

MEMORIES

IN

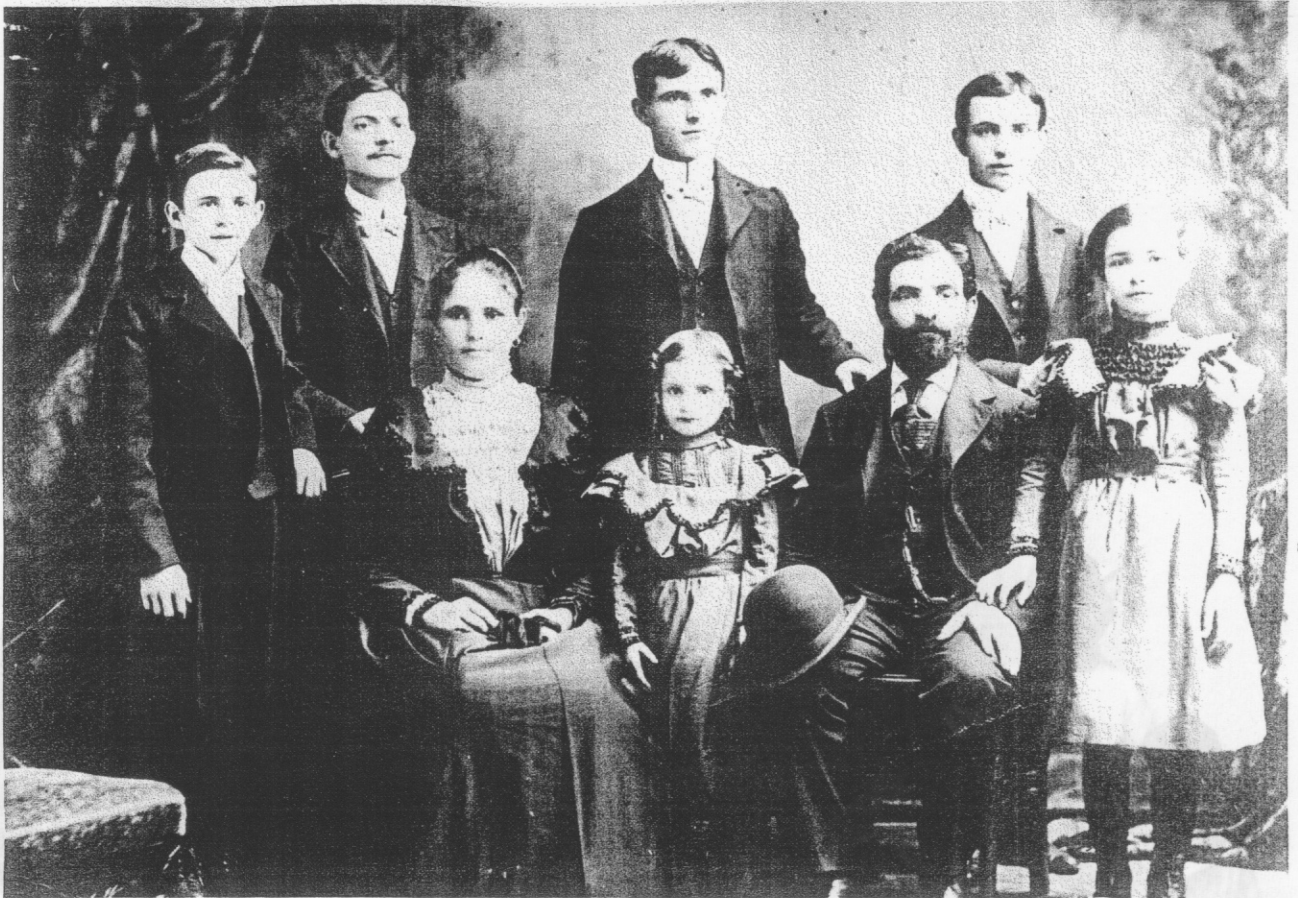
MEMORY

OF

ULA



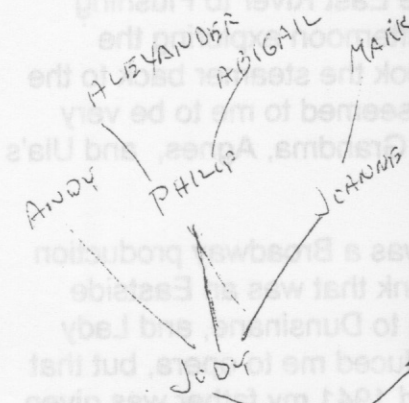
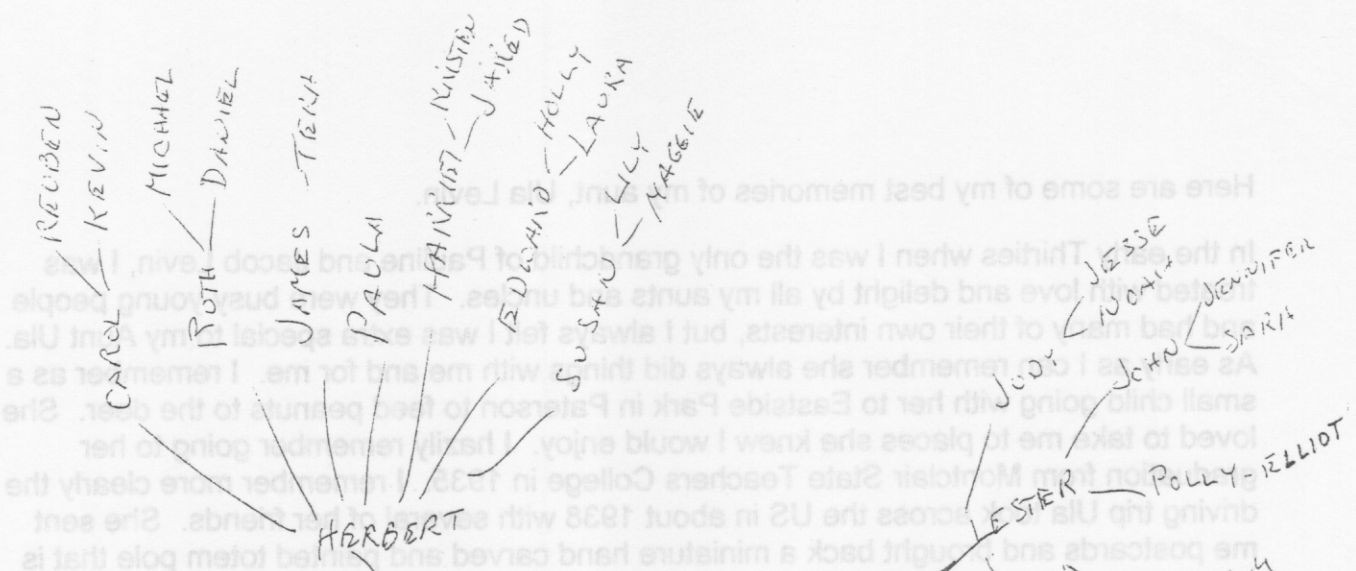
Grandma and Grandpa Clebnikow and grandchildren.  
Ula is second from the left, seated at Grandma's feet.



