen months Ann and I dated from separate cities doubled the time we eventually shared under the same roof. In this equivalent period Safe Return, with my full participation, would organize an international conference of exiles and stage manage a third dramatic surrender of a deserter, and these were just the major, most time consuming of our undertakings. Hours spent after work were almost as active as hours invested in the office. Tod and I shared what you could call a

lifestyle philosophy, embracing large doses of urban *Kultur* and lounging. We were out every night, often together, or linking up at the end of the evening if we had had separate rendezvous or theater plans. For years if Tod was meeting Pam Booth for a night cap I'd join them, often at Phebe's in the Bowery, but also at a half dozen other watering holes we all frequented. I'd sometime come accompanied, most often alone, and so would Jack Larson, Tod's fraternity brother from Michigan State, a stylish gent and witty conversationalist with a steady clientele as a commercial artist, including Safe Return, for his hip designs and hand lettering that gave our printed matter its ersatz Mad Ave. look.

I passed scores of variations of these evenings in those neighborhood hangouts with Tod, Pam, Jack as the main crew, but always with a numerous cast of others, some regulars, who wandered in and out of this tight circle, not just in the time I dated Ann, but through much of the seventies. And still, despite the complete submersion of my identity to the political work and the siren-like distractions of the great metropolis, I can reconstruct from memory alone a dozen excursions that took me out of New York within those nineteen months that Ann and I shared over weekends or longer, not including our month together in Europe.

The summer of '72, Ann having graduated the previous spring, we visited Maine. Along the way to Baxter State Park we would stop at the rural homestead where her father had spent some of his youth, and which her grandmother still inhabited. It was a road trip in the new Pinto her dad had given Ann as a graduation present; he was an executive at Dodge. I'd never been Down East before, never further north than Boston along the Atlantic seaboard. In the many years I have now lived in Maine, longer than the twenty I was in New York City, I am able to easily re-visualize the evolving, modernizing changes in the state since this inaugural trip with Ann. Some are trivial. The L.L. Bean we stopped at in 1972 was a charming trading post

compared with the mall-like spread of the Freeport giant today as we gallop well into the millennium. In the seventies, my costuming had a more roguish and individual flair. But I will here confess that I have long ago made L.L. Bean my haberdasher of choice. Not for fashion - though I recognize the brand is popular roughly with the same crowd nationwide that subscribes to the New Yorker. But for the durability of their wares, and the suitability of same to Maine's long winters and the rugged chores of country living.⁶

I remember clearly how Ann and I sat at a picnic table at some beachfront lobster shack and consumed the customary fare, right down to the soggy ear of corn. Then we drove north and maybe twenty miles inland to Searsmont, a plain hamlet along a winding back road with a saw mill, the white clapboard homes and farmsteads making a vernacular display of New England's old housing stock, the largest inventory of which is said to be found in Maine.⁷ At one such house we made a brief stop to meet the grandmother of the woman I was traveling with, although even now I recall how the lack of apparent familiarity between the two violated all the grandparent/grandchild protocols I was accustomed to. It didn't seem like a big deal to either of them. I never really thought to ask, but maybe her dad had left this place as if his butt was on fire. Many years later the woman I am calling Ann wrote that the visit to her grandmother's house "was memorable. The ice house. The root cellar. I'd never seen anything like it." I didn't get any of that from Ann's demeanor or anything she said that day.

On the way to Baxter to climb Mount Katahdin we had a nasty argument. It seems, if Ann's letter's can be considered an accurate record, that such episodes were entangled with our sex life. From Ann's point of view, a topic she touched on often when she wrote me, I pressured her to respond sexually as reassurance of her love. And, it's true, I couldn't keep my hands off her. But it was Ann who frequently initiated a passionate bout of making-out, privacy not

required. We could really get going hot and heavy in the back seat of a New York cab, which you only took in the city if you weren't in a hurry to get somewhere.

