

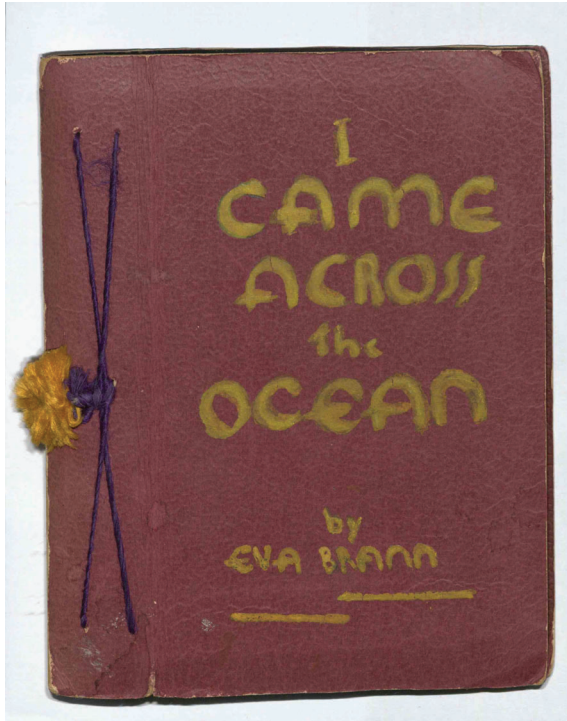
"I Came Across the Ocean"

Production

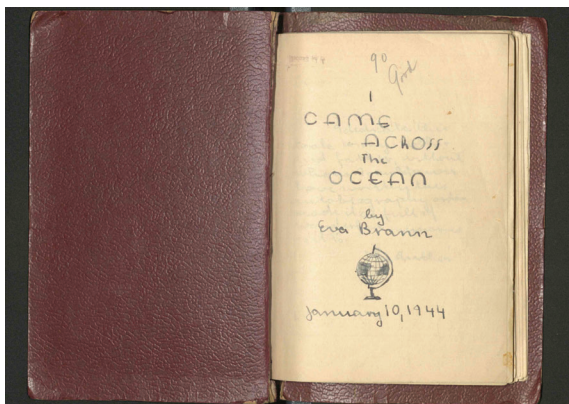
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I CAME ACROSS the OCEAN
by EVA BRANN



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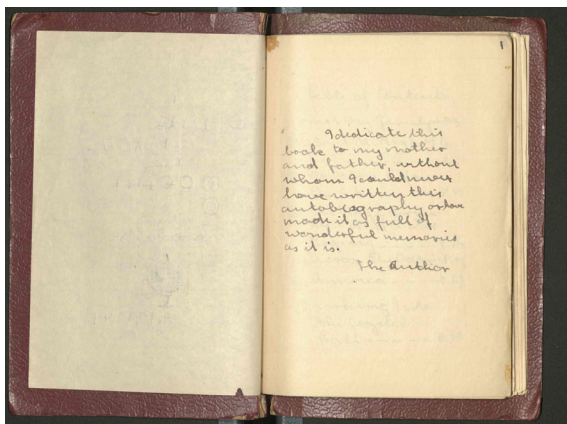
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90 Good

I CAME ACROSS The OCEAN

by Eva Brann

January 10, 1944



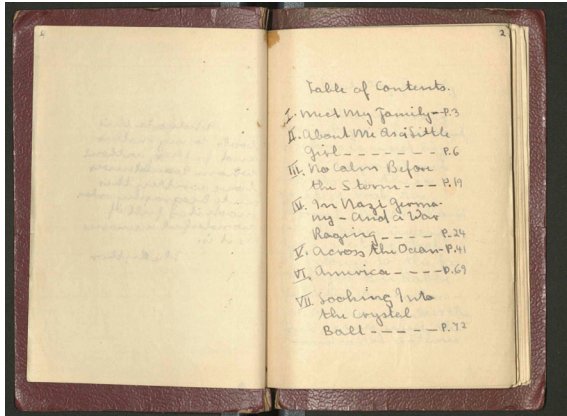
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I dedicate this book to my mother and father, without whom I could never have written this autobiography or have made it as full of wonderful memories as it is.

The Author



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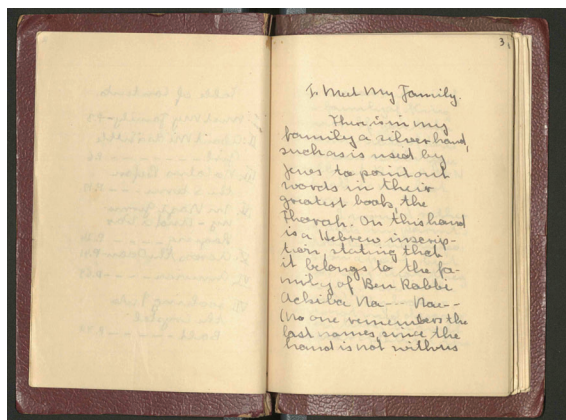
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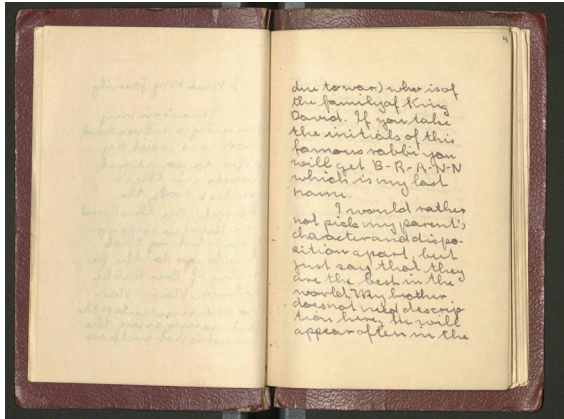


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I. Meet My Family.

There is in my family a silver hand, such as is used by Jews to point out words in their greatest book, the Torah. On this hand is a Hebrew inscription, stating that it belongs to the family of Ben Rabbi Ackiba Na--- Nae-- (No one remembers the last names since the hand is not with us

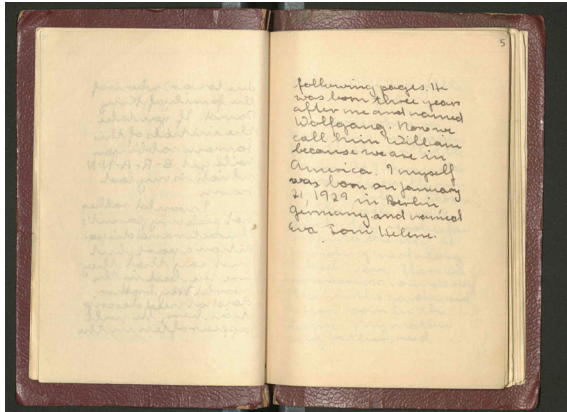


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due to war) who is of the family of King David. If you take the initials of this famous rabbi you will get B-R-A-N-N which is my last name.

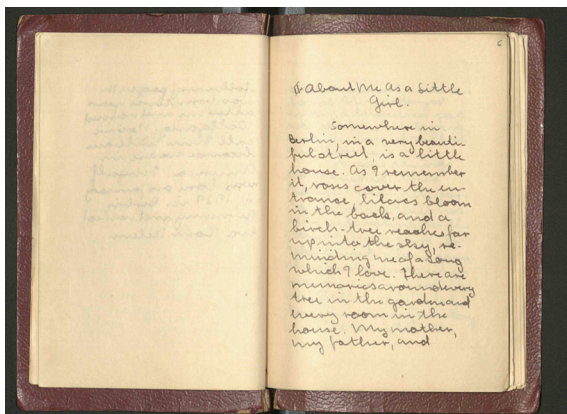
I would rather not pick my parent's character and disposition apart, but just say that they are the best in the world. My brother does not need description here. He will appear often in the



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following pages. He was born three years after me and named Wolfgang. Now we call him William because we are in America. I myself was born on January 21, 1929 in Berlin, Germany, and named Eva Toni Helene.

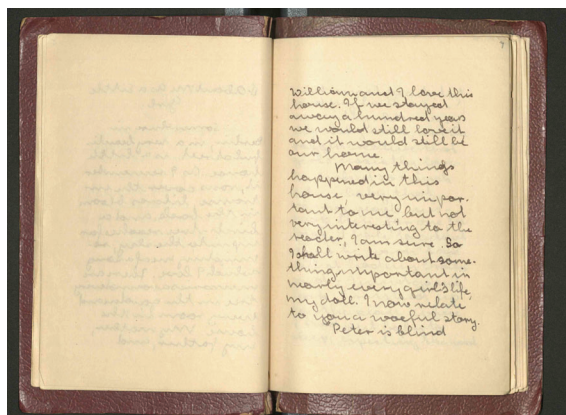


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II. About Me As a Little Girl.

Somewhere in Berlin, in a very beautiful street, is a little house. As I remember it, roses cover the entrance, lilacs bloom in the back, and a birch-tree reaches far up into the sky, reminding me of a song which I love. There are memories around every tree in the garden and every room in the house. My mother, my father, and



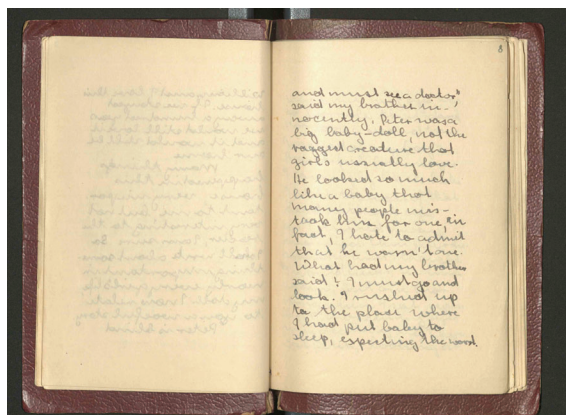
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William and I love this house. If we stayed away a hundred years we would still love it and it would still be our home.

Many things happened in this house, very important to me, but not very interesting to the reader, I am sure. So I shall write about something, important in nearly every girl's life, my doll. I now relate to you a woeful story.

