

ROYA

PUBLICATION

No. 30

MODEL AND MEADOW



EVA R. · II. 1943



MARTA · III. 1943



ZUZANA · IV. 1943



TRUDE · V. 1943



HELGA · VI. 1943



LENKA · IX. 1943



RUTH · XI. 1943



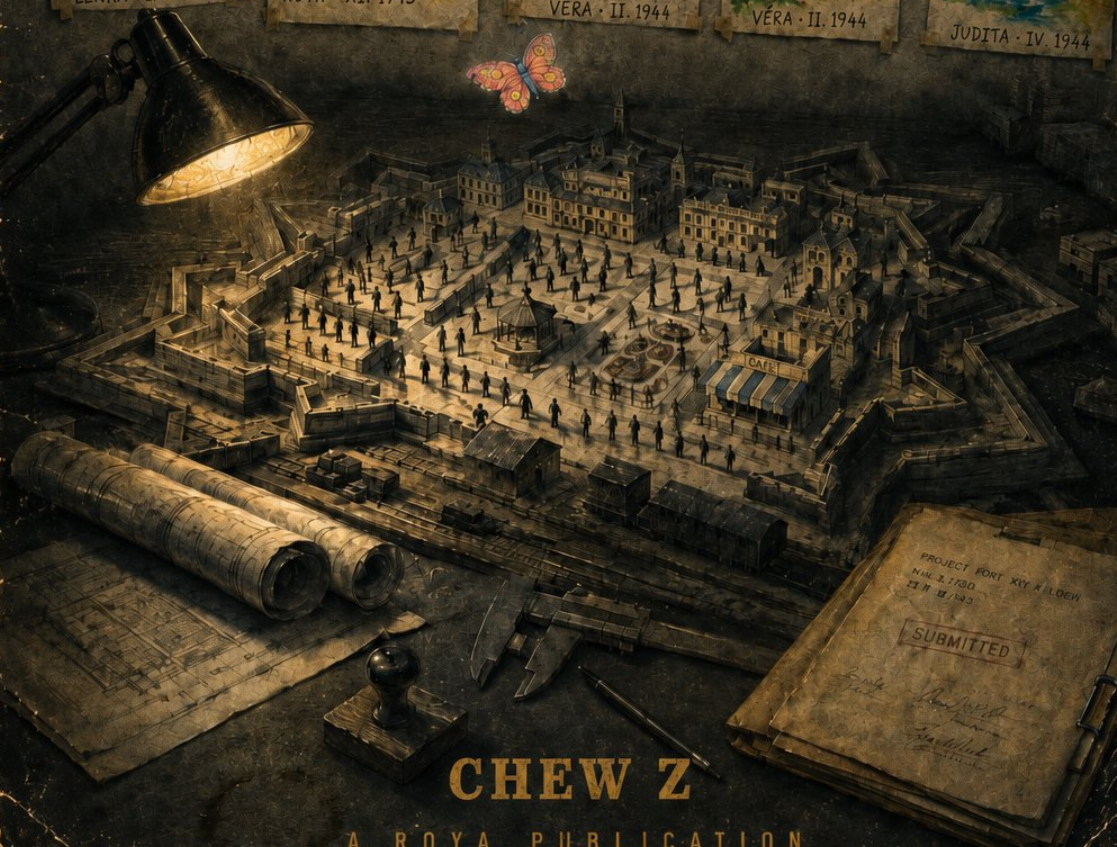
VĚRA · II. 1944



VĚRA · II. 1944



JUDITA · IV. 1944



CHEW Z

A ROYA PUBLICATION

MODEL AND MEADOW

Chew Z

Printed in the Reach

Roya Publication No. 30

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2026 Chew Z

All rights reserved.

ISBN 979-8-952790-29-2

Roya Publications

Publication No. 30

Typeset in DejaVu Serif.

Printed in the Reach

This is a work of fiction, standing closer to documented persons than any other in this series. The Theresienstadt ghetto, its children's homes and secret culture, the Beautification and the Red Cross visit of June 1944, the Birkenau family camp and its liquidation, and the life, method, transport, and suitcases of the painter and teacher Friedl Dicker-Brandeis are matters of historical record, used with the intention of fidelity and homage; her dialogue herein is invented. Eva, Honza, Hana, and the particular inhabitants of Room Twenty-Eight are products of the author's imagination, built from the documented testimony of the real rooms; any resemblance to actual persons beyond those named as historical is coincidental.

*Four lines make a frame.
Inside the frame, whatever you can hold;
outside the frame, whatever holds you.
Draw carefully.
The frame does not choose sides.*

— instructions from a drawing class, as a student wrote them down

THE TWO SUITCASES



The archive of the Thursday class as it was lifted from under the roof of the girls' home in June 1945: four and a half thousand drawings, each signed and dated, sorted by child, hidden in two suitcases by the teacher in the week before her own transport. The four sheets are one girl's course — a leaf, a window, a wagon, and the last exercise, in which the class drew the teacher and she asked that the page be signed by both names. The yellow square is the one the teacher dealt out to the class, one to each girl, from the paper she had carried in her fifty kilos.

both dates entered. the count was kept. — E. R.

SYNOPSIS

Terezín, 1942. The fortress ghetto is a town built to be looked at — the “model ghetto” the machinery keeps for showing, where sixty thousand people live in a town of seven thousand beds and two truths run at all times, one inside the other. Eva, eleven, is assigned to Room Twenty-Eight of the girls’ home, where thirty girls run a civilization on a constitution of their own — and where, on Thursdays, in a basement, a small grey-haired woman who packed fifty kilos of paper instead of clothes teaches drawing. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, Bauhaus-trained, does not teach the vase on the table. She teaches a practice: breathing, rhythm, seeing — a discipline that opens, for one bordered hour a week, a country the ghetto cannot enter. She never corrects a drawing. She keeps every one: signed, dated, sorted — an archive growing in secret, week by week, against the lists.

As the transports grind east and the postcards of ghosts come back, Eva — the room’s registrar, keeper of the going-away songs — becomes the archive’s living half: matching pages to children, entering both dates when the dates are doubled. Then the machinery decides to answer the world’s questions in its favorite medium: the town is beautified, a delegation of the world’s own certified eyes walks through a lie built of conscripted truth and finds it almost normal — and the autumn transports empty the certified town. Before her own train, the teacher packs four and a half thousand drawings into two suitcases and hides them under a roof, and hands a fourteen-year-old the register. This is a book about the fifth altered state of the war cycle — the frame: attention trained until it becomes a room the lists cannot inventory — and about the only ledger in these five books that survived into daylight, where it hangs now, signed and dated, still teaching the one assignment: look at it until you see it.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

This book stands inside a documented place, and closer to documented people than any other in this cycle, and I owe the reader an exact accounting of the border between record and invention. Theresienstadt — Terezín — was real, and was what this book says it was: the “model ghetto” maintained for showing, through which some 140,000 people passed, where a quarter died of hunger and disease in the town itself and most of the rest were transported east; of the roughly 15,000 children who passed through it, perhaps one in ten survived. The children’s homes were real, and the secret schooling, the boys’ magazine produced weekly and hidden in a suitcase, the children’s opera performed fifty-five times, the tribunal-and-rota civilization of the girls’ rooms. The September 1943 “family camp” at Birkenau was real: kept six months as a contingency exhibit, its remaining 3,792 people were gassed on the night of March 8, 1944 — many singing — and postcards in their handwriting, post-dated past their deaths, were mailed afterward on schedule. The Beautification was real: the painted route, the pavilion, the café, the bank with its Moses currency, the shop windows dressed with the prisoners’ own confiscated goods — and the Red Cross visit of June 23, 1944, whose delegate found the town “almost normal,” was real, as were the propaganda film shot on the same scenery and the eleven autumn transports that then emptied the certified town.

And Friedl Dicker-Brandeis was real, and this book is, among its other debts, an act of homage to her. Bauhaus-trained under Itten and Klee, a painter and designer of standing, she declined her own escape, packed art materials in her transport allowance, and taught drawing to hundreds of Terezín’s children — beginning classes with breathing and rhythm exercises, refusing correction, insisting on the signed and dated name — while secretly collecting their work. Before volunteering to follow her husband east in October 1944, she packed some 4,500 drawings into two suitcases and hid them; she was murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau on or about October 9,

1944; the suitcases were recovered after the liberation and their contents now rest with the Jewish Museum in Prague — the largest surviving body of witness made by children in the entire war, and the reason this cycle's fifth ledger, alone of the five, hangs today in public daylight. Her method, her packing, her transport and her insistence on names and dates are matters of record; her dialogue in these pages is invented, with the intention of fidelity to her documented teaching. Eva, Honza, Hana, Room Twenty-Eight's particular inhabitants and the magazine *Máják* are inventions, built from the documented testimony of the real rooms, the real editors of the real hidden magazines, and the real survivors who carried the register — and nothing structural in this book is invented at all.

What drew me, inside that record, was the substance — because this is the only book of the war cycle whose altered state was administered on purpose, by a teacher, as a discipline. The vigil was ancient rite; the clarity was the body failing; the stillness and the rocking were survival improvised by the trapped. The frame was taught: breathing to unknot the body, rhythm to free the hand, and then attention — trained, weekly, until it could open what one student in these pages calls the quiet behind the eyes, a bordered country in which a child in a death-machine's antechamber was, for one hour, a maker with a name and not a number. The drawings that survive show both of its faces at once, and this is what the after-years keep failing to hold about them: meadows and butterflies from the same hands, on the same afternoons, as unflinching pencil studies of the wagons and the queues. The children knew everything. The frame was never a blindfold. It was the discipline that made the knowing survivable — and the Quarrel at this book's center, between a girl of fourteen and her teacher over whether the hour was resistance or anesthesia, I have left standing with both pans loaded, because the teacher's own answer is the best I have found and it does not close the beam: she could not stop the trains; she could determine what boarded them.

Readers of Philip K. Dick will have felt a resonance running under the Beautification chapters, and it is intended, and I will name it: in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, exiles on a dead world chew Can-D to be translated into the Perky Pat layout — a lovingly

detailed miniature of the world denied them. Terezín's Beautification was a Perky Pat layout built at one-to-one scale, by the captors, with the world itself as the intended chewer; the Red Cross certificate was the wafer; and the children's drawn windows were the counter-layout — translation that restores the seer instead of erasing him. Dick understood, better than any writer of his century, that the question is never whether we will live inside constructed worlds, but who constructs them, and toward which direction they face. Attentive readers of this imprint may guess what the name on its spines has owed that novel all along.

A word on the final chapter's file: Theresienstadt's documented character — showcase, transit hub, instrument of deception, a place through which SS personnel and procedures moved on their way east — is a matter of record; the reading-room correspondence Eva encounters, which condenses that instrumental character into its darkest engineering implication, is invented, and the fall it delivers is the novel's and not the archive's. The consortium's letter is invented too, and I wish I were confident it always will be.

A last word about the looking. Every book of this cycle has turned on the world's refusal to witness — the marsh unvisited, the word withheld, the doors locked for a generation. Terezín is the terminal case: the world came. It walked through the town in person, earnest, with a camera and a form, and was shown a lie built of conscripted truth, and certified it. Attendance, this book concludes, is nothing; the delegate stood closer to the truth than any free man in Europe and saw less of it than a schoolchild sees today in one signed drawing. Seeing is a discipline, it is teachable, and it was taught — in a cellar, on Thursdays, by a woman who then carried her method into the wagon with her students rather than leave them unaccompanied at the border. The suitcases were her answer to the delegation, prepared in advance and addressed to the future: four and a half thousand witnesses, names and dates. Nobody believes a number. Everybody believes a child's picture. Look at it until you see it.

Chew Z

CONTENTS

I. THE TOWN

ONE. THE MODEL GHETTO	13
TWO. ROOM TWENTY-EIGHT	15
THREE. THE TEACHER	17
FOUR. THE LISTS	21
INTERLUDE I. THE BREATHING	24

II. THE METHOD

FIVE. THE PAINTED WINDOW	28
SIX. HONZA'S MAGAZINE	30
SEVEN. THE OPERA	32
EIGHT. THE SEPTEMBER TRANSPORT	34
INTERLUDE II. THE EMPTY CHAIRS	37

III. THE BEAUTIFICATION

NINE. THE GARDEN AND THE BANK	41
TEN. THE VISIT	44
ELEVEN. THE QUARREL OF THE CLASSROOM	47
TWELVE. THE AUTUMN TRANSPORTS	50
INTERLUDE III. THE LAST CLASS	53

IV. THE SUITCASE

THIRTEEN. THE TWO SUITCASES	57
INTERLUDE IV. THE MUSEUM	59
FOURTEEN. THE SECOND THING	62

I. THE TOWN

ONE. THE MODEL GHETTO

The town was built to hold seven thousand people, and when Eva came through its gates in the winter of 1942, at eleven years old, with one suitcase and a number on a string around her neck, it held sixty thousand.