Haiman Levin, Bessie (Israel) Levin  
and Family. Paterson c. 1896  
Back row, from left to right:  
Nathan, Jacob(Ula's father),  
Isaac(half-brother), Morris.  
Front row: Bessie, Rachel, Haiman, Ula.

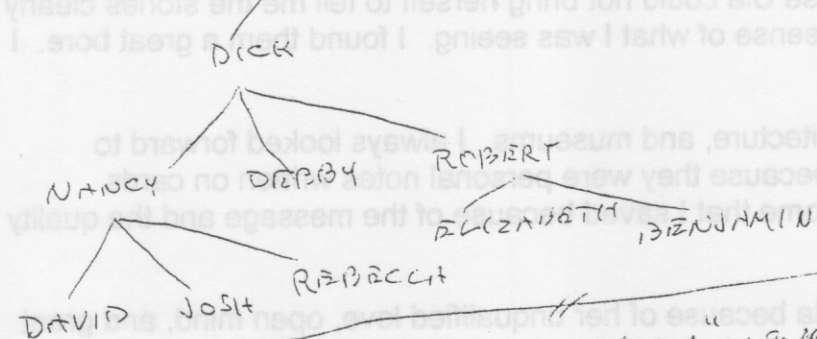


Pauline Clebnikow(on right),  
Ula's Mother, and a friend.



ULA E LEVIN  
1914 - 1995  
mar 22      Jul 26

FRED - JANE



MY "LIFE WITH ULA" 1940-1995

SIBLINGS	4	F	M
NIECES + NEPHEWS	14	9	5
GRAND NIECES + NEPHEWS	25	"	14
GREAT GRAND NIECES + NEPHEWS	8	3	5

MARGARAT M. LEVIN (MMH.J)  
March 1995

Here are some of my best memories of my aunt, Ula Levin.

In the early Thirties when I was the only grandchild of Pauline and Jacob Levin, I was treated with love and delight by all my aunts and uncles. They were busy young people and had many of their own interests, but I always felt I was extra special to my Aunt Ula. As early as I can remember she always did things with me and for me. I remember as a small child going with her to Eastside Park in Paterson to feed peanuts to the deer. She loved to take me to places she knew I would enjoy. I hazily remember going to her graduation from Montclair State Teachers College in 1935. I remember more clearly the driving trip Ula took across the US in about 1938 with several of her friends. She sent me postcards and brought back a miniature hand carved and painted totem pole that is still on display in our home. On other trips she sent me special commemorative covers that I still have in my stamp collection.

As I grew older she included me in field trips with her history classes. The first one I remember was to the 1939 New York World's Fair in Flushing Meadows. I was nine and much younger than her other students. It was quite an adventure. I think we took a bus to the New York Hudson River pier of the Day Line early in the morning. We boarded the excursion steamer that took us around Manhattan up the East River to Flushing Meadows. We landed at the Fair, and Ula and I spent the afternoon exploring the exciting exhibits. My favorite was the GM Futurama. We took the steamer back to the Hudson River pier and finally got back to Paterson at what seemed to me to be very late at night. It was quite an adventure. I of course slept at Grandma, Agnes, and Ula's home that night as well as many other times.

Ula took me to my first Shakespeare play in about 1940. It was a Broadway production of "Macbeth" with Judith Anderson and Maurice Evans. I think that was an Eastside High trip too. I still remember the witches, the forest moving to Dunsinane, and Lady Macbeth madly washing and wringing her hands. She introduced me to opera, but that was not very successful. I never became a fan. In 1940 and 1941 my father was given two season's tickets to the Met -- Orchestra seats, no less. With those tickets Ula took me to Saturday matinees of "La Boheme" and "Madame Butterfly." I never did understand the stories because Ula could not bring herself to tell me the stories clearly enough so that I could make sense of what I was seeing. I found them a great bore. I guess it was my loss.

We shared a love of art, architecture, and museums. I always looked forward to receiving her birthday cards because they were personal notes written on cards illustrating great art. I have some that I saved because of the message and the quality of the reproduction.

I always enjoyed visits with Ula because of her unqualified love, open mind, and great store of family lore that she would always share if asked. Janet and I still were hearing new stories even on our last visit with her in January this year.

Dick Rosenberg

March 1995

When I was nine or ten (1959 or 1960), Jane and Lester went on a trip to Europe and Tom and I stayed with Ula and Agnes in Paterson. One of our favorite places to go with Ula was Lambert's castle. Here was a chance for Ula to share with us both her knowledge of medieval history (the role of the castle in medieval life) and to relate some of Paterson's history as well (if I recall correctly, Mr. Lambert arrived in America a poor Irishman--did he like the line?-- became very rich in the silk(?) industry and decided to build himself a castle which was a replica of the lord's castle in his hometown.) There was a gift shop there and, with her usual generosity, Ula satisfied my fancy

March 26, 1995

Did anyone know that Ula set the direction of my future long before I ever knew her? It was because of Ula that Dick applied to Purdue, a school he had never heard of. We met our first week on campus and three years later became engaged. As a nervous nineteen year old fiancée, I made my first trip to New Jersey to meet Dick's family and give them a chance to look me over--a conservative Midwest Republican. Dick had told me all about his relatives, especially his favorites, so I already knew a lot about Ula. Nevertheless, I was not prepared for her warm welcome. She greeted me with open arms, unconditional love and Levin/Rosenberg stories galore.