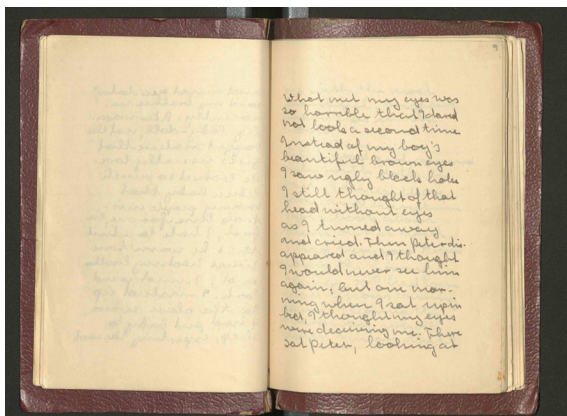
"Peter is blind



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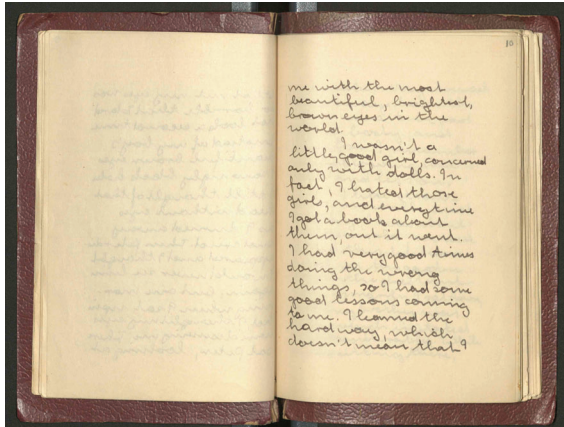
and must see a doctor," said my brother innocently, Peter was a big baby-doll, not the ragged creature that girls usually love. He looked so much like a baby that many people mistook him for one, in fact, I hate to admit that he wasn't one. What had my brother said? I must go and look. I rushed up to the place where I had put baby to sleep, expecting the worst.



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What met my eyes was so horrible that I dared not look a second time. Instead of my boy's beautiful brown eyes I saw ugly black holes. I still thought of that head without eyes as I turned away and cried. Then Peter disappeared and I thought I would never see him again, but one morning when I sat up in bed, I thought my eyes were deceiving me. There sat Peter, looking at

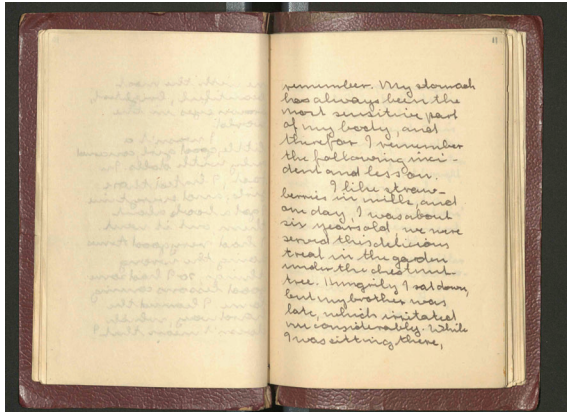


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me with the most beautiful, brightest, brown eyes in the world.

I wasn't a little, good girl, concerned only with dolls. In fact, I hated those girls, and everytime I got a book about them, out it went. I had very good times doing the wrong things, so I had some good lessons coming to me. I learned the hard way, which doesn't mean that I

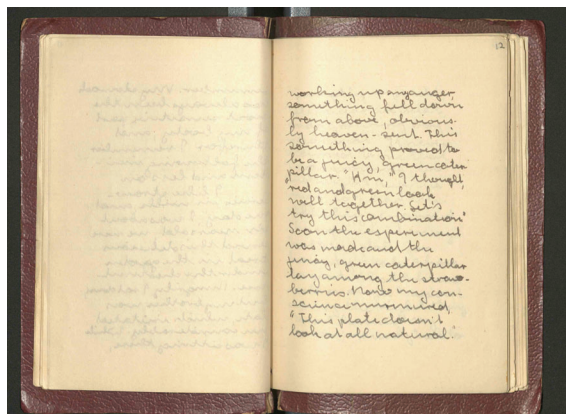


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remember. My stomach has always been the most sensitive part of my body, and therefore I remember the following incident and lesson.

I like strawberries in milk, and one day, I was about six years old, we were served this delicious treat in the garden under the chestnut tree. Hungrily I sat down, but my brother was late, which irritated me considerably. While I was sitting there,

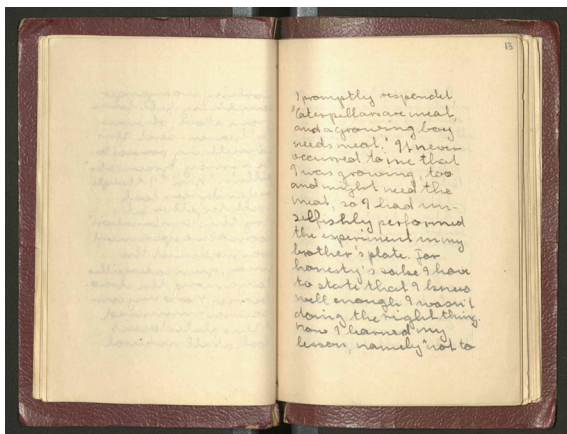


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working up my anger, something fell down from above, obviously heaven-sent. This something proved to be a juicy, green caterpillar. "Hm," I thought, "red and green look well together. Let's try this combination." Soon the experiment was made and the juicy, green caterpillar lay among the strawberries. Now my conscience murmured, "This plate doesn't look at all natural."

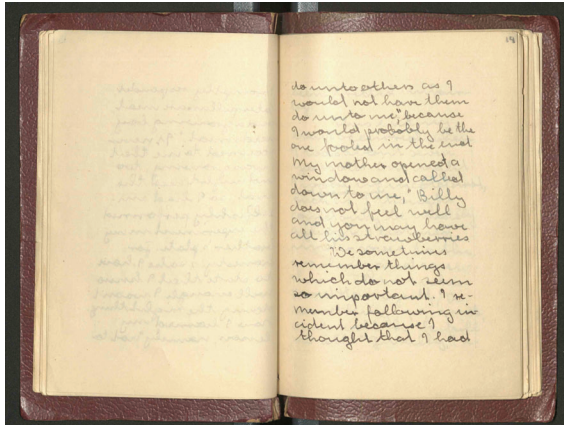


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I promptly responded, "Caterpillars are meat, and a growing boy needs meat." It never occurred to me that I was growing, too and might need the meat, so I had unselfishly performed the experiment in my brother's plate. For honesty's sake I have to state that I knew well enough I wasn't doing the right thing. Now I learned my lesson, namely "not to

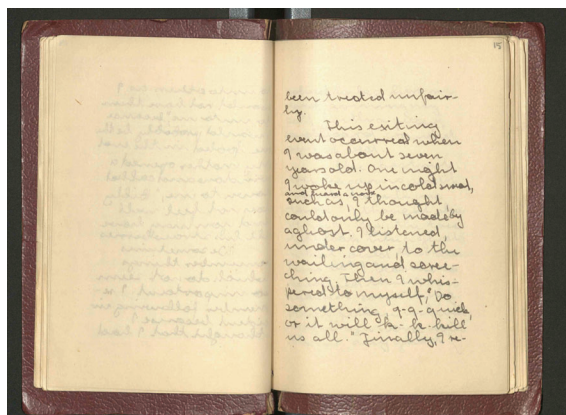


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do unto others as I would not have them do unto me," because I would probably be the one fooled in the end. My mother opened a window and called down to me, "Billy does not feel well and you may have all his strawberries."

We sometimes remember things which do not seem so important. I remember following incident because I thought that I had

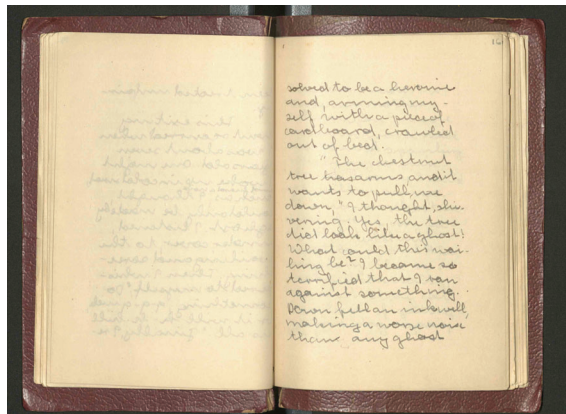


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been treated unfairly.

This exciting event occurred when I was about seven years old. One night I woke up in cold sweat, and heard a noise such as, I thought, could only be made by a ghost. I listened, under cover, to the wailing and screeching. Then I whispered to myself, "Do something, q-q-quick, or it will k-k-kill us all." Finally, I resolved

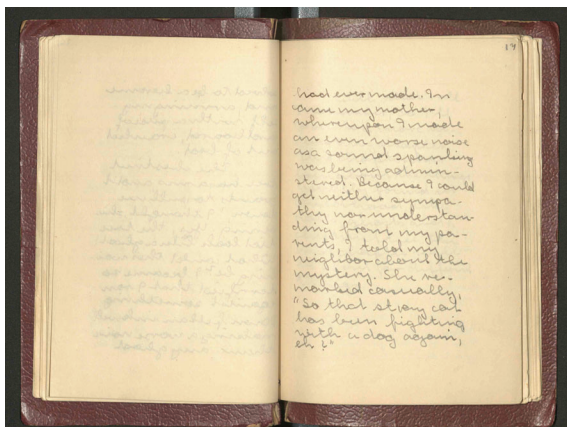


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to be a heroine and, arming myself with a piece of cardboard, crawled and of bed.

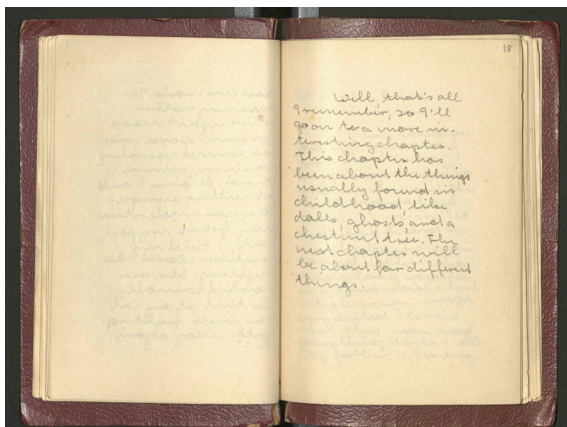
"The chestnut tree has arms, and it wants to pull me down," I thought, shivering. Yes, the tree did look like a ghost! What could this wailing be? I became so terrified that I ran against something. Down fell an ink well, making a worse noise than any ghost



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had ever made. In came my mother, whereupon I made an even worse noise as a sound spanking was being administered. Because I could get neither sympathy nor understanding from my parents, I told my neighbor about the mystery. She remarked casually, "So that stray cat has been fighting with a dog again, eh?"