Terezín had been a fortress town once — a garrison built by an emperor, star-shaped walls, straight streets, barracks the color of old custard — and the numbers on their own tell most of what the word ghetto meant here: a town of seven thousand beds and sixty thousand people, which is to say a town where the beds were stacked three high in every room and attic and the arithmetic never stopped being wrong. But the numbers do not tell the strange thing, the thing that made this place different from the other stations of that machinery, the thing Eva would need two years and a drawing teacher to understand: Terezín was built to be looked at.

The Germans had a name for it in their documents that nobody inside ever used: the model ghetto. The old and the decorated were sent here — war veterans with medals, the famous, the elderly bought here with contracts promising a spa town — because these were people whose disappearance the world might ask about, and Terezín was the answer prepared in advance. It was the ghetto for showing. When the questions came — from the Red Cross, from neutral countries, from anyone the machinery still bothered to answer — the answer would be: come and see. And so the town had two truths running at all times, one inside the other: the truth of the beds and the soup and the lists, and the truth prepared for visitors; and everyone who lived there lived in both at once, the way you live in a house and in the photograph of the house simultaneously, and can never entirely forget the camera.

Eva was assigned to the children's homes, because Terezín had those too, and they were real — the strange doubleness again, the thing the histories still argue about: inside the showing-town, the prisoners had built an actual world for their children. The Jewish self-administration, given the choice of where to spend the little it controlled, had spent it on the young: the children's homes with their own rooms and their own carers, extra grams of margarine

skimmed from everyone's ration, and — forbidden, disguised, carried on daily under the word "activities" — school. Eva went to Room Twenty-Eight of the girls' home, a room the size of a classroom holding thirty girls aged eleven to thirteen, bunks to the ceiling, one window, a list of duties on the door, and a motto the girls had voted on themselves.

She would spend the rest of her life explaining Room Twenty-Eight to people who wanted Terezín to be only the first truth, and she learned to say it plainly, the way all the clerks of the unwitnessed seasons learn to say their one impossible thing: we were hungry, we were frightened, we were dying — a quarter of the town died in the town, of hunger and typhus, before a single train went east — and inside all of that, we had a civilization. The adults of the town — and the town held, because of who had been sent there, a great share of the musicians and professors and painters of Central Europe — the adults gave it to the children deliberately, ration by ration, lesson by lesson, as policy. There were lectures in attics. There were choirs. There was an opera for children, rehearsed in a cellar. There was a magazine written by boys, produced every Friday on stolen paper. It was not that the town pretended things were normal; nobody pretended; the lists went up on the boards and everyone read them. It was the opposite of pretending. It was a decision, made by people who understood exactly what was happening, about what to do with children inside it: that since nothing could be promised them, not even the summer, they would be given the whole inheritance now — music now, mathematics now, drawing now — the entire treasury of the civilization handed over early, in a fortress, in whispers, ahead of the trains.

She did not understand the decision at eleven. She was hungry, missed her mother across the town in the women's barracks, hated the fleas, loved the choir, and stood in the soup queue with her bowl like everyone else. Understanding came later, and it came — this is why her testimony belongs to this cycle, why the season put her where it put her — it came through a particular door, on a particular afternoon in the first weeks of 1943, when the room leader announced that drawing lessons would begin on Thursday, in the basement, with Mrs. Brandeis; and thirty girls went down the

stairs on Thursday with the town's two truths hanging over them like weather; and at the bottom of the stairs, in a low room with paper laid out on the tables — real paper, scavenged office forms, the backs of German requisition blanks — stood a small woman in her forties with grey coming into her dark hair, who looked at them with a steadiness none of them could place, and did not say welcome, and did not say sit, but said, as if resuming a conversation begun long before any of them were born:

"Before we draw anything, we are going to learn to breathe."

TWO. ROOM TWENTY-EIGHT

Room Twenty-Eight ran on a constitution. That is the first thing to record about it, because the visitors of the after-years, hearing "thirty girls in one room in a ghetto," imagine a heap, and it was the opposite of a heap: it was the most organized place Eva ever lived, before or since, and the organization came from the girls.

There was a rota for everything — floor washing, bread cutting, the fetching of the soup pails, the airing of mattresses against the fleas — copied out weekly in the room's best handwriting. There was a court: disputes over a borrowed comb or a queue-place went before a tribunal of three girls, elected monthly, whose verdicts carried the gravity of a supreme bench. There was a flag, sewn from a ruined shirt. There was the motto, voted on and painted on cardboard above the door, and Eva would keep the words all her life the way other survivors kept numbers: that a person is worth what her help is worth. And there was, above and around the girls, the quiet architecture of the carers — the young women of the home, prisoners themselves, twenty-two, twenty-five years old, who ran the rooms like ship's captains and had made, without ever saying it aloud, the decision the whole children's floor was built on: that whatever else was taken, the girls would not be permitted to become what the town was trying to make them.

Because the town tried. The town was hunger, and hunger is a tutor with one lesson; the town was the queue, and the queue teaches elbows; the town was the lists, and the lists teach that your neighbor's name and your name are competitors. Every current of

the place ran toward smallness — toward hoarding, informing, the shrinking of the soul to the size of a bread ration — and the rooms of the children's home were built directly against the current, deliberately, like weirs. Bread was cut by one girl and chosen by another, the cutter choosing last. A parcel from outside — the rare miracle — was divided thirty ways or it poisoned the room, and the dividing was enforced by nothing but the motto on the door, which is to say absolutely. Eva watched a girl of thirteen divide her dead grandmother's last parcel into thirty parts with a wetted thread, weeping, precise, and understood that she was watching the room's whole constitution performed in a single act: grief made public, sweetness made common, the town's arithmetic refused.

The rooms had their own economy of rank, and it ran on the opposite currency from the town's. In the town, standing came from what you had — a better bunk, a job in the kitchens, a protector. In Room Twenty-Eight, standing came from what you gave: the best-loved girls were the menders, the rememberers of birthdays, the ones who sat with the homesick new arrivals through the first nights, the girl who could recite whole chapters of novels after lights-out, installments, cliffhangers, a serialized civilization delivered in the dark. Eva's own standing, she discovered, came from a habit she had brought from her school notebooks without knowing it was worth anything: she kept records. She became the room's registrar — the rota was hers, the birthday list was hers, the minutes of the tribunal were hers — and later, when the drawing classes began and the register she kept turned into the one this book is about, she understood that Room Twenty-Eight had been her apprenticeship: the room had taught her that in a place designed to erase people, the keeping of any accurate list of them is not clerical work. It is defiance with a ruled margin.

And the room taught her the lists' other face, because the lists came. Transport was the word the town used — to the East, the notices said, resettlement — and when a transport was called, the summonses went out by number in the night, and the room would wake to find two of its beds being packed. What the East was, nobody in those years knew and everybody feared with a fear that had no floor; letters did not come back from it, or came strange and

few. And Room Twenty-Eight had evolved, without any adult designing it, a liturgy for transport mornings: the summoned girl's bread was made up by the whole room, each bunk contributing from its own; her rucksack was packed by the four best packers, everything rolled tight, the room's collective expertise applied like a guild's; small treasures were pressed on her — a pencil stub, a carved button, riches; and at the door, before she went down to the assembly point with her number on her chest, the room stood and sang her out — one song, chosen by her, sung quietly because singing at dawn drew wardens, thirty girls around a rucksack singing almost in a whisper — and then the beds were shifted, and the rota was recopied in the best handwriting, one name fewer, and the day's soup was fetched on schedule.

Eva kept the going-away songs in her register too, next to the names. She could not have said why. She was twelve. It would take the drawing teacher, and the suitcase, and thirty years, before she could put it into the sentence she now gives the museum groups, standing under the framed pages in Prague:

We could not keep the girls. The town saw to that. So the room kept what could be kept — the song, the date, the name, the way she packed — because a person leaves twice, once on the transport and once when the last list with her name on it is lost. The first leaving belonged to them. The second one belonged to us, and we refused it.

THREE. THE TEACHER

What the girls of Room Twenty-Eight knew about Mrs. Brandeis, that first winter, was almost nothing, and what Eva assembled about her over the following two years, from the carers' talk and the woman's own rare droppings of the past, was this: that she had been, in the world before, an artist of standing — Friedl, the adults called her, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis — trained in the great design school of Weimar Germany, the Bauhaus, in the years when it was inventing the century's shapes; that she had studied there under masters whose names meant nothing to the girls and a great deal to the grown-ups who said them; that she had made theater sets

and buildings and textiles and paintings across Vienna and Prague; that she had been offered, when the darkness came down, visas and escapes — and had a permit for Palestine in her hand, the carers said — and had not gone, because her husband's papers were not in order, and she would not leave without him; and that when the transport summons came for the two of them, in December of 1942, she had used her allowed luggage weight not for clothes or food but for art materials. Fifty kilos were permitted. She packed paper.

She did not teach drawing the way anyone in the room had been taught drawing — the vase on the table, the correct proportions, the marks out of ten. It took Eva three lessons to understand that they were being taught not drawing but a practice, with steps, in a fixed order, the order itself the point; and decades more, and the teacher's one surviving lecture, to learn the practice had a lineage — that it came down from the Bauhaus preliminary course, from a master named Itten who began his classes with breathing and movement because he held that the hand cannot be free while the body is knotted; and that Friedl had carried this method across a ruined continent, through the closing doors, into a fortress ghetto, on fifty kilos of paper, like a woman carrying a lamp through rooms filling with water.

The practice went like this, every Thursday, without variation, and the without-variation was itself part of the medicine. First the breathing: two minutes, eyes closed if you wished, the breath counted in and held and let go slow — thirty girls in a basement doing nothing, on purpose, in a town where doing nothing was the one unrationed luxury. Then the rhythm exercises: big loose scribbling strokes, whole-arm, to music if one of the girls would sing, circles and waves and figure-eights filling scrap sheets edge to edge — not pictures, not for keeping, the teacher was firm about that; these sheets were for the hand and the breath to find each other; and Eva, whose registrar's soul was scandalized the first week by paper being used for nothing, watched her own tight fist unclench over the weeks into something that swung — and felt, before she had any words for it, the wave of quiet come up her arm and into her chest, the loosening that the swinging brought, the

same door her whole cycle of predecessors and successors would enter by their different terrible roads, opened here gently, on purpose, by a small grey-haired woman saying: bigger. Rounder. Breathe. Let the elbow go.

Only then, with the room breathing and the arms loose, came the seeing. That was the teacher's word for the whole third movement of every class: exercises in looking — at a leaf someone had smuggled from the ramparts, at the grain of the table, at each other's faces, at the memory of a kitchen — followed by the making, in silence, the half hour of real work when the basement went so still you could hear thirty pencils, and the teacher moved between the tables almost without speaking. She did not correct. That was the thing Eva could never afterward make art teachers of the free world believe: she never once corrected a drawing. She would stand behind a girl and look with her — at the drawing, at whatever the drawing was looking at — and ask a question. What is the darkest dark in it? Where does the light come in? Is that line afraid, or is it quick? And the girl would look again, and the drawing would change or not change, and either way something had happened that Eva spent years finding the name for and found it at last in the teacher's own lecture notes: the drawing was not the product. The drawing was the residue. The product was the seeing — the girl's attention, unhooked for one hour from the queue and the lists and the two truths of the town, given wholly to one leaf, one face, one remembered kitchen, and thereby given back to herself.

And what did they paint? The after-years always ask it in the museum halls, standing under the answer, and Eva makes them slow down for it, because the answer deserves the pace of the Thursdays themselves.

Begin with the materials, because the materials were half the lesson. There was almost nothing, and the almost-nothing was administered like a sacrament. Paper was wealth: the backs of German requisition forms, wrapping paper ironed flat under mattresses, the blank final pages razored from ruined books — and the teacher opened each class's ration with a small ceremony, the sheets dealt round the tables like bread, received in two hands.

Paint existed in stubs and residues, mixed thin, stretched with water to the edge of ghostliness, and so the room's great medium became the one poverty was rich in: torn paper. The teacher had carried colored papers in her fifty kilos, and hoarded scraps of everything since — sugar wrappers, a ruined blue blouse, the silver foil of a vanished chocolate — and taught them collage: pictures built by tearing and placing, color moved with the fingers like mosaic, whole meadows assembled from a dead magazine. Scissors were scarce, so they tore, and tearing, she taught them, was truer anyway — the torn edge is alive, the cut edge is obedient — and thirty girls learned to draw with their hands' own weather.