Being with Ula was always special. She was an extraordinary person and a very important part of my life.

Janet Rosenberg



When I was nine or ten (1959 or 1960), Jane and Lester went on a trip to Europe and Tom and I stayed with Ula and Agnes in Paterson. One of our favorite places to go with Ula was Lambert's castle. Here was a chance for Ula to share with us both her knowledge of medieval history (the role of the castle in medieval life) and to relate some of Paterson's history as well (if I recall correctly, Mr. Lambert arrived in America a poor Irishman-did he flee the potato famine?-, became very rich in the silk(?) industry and decided to build himself a castle which was a replica of the lord's castle in his hometown.) There was a gift shop there and, with her usual generosity, Ula satisfied my fancy for some pieces of polished semi-precious stone with little hooks in them so that they could be made into a pendant. Ula told me that I could write to my parents in Florence and ask them to bring me back a gold chain. She knew exactly where they should go to get it, and I think she even helped me to write the letter. Of course her instructions were perfect and Jane and Lester brought me a fine golden chain from Florence.

Polly Levin  
Berkeley, California  
February 27, 1995



JALVIN

Saturday, March 18, 1995

### VENUS AS A MORNING STAR

We come to see Aunt Ula  
And think of her as she's thought of us,  
Thinking through the years.  
Just the right act, just the right gift  
at just the right time.  
A guardian seen now and then, but  
always there,  
Just between the sun and moon,  
Always kind and knowing.  
We cousins, her kids return  
To be with her again and know,  
Venus is a morning star,  
Shining bright, 'till daylight comes.

*Edward D. Lévin  
February 12, 1995*



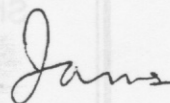
# JALEVIN

Saturday, March 18, 1995

Here is a story that I've been told again and again, each time I visited Ula. I heard it again when I visited with Ula last December.

I must have been 5 years old or so when my family drove to Paterson to visit with Ula and Agnes. When we entered their house, I saw a tasty treat on their table, which I rushed over to try - doughnuts! I picked a likely looking one, I bit into it, and, according to Ula, I had **such** a surprised and upset look on my face! It was a bagel.

During my last visit with Ula last December, she took me out to brunch to her favorite restaurant in Clifton. Of course I ordered lox and bagels.



James Levin

Several years ago, I was working on an advertising project that meant I had to make a day trip to NYC. I immediately called Ula, saying I was going to have a meeting in midtown, was there any way we could get together? Instead of the ecstatic welcome I was expecting, Ula sounded downhearted. It turned out that John Levin (whom I'd never met) was also going to be in town that day from CA, and she had already made plans to meet him. Since my free time was going to be so brief, we realized we really couldn't plan to see each other. Both of us were sorely disappointed.

The next week I flew to New York, and due to some rescheduling, my art director and I got in earlier than planned so decided to take a quick peek at the Paul Klee exhibit at the MOMA. We dashed in (with a meeting pending in 45 minutes), and agreed to split up and meet again in half an hour in the front lobby. I whipped through the photography exhibit and a few Picasso's, skipping Klee since there wasn't time, and promptly arrived in the lobby at the appointed minute. No art director. I waited and looked at my watch. I paced. I fumed. I cursed under my breath at her unreliability and just when my patience was running out, I glanced over at the bench across from me.

With a huge smile beginning to slide over my face, I walked across the floor and tapped gently on the shoulder of the woman thumbing through the paper as she patiently waited for someone to arrive. *Ula looked up and almost had a coronary!* Exclaiming and grinning, we just had time for a hug when unfortunately my art director reappeared and we had to bolt for our meeting. Well, at least we saw each other.

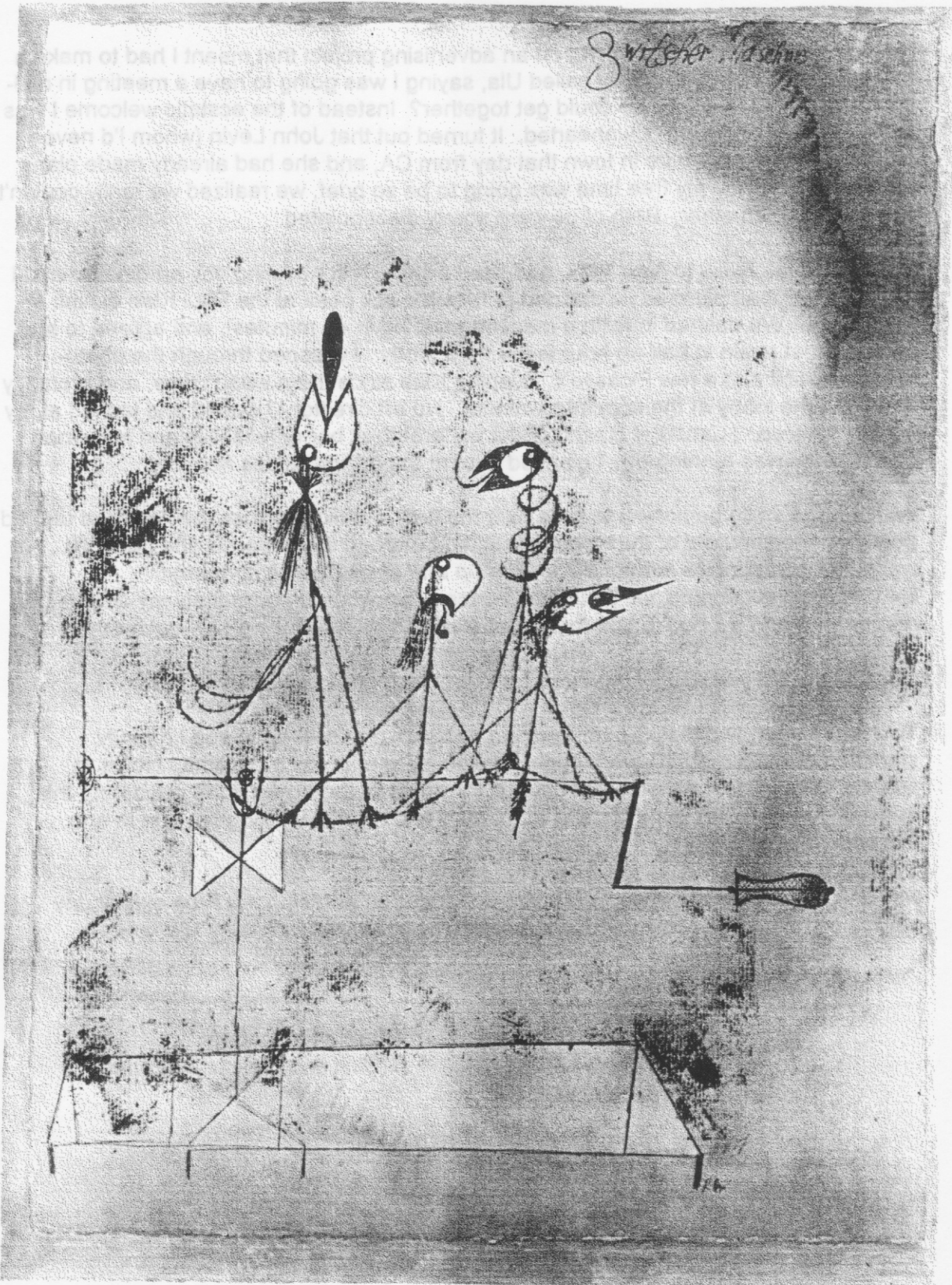
(Now just when you're thinking that's quite a coincidence, it gets even better...)