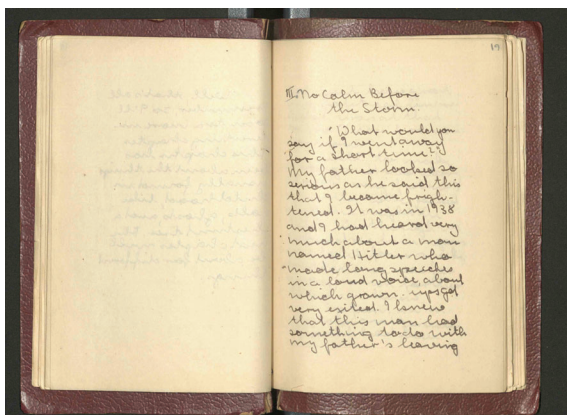


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Well, that's all I remember, so I'll go on to a more interesting chapter. This chapter has been about the things usually found in childhood, like dolls, ghosts, and a chesnut tree. The next chapter will be about far different things.



III. No Calm Before
the Storm

12-17-38

What would you
say if I went away
for a short time?
My father looked so
serious as he said this
that I became fright-
ened. It was in 1938
and I had heard very
much about a man
named Hitler who
made long speeches
in a loud voice about
which grown-ups
were excited. I knew
that this man had
something to do with
my father's leaving.

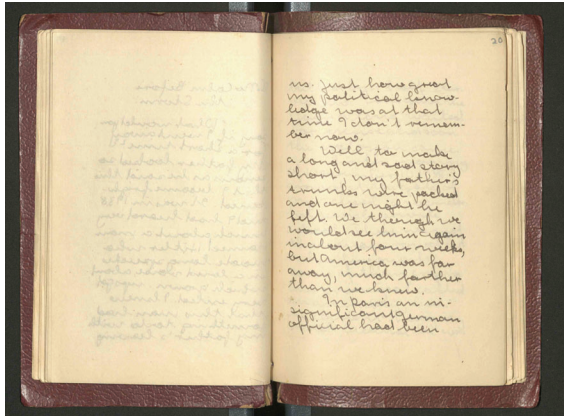
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III. No Calm Before the Storm.

"What would you say if I went away for a short time?" My father looked so serious as he said this that I became frightened. It was in 1938 and I had heard very much about a man named Hitler who made long speeches in a loud voice, about which grown-ups got very excited. I knew that this man had something to do with my father's leaving.



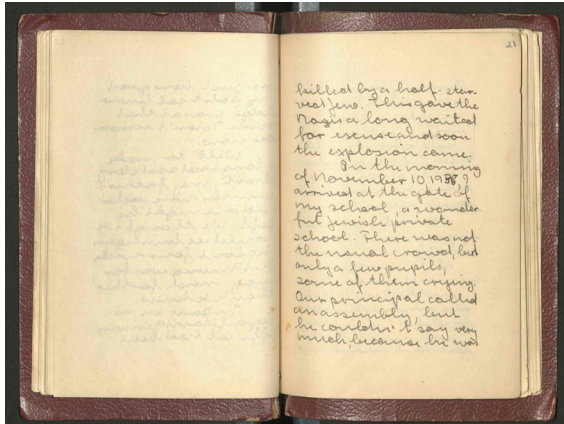
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us. Just how great my political knowledge was at that time I don't remember now.

Well, to make a long and sad story short, my father's trunks were packed and one night he left. We thought we would see him again in about four weeks, but America was far away, much further than we knew.

In Paris an insignificant German official had been

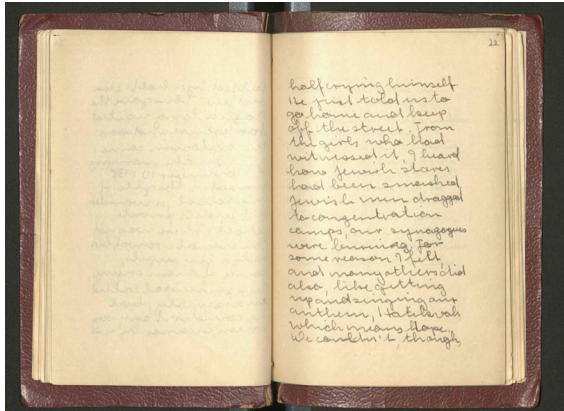


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killed by a half-starved Jew. This gave the Nazis a long waited for excuse and soon the explosion came.

On the morning of November 10, 1938, I arrived at the gate of my school, a wonderful Jewish private school. There was not the usual crowd, but only a few pupils, some of them crying. Our principal called an assembly, but he couldn't say very much, because he was

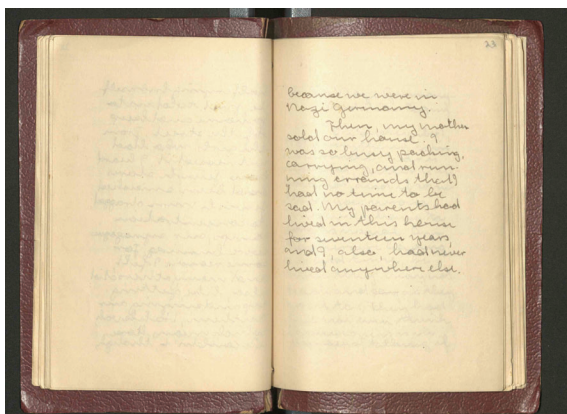


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half crying himself. He just told us to go home and keep off the street. From the girls who had witnessed it, I heard how Jewish stores had been smashed Jewish men dragged to concentration camps, our synagogues were burning. For some reason I felt and many others did also, like getting up and singing our anthem, Hatikvah which means hope. We couldn't, though,



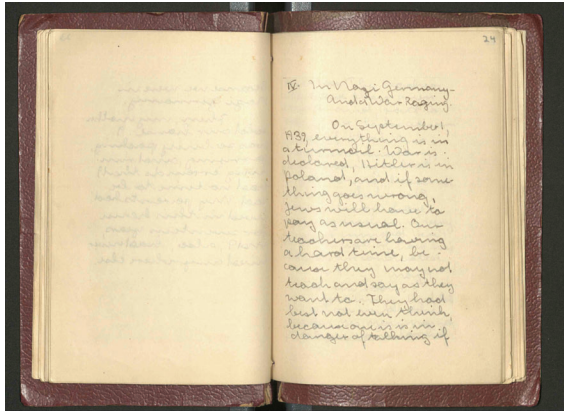
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because we were in Nazi Germany.

Then, my mother sold our house. I was so busy packing, carrying, and running errands that I had no time to be sad. My parents had lived in this house for seventeen years, and I, also, had never lived anywhere else.

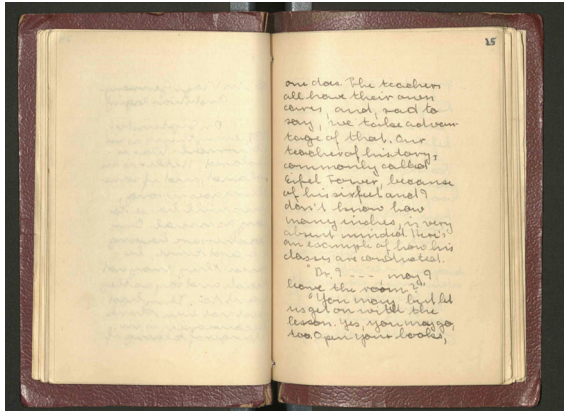


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IV. In Nazi Germany - And a War Raging.

On September 1, 1939, everything is in a turmoil. War is declared, Hitler is in Poland, and if something goes wrong, Jews will have to pay as usual. Our teachers are having a hard time, because they may not teach and say as they want to. They had best not even think, because one is in danger of talking if



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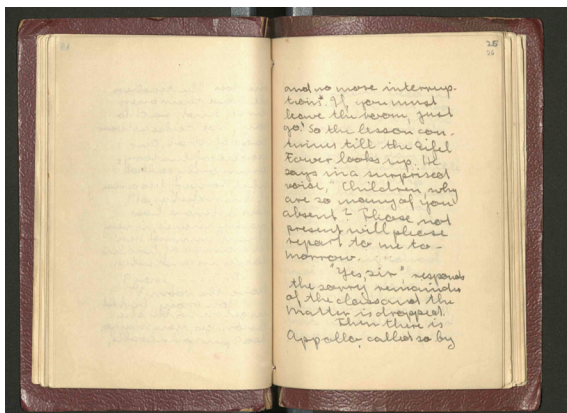
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one does. The teachers all have their own cares, and, sad to say, we take advantage of that. Our teacher of history, commonly called Eifel Tower, because of his six feet and I don't know how many inches, is very absent minded. Here's an example of how his classes are conducted.

"Dr. I---, may I leave the room?"

"You may, but let us get on with the lesson. Yes, you may go, too. Open your books,

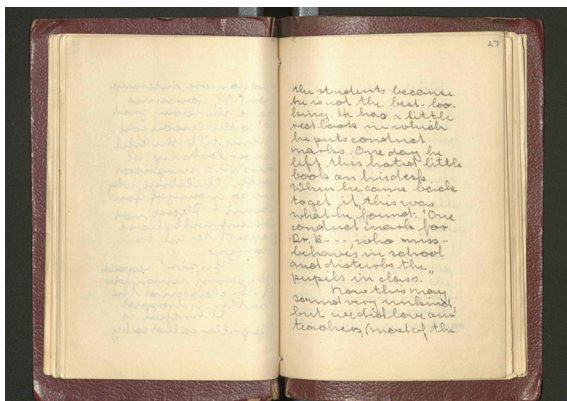


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and no more interruptions. If you must leave the room, just go." So the lesson can continue till the Eiffel Tower looks up. He says in a surprised voice, "Children, why are so many of you absent? Those not present will please report to me tomorrow.