And the subjects were the world, given back. They painted food, unashamed, expertly — the room ruled it lawful — loaves with the gloss done in saved white, a birthday cake remembered in cross-section; the museum groups laugh, and then stop laughing. They painted home by its particulars: a mother summoned by the exact blue of one dress; a kitchen proven by its clock; Zuzana's dog Punt'a, drawn weekly, in episodes, a serialized dog, until half the room could draw him from memory and did, in the margins of everything, a small scruffy immortal. They painted each other — the portrait game, two girls face to face, each the other's mirror, forbidden to look down at the paper, the results greeted with the room's best laughter, ordinary laughter, the kind the town had rationed — and they signed each other's portraits both, sitter and seer, years before the teacher made it doctrine. And on the good Thursdays, the ones the register marks with a small sun, they painted nothing that was asked of them at all: they painted because the yellow was out and the hour was theirs — princesses, sea-monsters, trams going nowhere important — joy without alibi, art with no message for anyone; which the teacher protected most fiercely of all, standing guard over their nonsense like a woman guarding seed corn, because a child's right to draw a sea-monster in a fortress ghetto was, she said once, the entire war aim of the class.

At the end of every class, the same closing, without variation. Each girl wrote her name on her sheet — her name, insisted on, every time, even on the scribble sheets if they were kept, name and date,

in a town that was working day and night to replace names with numbers — and handed it in. The teacher kept everything. She was not sentimental about it; she sorted the sheets like a clerk, by child, by date; the girls assumed it was tidiness. Eva, registrar to registrar, watching her square the papers and carry them away each Thursday to wherever she kept them, was the first in the room to suspect what she was actually watching, and she entered the suspicion in her own register that winter, twelve years old, in pencil, in the sentence that makes her this cycle's witness:

She is not collecting our drawings. She is collecting us. Somewhere in this town there is a place where all of us are being kept in order, name by name, week by week — and whatever the lists take, that place will have a copy.

FOUR. THE LISTS

The lists were the town's true government, and they worked like weather works: everyone watched for the signs, nobody could stop what came, and the whole social order of the ghetto arranged itself around the forecasting.

A transport began as rumor — a number, usually; five thousand, the kitchens were saying — and hardened into fact in the night: summons slips delivered by runners after dark, a number, a name, an assembly time, and the town surfacing in the morning rearranged, the way the marsh of another book surfaced and counted. Who protects you was the town's real constitution — a job in the war industries deferred you, the self-administration's stamps deferred you, until they didn't; every protection was provisional, every list could be reopened, and the reopening had a phrase, the worst phrase in the town's whole vocabulary: the transport is short. A train ordered for five thousand left with five thousand. If exemptions brought the number down, the machinery reached for more names — the reserve lists, the unprotected, the newly arrived — and so every deferral was arithmetic performed on someone else, and everyone knew it, and the knowing was itself part of the design: a town made to ration its own mercy goes quiet, and polices itself, and hopes in units of one.

Eva's mother worked in the mica-splitting shop — war industry, a strong stamp — and this, her mother told her plainly, was the fence around their two names, and fences are provisional. Eva learned to read the weather like everyone else: the kitchens' rumors, the wagons at the Hamburg barracks siding, the particular busyness of the registry office, the faces of the carers, who always knew a day early and spent that day being gentle in a specific way the girls all recognized and never named.

What the East was, the town did not know. This must be set down exactly, because the after-years have never quite believed the not-knowing, and the not-knowing was real, and engineered. Letters came back from the earlier transports — a trickle, then nothing, then, from one destination, a strange batch all dated within days of each other, all cheerful, all in a stiff dictated grammar that made mothers read them ten times at the window. Postcards were required from the deported; the machinery collected them in advance, dated forward, and posted them on a schedule after the writers were dead — the mail of ghosts, run like everything else, on lists. The town held rumors the way a body holds a temperature: work camps, family camps, a city in Poland where conditions were harder; and underneath, unspoken, the other rumor, the one nobody could live beside at noon and everybody met at three in the morning. People believed and did not believe. Both at once, the town's permanent condition, the two truths again: you packed the rucksack with winter things and wrote the address of relatives on the children's coat linings, and you also said, aloud, to each other, in the queue, it is a labor camp, the young ones will manage — because the alternative sentence could not be said in a town you still had to sleep in.

The children's homes had their own relation to the lists, and it was the tenderest and worst of all the town's arrangements: the self-administration, holding for a while the terrible power of composing the transport lists that the Germans demanded, tried for two years to keep the children off them — the young protected first, the town's one unanimous policy — and the protection worked until it did not, and when it did not, whole rooms went at once, because families were kept together, and a mother's number carried her

children's. Room Twenty-Eight's beds emptied in ones and twos through 1943, each with its dawn liturgy, its whispered song; and then in the September of that year came the transport that took five thousand in two days — a different kind, bound, the notices said, for a family camp at a place none of them had heard of, where families would remain together and children would have a school; and among the five thousand, with his parents and his grandmother and his entire building, went the boy from the boys' home that Eva had traded books with across the yard fence for a year, the editor, the one they called Honza.

He came to the fence the night before the assembly with his rucksack already expert-packed and his week's issue of the magazine under his shirt, and gave her the magazine through the wire — the whole issue, the original, twelve pages of his home's small precise handwriting — because, he said, in the voice of a boy editor stating an editorial policy and meaning something enormously larger, back numbers must be kept in the archive, and the archive stays here. She asked what everyone asked. He shrugged with one shoulder, thirteen years old, appallingly calm. "A family camp with a school," he said. "Either it's true, and I'll start a magazine there. Or it isn't true." He looked at her through the wire for a moment, the yard dark, the town listening to itself. "If it isn't true, then keeping things becomes the whole war, Eva. Yours and mine. The lists take the people. Fine — they're stronger; that's arithmetic. But they also want the second thing, afterward, and the second thing is in the keeping." He pushed the magazine flatter into her hands. "Don't let anybody draw on the back of these. Not even her."

She kept the issue. She kept everything; that was already who she was. And on Thursday, in the basement, when Mrs. Brandeis paused at her table and saw her drawing — the yard fence, in hard pencil, with the wire done over and over until it shone — the teacher looked at it a long time, and did not ask about the darkest dark or where the light came in. She asked: "Who is on the other side of it?"

"Nobody now," Eva said.

The teacher nodded slowly, took the sheet when it was signed and dated, and squared it with the others; and that week, for the first time, Eva walked out of the basement understanding the Thursday collection completely — understanding it the way Danylo understood the second book and Vestine the count: the teacher's archive and Honza's archive and her own register were one work, being kept in three hands; and the lists could reach every person in the town, and were going to; and the war inside the war, the one children could actually fight, was over the second thing.

INTERLUDE I. THE BREATHING

Minute one. Thursday, the basement, thirty girls on benches, and the teacher says what she always says — before anything, we breathe — and the room does the thing that no room in the town above ever does: it stops.

In, while she counts. Hold. Out, slow, longer than the in-breath, the whole exhale spent like a careful ration. Again. The basement air is cellar-cold and smells of paper and stone. Overhead, faintly, the town goes on — feet, a cart, the eternal queue-shuffle — and with each counted breath the ceiling grows somehow thicker, the sounds arriving smaller, further, until the town is weather heard from indoors.

Minute two. This is the border, and the breathing is the crossing of it. Nobody has told the girls that; the teacher does not explain her method, she only administers it; but the bodies on the benches have learned the geography the way bodies learn: on this side of the two minutes lies the town — the lists, the hunger with its small permanent voice, the two truths, the watching — and on the far side lies the hour. One hour, bordered on both ends, with paper in it. The breath is the bridge, and the bridge is burned behind them nightly and rebuilt every Thursday, and crossing it the fortieth time is not easier than the fourth. It is only more believed.

Minute three. Now the scribbling — sheets of ruined requisition forms turned face down, and the instruction that scandalized every new girl and freed her within a month: fill it. Not with anything. With motion. Whole arm, from the shoulder, big loose circles, and

Marta at the end of the bench starts a song low and the pencils pick up her time, thirty hands swinging, and the sound in the basement is rain on a roof — a dry, light, continuous rain of graphite, and inside the rain something in the chest unclenches that had not reported itself clenched. The hand, it turns out, has been holding the town all week — the queue-grip, the bowl-grip, the grip of a girl keeping her face still at a notice board — and the circles pour it off. Rounder, says the teacher, passing. Let the elbow go. The elbow, of all things. Wars stand or fall and the elbow must be let go, and it is let go, and the wave of ease runs up thirty arms into thirty shoulders and the room, without one word of what is happening, softens like frost off a window.

Minute four. And in the softened room, the quiet behind the eyes.

That is the only name Eva ever found for it, and she found it that first winter and kept it: a stillness that arrives not in the ears but behind the eyes, when the breath is slow and the arm is swinging and there is nothing to defend — a widening, as if a shutter, closed so long it had been mistaken for a wall, opens one slat. Attention, unhooked from danger, floats free for a moment with nowhere it must go. And into that opened slat the teacher, who has been building toward this for forty minutes with the patience of a woman lighting a stove in a frozen house, places one thing. A leaf. A face. Today, a chestnut leaf, smuggled from the ramparts in a carer's sleeve, laid in the middle of each table, five-fingered, going gold at the edges.

Look at it, she says. That is the whole instruction. Not draw it — that comes after, and comes on its own. Look at it until you see it.

Minute five. Thirty girls look at a leaf.

And the leaf — this is the mechanism, this is the country the suitcase was packed to preserve the maps of — the leaf expands. Looked at past the first glance, past the name leaf, it opens the way the slat opened: veins branching from veins, a north side gone bronze and a south side still green, a torn lobe healed with a seam of darker tissue, an entire autumn conducted in one hand's-breadth — and the looking girl pours through the slat into the leaf and is, for whole seconds together, not a number in a fortress but a

location of pure attention, unlisted, unrationed, unafraid, because fear needs a future and the leaf is entirely now.

Minute six. Pencils, unbidden. The rain begins again, slower, deliberate. The teacher walks the tables and does not correct. Somewhere above, the town's weather continues; a list is being typed up there this very hour, that is statistically certain; and down here thirty girls are inside a chestnut leaf, and both truths are true, and the teacher, who knows both better than anyone in the room, stands at the end of the table with her arms folded, guarding the border of the hour with her whole small grey person.

Minute seven. Sheets in. Name and date, insisted on, always: Eva R., Room 28, February 1943 — a girl, a place, a time, fixed to the residue of an hour of freedom like a specimen label on a wing. The teacher squares the papers.

The archive grows by thirty.

The town gets them back at the top of the stairs. It always does; the hour ends; that was never the failure of the method but its honesty. But they come back up carrying — each of them, folded invisibly somewhere on the person, past any search — the knowledge that the slat exists. That there is a country. That it opens from inside.

II. THE METHOD

FIVE. THE PAINTED WINDOW

The exercise that named this book's substance came in the spring of 1943, and Eva could date it precisely for the museum people forever after, because it was the Thursday after the room lost three beds to one list, and the class came down the stairs that week like a room full of held breath.

The teacher saw it — she saw everything; the not-correcting was never inattention but its opposite — and she changed the lesson. No leaf that day, no still life. She had them do the breathing longer, and the scribbling longer, Marta's song going twice through, and then she stood at the end of the tables and gave the instruction that divided Eva's life, and this cycle's whole quarrel, in a single sentence:

"Draw a window," she said. "Any window. And through it, draw what you would like to see."

That was all. Not what do you see — the basement had no window; the room above had one window and it looked at a wall and a corner of the assembly yard. What you would like to see. And thirty pencils hung still over thirty sheets for a long moment, because the instruction was enormous and every girl in the room felt its size without being able to say it: they were being asked to draw a hole in the town.

Eva drew her grandmother's kitchen window in Kolín: the geraniums, the lace half-curtain, the yard pump with its long handle, the neighbor's cat that owned the sill. Around her the room drew: meadows. Snow-peaked mountains no Czech girl had seen outside a calendar. The sea — four girls drew the sea, none of them had ever seen it, and each sea was different and each was unmistakably the sea. A Prague street with a tram. A table set for the Friday evening, candles lit, seven chairs, every chair filled. And the drawings that the suitcase would carry out of that spring, the ones that hang now in Prague under glass and stop the school groups mid-shuffle, have exactly the character Eva watched being made at those tables: the windows are drawn carefully — frames, latches, sills rendered with the method's whole trained attention — and through them pours color the ghetto did not contain.

Butterflies. Orchards. Kites. A world reported in perfect confidence by children who were simultaneously drawing, in other exercises, the bunks and the queues and the wagons at the siding with the same steady eye. Both. Always both, on the same afternoons, from the same hands. That is what the after-years keep failing to hold about the drawings, Eva tells the museum groups: they are not evidence that the children didn't know. They are evidence that the children knew everything, and were taught to hold a country the knowing could not flood.

And here the register must record what the color itself was, in that town, in the body — because this is the war cycle's last pharmacy, and its purest dose was never a powder. The ghetto was a place with the color confiscated: custard walls gone grime, brown soup, grey cloth, the whole spectrum of the administered world running from mud to ash — and an eye lives on color the way a body lives on salt; nobody notices the ration until it is cut. The children were color-starved in the exact sense that they were calorie-starved, and the Thursday basement was the one dispensary. Eva has watched the museum groups smile at the drawings' loud yellows and thought: you have never taken yellow. She had — they all had — the day the teacher unwrapped the last of the carried papers and dealt each girl one square of chrome yellow the size of a hand, and the room went silent the way it went silent for the leaf: thirty girls holding summer by its corners, the color entering the starved eye like sugar entering starved blood, a physical event, wave upon wave, the beautiful vertigo of too much at last. Some of the girls laughed. One wept. Every substance in this cycle's five seasons opened its door with a violence — the smoke, the hunger, the water, the motion. Only this one opened it with a gift: a square of yellow, administered by a teacher, to the starving eye of a child — the gentlest dose in the whole register, and not the weakest.

