Last Trip to Germany

Reflections on Art, Culture, Economics, History, Family and Travel in the Age of Climate Change

2018

Elizabeth Simpson and Henning Sehmsdorf

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Cover: Wassily Kandinsky, Locomotive at Murnau, 1917

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Foreword

In the summer of 2018, Elizabeth and Henning took three months to travel to Germany, with short side trips to Norway and Austria. This was the first time we had undertaken a major journey together during the last thirty years because during those decades we had both held what amounted to two full-time jobs, teaching at the University of Washington and on Lopez Island, as well as growing food for family and community on S&S Homestead Farm.

Our intention for the trip was to reconnect with our cultural heritage found in the great cities and museums, to hear and speak Henning's mother tongue, to engage with the daily lives of family and friends, and to explore the family's history now and in the past.

We also wanted to update our knowledge of life in Germany and Norway today, given that our personal experience was more than 20 years old. We also took this trip as an opportunity to live the question of travel in the Age of Climate Change.

This great adventure became the Last Trip to Germany. Elizabeth filled two notebooks with daily observations, and Henning took some 4,000 photographs. In what follows, we have added our reflections and some history to our memories.

To New York by Amtrak

We left from Everett on July 28, 2018 on Amtrak heading for New York City. Our first vacation ever.

Saturday, July 28

First day of leave taking and travel, although this trip started about a year ago, with Henning planning it step-by-step, relative by relative, purchasing ship and train tickets, figuring out trains and buses and relatives' schedules, writing (sometimes multiple times) to everyone and receiving gracious and eager welcomes and plans for our visit. Elizabeth, in the mean time, was organizing a small army of women to take care of Mom — breakfast, lunch, afternoon, dinner, getting her up, bedtime. Since Liz and Kim could not commit to more than spending the night, and sharing their evening meal with Mother from the food the farm provides, we were grateful for the women willing to come and provide care for the rest of the day.

We were thankful to the Ivy family vacationing on the farm for driving us to the train station in Everett. A leisurely morning, pleasant lunch, a couple of necessary stops to repair Elizabeth's purse and buy some knee-high nylons, respectful of the heat – who can walk around in pantyhose in 90° weather?

We had intended to leave from King Street Station in Seattle and spend time with the kids, but no invitation was forthcoming. Worked out great with the Ivys. We think they have learned the art of vacationing, and they love Lopez Island. Cautiously hope to move here.

Amtrak is not the Orient Express, and First Class is a private room with a bathroom, which would be adequate were it not for two large suitcases (Elizabeth's is huge). The porter offered to put them in the luggage rack on the first floor, but we wanted to have them accessible — to us. When we were boarding, a woman behind us saw us wrestling the suitcases up the stairs and told us that she travels a lot for business, purchases clothes when she gets to her destination, and gives them away before she goes home. It allows her to travel light, for sure, but sounds pretty expensive.

Elizabeth could see the lights of Wenatchee. There was a crew change here, and it made her think of her brother, whose beloved job it was to drive train crews from one place to another. Sometimes it is hard to believe he is gone, sometimes hard to believe he had been gone for only a month.

Henning and Elizabeth had hoped to keep to their schedule of having the main meal at noon and just a salad for dinner, but trains have traditional-sized meals three times a day, so we had the salmon (dry), potato (awful), rice (dry), beans (good), and wine (expensive).

Suzanne and Mark, our table companions, were pleasant people, with many trips behind and before them.

> We stopped in Spokane at 2:00 am, and the train sat for half an hour under a full orange moon.

The scenery from Everett east was beautiful — an unnamed river crowded with inner-tubers, lots of small rapids and stones on shore. A few horses, a few cows, some handsome homes and some derelict ones. We wondered how people came here, how they make a living, where their communities are.

Towns are mostly ramshackle — of course in a train you're seeing the back side of things — and Henning remarked that once human construction and destruction get out of the way, the landscape is beautiful.

The porter was available to make beds, but Henning, moving like an acrobat, got the top bunk down, the ladder in place, and both beds made up.

Sunday, July 29

We stopped in Spokane at 2:00 am, and the train sat for half an hour under a full orange moon. The backside of Spokane was charming — old brick buildings and old street lamps, old ads painted on the buildings.

Montana our scenery for breakfast — wide fields, broad river, high mountains, prosperous looking towns.

Food on the train was indifferent, mostly prepared elsewhere and heated up on the train. The waitress was somewhat snappy, because she was handling six tables while four other staff members stood around. She pointed out that there is only one tip jar. They seemed to get the message. We went up to the observation car, and when we came back through the dining car, we noticed that everyone was busy.

The walk through coach class was interesting: one chair per passenger, do the best you can for comfort. Water, $2.25 per bottle. In first class, water, coffee and juice were gratis (that is, we'd already paid for them).

Montana had some grand gorges and rivers, tree-covered mountains, isolated homes and ranches, and towns given over to tourism. Whitefish seemed to make its living from people who come to ski and fish. East Glacier catered to visitors to the park. Both towns featured faux Western façades. Henning and Elizabeth talked about the evils of tourism, but worse to us are people buying or building their third or fourth trophy home — punching down a well and punching through a driveway and changing the culture of the place by demanding services they are used to in L.A. This is happening on Lopez too; the change is unsettling and unwelcome. Jan Sundquist has a sticker on her car: "Don't change Lopez — let Lopez change you." Love the sentiment, but it's wasted on newcomers who want their slice of Paradise without making any change in their habits.

We were in Doig country now — just leaving Shelby and headed for Havre. Havre was dismal — a railroad town, sad buildings, huge junkyard. In one of Ivan's novels, a character says, "And as for Havre, you can have her."

All wheat fields this afternoon. We shared a table with Zillah and Tom, who farm in Illinois — corn, soy, cattle. They were worried about Trumped up trade wars, because they wouldn't be able to sell their soybeans to China. (Now, Trump is compensating farmers for their loss — at taxpayer expense.) It was pleasant to swap knives and speak the same language with other farmers.

We had a pleasant, reassuring talk with a couple over lunch; she was from Brooklyn, and told us that the subway is safe, as are the places we intend to go in Manhattan.

In keeping with our desire to spend the day looking at the landscape, we went to the observation car after dinner, and were treated to an impromptu concert. Young man with a guitar, young woman singing harmony. Elizabeth sang along with a few numbers, wept during "American Pie" which recalls the assassinations of Martin Luther King and both Kennedys; we enjoyed the camaraderie.

Everyone had a phone, and we were told more than once to download an app for Uber. But we couldn't do that without data. Very expensive for a function we might use twice.

Monday, July 30

Elizabeth knew we were in Minnesota before she saw the billboard advertising something about the state. The hay bales were still round, but the grass was green, and all the structures — homes, auction houses, businesses, even manufactured homes were tidy and well kept. The corn was higher than in North Dakota, and probably folks have more expectations of the neighbors' upkeep of their homes and yards.

Funny, all the fugitives we know are from Wisconsin: Roy, the Hutters, the couple "transitioning" their mother — perhaps Wisconsin has flaws Minnesota doesn't know about.

Over breakfast, we learned that what people in Wisconsin are fleeing are the regressive politics of the Republican governor and legislature, who are busily dismantling unions, universities, public schools and the social safety net.

Wisconsin used to be a progressive state, populated by Democratically inclined farmers, cheese makers, and brewers. The University of Wisconsin campus at Madison is still the only campus in the U.S. where beer is served in the cafeteria. How progressive can you get?

Henning teased Elizabeth that she once complained that Kirchhatten looks repressive, and asked if she felt the same way about what we saw in Minnesota. She admired its tidiness through a train window, but wondered how she would feel about having neighbors who expected us to trim our grass with nail scissors. Henning is grateful that there are places in the United States (besides our farm) that value neatness, order, and a sense of beauty.

The train was running along the Mississippi. "The magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along shining in the sun" (Twain).

"The magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along shining in the sun" (Twain).

Had lunch with a delightful couple. The man had taken an interest in Henning in passing, so knew a lot about our life already. (Were we Googled?) His wife a well groomed, vivacious fountain of knowledge about cruises in general and the Queen Mary in particular. According to her, weather in the North Atlantic is not conducive to sitting in deck chairs, but you can walk the deck. Food apparently not that great, two seating times for dinner, and you must dress formally (for which we were prepared). Great lectures, many activities. (Our experiences were somewhat different, especially on the return voyage.)

A long day on the train. At last, hours late into Chicago. Because Amtrak does not own the tracks, it must stop for every freight train that requires them, and is therefore late all the time. Chicago presented a bundle of beautiful architecture above, and slums below. Henning wanted to revisit the University of Chicago; it would have been possible time-wise, but we were concerned about getting transportation back to the train station.

So we found the Metropolitan Lounge, set aside for first class passengers, stowed our suitcases, found pizza and beer nearby, and went back to the lounge to make use of WiFi (not available on the train). Henning, unable to update email for reasons unknown, was watching news on the internet from Germany and Norway. Elizabeth returned to Michael Pollan's *How to Change Your Mind*. (Lou Pray, from the Lopez Island library, saved Elizabeth's sanity. She cannot be without a book to read, and could not carry enough books with her for a three month trip. Lou let her check out a Kindle for two months past the usual checkout time, and downloaded most of the books she requested. Many of these Lou had to purchase. The Kindle is lightweight and backlit, so if Elizabeth woke in the middle of the night she could read without disturbing Henning. All of the books were worth reading, and Henning got full synopses of each so we could discuss them.)

Elizabeth tried to read, but no go. These lounges have televisions turned to full volume, so she was unable to concentrate on the research about the therapeutic uses of LSD while listening to the fake sobbing of bachelors over a heartless floozy who has practiced too many goodbyes.

Off to the train, the usual problems with maneuvering huge suitcases in a tiny room. Moreover, the aisles are *tiny*, truly big enough for only one person — one *small* person — so Henning and Elizabeth, having had to walk half the length of the wrong car in order to let two people and their suitcases pass, fled to the dining car. It was charming, with comfy booths and a pretty, diner-like decor. Henning was perusing the last of the downloaded email, and Elizabeth went back to Pollan. We were drinking a splendid Kendall-Jackson Chardonnay (gratis!) The silence was lovely until other refugees poured in and the train started. Oh, well.

Tuesday, July 31

We both slept well in a compartment slightly better designed but less well appointed (no tissue, awkward disposal of garbage) than the one on the Empire Builder. Perhaps the wine helped, but we're perhaps also getting used to sleeping on trains. While the Chicago train system pretends to feed you chef-prepared meals at set times in a dining car, food on the Lake Shore Limited comes in a box, everything packaged in plastic. Breakfast was yogurt with blueberries and granola — which

you add yourself, more plastic — a plate of fruit, a granola bar, and a muffin. The pleasant young woman who distributed the boxes of food served us coffee and gave us orange juice, which we took back to our compartment with us, along with muffins and bars, for a midmorning snack. We will lose no weight on this trip.

This train would arrive late to our next connection. No one knew how late, no one knew if the connecting train would wait for us. That train, in which we would be seated in business class, would take us to Grand Central Station. We would get a taxi there to take us to the Airbnb in Brooklyn. Maybe. Thanks to WiFi on this train, Henning was able to contact our hosts and apprise them of the situation.

Amtrak is cutting corners — one person to hand out plastic-wrapped food, for example. The intercom system is faulty, and Amtrak can't afford to fix it. The company is in the red all the time. Local, state, and federal governments should be subsidizing it so that public transportation in America would be as pleasant and reliable as in Europe. Why don't they? Because the rich don't ride on Greyhound or Amtrak, or struggle with the inefficiencies of airports. They not only have their own private jets, they have their own airports. Why should they care about the rest of us?

Funny, and awful. Henning read an editorial in the *New York Times* in which the author spluttered indignantly that *everyone* in Germany expected to travel first class. In the U.S., which prides itself on being egalitarian, does everything it can to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, and to segregate those economic and social classes. We wish members of Congress could spend one night under a bridge in Seattle, and travel back to DC on a Greyhound.

We called Shelley, Elizabeth's niece, from Cleveland. We had hoped to make a stopover there, have her pick us up, and spend a day with her and her family. But the schedule would require her leaving Columbus at 2:00 am, and for us to miss a day of travel.

Brooklyn

Wednesday, August 1

We were seated in the Commodore Lounge (what a grand name!) Our train was indeed too late to make our scheduled connection to New York, so the conductor kindly changed reservations for us. Knowing that there would be no food on that train, Nancy, the dining car angel, gave us two boxed lunches to take with us. Amtrak employees are kind. They complain to the higher-ups about delays and poor accommodations, and are ignored. But they are the ones who face the anger and frustration of the passengers.

We finally arrived at Grand Central Station, took a cab to Brooklyn, and our charming host showed us through an elegant, comfortable townhouse, one of the old brownstones set back from the street by a steep staircase. We had a nice bedroom, large bathroom, spacious work area where Henning could do email, and an outdoor patio. We woke the first morning to a warm, muggy day, and had a simple, delicious breakfast at a nearby Mexican restaurant where we ate in the morning for the next two days. The women who run the restaurant and a catering business were warm, friendly, animated. There, as elsewhere, we found prices quite reasonable.

We sifted through options, rejected the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building, and opted to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge.

We sifted through options, rejected the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building, and opted to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. We were charmed by the section of Brooklyn we were in. The streets are clean, businesses small and interesting; Mom and Pop, not Walmart and Costco. Perhaps only the price of real estate keeps the monsters out, but we are happy to see small businesses.

The route up Court Street to the bridge goes through a series of parks, each dedicated to a great person: the most moving to us was RFK.

Henning went to exactly one political rally in his life, and RFK's was it. We were moved by the inscription: "What we require is not the self-indulgence of resignation from the world but the hard effort to work out new ways of fulfilling our personal concern and our personal responsibility."

Walking across the Brooklyn Bridge was an experience that carried an emotional punch we had not anticipated. Walkers of all ages and ethnicities — languages from everywhere, beautiful clothing on some of the women, everyone walking with what felt like purpose and joy. It was hot, with bright sun and a saving breeze.

We stopped for pizza and beer because Elizabeth had her desperate, footsore, hungry face on. She wondered at the dearth of public restrooms, grateful to use the one in the pizza place.

The new site for World Trade Centers, 1-7, some completed, some in planning stages, was our next destination. The memorial park is moving and beautiful, water flowing into a square rock pool, with another below it. On the rims were inscribed the names of those who died on 9/11. On the birthday of each, a white rose is placed in the inscribed name.

Donald Trump is currently inveighing against NATO, sure that the Montenegrans are going to piss somebody off and involve NATO nations in war. As a matter of fact, the only time Article 5 has been evoked was for 9/11.

We were moved not only by the memorial, but also by the wide variety of people and languages. We especially noticed women in elegant, flowing dresses, bearing themselves regally — dignity Americans lack. Sometimes it seems that sartorial shoddiness — baggy shorts, flip flops, tank tops, Hawaiian shirts, baseball caps worn backwards — is almost defiant.

After several hours in the heat, we took refuge in a Greek Orthodox church next to a cemetery — cool, soothing, and peaceful. Then we retraced our steps back over the Brooklyn Bridge, inspiring in the beauty and engineering of the bridge built by a German immigrant, finished by his wife, and moving in the flow of the people who walked there with pleasure and awe.

New York is a major city in ways that Seattle is not. We felt a sense of real ethnic integration we don't feel in Seattle (Johann confirmed this), history all around us (Henning mused, "A handful of beads, huh?"), and a relatively smooth flow of traffic and services. (More about the subway later.)

Of course, we were not in any but a couple of neighborhoods for a couple of days, but the impressions and experiences were very nice.

We walked back (Elizabeth limped) and came across a fish market we had visited that morning, and had a delightful supper — salmon and tuna Poke bowl for Henning, crab roll for Elizabeth. Limped home, turned in.

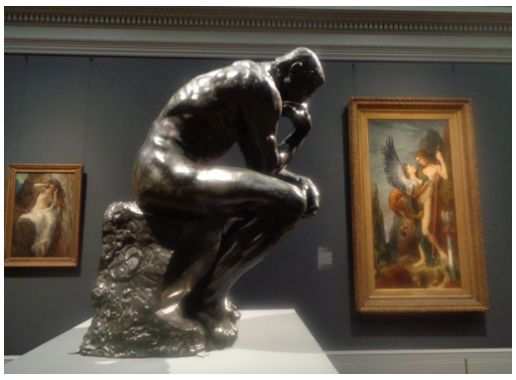
On Thursday, we took the subway to Manhattan. We asked our host about how the subway was holding up, and he was even-handed about it. On one hand, it's inexpensive, runs 24/7, safe, relatively clean, and reliable. On the other hand, repairs and expansion were not done when they should have been, because De Blasio and Cuomo have different interests, are highly

territorial, detest each other. Apparently moneys that should have gone into repair and expansion have been diverted to other pet projects.

We found the subway to work fine as far as getting around is concerned, but there are some pretty bad logistical problems. Slide your ticket, turnstile doesn't open. Once, Henning got through and opened the emergency door for Elizabeth; second time, he climbed over the turnstile. First time we bought tickets through a machine, it worked fine. Second time, the machine refused to read the credit card and then tried to eat it.

We spent most of the day at the Metropolitan. We started with the ancient Mediterranean cultures, marveling at the Cycladic statues of fertility. We ended with Classical Greece in that section. Our pattern was to linger over one piece in detail, then skim/scan the rest of the room, get an impression of story, artisanship, motifs, and so on. We did find it annoying that the beautiful Greek pottery was all in glass cases pushed up against a wall so that you could not see the paintings on the backs of the vases. You'd think they could at least have put mirrors there.

The room we found most startling contained bas-reliefs and statues from Assyria. They are in perfect condition. They were stolen by an English excavator in the 19th century. We are of two minds: on one hand, it was terrible for German, English, and American archaeologists to treasure hunt and rob countries of their national treasures; on the other, if these marbles and bronzes and ceramics hadn't been stolen, they



wouldn't exist now. Grave robbers would have chipped them up to sell by the piece, or enemy armies would have smashed them for spite, or current powers would have destroyed them for "religious" reasons, as the Taliban blew up the Bamiyan Buddha statues. How these ancient works of art traveled, undamaged, from the Middle East to New York is a fascinating question.

We went on to 19th Century European painters, spent a long time looking at Rodin and the Impressionists. Of course, we are drawn to the pieces we have copies of or are familiar with. We have not learned to take photos reliably with the

Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I,* 1907

phone, so Henning used the iPad, which worked well.

We refreshed ourselves with coffee at a Viennese cafe, then perused the Neue Galerie, with its display of early Modernists from Austria and Germany, including Klimt, Schiele and Beckmann. The fact that the work of these fine artists was interrupted (at best) by two world wars is beyond sad. Incredible, mindless destruction all over the world, lives cut short, all for land grabs and a pissing contest. Dinner at an organic, locally sourced restaurant, home to bed.

Sailing on the Queen Mary

Yesterday, **Friday August 3**, was given over to packing and embarkation. All successful. We have had moments of worry and tension about making the ship (What if Amtrak let us down in a big way? What if we get the date wrong?) so actually being in our stateroom, unpacking, settling in, was

lovely. Whew.

Today is our first full day on the ship. We explored, finding a dozen places to eat and drink (you could literally do both all day long), climbing up deck after deck, enjoying the excellent service — there is one staff member for every two passengers — and reveling in having Nothing To Do. No chores, no obligations, no cooking or housework. Traveling to Europe on the ship allowed us to relax and arrive in Germany rested and not suffering from jet lag.

There are activities all day long (We went to a movie last night — large screen!) Nothing but the safety drill is required. The food is excellent. In the dining room, formal dress is required, but if you don't want to dress up, there are several other venues.

For months, people have been asking, "Aren't you excited?" but we could never say, honestly, that we were. Too much to do, too much to plan, too many possibilities for things going wrong (like Mom's caregivers pulling out at the last minute and our having to engage more people) but we were *really* looking forward to doing exactly what we are doing right now, stretching out on deck chairs, staring at the wide blue ocean, watching small flying fish (from here, they look to be the size of butterflies) skip across the surface.

Saturday, August 4

Saturday night was "gala" — women in evening dress, men in tuxes or suits and ties. It was the Captain's reception, so everyone filed in, took a glass of champagne, found a place to sit. We joined a German couple, who were hugely relieved to find that Henning speaks German, though between the live music and surrounding conversations, it was difficult to hear anything. We enjoyed watching the women enter the room in fancy dress, some outfits sparkly with beads, some long, elegant gowns (most successfully worn by long, elegant women) and some "cocktail" dresses best worn by twenty-somethings, but they were few and far between. Most of the attendees had snow on the roof.

The captain said a few words in favor of dressing up, and we agree with him. As Sheila Metcalf said, it's important to honor the occasion.

The last events we attended (O*rpheus and Eurydice, Henry V, Othello)* were in the afternoon, and the audience mostly wore jeans and sneakers.

So how do you tell if the occasion is special?

One of Käthe's favorite means of rebellion as a teenager was to show up for a holiday, particularly Christmas, dressed like a bag lady. Quite the thumb in the eye.

Elizabeth does enjoy having new clothes that will last until she's old. Wearing Sheila's creations makes her feel like she has the arms of Lopez around her. They are beautiful and distinctive. Henning looks wonderful in a suit, although just as wonderful in his Mel Gibson (ripped) T-shirt.

End of sartorial digression.

The captain introduced his officers (the head chef is German) and commented on the number of countries represented on this voyage, the preponderance being Americans, Canadians, Australians and Germans. The crew, including serving staff, are astonishing in number and origin. There is one staff member for every two passengers, from 39 countries. The Captain noted that these folks live and work together amicably for months at a time — why can't the rest of the world take a lesson? A sweet, if superficial, analogy.

After dinner, we changed into our civvies and went to watch a fun, inconsequential movie, while most other folks opted for dancing — demonstration or participation, we did not know.

On Sunday after breakfast, we did our obligatory check in with Immigration. Apparently we will not need to take our passports ashore at Southhampton. We checked to be sure we have tickets for the excursion to Stonehenge, which we were very much looking forward to seeing. Of course the stones are cordoned off, but you can get close enough to "feel" them (our phrase).

At 10:00, we attended the "interdenominational" church service, led by the Captain in one of the theaters. It was pure Church of England, and Elizabeth loved saying the prayers she grew up with from the *Book of Common Prayer*. "We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts; we have left undone those things that we ought to have done; we have done those things we ought not to have done…" how those words ring and chime! The Lutheran phrases of confession are no less meaningful, but there is a gravitas about the formality of Church of England language that Elizabeth loves. As we gravitate to art we are familiar with, so we respond to words made meaningful in childhood.

After lunch, we attended a wonderful performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. This version was set after WWII, so there was swing dance and music from the 40s to move the play from scene to scene. The five actors played two roles each. The play was delightful, shortened, but not to its detriment, and the acting was great.

After dinner, we went to see *The Darkest Hour*, with Gary Oldman playing Winston Churchill just after he becomes Prime Minister and Dunkirk is upon them. Outside of the fact that Oldman mumbled (ok, so did Churchill, but we'd have liked to hear what he was saying) the film was excellent, and showed the political strains at the beginning of the war.

It's easy, in the hindsight of "winning" WWI and WWII (leaving out the wars in Korea and Vietnam and Iraq and Afghanistan, which we did not "win") to forget how many voices and opinions there were, and how easily things could have gone the other way.

Because we have to meet the bus for Stonehenge at 8:15 on Excursion Day and the cafeterias don't open until 8:00, we ordered room service breakfast for 7:00 am to see if it would come on time. It did. Of course, probably everyone will order room service on Excursion Day, but the staff will make it work.

So, it's Monday morning, we are in the beautiful library (the wood is mahogany or something like it) ready to walk the deck to get some fresh air and exercise. In retrospect, the library, which has 5,000 volumes, was a disappointment. The shelves are full of tacky best

sellers and travel books, and there is very little to read. Elizabeth was trying to save the precious books on the Kindle for the months in Germany, but it was slim going.

Henning can't access email without an account, which he may or may not want to open, but we've been able to make calls on our cell phone. Talked to Mary on Saturday; she was out in the garden picking for the CSA; all's well on the farm; talked to Stina last night while she was taking care of Mom, all's well there. Stina, bless her, called a meeting of all the caregivers so they could get schedules ironed out. We get a break from the responsibilities of the farm, Mother and everything else, and folks there get a break from us. We can only have faith that Mary and Rafael will not just "do their best," but do what's best for the farm. We are not at all concerned about Mother. There are several women taking care of her, the care is routine, Stina is in charge, and knows what to do in case of an emergency. The farm is different — decisions to be made, and we hope there will not be an "Oh, well" attitude. Oh, well. We'll deal with whatever there is to deal with come November.

Thursday, August 9

Mary sent us an "All's well" message and a photo of the cheese she just made. What did we do Tuesday? Checked in with the sculptor who is making a clay form of a horse drinking at a pool, and another horse (head) as the mirror image. He was interesting and informative, and described the difference between commercial art (this artist works mostly on commission and creates works to please his clients or to fit the space in a public place) and a sculptor like Rodin, who worked to express his vision. The distinction is not absolute, of course — what artist has not sold his or her work, one way or another? We both think that Raven Skyriver fits into the Rodin category, because he seeks to capture the living animals; their shapes and movements reside in his soul, and he can realize these in glass.

We also took a lesson in waltzing. Henning practically waltzed his way out of his mother's womb, but Elizabeth has two left feet and either trips over Henning's or heads the wrong direction. Nothing practice won't take care of, but who waltzes on Lopez? It's all line dancing and square dancing there.

We did attend Big Band Night, with live music, which was great fun. We did not dance, but enjoyed watching the couples who have been dancing together for years. There were three crew members there to make sure that all the women who were on their own could dance. Most memorable was a crew member who was "dancing" with a woman in a wheel chair.

We also saw a Steven Spielberg film, *Player One*. It's a dystopic movie, taking place in 2045, where the "real world" has been reduced to a junk pile, because people stopped fixing things, and the old just lived their way through the despair and destruction. But it's now OK! People just put on head sets and body suits and live in their avatars inside a game. Spielberg's references are to movies (King Kong, Godzilla) and mish-mash mythology (three keys to a magic door, the Gandolf figure, the Parsifal myth and the quest for the Holy Grail), popular paranoia (the evil corporation that wants to take over the game, and the teenage heroes who foil the plot).

The film takes place in the foreseeable future, and we reflect on the fact that a lot of people, especially the young, already live in a virtual world — hours and hours of screen time, gaming on line considered a sport, at which people can make a living.

A while back, Meike Meisner told us about a young shirt-tail relative who was staying with them. She was forever on her phone. The family took her to Watmough Bay, and she downloaded a movie. She could have been at the dump. Since Mike and Meike's children are restricted to so many hours of screen time per day, they were going to put this young woman on the same schedule. Hope it worked.