"Yes, sir," responds the sorry remainder of the class and the matter is dropped. Then there is Appollo, called so by



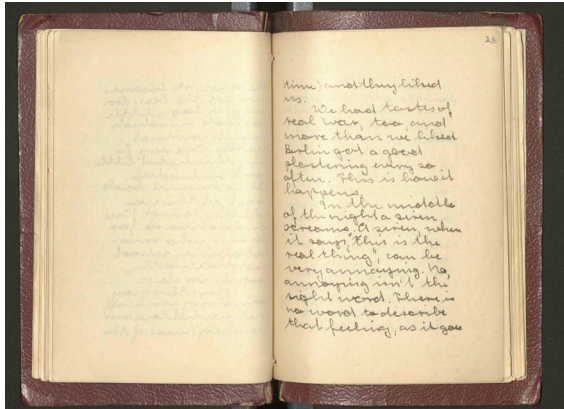
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the students because he is not the best looking. He has a little red book in which he puts conduct marks. One day he left this hated little book on his desk. When he came back to get it, this was what he found: "One conduct mark for Dr. B---, who misbehaves in school and disturbs the pupils in class."

Now this may sound very unkind, but we did love our teachers, (most of the



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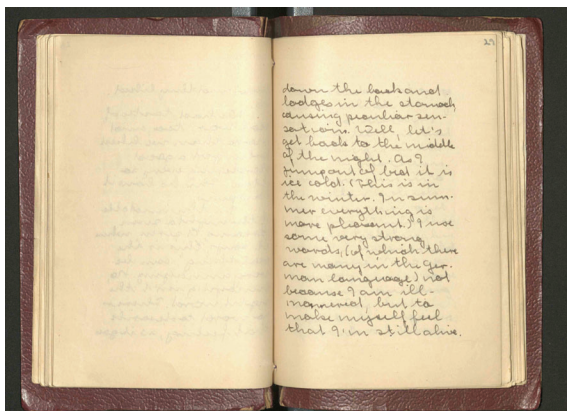
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time) and they liked us.

We had tastes of real war, too, and more than we liked. Berlin got a good plastering every so often. This is how it happens.

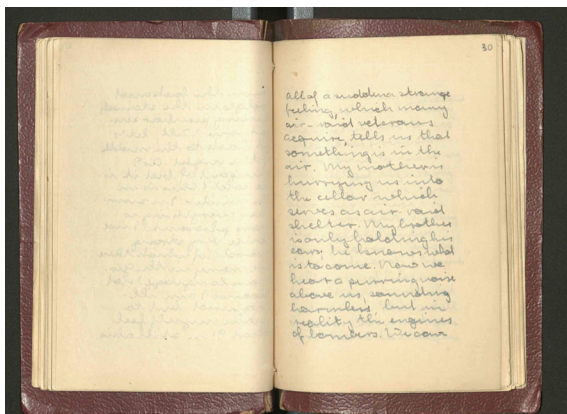
In the middle of the night a siren screams. A siren, when it says, "This is the real thing", can be very annoying. No, annoying isn't the right word. There is no word to describe that feeling, as it goes



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down the back and lodges in the stomach, causing peculiar sensations. Well, let's get back to the middle of the night. As I jump out of bed it is ice cold. (This is in the winter. In summer everything is more pleasant.) I use some very strong words, (of which there are many in the German language) not because I am ill-mannered, but to make myself feel that I'm still alive.

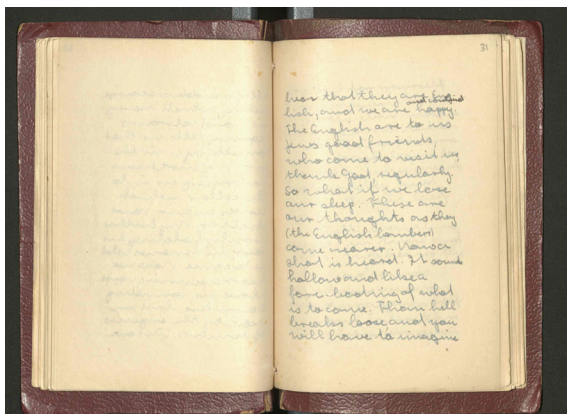


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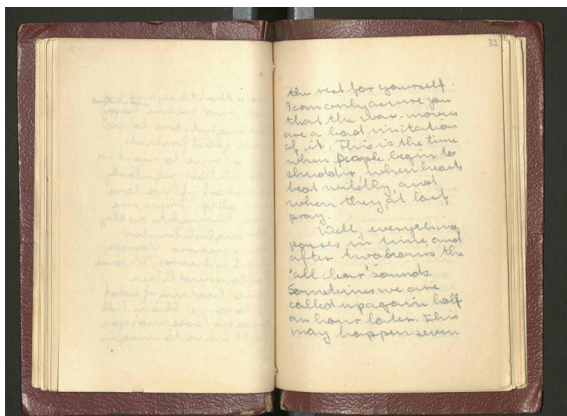
All of a sudden a strange feeling, which many air-raid veterans acquire, tells us that something is in the air. My mother is hurrying us into the cellar which serves as air-raid shelter. My brother is only holding his ears; he knows what is to come. Now we hear a purring noise above us, sounding harmless, but in reality the engines of bombers. We can



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hear that they are English, and we are happy and contend. The English are to us Jews good friends, who come to visit us, thank God, regularly. So what if we lose our sleep. These are our thoughts as they (the English bombers) come nearer. Now a shot is heard. It sounds hollow and like a fore-boding of what is to come. Than hell breaks loose, and you will have to imagine



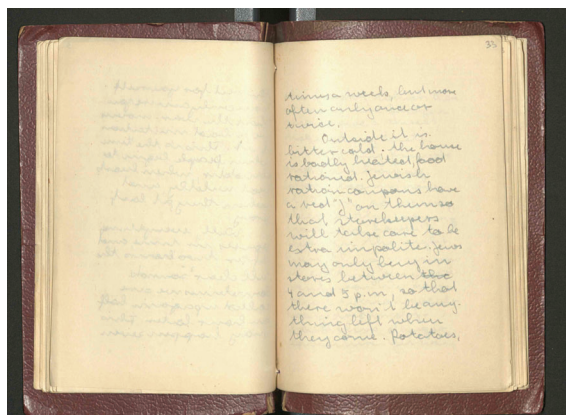
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the rest for yourself. I can only assure you that the war-movies are a bad imitation of it. This is the time when people begin to shudder, when hearts beat wildly, and when they, at last, pray.

Well, everything passes in time, and after two hours the "all clear" sounds. Sometimes we are called up again half an hour later. This may happen seven



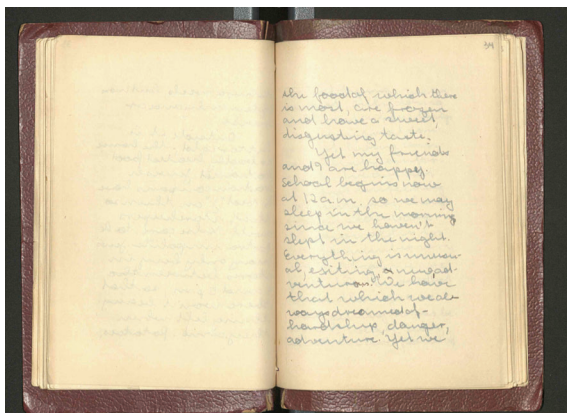
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times a week, but more often only once or twice.

Outside it is bitter cold, the house is badly heated, food rationed. Jewish ration-coupons have a red "J" on them so that storekeepers will take care to be extra impolite. Jews may only buy in stores between ~~the~~ 4 and 5 p.m. so that there won't be anything left when they come. Potatoes,



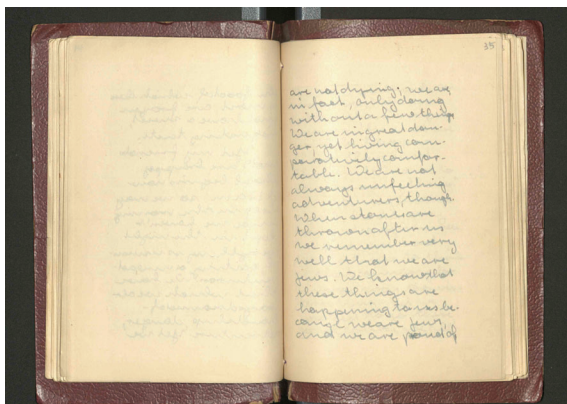
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the food of which there is most, are frozen and have a sweet, disgusting taste.

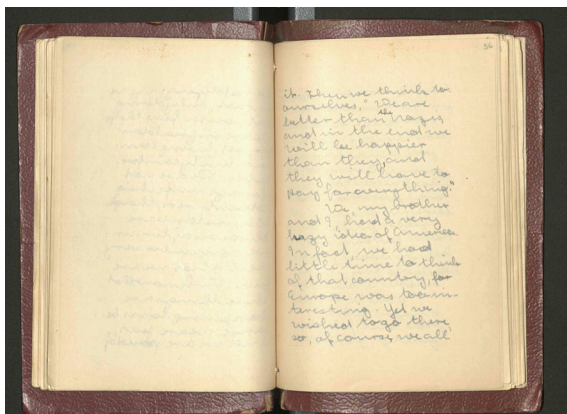
Yet my friends and I are happy. School begins now at 12 a.m. so we may sleep in the morning since we haven't slept in the night. Everything is unusual, exciting, a new, adventurous. We have that which we always dreamed of - hardship, danger, adventure. Yet we



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are not dying; we are, in fact, only doing with out a few things. We are in great danger, yet living comparatively comfortable. We are not always unfeeling adventurers, though. When stones are thrown after us we remember very well that we are Jews. We know that these things are happening to us because we are Jews, and we are proud of

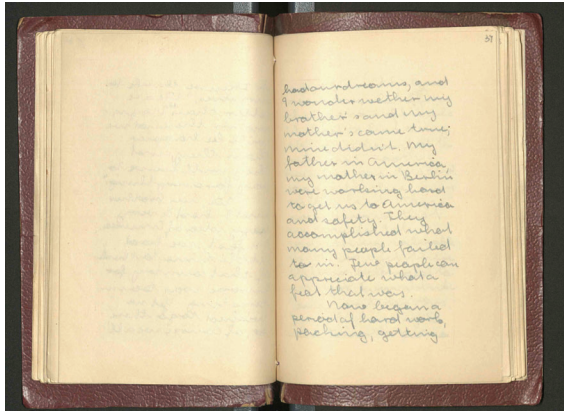


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it. Then we think to ourselves, "We are better than the Nazis, and in the end we will be happier than they, and they will have to pay for everything."