God knows we both had our hang-ups given the way our culture worked overtime to discourage healthy sexual development. Ann's main issue, not surprisingly, was around intercourse, fear of pregnancy, all that fumbling with jells and diaphragms at a time when men I knew only used condoms if they'd been with hookers. Ann to her credit framed this conflict within a mature vision of what was required of two partners in a modern relationship - a supportive friendship essentially. I didn't really get it then, and whether I was more or less backward in that regard than the average male of my generation and background, I am in no position to judge.

Then there was Sue Ellen, and the weekends Ann and I spent with her and her husband Howard at their old farmstead in New Hampshire, near the mill town of Claremont on the upper Connecticut River. Sue Ellen and Howard, both from Iowa, had married after college and headed for Peru in the Peace Corps. Sue Ellen returned home a full blown social activist, and for the period she and Howard lived in Manhattan, had been a reliable volunteer at CCI. She told me her father had given up a teaching job as a young man to buy the farm where she grew up, not unlike the scene Ann discovered lingering in her own grandmother's world. Sue Ellen's people kept critters, hayed their fields, grew and put up much of their own food. They may have had electricity by the end of World War Two, but not indoor plumbing. She often made weary mention of the two-seater out back of the house.

Visits to Sue Ellen's home in New Hampshire were seminars on the skills required of anyone backtracking to the land, and moving to the margins of the grid. Her kitchen was a small factory for producing good, fresh country cooking. The honeycomb in a pot came from her own

hives, eggs from her layers, and the herbs from a garden laid-out just beyond the kitchen door. There was a bottomless crock of sourdough starter on the counter, and always something simmering on the big wood fired cook stove. There were moments of discovery in such scenes that made these visits special to Ann and I alike, not least when we joined the crew over several days to frame out their new barn. It was the same weekend if memory serves when Sue Ellen's husband Howard, by then a lawyer with a small town practice in Claremont, broke his leg in several places trying to execute a forward flip, the timing and flexibility of his glory days as an athlete having long deserted him. This was, alas, characteristic of a certain unappealing hubris in the man; but everyone loved Sue Ellen.

Ann blended easily with the important women in my circle, women like Sue Ellen, and Pam Booth, both of whom were in their early thirties. They were seasoned women, and simultaneously pioneers and consumers of Second Wave Feminism with its frontal assault on male chauvinism. They were not women who attacked or hated men. These two in particular were unstintingly patient in my case as feminist mentors, which I cannot claim to have deserved but am grateful for. As I've commented already, the woman's consciousness raising movement and the many fruits it promised weren't a hard sell on intellectual or political grounds for most of the men I knew in the radical political milieu. When we, as men, spoke supportively of the feminist critique of sexism and struggle for equality, it wasn't just lip service. For many it was our good fortune, I believe, to have been over-sensitized since childhood to the less appealing burdens of the traditional male role, whether as paterfamilias or breadwinner. We were only too happy to consider a radical rearrangement of gender boundaries. We too wanted our freedom.

Many a night, seldom leaving the office before seven, Tod and I would join Pam and other women friends after a consciousness raising group had consumed the early part of their

evening. These meetings seemed to go on almost nightly during this intensely politicized period. They served as a kind of compression chamber for women who were digging deep among their gender grievances, and yet, after what could be grinding sessions, would emerge refreshed and empowered by the elixir of sisterhood. As for how the struggle fared between a given couple, my own case, or among my male friends and peers, I can report that it was better than what we were fleeing, but no free ride to gender enlightenment or unconditional love.

I will admit here to certain backsliding misgivings when, during her senior year, Ann began to write feminist tracts either for assignments or for the college newspaper. Such criticism could, after all, contain a point or two that might strike close to home despite one's professed sympathy for the feminist agenda. In one essay, "Rock the Boat, Not the Cradle," Ann confines herself to statistical revelations of a flawed meritocracy which ignored the fact that women, as Chairman Mao so sweetly put it, "hold up half the sky." Her closing line is priceless, a quote from a villain much reviled by the New Left, Dr. Grayson Kirk, the former President of Columbia University who had claimed: "It would be preposterously naive to suggest that a B.A. can be made as attractive to girls as a marriage license."⁸