This young woman was simply impatient with being on a farm, having Meike make all food from scratch. Wrong time in the girl's life to come here. It's wasted on her. We have found that young children and adults really appreciate our farm. The kids love the animals, the adults are fascinated by the processes. But teenagers who have never been on

a farm tend to want to stay in the car and gaze at their phones.

On Tuesday, we went to a fine performance by a Scottish guitarist; he played well known music from many places; another performance today, which we look forward to.

Yesterday we went to a performance of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, performed by the same group that did *Much Ado About Nothing*. The actors were, again, excellent. The play is witty, albeit thin. Big problem was that both of us kept falling asleep, so our sense of the plot was spotty.

Last night we attended a performance of "Latin" music and dance, and it was not memorable. The fault of the director/choreographer, we think. The dancers were good, but there was no variation in music, mood, or movement. And what is a song from *Man of La Mancha* and faux flamenco doing in a Latin-focused performance? Where is the distinction between Cuban and Brazilian music and dance? A sense of history. On Amtrak, we shared a table with a woman and her husband who were regulars on the west-bound voyages of Queen Mary II. Leslie rated the food as average and the entertainment superb. We would turn those last two evaluations around.

Yesterday morning Henning was part of a doubles ping pong tournament. He'd never played doubles before, but adjusted quickly. It was fun to watch.

Outside of the fact that, when you look out of the windows there is water in various shades of blue and gray, from glass smooth to whitecaps, there is no feeling that you are on a ship. The Queen Mary II is so big and stable (with an occasional wallow), the interiors so pleasing and well appointed, that it's like living in a grand hotel.

When we booked this room, we discussed the options of no window/small porthole/large window/balcony overlooking lifeboats/balcony with sea view. We opted for balcony with lifeboat, because we felt that having no outside air would make us feel claustrophobic and stale, since we sleep at home with door and windows open. As it happened, we never opened the balcony door for air because the temperature in the room was so well controlled. But the natural light was lovely and very important to us.

Yesterday we took a dance lesson in the slow foxtrot. It took Elizabeth a while to get the basic step down, and then it was fun. On the return trip we plan to take all of the dance classes, and be able to dance in the evenings if we want to. The instructor, who is loquacious and funny, told us about a group of WWII veterans (Pearl Harbor, Omaha and Normandy Beaches) who put hands on Elena (the instructor's partner) and danced, carefully, but with spirit, until 3:00 am. One of them pinned one of his war medals on Elena, who cherishes it.

After the foxtrot, we trotted to the Royal Court Theater to enjoy the second half of Ben Kearsley's guitar concert. Henning bought one of Kearsley's CDs.

Outside of the fact that, when you look out of the windows there is water in various shades of blue and gray, from glass smooth to whitecaps, there is no feeling that you are on a ship.

Dinner was fun. The six of us who share a dinner table enjoy each other very much. In fact, Peggy and Sabina had been afraid that, after Southhampton, the seating might be changed. We appreciate having dinner conversation with these interesting people: Willis, a retired businessman and banker; Peggy, a retired school administrator; Heinz, a CEO of a housing firm; Sabina, an administrator in that firm. Conversation is difficult because the room is noisy, Willis is hard of hearing (he adjusts his hearing aids using his cell phone), Heinz speaks no English, Sabina's is limited, Elizabeth's German not beyond the polite phrase.

Sabina is quite taken with Henning. She cannot believe he is eighty-one. When she asked how he felt about getting old, he told her that it was a new and interesting phase of life. She replied, "That's because you feel the way you do. But what if

you were crippled, or in pain, or on medication, or ill, or poor?" Good question. Elizabeth has always felt that her growing spiritual/religious faith is heavily dependent on 1) being married to Henning 2) living on Lopez 3) having Beth as a pastor 4) being in good health. She wonders how she would do living in a polluted, ugly, dangerous city with no animals, gardens, or supportive community.

After dinner, we went to see the film *Lean on Pete*, whose description makes you think you're in for *National Velvet* or *Seabiscuit,* but you're not. Abandoned-to-the-slaughterhouse horse, orphaned fifteen year old who steals horse and trailer, pilfers to stay alive, has run-ins with pretty scary people, and is entirely alone (horse is killed by a car) before finally finding his aunt. There is nothing sentimental about this movie. It is a very good reflection of America's hard-luck side, and we think about how many young people are homeless, addicted, prey to various predators, and don't have a kind, Dickensian aunt at the end of the road.

After the movie we went to one of the lounges to have a nightcap and were looking at, as we do every day, a lot of obese people — a couple of men who either had to recline in or sit on the edge of their chairs. Their bodies must be such a burden to them. How do they get into a bathroom stall? An airplane seat?

Stonehenge

Elizabeth did not get to sleep until after 3:00 am, so kept nodding off on the bus to Stonehenge. It is surprising how much open country surrounds Southhampton and Salisbury. Apparently, most of the population of Great Britain (67 million) reside in cities. Good thing. Lots of farm and grazing land and open forests. In America, this open land would be gobbled up by industry and developers.

We strolled around the site itself (smaller than Henning remembered or Elizabeth imagined) taking some good photos with the iPad. We were fortunate in the time of our arrival, because there were relatively few people. By the time our bus left, there were hundreds more. How can anyone experience this site if all they can do is take "selfies" with one standing stone?

The displays at the Visitors' Center, looped videos of Stonehenge were stunning. Of all the other well known stone work — the pyramids, Easter Island, Machu Picchu, for example — Stonehenge is the oldest (2000 BC, at least) and only part of a larger sacred space of barrow graves and pathways in Britain. The guide spoke briefly about electro-magnetic fields, and how churches, cathedrals and other sacred sites tend to be built on them.This, apparently, is one.

The visitors' center had slides that showed Stonehenge in every season, particularly the Solstice sun shining through the stones, and displays of what people ate (we noticed our own diet of fresh greens, meat, vegetables, and fruit in the photo) and a reconstruction of Stone Age humans, who looked very much like ourselves.

The guide and driver took us through the city of Salisbury on the way back to the ship. It was the first planned city in England, and was a favorite tourist destination until, a few years ago, the Russians poisoned a former spy and his daughter

with a nerve agent. It almost killed them both. Things had simmered down and tourism picked up until two more tourists found the vial used for the first poisoning and were poisoned themselves. One is now dead, the other recovering. Salisbury has lost millions of pounds in tourist money. The two

incidents raise the question of the underbelly of international politics. How could people kill in cold blood? For what cause?

The city, at least the part we were in, was not particularly engaging, but that may have been due to the traffic jam on the quaint little streets that brought our coach to a half hour halt. One can be interested in looking at apartment buildings for only so long.

Too late for a subway system, but surely buses, preferably electric, could ease some of the congestion.

We passed street after street of brick row houses, which are apparently the typical "Englishman's house." No yards or gardens in evidence, though there may be grass or gardens behind them. No patch of grass, large or small, was tended. They looked wild, weedy, dry, and like a fire hazard.

We returned for a late, delicious lunch, and Henning went around the ship taking pictures. Dinner at 5:30, because there was to be an aerial show in celebration of the Three Queens' (Elizabeth, Mary, Victoria) all being in port at the same time. The flyover was beautiful, the jets flying in close formation, releasing colored con trails. Henning got some good pictures of the two formations. Two reflections: why is it such a big deal that Cunard has three ships in the harbor on the same day? The government sponsors the events and pays for the fuel. We don't want to be curmudgeons, and do appreciate that the captain, crew, and staff take pride in this ship. They are doing excellent work — the hospitality never seems forced, the schedules work like clockwork, the passengers have complaints only (and rarely) about each other, not the crew. But — there is waste of fuel that is objectionable, all for show.

Is the government sponsoring tourism as much as it can because it's a growing industry? Tourism is a plague. At Stonehenge, our guide marveled that he had never seen so few people. There were *plenty* of people. Any more, and we would have been stepping on them and peering over their shoulders to see the stones.

After the air show, we watched the movie *Goodbye Christopher Robin*, a sad, sweet film about the Milne family, and how the little boy/young man could not escape, and was made more miserable by, his literary avatar. Wonderful portrayals of all things English: the cold mother, the loving nanny, the father who finally wakes up, and the healing reconciliation. Good film! In Elizabeth's childhood, she read all of the Christopher Robin books and poems, and read, as an adult, the fact that the real young man suffered in boarding school because his classmates would quote lines to him, such as "Hush, Hush! Whisper who dares?/ Christopher Robin is saying his prayers!" How dreadful. A.A. Milne was a wonderful writer for children, perhaps not so great a father to his own child.

We took a turn around the deck and went into The Golden Lion Pub for a nightcap. The band deafened us only for a short time before it was replaced by the Trivia Game. Let no entertainment stone be unturned! We prefer quiet bars where you

can hold a conversation, but The Golden Lion has a pleasant ambiance.

Friday, August 11

Our last day on board, we went to the Illuminations astronomy show. Not particularly illuminating either in information or special effects. A pleasant final dinner with our table mates. We packed, set our bags in the hall (once they are gone, they are g*one*) and went one last time to The Golden Lion for a little Irish whiskey. That night it was karaoke, and a worse set of caterwauling we never want to hear. Many of the participants were children (the youngest six) and everyone sang along to American music — the German kids all know American songs — singing in tune, actually hitting the note and not its next door neighbor — seems to be unimportant.

We started Sunday morning by breakfasting with our table friends, and Peggy put Elizabeth and Sabina in stitches by recounting her "My suitcase is gone" plight. "Where are my shoes? Well, I can wear the ship's white slippers until I get to my suitcase. Do I have a top? Well, I can wear the ship's bathrobe until I get to my suitcase." She followed that with the description of putting body lotion instead of conditioner in her hair, which set us all laughing again.

Hamburg & Hannover

Cunard, as usual, got everyone disembarked in a quiet, efficient manner, and Axel and Gabi were there to meet us.

The first disembarkation impression of Hamburg is of old buildings (Hanse dates from 13th to 15th century) and from the 19th century next to new buildings of glass and steel.

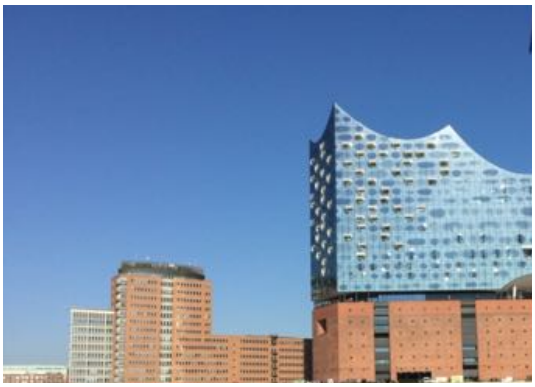
Axel and Gabi drove miles through city and suburb to their home, a beautiful, cultivated house with an extensive garden of flowering bushes. We talked, ate, and caught up on family history. Axel and Marion, his sister, are the cousins who spent five years in Heidenau, from 1940-1945. Axel does not remember Henning's father at all (not surprising, he was gone to war except for the occasional furlough) and has only faint memories of the Opi who was (and is) so dear to Henning.

Axel is eighty the way Henning is eighty-one — healthy (though Gabi told us he has a heart condition), smooth-faced, straight-backed, strong. Gabi is fifty-four, a sweet, pretty woman, very warm, generous, and loving. She kissed Elizabeth's cheek last night and exclaimed, "I love you!" Who can resist such spontaneous affection? She told us that she had been very nervous about the limitations of her English, but now felt at ease.

Since Elizabeth's German disappeared as soon as we docked in Germany, she was grateful for the unspoken forbearance.

We had dinner at a nearby restaurant, were joined by Axel's son, Sasha, and his partner, Jo. Some family history and tensions, but what family does not have history and tensions? The dinner, served in courses, was superb.

Today we breakfasted in the Gasthaus (guest house) and then went on a tour of the Elb-Philharmonie (also known as Elfie). We have seen many photographs of this fabulous place, which includes a hotel, apartments, practice rooms, and large and small concert halls. To recount all we recall (let alone all the detail we heard and cannot recount) would take several pages. The place is a wonderful, international collaboration in building and a city/state/individual effort to finance. The cost overruns seem small in light of the increase in tourism — the place has become a cash cow. The most moving and meaningful part of the tour was our sitting in on a rehearsal of Claude Debussy's



Daphnis and Chloe, wherein, due to acoustics and seating plan, each note fell pure and beautiful.

Henning has been wondering how to spend the extra time (Queen Mary II sails back to the U.S. later than we thought), but Elizabeth knew it would not be a problem — we will find so many places we want to return to, or visit. We will spend that last 2-3 days in Hamburg.

After the tour, we joined Axel and Gabi for a Mittagessen (noon meal), then ran some errands, (a calling card for the phone, a battery for the watch Henning received from his father). Axel took us for a long drive through the old residential part of Hamburg, and we ended up at the home of his best friend, for coffee and conversation. This man evidently visited us with Axel in 2006. Elizabeth has no memory of that, but that's not surprising. We have had so many people come to the farm that she never paid attention to them until she knew how many, and for what meals, she could expect.

It was a delightful day. Both of us were shaken by the concert hall. Maybe "overwhelmed" is a better word. And we see the Hamburg that was rebuilt after the bombing during the war. We all talked about the churches that had been taken apart and rebuilt after the bombing, and Elizabeth said that perhaps rebuilding is a way to rid a nation of bitterness. Maybe we were seeing the same thing at Ground Zero. There are now seven World Trade buildings built, or planned. "We Shall Prevail" is the theme, perhaps.

Tomorrow, Hannover. Elizabeth reveled in having plans made and carried out by others. Because of her limited German, she often didn't know what those plans were. Fine. *Very* relaxing!

Tuesday, August 14

We were off to Hannover today to visit Henning's cousin Marion. Axel and Gabi were driving us, which made for a pleasant trip. Gabi asked Elizabeth yesterday if she would find all of the weeks ahead with Henning's family strenuous. She said that it depended on who they were. There is a tendency in the family to argue about everything, which can be interesting, as long as you are not made to feel that your conversational partner is always right, and you always wrong. Also, squabbling couples can be hard to be around. Fortunately, our Mary II table mates were both loving couples, as were Axel and Gabi.

Marion greeted us at the door, looking like a Grand Dame of New York.

Before Gabi and Axel picked us up, we were sitting over another excellent Gasthaus breakfast: hard rolls, butter, cheese, cold cuts, fruit, with more on offer, such as eggs, cereal, breakfast bars. There is a very sophisticated machine that produces six kinds of coffee, and lots of choices of tea.

American "continental breakfast?" Perhaps some underripe fruit, soft pastries, waffle mix and a waffle iron, toaster and bread. Bad coffee. The appeal is that it's "free." When Elizabeth stayed overnight in Chehalis on the way to visit her mother, (better than falling asleep at the wheel, which she was prone to do) she would take one look at the stale offerings and walk to Denny's for some freshly made eggs and toast. Americans seem to think that if something is "free" it does not have to be (should not be?) of good quality. Henning has wondered whether Americans tolerate the poor quality of hotel breakfasts because they don't eat anything better at their own homes either.

Yesterday, when we visited Axel and Gabi's office, Sasha, who now runs the company, told us that there are now 100 more cruise ships in the making. He thinks that there are too many already, and we heartily concur. The islands and fjords of Norway are overrun by tourists from cruise ships who climb their mountains, peer in their windows, defecate on their beaches.

Sasha also told us that older ships run on the dirtiest diesel available, and do make a large carbon footprint. He apologized for passing that along, because he knew that we did not want to fly because of carbon emissions, but we told him we were glad to know — we don't want to be smug about a kind of travel that is only relatively less polluting.

Sasha is also upset about cruise ships that take people to the Arctic, but his solution is to make such trips fewer, smaller, and for less time. They should be "elite," "exclusive," which means that only the very rich get to pollute the Arctic. Come on, Sasha.

Wednesday, August 15

After yet another good breakfast at the Gasthaus, we took a long walk along the river Elbe, in the afternoon met Axel. We returned to the shopping center, where a jeweler examined the watch Henning had inherited from his father, and said that the whole back was a battery, and would last 30 years. End of watch, which had already lasted 30 years by the time it came into Henning's possession, and for which a new battery cannot be procured.

We picked Gabi up at her office and went to dinner at a wonderful Italian place.

Thursday, August 16

We drove from Hamburg to Hannover to see Marion. Since we were still carrying around the

small bottle of champagne gifted to us on the Queen Mary II, Elizabeth suggested that we take it to Marion. Henning said, "She lives on a whole different scale. You'll see." Elizabeth did indeed.

We checked in at the Sheraton, dressed for dinner, and drove a short distance to Marion's. Hannover is a beautiful city. Like Hamburg, it is a mix of old and new. But it is a smaller city, more approachable.

Marion greeted us at the door, looking like a Grand Dame of New York. Plenty of makeup (did we spot false eyelashes?), a mane of dyed brown hair, slender figure, fashionably dressed, with her feet squeezed into impossible shoes.

She is straight-backed, energetic, engaged. She is eighty. We had Campari (never again if we can help it) on the terrace, on a tablecloth bunched with a clip to give it fashionable creases.

Gabi took Elizabeth on a tour of the beautiful garden, groomed and manicured (by whom?) and showed her the pool, bathhouse, grandchildren's playhouse.

Dinner was divine. Marion and Heinz live with real silver, flatware, and linen (napkins tied with elaborate butterflies) wine and water glasses. Marion had made a feast: "Königsberger Klopse" (meat balls à la Königsberg), potatoes, beets, pickles, salad, wonderful cheeses for dessert, coffee, sweets to close.

The table was bare mahogany, over which Marion had scattered apples and limes. The conversation focused, appropriately, on family, memories. With her limited German, Elizabeth could not follow most of it. Henning noted that he would not have known Marion — she greeted him rather woodenly, in contrast to Axel and Gabi, who have been generous, warm, and welcoming.

Heinz and Marion live mostly on inherited wealth, and Heinz expressed annoyance that people (Americans especially) ask what one does for a living. We think that Marion has made social engagements, entertaining, and her house her profession. Every place in the house has some striking feature (a huge book, open on an easel, with a photograph of a sculpture of a group of elephants, for example.)

We slept the night in the Sheraton, breakfasted royally there. Europeans have taken the buffet idea from Americans, but the food is much better and more varied. We wrestled the suitcases back into the car and headed for the town center to find out why the new SM card installed in Henning's phone doesn't work. Turned out that the phone won't accept it. Gabi is going to send us a phone from her office, which we will return when we end our trip in Hamburg. Hope it works. We will have no other way of contacting our hosts.

Kirchhatten

Long waits — several of them — on the Autobahn. Perhaps they're building another one with wider lanes. The lanes on this one were so narrow you could shake the next driver's hand. There were signs on each overpass indicating traffic ahead, ordering trucks into the right lane, lowering the speed limit. It's great that these huge trucks, endless lines of them, stay to the right, don't pass, are not in your line of sight.

We were all tired of being in the car by the time we reached Heike's. Elizabeth nodded off several times, which she is prone to do in a warm car.

Elizabeth told Heike, quite truthfully, that except for her hair, which is a cloud of white curls, she had not changed. It was lovely to see her. We drank a little champagne, and ate dinner — you guessed it — "Königsberger Klopse," beets, salad. Delicious. Axel and Gabi headed back to Hamburg, and we took a long walk around the neighborhood.

Henning asked Elizabeth if she still found the village repressive and sterile, which she had on our previous visit, and she doesn't because the trees have grown in so much and people have gardens in their yards.

Coffee and cake, and later wine, and a long conversation about family. A lot about Käthe and our concern that she can't commit — not to Leo, advancement at Whole Foods, taking care of Mom, moving to Lopez.

We called Johann, (for a wonder, we can call the U.S. on our phone) and actually got ahold of him. He was volunteering at a camp up in Bellingham for kids who have been injured in fires. He sounded good, happy to hear from us. It was 12:00 noon there, which he said was a good time to call.

Henning slept well. Elizabeth was having a hard time falling asleep and didn't know why, but happily there was a second bedroom so that she didn't keep Henning awake.

After breakfast, we visited the place where Mutti's ashes are scattered, and Henning and Heike talked about their mother's last days. Then we drove to a place called Gut Sannum, which is much like a Rudolf Steiner Camphill community, with 25 resident adults with special needs and probably a matching number of companion/workers. We walked for a long time on paths through beech and oak trees by a very low river. The forest is extensive and beautiful, like something out of Tolkien. After our walk (which included an unexpected scramble through a ravine, not Elizabeth's strong suite) we had soup with milk rice and cherries for dessert and good coffee at the Sannum cafeteria. Then we visited the *Bäckerei* (bakery), used only for instructing residents, since it is too small to bake all the bread they eat each day, a beautifully kept hen and geese house, cornfields, old grain storage bins turned into information centers, a farm stand, gardens (totally overgrown with weeds), greenhouses (underused and a bit shabby), orchards.

Henning was quite taken with a wood storage method where there is a large bin made of pig wire or foundation grating, and cut firewood tossed into it to cure. Elizabeth wondered how you'd get it out: apparently you just open it up. Using such a structure would solve a space problem, and the problem of stacking wood on pallets, where knocking into one stick can bring down a whole pile if you're not careful.

There were women cleaning the kitchen after they had made lunch, and men measuring lumber to build a pen for forty-five goats that were supposed to arrive the next day. We found records kept for chicken care and eggs collected, and obviously someone cares for the horses and donkeys, and some of the residents were making (mostly percussive) music, and some were climbing into a van. But, like the Camphill in B.C., nobody was working very hard, as the desperately weedy garden shows. It's clear that the first responsibility of the companions is to take care of the residents, and if weeds choke out the chard, then they do.

The Camphill community we saw in British Columbia was much larger, with many more enterprises, such as weaving (we bought a beautiful pillow) and herbs — Henning is hoarding the seasoned salt — a CSA, a planned processing kitchen, extensive gardens, big machines.

Henning's inherited watch was a no-go, and Gabi was sending us a new phone with the European SM card. In Germany, the phone itself costs 700 Euros, the programs very little. In the U.S., a basic phone is cheap, the programs expensive. We are paying $45 per month for a basic phone which we can't even use if we are out of AT&T range. Amazingly, we have consistently had 3-4 bars and been able to call the U.S. from anywhere. It wound up costing a lot.

Friday, August 17

How to convey today? Heike had planned a hike in the woods (when we arrived, she had a three-ring binder full of plans for each day, pamphlets and maps. She had worked on it for months), but it rained hard in the night, early morning, and finally stopped about 10:00. We

decided to switch activities and go to the Cloppenburg Museum. Henning has been there, but it was before the kids were born. Elizabeth knew it was an outdoor museum (so if it started to rain again we would get wet) and that it had to do with traditional farming, but was not prepared for what we saw. The museum covers many hectares and includes several kinds of windmills — we saw, studied, and climbed around three of them — a blacksmith shop, a tool maker's house, a *bürgerliches* (middle class) house, a peasant house, a carriage house, a church, a school, buildings for the storage of lumber and farm machines, barns for storing hay and grain, gardens, happy chickens, pigs, and geese. There are over sixty structures in the park.

The fact that takes one's breath away is that all of these buildings were constructed somewhere else, in the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries, dismantled, transported, and reconstructed on this site. Half-timbered buildings, brick, stucco, thatched roofs, tile roofs, brick floors, floors made of rounds of wood. Windmills. How were they dismantled? Transported? Reconstructed? Perhaps this sounds like the mysteries of Stonehenge, but since the reconstruction dates hover around the 1970s, there's no mystery, just a marvel.

Heike and Henning practically took apart the windmills until they figured out how everything worked, and how the three types differed, and how the blades could be turned to catch the wind.

Walking around the manor farm, one becomes aware of the numbers of skilled people it would take to keep the place going: farmers, shepherds, people to care for farm animals, blacksmith, stone mason, wood cutter, milker, cook, laundress, carpenter, not to speak of house servants.

We ate at a very nice cafe in the park. Henning and Elizabeth had complicated and

delicious salads, Heike had pork, potatoes and sauerkraut, the latter overcooked and salty. After the meal Elizabeth was thirsty, and requested water. In America, it would have been a small glass of tap water, perhaps with ice, certainly free. Here it was a large glass of sparkling mineral water, quite satisfying, for three Euros. The three of us shared it.

There were a couple of major themes in the museum park presentations. One was change in farming methods over time, measured in hundreds of years. The pattern has been followed, tragically, throughout Western civilization: cut the trees, lose the topsoil. Dig and plow the sod, lose the topsoil. Try to amend and fertilize with animal manures, human waste, peat, and so on, and wind up with a small layer of topsoil, often bereft of fungi and microbiotic life.

Certainly diet changed with the coming of agriculture. The diet eaten by Stonehenge folks was nearly perfect: meat, nuts, fruits, vegetables. The diet after the development of agriculture depended heavily on grains.

Monoculture continues today. Everywhere we are surrounded by fields of corn, which is used for animal feed (inappropriately, since ruminant animals evolved to digest mostly grass with a minimum of grain in the seed heads), and fuel. Heavily dependent on chemical inputs.

The other theme was the difference in social classes between the very wealthy, the middle class, and the peasantry. We saw the different houses they lived in, all connected to the barns that housed their animals. The narrative comment about the wealthy was that they hunted, ate, drank, gambled, and lived off the rents and food produced by the poor. The rich emphasized family connections and marriage, the privilege of the rich, was mostly about the exchange and securing of property. Children were portrayed as miniature adults, women as overdressed and bedecked, with special emphasis on elaborate hairdos. One caption, under a drawing of dozens of pots of cosmetics, sneered, "And what will you do with the rest of your day?"

Go mad, apparently. A narrative about the secular magistrate condemning a poor man to the insane asylum. A rich man sending his daughter to the same place, apparently for removing her clothes in the garden and screaming. It's a form of social control that continues today. Dirk, our guide on Saturday, said that he had collected stories from people in the asylum, and many of them just seemed to be homeless.

Saturday, August 18

A day of sacred spaces. Heike, who had planned meticulously for our visit, hired Dirk Foss, a former mail carrier and current amateur (in the true sense of the word, someone who does something for the love of it) anthropologist, archaeologist, historian, and the author of several books, who took us on a tour of sites that began with an ancient oak tree that likely had been the site of pre-Christian worship, and an equally old church, which had been handed back and forth

between Catholics and Lutherans many times, repaired and rebuilt at need. It too was built on a sacred space. Apparently, folks from that age built their sacred sites on places where spirit flowed up from the earth. The name of the place is Dortlingen.

From there we went to several Stone Age sites for burials, cult ceremonies or both. As with

Stonehenge, only the skeleton remains — a few perimeter stones, a couple of capstones, a suggestion of what was once there. At one site is a long burial mound, which has been reconstructed — capstones and earthworks replaced. Of course, Henning and Heike entered and went as far as they could. Elizabeth stayed outside.