Two hours later, two blocks over from the museum, my colleague and I happily stumbled out of a meeting we thought was going to take twice the time. Hours to spare... what to do? As we walked down the steps of the brownstone pondering this question, we bumped quite literally into a man and woman walking by, arm in arm. *Ula and John. Really!*

Needless to say we spent a lovely afternoon together perusing the Klee exhibit; my newly acquainted first cousin once removed, my beaming great aunt Ula, and I.

Debra Rosenberg  
(Dick and Janet's daughter)

March 24, 1995



135. Klee. TWITTERING MACHINE. 1922. Museum of Modern Art, New York

# JOHN LEVIN

ON BEING ASKED TO WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT MY AUNT ULA ON THE OCCASION OF HER DEATH.

Memories of Ula precede memory--a feeling deep within me, of a summer spent with Ula and Agnes during World War II. My first recalled memories are of the railroad flat on a shady Paterson street with a wood front porch, a dark inviting interior where cut glass jars filled with gumdrops waited for Judy and me in the living-room and the kitchen smelled of Agnes's fresh-baked brown sugar cookies. Food and love were lavished on us in equal amounts and I would prowl the apartment marveling at Ula's mysterious treasures brought back from her exotic travels. My favorite for a time was a petrified wood paperweight on Ula's desk which led to tales of a great forest out West where the trees had turned to stone. I remember listening to Ula telling me about it and thinking that I too one day walk through would walk through this Stone Forest like Ula had --her red hair blazing.

As my interests changed Ula's did as well or so it seemed---digging holes in her backyard --deep in hopes of getting through to China--gave way to the Giants--Dodgers rivalry. Ula and I discussed the pitching arms of "The Barber" and "Preacher" Roe, marveled at my baseball card collection and went to the

POST BOX 885054 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94188 • TEL. 415 822-5553

Polo Grounds and Ebbets Field. With Ula I was never "Taken" it was always a joint-venture with wonderful surprises...A baseball autographed by Larry Doby another signed by all the Giants--our team.

The Summer of 1958 in Cuernavaca-- Ula, Jane, Judy, Polly, and Tom--camping-out along the way-- I tried to teach Ula how to swim--she was game, I think--and not just to humor me. We never got much beyond the dead man's float. And I remember as I held her hands in the water, feeling the fear in her fingers. And the project was abandoned by mutual consent.

When I was attending Columbia Ula would meet me in the city, taking me to lunch or plays--outings arranged at the seasonal family gatherings...We still talked baseball but also theater, books, art, and as the Sixties tumbled forward, politics. Ula shared my outrage as the civil rights movement faltered and the Vietnam War progressed.

When I became a revolutionary Ula didn't bat an eye--after all didn't Great-Aunt Ula--a suffragette--get arrested for chaining herself to the White House fence? Ula told me about the Paterson Silk strike of 1913 when Big Bill Haywood and Emma Goldman came to town and one of the striker's paper was printed out of her father's--my grandfather's Soda Pop warehouse.