In a post-sixties world, it's equally preposterous to imagine that leaders or academics who function in the higher reaches of the mainstream would allow themselves to be trapped in that conundrum. It's not that gaffes will cease to illuminate the inner-man or woman, and, in some cases, take them down. But middle-class and professional men today rarely talk about women in that way, no matter what their frustration with the orthodoxies of political correctness. Notable exceptions appear from time to time.⁹ I wonder if Kirk, assuming the quotation is accurate, ever had occasion to regret that shot to his own foot? Doesn't matter. I'll take Ann's word over the villain's, pleased that it's available to the likes of me for a bit of snide one-

upmanship at his posthumous expense. When you make an academic - or an author - look stupid, it doesn't get any worse than that. Of course, opinions differ.

Ann wrote one spirited defense of the antiwar movement in a direct clash with a schoolmate who posted in the student newspaper a cheeky bit of contempt for antiwar protesters who had gathered in the early spring of 1972. The reporter had written that "about 35,000 generally young demonstrators massed for apparently little other purpose than diversion in N.Y.'s Times Square, an area already noted for the quality of its entertainment." Ann's response was appropriately icy and indignant. "Let me point out," she observed, "it was pouring rain and cold that Saturday, and few persons would have turned out merely to entertain themselves." There's a tone of Ann, a senior, dressing down an underclassman (sic); the adversary is a freshman, and fledgling journalist. Ann accuses her of cynicism, when, perhaps, the girl is simply ignorant and unformed, probably trying to impress a professor with a show of reporter's neutrality which morphed into a cheap shot. I was proud of Ann for coming to the defense of the Movement, when I knew of her own skepticism on the value of demonstrations.

It needs to be restated here that neither the antiwar opposition much less the government nor the public at large at this late stage of the conflict, had reason to believe the end of the Vietnam War was yet in sight.¹⁰ The protests continued, even as the crowds ebbed and flowed depending on external events. At best, it was widely held that the fighting role of U.S. troops would soon be eliminated, but American air power would continue to support the South Vietnamese army. Of course, some U.S. troops would remain in support and security roles, the U.S. still anticipating a choreographed and orderly departure. But the end game for foreign occupiers seeking to withdraw their forces after failing to defeat a local insurgency, in my

reading of history at least, seems to always be a messy proposition, far from the well laid plans in military white papers and field manuals.¹¹

The vacation in Europe with Ann was an escape from all that, evidence, if nothing else, of my capacity to compartmentalize the complex realities and contradictions of the times into separate and manageable fragments. The feeling was of being on furlough, distant from the action to which, nonetheless, one was still eager to return in good time. In a postcard to my kid sister Maggi, a pre-teen back home in Babylon, Long Island, I wrote that Ann and I were taking in all the tourist sights of Paris. I failed to mention that we'd had another bout of *nesso al fresco* in the hedges of the gardens at Versailles. Ann's randy side never ceased to amaze me, all the more since in the privacy of the bed room she could suddenly turn cold and untouchable. It was not our dance around sexual intimacy that left a black mark on memories of this my latest stay in Paris, but a poor choice of charcuteries that laid me up with the runs for two days in our seedy Left Bank hotel.

Still, I can recall that we managed in a few days' time to take in Sacre Coeur and Sainte Chapelle, Notre Dame and the Louvre, the Jeu de Paume in the Tuileries Gardens, and all the literary dives and cafes associated with Joyce and Pound and Hemingway, plus stroll along the Seine and walk the town from end to end. We also had the company at times of a couple Tod and I had met while working on the Herndon case, two French writers and fellow *gauchistes*, Agnes Van Parys and Bernard Thomas. The international solidarity around opposition to Vietnam made easy comrades across cultures that might have otherwise harbored one dimensional stereotypes toward each other.

No doubt travel broadened me, and to Ann I must have appeared appealingly cosmopolitan, or so I fancied myself. In repudiation of the not so subliminal anti-French

sentiments I was schooled in as a teenager, mostly stemming from the tensions between the governments of Eisenhower and De Gaulle over U.S. leadership of NATO, from my very first visit there in 1970 I found the dreaded French to be much less haughty than advertised.