We, my brother and I, had a very hazy idea of America. In fact, we had little time to think of that country, for Europe was too interesting. Yet we wished to go there, so, of course, we all

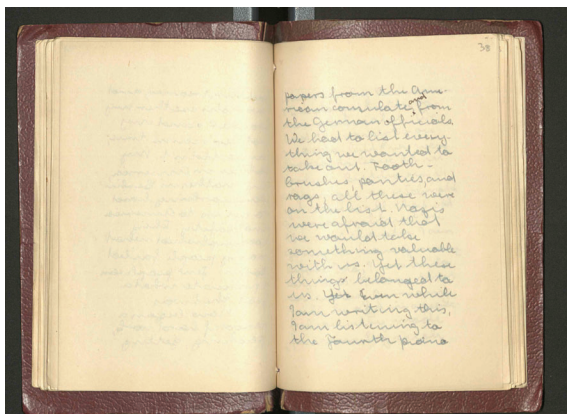


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had our dreams, and I wonder whether my brother's and my mother's came true; mine didn't. My father in America, my mother in Berlin were working hard to get us to America and safety. They accomplished what many people failed to do in. Few people can appreciate what a feat that was.

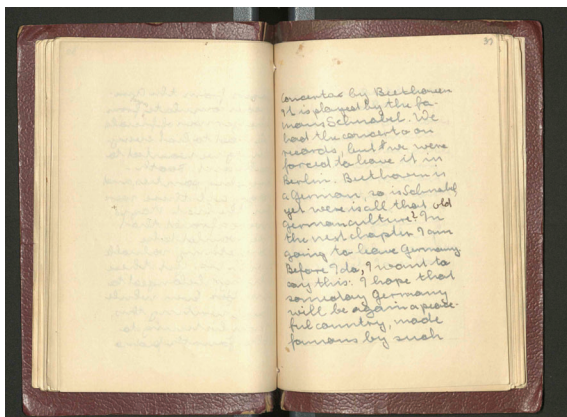
Now began a period of hard work, packing, getting



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papers from the American consulate, and from the German officials. We had to list everything we wanted to take out. Toothbrushes, panties, and rags, all these were on the list. Nazis were afraid that we would take something valuable with us. Yet these things belonged to us. Yet Even while I am writing this, I am listening to the Fourth Piano

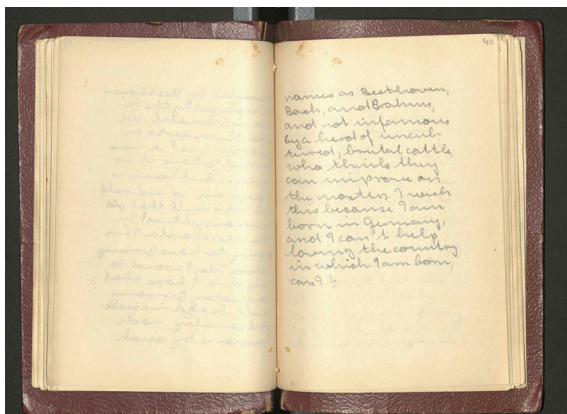


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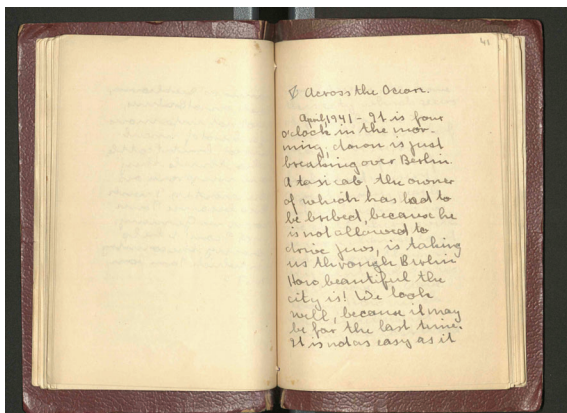
[Concerto] by Beethoven. It is played by the famous Schnabel. We had the concerto on records, but we were forced to leave it in Berlin. Beethoven is a German, so is Schnabel, yet were is all that old German culture? In the next chapter I am going to leave Germany. Before I do, I want to say this: I hope that someday Germany will be again a peaceful country, made famous by such



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names as Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms, and not infamous by a herd of uncultured, brutal cattle, who think they can improve on the masters. I wish this because I am born in Germany, and I can't help loving the country in which I am born, can I?



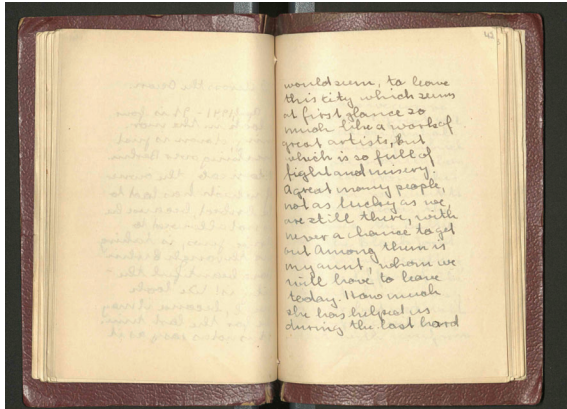
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V. Across the Ocean.

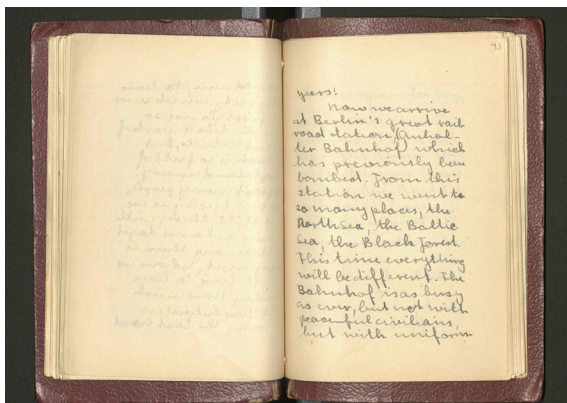
April, 1941 - It is four o'clock in the morning; dawn is just breaking over Berlin. A taxi cab, the owner of which has had to be bribed, because he is not allowed to drive Jews, is taking us through Berlin. How beautiful the city is! We look well, because it may be for the last time. It is not as easy as it



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would seem, to leave this city which seems at first glance so much like a work of great artists, but which is so full of fight and misery. A great many people, not as lucky as we, are still there, with never a chance to get out. Among them is my aunt, whom we will have to leave today. How much she has helped us during the last hard

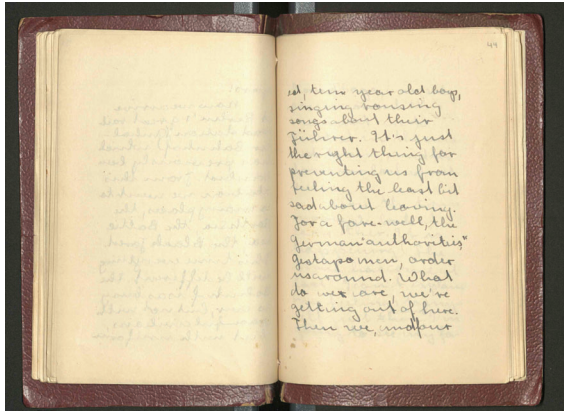


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years!

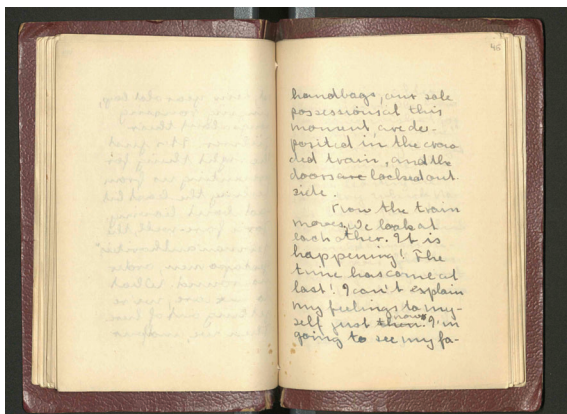
Now we arrive at Berlin's great rail road station (Anhalter Bahnhof) which has previously been bombed. From this station we went to so many places, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Black Forest. This time everything will be different. The Bahnhof is as busy as ever, but not with peaceful civilians, but with uniformed,



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ten year old boys, singing rousing songs about their Führer. It's just the right thing for preventing us from feeling the least bit sad about leaving. For a farewell, the German "authorities," Gestapo men, order us around. What do we care, we're getting out of here. Then we, and four



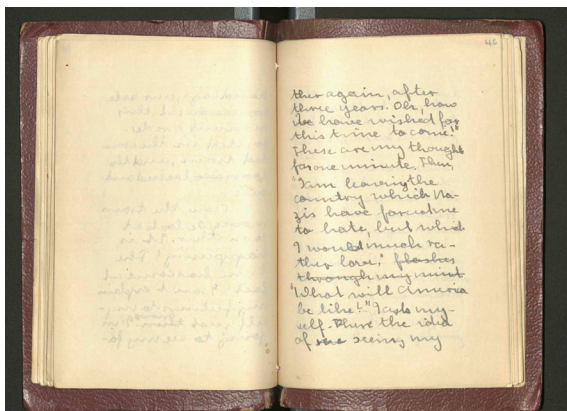
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handbags, our sole possessions at this moment, are deposited in the crowded train, and the doors ~~are~~ locked outside.

Now the train moves. We look at each other. It is happening! The time has come at last! I can't explain my feelings to myself just ~~then~~ now. "I'm going to see my father

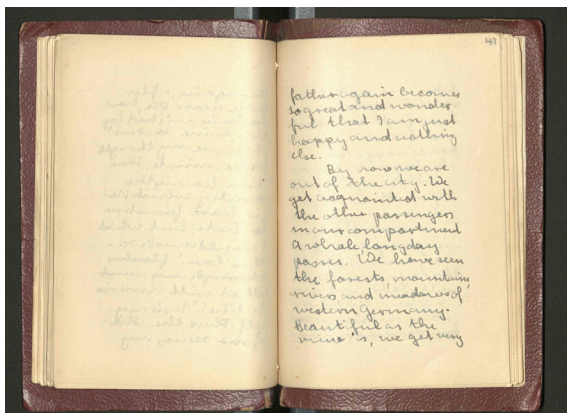


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again, after three years. Oh, how ~~we~~ I have wished for this time to come!" These are my thoughts for one minute. Then, "I am leaving the country which Nazis have forced me to hate, but which I would much rather love," ~~flashes through my mind.~~ "What will America be like?" I ask myself. Then the idea of ~~me~~ seeing my



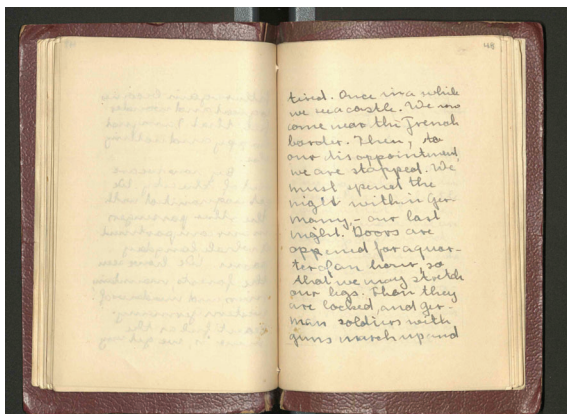
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father again becomes so great and wonderful that I am just happy and nothing else.