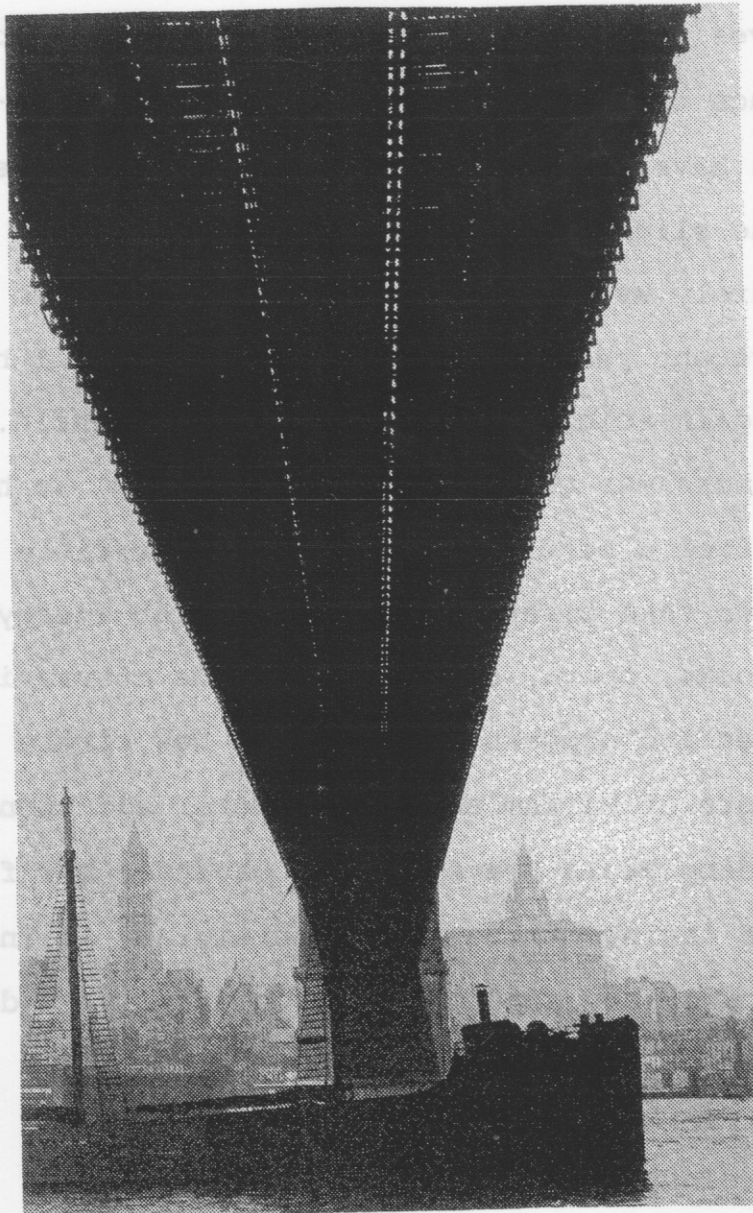
By the close of the Seventies Ula had lost three brothers, a sister and Agnes, her life-long companion--tough times--but despite quiet sadness that seemed to have enveloped her Ula somehow found the energy to love two new daughters of the Levin Family, Jenny and Sara, and make them feel as she had done to me that no matter what the turmoil inside or out--they were special. But more than that: with her uncompromising love Ula instilled in all of us--her slightly distanced progeny--that we were in and of ourselves possessed of intrinsic worth that no twist of circumstance could remove. Some of her students--the lucky ones--must have caught that look on her face, the cast of her glance, the slight tilt of her head and felt the same. Ula gave life as surely as a parent does as a teacher and an aunt.

The recent years were good. I felt that I had gotten to know Ula again--closely so as when I was a child. The last year this closeness was connected with her dying, so hard for her because, after a heroic recovery from a terrible depression, she had begun to take pleasure life again with energy of a woman half her age: books, opera, art, theater, the maturation of a host of grand nieces and nephews--and a whole new circle of friends at the Daughters of Miriam as well as newer additions to the Levin clan including Paula Braveman, who attended her first with the concern and caring of the family physician--as in Herb Levin--then as they got to know each other as a doting niece and loving friend.

That Ula died angry at her impending death doesn't bother me--seeing it did. There is nothing wrong with raging "against the dying of the light." I would have liked to have said to Ula in the last days of her life that I too felt that her dying had come too soon.

John Levin

March 26, 1995



Jennifer Levin

My earliest memories of Ula revolve around trips into New York City where she would take Sara and me to plays, museums, FAO Schwartz, and as we got older, clothing stores. I cannot reflect upon my childhood without thinking of Ula. I loved her dearly and her strong presence in the family will forever be felt. As a final dedication to Ula I would like to set forth a poem she sent to me when my mother died. I keep the poem, in her handwriting, in a frame next to a photo of Sara, my mother and me. When Ula sent me the poem she told me that someone had given it to her when Lester died, and somehow it gave her solace. I felt as if she were telling me that it was okay to be angry at the unfairness of it all. Now looking at this poem, I think of Ula, and my mother, and how I wish they were still alive.

*Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave  
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind  
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave  
I know. But I do not approve  
And I am not resigned.*

E. Millay

"Dirge Without Music"



My memories of Ula are longterm and complex and affectionate. When I was a young girl visiting her in Paterson, I observed her in the orderly, comfortable household she and Agnes created. She was a rare and valuable example for me of a single professional woman - intelligent, concerned and urbane. And she was always the loving and accessible aunt. Even as a child, I was amazed by her great talent of being at ease in conversing with anyone! Whether the person was a preschool child or a sophisticated adult, she would seriously, humorously and respectfully interact with each person in a way that was appropriate to that individual, their situation and their interests. She was always able to be comfortable yet clearly herself in a wide variety of settings.

Once as a young child I stayed with her in Paterson for a few days. I remember sitting with her in the kitchen one evening while she assigned grades to her students. She talked aloud through this routine part of her job so I would feel involved. It was one of my first opportunities to visit an adult as a person who treated me as a person - a revelation unlike my previous experiences in parent-child and teacher-student relationships.

As I grew into an adult myself, I cherished her all the more for the decades of ongoing visits, phone conversations and notes that marked our evolving adult to adult relationship. We exchanged views on art, social change and family doings. I am already missing the sharing of jokes, exhibits or book reviews (see the enclosed New Yorker cartoon as an example!). She was a great role model all her life to me and countless others. Dealing so honestly and courageously with illness, depression and loss in her later years has increased my respect for her even more.

Ula greeted my young and then growing children with the same delight and respectful interest that she did everyone else. I have felt fortunate to be able to offer them family members of this generation who are products of their time yet entirely relevant and involved in the current era.

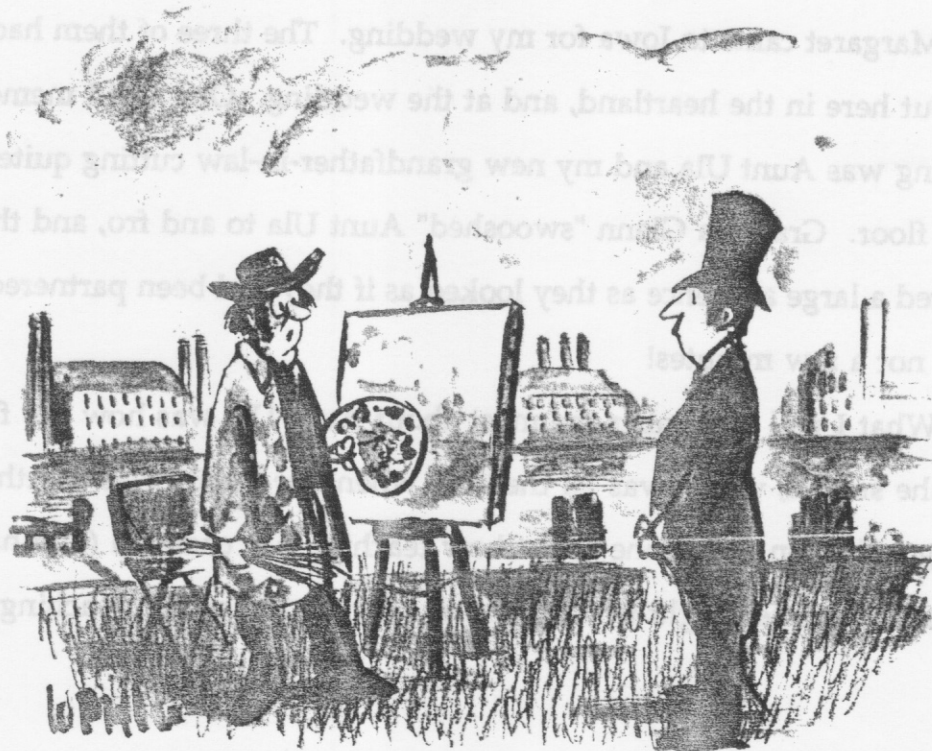
I remember "Ladies" lunches at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, warm talks amidst the happy hubbub of family gatherings in Belle Vernon and breakfasts of lox and bagels in her kitchens in New Jersey. She's left a rich legacy.