Parisians, like New Yorkers, could be thin skinned, an artifact of urban crowding I suppose. But the right approach, modest and respectful, to either species - New Yorker or Parisian - in the normal round of commercial or spontaneous encounters typically meets an accommodating response - sometimes over-accommodating - and on the rare occasion an outpouring of fellow-feeling for the sojourning stranger.

It was pure kindness and generosity, not political solidarity, which caused Agnes and Bernard to put into our hands keys to their country home in Brittany, where Ann and I were headed after a brief swing through Normandy and a day's touring Mont St. Michel. In an abbreviated exposure to an historical site of such unique splendor as St. Michel one is left only with gauzy traces of imagery in the mind's eye, the set piece of the singular monastic fortress seen shimmering in the mist while approaching along the tidal causeway; the archeological climb spiraling upward on worn stone treads through one monastery built upon another, even the sheep grazing on marsh hay surrounding the island at low tide - an iconic symbol of the place - were there, and may or may not have been the source of the mutton stew we would eat that night at the inn where we had taken a room.

I knew nothing of Brittany, other than that the old Gaelic tongue could still be heard there. Bernard, a handsome blond man of medium stature and Teutonic in appearance, grew up in that province and considered himself a Breton nationalist. The nationalist movement in Brittany, while perhaps not quite so evolved, was similar to that in other parts of Western Europe, Ireland, the Basque Provinces, Catalonia, Scotland, and so on, to the degree it was

grounded in a minority identity whose descendants still inhabited some ancient corner of a modern unified state, and formed parties to agitate for succession or home rule and to revive their own languages and cultural traditions in the face of pressures from a dominant, homogenizing majority.

As best I can reconstruct our itinerary, our destination was near Quimper, and nothing prepared Ann or I for the stunning chateau that our casual acquaintances in Paris had bestowed on us.¹² It was a rich man's abode to give it my crudest off-the-cuff interpretation, three massive stone sections, gabled and towered, five stacks with multiple chimney pots along the roof line. Approached by a dirt drive, the imposing structure sat on spacious under-landscaped headlands and faced a wild unbroken panorama of the English Channel. Was there a caretaker on the scene? I don't think so. And, oddly, I have not a single remote recollection of the interior of the place, nor of where or how we slept there. Up the lane that led us there from wherever it was the train had left us - most likely Audierne - were a cluster of old stone houses occupied by local farm families.

In one outdoor photograph of Ann, looking sullen, there is also a dog and a small motorbike. Were we fighting again? Probably. Whose dog? No idea. But we used the motorbike a couple of times on runs for food, including fresh eggs and milk from a neighboring farm. Perhaps Ann knew more French than I remember, and she helped bridge the language barrier, though, in truth, I had enough of the rudiments of French to get along on my own. More holes in the story, the inexplicable selectivity in what's retained and what's discarded from any given experience of the past. I may have erased certain of the more prosaic day-to-day details of our stay, an argument for journal keeping, albeit an exercise I have never been able to abide. I could be a fastidious note taker when doing research or dabbling in journalism, but not where my

own life was concerned. This was my private life, not my work, not my subject; I was living it fully, not examining it as I am now.

What does remain vivid is a memory of Brittany as a magical place, full of delightful surprises. One morning we struck out from the house, and went walking across rolling fields marked by low stone walls, acre after acre, suddenly coming upon the ruin of a roofless Romanesque chapel. The walls, remarkably intact, were all bulk and rectangles but no less admirable and spell binding for that. I kept thinking, it's just here from, what? - the twelfth century? And it's not protected, or undergoing restoration, or preservation? No admission. So many ruins of the ancient days that you can afford to ignore them? It was an spate of random observations, not a judgment. Here was the self-proclaimed cosmopolite as just another innocent gawking Yank off the reservation.