Because that was the lesson under the lesson, and the teacher gave it aloud only once, that same spring afternoon, quietly, at Eva's shoulder. Eva had finished her window — the geraniums, the cat — and sat looking at it, and the town came back in on her the way it always came back, and she said, without meaning to say anything: "But it isn't true."

The teacher was quiet for a moment. Then she pulled the drawing an inch toward herself and looked at it as if reading a document.

"The window is drawn correctly," she said. "The latch is right; you looked at many latches to draw this latch. The geraniums are specific geraniums, not the idea of geraniums. The cat has weight." She slid it back. "Every line in it is a true line, Eva. What you mean is that the window is not here. That is a different thing than untrue, and learning the difference is the whole of what I teach, so hear it once and keep it: a lie faces outward. It is made to be shown, to persuade, to replace the truth for someone else — you will see lies made of paint before this is over, and you will know them, because I am teaching you their opposite. This—" one finger on the sill of the drawn window, gently, the way you touch a real sill — "faces inward. It replaces nothing. It sits beside the truth, at the same table, and holds the seat of what is absent. Every civilization that ever starved or froze or buried its children has made these — the songs about the far green country, the pictures of the feast in the lean year. They are not the failure to see the winter. They are what seeing the winter costs, paid honestly, in advance, so that a person can go on seeing it without becoming it." She straightened, and looked down the tables at the meadows and the seas and the seven filled chairs, thirty windows in a basement under a fortress, and said the sentence Eva put at the head of her register that night and at the head of her testimony fifty years later:

"They can make us live in their picture of us. They cannot stop us keeping our own. Sign it and date it. The frame holds."

SIX. HONZA'S MAGAZINE

The boys' home across the yard had found the same door by a different key, and the key was print.

Their magazine came out every Friday evening, and it was called Maják — the Lighthouse — a name the founding editors had chosen, Honza told her once, after a full parliamentary debate, over rivals including The Voice of the Attic and, from one faction, simply Bread. It was a magazine in the complete sense and in no physical sense at all: one copy per issue, handwritten, sewn with thread,

read aloud on Friday nights by its authors, then filed — the word was Honza's — in the archive, which was a suitcase under the floorboards with the home's whole run in it, numbered, dated, complete.

Eva was its foreign correspondent for a year, which meant she wrote a column about the girls' home that a runner carried across the yard folded in a sock, and this gave her standing to attend, twice, wedged among visitors at the back, the Friday reading — and she has spent the after-years trying to make people understand what she saw there, because the after-years want it to have been sweet, and it was not sweet. It was a newsroom. Boys of twelve to fifteen, in a bunk room in a ghetto, producing to deadline: editorials, and the editorials argued — about the self-administration's rations policy, about whether the home's food-sharing rules were justice or theft, about God, in one issue, both columns, signed. Reportage: a boy spent a week in the bakery on a work detail and wrote two thousand words on the economics of ghetto bread that Eva, who queued for that bread daily, read like a revelation. Interviews with the town's famous prisoners — professors, a composer, an old man who had been to the Arctic. Poems, printed with savage editing; Honza returned verses to their authors marked sentimental: cut, thirteen years old, merciless, correct. And obituaries. That was the page that made it what it was. When the lists took a boy of the home, the next Friday's issue carried his obituary, written by his friends to the standards of the trade — his full name, his town, his record in the home's football league, his character, honestly rendered, including the faults, because, the editors ruled, an obituary that lies is a second death. Then the issue went into the suitcase with all the others. Filed.

"You keep names on paper against the lists," Honza said to her at the fence, the year they traded books. "So do we. The difference is only the column format." He was the youngest editor-in-chief in the magazine's short dynastic history, a thin boy with his grandfather's spectacles mended at both hinges, and he had the vocation complete: he believed in the record the way the teacher believed in the frame, as a place that holds. "Your Mrs. Brandeis collects what you see. We collect what happens. Between the two of us the town

is covered." He said it lightly, over the wire, in the manner of boys, and meant it with his whole life, and Eva only understood the size of the meaning later, when both archives were all that was left of nearly everyone in them.

The magazine's finest hour, the issue the whole home spoke of afterward in the tone reserved for legends, came out of the town's cruelest arithmetic. In the summer of 1943 the lists took, in one stroke, the home's oldest room — boys turned fifteen, aged into the adult quotas — and the home stood at Friday assembly with a hole in it. That week's *Maják* ran sixteen pages. It carried an obituary for every boy taken — not the deferential kind; the true kind, the football records, the fault lines, the debts of borrowed books meticulously noted as debts — and then, as the closing editorial, unsigned, in the plain hand the home knew was Honza's, three sentences that Eva copied into her register the day the runner brought her the sock, and that belong in this book because they are the whole cycle's doctrine, arrived at independently by a boy of thirteen with mended spectacles, a year before the East swallowed him:

"They are made to leave as numbers. We record that they lived here as names. Whoever, in whatever year, is holding this suitcase: the count was kept. Act accordingly."

SEVEN. THE OPERA

The opera was the town's one open secret performed with the lights on, and to explain it Eva always has to begin with the fact the after-years find hardest: the Germans allowed it. Encouraged it, in the final year. Applauded it, some of them, from the back rows. And the town knew exactly why, and sang it anyway, and the reasons on both sides of that bargain are the whole of Terezín in one cellar.

It was a children's opera, written before the war by a composer now a prisoner in the town — a small fable for small voices: a brother and sister whose mother is sick, who need milk and have no money; a wicked organ-grinder, Brundibár, who rules the town square and drowns them out when they try to sing for coins; and the animals and the children of the town, who band together at last,

three hundred small voices against one loud one, and out-sing the tyrant, and win the milk, and end shoulder to shoulder on a victory march about standing together against the bully. The plot was transparent to every soul in every audience. That was the point. Brundibár with his mustache was who Brundibár was; the finale was what the finale was; and the town packed the hall for performance after performance — fifty-five of them, in the end — to hear its own children sing, in Czech, at volume, with the wardens in the room, the one sentence the town could never otherwise say above a whisper: together we defeat him.

Eva sang one run in the animal chorus — a sparrow, third from the left — and what she carries from inside it is not the allegory but the mechanics: the rehearsals in the cellar with the composer conducting on a legless piano; the way the parts were recast every few months and nobody said the reason aloud, the cast list and the transport lists keeping their terrible double-entry, this season's Brundibár going east and the understudy stepping up and the show going on because the show going on was the entire text of the show; and the finale itself, from within it — three hundred children at full voice in a packed hall, the sound physically enormous, the audience on its feet weeping and pretending not to weep, and inside the wall of sound the sparrows and the cats and the schoolchildren of the cast looking out at their parents and their carers and, at the back, the uniforms — singing, at the tops of small lungs, protected by the fiction that it was only a story about milk, the plain forbidden thing. She had entered the frame-country by pencil on Thursdays; here was the same country entered by two hundred throats at once, in public — and the wardens stood at the back and let it happen.

Why they let it happen was the bargain's other half, and the town swallowed that half with the milk. The opera was useful. A ghetto with a children's opera photographs well; the machinery that had built a town for showing understood perfectly what fifty-five performances were worth to it, and in the final year the opera would be moved to a proper hall with a painted set and filmed for the propaganda reel, and the children would sing their forbidden sentence straight into the enemy's own camera, to be shown to the

world as proof of the town's contentment — the frame conscripted, the inward-facing thing forced to face outward, the exact inversion the teacher had warned was coming. You will see lies made of paint before this is over. And of music.

They argued about it, the children of the cast, with a directness the adults could not afford — argued it in the cellar, in the yard, in Maják, which ran both columns: whether singing for their camera made the song theirs; whether a true thing performed inside a lie stays true. Honza, before his transport, filed the question in an editorial and answered it like an editor: "The song does not know who is filming it. The song knows only who is singing it, and what they mean. Sing it meaning it. Archives outlast newsreels." And Eva, sparrow, third from the left, sang it meaning it, every performance, and watched the audience mean it back, and entered the finding this chapter exists to hold — the finding about all the town's secret culture, the opera and the magazine and the Thursday basement alike, the reason a dying town spent its last strength on children's art:

None of it saved anyone. The cast lists and the transport lists ran their double-entry to the end; the composer went east with his opera in his head; the sparrows went, row by row. It saved no one, and it was not for saving. It was for the sentence. Somewhere in every one of us who sang it, the sentence is still standing — together we defeat him — installed at full volume, in company, before the East could teach us its own sentence instead. They could take the singers in any order they liked. They could never afterward make any of us un-sing it.

EIGHT. THE SEPTEMBER TRANSPORT

The September transport of 1943 was different, and the town felt the difference before it understood it, the way you feel a change of pressure before the storm has a shape.

Five thousand summoned in two days — that alone was not new; the town had bled larger numbers. What was new was the composition and the story. Whole families were called together, children included, the young protected lists broken open at last —

and with the summonses came, unprecedented, an explanation. The transport was bound, the self-administration was given to announce, for a new family camp in the East, where — the phrases were specific, and specificity from that machinery should have been the loudest alarm the town ever heard — families would remain together, children would be schooled, the able would work, and correspondence would be permitted. No previous transport had been furnished with a prospectus. The town, two years deep in engineered not-knowing, took the prospectus and divided over it in the usual way, at noon believing, at three in the morning not; and Honza went with his parents and his grandmother and half his home, and gave Eva the last issue through the fence, and the trains went east, and the town closed over the hole and waited.

And then — this was the unprecedented thing, the thing that ran through Terezín like current through water — letters came back.

Real letters, in known handwriting. Postcards from the family camp, place-name and all: Birkenau, bei Neu-Berun. They were censored, they were brief, they were strange in the stiff dictated way all the East's mail was strange — we are well, we work, the children attend school, send parcels — but they were real, they kept coming, month after month, and they said the children were alive, and the town, which had learned to read every document twice, read them the only way starving hope can read: the family camp exists. The prospectus was true. There is, in the East, at least one address where families stay together and children are schooled — and when the lists came again that winter, in December, and took five thousand more to the same address, the town grieved them differently than it had ever grieved a transport. Grieved them, and half-envied them. They were going where the letters came from.

Honza's cards reached Eva through her mother's cousin in the town's postal room — four of them across the autumn and winter, each a miracle of compression under the censor's eye. The first: healthy, the family together, paper situation poor, tell the archive the numbering continues. The second, in December, one sentence among the permitted phrases that she read twenty times before she

understood he had told her the camp had children's barracks and he was teaching in one: I have younger colleagues now. The third, in the new year, thinner, the handwriting pressed: we are told our six months here has a name, ask the professor what "quarantine" is when there is no doctor in it. She asked no professor. She entered it in the register and lay awake with it. Six months, a name, a term running — a boy of thirteen, inside the machinery, reading its paperwork the way he had read the bakery's economics, and filing his report through the enemy's own post.

The fourth card came in March of 1944, and it was dated the twenty-fifth of March, and it was cheerful, and it was in his handwriting, and it said the spring was coming and the family was well and she should greet the home across the yard — and by the time it reached her hands, the town already knew, from the whisper-channels that outran all mail, from a returned work party, from the railwaymen, what the March air over that part of the East had carried; knew it in the way the town knew everything, sideways, in fragments, at three in the morning: that in the second week of March the family camp's first six months had come due; that on a single night — the night of the eighth of March, the whisper said, and the after-years' documents would confirm it to the digit — the entire September transport remaining alive, three thousand seven hundred and ninety-two people, had been taken from the family barracks and gassed; and that they had gone — this the whisper carried with a specific awe, and the survivors' testimony would carry it forever after — singing. The anthem. The other anthem. Three thousand voices, the finale performed at the door the fable had always been about, together, against the loudest organ in the world.

The card was dated seventeen days after the night. She stood in the yard with it, thirteen years old, holding in one hand the cheerful spring greetings of a boy who had been dead for weeks when they were posted — the mail of ghosts, the machinery's last letter-writing done in his stolen name — and she understood, standing there, with a completeness that had no tears in it yet, both halves of what she held. That the lie was total: it had his handwriting, because they had made him write ahead; it had a

date, a stamp, a censor's chop; the machinery had manufactured his aliveness with the same clerical thoroughness it had manufactured his death, and mailed it, on schedule, to his archive. And that the lie had failed anyway — was failing in her hand at that moment — because of the war inside the war, the second thing, the keeping: the town's whisper-ledger had outrun the ghost mail; the count was kept; the eighth of March was entered; and in a suitcase under a floorboard across the yard, twelve numbered pages at a time, the editor's whole testimony stood filed against exactly this, in his own unstolen hand.