Ruth Levin 4/6/95

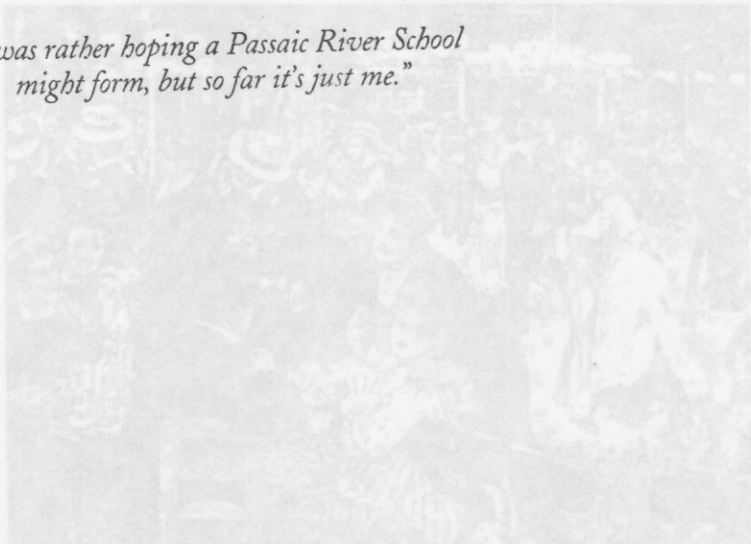
April 5, 1992

Most of my

experiences with (Great) Aunt Ula were when I was very young and our family would travel from Chicago to New York/New Jersey to see the relatives. I don't really remember much about those visits. But in 1985, Aunt Ula, Aunt Mal, and Aunt Margaret joined me for my wedding. The three of them had a wonderful time out here in the heartland, and at the wedding, Aunt Ula and Aunt Mal were the wedding was Aunt Ula and my new grandfather-in-law cutting quite a rug on the dance floor. Great Aunt "swore" Aunt Ula to and fro, and the two of them attracted large crowds as they looked at the pictures that had been prepared for many years, not just for the wedding but for the years before.



*"I was rather hoping a Passaic River School might form, but so far it's just me."*



*Pat Proctor  
2512 Venetian Circle  
Trenton, NJ 08645*

April 5, 1995

Most of my experiences with (Great) Aunt Ula were when I was very young and our family would travel from Chicago to New York/New Jersey to see the relatives. I don't really remember much about those visits. But, in 1985, Aunt Ula, Aunt Mal, and Aunt Margaret came to Iowa for my wedding. The three of them had a wonderful time out here in the heartland, and at the wedding. One vivid memory of the wedding was Aunt Ula and my new grandfather-in-law cutting quite a rug on the dance floor. Grandpa Glenn "swooshed" Aunt Ula to and fro, and the two of them attracted a large audience as they looked as if they had been partnered for many years, not a few minutes!

What I will remember the most about Aunt Ula was how her face lit up every time she smiled, which was all the time when our family was together. I will miss talking to her on the phone about how teaching has changed (and hasn't changed) from the time she taught to the present, now that I am also teaching.



Bob Rosenberg  
2692 Concord Circle  
Iowa City, IA 52245

## Memories of Ula E. Levin

Many years ago I read a poem, "In Praise of Aunts," written by Phyllis McGinley (1960) that reminded me very much of Ula. I copied it down in a notebook in which I keep various fragments of text and poetry that I want to remember and revisit. One verse brings to mind Ula's quality of being an extraordinarily good listener. This trait I recognized early on in my interactions with Ula, in the feeling she generated of being interested in me: what I thought, what I believed, and what sense I made of the world. Rather than a specific incident, it was Ula's way of being there in the moment, attentive, and hearing what I, even as a child, had to say that is my core memory of Ula. And I hold that image of Ula within me, as I, in turn, try to be a praiseworthy aunt.

Aunts are discreet, a little shy  
By instinct. They forbear to pry  
Into recesses of the spirit  
Where apprehensions lie.  
Yet, given a tale to hear, they hear it.

*Paula*

Paula Levin  
Cardiff, California  
April 1995

THOUGHTS OF ULA

I loved the way she would call me "dear".

I loved her skill of being a really good listener. I always felt that I had her undivided attention when we had conversations.

I loved her true interest in the thoughts and ideas of people from all walks of life.

I loved her passion for learning throughout her life.

I loved the stories she told me of her life with my father.

I loved her grace.

I loved seeing the joy she found in music, art and literature.

I loved the unconditional love I felt from her.

I loved the backrubs she gave me as a child before I fell asleep. And I love thinking about her when I give my children backrubs as they fall asleep.

HARRIET LEVIN

Paula  
Paula Levin  
Cardiff, California  
April 1995

I arrived on a beautiful sunny Thursday in February at 4:30 in the afternoon. Jane was there waiting for me and waiting for me. It was a relatively easy trip down from Vermont. I had left at noon after seeing a patient at home for physical therapy. I really meant to leave earlier, but as usual everything took longer than expected. As it was almost noon-time, Rich invited me to lunch at the nearby Sunflower Cafe after which I left for Clifton.