I know Ann was just as blown away as I was, exploring this perimeter of Old Europe where many of the locals we saw wore traditional clothes, the women with lace bonnets like Mennonites in the U.S., but more elaborate like Spanish Mantillas. The term medieval would seem well-chosen to describe the look of a nearby town that had been growing there for centuries, and whose inhabitants treaded nimbly over cobbled pathways in wooden shoes. Framed within the stone fields that surrounded the town you could see folks laboring, hoeing the ground with tools of the ages. It wasn't a re-enactment, like Williamsburg or Greenfield Village, it was real. The cliché of going back in time hundreds of years courtesy of an entrenched or hidden minority culture was validated here - and to our extraordinary delight - this was not Borneo or the Amazon forest - but Europe, the epicenter of modernity. It would not be the last time on this trip that Ann and I would catch snatches of tableaux from European life rooted deep in the past.

Having read ahead perhaps from the Michelin Guide, Ann had a modestly active schedule for sightseeing in a given locale. Less touristically inclined, I was prone to just wander, my senses open to absorbing a place, and if I was really drawn to it, daydream about coming back someday for an extended stay.¹³ Still I was companionable enough to go along with Ann's agenda, which always delivered something worth the effort. I don't recall that this topic was ever a cause of contention between us. Ann probably would have suggested the excursion to the Isle de Seine, a nearby Channel Island, one of those stark, windswept places where the rocky shoreline seems to meld into the densely packed inhospitable village assembled from the same material. The only snapshot is of me posing between two menhirs in an old church yard, a nice shot for a New Left fashion catalogue of the seventies. Frankly, the menhirs meant nothing to me. I'd never looked with much curiosity on my own Celtic roots, or their deeper stories and traditions, and had only minimal exposure to Gaelic in my linguistic studies. But I have the Irish in me, and no doubt I've been influenced from birth to feel nostalgia for the old sod and the old gods, breathed in with lullabies and Mother's smiling Irish eyes.

We traveled back to Paris en route to Yugoslavia, where we planned at least a week's stay. The enclosed compartment in the train didn't seem to improve our respective moods, which migrated from benign tolerance extended between two parties who are at least still speaking to passive hostilities, usually in the form of mutual withdrawal. I do remember that the couchettes were too short and damned uncomfortable. I slept badly, and, I'm sure, woke up ill-tempered. And then there were all those mixed signals about physical contact, which I no doubt took personally. In the worst instances - and I am dutifully ashamed to admit it - I would hold onto that rejecting mood like a stubborn child, long after a more sensible person would have just

let it go. I think that was a trick I learned from my parents, but by now it was completely mine, shaded I have no doubt by some brand of war fatigue.

Zagreb was drab, and we left immediately for whatever station one disembarked from for the Plitvice Lakes region, where we were determined to get in some real hiking. I only recall that we did this, and that the park was everything the guide book promised, only more so. A place of incomparable natural beauty. One descends rapidly in places along the trails, surrounded by gorges cut deep in the rock face overspread thickly with vegetation. Add the falls and the lakes and our moods, not surprisingly, quickly lightened and took flight.

I myself had never expected to find in Yugoslavia - which in some semi-unconscious recess of my mind was still coded: drab Eastern European Communist country - to be, by my lights, the most captivating mix of geography I would ever visit. I would be hard pressed to put words to the sensations behind that estimation which, nonetheless, remain so strong within. I have never seen a topography that, taken in its own scale, compelled my wonder and admiration more whether seen from land or sea. I've been to many stunning foreign places both before and since. For example, no city I've ever visited comes close to Rio's contours and configuration, the curvaceous beaches of the Zona Sul, the rocky towers randomly scattered at water's edge and climbing high into the air, most notably in Botofogo and Gavea, the stepped highlands and patches of Atlantic forest rising above the sea¹⁴. These broad descriptive details about Rio come easily to the page; I've lived there. The issue of scant familiarity notwithstanding, but trusting to a deep impression that no rival has yet dislodged, the former Yugoslavia still tops my list.