She did not draw that Thursday. She came down the stairs and sat at the table with the paper blank in front of her, and the teacher stood at her shoulder a while, and did not correct, and did not console, and at the end of the hour said only: "Bring the cards next week. All four. We will copy the dates into the register, his and the true one, side by side." And then, in the voice she used for the method, for the latch and the geraniums, the sentence Eva carried out of the war: "This is also seeing, Eva. This is the hardest exercise in the whole course. Look at it until you see it — both dates, both truths — and do not look away, and do not let it be the only thing you ever see again. That is the assignment. It has no due date. Most of the world will fail it."

INTERLUDE II. THE EMPTY CHAIRS

Minute one. Thursday, the basement, the benches — and the benches are wrong. The room counts itself the way rooms do, below thought, and the count is short: three gone in the December lists, two in the spring, and the new girls sit in the gaps not-quite-fitting them, the way a mended place in cloth is cloth and is also forever the mend.

The teacher does not rearrange the benches. This is noticed. Other rooms in the town close their gaps at once — beds shifted the same morning, rotas recopied, the missing name healed over by noon, because a visible gap is a wound and the town cannot afford open wounds. The teacher leaves the gaps where they are, and says

nothing about it, and begins the breathing, and the gaps breathe with them.

Minute two. The scribbling. Marta's song — Marta is gone; the song is sung by the room now, lower, the way a house keeps a habit of its dead — and the pencil-rain falls, and the arms swing, and the crossing is made as always. But the country on the far side of the border has changed with the seasons, this last year. The windows drawn in it have fewer geraniums. The seeing exercises come back darker: the wagons at the siding, drawn from memory with the method's whole trained attention, the coupling-chains done link by link, correct; queues, rendered with the patience once spent on chestnut leaves; a bunk room at night, twelve sleeping heads and one awake. The teacher takes these in with the same nod as the meadows, squares them into the same archive, name and date. She has never once, in two years, told a girl what to see.

Minute three. Today she sets no leaf on the tables. She stands at the end of the room, by the empty places on the benches, and gives the exercise in the same voice as every exercise:

"Draw this room," she says. "As it is. Everyone who is here — and every place where someone is not."

Minute four. Thirty pencils, and the stillness behind them has a new grain to it. To draw the room as it is: the benches foreshortened, the paper, the pipes along the ceiling, each other — the girls have drawn each other for two years; faces are the course's oldest subject. But the instruction's second clause has changed the composition of the world. Every place where someone is not. And the hands that have been trained, Thursday upon Thursday, to look until they see, turn the training for the first time deliberately upon the gaps — and find, this is the discovery of the darkened year, that absence can be drawn. That it has a shape: the shape of the room around it. You draw the bench, and the girls at either end of the bench, and the space between them at its true width, the width of one person, and you do not fill it, and the not-filling, done with the method's full attention, is the most exact portrait the course has ever produced. The empty chair, drawn correctly, is the sitter.

Minute five. Eva draws the room. Her pencil walks the benches: Hana's niece with her cropped hair growing back; the new girl from Brno who cries without sound; the gap where Marta sang; the gap that was Trude, who packed rucksacks better than anyone and taught the skill forward before her summons like a guild-master transmitting the craft. She draws the gaps at their true width. And working — this is what the interlude exists to record, the finding from inside the hour — working, she crosses a second border she did not know the country had. On the near side, the gaps are grief, and grief in the town must be rationed or it takes the whole ration. But drawn — held in the frame, given edges, given their exact place on the bench between the living — the gaps change state. They are still grief. But they are kept grief now, grief with a location, entered in the record at true width in the presence of witnesses; and the difference between carried grief and kept grief, she will tell the museum groups sixty years on, standing under this very drawing, is the difference the whole basement was for: what you carry bends you. What you keep, holds.

Minute six. The teacher walks the tables. At Eva's sheet she stops the usual half-second longer, and asks her question — not the darkest dark this time.

"Are the empty places the same size?"

Eva looks. They are not. She has drawn Marta's gap wider than the others without knowing it — Marta of the song, the room's whole weather — and the pencil hovers to correct it to justice, and the teacher's hand, very lightly, touches the paper's edge: no.

"The record is allowed to know who sang," she says, and moves on.

Minute seven. Sheets in. Name, date: Room 28, as it is, April 1944. The teacher squares the papers, the drawn room joining the archive where all its drawn dead already live, leaf by leaf, Thursday by Thursday — the class entire, present and absent, kept together at true width in a suitcase whose location no girl knows; and the room climbs the stairs into the town carrying its gaps a fraction differently than it carried them down, because they have been to the far country now, and been seen there, and have a page.

III. THE BEAUTIFICATION

NINE. THE GARDEN AND THE BANK

The order came down in the winter of 1943 into 1944, and the town, which had spent two years learning to read the machinery's paperwork, read this order wrong in the only way that mattered: it read it as good news.

The town was to be beautified. That was the actual administrative term — *Verschönerung*, embellishment — and the program it named transformed Terezín through that winter and spring with a thoroughness the town had never seen the machinery spend on anything that kept people alive. A commission was coming; that much surfaced at once: a visit, in the summer, by the International Red Cross — the outside world, at last, sending eyes — because the neutral countries had begun asking questions the machinery had decided to answer in its preferred medium, which was scenery. And so the showing-town, which had been a designation, now became a construction project, and the prisoners were the labor.

They painted the facades along the visit route — surveyed first, marked out like a stage — fresh paint to exactly the height a man sees, fresh gravel, roses. They built, in the square where the queues had stood, a music pavilion, and turf was laid, and a playground appeared with swings and a sandpit, and a café opened on the corner with a striped awning and real coffee for the day of the visit and printed menus. A bank was fitted out — the Bank of the Jewish Self-Administration, brass grilles, ledgers, and a currency printed for the occasion, ghetto crowns, handsome bills with an image of Moses, money that bought nothing and existed to be seen changing hands. Shop windows were dressed with the town's own confiscated luggage: the prisoners' linens and gloves sold back to the scenery. Signposts went up in cheerful lettering: to the bath, to the park, to the school — and the school signs pointed at buildings that had never held a class, freshly painted, with a notice on the door for the day of the visit: closed for holidays.

There is a word for what the town was being turned into, and nobody inside it had the word yet, because the word belonged to a paperback that would not be written for another twenty years, in another language, about another dead world; Eva would meet it in

her after-years and recognize her own address on every page. The word is a layout. A miniature of a happy world, assembled with a collector's tenderness — the café with its striped awning, the bank with its toy money, the little shops, the playground, the nursery with its dancing lambs — every detail loved into place, complete in all particulars except one, which is the possibility of anyone living there; a doll's town built at one-to-one scale, with the town's own people included in the kit as figurines: posed, painted, and glued down.

And the town's own hands did all of it. That was the beautification's deepest tooth, the one Eva watched close on her own family: the work details were prisoners; the painters were prisoners; the carpenters of the pavilion, the printers of the money, the seamstresses of the café aprons — the town built the lie about itself, under orders, with its own skilled and starving labor, and among the labor, because the program needed decorators and the town's luggage had carried half the artists of Central Europe, was Eva's aunt Hana, her mother's younger sister, a painter of murals and shop signs in the world before, who was assigned that spring to the beautification's decoration crews, and who came to the women's barracks in the evenings with paint on her hands and a look Eva had no name for yet, and washed, and did not talk about the day.

Until the evening she did. It was April, the roses going in along the route, and Hana sat on the bunk edge with her sister and her niece and said, in the family's truth-voice: "Today I painted a nursery. A model nursery, for the route — cots, curtains, a frieze around the walls. They gave me the frieze to design myself: I painted lambs. Thirty lambs, holding flowers, dancing in a ring around a room where no child of this town will ever sleep one night — it is scenery; the cots are props; the whole building is closed the moment the delegation's backs are turned." She looked at her paint-stained hands, the same hands that had painted signboards in Kolín and a cinema ceiling in Prague. "I am good, you understand. That is the trap they have built for exactly people like me. The lambs are good. I gave them weight and joy because my hands do not know how to give less — she taught us that, your Mrs.

Brandeis, we studied under the same tradition, the hand must be honest even when nothing else can be — and my honest hands spent this whole day making the lie beautiful. The delegation will see my lambs and think: children are happy here. My skill will testify against my own family.” She was quiet for a moment. The barracks around them made its evening sounds. “There are painters on the crew who slack the work — thin the paint, let the lines wander — a private resistance, and the overseers cannot always tell. I cannot do it. I have tried. The hand refuses; forty years of training refuse; I lay a bad line and my whole body stands over me like a teacher until I correct it. So I paint well, and every good line goes into their scenery, and I come home at night and I understand something about this place that I would rather not have learned, and since you keep records, Eva, record it: they do not only take our lives and our luggage. They requisition our excellence. The best of what we are is conscripted first — the musicians for their culture reel, the professors for their showpiece lectures, my lambs for their nursery — because the lie cannot be built out of anything less than our best; shoddy work would give it away; the lie is load-bearing and only truth-quality materials will hold it up. That is the beautification, niece. Not paint over dirt. Our truth, harvested, to bear the weight of their lie.”

Eva recorded it. And that Thursday, in the basement, she asked the teacher the question Hana’s hands had asked the family bunk — whether skill itself could be taken, whether the frame could be conscripted — and the teacher listened with the stillness she kept for the hardest exercises, and answered with the distinction that the Quarrel of this book would later contest to a standing beam, and that Eva has weighed every year since against thirty dancing lambs:

“Your aunt’s hands are honest, and honest hands can be stolen; that is true, and it is one of the oldest griefs of our trade. But mark what they had to steal, Eva, and what they could not make. They cannot paint the nursery themselves. For the lie to stand, they must come to us — to the trained hand, the true line, the schooled eye. Their whole tower of scenery rests on borrowed truth. Remember that when the delegation walks through it in the summer, and

remember it in whatever years come after, when you meet the pictures this place will leave behind: every beautiful lie you will ever see was built by conscripted truth — and conscripts, Eva, keep their own records. Your aunt came home and testified the same evening. The lambs will fade with the scenery. The testimony is in your register. That is the whole long war between our trade and theirs, and ours keeps better archives.”

TEN. THE VISIT

The delegation came on the twenty-third of June, 1944, in the middle of a warm morning, and Eva saw them twice: once with her eyes, from the second row of a choreographed group of children being wholesome near the playground, and once, for the rest of her life, in the understanding of what that day had actually been.

There were a handful of them: a delegate of the International Red Cross, young, Swiss; observers from the Danish side, because Danish Jews were in the town and Denmark alone kept asking after its people by name; and their escort of officers and officials, moving the party along the surveyed route at the pace of the scenery. The town had been dressed for weeks; now it performed. The transports of the spring had already solved the crowding — the town looked spacious because seventy-five hundred people had been sent east in May expressly so that the delegation would not see crowding; the removal of the evidence was itself the largest single act of the staging. The route ran past the fresh facades and the roses; the pavilion had an orchestra playing; the café had its coffee drinkers, seated by list, rehearsed; the bank changed its Moses-money through the brass grilles; the shop windows shone with the town's own stolen linens; and the children — the children were everywhere along the route, scrubbed, in their best surviving clothes, on the swings, in the sandpit, eating, at the appointed spot, bread and margarine issued for the scene, some of them coached in lines of dialogue, the most famous of which — the town repeated it for weeks in a whisper that did not know whether it was laughter — had a group of children complaining to the Kommandant, on cue, with rolling eyes: What, sardines again?

Eva stood in the second row of wholesomeness and watched the visitors go by at twenty paces, and what she saw, and never stopped seeing, was that the delegate was looking. He was not glancing; he was inspecting — he peered into the dressed windows, he asked questions, he took photographs; his whole young earnest bearing said: I am here to see. And he saw the paint to the height a man sees, and the roses, and the lambs' nursery, and the sardines line, and the orchestra, and he was walked through the finest scenery ever built by conscripted truth, at the pace of the scenery, along the route of the scenery, and the town stood inside its own beautified lie, thousands of eyes on him, every one of them screaming behind a rehearsed face — and could say nothing, because the machinery had made the price of one honest sentence collectively payable, and everyone knew who would pay it and how, after the delegation's train left.

He was translated. That is the only verb Eva ever found that carries the day, and she found it decades later in the American paperback: the visitor did not inspect the layout — he entered it; the miniature closed over him the way the drug closes over the chewer; and for six warm hours the doll's town had the one thing every layout in the universe is starving for, an inhabitant who believes it — while the actual town stood packed around its own diorama, excluded from the world it was holding up, watching a man walk the one street of the miniature as its one true citizen.