The oak trees - sacred to several cultures - are intimately connected to these structures, in one case being intertwined with the stones to the point that the tree slightly displaced a several-ton stone.

The megalithic monuments we saw are only three out of thirty-three in Northern Germany. These burial, sacred cult structures begin in Africa and march north. Elizabeth had always associated the Stone Age with tools, just like the Bronze Age. But it now seemed clear that the age was marked by the movement and collection of huge stones, mostly glacial moraine from the last Ice Age.

We also visited a spot with acres and acres of burial mounds wherein the ashes of the dead are interred.

Magnetic lines that run through the earth are beneath most sacred sites. Some people are sensitive to them. Apparently Dirk made himself sensitive to them, and then became oversensitive. He could not sit in a meeting for two hours over such a line without feeling nauseated and breaking into a sweat. How do you say to your colleagues, "Sorry, I have to leave. I'm reacting to electro-magnetic impulses under the earth?" And Elizabeth thought menopause was bad. He desensitized himself, apparently by ignoring the lines. We wonder if Roy, our friend and homeopathic physician, who is very sensitive to electromagnetic fields, could do the same? Louie Washburn, a former superintendent at Lopez School, was a real believer. He talked about how lines in a classroom affected student behavior, and had a pair of wands to demonstrate where the lines were. Sure enough, the wands showed strong impulses at the back of the classroom. Sure enough, that's where the worst-behaved kids sit. Of course, they also sit there to avoid being noticed by the teacher. What's cause? What's effect? (Everybody on Lopez thought Louie was nuts, but he may well have been on to something.)

We had the usual good lunch at a hotel, and discovered that not all places would take our credit cards. Then we went to the final site of the day, a Basilica with two chapels and a large park in a town called Beten (prayer). In the Middle Ages,

people in cities then as now would get sick from bad air, food, and water. The locals built a rest house, hospital, sanitarium in what is now the park. Of course, as we understand today, the improvement in air, water, food, and cleanliness made people's health improve. As people in the Middle Ages saw it, the regular processions featuring the statue of Mary holding the body of

Jesus were curative. The hospital was not dismantled until the last inmate died in 1934.

A local magistrate decided to build a church memorializing the dead of WWI, and there are stones inscribed with their names on the first floor of the church. When it came to WWII, the names had to be written in books. So many dead.

The church is elaborate and beautiful, with intricate mosaic work behind the altar showing God in human form, Christ crucified with blood from his hands running into cups held by angels. Below his feet are trees filled with grapes, earth and flowers below. The world tree. As in the first church we saw, the Apostles are portrayed as gryphon, eagle, ox, and angel. These creatures appear in the Book of Revelation, and scholars and artists attempt to make a single, coherent document out of all the books of the Bible.

Sunday, August 19

Today we attended church at the Dorfkirche (village church) in Dortlingen, the place of the pre-Christian oak tree. We arrived just as the bells began to ring. Few attendees, all adults, no apparent Sunday school, although there are photographs of children prominently displayed. Elizabeth could follow the readings because she knows the stories: the sermon was beyond her. No communion, which apparently only happens once or twice a month.

We were invited for coffee, with everyone seated at a table and coffee and tea poured in a hostly way. We were ignored. Heike was finally able to engage a couple of people in conversation about the immigration situation, and heard the comments she often hears about immigrants not wanting or trying to assimilate.

When we reached Kirchhatten, we visited St Ansgari, built in the 1100s and named after the 9th century bishop of Hamburg-Bremen in Charlemagne's East Frankish Kingdom and missionary among the Saxons. The church is noteworthy for its beauty and age and the steady rebuilding from stone and plaster to brick. It has a balcony on three sides with medieval paintings of the saints. We were not blocked off from the altar, and were able to examine the tragic looking Christ, made of wood.

Surrounding the church is a lovely cemetery, with headstones marking family plots, most as yet unoccupied. Outside the gate, between the churchyard and the street, is a graveyard of the dead, mostly from the last days — almost the last moments — of WWII in April 1945. There are many headstones for the Unknown Soldier, some for Canadian, some for German soldiers. Henning thinks that their father fought nearby, if not immediately in Kirchhatten, and it was from "here" — close by, that he left before the German surrender. He took a jeep and a driver, and they

broke through the British lines. Their jeep was shot out from under them (perhaps the British weren't trying hard at that point to kill any more people) and escaped. Anticipating disaster for the Nazi project, Henning's father had buried a set of civilian clothes in a woods, which he exchanged for his uniform, and made his way home.

Tuesday, August 21

We had planned to go to Oldenburg yesterday, to whatever museums offered themselves, but the day settled in to an off-on rain, and on Mondays all museums are closed. So we settled in for a day at home. The phone Gabi and Axel procured and programmed for us arrived. It is just a phone, not a smart phone, so it cost about $20.00. The SM card allows us to call numbers in Germany and we have 300 minutes for conversations to America. It took Henning about an hour to set it up (ring tones, language, and so on) and figure out how to use it. With this phone we can call our hosts if the train is late.

Käthe Kollwitz, *Mitleid* (Compassion)

Heike showed Henning a set of silver flatware his mother left him. It's large, monogrammed, and something Käthe might like as a connection to her grandmother. But it is heavy. We worked it out that, if Heike joins us in Hamburg for the last few days before we sail again, she can bring those pieces with her, and we'll take them home; if not, perhaps little Heike would like them. As Elizabeth said about the antique mirror and the oil paintings she gave to Shelley and Bill (niece and nephew) and left with Barbara (her brother's partner), at the end of the day, it's just "stuff." Beloved to someone in the past, not necessarily now.

On Tuesday the weather improved and we went to Oldenburg, the historical seat of the German House of Oldenburg from which kings of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Greece, the Emperor of Russia, and Prince Philip of England are descended. Until 1772 Oldenburg was nominally Danish. We visited the equivalent of The Natural History Museum and a wonderful art museum, dinner in between, and a stroll around the town square.

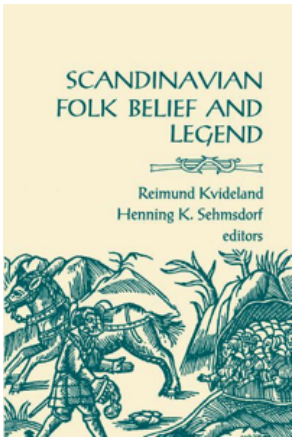
Oldenburg is a lovely city, its buildings more varied than in Kirchhatten, which is brick and tile; as usual the newer architecture looks stark and unattractive next to the graceful old stucco. We were most impressed by the wide brick sidewalks, filled with bicycle traffic. The streets for cars are narrow, and bicycles follow the left and right lanes as if they were on the street dodging cars, but they have the sidewalks. Even the "Walk" lights have bicycle icons. The town square (carless) is filled with people, outdoor cafes, large trees. The church is old on the outside, modern on the inside.

We saw two exhibits at the Natural History Museum. The first was "Moor" which featured a huge slice of the old peat bog, including "the bog people" who had been sacrificed in it. A fascinating computer display of one of the skeletons, its excavation, exploration by imaging, and reconstruction with a re-fleshed, modeled face. He was handsome, with regular features. There were displays of animal, bird, insect, and plant life, all very well done. Beautiful Bronze Age tools.

The second display was about shamanism, which is enjoying a resurgence in modern culture. It

is focused on healing an individual or the community and features a blending of animal and human spirits. Stuffed bears, otter, Arctic hare, fox, martin, salmon, Arctic Circle critters. Display of clothes made from animal and fish skins, birch bark. Brought back Pollan's *How to Change Your Mind* because of shamanism's focus on losing the individual ego, and *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend,* in which Henning redacted many a tale from shamanistic belief and practice in pre-industrial Scandinavia.

Over lunch, we told Heike about personal narratives whose reality falls outside contemporary world view, the *Hug* (traditional Norwegian for "spirit" or "thought") , the Bear Story, the elementals. The Bear Story is about one of the Huxley College student's feeling called away from a hike on the Pacific Crest Trail when a black bear came in the early morning as he lay on the ground sleeping, and sniffed him from head to toe. When the bear left, Kenny got out of his sleeping bag, packed his gear, and hiked out by starlight. He knew he had to call Henning, even though the two of them had not communicated in over a year. He hiked out to within range of his cell phone, called us and said he would be on Lopez Island the next morning. He arrived in the middle of the night, slept in his truck, took a shower and needed breakfast. He told us about the bear, and asked "Why am I here?" Henning had just had surgery on his retina, and could not take any strain that might damage his eye, but needed to get the barley to the thresher. He had thought about Kenny, who was just the right person — fast, intelligent, strong. It was Henning's *Hug* — manifestation of his spirit — that had called him in the shape of a bear.



The invisible elementals that live on our farm were discovered by Jacqueline Freeman, a friend of ours who has second sight. She met them while taking a walk on the farm — there's one who manages the water flow and ponds, one who looks after the pastures and hay fields, one who looks after the cattle and all the other animals on the farm, one who protects the farm as a whole. When Jacqueline reported to them Henning's desire to talk with them, they laughed, and said they talk to him every day, and the reason they abide on the farm is because Henning listens. Every culture in the world, except for the U.S. and Western Europe, acknowledges the life force and spirit in everything around us. We are among the few exceptions in the U.S. because we still live by the Old World view, and everything around is alive to us.

The art museum we visited had two exhibits we particularly liked, including drawings by Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945). Some wonderful Romantic paintings. Elizabeth loves the Romantic paintings because you can look back and back into the depths of a landscape and find spirit there. Her great grandmother painted in that style.

Oslo

Wednesday, August 22

Travel day! We woke at 5:30, packed, had a brief breakfast and coffee, and Heike drove us to the train station in Oldenburg. We arrived early in order to find the right track.Tearful farewells.

We had only fifteen minutes to change trains in Bremen, but had no problem. Efficient Germany, polite Germans who ushered us onto the elevator. Uneventful travel to Kiel, a beautiful city with, again, old and new buildings side by side. Once probably a fishing city as well as a port city, it now boasts many marinas filled with sailboats (if we saw power boats we don't remember them) and beaches filled with swimmers and sunbathers. There we boarded the ferry to Norway.

A beautiful trip out of the fjord, under a bridge linking islands in Denmark, windmills in the sea, two wonderful feats of engineering. Henning took a nap on deck. The time with Heike had been busy, and it was good to relax.

Our cabin is cozy, with a comfortable bed. The rest of the ship/ferry is strange — a video arcade, multiple places to shop and eat, Norwegian-high prices (get used to it, Simpson). We saw a nightclub show with singers and dancers who were talented and versatile. Lots of popular American music and dance, designed to appeal to an audience that accepts the ubiquity of American cultural hegemony. At any rate, we thought the show better than most of what we saw on the Queen Mary II, with the exception of Shakespeare and the Scottish guitarist.

Thursday, August 23

A rather less orderly disembarkation from the Color Line than from the Queen Mary II. Roberta tells us that Norwegians don't line up well, and our experience bore that out. Henning slipped into every open space in the milling crowd, and Elizabeth was sometimes hard put to stay right behind him.

Roberta (a former doctoral student of Henning's who became a professor in Oslo, now retired) and Roberta's husband, Stig (a retired social worker of blue-collar background and persuasion) picked us up at the dock, and then we were off for a wonderful day. The first stop was the Holmenkollen Ski Jump, one tram station above Voksenlia, where in 1966-7 Henning, then a Fulbright student from the University of Chicago, rented a room in the small house of Fru Møller, the widow of a sea captain. Memories came flooding as we walked: This was a time when Norwegians still took pride in what they called "mangelkultur" (lean culture), i.e. before the flow of riches from North Atlantic oil transformed Norway's into a consumer culture. It was a time when people couldn't as yet afford to take daily baths, for example, or change their clothes every day. Henning remembers Fru Møller, who was hard of hearing, mumble outside the bathroom door, "*det værste jeg har sett, bade midt på uka!*" (the worst thing I have seen, taking a bath in the middle of the week!). In this context it is interesting to reflect on a recent broadcast on *Dagsrevyen* (The Daily Review), which featured Prime Minister Erna Solberg doing her laundry to demonstrate to the Norwegian people that it really wasn't necessary to change their clothes, including underwear, every day, in the interest of saving both water and energy and thereby help mitigate climate change. Back to the future in Norway?

Material expectations were modest and simple in the 1960s, but there were rich compensations. For example, Voksenlia, where Henning lived, lies at the edge of Nordmarka, a wilderness area (427 square km), much of it owned

by the formerly noble Løvenskjold family (nobility as an official estate was abolished in Norway by 1821), where the people of Oslo hike and ski year round. During the summer months, Henning would walk there and swim in ice-cold mountain lakes, staying overnight in simple lodges, cabins really, where the only expectation was that he replenish the firewood he would use to cook a meal. In the winter he would ski, not only in the mountains, but also down toward Oslo on unplowed roads, to Blindern campus of the University of Oslo at the northern edge of the city. Occasionally, he would meet King Olav skiing in the same woods in the company of a young adjutant, and the king, whom Henning had met at a reception for Fulbright students, would greet him jovially: "*Hei, min gutt,*" (Hello, my boy) the king would say. The reception of Fulbright students where Henning first met the king took place at his summer castle, tiny Oscarshall, situated on the Oslo Fjord. With champagne flowing freely, some party goers were casting about for bladder relief. With the only bathroom in the castle reserved for ladies, gentlemen were directed along a beautifully graveled path to a wooden wall set up for that purpose! A memorable example of a "lean" culture!

At the university, where Henning studied language, literary history and folklore, he was befriended by Professor Harald Beyer, editor of the literary journal, *Edda*, who later published Henning's monograph on Knut Hamsun's *Pan* (1894) as a special issue of the journal (which earned Henning tenure at the University of Washington). A second favorite mentor was Svale Solheim who — unusual for that time — lectured in his own regional dialect (he was from Naustdal in Sunnfjord), which made him difficult to understand for Henning. To help him out, Solheim gave Henning a complete set of his lecture notes, as well as a copy of his epochal work, *Norsk sætertradisjon* (Traditions of Norwegian Mountain Farming, 1952), from which Henning drew much of the inspiration for his doctoral dissertation. Solheim also introduced Henning to *Norsk Folkeminnesamling* (Norwegian Folklore Collections), where he was a curator. Working in that collection inspired Henning to publish what eventually became a three-volume edition of Scandinavian folklore texts and secondary literature. At Solheim's suggestion, Henning became a frequent visitor at *Bygdøy Folkmuseet* (Bygdøy Folk Museum), where he learned about the history of the material culture, customs and belief systems of pre-industrial Norway, and where he heard nationally known fiddle players like Sigbjørn Bernhoft Osa, Jens Amundsen and Odd Bakkerud perform the intricate traditional music of Telemark and Hallingdal, and he spent weekends in rural communities a few hours by train from Oslo, where an astonishing number of local musicians performed in regional *kappleik* (competitions), playing both the violin and the 8-stringed *hardingfele* (Hardanger fiddle which originated in Hardanger in the 1650s) and danced the complex ancient village dances of Norway, the *springar* and the *gangar* (roundels in 3/4 and 6/8 time) and the

athletic *halling* (dance from Hallingdal). In Oslo, Henning joined a *leikarring* (dance group) in order to learn the old dances himself, which is something he continued once he started teaching Scandinavian studies at the University of Washington in 1967.

Another fond memory from Henning's time at Blindern also speaks to a leaner, more improvised and intimate culture. The student parents of infant children quite commonly kept them stowed in open prams lined up in a roofed walkway between the library and the lecture halls. There they stood without supervision and if a baby cried, anyone passing by would rock the pram and if that didn't help would call the mother or father

seated in the library!

At the Holmenkollen Ski Jump, we strolled through the museum, mostly filled with skis and snowshoes and other artifacts showing their historical significance to Norwegian culture, and then took the lift to the top, from where the view of Oslo is superb. We could see the fjords and the harbor and the suburbs of the city. We watched a mother and son take the zip line down the ski jump (took more time to belt and helmet them than it did for them to take the drop down). Henning and Roberta were both tempted to follow them. Elizabeth found all the thrill she needed in taking the lift.

From there, we went to *Frognerseteren* (an old mountain farm) for lunch. Stig and Elizabeth had wonderful sandwiches, Roberta the traditional delicacy *Rømmegrøt* (sour cream soup with sugar and cinnamon), and Henning three kinds of herring. Elizabeth did a quick sleight of hand to slip Henning the credit card so that he could pay for the lunch. In the process the other card fell to the floor. By a miracle someone gave it to the cashier who recognized the name and got it back to us. This is the second time we've dropped a card; because we unstuffed our wallets before we came, everything is loose. Must be more careful.

We do believe that Stig Berg is the most patient person we have ever known. He drove us everywhere, going places far away from our destinations so that Henning could see the places he used to live in and frequent. He walked Oscar (their beloved dog) and read in the van for the hours that Roberta, Henning and Elizabeth made the most of the Viking Museum and the Fram.

The Viking Museum was stunning because of the ships and their graceful lines and proportions and seaworthiness. Maps showed that the Vikings traveled in them over most of the known world,

including their explorations of Russia and the Mediterranean. There was a video that was good, but sketchy and you needed three heads to see it — different images on three walls.

The artifacts all came from grave ships, which of course had been robbed, but even the leftovers were stunning in their artistry and craft, like the sleigh and the carts. The analysis of the remaining skeletons was amazing — how do the forensic folks know what indicates childhood disease and adult cancer?

If the Viking Museum is packed with artifacts, the Fram (the museum dedicated to Amundsen's polar expedition) is stuffed. You could spend a week there and still be reading reproductions of diaries and journals, sorting out relationships and untangling narratives.

As it happened, the final episode of *Ten Who Dared,* hosted by Anthony Quinn, was showing. It gave a somewhat sanitized version of

Amundsen's "discovery" of the South Pole on December 14, 1911, his quarrel with Johanson, his second in command, the struggles along the way, the slaughter and consumption of the dogs which, along with Scott's death, caused such a negative public outcry after the journey.

The *Fram* (Forward), the ship that was built to conquer the Arctic but wound up going to the Antarctic, was there, and explorable. Sound effects and computer images of waves provided a vivid setting, and it was possible to explore most of the ship. You get a real sense of what life on board entailed.

At the end of an exhilarating and exhausting day of museum visits, we returned to Stig and Roberta's house, an old, old house surrounded by a courtyard of outbuildings dating from the 1840s, now claimed by the equivalent of our National Historical Monuments Association, which means that they can't make any changes to the outside. The inside, which they did change, is quite beautiful, with many cozy rooms and lovely woodwork. Its age is evident by there being no closets and little storage space (lean culture!) which tells you something about how much stuff we have today.

Roberta fixed a lovely meal of three kinds of smoked salmon and trout, scalloped potatoes, cucumber salad, crisp white wine.

To stay with the day's theme, we watched *Kon-Tiki,* the story of legendary explorer Thor Heyerdal's epic 4,300-mile crossing of the Pacific on a balsa wood raft in 1947, in an effort to prove that it was possible for South Americans to settle in Polynesia in pre-Columbian times, and then we climbed very steep and narrow stairs to bed.

Friday, August 24

In the morning, Henning made a delicious omelette with some of the leftover salmon, and we filled out the meal with bread, butter, cheese, and cherry jam. Elizabeth thinks she could live on the breads and cheeses of Germany and Norway.

Roberta, Henning and Elizabeth took Oscar for a walk (or rather, he took us) around a nearby lake, then Roberta dropped us off at Vigeland Park built by the City of Oslo to display more than 200 sculptures by Gustav Vigeland (1869–1943) in bronze, granite and cast iron, including Henning's favorite, the famous *Sinnataggen* (Angry Boy). We took our time looking at all the robust, athletic statues, including the baby garden with the statue of an unborn child in fetal position (upside down) at the center. Very poignant, and very often stolen, apparently. We visited the bust of Lincoln presented to the people of Norway by the people of Kansas in 1942. Henning and a few colleagues used to gather there every Fourth of July.

We caught a bus to downtown, using Roberta's pass and the honor system.

Oslo has changed drastically since the years Henning taught summer school here. Lots of new buildings and they are, for the most part, stark, square, and ugly. Roberta calls them bar code buildings.

Downtown Oslo is very meaningful to Henning, more than Berlin, for example. This was a place of education, culture, language, scholarship, friendship and romance for him, and is deep inside his mind and heart. He was close to tears a few times. We walked up to the palace, looked at the statue of King Carl Johann, raised by the people of Norway, and the statue of Camilla Collett (1813-95), Norway's first novelist, feminist, and

realistic writer, raised by Norwegian women, and commemorated on Norway's 100 Crown note.

The walk to the city center is down a sweeping drive, a joy because there are no cars. We both used the restrooms in the Continental Hotel, an old habit of Henning's. They are elegant. We also went to the Theater Cafe, where he once had coffee with his good friend, poet Halldis Moren Vesaas (1907-1995), a beloved memory. In his time, Henning wrote about Halldis and about the work

of her husband, Tarjei Vesaas (1897-1970) and translated his poetry.

We went to the National Museum and reveled in paintings from the Romantic, Impressionist, and Modern periods. Some of them, such as the mysterious *Vårnatt i Hagen* (Spring Night in the Garden, 1909) by Nikolai Astrup were familiar from reproductions Henning has had on his walls since his student days. Stepping into a room and sweeping the walls with our eyes, we would spot many old friends and visit them again, close up and personal. The Munch room contained not only *The Scream* (heavily protected), *Madonna, Puberty, Sick Child*, but also some paintings we did not know.

Van Gogh, Manet, Monet, Picasso; the collection is wonderful. Every time we were ready to succumb to weariness we'd find another room we had not seen.

We briefly stopped by the (for us) new Oslo *Konserthus* (Concert Hall), home of the Oslo Philharmonic which since the 1960s has developed into a world-class orchestra, mostly under the leadership of young Scandinavian conductors, a spectacular example of how Norway has parlayed its oil wealth into a fine cultural flowering of the arts. Unfortunately, this being the summer break for the Philharmonic, we were not able to attend a performance there.

We took the subway home and after one wrong turn on a street, found our way easily. Another fine meal and very pleasant evening.

Saturday, August 25

The next day, Saturday, packing suitcases and shopping and packing the car for our trip to Roberta and Stig's house on the fjord.

Elizabeth has many memories of being in Oslo before — the National Museum, dinner at the apartment Roberta lived in at the time (Elizabeth's and Johann's notes embroidered on the tablecloth here is a reminder), Elizabeth's time at the summer cabin with Gitte and Johann. But no one — not Elizabeth, Henning, Ann Helene nor Roberta can remember why we were here so many years ago, when Johann was a young teenager.

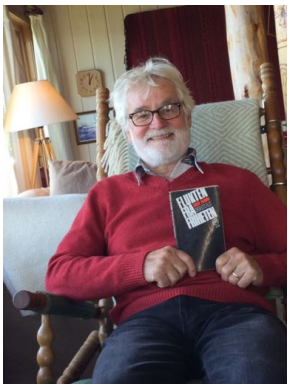
We drove through beautiful countryside

and stopped to tour the Amundson house. He is still a controversial figure, but the guide was positively reverential. Beautiful house and artifacts, interesting history.

On to the cabin, high flight of stairs. Darling house, pretty setting, the fjord below, clouds above, rocky paths. Oscar hard to handle. He wants to run free, but doesn't come back when he's called.

Sunday, August 26

Guests coming for dinner. Roberta invited a professor of business ethics who seems both cynical about and apologetic for his vocation, as well as a former colleague of Henning's, folklorist Ann Helene Skjelbred, and Kjetil Flatin, Henning's colleague in the Scandinavian Department at the University of Washington and later Director of the Summer University in Oslo, where Henning taught for several years, and his wife, Penny. Elizabeth liked them at once. Penny has a dry sense of humor and Kjetil a warmth and sympathy that are most engaging, and explain why they have been Henning's friends for so long.



Roberta served a sumptuous Norwegian summer feast of shrimp, white bread, butter and mayonnaise, with tomatoes and carrots and white wine (apple juice for the drivers). Strawberries for dessert. Coffee and liqueur afterwards. For people who don't drink themselves, they are well supplied.

Roberta and Stig are such gracious and generous hosts. They made no bones about wanting us to stay longer — Roberta was in tears more than once — and we felt it. They treated us royally, but also just gently folded us into their daily lives. "Inspector Morse", "Vera", The History (read "Conspiracy") channel, cassette tapes of Neil Diamond and Stan Freeberg. Roberta and Elizabeth both love musicals, Louise Penny novels, snatches of popular songs, coffee before breakfast. Her tablecloth, on which she embroiders messages guests write in ink, says a lot about her generosity, artistry, and wide group of friends. Johann's clever little sketch representing "The Rainy City" and Elizabeth's rather cramped "Greetings from Dr. Simpson to Dr. Wiig" were delightful to see.

Roberta and Stig have a friend named Shanie, who regards them as friends/parents, and who quietly steps in to help with household chores. She will, we hope, be of help and support to them in their old age.

Monday, August 27

On Sunday night, Penny and Kjetil drove us to their house in Nesodden, ensconced us in a luxurious downstairs apartment, and talked with us fairly late into the night. Henning and Elizabeth were off back to Oslo the next day, taking the ferry a few minutes on foot from Penny and Kjetil's house.

We spent a very good, rather tiring time in the city — tiring only because we walked for several hours. Our first stop was at City Hall where Henning showed Elizabeth the ten large wooden painted carvings on the outside of the building, each depicting a scene from Norwegian mythology. We entered City Hall by a huge hall with marble floors and large, beautiful murals depicting scenes from Norwegian history. A number of the murals showed representations of Nazi invasion and occupation. They are easily understood. Elizabeth especially liked the murals in one of the upstairs rooms which depicted daily life in four seasons — milk cow, girl with basket of food, sledding and skiing, bees. Tapestries, marble, flawless pine

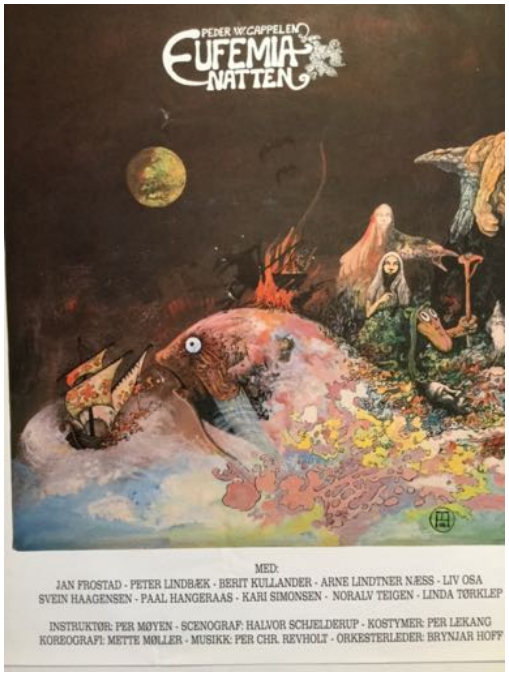
paneling and knotty pine floors. A room featuring a Munch original where weddings are performed.