Now, to be clear, what I'm gushing over is exclusively the natural beauty. Based on Zagreb, we assumed all the cities to be dreary on the Soviet model and so made no plans to visit Belgrade or even Sarajevo. The country's tourist infrastructure was primitive. The food was

bland and starchy, and accommodations in the places where we stayed consisted mostly of rented rooms in private homes whose owners did not possess, shall we say, the innkeeper's calling. In fact they were inexplicably unpleasant, as if enormously put-out and resentful of our very presences. We were mostly in Croatia, it's true, so there may have been a chill of anti-Americanism lingering from World War 2 given Croatia's easy collaboration with the Nazis, and which, owing to my then complete ignorance of history in the Balkans, I defensively translated into a stereotype of the unfriendly Slav. In Split the remains and ruins of Diocletian's Palace, a magnificent relic of ancient imperial grandeur, stimulated much curiosity in my imagination, and more than redeemed whatever minor discomforts we had suffered during our stay. There was, amusingly, cast off evidence of the world abandoned by ancient Rome everywhere in Split, even in the scrubby lot behind a supermarket where I had Ann pose for a photo on a pedestal, one of several chunks of fluted column that were strewn about there.

There was a day trip to Hvar, one among the several popular excursions to Adriatic islands in the waters around Split. Whatever the postcard image of the place - I have since seen Hvar's architecture described as *Venetian* - what I most strongly recall is looking over the wharf's edge and seeing several fathom deep clear to the sea bottom. You could count the pebbles. This was far from my experience whenever I cast my eyes upon the opaque waters of the Hudson and East Rivers back home in New York. Along that whole stretch of the Adriatic down to Dubrovnic and beyond, wherever I chanced to look, the water was equally pristine. It was a remarkable sight.

Something touristy about Dubrovnic displeased us, and we did not linger there. But again, it's one of those places not uncommon in Europe - a charming and well-preserved walled city that archives the tales of many epochs - where one might enjoy a fortnight's stay to savor

what one could never manage in a single night.¹⁵ From there we traveled, probably by bus, to Stari Bar, a port in lower Montenegro, for the crossing to Italy. We were told that most of the people in this region were ethnic Albanians. Near a small but notably well-preserved amphitheater of the late Roman period we met some of them, and briefly befriended a family who sold us a paper cone filled with large, succulent green olives. Ann also accepted a pomegranate which she professed to like, but to me the fruit was much work for little payoff. The single photo of this moment shows me in wire rimmed glasses, looking relaxed and content and seated in an olive grove against the thick base of what Italians call *secolari*, trees that are centuries old, flanked by three lovely Albanian kids; twenty-five paces to the rear stands the diminutive figure of their watchful mama, and a solid one story Mediterranean-style home.

In front of me, and behind the camera, was Ann. She seems to have taken most of the photos, which would explain why I was by a slight margin the subject more frequently than she. There are approximately ten shots of us in my possession that help document this trip. I was alone in more of them than she was, while in two of them in Paris we're together. We probably didn't shoot more than a roll of film, at least while together, assuming that was my camera. And we apparently kept only the shots that were decent. I hope that duplicate copies were made, and if Ann retains a photo of me, it's this one with those Albanian kids. The picture somehow reminds me that there were deeply shared and loving moments between us during this trip, and at times, rather than stormy lovers, we were close companions together on a shared adventure.

Alas the tensions between us had already risen to such a pitch that, within the week, having finally arrived in Rome, my free travel time by then expired, we abruptly and angrily went our separate ways. A silence of several weeks followed this bad parting while Ann continued her travels alone. When a letter finally arrived in late November, Ann wrote of being

“depressed about our relationship,” and “confused about what I want... I have such horrible memories of our arguments... Can we love each other, or are we past that point?” These questions were both poignant and sincere, then hastily followed by newsy accounts of traveling around North Africa with new companions, sometimes other men. This was a blow to a jealous man, and such news made me suffer terribly, but I remained sanguine about my life, and resigned that this break-up, while unwanted, was probably irreparable. I could fight much more tenaciously in the intellectual arena of politics than the emotional arena of love.