When I was expecting my first child, Aunt Ula and I were discussing names. I told her that if the baby were a girl, my husband and I had decided to name her Rebecca Jo- Rebecca because we liked the sound and Jo because, besides its being pretty, would honor Grandma Jo on the birth of her first grandchild. Aunt Ula said that her sister, Josephine, was fortunate to have been given such a lovely name and to have escaped the ugly name originally chosen for the first daughter of Jacob and Pauline Levin. When I innocently asked what it was supposed to have been, she responded with great distaste, "Ula Edith! And how I hate the name!" When I asked how she had come to be given the name originally designated for her older sister, she told me the following story.

"When I was about fifteen, I was with some of my cousins and I complained about how much I disliked my name. An older boy cousin took me aside and told me that I was now old enough to know the truth about my name. I told him that I already knew I was named for Aunts Ula and Edith but he said those names were supposed to have been Jo's. However, right after her birth, my father had swept into the room, announced to all assembled there that his new daughter was named Josephine and swept out again. No one said anything, my cousin told me, because they all knew that that was the name of his mistress. Well, the next three children being boys, the names Ula Edith fell to me. I hope," she finished, "that no one ever saddles another child in this family with those awful names!"

Nancy Rosenberg Engel  
2653 Broadway Ave.  
Evanston, IL 60201

## My Story for Aunt Ula

I arrived on a beautifully sunny Thursday in February at 4:30 in the afternoon. Jane was there visiting Ula and waiting for me. It was a relatively easy trip down from Vermont. I had left at noon, after seeing a patient at home for physical therapy. I really meant to leave earlier, but as usual everything took longer than expected. As it was almost noon-time, Rich invited me to lunch at the nearby Sunflower Cafe after which I left for Clifton.

Ula was in her new recliner chair visiting with Jane when I arrived. Orchids from Ruth had been delivered from Hawaii and Jane was arranging them in one of the larger vases. They were sitting on the dining room table in full brilliance. It was good to visit with Jane who I had not seen for several years. My last recollection was when Reuben, who is now seven, was about 2 or 3. Before long she left so as not to get back into the city too late.

I knew Ula was resistant to having someone come and stay with her, but after almost a week of no outside help because of the change in home care organizations, from the local home care agency to hospice, I decided she needed more help. We had earlier invited her to come to our home in Vermont, which we knew she would most likely turn down. The boys had it all figured out. They would both move upstairs and that Aunt Ula would have their room which was on the first floor and next to the bathroom. Since she understandingly wanted to stay in her own apartment, I felt that it was important to come and help her until things could be more in place for her, so she could remain in her own home.

She seemed frail but was still walking independently with the cane. For the past week she had difficulty keeping anything down. It was an enormous relief to her that the hospice nurse, who had visited for the first time earlier this day, told her that she didn't have to eat. The nausea could be controlled by medication, or it actually proved easily with coke syrup and seltzer. Pain control would be provided by a variety of medications.

Ula seemed somewhat agitated before being able to explain to me that I was to eat the dinner which had already been brought up by the dining room staff. She refused any of it, but seemed satisfied to be able to at least provide me dinner. Calling the dining room each day either between 10:00 and 11:00 or between 1:30 and 2:30 became a daily ritual. It was her way to "host" me (and later Mom) by providing a main meal each day. This was her daily meal provided by the Daughters of Miriam. Normally she went each day to the community dining room. She also had the opportunity to have it delivered to her room which she had been doing since her latest return from the hospital.

She sat up for quite a long time, mostly visiting and looking at the beautiful orchids. She didn't care to read, or watch TV, or listen to music. Sometimes we talked about family and family "doings", sometimes we just visited in quiet. I urged her to go to bed and rest, but she said "I need to visit, at least for today" Little did I realize that this would be almost the last time she was to have been able to "properly visit" in the living room.

Friday, she seemed to have a more difficult time walking. We did a morning routine in the bathroom, with which she let me help. A number of visitors came, including Bess, her new-found friend from the building, and her dear friend Fran (forever known in my family as Nanna Franna). The home health aide came as did a nurse from Hospice. For this flurry of activity in the afternoon did she sit up in her chair in the living room. But after they all left, she willingly went to bed.

Over the next two days, she only got up to go to the bathroom, and only with help, as her walking became less and less steady. She needed physical help with any activity except rolling over in bed. She took liquids, at first juices - mostly cranberry or cranberry and seltzer. For the following few days seltzer and coke syrup was the drink of choice. This helped with the nausea.

Judy had scheduled a 24 hour live-in person to come on Monday. Over the weekend, I realized that not only did Ula need physical help in managing the day to day, hour to hour activities, she also needed moral and family support for her personally and for answering the phone calls of her many friends and the family and hosting visitors. She chose over that weekend to discontinued communication over the phone. She just didn't feel physically or psychologically able to manage it. With the plan of a new, unknown person, handling these activities, I felt it best to stay on. I could manage both her physical care and the family/friends/neighbors connections. My own family was very supportive and granted me this time to help Ula. She had taken care of us in many ways all our lives, and this was a chance to give something back to her.

On Tuesday, my Mom (Margaret) came from Pennsylvania. She found it a hard decision to make. Originally I had the feeling that she "couldn't go through it again", as she did with her parents, Daddy (Herbert), Agnes, and most recently two of her sisters, Anna and Frances. I realized that she had done her part, and now it was the next generation's turn to help manage a final exit. After Ula's quick decline, and my willingness to help, Mom decided that indeed she did have a roll in this process. Ula had been not only a favored sister-in-law but a dear friend for many many years.

After Mom came and could provide the emotional support for Ula as well as be the communication center for the rest of the family and friends, I agreed to let a live-in person come to provide the physical care that my mother could not. Ula needed actually lifting to transfer to the bedside commode, as well as bed baths and other personal care. I was ready to go back to my own family by Wednesday or the latest on Thursday, but we were told that the 24 hour person couldn't come until Monday. I chose to stay. Richard and the boys made do without me. I had hoped that this might be enriching for them, and not too terribly stressful. It was the first time for me to be away, and for such a long time.