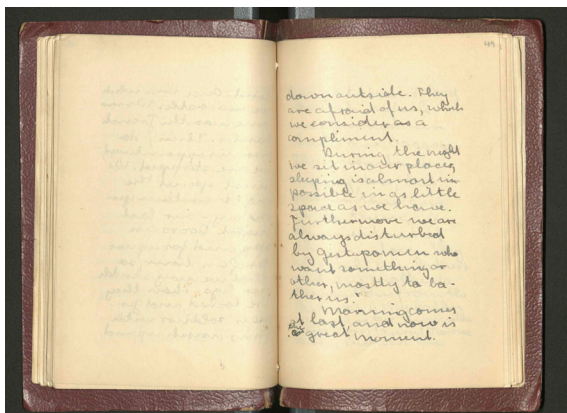
By now we are out of the city. We get acquainted with the other passengers in our compartment. A whole, long day passes. We have seen the forests, mountains, rivers, and meadows of western Germany. Beautiful as the view is, we get very



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tired. Once in a while we see a castle. We now come near the French border. Then, to our disappointment, we are stopped. We must spend the night within Germany, - our last night. Doors are opened for a quarter of an hour, so that we may stretch our legs. Then they are locked, and German soldiers with guns march up and



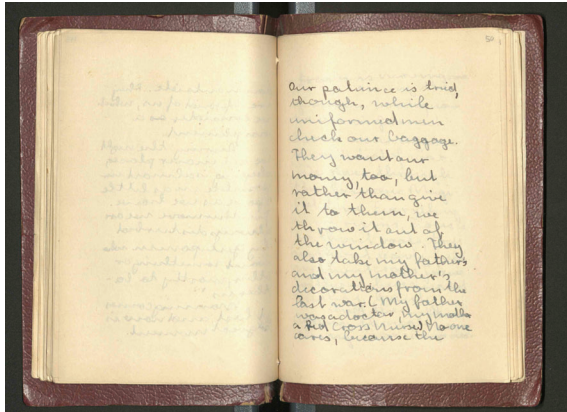
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down outside. They are afraid of us, which we consider as a compliment.

During the night we sit in the places; sleeping is almost impossible in as little space as we have. Furthermore we are always disturbed by Gestapo men who want something or other, mostly to bother us.

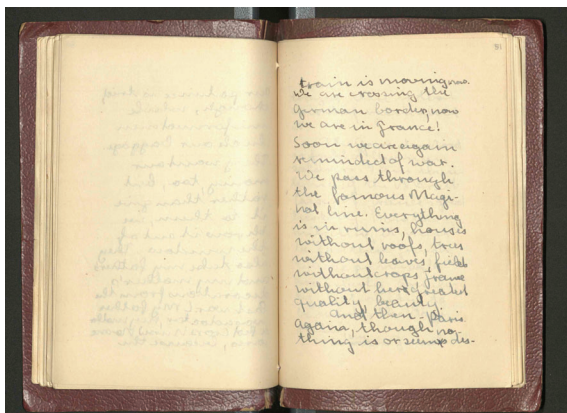
Morning comes at last, and now is the great moment.



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Our patience is tried, though, while uniformed men check our baggage. They want our money, too, but rather than give it to them, we throw it out of the window. They also take my father's and my mother's decorations from the last war. (My father was a doctor, my mother a Red Cross Nurse.) No one cares, because the

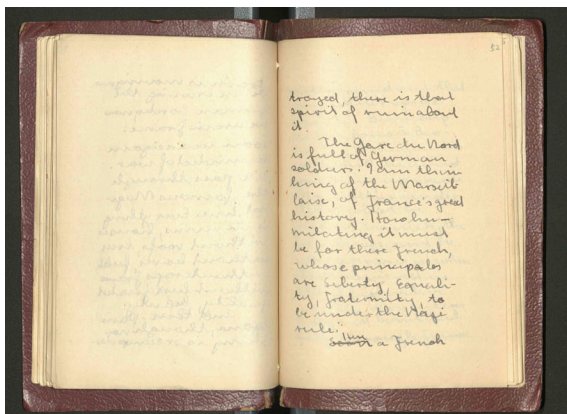


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train is moving now. We are crossing the German border; now we are in France! Soon we are again reminded of war. We pass through the famous Maginot line. Everything is in ruins, houses without roofs, trees without leaves, fields without crops, France without here greatest quality, beauty.

And then - Paris. Again, though nothing is or seems destroyed,



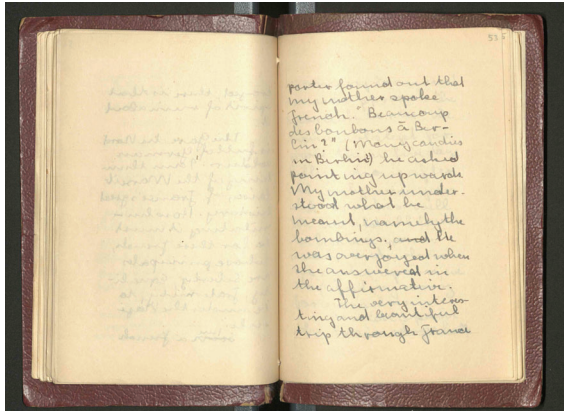
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there is that spirit of ruin about it.

The Gare du Nord is full of German soldiers. I am thinking of the Marseillaise, of France's great history. How humiliating it must be for these French, whose principles are Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, to be under the Nazi rule.

~~Seen~~ Here a French

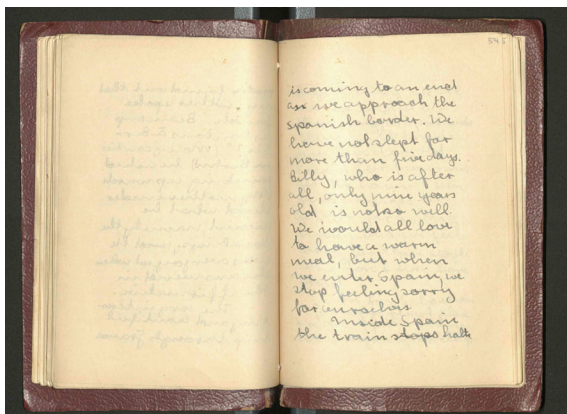


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porter found out that my mother spoke French. "Beaucoup des bonbons à Berlin?" (Many candies in Berlin?) he asked pointing upwards. My mother understood what he meant, namely the bombings. ~~and~~ He was overjoyed when she answered in the affirmative.

The very interesting and beautiful trip through France

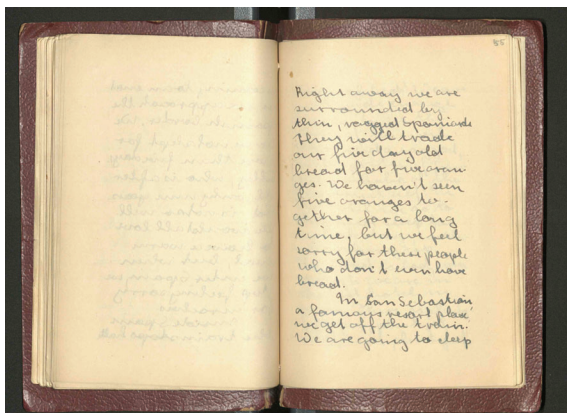


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is coming to an end as we approach the Spanish border. We have not slept for more than five days. Billy, who is after all, only nine years old, is not so well. We would all love to have a warm meal, but when we enter Spain, we stop feeling sorry for ourselves.

Inside Spain the train ~~stops~~ halts.



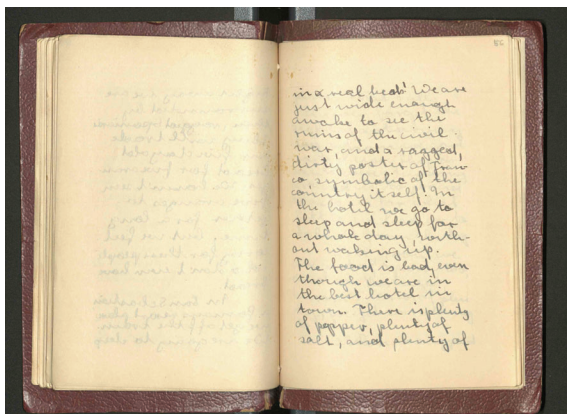
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Right away we are surrounded by thin, ragged Spaniards. They will trade our five day old bread for five oranges. We haven't seen five oranges together for a long time, but we feel sorry for these people who don't even have bread.