When Henning was teaching summer school here, the mayor, all tricked out with medallions and ribbons, would give a reception for the opening of summer school. Tables of food and wine and champagne. Dancing. Apparently this still happens, but not as lavishly.

We walked up to Akershus Fortress (built in 1290 as a royal residence and defensible redoubt), admired the bust of FDR (not a good likeness), examined the walls and buildings, got a bit lost in the military area. This is a special place not just for its long history, but for the fact that Henning translated a dozen plays by his friend, Peter

Cappelen (1931-92) associated with the history of Akershus. One of these plays, *Dyveke, Duen på Akershus (*The Dove of Akershus*,* 1982) describes historical events that took place in the very courtyard where Henning, as Cappelen's guest, saw the play. Similarly, in 1986 Henning saw the premiere of Cappelen's riotous fairytale play, *Eufemia-Natten* (Eufemia's Night), performed by a pond just outside the main wall of Akershus, and in 1990 he saw another one of Cappelen's historical plays, *En Møydom* (A Maidenhead) in nearby Tønsberg, at the site of the stronghold of Harald Hårfagre (Harald the Fairhaired), who unified all of Norway. As reported in *Heimskringla* (Snorre Sturlusson's Sagas of the Old Norse kings*,* 1230), the story begins with a marriage proposal that resulted in rejection from Gyda, daughter of king Erik of Hordaland. She refused to marry Harald before he was king over the entire country. Harald vowed not to cut nor comb his hair until he had won her "maidenhead" by defeating all the minor kings of Norway, which he accomplished in a great sea battle in Havsfjord in 872. Thus the epithet.

In search of coffee and a sandwich, we returned to the theater district and the center of town, and found a great bakery where we had both. Nowhere in Norway or Germany are there free refills of coffee, drinking fountains, or free water served with meals. This bakery was an



exception in the last category. After coffee, we explored the National Theater, peeked at the great performance hall inside and outside the building, marveled at the statues of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910, Nobel Prize for Literature, 1903) about whose *Bondefortellinger* (Peasant Tales) Henning wrote his doctoral dissertation on the background of Norwegian folk narrative and traditional belief systems; Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the great dramatist whose work compares with ancient Greek tragedy, Shakespeare and the classical French theater of Corneille, Racine and Molière (Henning published essays about several of Ibsen's plays in the context of Norway's belief traditions); Ludwig Holberg, essayist, philosopher, historian and playwright, considered the father of Norwegian theater, notwithstanding the fact that he wrote in Danish and mostly in Copenhagen, then the capital of Denmark-Norway after Norway's absorption into the Danish kingdom at the end of *Svartedauen* (Black Death, 1347- 49), which killed 60% of the Norwegian population and so weakened the royal house that Norway was reduced to a province in the Kalmar Union (1357-1523), uniting the three Scandinavian kingdoms under the Danish crown. A little distance from the theater we pondered the fate of Henrik Wergeland, probably Norway's greatest poet (and the first to compose in free verse), whose sublime verse is basically unknown outside the country because he wrote in a language spoken by so few. In a poignant poem, he compares himself to an eagle chained to the barn yard like a farm dog.

After this sobering reflection, we hopped an electric tram (our ferry tickets were good for buses, trains, and subways) and went to Oslo train station which looks like a large, luxurious shopping mall. A Comfort Hotel raised Henning's eyebrows. Perhaps a No-tell Motel? From there, we strolled back to the harbor through wide, traffic-less streets, past people from many nations. Henning was struck by a young black man speaking perfect German. Many old buildings along the waterfront now house restaurants and offices.

Kjetil picked us up at the ferry landing, took us home, and showed us his writing cabin, which is charming and small and crammed with books. Penny fixed a delectable dinner beginning with an appetizer of salmon roe, lemon, avocado, lettuce, and melba toast, followed by chicken in a mushroom gravy, mashed potatoes, and fresh green beans. Delicious. Good conversation afterwards — discussions of *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Israeli writer, Yuval Harrari, describing the evolution of archaic human species within the framework of natural science, and other books.

Tuesday, August 28

Penny made us a lovely pancake breakfast and we were off to find petroglyphs/pictographs near Oslo. Østfold has probably the largest collection of Bronze Age artifacts of any place in the country. After many false leads, we did locate a large rock with multiple carvings of long, skinny ships (and, Henning and Kjetil noted, long, skinny penises). The images evoke the centers of the sacred in Bronze Age culture in Norway (ca. 1,700-500 B.C.)—

ships, warriors, and sun worship. From here, we drove to Frederikstad, a city established in the Middle Ages (1600s) by a Norwegian king to defend the land against Sweden. The whole town has a population of 70,000. The old part of town features cobbled streets and old stone and plaster buildings. We had a delicious lunch, went for a walk on the sea wall, and took a harbor cruise on a local ferry. The sea sends two rivers into Frederikstad, and the harbors are lined with boats. For most folks, this is their commute home.

We had just missed the tourist season, during which the old part of town turns itself inside out selling stuff. We had the Old Town to ourselves, perfect weather (cloudy and dry and still) and a guide (Kjetil) who grew up nearby and attended school here.

Olav H. Hauge, 1908-94

Wednesday, August 29

We have now been traveling for a month. Seems like forever, and nothing at all.

Yesterday Elizabeth was struck by how the only place that felt like Norway was the Old Town in Frederikstad, with its cobblestones, sea wall and old buildings, using a ferry for local transportation. On the highway, passing cultivated fields, we could have been anywhere, save for the large, gracious manor houses. We saw only one junk pile, complete with rusty RVs, worthy of the U.S.

We spent three days in Oslo, one at the Viking and Fram museums, one at Vigeland Park and the National Gallery, one at City Hall and Akershus. We returned to the Theater District all three times. Oslo has changed a lot in the twenty-four years since Henning spent any time there, and there has been a lot of building since then, and a major change in demographics, but some places are the same, and he felt moved by those places and friends. We would have liked to return to the university at Blindern, but ran out of time. We have reflected on our choice not to travel beyond Oslo and its environs since Henning's associations in Norway go far beyond the capital city, especially Bergen, where he worked with folklorist, Reimund Kvideland, and his colleagues at the University for numerous years. But Reimund died in 2006, his former colleagues have retired, and the once vibrant Folklore Institute has been subsumed into the generic Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion. And do we really want to return to the Hardanger Fjord, where Henning visited poet, Olav H. Hauge, in 1980 during the apple and blossom season, considering that the fjords today are overrun with thousands of tourists spilling from ubiquitous cruise ships? Or would we return to the famous *Prekestolen* (Preacher's Pulpit) in Rogaland, if, according to the Norwegian News, we would have to share the cliff overlooking the fjord with 105,000 hikers in June alone? Did we want to visit Lofoten, arctic site of the youth of intrepid fisherman, Frederik Simonson (1890-1991) who nearly drowned several times while fishing for cod in open dories, before moving to the Pacific Northwest in 1910? Henning, who collected Simonsen's life stories just before his death at the age of 101 (published in *Fabula*, 1992), would have loved to visit Kjerringø, where Simonsen was born, or Reine and Røst at the tip of the Lofoten archipelago where he plied his difficult craft, but how can you when the Norwegian News report of piles of human feces left at dockside by more

Reimund Kvideland 1935-2006

tourists than this delicate ecological system can bear? Similar considerations cut short plans to retrace Henning's journey up the coast to Northern Norway, where in the 1960s he studied burial customs in communities without sufficient soil to bury the dead. He travelled with *Hurtigruten* (Fast Route), then a modest packet boat carrying supplies to isolated towns along the coast. But now Hurtigruten has become a sumptuous cruise line disgorging travelers paying thousands of dollars for the privilege of despoiling the coast, much like similar cruises to Alaska. Our ambivalence about traveling anywhere is well illustrated in a recent New York cartoon ("Power Trip") lampooning the destructive impacts of tourism.

Henning, Kjetil, and Ann Helene were able to catch each other up on the lives and careers of friends and colleagues, and they discussed the issues of aging — health, diet, debilities — Stig's weight and diabetes, Roberta's tremor, Kjetil's hearing, and so on — and children.

Kjetil, Henning, Penny and Elizabeth were able to talk about our concerns for our daughters. We commented on the fact that both suffer from the time we're all living in — political and environmental and social instability/change/threats, the fact that everything *is* accelerating, and things that used to be stable and trustworthy when we were young (network news, rule of law, predictable outcomes, reliance on ethical behavior) are no longer so.

Both sets of parents realize that they, as individuals, did not cause their daughters' anxieties and depressions, but belong to the generation that created the world these women now have to navigate. That the only way we can help is to love them. That, in our lifetime, everything has changed. There used to be a limited number of jobs and professions. People hoped to be happy in a marriage and work, but responsibility came first (maybe exaggerating a bit here). A college education meant a good living and security. Now everything is up in the air and up for grabs and sometimes scary as hell.

Cunard should pay us a retainer, we have spoken so favorably to Stig and Roberta, to Penny and Kjetil about our time on the Queen Mary II. It is doubtful that Roberta will be able to shake Stig loose for the trip, but Penny and Kjetil really might do it. Kjetil proposed that Henning and Elizabeth return to Europe via a flight to Boston, then to Iceland, then to Oslo, with a few days at each destination to fend off jet lag and see the sights. He brushes off our concern about the carbon footprint, because the modest trip he proposes, he says, is *way* less harmful than the north/south trips taken by all his friends. He reminds us of a friend on Lopez Island who flies all over the world just because he wants to, and thinks it's ok if he puts ten bucks in the carbon kitty.

Henning said that he wished to live deliberately, which precludes traveling for any but serious reasons. A reminder of Elke, with her rather desperate "bucket list" (a detestable term and detestable idea). Her goal was to drive the length of Norway, so she had a half day in Oslo, and, of course, saw very little.

It feels that Penny and Kjetil are more European than Norwegian — trips to England, Germany, France, the Canaries, an apartment in Spain, trips to Cape Town, upcoming visit to Cuba. They are both aware that Kjetil's hearing loss and uncertain sleep are making life more and more difficult for both of them.

It is interesting and instructive to Elizabeth to see how women deal with husbands who are aging, ill, suffering from deafness or dementia, or both. Gabi treats Axel with care and concern and love, and some anxiety, accompanied by over-solicitousness that annoys him. He is twenty-five years older than she, and has had heart problems. Phyllis was incredibly sweet with Ralph, but could no longer live with a man whose dementia caused him to wander at night and would not let her sleep. Now, having put him in a care facility, she is terribly lonely. Linda was impatient with David (at least sometimes) and it was probably a relief to her when he died.

Henning, at eighty-one, is hale, hearty, vigorous, with a great deal of stamina — more than Elizabeth has. He and Heike could walk for miles/hours, and Elizabeth was done when two hours

were past — dragging her right foot, back tight, hips achy. Henning's volatile blood pressure is, according to his homeopathic physician, a sign that he's healthy; that when blood needs to pump, it can. The damage to his vision and the depth perception problems it causes, occasionally make him step off a curb or the last step on a stairs as if it weren't there.

Thursday, August 30

On the ferry from Oslo to Kiel, we watched a televised program of the celebration of King Harald and Queen Sophia's 50th wedding anniversary. The presiding priest was the newly made bishop, a strikingly pretty woman with flyaway hair who takes a dip in the fjord every morning and ministers to the poor and homeless every evening. The ceremony was moving and charming — sermon, choir, a choreographed song performed by two gay men, a song sung by a Sami girl, prayers and texts read by teenager, Princess Ingrid Alexandria, and presentation and candle lighting featuring a Somali immigrant boy. The filming caught many aspects of this beautiful cathedral. As everyone processed out, we commented that in Great Britain the ceremony would have been stiff and awkward and probably silly, and in America it would not have been possible.

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Henning wondered later how Harald V (now eighty-one) must feel. Previous Norwegian kings were fighters and warriors, protectors of their own soil and purloiners of other people's. During the Second World War, King Haakon VII governed from England. He couldn't *do* anything to defend his country against the Nazis, of course, but he kept Norwegians' pride and morale high. What does King Harald do? He waves, presides over ceremonies, and cuts ribbons. Norwegians love their royal family, and, unlike the hapless British, they embrace their social faux pax: the current crown princess had an illegitimate child and was "involved with drugs", though not an addict, nor a dealer.

A topic that surfaced again and again during our visit to Norway (and again in Germany) was immigration and its socio-economic costs, mostly in terms of unemployment benefits and crime rates. Nearly 17% of the Norwegian population of 5.3 million are either foreign-born or born in Norway of two immigrant parents. Educated immigrants from Sweden, Germany and other Western European countries are mostly easily assimilated and actually bring economic benefits to the public sector, in contrast to refugees from war-torn countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, or Syria, each of whom cost the state millions of Norwegian Crowns to integrate. Violent crime among immigrants (especially Africans) eclipses that of native Norwegians by a factor of three. Average unemployment in Norway hovers around 2.7%; among immigrants 6.5%, African immigrants 12%, and Pakistani women 20%. The political establishment takes pride in multi-cultural humanism, but Islamophobia remains widespread. In 2011 Anders Breivik, self-declared nationalist, killed 77 people in two attacks, and terrorist attacks against Moslems have occurred since then. Watching the daily news, we were impressed by the prominence of certain public figures of immigrant background like Abid Raja, a lawyer elected to Parliament in 2013; Hadja Tajik, lawyer and journalist, who in 2012 become Minister of Culture, at 29 the youngest minister ever to serve in Norway; or Yama Wolasmal and Rima Iraki, news anchors at Norwegian Radio, all four of them Muslims. But we also were taken aback by frequent news reports about gang warfare and drug criminality in Oslo and other urban centers, often linked to African immigrants.

Potsdam and Berlin

Yesterday, **Friday, August 31**, was another travel day, leaving the ferry, making our way to the train station, finding a meal, boarding the train. The ICE train took us from Kiel to Berlin, where we jumped off, took escalators to the top floor, and caught the subway to Potsdam. If the conductor and food server had not been so thorough and precise in their directions, we'd have missed the subway.

Henning had originally written to Friederike that we would be coming on the 30th and emailed her the correction. Fortunately she checked the email before starting for the station to pick us up, because she lives a long way from there. So we missed having dinner with her family. But we found each other on the 31st, drove to her home/studio/beautiful garden, and then went to a delicious trout and herring dinner in a nice restaurant. The entire district consists of the mansions and palaces and pleasure grounds belonging to the Prussian kings and later to the emperor. Before dinner, we walked up the drive past charming pea patches and saw the outside of one of the palaces.

At the restaurant, Henning and Friederike talked nonstop about family. Friederike is the granddaughter of Uncle Georg, the brother of Henning's father. Her family, too, was marked by the war. Georg and family were sent out of Africa, where they were missionaries, when the war began. Friederike's father suffered from malaria, his older brother died from typhoid. We learned much about the childhood and youth of Henning's father, how his own father had treated his often recalcitrant son with severity, and how during the world wide economic downturn of the 1930s, he struggled to complete a doctorate in law, without any help from home. He wrote a dissertation on police authority of the German consul on German ships in foreign harbors, hoping that he would enter a diplomatic career. But the political turmoil of those years and the outbreak of WWII ended all of that.

Frederik the Great's Art Gallery at Sanssouci

When Henning's father celebrated his eighty-fifth birthday, Henriette was able to attend (not sure how she got to the West), but Friederike was still in the East. (But wasn't the Wall down? Elizabeth's chronology is off.)

In Friederike's family people talked about everything — history, relationships, past wounds. In Henning's family, nobody talked about anything. So now they're talking about it: Heike, Axel, Gabi, Friederike, — so far. We have the rest of the family to go. Elizabeth has wondered if Henning would not become emotionally exhausted by the ongoing re-visiting and revisioning of the past.

Saturday, September 1

Last night, in the dark, Henning mistook a step in the house and fell hard on his tailbone. It's

showing up today. Henning woke up dizzy, with the room circling round. His blood pressure is 180 plus. He gets light-headed climbing stairs. We were going to take the bikes and visit Old Potsdam this morning, but took a walk by the river instead. He wants to set a date to visit Michael in Berlin, but not if he's feeling ill.

Yesterday, Friday, we did take the bikes to Sanssouci. Elizabeth had not been on a bicycle for 30 years, and it took some getting used to,

Adolf Menzel's painting (1852) of Frederik the Great performing his own music at Sanssouci

especially riding on streets with cars passing by. German drivers are very considerate, but they have a right to expect a bicyclist to know what she's doing. Sanssouci was beautiful, a stirring witness to the reluctant, musically gifted, disciplined king, Frederik the Great (1712-86), who over 46 years built his initially small country of Prussia into a leading power in Europe, and became famous not only for his military victories but also as a patron of the arts and the Enlightenment. We began by visiting his old mill, still in operation, and you can buy bread and other baked goods from the flour milled there. Two highlights followed: the palace of the king, and the vast gallery of the paintings he treasured.

Tickets to enter and tour were staggered, so we were not crowded. Elizabeth seldom uses audio tours, but appreciated this one. We know something of this king's personal history; this tour of his summer palace, built, amazingly, in two years' time, in a vineyard Frederik planted first, emphasized his artistic and intellectual side, and it is here he regularly performed his own music for a select audience. (His favorite guest, the philosopher Voltaire, stayed for three years.) Each room is different, and differently themed. The audio tape drew attention to the cunning artistic detail in each room.

The painting gallery is amazing, featuring Reubens prominently, and one Caravaggio (*Doubting Thomas*). Mythological and Biblical themes prevail. Almost without exception, women are bare breasted, their bodies voluptuous. But then, there isn't a female figure in The Louvre under 155 pounds. Some stories behind the paintings we knew, and wished we knew the ones we did not. Frederik the Great collected most of these paintings, and spent a lot of time alone in the gallery.

The theme of art was picked up in the evening. We went to *Schloss Sacrow* (Sacrow Castle), actually more like a large, attractive manor house in a park once owned by a baron, now in public hands. We walked to beautiful *Heilandskirche* (Church of our Savior), built in the 1800s, hanging over the river. The "Schloss" featured contemporary paintings, most done by a man whose name was Maliler, but who painted by the name of his home town, Straw. He was hired by the Communist Party to make films. When his films displeased the Party, they were put away. When the Party denied him art supplies, he painted on the backs of old maps. He is now 87, and pleased to have his work shown again.

There is a strain of German aesthetics that says, "After Auschwitz nothing can be beautiful." Hope that notion passes. We do appreciate the fact that there is a room at the "Schloss," however, dedicated to its recent history under Communism, which included its use as a place to train German shepherds for Stasi border patrol. There were photos of them jumping for food and then being taught to bite and tear at people.

The film shown that evening at the "Schloss" was *Loving van Gogh*, which was done as a fluid series of paintings. 100 artists contributed to

painting for that film, which uses van Gogh's own paintings and style to explore the mystery of his death. Very creative and beautiful film.

Sunday, September 2

Today, Henning woke up feeling ferociously dizzy, the room spinning around him. Any movement of his head caused disorienting dizziness. His blood pressure once more was 182 or thereabouts. Terribly frightening. We scrapped plans to bicycle to Old Potsdam again and went for a

another walk along the river. Climbing stairs made Henning breathless and dizzy. We came home and quietly did computer work and journaling until lunch time. Friederike had made a large pot of delicious quark (cucumber and dill in a medium-thick sauce) and boiled potatoes, so Thilo, Henning and Elizabeth helped themselves while Friederike worked in the gallery. Later we had coffee and homemade cake in the garden.

Thilo took us out on his boat to give us a water view of Old Potsdam. Beautiful old houses line the banks of the river and Thilo pointed out the villas Stalin, Churchill, and Truman had stayed in. Their meetings took place in the Cecilienhof, but each, for reasons of privacy and security, had his very own villa. The palaces and castles and villas are quite lovely, and the river was full of pleasure boats and water taxis. There were many of the river cruise ships we have seen advertised multiple times — you are on a boat, you cruise up or down a river. You look to see what you can see of buildings on the banks. You are released from time to time to buy souvenirs or terrorize the locals. Not for us.

We joined Friederike in her gallery for a time. Very interesting paintings that become meaningful when explained. Can't imagine hanging any of them in our home because of their bold

provocativeness. We very much liked the various sculptures displayed in her garden, including a series of leaping whippets, one of which had been sold. She showed us a catalog of fabulous ceramic work — she has one vase made by the artist — and talked about her own history of becoming a visually oriented person and then studying art and art history.

Friederike and Thilo went to a birthday party, and we went to the Meierei (a local brewery) for a wonderful dinner of Wiener Schnitzel, potato salad and beer, which Henning never seems to be able to get enough of. Our sense of home is very much tied to memorable foods. Early to bed, a good sleep. Henning's blood pressure lower, in the 150s, still not good. We are pretty sure that the dizziness is caused by a spinal nerve pinch or dislocation when he fell on the stairs. He has talked about being checked out by a doctor, but he probably won't, and he doesn't want to upset his hosts.

Today, Sunday, Friederike drove us to the church in Old Potsdam where her grandfather, Georg, used to preach and which had been largely destroyed during the war. She could not join us for the service because Thilo had made a business appointment for them today. The church service was very nice, although Elizabeth could not follow anything, and Henning filled her in later. A large, beautiful church, dedicated to the idea of peace. The sermon compared modern Moslem, Jewish, and Christian practices. The pastor urged us to regard the Sabbath as a day to think about what we had created that week, as God had done when He rested on the seventh day. The liturgy was easy to follow because it mirrored our practice on Lopez Island, although no prayers were said for individuals, nor was there communion. This church, like so many other buildings we see, is being rebuilt and repaired. Germany is spending untold sums of money to restore buildings and historical sites from its past — including the restoration of Stone Age graves, to remind the people who live here that their very being is embedded in an ancient heritage that affects how they perceive and act in the world today.

At Thilo's request, Henning told him his own history of coming to America, working in a meat factory, getting his BA in science from Rochester, a Masters in European languages from Chicago, a year of studying philosophy at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, the Fulbright that took him to Norway to study and write his dissertation. Full scholarship at University of Chicago, job at the University of Washington, Lopez. Thilo, who pretends to a certain cynicism, listened without a sneer. Henning was even able to talk about the Tesla, which also causes some people in Germany to sneer. Not until we talked to Andi, did we understand why.

Sunday, September 2

The church on Sacrow Island (Heilandskirche) had advertised a concert that we wanted to attend, so we took a water taxi there, and arrived just in time to enter old-fashioned pews with doors on the aisle. The fresco over the altar (by Adolph Eybel, 1845, after the design by Romantic painter, Carl Joseph Begas), is one of the most beautiful we have ever seen: Jesus as Christ seated in the middle, eyes calm, hand raised in blessing. Around him are the four Evangelists, each with the apocalyptical symbol: gryphon, eagle, lion, book. John, with long hair and flowing robes, writing in his book, is youthful as the beloved disciple. Directly above the haloed head of Jesus is a dove representing Spirit, and four little heads with wings, and just below are angels in a ring, reaching out to each other's hands as if in a dance. They are dressed as peasant girls, a touch we really loved. Below them are two more serious angels supporting, with just a touch, the throne of Jesus — a really simple throne — their wings nearly touch the dancing angels who are reaching to clasp hands. If there were any image to move someone to embrace Christianity, this would be the one, because it is so beautiful and human.

The genial, rotund, deep-voiced pastor began the event by talking about how Germany has now been at peace for seventy-five years — the longest in its history — and how this church is dedicated to peace. Everywhere we went in Germany were reminders of war — the Thirty Years' War, the Franco-Prussian War, WWI and II, rebuilding after WWII. As we traveled by train through the countryside, we talked about what it must have been like for a peasant family during any of those wars: rape, death, theft, burning, destruction of land and crops. This now peaceful

and productive country is proof against hatred, stupidity, power grabs, and pissing contests. The drive to rebuild, restore, and recreate buildings as they originally were, is all around us, as is the presence of the divided Germany, divided Berlin. Where a building cannot be saved or rebuilt, it is kept as a memorial.

The concert moved us both to tears. Baroque music (Buxtehude, Tunder, Bach, Telemann, Händel, Tollit), a soprano (Margret Bahr) whose marvelous voice made us wonder how it came out of such a slender body — she's really small, like a bird with delicate bones — a violinist, a harpsichord player. The music was enchanting. The setting and its history were sobering — the East German government, doing "the work of an evil child," as Steinbeck would have said, destroyed the church and smashed the organ. The church has been rebuilt, a new organ now in place. How do these people have such cultural memory and political will?

Sunday continued to be grand. We found a nice bistro in Potsdam: Henning had his beloved herring, Elizabeth had salmon, both very good. We haven't had a disappointing meal yet.

Monday, September 3

First day in Berlin. Walking through Old Potsdam to the railway station to pick up the water taxi in a nearby canal, we noted that the city is built to human scale, does not seem to cater primarily to tourists: the streets car-less, the sidewalk cafes populated with local folks. Water taxis, by the way, are marvelous. They are like tour boats with a destination. For a lot of people, they are the commute to and from work.

We are grateful that we are here after the main tourist season: the weather is warm, rather than hot, but that now seems to be luck rather than the season — the wild swings of heat, rain, floods, drought that we watched on line all year are clearly due to global warming. There are certainly tourists (and we are happily among them) but the hoards and crowds are back home to work and to school, so we are able to get seats on trains, be first in line, and not be peering over shoulders or part of someone's selfie.

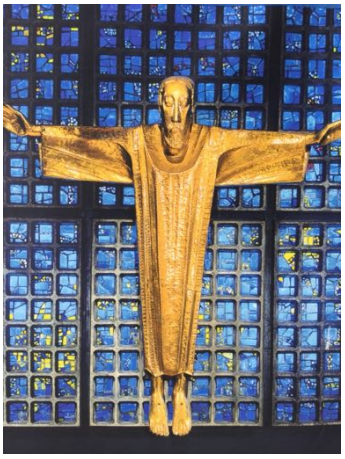
Tuesday, September 4

We took a hop-on-hop-off bus, a good idea that works sometimes. You buy a ticket for the day, take multiple buses and stop at a site you want to visit, then pick up the next bus when you are ready. Unfortunately the headphones mostly didn't work, the bus was usually late and you couldn't see much from the bus. The site we wanted to visit first, the Brandenburg Gate, was special because of its historical significance, probably the most famous landmark of Germany. We found walking through the Gate very moving, so much had happened there. Originally constructed in 1730s by King Frederik William II of Prussia, it was intended as a peace arch. Twelve Doric columns form five passages, in imitation of the gateway to the Acropolis in Athens. The Quadriga, a chariot drawn by four horses and driven by Victoria, the goddess of victory, crowns the gate. After the French invasion in 1806, Napoleon triumphantly carried the Quadriga off to Paris, from where it was returned, just as triumphantly, after the Prussians defeated Napoleon in 1814. At the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, newly crowned Emperor William celebrated his victory at the Brandenburg Gate, and his grandson, William II, paraded his troops through the Gate on the eve of World War I, as did the revolutionaries who deposed him at the end of that war. When the Nazis came to power in the 1930s, they made the Brandenburg Gate into a symbol of party power,

while after Germany's defeat in World War II, the Soviets planted their flag on top of the venerable gate. After the division of East and West Germany, the Gate became the border crossing between the two countries. In 1963 Kennedy declared there that he, too, was a Berliner, and in 1987 Reagan challenged Gorbachov at the Gate to "tear down the wall." Today the Brandenburg Gate is a peaceful, albeit busy, pedestrian zone and to the side of it there is a room of silence, where people come and sit in memory and respect for the dead from the last two, and earlier, wars. Germany, especially its churches, is filled with such places of peace.