The report, when the after-years finally published it, said what the day had been built to make it say. The delegate had found the town — the words would be quoted forever, in the tone the world reserves for its own worst marks — almost normal. A city like any other, with an odd atmosphere perhaps; living conditions adequate; the population elegant, even, the women in stockings, the children healthy. He had, he would say decades later, an old man interrogated by documentarians, seen nothing to prove otherwise, been shown no one who whispered, received no note pressed into his hand — and this was the day's deepest engineering, the part the town itself had been conscripted into: the terror had staged the audience as well as the set; the prisoners were the scenery and the guards of the scenery at once; and a young man with a form to fill

found the boxes fillable, and filled them, and the form went to Geneva, and Geneva was satisfied, and the machinery had what it had built the whole town to manufacture — a certificate, from the world's own appointed eyes, that the East's antechamber was a city like any other. Within months the reel-film crews came to shoot the same scenery in moving pictures, the opera in its painted hall, the smiling bread; and within weeks of the filming, the autumn transports began that emptied the town of nearly everyone the camera had certified, the cast of the film sent east in eleven trains, the director of the film among them.

Eva walked back to the room that June evening past the pavilion, where the orchestra was still packing up, and the whole two years of Thursdays assembled themselves in her at once into the finding she would carry into the Quarrel, and out of the war, and into every museum hall she ever afterward stood in, under her own framed evidence:

The world came. That was the day's discovery, and it changed the shape of every unwitnessed season before or since, and this cycle exists in its shadow: the marsh was never visited; the winter's word was withheld at a distance; but here the witness arrived in person, young and earnest, with a camera and a form — and the lie was ready for him, because the lie had known he was coming, because lies are never lazier than truth; they rehearse. Seeing is not a location, she tells the school groups now, standing under the drawings. He stood closer to the town's truth than any free man in Europe, and saw less of it than you are seeing right now, sixty years away, looking at a child's pencil sketch of the wagons — because the child had been taught to look, and he had only been brought to look. Attendance is nothing. The teacher told us from the first Thursday: look at it until you see it. He looked at it. The whole world, that summer, looked at it. The seeing was left to the drawn.

ELEVEN. THE QUARREL OF THE CLASSROOM

She had the quarrel with the teacher in the late summer of 1944, in the emptied basement after a Thursday class, because the visit had lodged in her like a splinter working inward, and because the transports were rumored again and the room could all feel the barometer falling, and because she was fourteen now and the register had made her old. She stayed behind over the squaring of the papers, and asked to speak, and the teacher heard the tone and sat down on the bench and gave her the whole of her attention, which was the largest thing the town had ever given Eva, and the quarrel of this book was had between a girl of fourteen and a woman of forty-six, over a table of children's drawings, in the last summer of the world they were quarreling about.

"I want to know what we are doing here," Eva said. "Truly doing. Because I have believed you for two years, and after the twenty-third of June I lie awake, and I will say the whole of it or none of it." The teacher nodded: the whole of it. "Then here it is. You taught us the frame. The window that faces inward; the country behind the eyes; the hour with borders. And I have watched what the same tools do facing outward — I stood in the second row of it. The route was a frame. The delegation walked through a drawing, Mrs. Brandeis — a drawing made with our hands, composed, staged, every sightline arranged, the world's eyes led along it exactly the way you lead ours along a page — and it worked. It worked better than anything true has ever worked in this whole town. So I ask you what I could not ask when I was twelve: what is the difference? You say a lie faces outward and the window faces inward — but Aunt Hana's lambs faced inward too, once, in her training, in her hands; they conscripted the facing. And here is the black thought, the three-in-the-morning one, and you will hear it to the end because you taught me to look until I see: what if the frame is simply obedience with better manners? We go down the stairs on Thursday and we breathe, and the town becomes weather, and for one hour we are content — and up the stairs, twenty meters away, the lists are typed. What if the hour is the sardines line, performed for ourselves? What if you have spent two years teaching thirty girls, with the best method of the best

school of the best civilization, how to be gassed serenely — how to look at a chestnut leaf while the train is coupled? The delegation was shown a beautiful room and did not smell the engine. Every Thursday, Mrs. Brandeis, you show me a beautiful room. I am asking whether you have made me the delegate of my own life.”

The basement was very quiet. Above them the town shuffled. The teacher did not answer quickly; she never answered quickly; she looked at the girl the way she looked at drawings, until she saw her, and when she spoke it was in the voice with no comfort in it, the truth-voice, the one the whole cycle’s old ones keep for the far end of the quarrel.

“Good,” she said. “Fourteen, and you have arrived at the question my own teachers quarreled over in warm cafés with pastry on the table, and you have arrived at it in a place that will grade the answer. So I will not console you; you would smell it; I will answer as your teacher, in order.

“First, the mechanics, because you have the mechanics wrong by one word, and the word is everything. The route and the window are the same instrument — yes. Framing, composition, the led eye: one toolkit; I never hid it; I taught you the toolkit of the enemy of that route because it is also ours, older than them, older than everything. But an instrument has a direction, and you named it yourself two years ago and have forgotten your own naming. The route was built to replace seeing — its whole function was to stand between the delegate and the town, so that having looked, he would not look further; it is a frame that closes the eyes it fills. The Thursday hour was built to train seeing — you went down those stairs one girl and came up able to see the wagons, the queues, the empty chairs at true width; the frame opened the eyes it filled. Same toolkit; opposite work. You ask what the difference is, as if it were subtle. Eva. You are the difference. The delegate walked his frame and saw less afterward. You walked yours and see more — you see so much more that it keeps you awake, which is the certificate of the method, printed on your own face. A drug and a discipline can share every ingredient but the direction. Theirs anaesthetizes with beauty. Ours — ” she touched the squared stack

of the day's drawings — "ours uses beauty to keep the patient awake through what must be seen. Do not confuse them again; the confusion is exactly what their scenery is for.

"Second, the harder half, because you did not come down here for mechanics. You came to ask whether the hour is desertion — whether contentment, in this town, twenty meters from the typewriters, is treason. And here I will give you the only answer I own, and it is not a proof, it is a position, and I have paid for it with everything, so weigh it accordingly. They have built a machine whose product is not death, Eva; death is its exhaust. Its product is reduction — the person made number, the day made queue, the future made list, until what climbs into the wagon is already, by their accounting, cargo. Against that machine, the hour is not a rest from the war. The hour is the war. Every Thursday, for one hour, in this cellar, thirty human beings are enlarged — you attend, you see, you make, you sign your name and the name means a maker and not a number — and every week the machine upstairs must begin again on girls who have been persons within living memory. I cannot stop the trains. Nobody in this fortress can stop the trains, and any teaching that pretended to would be the true anesthesia. What I can do is determine what boards them. That is the entire content of my resistance, and I chose it with open eyes: they will decide whether you die; they are stronger; that is arithmetic. But whether the one who dies — or the one who lives; some of you will live, Eva, hold that in the register too — whether she is by then a number that was once a girl, or a girl who was never, for one single Thursday, successfully made a number: that is decided down here. In the breathing. In the leaf. In the signed name. They own the lists. The frame is where we keep what the lists cannot inventory. It is not the sardines line, child. The sardines line was performed for their camera. The hour is performed for no one. It has no audience at all — which is precisely how you may always, for the rest of your life, tell the window from the route.

"And third." She stood, and squared the papers a last time, and her voice did the thing Eva had heard in it only twice, the thing that was not softness but a kind of formal tenderness, the register of wills and bequests. "You asked whether I have taught you to look at

a leaf while the train is coupled. Yes. Deliberately. Because the train will be coupled, Eva — for some of this room, for me; we will not pretend at this table — and when it is, the ones on the platform will be exactly what they have practiced being. That is all a practice is: a decision about the last hour, made early, in installments. The ones who practiced being cargo will board as cargo. And the ones who practiced the frame — who breathed, and saw, and signed — will stand on that platform in possession of themselves, seeing everything, the wagons at true width and the sky at true width also, and will board as what we made them down here: witnesses. Undeceived, unreduced, and carrying the country in the only luggage they cannot weigh. I would rather every one of you lived. I am not granted that. So I teach the other thing, and I will say its name once, since you are fourteen and came asking like an adult: I am not teaching you drawing, and I was never teaching you drawing. I am teaching you how to remain a person in a machine built to prevent it — and if the machine takes you anyway, to make it take a person, whole, seeing, signed — because that, in the end, is the one defeat they have no procedure for, and the archive downstairs is the proof it happened, thirty names at a time, every Thursday, in the middle of their masterpiece.”

TWELVE. THE AUTUMN TRANSPORTS

The autumn came for the town all at once, the way the dry season came for the marsh: punctually, at the machinery’s own hour, when the scenery had served and the camera crews were gone and the certificate was filed in Geneva.

The transports of that September and October were different in scale and in candor. Eleven trains in five weeks. The exemptions that had held for two years were dissolved almost casually — the war industries, the self-administration’s stamps, the protected categories, all of it opened; the machinery, losing its war, was closing its books, and the town could read the bookkeeping in the composition of the lists: the able men first, then their families, invited — the word was invited — to follow voluntarily and reunite; then the artists, the prominent, the faces of the culture reel; the composer of the opera went, and the conductor, and the boys who

had sung Brundibár's defiance into the propaganda camera went east behind their own filmed smiles. Eighteen thousand people in five weeks, out of a town the delegation had certified as almost normal. The café kept its striped awning. The pavilion stood in the emptying square. The lambs danced in the locked nursery. The scenery, having no further audience, played to the trains.

The summons for the teacher came at the end of September — not for her; for her husband. Pavel's number went up with the able men, and the town's whisper-knowledge said plainly what following meant now; and Friedl, who had once held a Palestine certificate in her hand and stayed for this man, did the thing everyone who knew her knew she would do, and which Eva has never in sixty years found the full sentence for: she volunteered. She went to the registry of her own accord and asked to be added to the next transport east, to follow her husband — asked for the East, at the hour when the town had stopped believing anything about the East except the truth.

She had one week between the asking and the train. And what she did with the week is the reason this book, and its whole cycle, exist.

She did not spend it packing; her permitted luggage was the same fifty kilos it had always been, and she had long ago decided what her kilograms were for. She spent the week on the archive. The Thursday collections of two years — four and a half thousand sheets by then; every scribble exercise she had judged worth keeping, every leaf, every window, every wagon, every empty chair, each signed, each dated, the entire seen record of the children of the town — she gathered from their hiding places and sorted, one last time, registrar to the end: by child where the child could be kept whole, by home, by date. Eva helped her two of the evenings, in the basement, by a lamp with a shawl over it, and the work was silent and enormous, and the teacher's hands moved through the sheets the way the priest of another book had moved through his registers — and at the end of the second evening the sorted whole was packed, pressed flat, into two ordinary battered suitcases, and the suitcases were carried up under laundry and hidden where the

carers had prepared the place, above the ceiling of the girls' home, in the dead space under the roof.

What she said over them Eva kept, and has repeated on every continent, in the plain voice, because the teacher said it in the plain voice, kneeling at the attic hatch with her hands flat on the nearer case, a small grey-haired woman addressing two suitcases as if entering an item in a ledger:

"Four thousand five hundred witnesses. Names and dates. Whatever is said about this place afterward, whoever comes to say it — the children have already testified." She closed the hatch. And then, to Eva, on the attic ladder, the last teaching, delivered in exactly the voice of the first — before we draw anything, we are going to learn to breathe — as if the course were one long single Thursday and this its final exercise: "You are the registrar now. Not of the suitcases — the suitcases have their own guardians arranged, and the fewer names you know the safer the names. You are the registrar of what the suitcases cannot hold: which child made which page, and what was happening that week, and who sang, and who packed well, and both dates when the dates were doubled. Paper survives by hiding, Eva. Memory survives by being carried in the open, in a living person, who eats and sleeps and crosses borders and cannot be confiscated. You are fourteen; your memory is at the age when the country is paved; everything you file now is filed for eighty years. So file. And when it is over — " not if; she said when, on a ladder, in October 1944, with her own transport number in her pocket — "when it is over, find the suitcases, and marry the two archives, theirs and yours, the pages and the names, and give the whole of it to whoever is building the record of what this was. It will take them decades to believe it. The drawings are for that. Nobody believes a number, Eva. Everybody believes a child's picture of a butterfly with a chimney behind it. That is the last thing I know about our trade, and now you know it too."

She went with the October transport, in its first week, with the last great trainload of the town's artists and teachers and orphans — she had asked the registry for one thing only, and been granted it

with the machinery's occasional taste for meaningless mercies: to travel with a group of her students, the children of one of the homes, so that the wagon would have the breathing in it, and the counted breath, and a voice the children knew. The town's records, and the after-years' reconstructions, close the file with the administrative brevity the whole century closes such files with: the transport reached the East in two days; the selection was held on the ramp at night; Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, painter, teacher, registrar of children, was sent with her students to the side from which no number returned, on or about the ninth of October, 1944.

The town she left held out its strange half-year longer — the trains stopped, the front crawled nearer, the scenery peeled — and in the girls' home, above the ceiling, through the last winter of the war, through the typhus and the liberation and the spring, the two suitcases lay flat in the dark under the roof, keeping, at true width, in four and a half thousand signed and dated hands, the entire seen record of the children of Terezín: the leaves, the windows, the wagons, the empty chairs, the meadows no one had visited, the seas no one had reached — the archive of the drawn, waiting, exactly as designed, for the world that would one day claim it had been impossible to know.