In San Sebastian, a famous resort [place], we get off the train. We are going to sleep

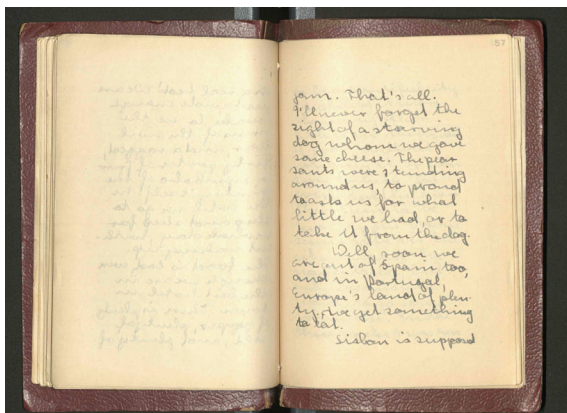


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in a real bed! We are just wide enough awake to see the ruins of the civil war, and a ragged, dirty poster of Franco, symbolic of the country itself. In the hotel we go to sleep and sleep for a whole day, without waking up. The food is bad, even though we are in the best hotel in town. There is plenty of pepper, plenty of salt, and plenty of



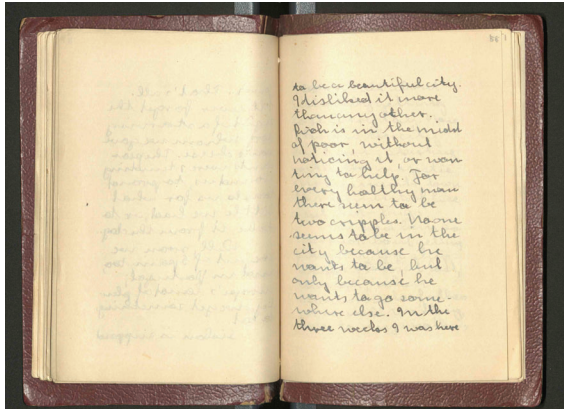
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jam. That's all. I'll never forget the sight of a starving dog whom we gave some cheese. The peasants were standing around us, too proud to ask us for what little we had, or to take it from the dog.

Well, soon we are out of Spain, too, and in Portugal, Europe's land of plenty. We get something to eat.

Lisbon is supposed

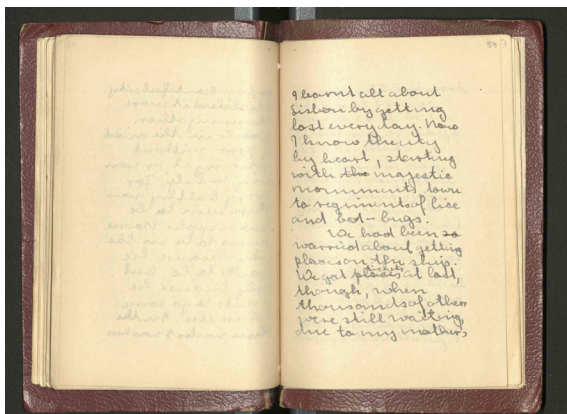


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to be a beautiful city. I disliked it more than any other. Rich is in the midst of poor, without noticing it, or wanting to help. For every healthy man there seem to be two cripples. No one seems to be in the city because he wants to be, but only because he wants to go somewhere else. In the three weeks I was here

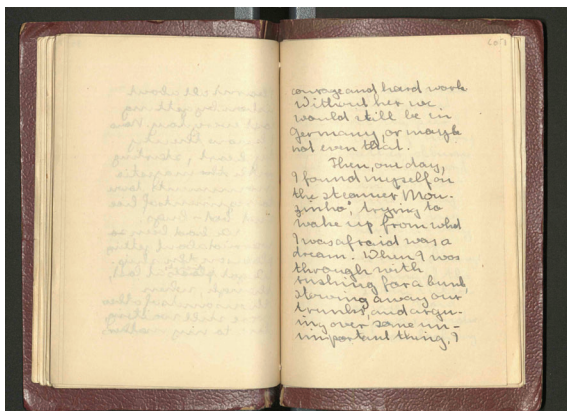


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I learnt all about Lisbon by getting lost every day. Now I know the city by heart, starting with ~~the~~ majestic monuments, down to regiments of lice and bed-bugs.

We had been so worried about getting places on the ship. We got places tickets at last, though, when thousands of others were still waiting, due to my mother's



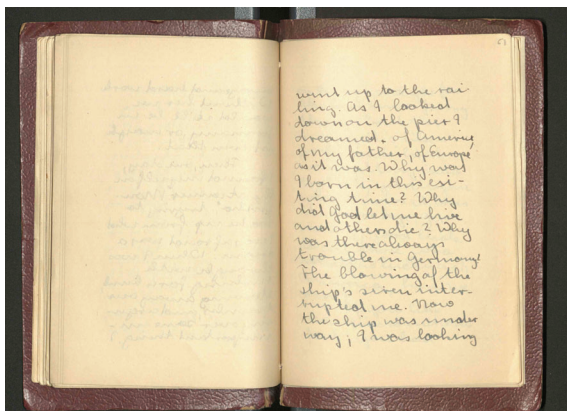
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courage and hard work. Without her we would still be in Germany, or maybe not even that.

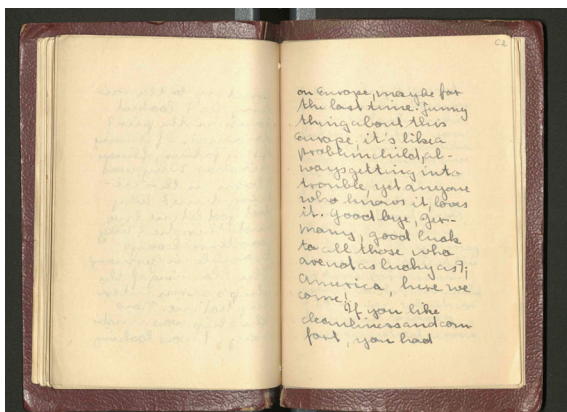
Then, one day, I found myself on the steamer "Mouzinho," trying to wake up from what I was afraid was a dream. When I was through with [rushing] for a bunk, stowing away our trunks, and arguing over some unimportant thing, I



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went up to the railing. As I looked down on the pier I dreamed of America, of my father, of Europe as it was. Why was I born in this exiting time? Why did God let me live and others die? Why was there always trouble in Germany? The blowing of the ship's siren interrupted me. Now the ship was under way; I was looking

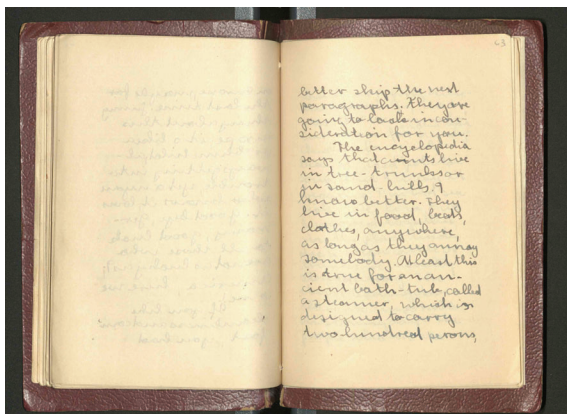


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on Europe, maybe for the last time. Funny thing about this Europe; it's like a problem child, always getting into trouble, yet anyone who know it, loves it. Good bye, Germany; good luck to all those who are not as lucky as I; America, here we come!

If you like cleanliness and comfort, you had

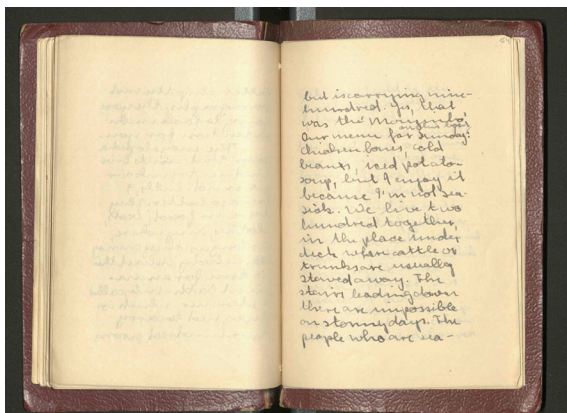


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better skip the next paragraphs. They are going to lack in consideration for you.

The encyclopedia says that aunts live in tree-trunks or in sand-hills. I know better. They live in food, beds, clothes, anywhere, as long as they annoy somebody. At least this is true for an ancient bath-tub, called a steamer, which is designed to carry two-hundred persons,

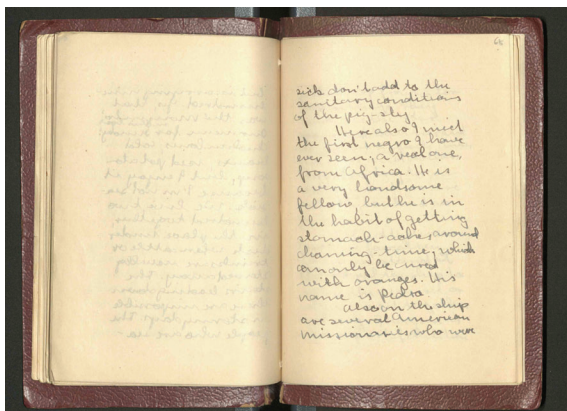


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but is carrying nine hundred. Yes, that was the "Mouzinho." Our menu for Sunday on this boat: Chicken bones, cold beans, iced potato soup, but I enjoy it because I'm not seasick. We live two hundred together, in the place under deck where cattle or trunks are usually stowed away. The stairs leading down there are impossible on stormy days. The people who are seasick



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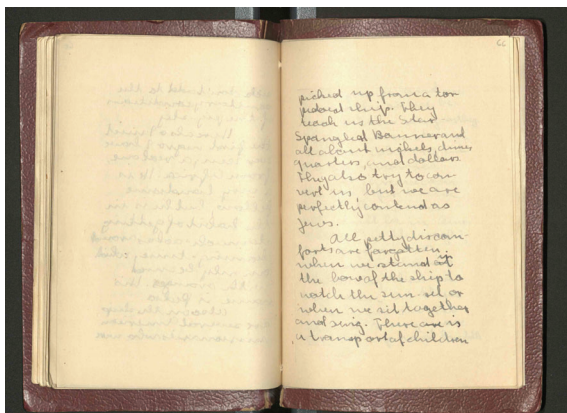
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don't add to the sanitary conditions of the pig-sty.

Here also I meet the first negro I have ever seen; a real one, from Africa. He is a very handsome fellow, but he is in the habit of getting stomach-aches around cleaning-time, which can only be cured with oranges. His name is [Pedro].

Also on the ship are several American missionaries who were



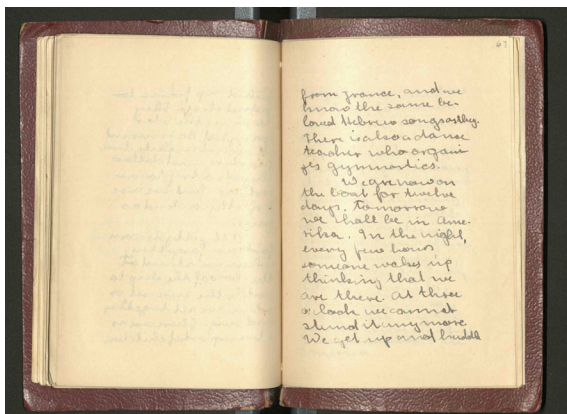
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picked up from a torpedoed ship. They teach us the Star Spangled Banner and all about nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars. They also try to convert us, but we are perfectly content as Jews.