We also "hopped off" at churches at the center of Berlin. One was a ruin from the bombing during World War II, and left as a memorial — the Kaiser-Friedrich-Gedächtnis-Kirche (Emperor Frederik Memorial Church) — the other was a hexagonal church, with a stunning, severe image of Christ in gold on a background of blue glass behind the altar. We were fortunate to come in during a service. Henning first visited this church together with Johann when he was a teenager, at which time the church stood alone in an empty space between two main thoroughfares, one of them the famous Kurfürstendamm (Elector's Dike), affectionally referred to as Kuhdamm (Cow's Dike). Today the space around the church no longer stands empty, but is crowded with makeshift booths from which merchants peddle fast food and gaudy trinkets to unsuspecting tourists. We enjoyed a scrumptious pizza in one of the elegant sidewalk cafes along the Kuhdamm.

The bus also stopped at the remains of the infamous Berlin Wall, an ugly physical and emotional reminder of the Cold War. The wall and the museum next to it, contrast with the beautiful

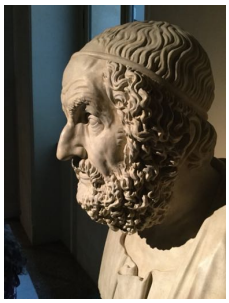


rebuilding Berliners have done of some of their public edifices. Despite their efforts, however, Berlin remains a city of tatters — garbage in the streets, homeless people, public buildings marked with graffiti, especially in what used to be East Berlin. It brings to mind the time in 1948-9 when the divided city was blockaded by the Russians, and the Berlin Drop — American and English planes flying supplies in to the Western residents, provided the only aid West Berlin would get.

We wanted to visit the *Bundestag* (Parliament), which Henning and Johann had visited during their time in Germany. Henning wanted to show Elizabeth the dignified and grand parliamentary chambers visible from above through a lofty glass dome, but the lines were so long just to get tickets, let alone stand in line to get in, we gave up.

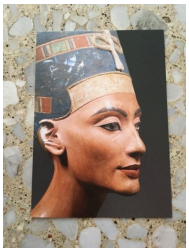
Yesterday we also went to the *Museumsinsel* (Museum Island) in Berlin. It is literally an island, and three major museums are there. We went first to the Pergamon. A grand new Pergamon is under construction, so one of the most impressive displays, the Greek Gate, had been removed. How

they take those mammoth structures apart, move them, and put them together again is beyond our knowledge or imagination. But we saw Roman ruins of a temple, mock-ups of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the most marvelous, lifelike statues of Greek and Roman philosophers, emperors as well as ordinary folks.



The walls lining the entryway to Babylon — blue brick, reconstructed from millions of pieces, lions, and a daisy motif. The lion guards. What people built these? Who stole them from their place of origin, and moved them here? Certainly these beautiful artifacts would not still be standing in their places of origin — smashed, bombed, deliberately destroyed out of spite or during the routine warfare that the Middle East has become — had they not been stolen and moved.

Neues Museum (New Museum) — The head of Nefertiti, reproduced in so many art books, was at last in front of us. Henning sneaked a photo of it. The life of the real woman is unimaginable to us — what remains in art is beautiful. We also saw artifacts that Heinrich Schliemann took from Troy he supposedly uncovered in 1870 (Schliemann's role and the actual site of the historical Troy remains disputed). Schliemann dug like a grave robber, and the layers of perhaps nine cities of Troy are still being excavated and analyzed. Homer's *Iliad*? How much historical truth? Certainly literary truth. It was a thrill to see even replicas of the jewelry and artifacts we have read about and seen photographs of for so long. The originals were stolen by the Russians after World War II and are kept in Moscow's Pushkin Museum to this day.



Oh, my. The art museum was having a special display of Caspar David Friedrich paintings, borrowed from all over Germany. Wonderful Romantic paintings. Too much to take in and too much to remember, but his vision of human life and spirit, often rendered through landscape and seascape, is one we saw over and over in our travels through other museums in Germany.

Traveled back to Potsdam and had dinner with Friederike, her son and her son's girlfriend. We have enjoyed the Meierei. Good food, a view of the river.

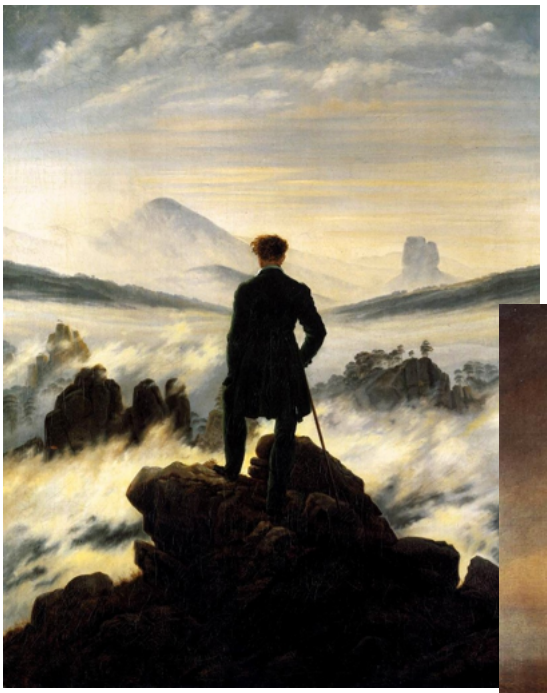
Wednesday, September 5

A farewell to Friederike and her husband, Thilo. We leave deeply grateful to Friederike for finding time in her unbelievably busy schedule to host us. Another four museums in two days, needing to leave because of time and fatigue and still being drawn from room to room, painting to painting. That Aha! of something known and seen in the original for the first time in the Pergamon, Bode, Altes Museum, Neues Museum, National Gallery! Such riches! Elizabeth has always felt that Greece, Egypt, the Mediterranean, France, England, Germany, belonged to her because their art and literature and music were part of her cultural heritage. Standing before paintings and sculptures and hearing music only experienced before in reproduction feels like coming alive. Henning thrilled to see the delicate carvings of Tilman Riemenschneider (1460-1531)

and the paintings, wood cuts and engravings of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), such as *Ritter, Tod und Teufel* (Knight, Death and Devil), which he remembers vividly from his years at the boarding school in Steinatal (1947-54). Henning also discovered Ludwig Richter's *Die Überfahrt am Schreckenstein* (Crossing the Elbe at Schreckenstein) 1840, a copy of which hung over his bed in his childhood.

In Berlin we spent the evening with Michael and his sons, Leo (13) and Jano (9). They live in a spare, sparsely furnished, all-white apartment in the heart of Berlin. We had a very interesting talk with Michael, who gave us a corrective to all the urban legends we have been hearing from everyone else about recent immigrants. He takes a larger perspective than current news reports about cultural clashes and immigrants' difficulties in assimilating, and talked about the need Germany has for skilled labor, especially for people who can do plumbing and wiring, drywall — the basics of putting a building together. Since he is an architect, and does on-site inspections, he is aware of the lack of people who can do apprenticeships and become skilled in fields that German youth apparently do not want to do.

His boys are very sweet, and he is teaching them to be self-reliant. It's going well, but we were taken aback to learn that the nine-year-old once took the wrong train and wound up in Potsdam. All turned out well. Michael is juggling fatherhood and full time work as an architect. Not easy. The last time we saw him was at the birthday celebrations for Henning's mother and father — it was nice to get to know him as an adult.



Dresden

Thursday, September 6

Thursday morning we walked from Michael's apartment to the train station hours before the train left, made some purchases, drank coffee, fended off the Roma, who are everywhere begging. Christian told us that begging is a gang-run enterprise. Apparently individual beggars turn their spoils and their social benefits over to the boss who drives (or is driven in) a Mercedes, and exploits pitiful individuals who work the street, railway and bus stations, and get minimal housing and food in return. In Oslo, Stig had told us that the only truly poor in Norway were the Roma, and evidently only some of them are — the ones exploited by their bosses.

German railways disappointed us for the first time. We checked and double checked our train schedule, collected our heavy (and more numerous) luggage, and went to Platform 3 in the bowels of the station. But the train, just this one day, left from Platform 12. So we hauled our luggage up four flights and made the train just fine. Good to be early.

Also good to be first on the train car. People have large bags that the luggage rack won't accommodate easily, and Elizabeth's is gargantuan. Three months, two changes of weather. Opera? Symphony? Not so far. Henning had the wisdom to leave his "ship finery" with Axel in Hamburg — Elizabeth (or Henning, rather) still lugging hers around.

Christian picked us up at the station and drove us to the town where he, Elisabeth, Katarina, Friederich, and Johann live. The area is quiet, with lovely homes and narrow streets. The house is the coziest, most welcoming, we've seen yet. First floor: kitchen (way too small, in Elizabeth's cookly opinion) bathroom, stairs to the basement, living room, dining room, a sun porch/reading room, music room. Double sliding doors define spaces as large and inclusive or small and quiet. Second floor: the children's rooms, a bathroom, a hallway filled with bookcases, cubbies. Third floor: parents' bedroom, bathroom, and a guest room/study where Henning and Elizabeth stayed. The garden has a picnic area, but the grass is brown and the ground bare from the drought, which we found everywhere in Norway and Germany. We had the traditional German supper Elizabeth loves: great breads, cheeses, meats, beer. Fresh fruit is always available, but she misses having green salad every day.

In the afternoon, Christian took us to a charming summer palace and grounds, one of hundreds? thousands? of parks and paths through woods in Germany once owned by the nobility that are now enjoyed by the public. Christian and Elisabeth had lots of places to let their children run. He also took us to a rather overwrought vineyard, with bushes tortured into baroque shapes, pathways, elegant tables set for a special dinner. At the vineyard, the view of grapevines marching up steep

hillsides to an elegant "Schloss" was quite beautiful — and orderly.

Friday, September 7

We took the tram to the center of Dresden. We loved the tram. It is on its own rails, clean,

comfortable, on time. In one square is a food and flea market opposite a library originally built by the DDR. Still murals there depicting a workers' paradise. Its style is in sharp contrast to the old/ancient churches and palaces surrounding it. From 1485 on Dresden was the residence of the rulers of Saxony beginning in the twelfth century and ending in the nineteenth, their images marching along a palace wall. The architecture is Renaissance, quite beautiful.

The palace was severely damaged during the bombing of February, 1945. The political will it took to persuade the DDR not to simply put a fence around the ruins or raze it completely boggles the imagination. The palace is restored, and its contents, once hidden away, are on display again. Some things delicate, some gaudy. Rooms of porcelain, silver, gold and ivory objects on display. Royal jewels. Henning asked a guard about the purpose of a basin the size that you could bathe a two-year-old in, and he answered with something of a sneer, "Nobody used it for anything. It was just to own. Just for show."

When Elizabeth told Christian about her sadness about the whales and walrus and elephants whose ivory created all this useless stuff, he said, "But that is a 20th Century perspective." Yep.

We were burdened, rather than impressed, and happy to meet Elisabeth and see her handsome, functional office overlooking the frieze and made homey with plants, and go to lunch together. Christian is a lawyer, Elisabeth a judge, and she has been able to work from home part time in order to be there for her children.

The other part of our day was more uplifting. We attended a prayer meeting at *Frauenkirche* (Our Lady's Church), which included organ music, prayers, and an explanation about the ties between Coventry and Dresden. The day after the Germans bombed Coventry in 1941, destroying the church and much of the town, a priest erected a sign asking that "Gott vergebe ihnen" (God forgive them). When the combined forces of the British and Americans bombed Dresden in February 1945, there was mass destruction, as Henning's memory attests. After the war, the son of Commander Harris, who had organized the bombing of Dresden, raised money to restore the Frauenkirche. When Henning and Johann were in Dresden 15 years ago, there was scaffolding all around the church, and the workmen told them they were bound to work seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, to restore it. The work had been done by the time we were there. The church is

magnificent. The Coventry prayer, which focuses on forgiveness, is everywhere in German churches.

After lunch with Elisabeth and Katarina, we went to the Albertinum Museum, which features art from the Romantic period to the present. This and the National Gallery in Berlin have been our favorites, or at least Elizabeth's. The National Gallery had featured a presentation called "Wanderlust", which included music scores and original works of literature including, to Elizabeth's delight, pages from Thoreau's "Walking", which she finds his most approachable and delightful essay, and which she taught for many years. Many of Caspar David Friedrich's works, usually spread throughout Germany, had been collected there, including the painting of the man facing the ice storm, a painting we had intended to seek out in Hamburg.

The Albertinum is so well organized that we moved from period to period easily. We find headphones distracting (if Elizabeth lived near a world class museum, however, she would use them room by room to get a start on her fantasy study of Art History) and texts adequate for identification. We moved most happily through the Romantic paintings, able to identify Friedrich's across a room. He paints the spirit of the scene. Elizabeth especially loves his sunsets on the beach; people in the foreground, ships with set but quiet sails against a sunset sky. We moved into Impressionism with Manets and Monets, like coming across old friends in unexpected places. We enjoyed Marc and others from the *Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider) School. The moderns were just depressing. Some had been present in the "Woodland" exhibit (the spray painted tree was delightful) but modern art strikes Elizabeth the way modern poetry does: it's all about the artist, and you have to read his/her mind to know what's supposed to be going on. Modernism asserts that we can't know anything outside ourselves and psychologists argue that we can't even know *that*. Elizabeth prefers the mystery, beauty, sense of the past evident in Romantic work, and the fact that the eye goes back, back, back and finds more and more detail as it does in her great-grandmother's paintings.

Saturday, September 8

On Saturday, Christian took us on the obligatory Sehmsdorf tour of the family home and environs in Heidenau, a short drive from Dresden. Turns out that Christian had been showing family members the wrong house until Elke (ever the family historian) set him straight. We did find the house Henning lived in until the family broke up after the war. Since no one was at home, Henning was able to go to the place where their garden had been and take photographs of three sides of the house. The garden is sadly overgrown, the fence in

front of the house has not been replaced in a very long time. Henning was able to point out all the rooms where family slept, lived, and worked, and Elizabeth now has a better idea of where all the stories took place. This visit reminded us of the first evening of Henning's seventieth birthday, when all his brothers and sisters came to Lopez Island. Heike had gathered photographs from everyone and put them into a slide show. The view of the childhood home from the street elicited an hour of memories from everyone.

The mini-castle is still across the street, where the Baroness showed the children her treasures, and the Baron was shot by the Russians on his own front steps because he would not yield to them.

Next we visited farm fields and Farmer Kegel's farm house. No one of the family is left, and the farm buildings now house apartments and tourist accommodations. Christian speculates that the farmer and his family moved to the West when the DDR began collectivizing all of the farms.

The photograph of Henning in the courtyard, pointing to a window, shows the former kitchen, where Frau Kegel fed the children after they had gleaned the fields. Henning and Eberhard both remember their fear and awe when she would cut huge slices from a loaf of home-baked bread after placing it on the firm porch of her breasts. They also remember being fed out of wooden trenchers and licking their plates, after which Frau Kegel would put them back on the rack. Must have really built up the immune system.

Next to the entrance of the farm is an old stone gate which Henning and his siblings traversed on most days on their way to the village school in Gross-Sedlitz. The elementary school Henning attended is still a school, for first through fourth grades. Handsome building with large windows covered with children's decorations. When did the uglification of American schools begin? Elizabeth attended elementary and secondary school in gracious brick buildings with high windows and generous rooms, beautiful auditoriums and pleasant playgrounds and lawns. Henning's boarding school was of stone, in a lovely setting of trees and a brook, with nearby woods. But by the 1970s, schools, in America at least, started resembling industrial sites or prisons with tiny windows that cannot be opened.

Christian then took us to a farm he's had business dealings with. It's organic (in German, called "Bio"), sells its own vegetables in its own supermarkets, raises, slaughters and sells some of its own animals. Apparently the rapid spread of "organic" food (much of it from China, which makes one suspicious) has made marketing more difficult for this farm.

We then drove to Dohna, a town near Heidenau. In the cemetery by the chapel, Henning found the birch tree the family planted on Gernot's grave after he died on January 6, 1946, and he found the little funeral building where brothers and sisters stood by the four-year old's casket to keep watch before the burial.

It is a pretty cemetery, well maintained. Christian says that people are turning more and more to cremation and having their ashes scattered,

as Henning's mother did, or having an urn quietly tucked away. People move a lot. Parents don't want to burden their children with the care of a grave (or have their grave neglected). Fewer and fewer people want funeral rites. Spiritual life is waning.

Christian talks a lot about the reunification of East and West Germany. (Please note that in the division of Germany after WWII, the Prussian third or so of Germany was swallowed up by Russia and Poland; so the division was really between Middle and West Germany.) Where others in the family talk about the impact of current immigration from outside of Germany, he refers to the impact of the intra-German migration in the 1990s after the Wall came down. We saw some of the tension he's talking about when he took us to the paper "factory" (where huge rolls of raw paper were processed into wholesale products) Henning's father owned and had to walk away from when his Socialist partner denounced him as a Nazi German officer. That event precipitated the family's flight to the West. The "factory" is now a private home, owned by the partner's daughter, a harpy who flew at Henning, announcing that she had ownership papers, it had all been settled long ago. She threatened him with the police, told him to take the film out of his camera (actually an iPad), and said that if she saw any images of the place published anywhere, she would sue. All Henning wanted to do was find the cherry tree in the back of the factory he used to pick fruit from as a child.

Some of the tension between former East and West remains. We just read an article in *The Economist* about Prince Georg Friedrich of Prussia, great-great-grandson of the last Kaiser, who has been talking for years with the federal government and two state governments about possessions expropriated by the Russians at the end of the Second World War. The man wants his family's stuff back, but his claim has been refused because his family sided with the Nazis. He is not alone. Years ago, Henning's father asked if Henning or Folker would be interested in reclaiming the family share of the "factory" he owned between 1939 and 1947. Another dimension of the tension takes the form of a certain nostalgia for the cultural certainties of East German Communism. We heard as much in our conversations with Friederike and Thilo who seemed to suggest that "Wessies" (Western Germans) pretend to undeserved claims of cultural superiority. On the other hand, among West Germans we heard much grousing about the "Soli" ("Solidaritäts-Zuschlag"= solidarity surtax), an annual levy on personal, corporate and capital incomes of 5-7.5% to finance the rebuilding of Eastern Germany after the country's reunification in 1990. Current finance minister, Olaf Scholz, recently proposed dropping the "Soli" for 90% of German citizens by next year, at a cost of 11 billion Euros to the federal treasury.

On the way back from Heidenau, Christian drove up to yet another "Schloss" perched high over Dresden, overlooking the city and the drying-up Elbe, a huge swath of open green, crossed by bicycle paths. You can

bicycle from here to Hamburg (takes about a week) without crossing a highway.

We gave the rest of the day to downtown Dresden, going through the "Zwinger," yet another beautiful palace with lovely grounds that now belongs to the public. The name "Zwinger" refers to the medieval fortifications between the outer and inner defensive walls of the city. Duke August der Starke (A. the Strong), 1670-1733, converted the "Zwinger" into palace grounds to rival those of Louis XIV at Versailles. Destroyed during the Allied carpet bombings of Dresden on February 13-15, 1945, the sprawling palaces were rebuilt from the ground up between 1951 and 1963, by the Soviet military administration in a pointed rebuke of "fascism."

Christian told us how moving it was to him to watch, over twenty years, the city rebuilding itself after the war, especially after the bombing, but also after years of neglect. He said it was a building here, a building there, until a pattern emerged. Now the city is whole again.

As we were sitting down to order coffee, Christian discovered that there was a Vespers service at the Kreutzkirche, so we hoofed it across town to one of the loveliest services we've ever attended.The choir was from Leipzig. The church had been rebuilt, but not restored, as a memorial to the past. The music was beautiful and moving, including psalms, religious songs from many cultures and traditions, including, to Elizabeth's delight, "Down to the River to Pray."

Home to a late supper and another stimulating conversation. We have been mentally living in the Germany of twenty years ago; we are being brought up to date now. Not very happily.

This morning we packed, had a last cozy breakfast, and lingered so long that Christian had to drive pretty fast to get us to the train.

The children: Katarina is a brilliant student, who got into the University of Heidelberg, the premier medical school in Germany on her first try (takes up to nine years for some), and she will do well if she doesn't let anxiety get in her way. Her parents are loving and practical when they talk with her about apportioning her resources. Sebastian, a teddy bear at sixteen, is easy going and cuddly, interested in everyone around him. Johann, at fourteen, makes up his own mind. He is the chess champion in his age group in Germany, and outplays old men in villages in Hungary when the family travels. He joined a conservative political party (the Free Democrats) when he was old enough to, and attends meetings on his own. He is quiet and rather shy, taking little part in the conversation, and slipping away to his own pursuits when he can. While he is in his room (playing chess? reading about politics?), Katarina is talking earnestly about her goals and Sebastian is making sandwiches.

München

Sunday, September 9

We felt very welcome in Christian's family and it was hard to leave. On the train, we sat in glorious first class comfort on an ICE to Leipzig, where we would change trains to Munich. We crossed the Elbe, which was terribly low. The boats were mostly tied to piers. Elisabeth told us that if there is a real need, a wave of water is released from the Czech Republic. Quite frightening, the drought. We took a last look at the glorious city of Dresden with its two marvelous squares. Of the cities we have visited so far: New York (Brooklyn), Hamburg, Oldenburg, Oslo, Potsdam, Berlin, and this one, Dresden, this is the one we could live in. Christian says he would not live anywhere else.

We gradually passed into Southern Germany, and fir and pine were replacing beech, birch, linden, maple, oak. Lots of long tunnels. Green fields, rich soil, charming villages, onion-shaped church spires.

While we traveled to Munich, Henning and Elke talked at least three times on the phone. Fortunately, he told her that we had many pieces of heavy luggage; we don't know how we could have wrestled them onto the subway. Elke wisely hired a taxi, and we'll have to get one for the trip back to the train when we leave. How Elizabeth regretted her overfull and heavy suitcase! She would not feel that way next month when the weather cooled off, however, and she needed warmer clothes.

We settled into two rooms at Elke's (she was sleeping on the couch) and she is such a gracious, caring, loving hostess that we would not upset her by refusing any generosity.

In the late afternoon we took a walk which ended at the Isar River. The walk down the path to the river is quite dramatic, a cut bank of sedimentary rock making up one wall. On river level, there is a very large park, which we did not explore for lack of time. Bicycles zoomed everywhere; babies and children and families, dogs, too many of them. This beautiful area is being destroyed because people are overusing it, and being careless.

Elke told us that the river had been redirected — wrong decision — and now that authorities are again allowing it to cut its own banks, flood control and the fish population are improved. There is a small sweet Catholic shrine there that seems part of the landscape. We found a very nice restaurant on the way back, and had dinner there. As ever, delightful atmosphere and delicious food. Elke asked Elizabeth about her impressions of Germany so far. Elizabeth talked about the fact that people in every city have access not only to parks but to woods and water; public transportation is excellent and inexpensive: trains, trams, buses, subways, bicycle lanes, open streets where cars can go but most of the traffic is pedestrian; the coexistence of past and present.

Buildings that were destroyed in the war are rebuilt in the old style with new material. Every building acknowledges its history, like the library in Dresden or the "Schloss "at Sacrow. Buildings are valued, not razed and replaced, and not simply abandoned; every city in Germany rebuilt itself after the war. The treasures of churches and museums were packed away (some in old salt mines) and the rubble of the original buildings was used to rebuild as much as possible. It is incredible, and very moving, to stand in a palace or museum or church and see photographs of what it looked like in 1945. The stupidity, brutality, and futility of war is acknowledged everywhere. The World Wars, the Thirty Years' War, The Franco-Prussian wars, the invasions and incursions of various kings (like Frederik the Great), so that they could be king *of* Saxony or Prussia or Bavaria or Poland, are represented not only in museums, but also in posters on fences and walls. As a human race, we don't seem to have learned very much.

Elke and Henning, as expected, had a lot to say to each other. They are in constant contact by email from Germany to America, but they are still catching up on family, present members and past events. Since they are both interested in politics, history, current issues, the environment, and so on, they had lively discussions about those, too.

This morning, after a very solid sleep the night before, we ate breakfast, caught the subway, and went to the part of Munich Elke likes best: the "Viktualienmarkt," an old open air marketplace that has been in operation since 1807, and where some stands have been in the family for five generations. Open stalls for cheeses, meats, fruit, vegetables, bread, and one for spices Elke especially likes. Flowers. People can, and do, really shop in this market for their weekly food. Heartening to think about. We ate our main meal of the day there, white sausage for Elke and Henning, salad for Elizabeth. There were lots of tourists. Elke says that from October to May, the city is returned to its citizens.

After the meal, we walked to the newer Munich, of very expensive shops and captains of industry. We noted a particular place of shopping "worship" dedicated to expensive jewelry— tall columns, gold title (Hermes) over the door, a hushed tour group gathered around a window display.

We visited the *Odeonsplatz* (Odeon Square) where Hitler made his play to take over Bavaria and was sent to jail. The famous *Feldherrnhalle* (Field Marshall's Hall): stairs, lions, statuary — quite impressive, but more gaudy than beautiful. Modeled after the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence, it was commissioned in 1841 by King Ludwig I to honor the tradition of the Bavarian Army. In 1923 it became the stage for Hitler's failed putsch. Next door, we visited the *Theatinerkirche* (Theatine Church), a cathedral rebuilt after the war. Its interior is so elaborate, white plaster and gold figures everywhere, it looks like the work of a confectioner under the spell of The Sorcerer's Apprentice. Built during the Baroque period by Elector Maximilian, it became the burial site for

most of the members of the Bavarian royal house. The church made quite a contrast to the stark Ohel Jakob Synagogue constructed between 2004 and 2006 at Sant-Jakobs-Platz, as the new main house of worship for the Jewish community in Munich. The synagogue was inaugurated on November 9, 2006, the 68th anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass), the infamous pogrom against the Jews in 1938. The building is part of the new Jewish Center consisting of the synagogue, the

Munich Jewish Museum and a community center. Unfortunately we could not enter the synagogue for security reasons. While the Jewish population in nearly all countries of the Diaspora declines, the Jewish population in Germany boasts an unprecedented boom. In the past 15 years, the number of Jews in that country rose three-fold to reach an estimated 150,000, making Germany the home of the fourth-largest Jewish community in Europe. However, since the rise of nationalistic populism under the leadership of the AFD (Alternative for Germany), Jews and other minorities, and immigrants of any background, once again feel threatened.