INTERLUDE III. THE LAST CLASS

Minute one. Thursday, the basement, the first week of October, and the room knows without being told that the course is ending: the teacher's number is in her pocket; the benches hold what the autumn has left of the class — eleven girls, and the gaps at true width — and she begins exactly as she began in the first winter, as if two years were one long lesson closing its bracket. Before anything, we breathe.

In, counted. Hold. Out, longer, spent slow. Eleven girls and one teacher breathing in a cellar while the town above them is dismantled by list; and the border holds. That is the fact the interlude exists to file: in the first week of October 1944, the border held. The crossing was made. The hour opened.

Minute two. The scribbling — and today she joins it. She has never drawn in class; the teacher's hands taught by pointing, by the touch on a paper's edge; today she takes a sheet from the stack like a pupil and swings the circles with them, whole-arm, the grey head bent, and the pencil-rain falls twelve-handed, and Marta's song is sung by the room for a woman who is leaving on the same rails as the singer.

Minute three. The last exercise. She sets nothing on the table. She stands at her place, and looks down the benches at the eleven, one face at a time, the long looking, until the room understands: they are the still life.

"Draw me," she says.

Minute four. It has never been asked. Two years of leaves and windows and each other, and never once the teacher — she deflected it always, with the smallest turn of the wrist, next exercise; and now, in the last hour, she sits for them: hands folded on the table, the mended cardigan, the grey coming through the dark hair, the face behind every drawing in the suitcases, appearing in none of them. Eleven pencils begin. And she does for them, one last time, the thing that was the whole method: she does not compose herself. She does not put on the sitter's mask, the smoothed public face; she sits as she is, tired, undeceived, present, the eyes level — look at it until you see it — offering her own worn actual face as the course's final text.

Minute five. Eva draws. The cardigan's mend. The particular way the hands fold, right thumb over left, a registrar's hands at rest. The lines at the eyes, drawn at true width, because the record is allowed to know. And drawing — this is the crossing inside the crossing, the thing she will stand under glass and fail to say to cameras for sixty years — drawing, she feels the method complete its circle: for two years this face taught them that attention is a form of love that can be trained; and now, in the training's last hour, the attention pours back the way it came, eleven-fold, the whole schooled seeing of the class turned on the teacher, holding her — there is no other word; the pencils are holding her — line by line, at true width, in the only arms the basement has.

Minute six. She looks at each drawing when they are done. Eleven portraits: none flattering, all true, the mend and the tiredness and the level eyes eleven times over, eleven witnesses agreeing. At Eva's she stops the half-second longer, and Eva waits for the question — the darkest dark, where the light comes in — and the teacher asks neither. She reads the corner first, the way she taught them to read documents: name, date. Eva R., Room 28, October 1944. And she says, in the voice of the method, the last question of the course:

"Is it signed by the right person?"

Eva looks at her own name and does not understand. The teacher touches the paper's edge, the old light touch.

"Both names," she says. "From now on. The one who draws, and the one who was seen. That is what a record is, Eva. Two names and a date and the truth between them. Sign me too."

And Eva writes beneath her own name, in the register hand, the teacher's — Friedl — and the date, and the sheet joins the stack, and the stack is squared.

Minute seven. Up the stairs. The town takes them back at the top as it always does; the lists are typing; the train is in the week. But the archive under the roof has gained eleven pages it was never designed to hold — the collector, collected; the keeper, kept; entered at last into her own suitcase by the hands she trained — so that when the world finally opens the cases and meets four and a half thousand children, it will find, filed among them at true width, signed twice, the small grey woman who taught them all to see: present in the record, name and date, in eleven honest hands.

The course is complete. The frame holds.

IV. THE SUITCASE

THIRTEEN. THE TWO SUITCASES

The town after the autumn transports was a coat with the person gone out of it. Eleven trains had taken the working heart of it — eighteen thousand people, the artists, the carers, half the remaining children — and what stayed was the old, the ill, the administratively stranded, and a scattering of the young, Eva and her mother among them, held back by the mica shop's last unexpired stamp; and the scenery stood over the emptiness with its striped awning, and the winter came down, and the town, which had been sixty thousand and had been a civilization, was eleven thousand people wintering in a stage set.

The trains east stopped — the last left in October, and then the rails' traffic reversed, and the reversal was the town's education in what the East had been, delivered in person, in the spring, when the machinery began evacuating its collapsing camps ahead of the fronts and the marches and freight cars of the evacuated reached Terezín. Eva stood at the siding on a day in late April among the helpers with soup, and what came out of the cars she has set down once, in the flat register, for the record, and will not decorate here: the arrivals from the East were not people the town could recognize, and then, worse, some of them were — returning transports, the town's own numbers, individuals last seen boarding in the autumn now weighing what they weighed and carrying typhus into the fortress; and from them, in fragments, from mouths that could barely spend the breath, the town received at last the full unwithheld answer to the question it had lived inside for three years. The name of the place the letters had come from. What the six-month quarantine had been. What the ramp was, and the selection, and the side from which no number returned. The town heard it standing in the April wind with soup ladles in its hands, and Eva, fourteen, holding a bowl for a man who had been a boy of the boys' home, understood that she was receiving the deposition the whole war had been withholding, and that her register was now the register of confirmed things.

The typhus the freight cars brought killed in the town for weeks on both sides of the liberation — the war ended in the second week of

May; the flags changed; medical teams came; and the town's last dead died free, of the East's final parcel, in clean beds, in the spa town the machinery had promised the old people in their contracts. Eva and her mother lived. The mica stamp, the room's arithmetic, the whole chain of provisional fences had held to the end for two names out of a family of nine, and the counting of the seven began that summer and has never in any real sense ended.

She went up to the attic in June, with one of the surviving carers, on a bright dusty afternoon, and they lifted the boards and the two suitcases were there — flat, ordinary, battered, exactly as left, the dead space under the roof having kept them through the last winter of the war the way the marsh kept its own, the way the floorboard kept the tin — and they carried them down into the daylight and opened them on a table in the emptied girls' home, and Eva, who had helped pack them and knew precisely what they held, was not prepared, and no one who has ever opened them since has been prepared. Four and a half thousand sheets. The smell of paper and cellar. The leaves, the windows with their geraniums and their seas, the wagons done link by link, the empty chairs at true width, the eleven portraits of a grey-haired woman signed twice — the entire seen record of the children of the town, name by name, date by date, in order; and of the names on the sheets, the after-years' arithmetic would establish the proportion that makes the suitcases what they are: of the roughly fifteen thousand children who passed through Terezín, perhaps one in ten lived to be liberated. The drawings survived at a rate the children did not. The archive had done exactly what its keeper built it to do — it had gone where the lists could not reach, and waited, and come back carrying everyone.

The suitcases went to Prague that autumn, to the community that was gathering the record of what had been done, and Eva went with them as far as the handover, fifteen years old, the living half of the archive, and performed on a clerk's table in Prague the marriage the teacher had assigned her on the attic ladder: the pages and the names, the drawings and the register, which child made which sheet, and what was happening that week, and who sang, and both dates where the dates were doubled. It took the clerks years to catalogue and the world decades to look. She

learned to wait. The teacher had told her it would take them decades to believe it, in the plain voice, on a ladder, and the teacher's estimates had never once been wrong.

And the estimate about the butterfly was not wrong either. When the world finally came to the suitcases — the exhibitions, the books, the school groups of every country filing past the framed pages — Eva watched, year after year, the same thing happen at the same kind of sheet: the crowds moved past the documents and the numbers and the maps at the pace of the route, the delegation's pace, looking without seeing — and then stopped, cold, mid-shuffle, before some small signed page: a butterfly, a window full of meadow, a birthday table drawn from memory by a girl whose date-pair the caption gave in one line. Stopped, and went quiet, and saw. Nobody believes a number. Everybody believes a child's picture. The frame held; the frame holds; the drawn ones, hung at true width in the daylight of the after-world, still doing, on every wall they hang on, the only work they were ever assigned:

look at it until you see it.

INTERLUDE IV. THE MUSEUM

Minute one. A Tuesday morning, sixty years deep in the after-world, in a hall of the old Jewish quarter of Prague, and the room is being entered by a school class — twenty-eight children, thirteen years old, of the age, herded and buzzing, trailing a teacher who says in the doorway what teachers say: quietly now, and stay together.

The walls hold the pages. A selection, rotated gently through the years to rest the paper: this season, a chestnut leaf in hard pencil; a window with geraniums and a cat; the sea, drawn by a girl who never saw it, unmistakably the sea; the wagons at the siding, link by link; a room of benches with three spaces left empty at a deliberate width; a portrait of a grey-haired woman in a mended cardigan, signed twice. Beside each, a small caption: a name, a birth date, and the second date, and the one-line grammar the hall has settled on across the decades, the plainest sentence the language owns: deported October 1944. Did not return.

Minute two. The class enters the way every class enters — at the route's pace, the delegation's pace, eyes skating, elbows, a stifled laugh at the back — and the room does to them what the room does. It is not solemnity; children are armored against instructed solemnity, and rightly. It is the pages themselves, working one child at a time. A boy stops in front of the wagons because he likes machines and the coupling-chains are correct, and reads the caption, and does the arithmetic every child does — he was my age — and stands there recalculating the world. Two girls stop at the window with the geraniums because the cat is good, the cat has weight, and read the caption, and one of them looks back at the window, and her face performs in four seconds the entire distance the delegation never crossed: from looking to seeing.

Minute three. By the far wall, on the bench the museum keeps for her, an old woman sits with a folder of papers on her knees, watching. She is small and upright and has the stillness of the very old who were taught stillness early, and the staff treat her the way a building treats its cornerstone. When the class has gone one full slow circuit — the buzzing long gone; the room has taken it, the way the room takes it from every class — the museum teacher gathers them at the wall of benches-with-empty-places and says: we are very fortunate today. And the old woman rises, and does not go to the lectern, and stands instead beside the drawing of the room with the gaps, under her own careful thirteen-year-old lines, and performs the office she has performed on this spot across four decades of Tuesdays, the office assigned to her on an attic ladder by a woman with a transport number in her pocket:

she reads the register.

Minute four. Not a speech. Names. She matches the walls to the world, page by page: who drew the leaf, and that she sang; who drew the sea, and that she packed rucksacks like a guild-master and taught the skill forward; who edited a magazine of sixteen pages a week and ruled that an obituary that lies is a second death, and what his last card said, and both of its dates. The class stands in the held quiet of children hearing, for the first time, history speak in the first person singular — and then she does the thing

that the staff, decades in, still position themselves to watch, the close of the office, the last exercise of the course she never left:

"Now," she says, "everyone find one page. Any page. Stand in front of it. And do what the person who made it was taught to do, in a cellar, on Thursdays, by the woman in the mended cardigan behind you." She waits while twenty-eight children distribute themselves along the walls, one child to a page, the room arranging itself into the shape it was always, secretly, built to hold: a class. "Look at it," she says, "until you see it. Take your time. The paper has waited sixty years. It can wait for you."

Minute five. And the room goes down the stairs.

There is no other way to put what happens, and the old woman has stopped looking for one: the buzzing class, the route-pace class, stands one-to-a-page in the quiet, and the quiet deepens, and somewhere in the second minute the border is crossed — twenty-eight children pouring, each through a private window, into a leaf, a sea, a kitchen, a set of empty benches — attention unhooked and given whole, the slat opened, the old country entered by the young; and the pages, which are the residue of children learning to see, complete their circuit at last by teaching it; and for the length of the exercise the hall holds fifty-six children at once, the drawn and the looking, both at true width, both present, in the largest Thursday the course has ever convened.

Minute six. The teacher of the after-world finally, gently, calls time; the class surfaces; the room exhales; and at the door, filing out changed by one degree — which is all any hour has ever changed anyone, and enough — the children pass the bench where the old woman has resumed her seat with the folder on her knees, and a girl at the line's end, the one who saw the cat had weight, stops in front of her, and asks the question one child in every class asks, the question the whole cycle bends toward:

"Are you in the drawings too?"

"I am the one who wrote the names on the back," the old woman says. "Somebody has to hold the register. When you are old, it will be somebody from a Tuesday like this one." She taps the folder,

once, the registrar's tap, the closing of the day's account. "Perhaps the one who saw the cat."

Minute seven. The class is gone up into the daylight of the priceless ordinary city. The hall settles. The pages hang in their frames, signed, dated, at true width — four and a half thousand witnesses, on rotation, on duty — and the old woman sits with the register on her knees in the quiet behind the eyes, keeping the room, keeping the count, keeping the appointment: still there. Still, after everything, there.

FOURTEEN. THE SECOND THING

The after ran longer than the war by a factor the young cannot feel until they are old, and Eva's ledger of it, kept to the end in the register hand, closes this book with three entries: one for the archives, one for the argument, and one for the water — because every book of this cycle ends beside its water, and it took Eva fifty years to find where hers had been all along.