Hospice service was wonderful. The home health aide came every day, except weekends. The nurse came twice a week. The on-call people answered our in-between questions throughly and completely. Ula's body was winding down. Initially one of her most difficult surprises was upon waking up "Oh, no! Why is this taking so long?". I think that perhaps when we decide the very difficult decision to "let go" that, hopefully, it will be swift. She bravely managed all the tests, micro surgeries, radiation, blood transfusions, and now felt that it was no longer useful to fight the inevitable. She couldn't go to operas, enjoy any of the arts or politics, visit easily with friends and family. The pain and suffering was just too much. Even with her conscience decision to let go, it seemed that it was basically against her moral fiber. Her body took its good sweet time.

Fortunately she slept most of the time, awaking to take some water, or to turn over. Many had the opportunity to come and visit and to say good-bye : Jane and John; George, Michael and Daniel; Bess; Judy Diello; Fran and Jimmy; Harriet and Edward; Judy B (who heroically managed her affairs); Tom, Sara and Carla; Gabriella (her maid), Deborah R. and perhaps others I can't quite remember. And of course, there was Mom and I. We had innumerable phone calls (as many as 20 a day) from many family and friends sharing caring and concern. Many called frequently and the support was wonderful.

I went home Monday after orienting Charlene, the person who was to stay and help. Mom stayed and provided a wonderful supportive role. Early Sunday morning, February 26, at 4AM the final struggle ended peacefully. I feel privileged to have been able to help Ula, as I know many of the others who helped felt. She was an extraordinary woman, kind, generous, supportive, and encouraging. We felt strength in her presence, and presence in her absence. The world is a better place for her being. We miss her enormously.

Carol Levin



March 27, 1995

This is to report on the memorial, yesterday.

It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining. The sky was cloudless blue. The 'auditorium' was a pleasant room on the ground level of Ula's building, with a window wall on the lawn -- a pretty prospect. There was a simple buffet on tables at the side and several fragrant bouquets of flowers arranged in familiar vases, pitchers and teapots of Ula's, here and there. Opera music was soft in the background somewhere until the service began.

Carol, very self assured and cheerful, officiated. She identified the groups represented -- school friends, family, and new friends made during Ula's tenure at Daughters of Miriam. She began by reading Edward's poem written in the air at dawn on his way to see Ula a few weeks ago, then asked someone from each group to speak, and then anyone else who cared to.

I can not tell you the names of the 20 or more who responded. I can only say that the outpouring of love, admiration, and tribute was incredibly touching. Of course, I expected this from family members and Ula's very close friends, but I was astonished at the number of younger women, who started teaching when Ula was already a veteran, and women, who had first met her as students as long as half a century ago, who came to tell what she had meant to them.

A slightly younger teacher, who looked a little like Agnes, remembered her initial awkwardness and isolation when she came to teach, and Ula's reassuring graciousness. "She was the first teacher to bring me in."

Another -- perhaps in her early fifties -- said she "had never had a thought in my head until I had Ula for a teacher. She described how she brought history into the class room to make students realize that they were part of it and should take part. She told about her sending them to New York on research projects, and sending one boy to the Paterson City Council, who came back to report, "I have never heard such a stupid speech in my entire life". Ula used his experience for a lesson in democracy, pointing out that Democracy allowed him freedom to criticize his government and a corollary responsibility to monitor it. to take part and see that it worked as intended. The woman "without a thought in her head" left the class, determined to become a teacher herself. And she is.

A stunning black woman, corn braids draped gracefully around her head, told how Ula had made her dream and fueled the

dream. She concluded, with deep conviction. "I can say Ula Levin is responsible for my being where I am today."

Her friend Fran, who came to her as a student when she was 13 and, when she returned to Eastside as a teacher, became her closest friend, was quiet and eloquent, finally reading a Cavafy poem, "Ithaca", which Ula had introduced her to and which I enclose.

Beyond Ula's gentle grace, her broad social, cultural and political interests and knowledge, her dedication to teaching and the obvious pleasure in young people that attracted them, held their interest, and developed their self confidence, what echoed through all that was said was admiration for her social and political conviction, her devotion to her friends, and her personal integrity: she knew who she was, who she wanted to be and she continued to be that person, growing stronger and stronger to the end when she turned away the Hospice offer of spritual support, and quietly died.

When I was young, and impressed with Ula's enormous intelligence and ability, I tried to persuade her, in those War years, to abandon her meagerly paid (under \$2,000 a year) teaching job for something bigger -- editing, writing, magazine or book publishing. She was totally un-receptive. She said she could not afford to take the chance. She needed her insurance, her pension, her tenure to take care of her mother and Agnes. At that time, I felt sad that she was not more adventurous. I felt she was 'under-achieving', and should shape up, so to speak. In the final analysis, Ula certainly made a good case for under-achievement. I can't think of anyone who did more with what she had been given to enhance her own life and the lives of all whom she touched.

JANE WHITBREAD BEYER

(Mother of Judith, John, Polly & Tom)

A translation by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard for "C. P. Cavafy/Collected Poems," (Princeton University Press, 1992), reads:

As you set out for Ithaka  
hope the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon — don't be afraid  
of them:

you'll never find things like that on  
your way

as long as you keep your thoughts  
raised high,

as long as a rare excitement  
stirs your spirit and your body.

Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
wild Poseidon — you won't encounter  
them

unless you bring them along inside  
your soul,

unless your soul sets them up in  
front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.  
May there be many a summer  
morning when,

with what pleasure, what joy,  
you come into harbors seen for the  
first time;

may you stop at Phoenician trading  
stations

to buy fine things,  
mother of pearl and coral, amber  
and ebony,

sensual perfume of every kind —  
as many sensual perfumes as you  
can,

and may you visit many Egyptian  
cities

to gather stores of knowledge from  
their scholars.

Keep Ithacaq always in your  
mind.

Arriving there is what you are des-  
tined for.

But do not hurry the journey at all.

Better if it lasts for years,

so you are old by the time you

reach the island,  
wealthy with all you have gained on

the way,  
not expecting Ithaka to make you

rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous  
journey.

Without her, you would not have set  
out.

She has nothing left to give you  
now.

And if you find her poor, ithaka  
won't have fooled you.

Wise as you will have become, so  
full of experience,

you will have understood by then  
what these Ithakas mean.



San Francisco, May 1989  
(Courtesy of Margaret)