Lukas Cranach d.Ä., *Martin Luther*, 1529

Tuesday, September 11

Today was museum day. Henning and Elke spent some time after breakfast sorting out family stories, history, memories. Just as talking with friends and family brings Elizabeth's impressions of Germany up to date — the school system, social satisfaction, fears (according to a recent poll, Germans' greatest fear is Trump), so Henning's conversations with family members flesh out the family history. That history is complicated by the fact that after the end of the war, after fleeing from Soviet East Germany to the West, after their parents' divorce, the brothers and sisters were also separated and grew up among members of the wider family and in boarding schools and so hardly saw each other for many years.


Fra Lippo Lippi,

Elke took us to the "Museum Island." The subway stop for *Königsplatz* (King's Square) had walls filled with copies of famous paintings and remnants of marble statues — real?— in glass cases. What would happen to them on an American subway? Smashed and painted over, probably.

Our first stop was the *Alte Pinakothek* (Old Gallery). There we saw paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553)— a special pleasure, because Elizabeth was reading a book about Martin Luther who was befriended by the artist who painted his portrait. We also saw famous paintings by Pieter Bruegel, wonderfully artful and realistic depiction of contemporary peasant life, including some ghastly evocations of poverty, human degradation and


Peter Paul Rubens, 1577-1640

death. That worked up an appetite, so we had an excellent salad at the Victorian Cafe in the museum, then went on to the second floor.

A surfeit of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640). We saw a lot of his work in the gallery at Sanssouci, and it is a wonder how he managed to paint *so much*. The movement in his paintings is striking — all action and tension and flow.

Nearly all of the paintings in this section are religious, with a few classical motifs, and most of those involving Mary, or Mary and child, or the Holy Family, are violent and bloody and tragic. There is a lovely painting by Peter Paul Rubens of Jesus preaching to Mary (sister of Lazarus) while Martha frowns behind her, and many redactions of various stages of the Crucifixion.

Three paintings by Fra Lippo Lippi, one of two saints, another of Mary and child, and a third of a man and a woman at a window. They are delicate, almost hushed in tone, and have the wonderful lacy touches seen in his other work.

A Rembrandt, a da Vinci. After years of seeing reproductions, Elizabeth marvels at standing in front of the real thing. The brush strokes are visible. If you dared, you could touch the painting. There are paintings in this world that have been stolen or threatened so often that they are behind glass, almost behind bars. The *Mona Lisa,* which is a small painting anyway, is now behind glass and at a protective distance. Henning saw a photograph of tourists, all with their cell phones in the air, trying to get a picture of the painting. Why? Perhaps just to tick off their list that they had been in a room with the *Mona Lisa*.

We were on the lookout for paintings by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), a favorite of ours, and found them. (A copy of *The Prodigal Son,* which we have always called *The Swineherd,* hangs in our dining room). The most striking of Dürer's paintings in this collection was his self-portrait, a full-lipped strong-faced man with beautiful hair and beard, gazing straight at the observer. You feel as if you are having a conversation with him across the centuries. This self portrait is particularly noteworthy because before it, only Jesus was painted looking straight at the observer. Paintings of saints and a Mary and Child. Such detail! Dürer, living during Luther's time (and dying at age 56) was the father of German painting, inspiring Cranach among many others.

Henning was surprised and disappointed to find that *The Swineherd/The Prodigal Son* was not in the Munich collection, nor was it reproduced in any of the many books on Dürer. The best book we found with his paintings was too large and heavy for us to carry with us, so we noted the publishing information, and Heike ordered it when she visited us, her gift for us. We treasure it. Dürer's self portrait is on the cover. Next to his self portrait, Elizabeth's favorite of his paintings is *Der Hase* (The Hare*);* Henning loves his paintings of plants. They remind him of Goethe.

We made our way to the *Neue Pinakothek* (New Gallery), passing a massive Henry Moore sculpture. It invites you to climb on it, but the sign read "For security reasons, don't touch." The museum was closed, which was just as well, because we can absorb only so much art in a single day.

Instead, Henning elected to go to the museum named *München und der Nationalsozialismus* (Munich and National Socialism). The brochure we picked up is called *Die Wiege der Gewalt* (The Cradle of Terror*).* On the cover is a photograph of a five- year-old (one year older than our godson, Theo) dressed in a little brown uniform and giving the Nazi salute. A woman and a man in a business suit look down approvingly.

Henning shies away from WWII films, so Elizabeth was surprised that he wanted to go to this museum. He explained that what bothers him in these films is the ignorant and prejudging erasure of thousands of years of German history and culture, and the identification of all things German with Nazism. Americans tend to go for the cheap shot.

The museum was brilliantly set up. The exhibition starts on the fourth floor, with the origins and rise of the Nazi movement (1918-1933); third floor, dictatorship and society under National Socialism (1933-1939); second floor, Munich and the War (1939-1945); first floor, the long term effects of the Nazi era after 1945.

Each part of the exhibition consists of enlarged photographs and thorough explanations of the who/what/when/where/why of each period. There are backlit tables with photographs and original documents that provide detailed examples of the larger events. The detailed exhibits are a reminder of Orwell's *1984:* how history can disappear unless it is carefully annotated.

Persecution of various religious and ethnic groups, sterilization, murder, were well and painfully documented. The persecution and attempted genocide of the Jews was powerfully represented by photos of Kristallnacht and a wall showing various decrees that finally denied Jews any rights — except the right to die. Dachau is close by, accessible by bicycle.

The fact that so many groups and individuals were targeted for death made us wonder how there could have been anyone left after all the young men had been taken by the army.

The exhibit featured a section on forced labor — prisoners from occupied countries being brought to Munich to do the work of an absent population. There in plain sight — starving, beaten, exploited. (BMW came through this entire period smiling.)

As we left the museum we walked against bicycle traffic, and Henning said, "The people coming at you are the same people who did all this." He did not mean contemporary Germans alone. Elizabeth thought about the people of her birthplace, Hood River, Oregon, who happily watched the Japanese-Americans of that community sent off to the concentration camps of Manzanar in 1942. Those good townsfolk then took over the farms and orchards of the people they had expelled, and made a fortune from them.

The section on Hitler's manipulation of the media: photographs, music, films, all forms of propaganda is a reminder of Trump and how he and Fox News feed off each other, frighten and stoke the anger and frustration of the ignorant. Are there any free journalistic voices left in America? If so, who's listening?

The last images we watched were films from damage done by Allied bombing — the rubble of Munich. Thomas Mann wrote that it served them right. Who is "they," however? Understandable that Mann would blame the supporters of the Nazis. But what about the men and women who did not? The children who died in the bombings and had nothing to do with politics? We stand today in the buildings reconstructed from that rubble, perhaps containing the bones of the innocent. Final comments about anti-Semitism? Genocide? Neither has gone away. Sometimes it makes the newspapers.

Germany is forthright in coming to terms with its past. Is America? How many cities acknowledge their part in slavery, genocide of Native Americans, the internment of Japanese-Americans? Granted, the Holocaust trumps all of these for dehumanized and dehumanizing horror. Sheer numbers. Machinery designed for mass murder.

Wednesday, September 12

Today, Elke had planned two connected outings: the first to the Basilica of St. Benedict and Chapel of Anastasia in Benediktbeuern, the second to the Franz Marc Museum, which features paintings and drawings by Marc, Picasso, Paul Klee, Kandinsky, and other members of the Blue Rider School.

We took a special local rain to the Basilica. The Benedictine Abbey, founded in 725, secularized in 1803 by Napoleon, is one of the oldest in Bavaria. The Basilica is large, Baroque in style, with all of the side altars, stations of the cross, sacred paintings and statues that can be crammed into a church. What makes the place lovely is that it is a living space of worship, and we wish we could attend a service here.

There is an arm relic of St. Benedict, supposedly contributed by Charlemagne around 800, that makes the church a special place of pilgrimage. The attached Chapel of Anastasia, built in 1751, contains relics of that martyr, who saved the church from being sacked by the Huns by melting the river's ice with her prayer, so they couldn't cross. She is a special saint for people who are mentally or physically ill.

What makes this site so appealing is that it is alive with fruit and herb and flower gardens, a well-tended cemetery, and vigorous educational programs. In the 1930s, the Salesians (named for Saint Francis de Sales, 1567-1622, known for compassion and work on behalf of people in need) acquired the entire estate and established it as a center of religious training, science and education, especially for young people. There a Catholic priest, Don Bosco (1815-88), saved the lives of young people in trouble, educated them, and started a movement that is now world wide. This place is alive. Henning said that he would come to volunteer and live here, if we didn't have Lopez.

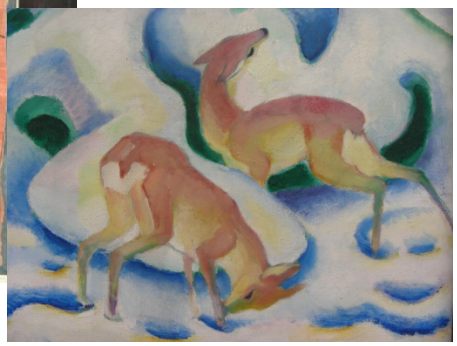
We took the train one more station, and walked through the village and up the hill to the Franz Marc museum. There we had an elegant lunch, and then spent two hours drifting from masterpiece to masterpiece. Elizabeth loved Marc's blue horses. They are joyful. The painters of the Blue Rider School painted the spirit of the thing, so the horses are depicted as joyful. It's the inner, not just the outer, image.

The theme of the exhibit was "reading" and there were wonderful poems/analyses/statements by poet, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), that made the paintings richer, especially the one by Picasso of the woman bent over her book, a blue and white face reflecting her inner and outer feelings; one hand becomes a bird's wing. There were two paintings by Renoir, of young girls reading — one has her arm hooked around the back of her chair, the other is accented by flowers beside her and ringing her hat. Both are deep in their books.

Henning had been able to take photographs in other museums but a guard stopped him here, saying "This is a private house." A shame,

because without photos the paintings and statues and ceramics and treasures and cupids and Marys exist for us only for the moment. You can't study the entire contents of a museum and carry them away in your visual memory alone.

We left in time to catch the 5:45 train, and were very glad we did so, because it was after 8:00 by the time we got home. The train ride goes through beautiful country — farms, fields, horses, cows. (Henning got a great photo of two girls on horseback.



They were joyful). The open fields here make us wonder where they put the vast population of Germany. Cozy villages, one of which once housed four painters from the Blue Rider School, including Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Gabriele Münter (1877-1962), who painted that landscape prodigiously.

Lots of old couples and single folks on the train decked out for hiking. Young women with phones. Young men with beer and phones. We saw again and again, people walking, hiking, bicycling, using the countryside set aside for those purposes.

Thursday, September 14

A red letter day. We went to the Lenbachhaus which has an extraordinary collection, including 19th century paintings, art from the post war period, and a full floor of the Blue Rider paintings. There is also a charming garden.

We went through the other exhibits dutifully and then lingered in the rooms of the Blue Rider.

Henning has a print of a work by Paul Klee, but Elizabeth never appreciated his painting until she saw it in more fullness and

variety. His dynamic work, capturing outer experience and inner essence, sums up Expressionism beautifully.

Like the work of Paul Klee, it is easier to appreciate the work of Kandinsky by seeing it in progress and in bulk, so to speak. But the love affair of Elizabeth's artistic heart is with Franz Marc. She spent a long time in the room devoted to his work, for three of her favorite paintings on earth are there: the *Blue Horse*, the *Jewel-Eyed Tiger*, and the *Deer in the Snow*. She loves the playfulness of the paintings, and their beauty, and — not to overuse this word — the expression of the essence of the animals. The paintings use the power of deep color and the mix of realism and the artist's inner vision to create something that is profoundly personal for the artist and the observer.

We gorged ourselves on art, and then came home to rest. At 6:00pm we got going again, and went off to *Cosi Fan Tutti,* performed at the *Nymphenburg* (Nymph Castle) Palace, acres in size, its buildings on three sides of an expanse of lawn. We took a taxi there, which took about an hour (public transportation home required far less time and money) and took us through some of the rattier parts of Munich.

The foyer of that section of the palace was grand. We sipped champagne, and Elizabeth enjoyed being able to wear her opera clothes — silk kimono and woven coat. When the bell called us to the performance, an usher stepped aside and we went upstairs to find our seats. We didn't have them for long. A ticket seller in the city had sold us tickets for the previous night's performance, probably a computer glitch.

Officials, presented with our problem, kept saying, "There's nothing we can do. This is between you and the ticket agent." Henning insisted on their providing us with seats, and we were finally placed in seats better than the original ones. The opera was fantastic. All of the voices were excellent; Mozart demands a lot, and the performers were up to it. The stage director made the most of the set, a tilted hoop with a swing and a table, surrounded by ratty curtains, which served as a boudoir, a garden, a hiding place, a drawing room. Actors could step over, sit on, or stand on the railing, drape clothes over it, or use it as a barrier. Costumes were just enough to show a change in character or condition. Symbols were used well — the pink and blue ribbons signifying the purity and chastity of the girls were particularly effective. The libretto switched from Italian to German at appropriate times. The Seattle Opera provides a translation band you can refer to to follow the libretto, but we did not miss it here, because we knew the story. It was a grand opera in a grand setting.

Friday, September 15

Today was Greek statue month. We say "month" because, as we experienced yesterday, we learned as much in a few hours of standing and staring as we would have in a month of casual study. The *Glyptothek* (Collection of Jewels or Sculpture) is the oldest museum in Munich, opened in 1830, just in time for antiquities dealers to sell their treasures

—often stolen from places of origin— to King Ludwig I, who loved the Classical period and detested the cheap stuff that passed for statuary around the palace.

The outside has the pillars of a Greek temple, the inside has arches and vaulted ceilings and relatively small spaces, for a museum. Thus the visitor can examine a few pieces at a time. Each room has a large explanatory panel that describes the period of Greek art and its characteristics. In some of the rooms, there are plasticized sheets describing each piece. All statues are placed so that you can walk around them (unlike the Metropolitan, where we never saw the back of a vase) and close enough to touch. We could see the cuticles on the toenails of the *Barberini* (Drunken Faun) (late 3rd-early 2nd century BC). The rooms began with this very sophistically carved faun in a (drunken? post coital?) sleep, sprawled, vulnerable, and beautiful. His faun nature was indicated only by a vestigial tail.

From there, the rooms moved chronologically from the early stiff, Egyptian-like "Korai" (monumental stone figures, 660-500 BC) to more and more plastic representations, ending in a frieze of lifelike people, carts, animals, and intimate stone portraits of various Roman emperors (e.g. Emperor Trajan, ca. 110 AD). As usual, we were exhilarated and exhausted by the experience. Henning photographed everything and its accompanying plaques. He had over 1,000 pictures by now. Thank goodness. They will bring back experiences, images and memories vividly.

Sunday, September 16

Yesterday we took a trip that started off in comic confusion but ended well. Henning and Elizabeth wanted to stay with antiquities and visit at least one more museum. Elke wanted to take a train out to the country, walk through the woods, visit a monastery that has a prize winning garden, and go to the Buchheim Museum, the former home of a well known eccentric, Lothar-Günther Buchheim (1918-2007) who assembled an eclectic art collection by buying whatever he liked. In World War II, Buchheim was a *Sonderführer* (an officer in the Nazi SS), in charge of propaganda. During the Battle of the Atlantic in 1941, his assignment was to photograph and describe the U-boat in action. After the war, Buchheim became an artist, collector, gallery owner, auctioneer and publisher. Through the 1950s and 1960s, he gathered expressionist works of *Die Brücke* (The Bridge) and *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider), which had been derided as degenerate by the Nazis, and so he was able to buy

them cheaply. These included works by Max Pechstein, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Gabriele Münter, Alexei von Jawlensky and Max Beckmann. Buchheim became famous for his novel *Das Boot* (The Boat), which was made into an even more famous film. Sounded interesting!

The confusion occurred when the trains/subways kept changing their signs about starting points and destinations. We wound up getting on the S-Bahn, then Henning got off to check on the train on the next platform, beckoned to Elke and Elizabeth to join him, but too late — the door would not open. So there Elizabeth was, quite safe with her sister-in-law who had money and the keys to the apartment, and spoke German. But Elizabeth had no purse, no money, no ticket, no German. She knew that Henning would take the train and we would most likely meet up in Tutzing, but felt bereft. Elke was nervous. She asked if Elizabeth had the number for Henning's phone — no, she did not. When we arrived, Elke fussed about what track the train would come in on. She found a conductor and started a long story about her brother and two trains, but the conductor cut her short, "Just tell me what you want." There were two tracks side by side, and the next train would arrive soon on one of them. By the time we discovered there was no bathroom in the station, Henning had arrived, Elizabeth found a clump of bushes, and all was well again. We walked on a path through a nice woods along what is one of Elke's favorite bicycle paths (we were constantly stepping aside for passing bicyclists) and after a false alarm at what proved not to be a museum but a huge bazaar selling ugly stuff, we found the museum. We had a meal, which went a long way toward easing Elizabeth's feet and improving her attitude.

The museum really was a mixed bag, somewhere between sublime and scurrilous, the expression of a playful artistic sensibility gone a little mad, combined with a sense for a good bargain: few paintings on the walls (the rest were locked away pending another exhibit), some "found" or put-together "art", very clever displays of papier-mâché people sitting at tea tables — sufficiently lifelike that Elizabeth was glad not to be alone with them — pop art, a compelling collection of wood block cuts and philosophies by Sutemi Kubo, a Japanese artist, an intricate, crudely made dollhouse, a studio for kids to play and paint in, an underground bunker displaying the family's furniture, floor after floor of stuff. Every corner offered another display, and a view of the one below. Elizabeth liked the horses from a disassembled merry-go-round. We were surfeited before we could tour the top two floors.

We had coffee, discovered a fairly short route to a nearby train station, waved goodbye to the lake, and went home. Henning and Elizabeth went out for a beer just to have a few minutes alone together.

Henning and Elke spent a couple of evenings putting together a timeline of Elke's life. Some revelations of difficult times that she refuses to be bitter about. Henning talked on the phone with his nephew, Friedjof, who really wants to see us, but how will Kirsten feel? Aargh.

Salzburg

Monday, September 17

We sat on a train to Austria, passing through beautiful land and past cozy, pretty towns.

Oliver picked us up at the train station. It is hard for us to take in how close everything is here. An hour's train ride, and we're in Salzburg!

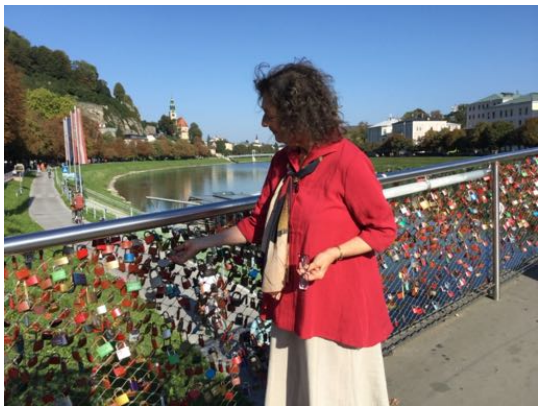
Oliver drove us to Barbara's house. It is a cunning house, shaped to fit the bank and hill it is built on, with balconies and a ship's prow shape, many outdoor tables and sofas and nooks, windows and skylights, storage garage, a sauna. If Christian's house is perfect for a family, Barbara's is perfect for a couple.

We had dinner outside — a nice lamb curry and rice, with a salad — and talked about possible things to do. Oliver had just gotten home from taking a class of students across an Alp (they all made it) and was in need of a shower and time to do laundry and lesson plans. So Barbara took us to Salzburg on a sight-seeing adventure. We were not alone in the city — China apparently cleaned out one of its major cities and sent its people here. They wander in bewildered groups. They have no idea what they are looking at, but they take pictures of it anyway. Henning wondered what they came here for, and Elizabeth answered "The Sound of Music."

Salzburg's outer shell looks like industrial America. There is no attempt to build in harmony with traditional buildings, as we saw in Dresden and Potsdam. The old, inner city is charming, and architecturally intact. We went to the "Schloss," which was the residence of an archbishop. It has intricate formal gardens. We saw one church that was empty of pews. It is reserved for concerts and tourists. The cathedral is suitably impressive: one is greeted by large plaster popes. Live candles in the side altars, lots of people praying, apparently. Barbara says she prefers Romanesque to Baroque style, (we concur) and there is a dignity about the cathedral because of its lack of a cake-decorator's cherubs and flourishes. The most impressive thing about these buildings is their age — built in 795, for example.

Behind the cathedral is a very old cemetery — graves from the 8th Century, beautifully tended and flowered. Rearing straight up from the back of the buildings is a sandstone cliff. How high? In it are a few doors — catacombs or recesses for prayer. There are steps carved into the sandstone, and what look like blasting holes.

Barbara says that every year or so, men go up and knock the loose rock down. Building up against that cliff is an act of faith.



We walked across a bridge studded with locks left there by lovers, stopped for coffee in one of the town squares — they are connected by

archways and tunnels — and lingered there until it was time to go to a concert. The tickets were very expensive; perhaps we are spoiled by the fact that Germany subsidizes cultural events, and ticket prices for museums and concerts are pleasingly low.

There were exactly two people in the audience in the church when we entered. The pianist was incredible. We could watch her fingers, long and graceful, dance through pieces by Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt, Chopin, and so on. On one piece, her fingers were a blur. She played everything technically perfectly, but Henning missed the passion she could have brought to the music, and we wondered what her music teachers would say to her about what to work on next.

We enjoyed the concert. Barbara drove us to Manfred's, where we wrestled the suitcases out of the car and up the staircase. Maria had prepared a delicious pumpkin soup, just right for a late supper, and we had the awkward conversations of first night guests.

Tuesday, September 18

We slept well, rose to a hearty breakfast, and Maria drove us to the Waldorf School where Barbara and Oliver teach. In Barbara's math class, we saw the students use their heads (not calculators) to figure out problems in percentages, follow a precise formula to figuring out particular problems, and keep notebooks so neat that they will become

the students' text books. We were mightily impressed with students happily working in metal and wood shops, painting and sculpting.

Oliver gave us copies of the Master Plan Curriculum, which we discussed with him, and he

showed us around the school; particularly interesting were the differences in colors, shapes, and furnishings in each of the grade's classrooms. We were impressed by the handwork elementary students do; Elizabeth felt a stab of envy when we saw the socks knit by third graders. The students seemed happy and comfortable and often without supervision. We had expected an exemplary garden; however, found an overgrown, weedy mess, with students enthusiastically watering everything from three feet up. Evidently the head gardener is a caring man who works well with students on a personal level, which is more important to the school than his actually being able to teach students how to garden well.

Manfred picked us up for The Mountain Experience. *Schafberg* (Sheep Mountain) can be conquered by foot or by train. It rises 1,783 meters (5,850 feet) from the *Wolfgangsee* (Lake Wolfgang). We had planned to take the train halfway and hike the rest of the way to the top, but there weren't enough spaces left on the return train, so we took the train all the way to the top, sometimes feeling like we were hanging perpendicularly from the mountain. When we climbed the short road up to the wall overlooking the valleys below and a small cafe, we were grateful for the train. Elizabeth could not have walked at that elevation on a steep gravel path for an hour. Henning felt the same — his heart was laboring.

The view was incredible. German and Norwegian painters have created that vision of

range after range of blue mountains, folding back and back. It's a sight that Immanuel Kant must have referred to when he wrote about the Sublime. We saw lakes and villages and green pastures below. We ate what food the cafe still had available at that hour, and took a final look down into the clouds that by then obscured the valleys below. Maria asked Elizabeth if she had enjoyed the day, and she said, "Yes! It is the first time and the last time I will see this!" It is a sad and poignant thought, one we often have had on this trip.

Wolfgangsee is a large, inland, placid, warm, beautiful lake, so the village has turned itself over to the tourist trade. Thanks to Maria's persistence, we found a restaurant right on the lake, a more elegant version of the Meierei in Potsdam, and had coffee. One of the things we enjoy about Europe is that you can occupy a cafe table for hours. We talked and talked as the sun went down and the swans came out, and the light changed on the mountains and the water. People came, ate, drank, smoked, lingered, talked, took their time. The evening was beautiful — until we saw jet trail after jet trail in the sky, sometimes five at once. Those jets are the reason there is no more snow in the Alps. We opted not to eat at the restaurant, but to go home for a "simple" meal, which, as usual, consisted of all kinds of delicious things on the table. More conversation, and at last to bed.

Wednesday, September 19

We arose to the usual wonderful, many-hued breakfast, and then Manfred drove us in his Mercedes convertible, top down, into Salzburg for the morning. We retraced the steps we had taken with Barbara, this time to linger where we wanted, go where we had not, and take pictures everywhere. We paused for sandwiches, wine, coffee, climbed up to the castle and back down, everywhere elbowing our way through tourists. Of course we have found tourists in every city we have visited, but Salzburg seems to have given itself over to them. Everywhere there are piles of junk for sale.

Our stay with Manfred and Maria continued to be wonderful. They were warm and loving and thoughtful. We also got to meet Manfred's daughter Heike, sweet, very pretty, her pregnancy showing. She is an art therapist in a clinic for people with psychosomatic illnesses. We had a lively, interesting conversation with her about her work.

On Wednesday, Manfred took us for a long walk in the Wild Woods, private property hosting wild boars and deer, both of which we saw from a distance. Apparently the owners shoot 150 boars a year, and feed the rest in the winter. Manfred, a great source of information on many other subjects, could not answer most of our questions about how the feeders work. We crossed metal bridges and ladders to get in and out of the Wild Woods, and came to the Salz River, a border with Germany. The walk was perfect for the day.

Ottenbrunn and Calw

Thursday, September 20

Time came to say a sweet goodbye to Maria, who was crying when we hugged and parted. Elizabeth feels that if they lived closer (and perhaps spoke the same language) they would be friends. She is passionate and emotional, quick to laugh or be touched or irritated (usually with Manfred). At times, she seemed a stereotypical Italian. Her art, hanging on the walls of their home, is colorful and abstract. She brings that gift of art and passion to her students at a Waldorf School, and she was leaving early in the morning to teach there.