The archives first, because the teacher's estimate proved exact: it took the world decades to believe it. The suitcases reached Prague in 1945 and lay in the community's keeping through the grey years that followed — catalogued, conserved, exhibited at first in small rooms to small crowds, while the world's attention did what the delegation's had done, arriving and departing at the route's pace. The magazine's suitcase surfaced too, in its own time, dug from under the floorboards by a surviving editor: the complete run, numbered, dated, the obituaries with their honest fault lines, the editorial in the plain hand — the count was kept; act accordingly — published at last, taught at last, the youngest newsroom in the history of the trade entering the permanent record with its archive intact and almost none of its staff. And year over year, exhibition over exhibition, the estimate about the butterfly compounded: the drawings traveled — Prague, then everywhere — and became, for millions who would never read a document, the door into the whole subject; the school groups of six continents stopped mid-shuffle before the signed pages; and Eva, who had watched the world look at Terezín once, in June of 1944, and see nothing, spent her

after-years watching it look again through four and a half thousand frames built in a cellar by children, and see. The lie had needed a town, a program, a budget, and the world's certified eyes, and it lasted one summer. The truth needed paper, a method, and two suitcases in an attic, and it is still gaining ground. Ours keeps better archives. She had it carved, in the end, very small, into the frame of her own testimony, where the museum's caption-writers let it stand.

The argument second, because the Quarrel of the basement did not close, and she carried both pans faithfully, as instructed, all her life. The after-years produced their own delegations — scholars who called the town's secret culture a beautiful anesthesia, chestnut leaves against freight schedules; and others who called it the purest resistance the century recorded, the person defended at the one altitude the machinery could not reach. Eva testified for neither school and against neither, and gave every interviewer the same finding, the registrar's finding, the only one her evidence supported: I cannot tell you what the hour was worth against the trains, because the trains ran regardless; that ledger has no column for it. I can tell you what boarded the trains. I stood on the platform in October 1944 and watched a grey-haired woman climb into a wagon with her students, undeceived, unreduced, carrying breathing exercises to Auschwitz — and I have spent sixty years failing to describe her face, and the nearest I have come is this: it was the face of a person whose archive is already safe. You may decide for yourselves what that was worth. She knew exactly what it cost, and paid it looking.

And one more entry from the argument years, filed in the register under recognition. Sometime in the sixties an American paperback made its way to her through the usual smuggled channels of the grey years — science fiction, by a Californian with a cold eye and a broken heart — a novel about colonists exiled on a dead world who chew a forbidden drug in order to be translated, communally, for stolen minutes, into a doll-sized layout of the sunny planet they have lost: a miniature with a little shop, a little café, tidy money, every detail loved into place. She read it in one night, in Prague, with the suitcases ten minutes' walk away, and sat until morning

with the thing the book had handed her: the diagram of June 1944, drawn twenty years late by a man who had never heard of her town. Because she had lived inside the illustration. She had stood in the second row of a layout built at full scale, and watched the world itself do the chewing — take the wafer of the certificate, and be translated into the miniature, and walk its one street believing — and the difference between the exiles of the novel and the delegate of the twenty-third of June, she wrote in the register, is the whole moral history of looking: the exiles knew the layout was false, and entered it anyway, because their truth was a dead planet and they were dying of it. He had the truth packed living around him at twenty paces, and preferred the layout. And the after-world is not cured, she wrote under that, in the small hand, the three-in-the-morning hand. The tidy miniature of the past is always on sale — the history in which it was all almost normal, in which nothing could have been known — and the certificate is always being chewed, by somebody, somewhere, this Tuesday too; and the only antidote our trade ever found is the counter-layout: the child's page, the drawn window, the frame that opens the eyes it fills instead of closing them. Two layouts, one method, opposite directions. Choose which one you are translated into. That is the entire instruction, and the paperback's author knew it, and the teacher knew it before him.

And then the file. It belongs after the paperback in the register, because the paperback was the diagram and the file was the confirmation, ordered so the reader takes the fall in the sequence she took it. In the years when the captured archives opened to researchers, she was granted a reader's desk — the living half of the suitcases could not be refused — and she went looking for the Beautification's paper trail, the work orders for the café and the lambs, expecting to document a stage set. What she found instead, threaded through the town's administrative correspondence, was a vocabulary she recognized from a different industry altogether, and it took most of a week to let the recognition finish arriving. The correspondence did not discuss a ghetto. It discussed a facility. Throughput. Staffing ratios per thousand units. The refinement of list-procedures, with revisions numbered. Rotations — personnel

cycled through the town on postings measured in months, arriving raw and departing, the file said in its own words, experienced in the handling of concentrated populations, their next postings eastward. The show-function — the layout, the visit, the film — filed as one deliverable among several, between transport scheduling and process improvement. She sat with the folders open and understood, at last, the word she had lived inside since she was eleven — the word planted on this book's first page as it was planted on her: model. As a child she had learned its second meaning, the showpiece. The file held the first, the engineer's: a model is a working simulation. A pilot plant. The town had been, in its own makers' filing system, the machinery's rehearsal of itself, run live — the efficient ghetto developed on working material, its procedures debugged on the population that died debugging them, its staff trained on the survivors, its public face play-tested on the world's certified eyes — and the whole civilization inside it — the homes, the opera, the Thursday cellar — had been built by its prisoners inside the rehearsal of the thing that was learning, from their handling, how to run everywhere else. The town built to be looked at was the town built to be learned from. The delegate had walked a demonstration. The East had been the production run. The entry she made that night is the register's coldest: We thought the lie was the mask the machine wore for visitors. The file says otherwise. The lie was a deliverable, and so were we — all of it one program, the drawing class included, if only as a variable the designers never noticed they had failed to control.

She spent her final day at the reader's desk doing the thing registrars do when the world splits: she put the two vocabularies side by side. On the left of her notepad, the file's words, copied exactly: throughput; units; staffing ratios; process improvement; show-function; deliverable. On the right, from memory, the words written on the backs of the pages in the suitcases, in the round hands: my mother's blue dress; our kitchen, the clock is real; Punt'a, week nine; the sea (I think); for Marta, who sang. Two languages, she wrote beneath the columns, and the difference between them is the whole finding of my life, so enter it plainly: cruelty is fluent in the abstract and cannot survive the particular.

No one has ever gassed “Zuzana, who drew her dog in episodes”; to do what the file did, the file first had to translate her into units, and the translation was the crime’s true first act — everything after was procedure. And innocence, it turns out, was never the ignorance the adults kept mourning in us. It is the refusal, native to children and trained to a discipline in one basement, to speak the abstract language at all — the stubborn insistence that the clock is real and the dress is blue and the dog has a name. The model was written entirely in the left-hand column. The meadow is written entirely in the right. Hold the columns apart, whoever holds this register, and you will know every future file by its grammar before it is a fact.

And last, the letter — filed in her ninth decade under the oldest heading in the register, the second thing, because the second thing is the taking of memory, and the letter came for the memory with a purchase order. It arrived through the museum’s correspondence, on the letterhead of a consortium, in the smooth grammar of the heritage industry: a proposal for an immersive historical experience — a faithful reconstruction of the town at one-to-one scale, exhaustively researched, in which visitors would assume period roles, the letter said, on both sides of the wire, for the premium tiers; the educational value was asserted twice; and the consortium requested, to ensure environmental authenticity, reproduction rights to a representative selection of the children’s drawings. Eva read it at the bench and recognized every component: the layout, rebuilt; the translation, ticketed; the appetite that the file had documented in its native uniform now returning dressed as remembrance, asking politely, this time, for the wire — and asking, since the lie can still be built of nothing less, for conscripted truth to bear it: the counter-layout as set dressing, Hana’s lambs again, with a licensing fee. Her reply is in the museum’s files, two sentences, the shortest verdict of her life, preserved in the register as proof that the war of the two layouts has no armistice: The children’s pages exist to open eyes. Your facility requires them closed. Refused.

And the water. Eva lived to be old in Prague, ten minutes’ walk from the suitcases, and kept her Tuesdays at the museum into her ninth decade, and it was there, late, standing before the drawing

that had hung longest — a girl's window, geraniums, the cat with weight — that the last entry of the register wrote itself. A restorer, working beside her one closing hour, tilted the frame's glass against the lamp, and in the raking light the drawing showed its surface — the sixty-year-old graphite sitting in the grain, silvery, mineral, faintly shining, the strokes standing up off the page like a tide-mark — and Eva, looking at the shine, understood at last which water her book had been beside the whole time. Graphite is a dark water. Every line of the four and a half thousand pages is a stroke of it, laid by a child's hand in a cellar and holding, at true width, in the mineral itself, the exact motion of that hand on that Thursday of that year — the swing of the arm, the pressure of the seeing, the tremor and the steadiness both, kept the way the marsh kept everything it was given, the way still water is a mirror leaned close to and a lid stood back from. The children could not be kept; the town saw to that; the lists were stronger; that was arithmetic. But the motion of their attention — thirty small hands learning, one hour a week, in the middle of the machinery's masterpiece, to be free — was poured into the dark water of the graphite line by line, and sealed under glass, and it has not evaporated; and every child of the after-world who looks at a page until they see it stands at the edge of that water, watching the hand still move.

The unwitnessed wars end here, at the frame's edge, and the register closes the way registers close: with the roll. Five seasons; five doors; five clerks nobody appointed. An orderly in a poisoned marsh, keeping the vigil the smoke could not enter. A weigher at a brass scale, given the terrible clarity, keeping the count in circles. A woman under the papyrus, gone below her own edges, called back nightly by two clicks of an old man's tongue. A night attendant with a ring of keys, rocking with her forty children in the one-rhythm dark. A girl in a cellar, breathing on the count of a teacher who packed paper instead of bread. Five altered countries, entered by five terrible roads — and all of them, the register finds at the last, one country: the place attention goes to stay alive, the room in the person that the machinery of every season — gas, famine, blade, ratio, wire — has never once succeeded in inventorying. Four of the five were found by the trapped, alone, at

the full price. The fifth was taught. That is why the cycle ends here, in the basement, on the Thursdays: a door that can be taught can be inherited, and a state that can be inherited is a state the wars cannot outlast. They take the people first and the memory second, and only the second taking can be fought — with a scale, a count, a tongue-click, a rhythm, a signed and dated page. The drawn ones lost the first war entire. They are winning the second one still, every Tuesday, in the quiet behind the eyes of children not yet born when even their rememberer is water.

And the register passes, as it has always passed, the way the boy editor said it would: to whoever, in whatever year, is holding the suitcase. That is you now. The count was kept. Act accordingly.

Look at it until you see it. Then hold the register.

The frame holds.

GLOSSARY

BRUNDIBÁR [BROON-dee-bar] — Czech, *the organ-grinder*. The children's opera written before the war by a composer who became a prisoner of the town: a brother and sister, a wicked organ-grinder who drowns out their singing, and the town's children and animals who out-sing him together. Performed fifty-five times in Terezín, and filmed for the propaganda reel.

MAJÁK [MA-yahk] — Czech, *the Lighthouse*. The boys' home's magazine — one handwritten copy an issue, read aloud on Friday nights and filed in a suitcase under the floorboards, obituaries and all. An invention, built from the real hidden magazines of the town.

TEREZÍN [TEH-reh-zeen] — Czech, *Theresienstadt*. The fortress town north of Prague, built by an emperor for seven thousand, that the machinery made its "model ghetto" — the town for showing — and through which some 140,000 people passed.

VERSCHÖNERUNG [fair-SHUR-ner-oong] — German, *beautification, embellishment*. The administrative term for the program that dressed the town for the Red Cross visit of June 1944 — the painted route, the pavilion, the café, the bank with its Moses currency — built by the prisoners' own labor.

Terezín, 1942. The fortress ghetto is a town built to be looked at — the "model ghetto" the machinery keeps for showing, where sixty thousand people live in a town of seven thousand beds and two truths run at all times, one inside the other. Eva, eleven, is assigned to Room Twenty-Eight of the girls' home, where thirty girls run a civilization on a constitution of their own — and where, on Thursdays, in a basement, a small grey-haired woman who packed fifty kilos of paper instead of clothes teaches drawing.

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis does not teach the vase on the table. She teaches a practice: breathing, rhythm, seeing — a discipline that opens, for one bordered hour a week, a country the ghetto cannot enter. She never corrects a drawing. She keeps every one: signed, dated, sorted — an archive growing in secret against the lists.

As the transports grind east and the postcards of ghosts come back, the town is beautified, a delegation of the world's own certified eyes walks through a lie built of conscripted truth and finds it almost normal — and before her own train, the teacher packs four and a half thousand drawings into two suitcases, hides them under a roof, and hands a fourteen-year-old the register.

Nobody believes a number. Everybody believes a child's picture. Look at it until you see it.



FROM THE UNWITNESSED WARS

ROYA PUBLICATIONS