In drawing the conclusion that it was over, I had completely misread Ann’s state of mind. There’s no doubt that I had become a drag on what she may have viewed as a once in a lifetime opportunity to travel completely independently before settling into marriage and career. I only speculate. I was nonetheless completely caught off guard when, by early December, Ann again wrote that she was toying with the idea of “going to Israel instead of coming home.” She was also “thinking about our relationship...” about how she enjoyed talking with me, and, then, throwing a totally unexpected curve, advised that “we should both give in more.” I suddenly grasped that the relationship still had a spark. Ann went on, “I like what you are and your ideology... and hope you still care enough to consider trying to make things work. I hope I’m not writing to a blank wall.” She closed ominously expressing her continued indecision about going to Israel. She didn’t.

Over Christmas, I was a guest at Ann’s parent’s home near Detroit. In reply to my bread and butter thank-you note, her mother’s words say it all. She wrote that I fit in well over the holidays, “a family type rather than a guest type, an important distinction.” It was a dizzying transition I’ll admit, but it seemed perfectly natural at the time. There was a brief moment when we actually thought we were headed for the altar, so blinded did we become, and so quickly, to

the emotions that dissolved our differences into fantasies. Mercifully, it never even got to the pre-planning, planning stage.

By the summer of 1973, I had joined Ann in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was working at Brandies for an economist, and I pretended I was getting primed for some serious writing. We rented a tiny two-by-four on a side street until it was time to house-sit, back-to-back, in a couple of fine homes belonging to senior Harvard faculty gone off somewhere for a month. We might play a round of tennis in the early morning on the courts at Radcliffe College before Ann biked off for work to Waltham, and I took out the typewriter or made the rounds of the Movement roosts and offices in and around Boston. This uprooting to Cambridge was a compromise on my part, so we could end the long months of separation before returning to New York in the fall to an apartment of our own. No one at Safe Return, which included a few new faces by then, was thrilled about my summer sabbatical. I will reprise this episode when it reoccurs in the ongoing chronology, and add a bit more detail to this, my much faded portrait of Ann and to the other goings on that summer.

Our cohabitation in New York on East 9th Street lasted barely six months, although I have no record on which to base that claim other than my vague memory that it was early spring when Ann moved out. It got to the point where I dreaded hearing her footsteps approaching our door as she came home even later than I did from the grown-up job she had with the city. I have no doubt her dread was on a similar scale, if at a higher key. The idea of marriage had been ludicrous, at least for me. I had no space in my head then for thinking about what marriage would really entail. I was married to the revolution, and I'm only being partially facetious. Ann's reasons, I'm sure, equally incorporated the view of our fundamental mismatch, despite the deep and genuine attraction we had felt for each other. It was an easy let down for both of us.

We didn't even formally break up. That took place in measured increments, until finally there was another guy, and then another, along with a more serious job and a move back to Cambridge. Ann was launched. I mourned the loss of this relationship obliquely in a series of despairing, gloomy poems composed late on lonely nights, while from all external appearances I went blithely along my way.

Notes in progress...

1. Personal correspondence.

5. Break-in took place that summer... reference April demo, Dewey Canyon, May Day for the record.

6. Ayuh!

7. This factoid came to me through a source I no longer recall when I was engaged in writing, *Exploring Maine on Country Roads and Byways*, 1991, Clarkson N. Potter. I can only say that I recall finding the source credible at that time.

8. Re. Kirk

11. As this book is being written, American forces again confront the obstacles of withdrawing from not one, but two occupations on foreign soil, Iraq and Afghanistan. Again U.S. fighting forces are held to a standoff, and therefore, arguably, defeated on the field of battle, while, paradoxically, achieving U.S. security goals in maintaining the strategic status quo in the face of eroding American global hegemony.

12. I believe I was told that the place was a summer retreat for Agnes' family, her father having been a well known composer of musical theater. Also Bernard, *Voyage of Yann*.

14. Also accompanied by the historic damage wrecked upon a large Black population, repressed and beat down until the eighties, surrounding the Cidade Maravilhosa in the most horrific of slums known as the *favelas*. And the crime, chaos and anarchy that has followed... and so on.