We spent the rest of the morning talking with Manfred. He is much changed since we saw him ten years ago — mature, thoughtful, careful of us. Like Maria, he was sad to see us go. He and Henning were able to talk about the past, mostly about their father. Another few pieces in the family puzzle. He took us to the train back to Germany.

The usual minor dramas about the train, then a rocking ride through lovely country on our way to Stuttgart. We were seated in different compartments, Elizabeth with three translators from the European Summit held — over two days only — in Salzburg. They mostly talked about the difficulty of translating Macron, who leaps from idea to idea; Theresa May, who talks too fast; Sarkosy, whose ideas are incoherent. They discussed the concept of "flexible obligation" or some such term. Sounds like a squirm out of actual commitment. The Czech Republic refused to take in fifty Syrian orphaned babies because they were Muslims and might turn into terrorists (or tourists?). The woman translator noted that the Czech Republic was in such bad shape it was probably better for the babies not to find homes there. One of the men said that the only plan for the problem of immigration that made sense was to turn it over to an international commission and have them decide what countries could take how many people.

The train trip ended with a ride on the subway, slowed because there was a person on the tracks and the police stopped the train. Apparently people walking home from work often try to short-cut across the tracks.

Andi (Eberhard's youngest) picked us up at the train station, Stadt der Weil, and drove us to his home in Ottenbrunn, to be greeted by Lizzie and Jonas. We remember Jonas very fondly from his stay with us years ago. He has the same sweetness and boyishness, thoughtful good manners. We had a quiet, pleasant evening.

Friday, September 21

After a full, fabulous breakfast, we went to Eberhard and Gretel's house, where first we had a tour of their beautiful home, where there are two studies, a downstairs apartment, about six bathrooms, as well as a nice kitchen, pleasant living room and dining room. We sat on the balcony overlooking a lovely view of green hills with now

more factories and businesses than there were when Henning was last in Heumaden. We caught them up on Lopez plans and arrangements, toured the garden, and drove to a neighboring town to an elegant restaurant for an sumptuous dinner. "Leisurely" is the word for German meals. Elizabeth had trout with noodles in a cream sauce, the others opted for beef in a deep red wine gravy. Henning's food and beer did, as sometimes happens, wreak havoc with his digestive system.

We then visited a very old church (791?) with a checkered past — Catholic, shut down, abused by French soldiers during the Thirty Years' War, rededicated, now Protestant. The box for the communion host was much in evidence. We left the church to visit the ruins of Hirsau Abbey. Eberhard is a fountain of information, evidenced by the poem he recited by an old fountain outside the monastery. There is only one tower left — it shows Romanesque moving into Gothic styles. The remaining walls show a church in the center, a cemetery on the left, cloisters on the right. Peaceful. Beautiful. Green.

Hirsau Abbey was once one of the most important Benedictine abbeys of Germany. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the monastery was a center of the Cluniac Reforms. In 1692, the complex was devastated during the War of Palatine Succession (1688-97) pitting Louis XIV of France against a European coalition of the Holy Roman Empire led by Austria, the Dutch Republic, Spain, England and Savoy, and not rebuilt.

We drove back to the house, and had a long conversation about the family, past and present. It was so helpful to Henning that Eberhard has mellowed, is patient, listens carefully. Henning was able to clarify some of questions he has had for a long time: how often and how long his beloved grandfather (Opi) stayed with them in Heidenau, why his brother, Folker, two years older, was in his class during seven years of high school in Steinatal, why he remembers no affection from his mother, and details surrounding their brother Gernot's illness and death. He and Eberhard also talked about the personal problems of some family members; they shared opinions about the devastating effects of childhood trauma. We had an evening meal with them, then back to Andi's for the night. Everyone abed, and we were glad to do the same.

Saturday, September 22

On Saturday, Andi, Lizzie, Henning and Elizabeth went hiking in the Black Forest. People here say "hiking" for a pleasant walk in the woods, as if we were climbing Mt. Baker. The route was flat, graveled, except for a boggy section where we were walking on planks. Lots of other walkers, most of them armed with schnapps of one kind or another.

Elizabeth is used to the brisk pace set by Henning, Heike and Elke, but Lizzie and she moved at a saunter, and put more emphasis on getting to know each other than breaking speed records. We passed a deer farm, a pretty, hummocky lake, and arrived at a charming restaurant where we ate beautiful blueberry pancakes and watched others battle wasps. We

timed our meal perfectly — there was a line of people a mile long by the time we left.

Saturday evening was a hoot. Sebastian was there, and Eberhard and Gretel. Elizabeth got going on comic exaggerations, we talked about the farewell parties Sebastian, Jonas, and Judith had before they left our place on Lopez Island, Sebastian did some wonderful falsetto numbers from *The Magic Flute,* Jonas put on the American folk song, *Wagon Wheel*, and Lizzie and Andi danced to it like professionals. What a treat! Lots of laughter, even from Eberhard, who doesn't let his funny bone loose very often.

At the end of the day, we got some bad news from home, following Mike and Meike's writing several days ago that Embla (the milk cow born and raised on our farm, now owned by the family at Stonecrest Farm) was ill. Many emails exchanged, days gone by, and she seems to be getting better. Then sudden news that another one of our cows, Ceres, fine on one day, was dead the next. She was first misidentified as Abby, which caused us grief; Abby, the lead cow, is the queen of the farm. News that it was Ceres is no less sad, and more worrisome, because she had been in her prime. Now we hear that Ares the young bull is also very sick, and there's a cough going through the herd. It could be that the cows Mike and Meike brought from Colorado brought a virus with them.

It was worrisome that Mike and Meike, with all their experience, did not quarantine the new cows before mixing them with our herd for the summer, although perhaps they did — we just didn't know. Apparently there had been a lot of smoke from the fires in Canada which could have caused lung problems. A vet was due Wednesday, many days late when the sickness can take an animal down so quickly. It was hard to be away from home right then, haunting to know that we would have noticed problems sooner and acted more quickly. Henning emailed Mary to get Ares by himself, feed him well, and watch him closely. He pulled through. We missed our sweet animals and suddenly wished we were home.

Sunday, September 23

Henning and Elizabeth went to church with Lizzie, just a few steps from their house, and a dry, bloodless service it was. No warm greetings, no prayers of the people, no coffee, no emotion. Henning liked the hymns. Evidently Lizzie had a Pietistic upbringing she is still trying to bring into perspective. Did we see some Pietistic sourness in that church? Or just a lack of joy?

In the afternoon, Lizzie and Elizabeth dropped Henning off for another talk with Eberhard, and they went on to stroll around in Calw and go to the Hesse Museum. The museum was well done, with small rooms, each dedicated to a different phase of the life of Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), the author of *Steppenwolf* and *Siddartha*, works still in vogue in the U.S. There was a very good film, with photographs and interviews. Nothing was in English, so Lizzie gave Elizabeth key translations.

Calw is like Salzburg in that the surrounding outer city is factories and businesses that could be anywhere in America, while the core of the city has maintained the old buildings, mostly half-timbered houses. In front of the city church in Old Calw is a new wooden sculpture of a female figure with a round, featureless head, standing on top of what looks like a bear but has a semi-human face. Both figures have deforming lumps. New art? Must be. What does it represent? We did not ask.

We returned to the house and an anxious Andi, who was making what turned out to be a delicious sauerbraten. Lena, Sebastian's intended, came, and showed us a video of herself falling off a horse (very gracefully, though) in a competition.

Judith came, and Henning and I had separate conversations with her about her time in Chile and her plans for the future. Jonas showed photos from his time on Lopez, many of them featuring farm work, particularly grain harvest and milling. Judith had similar memories of our place, and had also attended and helped out at a harvest event.

We had a revealing conversation with Andi about our owning a Tesla. Andi argued that the American upstart was technically overblown and not ready for the market, a view not surprising from somebody making his living designing Mercedes cars, the very flagship of Germany's proud heritage of automobile industry. The inevitable shift to electric vehicles seems to pose a deep challenge to Germany's industrial culture. We owned that we find the Tesla a wonderfully elegant and easy to drive vehicle, but are aware of the risks underlying a technology totally dependent on computers. All-electric cars have no combustion engine to back them up in case of computer failure, as computers sometimes do.

Lizzie became very dear to Elizabeth in a very short time. If she and Maria and Elizabeth lived closer together, they would become close friends. Lizzie and Andi are living in interesting times. Andi is earning good money but after all

these years on the job, he is somewhat bored. He talked to Elizabeth a great deal about the pottery he has made and his desire to take it up again. He has plans to turn one of the children's rooms into a studio. Lizzie loves her work in nursing administration and is moving into a new phase of it, and the house feels like too much to take care of. Sebastian has followed in his father's footsteps as an engineer for Mercedes, and likes his work. Jonas is working toward a degree in business and mechanical engineering, but struggles with the exams and the master's paper ahead of him. He is great with people and we think he would be a fantastic teacher. Judith has just completed an internship at a children's home in Chile to perfect her Spanish, and will be doing the same during the coming year in France, to perfect her French, all the while waiting to be admitted to medical school, which can be a lengthy process in Germany. It was lovely to see all three children nearly grown up, and we feel close to them. Henning pointed out as we were getting ready for bed, that our experience in Germany and elsewhere would be far different had we stayed in hotels and missed the intimacy of family life.

Monday, September 24

Henning and Elizabeth had a quiet breakfast with Lizzie, talking a lot about religious issues and our personal spiritual lives. Then Eberhard picked us up, we loaded our huge suitcases into his car, and went to his house to spend the early afternoon. Gretel and Elizabeth went for a walk in nearby woods and fields. Loved the flock of sheep and the stillness. Gretel walks with poles to steady herself, her ankles still weak from surgery. Eberhard's leg is reduced in size and strength from back surgery, but they still soldier on, traveling to the East (Ukraine, Tibet, Azerbaijan) and walking several times a week. Gretel misses friends in Mariposa, where they spent summers for several years, but Eberhard does not look back.

We had a pleasant lunch with them. Gretel talked about the current lives of children and grandchildren. Eberhard wondered why Henning would revisit the past, which is painful for Eberhard, too. He wants to put it behind, but finds himself beleaguered by his brothers and sisters to play the historian and advocate. Eberhard told us that he had destroyed many family letters. We understand his need to be done with the past, but wonder about what value those letters and documents might have had for a future seeker of family (and German) history.

Before we left for the train station, Eberhard asked Elizabeth if there were anything more she wanted to say. She thanked him for his

patient, empathetic talks with Henning, which served to add several important pieces to the puzzle of the the family now and in the past. We also told him how much we regretted not seeing Matthias (Eberhard and Gretel's eldest) and his wife and children, another member of the younger generation who is keeping his distance from the family.

Göppingen

We made our train connection, and were greeted by an ebullient Eberhard Wolters, Henning's cousin (grandson of Onkel Otto, a younger brother of Henning's father), who drove us to his home in a small village just outside of Göppingen. Their house is 200 years old, with all of the charming spaces of other old homes we're seen, this one filled with shoes, laundry, toys, all the detritus of an eleven-year-old (Thibold) and a seven-year-old (Tom). Eberhard's wife, Karin, is a very pleasant, loving Frenchwoman, sensibly planning/preparing to work as a translator when the boys are older and less at home.

Tuesday, September 25

We woke in the cozy hotel room Eberhard had reserved for us, after an ok night's sleep on Elizabeth's part, a skimpy night's sleep on Henning's. Fantastic breakfast buffet and coffee. Eberhard came at 9:00 to pick us up, suffering from the cold he is sharing with his son, but gracious and game to give us not only his time today, but to drive us to our next trip destination tomorrow (a five hour trip for him). We accepted with alacrity. More time with him, no trying to make train connections and wrestle with luggage.

How kind everyone has been! In Potsdam, we felt that we must be putting something of a strain on our overextended host, but still were treated like roundly spoiled guests. Heike and Elke, who shed tears at our parting, must have been relieved to see us go after all the plans and foods prepared in anticipation of our coming; they and everyone else surely were grateful to return to their work and routines. Eberhard spoke with some irony about Henning's being the celebrated "Visiting Uncle." Nonetheless, there has not been a day we didn't feel welcome and wouldn't want to experience again.

Eberhard Wolters took us on a very pleasant walk this morning visiting the boys' school, passing through fields of sunflowers and cover crop, looking at the building site for their new house. We returned to his home for a lovely quiche and salad (more great food, which we are wearing around our middles, much to our discomfort) and then went for another walk through the village and neighboring fields, pausing at about ten beehives for a discussion about bees, ending at a bakery and eating more food.

These villages are charming. We see people everywhere on bikes, walking their dogs and babies, and a memorable girl on a bike exercising a pony and two dogs. You would really have to know your way around these winding streets, back alleys, gravel paths. We could not have found their house a block away. How different from the grid-mapped streets of even the smallest American town! Gardens are lovely and well tended. Houses are very close together, but maintain their privacy with trees and bushes.

There is a sense of history and continuity everywhere. The cemetery where we visited the graves of Henning's father and Gretel's mother showed that history — Eberhard (Henning's brother) said that when this relatively new cemetery was established, he and Gretel had a sense of being rooted in Calw which had been missing before. At the same time, many of the cemetery's newest occupants are Muslim, Italian and other immigrants — the new Germany.

Eberhard Wolters was fascinating to talk to — he spoke of the South of Germany pumping money into the North just as Christian talked about the West pumping money into the East. About how everyone who is wealthy is not supposed to show that wealth, so his buying a building plot about four times the size of anyone else's is a bit of a scandal for the neighbors, rather like our owning a Tesla.

Mary sent us word today that Ares perks up a little more each day, the cough is still in the herd but everybody seems to be ok. The milking parlor and the kitchen passed inspection with the usual demerits for a glassed-in bookcase and glass-covered canning shelves. No vet until Wednesday (actually, none ever came). Mary has been handed more than any of us bargained for, as have Rafael, Mike and Meike. A nice email from Kim to the effect that Mom is doing well, the cat and the dog are fine. We wish the cows were.

Kemel

Thursday, September 27

Yesterday Eberhard Wolters drove us to Kemel, a three hour trip though fields and villages. He asked for Elizabeth's life history, which passed the time on the Autobahn and gave some more pieces to the family jigsaw puzzle he knows.

We met up with Marlies and her husband, Hans-Jürgen Bertram, a retired lawyer, both Henning's former schoolmates at Melanchthonschule in Steinatal. They took us to an Italian restaurant where we had a delicious supper while reminiscing about life shared more than sixty years ago. Marlies was Henning's first sweetheart, of whom he has often spoken.

Henning vividly remembers the sweet poignancy of that innocent love that meant so much to him in his adolescent loneliness, and beyond. Marlies is now in her late 70s, a thin, bird-like woman, who has had cancer of the tongue. The resulting operations left her reduced, with missing lymph nodes and damaged vocal chords. Her voice is hoarse and high, and she needs water to combat the constant dryness in her mouth. She can eat small amounts of soft foods. Her eyes are large, dark brown, and expressive. She speaks some English, and was quick to tell Elizabeth about everything we were seeing. Hans-Jürgen is quiet, gentle, thoughtful. The three of them spent the evening reminiscing about their school years and classmates. Marlies keeps everything, including several photos of Henning as a boy, for example one where he's playing soccer in his "Lederhosen" (leather pants), and another of his beloved "Home Mother," Frau Voigt.

We talked, then took a walk in the woods. Hessen was Henning's home ground during his high school years. He spent his Sundays walking and listening to these forests, a mix of pine, fir, chestnut, maple, and oak trees. This region is less dramatic

than others we have seen in Germany, with wide fields and swooping, low hills, well tended gardens and modest villages.

Friday, September 28

Today after breakfast we went on a car tour through lovely woods (Marlies touched Elizabeth's arm a dozen times to point out vineyards, started here by Romans, marching up hillsides) and wound up driving along the Rhine, watching tour boats and freight barges make their way up and down the quiet river. Castles, some in ruins, some complex and complete, lined the river, so many and so close together that you wonder how merchants ever made it down the river without being completely fleeced. But Marlies told us that the safe passage "fees" were regulated, apparently by the lords and knights themselves. The Rhine is beautiful, but we're glad we did not take the oft-advertised river tour.

We ate a delicious meal at a restaurant overlooking the river, with Mainz in the background. Elizabeth had read about Mainz as a medieval city with alchemists and magicians — but the one before us had left its medieval self behind, and belched smoke from factory stacks, decidedly unlovely.

As usual, we ate too much, and were uncomfortable in the evening. The food is fantastic, and we do not want to refuse what our hosts have made for us, but Elizabeth fears she will outgrow her clothes. We rested a bit, refused cake with our afternoon coffee, looked at many photograph albums that Marlies has assembled. She was a very pretty, even striking, young woman. A pleasant walk, plans for travel tomorrow.

Henning and Hans-Jürgen were finally able to activate the iPad, entering a password that was two full lines of numbers and letters long. We were rewarded by finding an email from Mary saying that Ares' temperature is back to normal, and they will move the herd to better pasture tomorrow.

Mary and Rafael (and to a lesser degree, Mike and Meike) have been through, not exactly a trial by fire, but certainly a challenge, handling the farm while we're gone. Mary was concerned at the beginning that she would not be able to do all she had taken on in our absence, and now she's responsible for more than anyone bargained for. She's handling it, which must make her feel good, between the stress attacks. Rafael sent us a reassuring picture of a stack of firewood he split for the coming winter.

Hameln

Saturday, September 29

On Saturday morning, Hans-Jürgen and Marlies drove us to the station at Wiesbaden. Final farewells. We took the train to Hameln (the town famous for the Pied Piper who lured the children of the medieval burgh "into the mountain," never to be seen again, after the burghers cheated him out of his pay for ridding the town of a plague of rats — the legendary motif reappears in the writings of Goethe, the Grimm Brothers, and Robert Browning).

Helga, Hans-Helmut's wife, an elegant, sophisticated woman, picked us up at the modern train station and took us home for coffee and cake. Sometime after Henning had last visited them in their house at the edge of Hameln (in 1989), they had moved to a more manageable, modern apartment in the center of the city. Hans-Helmut, now 83, is much reduced by the Parkinson's that has plagued him since around 2000. In body, he is heavier than the lean, strapping young man that was Henning's school friend, and he can no longer stand by himself or walk. Henning helped Helga lift him back into his wheel chair after a slide to the floor, and it was as much as he could do. Of course, it's very hard to lift an adult that can't help. Hans-Helmut's face is fleshier and, though Elizabeth noticed a dimple appear briefly, his face, except for the eyes, does not register expression. Henning did much of the conversing — Hans-Helmut can speak, just a little, and he and Henning and Helga talked about the art on their walls and the daily activities of their week. And they talked of their children Henning has never met, a son who is a successful printer and has a family of his own, and their daughter, a chemist, whose husband died tragically but who now lives in a new partnership. Over coffee, Henning and Hans-Helmut then perused books about the Melanchtonschule, looking for photographs from the years they spent together at the school, where they lived in a boarding house. So many memories! Here was a picture of the eight boys sharing double bunks in a single room (with communal bathrooms down the hall): Hermann Müller (later a mathematician); Volker Vogelsang (lawyer), Hermann von Loesch, the son of an impoverished noble family who had trouble getting promoted in school; Werner Werner, the smart ass kid from Berlin (what had become of him?); Henning's brother, Folker (businessman in America) and of course Hans-Helmut (interior designer), and Henning (professor and farmer). They remembered some of their youthful pranks, such as when on a Saturday night they climbed down the thick sandstone pillars below

Henning and Hans-Helmut, ca. 1954

their room in their confirmation suits, and on their bicycles rode to the neighboring village where they danced the night away on a glass platform illuminated by lights moving below it — and then had trouble staying awake in class the next day.

They talked about the teachers they remembered with fondness: Dr. Dahlhoff, the kind but strict principal, who once boxed Henning behind the ear because he disrespectfully kept the collar of his coat turned up in church; equally strict but fair minded, Herr Klöppel, the math and physics teacher, who had been an Air Force pilot during the war and still walked around in uniform jodhpurs and leather boots; Herr Klein, the Latin teacher, a tall and massive man who sported a rigid pinkie broken when he competed as a professional boxer in his youth; sports teacher, Herr Zimmerman, lanky and tall, who taught Henning how to do giant swings on the high bar (he was the one who, when Henning asked him why they were learning all these gymnastic tricks, answered that they would remember him when they were seventy and still could climb trees! And right he was!); flamboyant Herr Döhl, the English teacher, who memorably during a school prom jumped on top of the baby grand to blast the jazz rhythms of Satchmo on his trumpet; doughty Herr Schauermann, the "House Father" in the boys' dormitory, who loved to wear knickerbockers and tight shirts that revealed his muscular body, and Fräulein von Stryk, the"House Mother," a lonely spinster who would sing soulful, sentimental songs in the evening. They also remembered that at the occasion of proms, the school (an institution of the State Lutheran Church, no less!) supplied each couple with a bottle of wine for the evening, intent on teaching the students how to deal with alcohol responsibly. They also talked of some of the girls: Ingrid Röhrborn, daughter of the preacher who prepared them for confirmation (and on whose cheek Henning once planted an unauthorized kiss while waiting to be catechized by her father), Marlies Schwerdtfeger (later Bertram), of course; Eva Schimmelpfeng, with whom Henning was helplessly and hopelessly in love, with the kind of unrequited passion only the very young are capable of, which, however, overshadowed his life for many years to come; and others who made less of an impression. But mostly, Hans-Helmut and Henning spoke of their friendship and the times they had spent together walking in the woods, talking of what their lives would be like in the future and of God whose loving presence they sensed in their beautiful surroundings. Among his papers, Henning still has an essay he wrote as a class exercise in 1954 about Hans-Helmut.

Elizabeth was reminded of Hans-Helmut's sending Henning all of the letters Henning had written to him over sixty years, each neatly summarized. What a gift of a lifelong friendship! Marlies and Hans-Helmut taught Henning that friendship and love are fundamentally the same thing.

Marlies and Hans-Helmut taught Henning that friendship and love are fundamentally the same thing

After coffee Hans-Helmut needed to rest, and Helga drove us, and our luggage, to the pleasant "Jugendstil" (art nouveau) hotel where we stayed. The high ceiling in our comfortable room and the wainscoting and colored glass in the windows and chandeliers were intriguing. We took a walk through the "Volkspark" (People's Park) that had severely disciplined bushes and paths, but was charming and evidently a favorite hangout for the young and for immigrants.

By early evening, we walked back to Helga and Hans-Helmut's apartment, where we had a wonderful dinner, rice and sautéed vegetables and tender curried chicken accompanied by a good Italian red wine. (We have not yet had a bad white or a good red wine from Germany.) Helga is a loving wife who is spending the last years of her life talking care of a more and more helpless husband. She does it with tenderness and practicality. She has help in the mornings, and for now he spends a couple of days a week at a senior center. Their apartment is stark white with black furniture like Michael's. New, modern decor. At the end of the evening, Henning and Hans-Helmut said a heartfelt and tender farewell. Last time. It is difficult to leave.

Freiburg an der Elbe

Sunday, September 30

Last day of September and the weather is finally feeling fallish. Rafael sent us more photos, of the truck and the bin full of potatoes, of the sheep on dry grass, of the fencing he has done around the burn site. Of his three children tentatively petting our dog Molly, of the maples along the driveway, their leaves already shed, of the plump hens. Lovely photos. None, we noticed, of the cows.

We took the train from Hamelin to Harburg, where we were to transfer to a local connection to Stade. The train left Harburg an hour late because it had been delayed in coming from Hannover. Ironically, Henning had been unable to get seat reservations on the train we intended to take, but we wound up on an old, rickety coach to Stade with a compartment all to ourselves. We blessed Gabi for the phone she had given us — Henning was able to keep Kirsten apprised of every delay.

Friedrich picked us up at the station in Stade, a pretty town. Elizabeth remembers arriving at that station twenty-three years ago with Johann, sick with jet lag, nerves, and sleeplessness, and having to ask someone at the station to call Kirsten, who had already come to the station to meet our train once, no slouch of a distance.

Kirsten and Friedrich live in a charming villa in Freiburg. The house is old, spacious, gracious, a place that Henning feels is a cut above our house on Lopez, and where he could happily live.

Elizabeth loves the dedicated rooms and the double doors that can provide either privacy or create a graceful flow from room to room. They also have extensive cellar rooms that we would love to have.

We had coffee and cake, talked about our travels so far and in the future. Elizabeth finds that she is unable to remember the names of places or people when she's tired. It has been a long, experience and people-packed trip. Kirsten made a delicious dinner. We were on the porch for dinner today, dining room for dinner last night, kitchen for breakfast this morning, living room for coffee yesterday afternoon. After dinner, Henning filled them in with our current arrangement and plans for the farm, the Land Trust, The Mobile Slaughter Unit, and the forty non-profits on the island. He has written to them about all of this, but it's easier to understand when someone is telling you face to face, and you can ask questions.

This morning we took bicycles and went to visit Kirsten and Friedrich's daughter, Heike, and her family on their "remnant manor farm," a beautiful old house, huge barn that has converted stables, a large space for machines, beautiful grounds. The garden is immaculate, and a robot mower keeps the grass clipped to nail-scissor precision.

There is a lovely orchard and a new plantation of bushes and trees along a professional-looking fence to keep the "noisy" (meaning "nosy") neighbors from spying on them. Their work on the farm and the house has drawn a lot of attention, to the point that people have driven into the ditch while they were rubbernecking.

We had a leisurely tour, then drank apple juice and some liquor from plums and blackberries. We met their daughters, Antonia and Friederike, seventeen and nineteen, the younger about to do her "Abitur" (high school graduating examination), the elder to do an apprenticeship in banking, following her father. Neither is interested in farming. They are modern young women.

Heike and her husband have laying hens in a house with stained glass windows and laying boxes where the egg drops through a hole in the nest onto newspaper. Keeps the eggs clean and the hens from eating them. Henning asked for photos. They also have ducks, which are slaughtered, plucked, and cleaned by a professional. Heike is a lovely young matron with the same laugh we remember from twenty-five years ago.

We returned home for dinner and a rest, then drove to a peat bog, at least 200 acres in size, evidently purchased from a farm and harvested by a company using huge machines. We saw acres of stacked bricks of peat, and mountains of peat in the drying stage. There were protests over the sale and the excavation because habitat is destroyed in the process and untold tons of carbon released into the air. Agriculture on this scale is either the first or second cause of global warming.

Elizabeth was saddened by the piles of birch trees stacked and waiting to be shredded. Forests and moors uprooted and excavated. This sight puts those bags of peat moss we buy every year to mix into our compost into a new perspective.

On the walk back over a concrete and rebar road built for the monster machines, we saw two deer, a hedgehog, and some cows. What wildlife was there before, and is now gone?