All petty discomforts are forgotten when we stand ~~at~~ in the bow of the ship to watch the sun-set or when we sit together and sing. There ~~are~~ is a transport of children

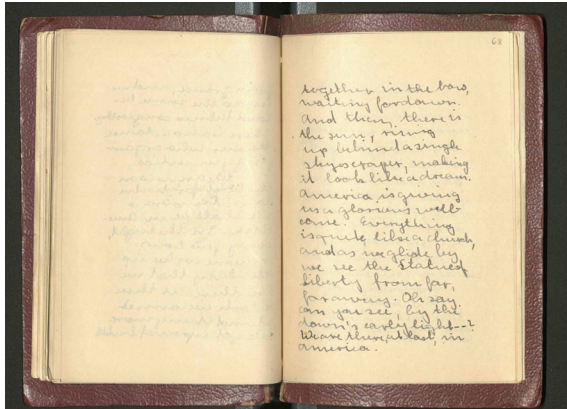


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from France, and we know the same beloved Hebrew songs as they. There is also a dance teacher who organizes gymnastics.

We are now on the boat for twelve days. Tomorrow we shall be in Amerika. In the night, every few hours, someone wakes up thinking that we are there. At three o'clock we cannot stand it anymore. We get up and huddle

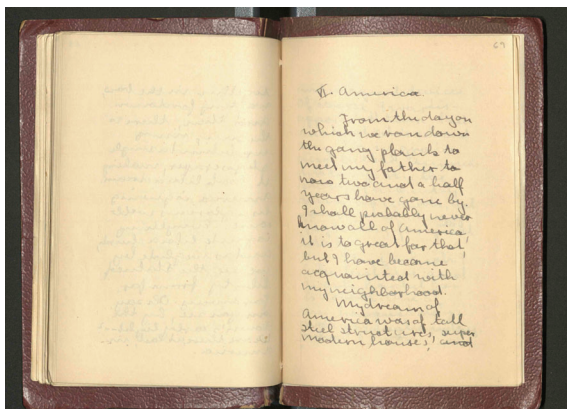


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together in the bow, waiting for dawn. And then, there is the sun, rising up behind a single skyscraper, making it look like a dream. America is giving us a glorious welcome. Everthing is quite, like a church, and as we glide by we see the Statue of Liberty from far, far away. Oh say, can you see, by the dawn's early light--? We are there, at last, in America.



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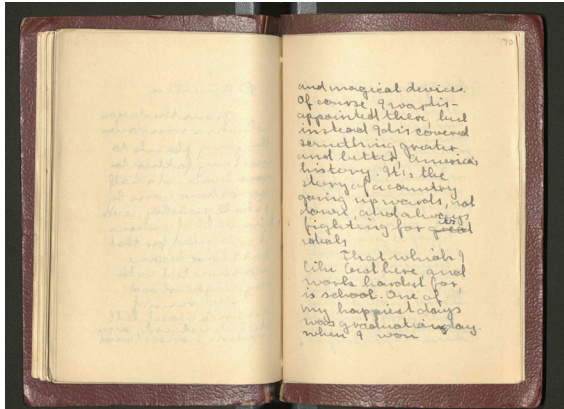
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VI. America.

From the day on which we ran down the gang-plank to meet my father ~~to now~~ two and a half years have gone by. I shall probably never know all of America, it is so great for that, but I have become acquainted with my neighborhood.

My dream of America was of tall steel structures, super modern houses, ~~and~~



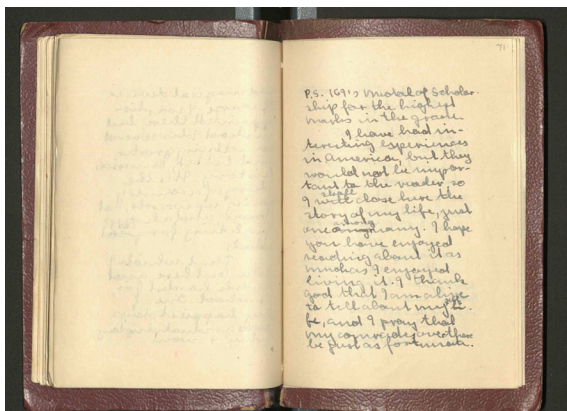
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and magical devices. Of course, I was disappointed there, but instead I discovered something greater and better, America's history. It's the story of a country going upwards, not down, and always fighting for ~~great~~ its ideals.

That which I like best here, and work hardest for, is school. One of my happiest days was graduation day when I won

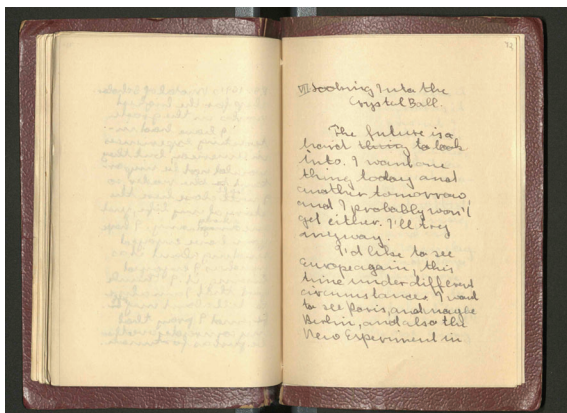


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P.S. 169's Medal of Scholarship for the highest marks in the grade.

I have had interesting experiences in America, but they would not be important to the reader so I ~~will~~ shall close here the story of my life, just one ~~among~~ among many. I hope you have enjoyed reading about it as much as I enjoyed living it. I thank God that I am alive to tell about myself ~~life~~, and I pray that my comrades over there be just as fortunate.



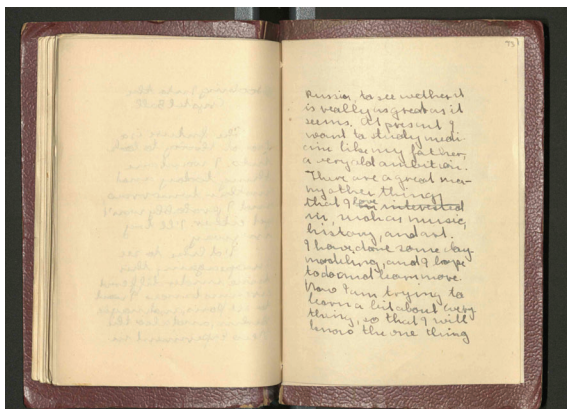
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VII. Looking Into the Crystal Ball.

The future is a hard thing to look into. I want one thing today and another tomorrow, and I probably won't get either. I'll try anyway.

I'd like to see Europe again, this time under different circumstances. I want to see Paris, and maybe Berlin, and also the New Experiment in

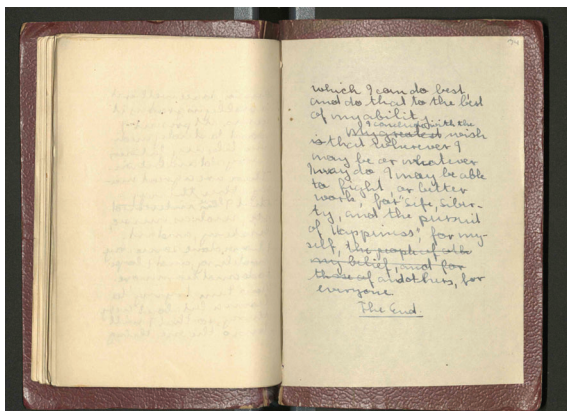


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Russia, to see whether it is really as great as it seems. At present I want to study medicine like my father, a very old ambition. There are a great many other things that I am interested in, such as music, history, and art. I have done some clay modeling, and I hope to do and learn more. Now I am trying to learn a bit about everything, so that I will know the one thing



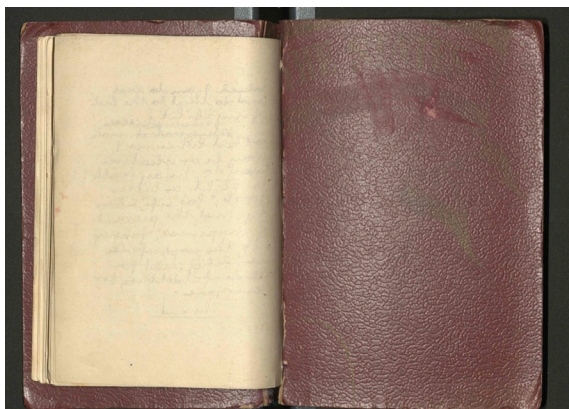
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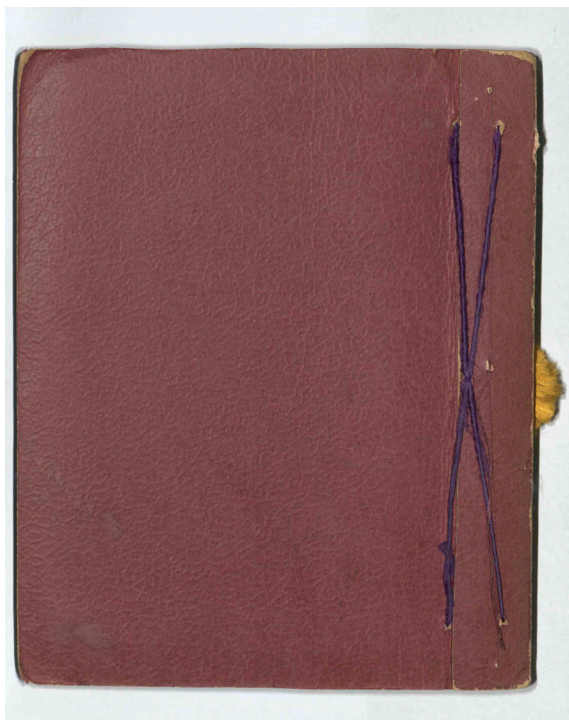
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which I can do best, and do that to the best of my ability. ~~My greatest~~ I conclude with the wish ~~is~~ that wherever I may be or whatever I may do, I may be able to fight, or better work, for "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," for myself, ~~the people of oth my belief, and for those of~~ and others, for everyone.

The End.





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