On the drive back we took a detour to see the site of an ancient "Thing" (a former outdoor meeting place where local people since immemorial times had held community council)— now linden trees surrounding an equally ancient oak. The site was used by the community until 1852, meetings taking place on the first Sunday after Pentecost. By that time, the meetings would have had little legal weight.

Northern Germany is flat. No surprise that there are moors here. Cows, sheep, and horses graze in low lying fields framed by raised tree-lined edges, fields that are being drained for future bog cutting, or fields that have already been emptied of peat moss and then sown to grass. The word "pastures" doesn't immediately come to mind.

There are "wind farms" everywhere, windmills huge or merely large. There are colored domes (one large, two small) for the production of "biogas." Friedrich disapproves of them, for one because the production and transportation of biogas swallows up much of the energy produced and, for another, because growing crops for biodiesel reduces the amount of food for human consumption and basically exploits the land for profit.

Tuesday, October 2

Yesterday we were supposed to take the bicycles to see the Elbe. (We saw it from the farm, many years ago, but Kirsten does not consider our visit complete without a visit to the Elbe.) Elizabeth was enchanted by the sight of a ship apparently moving across land (seen behind a dike) and of the sheep grazing on the banks that front the river. Instead of a bicycle trip, we took the car to Stade, one of the prettiest towns in Germany. It used to be a member of the Hanseatic League that flourished between the 14th and 17th centuries in Northern Europe, originally constituted of merchants of various free German, Scandinavian and Baltic cities, and later of the cities themselves and organized to secure greater safety and privileges in trading. The town center has kept the integrity of its buildings, even newly built ones conforming to the traditional style — lots of half-timbered houses. Apparently, Stade had to relinquish its preeminent status as a Hanse city to Hamburg, because the Elbe eventually silted up and the wooden merchant ships could no longer reach its harbor, but some of the picturesque

old wooden cranes and storage buildings remain as evidence of the past.

We visited the cathedral, built before 1000, (burned during the Thirty Years' War, rebuilt by the townspeople). It has been repaired and rebuilt many times, and there are excellent photographs and a wooden model showing the inner structure of the onion dome.

The architecture is Romanesque, refreshing after the meringue of Baroque churches, simple and clean. Flanking the pulpit, we found two excellent side by side portraits, one of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and one of Luther's co-reformer, Philip Melanchton (1497-1560), after whom Henning's school was named.

Even though the church is now used by Lutherans and Evangelicals, candles are still bought and burned, a common practice in Catholic churches. The setting for candles in this church is wonderful: a large cement basin filled with sand into which people put single slender candles. No little candle holders to clean or throw away. The candle burns into the sand, and is extinguished there. Life burns out and vanishes.

The steps before the altar were decorated with fruit, vegetables, and flowers arranged in wagon wheels. Quite lovely and appropriate for the season —*Erntedankfest* (Harvest Gratitude Feast).

The altar was impressive, as was the preaching podium, but the real beauty of this church was the side altar, separated by iron gates featuring the stag, birds, and the unicorn, medieval symbols for the church, the soul, and Mary and Jesus. The "altar" was a tryptic dedicated to Mary and various female saints. An armless Christ hung on a crucifix to the right, an odd circle/candle sculpture on the left. The whole church felt peaceful and good to be in.

Perhaps because of the rain, perhaps because of the season, there were few tourists. Museums and many restaurants closed, because it was Monday, but we found a nice bistro and had a very good meal. The city hall featured a model of the old city, many buildings still standing and in use.

Stade is a lovely city that exists for its residents with tourism as a sideline. It was a pleasure to see it again.

Wednesday, October 3

This morning we all awoke early. Kirsten won the sleepless contest, and had gone to the basement to iron. Over breakfast, Henning and Kirsten continued their conversation about family

history and memories. Everybody carries a burden from childhood. Elke seems to be the one whose sanguine personality has cast the past into a pleasant and constructive light.

It was raining and cold, so instead of taking the bicycles, we drove to the Elbe. Through rain and clouds we watched ships — one naval ship, one large container ship. The water is so low that the containers must have been empty. Scores of water birds, some here for the winter, some just stopping to feed before they fly south, were on the water and in the fields. Environmentalists and farmers are at odds about the dikes — whether to let the river flood, providing habitat for snakes and frogs and the storks that feed on them, and let the ducks and geese eat the crops, or keep the waters at bay. Both sides have worthy arguments. The government pays farmers for their losses, but farmers want a crop, not a check. Fewer kinds of birds come now, and there is a last ditch effort to feed storks in a refuge.

Henning asked what plans there were for the slow taking of the land by rising seas. Apparently no coherent plan, just local efforts here and there.

Henning and Elizabeth took a little walk around the oldest part of Freiburg, a pretty village with narrow, cobbled, winding streets. Fewer and fewer small shops. Old story. Even megastores, like Toys R' Us, are falling to on-line shopping now. We found the village church locked up, the billboard outside announcing occasional services, few congregational activities. Kirsten tells us that most people prefer the television to the Church as their cultural focus, and the Church does not seem able to find the language by which to address the spiritual needs of the people. We have been struck all through Germany by the shrinking role of churches in modern society, in contrast to the U.S., where churches like the Lutheran church we attend on Lopez Island, are full of congregants who come to worship and be involved in community.

Over supper, our last with Kirsten and Friedrich, the ongoing drama of family history turned into the quiet discussion of current family relationships. Friedjof is separated from his parents and sisters over unresolved issues concerning the farm he inherited. Henning gently presented our plan to visit Friedjof, preceded by an expression of gratitude for their being willing to discuss what is still painful to them. Little by little, brother and sister by brother and sister, all the siblings have been able to reassemble the complex behaviors and characters of their father and mother. We will see what happens when we visit Friedjof, his wife and two daughters shortly. If we are lucky, Friedjof, his sisters Gesa and Heike, will get together with us and Axel and Gabi in Hamburg before we sail for home.

Stralsund & Jager

Thursday, October 4

Friedrich and Kirsten put us on the train at Stade, we changed trains in Hamburg, and had a quiet, pleasant trip to Stralsund, where we were greeted by Henriette, the younger sister of Friederike, another woman of huge creative talent, and her two young sons, August and Albrecht. We left our bags at the station, went out for pizza with Henriette and the boys, then took a walking tour of this remarkable port city. The island, Rügen, where Henning and Heike in 2008 took a trip on the occasion of her 70th birthday, is just across a bridge. Every Hansa city, Henriette told us, has three churches, each named for a saint, and these are stunning. We saw only the exteriors: one of them had a brick façade standing by itself, with unblocked porticos all the way up. The late afternoon light shone through them. Like many German towns and cities, the cores are medieval, shading to Renaissance, with modern businesses on the outskirts of the old towns. Either because the tourists have flown south for the winter, or because it was cold and windy, we had the streets and parks and waterfronts pretty much to ourselves.

We picked up our luggage and drove to Jager, a tiny settlement which consists only of a few houses and a small church strung along a short road— no stores or shops or services of any kind. The government has taken notice that rural villages are turning gray as the young hustle off to the bright lights of Leipzig. Henriette's work, writing and producing operas, plays, and other cultural events in and for rural areas, is appreciated by the local arts council, and she currently is supported by a three-year grant, which affords her a salary and help from several assistants.

The straw-thatched house that she and her husband, Hans-Henning Bär, and the boys live in is a marvel. Only one close neighbor, a huge yard and orchard, and outbuildings that used to house horses and now store bicycles. One wing, which used to be a separate house, has been attached to the home by a gracious entry room, paved with ancient stones. The adults have their offices, studios and material collections there. If Friederike's house also serves as an art gallery, the second wing of Henriette's serves as a back stage and theater costumery, and as a shop and tool room for her husband.

Hans-Henning, whom we did not meet because he was away fishing with friends, is a restorer, and this imaginative house shows his skill. It does not have the cultured elegance of Kirsten and Friedrich's villa or Christian and Elisabeth's house, partly because small children have a big hand in the decorations, but it is artistically alive and loved. It is also the only house we've been in where doors do not lock behind you and you do not have close neighbors watching you prepare dinner.

Züsedom

Friday, October 5

Today was our trip to Züsedom, the old manor farm and family seat from 1811 to 1842. Elizabeth dreaded the trip, because Henriette was

loaning us her car, the town is hard to find unless you know the way (no Siri or Navigator to help us), and we'd be driving most of the time on the Autobahn, Elizabeth's memories of which were miseries — cars whipping by, too-quick decisions about exits, traffic jams.

Henning and Henriette spent a long time over maps last night, and this morning Henning and Elizabeth took possession of printed directions from the Internet, and an excellent, detailed road atlas. We'd still be out there in the pucker brush without them.

We missed a turn and by chance wound up in a small village, Dauer, where one of Henning's earliest traceable ancestors by the name of Sehmsdorf, was a blacksmith. Presumably he took the name from the town of Sehmsdorf near Oldesloe in Schlesvig-Holstein from where he migrated into Uckermark during the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), when the Duke of Brandenburg recruited farmers and skilled artisans from Central and Western Germany to convert the vast forests and marshes of the East into fertile farmland and build viable communities. Dietrich Sehmsdorf may have worshipped at the old stone church in Dauer.

Nearby Züsedom is a larger village than we expected, mostly industrial. The manor house is at the center of the village, kitty-corner from a church that probably dates from the same time. An elderly, brisk woman told us that, yes, the church is still very much in use, and that the manor house is now owned by the community and up for sale. She also said that people had stripped the place of windows and doors. The pillaging started with the Russians, continued with the DDR, and went on until there was nothing left to take. A daughter of the Earls von Armin, the last family to own the farm and house before it was overrun by the Soviets in 1945, and memorialized

in the cemetery, apparently still comes around. The manor house must have been a spectacular place before its façade was stripped away by the Soviets who turned the huge house into some kind of service building.

The old manor house, now just a hulking, gray shell, is covered with vines and crowded by trees, one of which was bearing apples that were almost ready to eat. Does anyone gather them? We made our way through what must have been the main entrance. One of the boards blocking it had been partly torn away. Inside, we found room after room after room — living rooms, reception rooms, dining rooms, music rooms, drawing rooms, parlors, kitchens — who knows? There used to be a tile stove in every room, now all smashed. Spite? Vandalism? Huge windows in every room. The stairs were in good repair, solid wood. Upstairs, room after room after room — bedrooms, nurseries, sitting rooms, studies, offices? Each was bright with natural light from high windows, and large. Third floor, smaller rooms, probably for servants, but still generous in size. We wondered how many people it took to keep this place going. There must have been maids, coachmen, cooks, nannies, grounds keepers, stable hands, personal servants for the master and mistress.

We found a huge set of gears and wheels and pulleys that must have been used for a dumbwaiter. Supplies stored in the attic sent down

to the kitchen? We found a beautiful tiled floor on the first story that must have belonged to a kitchen. You could house a hundred people in that place last occupied at the end of World War II.

There are outbuildings still standing. The beautiful chapel, a huge granary, both now protected by the government as historical sites, horse stables, a smithy, a bake house, storage buildings, all of field stone and brick. The overseer's house has been renovated and is occupied. Behind the house is a playground attached to a school and the manor park surrounded with remnants of brick walls and gates, ancient trees and some pretty flowerbeds.

We have been brushing through the curtains of history since the beginning of this trip. First of course, was seeing our cultural heritage — the art of Greece, Rome, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt — all the cultures that grew in the West and the Middle East and the Mediterranean. The Metropolitan in New York, the Bode, Pergamon, Neues and Altes Museums in Berlin, museums in Dresden and Munich gave us remnants we could have touched. (Americans, unlike the Germans, put their treasures far out of reach.) We are so grateful that we have kept a journal and taken thousands of pictures. Words and images remind us of what we have seen.

The second brush with history comes with every German town or city we visit. Buildings destroyed in wars (more than one war has left its mark) have been rebuilt. New buildings often adopt the architecture of the old. Cobblestoned streets, winding roads, "ring streets." Museums that keep the past alive. Delicacy about certain dates. (The reunification of East and West Germany on November 9 when the Wall came down, shared a date with the notorious "Kristallnacht," and so there are no showy celebrations). Then, thirdly, there is family history. As Eberhard might say, it has two parts. Stories gathered from brothers and sisters, visits to Henning's childhood home and the areas around his schools, and talks with Marlies, Hans-Jürgen, and Hans-Helmut that helped put missing pieces into the puzzle of his childhood.

And, fourthly, there emerges the extended family history, the story of a manor farm, the family crest, the hows and wheres and who's going back hundreds of years. Henning's cousin, Tim Sedelmeyer (another grandson of Onkel Otto, a younger brother of Henning's father), is the family historian, and while we were in Germany, he sent Henning reams of research and talked to him multiple times on the phone to compare what we were learning from old documents, and now seeing with our own eyes. Tim's research has answered many questions, and Henning has now set foot on the same ground that his great-great-grandfather, Julius, rode across in his carriage. We learned, for example, that Samuel Sehmsdorf, the son of the blacksmith, Daniel Sehmsdorf, who migrated to Prussia from Schlesvig-Holstein, became a leasehold farmer. Samuel's son, also Daniel (1746-1824), first managed the Züsedom manor as a leaseholder, but then purchased it in 1802 from the baron who was bankrupted by the expense of attending the royal court in Berlin as required of an officer. When Daniel S. died at 58 years of age, his only surviving son, Julius Sehmsdorf (1811-1900) inherited the manor, but had to sell because, at 13 years of age, he was too young to assume the responsibility of managing the farm. From the money, he later purchased another manor farm, at Podanin (now in western Poland), which remained in the family until the end of World War II. It was exciting to see the actual documents, the purchase and sales agreements, the testaments and royal correspondence. It was also fascinating to realize that while the Sehmsdorf name did not come into the family until the 17th century, the family line can be traced back as far as there are church registers, recording births, baptisms, deaths, livelihoods and social standing of ancestors going back to the 13th century. The oldest family member identified by Cousin Tim, Gerhard von Wichbold, lived 21 generations ago and was a councilman in the city of Kolberg from 1282-1290. We loved our visit to Züsedom and left knowing that much remains to be explored in the tangled genealogical history of the family. As a red-blooded American,

Elizabeth sometimes wonders why Henning is so preoccupied with family, both present and past. Americans tend to think that it matters less where you come from and who you are descended from than what you have made of your life as an individual. As an immigrant, Henning, while he has put down solid roots in the U.S., still clings to the old ones and feels strongly that his mother tongue and the culture of the immediate and past family shape his identity to a degree unimaginable by most people in this comparatively young country.

On the way back from Züsedom, we filled the car with diesel and ate a pretty bad pizza in a small town cafe. Elizabeth had hoped there would be a local bistro or coffeeshop where the locals would eat, but there was only this one, sad place. Henning wondered if the Muslim woman who ran it would be rendered unclean by serving the pork she put on our pizza. Aided by Internet directions, we made our way back to Henriette's.

We rested and then took a walk, visited a herd of hefty-looking cows, who expressed deep bovine interest in us, or at least in our giving them new pasture. We found some tansy ragwort, and told Henriette about it. We visited the village chapel, which is small, earnest, active, and has a marvelous bell. Brick altar, clear engagement with parishioners. The noisy geese next door cannot compete with the great raft of cranes flying in to stuff themselves on the corn fields. Dinner with Henriette and her sweet, funny little boys. Nearly time for bed.

Still Friday. October 5

We are rapidly approaching the end of our trip. As with coming here, we are glad to go home and sorry to leave. Right now, we are sitting at Henriette's table with Christoffer, Henning's cousin, the father of Friederike and Henriette. We are perusing an album of photos from Botswana in Africa, the missionary home of Christoffer's father, Onkel Georg. Most of the children of Onkel Georg were born in Africa, and he worked as a missionary in a particular village for years (his wife was a published writer of fiction describing their African experience), until they were expelled at the outbreak of World War II, and the family still raises money for a children's home they established there and go every year to deliver it. (Friederike is going to take over that task, because her parents are getting too old.) All deeply interesting and we have dozens of questions. The photos are quite beautiful, one of them showing women on their way to market, dressed in beautiful, flowing clothes. Käthe would be enchanted.

Johanna, Christoffer's wife, took most of the photographs. She is a quiet woman, self-effacing, grandmotherly, but amazing. She started the children's home for which they raise 10,000 Euros a year, built 30 huts for women needing homes, and crossed mountain trails to take salt, sugar, and money to a man who cares for the elderly in the village where they worked.

Lübeck

Saturday, October 6

Christoffer took us to the little train stop near the village, which took us back to Stralsund and from there to Lübeck to visit yet another classmate from the Melanchthonschule, whom Henning hadn't seen since 1954.

While waiting for the train, Christoffer and Henning continued their discussion about Biblical texts. Christoffer has a broad historical view that takes context, authorship, and patterns of mythology into consideration, which Henning appreciates very much. The evangelical literalists in Henning's men's group on Lopez Island would find this perspective a challenge. Christoffer shares Henning's view that the church in Germany is withering because it does not seem to be able to adapt its outmoded institutions to modern needs. He told Henning that his son, Eckehart, also a Lutheran minister, is having a difficult time because he is challenging the status quo.

We changed trains twice, riding the nice little regional trains that get people most everywhere — baby carriages, bicycles, wheelchairs, large suitcases included. Volker Vogelsang, Henning's classmate from long ago, met us at a small train stop, close to the suburb he and his wife, Elke, live in. She had coffee and cake ready. They are both lawyers, but Elke had put away her law books when their children came along. Their house is large and comfortable, filled with her paintings and ceramic and stone work, with a large yard and garden behind. Our room, one downstairs with a warren of utility rooms, opens onto the patio and the garden. This house is the second (Henriette's is the first) that we could actually get in and out of without keys or doorbells.

Volker took us for a walk along a nearby lake or river. The difference in terminology apparently mattered when the city wanted to create a path and homeowners protested. The city won because the river overflows its banks, so that part is designated "the commons," and that's where the city put in a bicycle trail to serve the public. The lake is covered with algae near the banks, with handsome trees, some leaning parallel over the water. We could not walk abreast, because bicycles ding-ding-dinged past us constantly. Walkers, joggers, and dogs — first we've seen off-leash so far.

We returned to a lovely supper of soup, bread and meatballs and all of other usual fixings, watched the "Tagesschau" (Daily News), drank some wine, talked some more. We admired the hundreds of books they have on art and painters and paintings. Books like those were Elizabeth's introduction to the art she has now seen in the original, up close and personal, in museums in Norway, Germany and Austria.

Sunday, October 7

Even though it was Sunday, we would be able to go to the Hanse Museum. First, a leisurely breakfast, then Volker took us on a drive around the Island, which contains the old inner city of Lübeck. Church spires of St. Peters and the *Marienkirche*

(St. Mary's Cathedral) dominate the skyline. Originally built between 1250 and 1350, the Marienkirche became the symbol of the power and prosperity of the city. Architecturally it epitomizes North German Brick Gothic and it set the standard for some 70 similar churches in the Baltic area. At 126 feet, its spire is the tallest brick vault in the world. Almost totally destroyed by Allied bombers on Palm Sunday, 1942, it was completely rebuilt a decade later, a remarkable expression of the will to survive by a defeated people. Behind the alter, there is a simple iron cross mounted on the wall and underneath is written the Coventry Prayer commemorating the bombing of Coventry in

1945, the same we saw in Dresden. On the opposite wall, there is a haunting painting of Cain slaying Abel, mythically evoking the apparently incurable propensity of humans to kill each other. The most impressive memorial to the destruction wrought by the War, however, are the partially melted bells that hurtled from the church tower during the air raid, and were left lying where they fell.

The Marienkirche is an unusual church in many ways. One is the altar, of dark wood, with an

indecipherable (to Elizabeth, at least) wooden figure on top. It looks like a trough with a head? Sawed log. There are chairs on three sides. Behind the altar hangs a huge crucifix carved in 1959.

In the back of the church are crude wooden crosses in various stage of splintering, studded with long nails on the tops. It is a memorial to WWI. Plaster figures, broken in the bombing, have been reassembled, but still show the damage.

Sandstone carvings featuring The Last Supper, foot washing, the Garden of Gethsemane have a little mouse on the lower left, gnawing on the roots of the rose tree "on whose blooms the city depended." It has been darkened by people touching it for luck. Volker said that if we touched it, we would come back to Lübeck. Lovely idea.

There is a black and white copy of The Dance of Death, a painting by Bernt Note that hung in the chapel between 1463 and 1942. Figures of Death dance between every kind of person: farmer, doctor, maiden, nun, reminding us of how everyone will end up some day.

Henning spent a lot of time in front of an astronomical clock that shows the phases of the moon. According to the reference guide, black, white, and yellow people pass Jesus on the dot of noon.

We saw the grave of

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707), the great Baroque composer for voice and organ, who became the model for G.F. Händel (1685-1759), J. Mattheson (1681-1741), G.P. Telemann (1681-1767) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). What an outpouring of genius from the influence of one great teacher! In 1705, 20-year old Bach walked 250 miles to Lübeck, where he for three months attended evensong every day to listen to Buxtehude play the cathedral organ.

On the outside of the cathedral, there is a cunning little devil who provided the perfect setting for a picture of Henning and Volker.

The *Rathaus* (City Hall), like the one in Stralsund, has a beautiful Gothic/Renaissance façade, with sun shining though the open arches. From the City Hall we walked through the Hanse "Tor" (Gate), one of the fortified entrances to the medieval city.

The Hanse Museum is located on the *Schlossberg* (Castle Hill), where archaeologists are unearthing an old monastery — we walked on ramps through the excavation. The site was used as a bomb shelter during World War II, and so there are reinforced concrete walls around the site.The museum, housed in a stark, modern brick building, is huge, with informative, detailed exhibits and translations in four languages. Our tickets would have allowed us to activate computer displays, but we did not use them, because Henning took pictures and Volker explained everything.

It is a hopeless task to recapitulate the information we gained this afternoon. Elizabeth had no idea how vast the Hanseatic League was, how far east it went, the wide variety of goods traded, how small the ships were. These shallow-draft vessels replaced Viking ships and went east into the Baltic Sea, voyages skirting the winter and lasting about six months.

The number of the cities involved in the Hanse trade grew, as did the power of the merchant class. Conflicts between the Church, Princes and the growing middle class, between rural folks and urban nobility, between countries vying for trade advantages (Queen Elizabeth I finally cancelled German trade), class struggles (the nobles rewriting voting laws to exclude the lower classes, which sounds very much like the Republicans in America altering voting laws to exclude people of color), the Plague (1347-51) in which Europe lost one-third of its population, trade boycotts against particular cities and the ultimate decline of the Hanse as the New World was "discovered" and trade opened to the Americas. The museum featured larger-than-life models of historical individuals, and life-size models of monks. There were original and copied documents, computer displays of such things as population growth, urban development, time lines and trade routes. One of the original ships with barrels and sails and gear aboard. You could

touch them. Each room had a historical theme with original materials and supporting data.

In the same building were rooms remaining from the old monastery, including an infirmary with wood-heated floors. The monastery became an almshouse after the Reformation. Repeatedly the point was made that people in the Middle Ages firmly believed that illness and misfortune were signs of God's displeasure, and welcomed the services (as confessors, for example) of the Dominican, Franciscan and other mendicant monks who made their way in the world by begging.

We next visited *Heiligengeist Hospital* (Holy Spirit Hospice), now a remnant of an "old folks' home" which housed the very poor (beds lined up in a hallway, with curtains in between) and the less poor who could pay for a tiny room, just big enough for a bed and a dresser. The small hallway was lined with these doors. The last resident was sent to another facility in 1970. 170 people lived there at one time.

Old folks at Heiligengeist-Hospital, ca. 1970

Monday, October 8

Today we visited Travemünde and *Brodtener Ufer* (Brodten Shore). Travemünde is a long beach on an arm of the Trave River that opens into the Baltic Sea. Visible from the beach is the old border with the former East Germany. People could see their freedom just a swim away. They couldn't even try it, though, because only military personnel were allowed there. Also across the water is a hideous apartment complex being put up by a Danish company. It destroyed lovely woods and fields, and is an eyesore. Ferries and container ships come and go.

There is an old, beautiful hotel where bathers used to stay. A fat part of the beach features imaginative playground equipment. Henning and Elizabeth and Volker walked the mole/causeway out to the lighthouse. Upon our return, we saw the prices charged for being on the beach, and a lovely statue of a harbor pilot. We ate herring on bread at a pleasant outdoor cafe.

From there we drove to Brodtner Ufer. There, sandstone cliffs are being eaten away by rain and sea, and every few years the bicycle/walking path is moved ten feet into the farmers' pastures. We passed the remains of an old bunker with twisted rebar extruding. Elizabeth rested her hand on it, and wondered bitterly how much money and effort people will expend in order to kill each other.

We went to dinner at the "Schabbelhaus," a large historical inn in Lübeck, which was decorated with all things nautical, including large models of ships, paintings of ships, and charming carvings on the "walls" of booths. Pleasantly formal, good service, disappointing food.

Our first stop Monday morning was a visit to the harbor where "Only You," the Vogelsang's sailboat, is docked. That makes three families we know with dedicated sailors: Henriette's husband, Gesa's family, Volker and Elke.

Tuesday, October 9

Today we took a train and S-Bahn to Altona-Hamburg. Axel and Gabi, he as warm and kind, she as fond and ebullient, as ever. We spent enough time in their office to chat with Sasha and for Henning to check his email, and then Axel drove us to the Elbphilharmonie where Gesa (Kirsten and Friedrich's oldest daughter) was waiting. We walked around the port part of Hamburg, familiar to Gesa because she lives only 30 minutes away, and then had salads in the restaurant Gabi and Axel had taken us to at the beginning of our trip. It was wonderful to see Gesa, all grown up, 46, with two grown stepchildren and son Max, who is fourteen. We got another perspective on the family situation.

At the end of our day trip to Hamburg to meet with Gesa, Volker picked us up at the Lübeck train station (we were misled onto the wrong train

Low income housing

and almost missed the right one) and took us to see a "little fishing village" on the river. We saw scant signs of fishing. It is a small settlement where the flower gardens are beautiful and well tended, and the thatched-roof houses right out of Disney, and decorated for "cute." It was a bit creepy to see no people on our walk through the village on a designated path — this place is an enclave of the past, preserved into the present. Folks still live here, though they can no longer earn a living fishing from the Trave but commute to day jobs in the city. On the way back, we saw more people, including a woman in her seventies, who had just come from

the beauty parlor where they gave her carefully swooped hair and painted on her eyebrows. She wore a jacket trimmed with fake fur and was sweeping delinquent leaves into a dustpan.

Wednesday, October 10

Last day in Lübeck. We parked in an underground garage, finding out later that most people do not respect the rule that no one park in the pedestrian streets after 10:00am. Apparently the police pay no attention, and it could be that the merchants would not flourish if they did.

We strolled to the center town square, next to the Rathaus, and found that, again, small spaces historically used for public events are now housing small businesses. We raised the question of where the not-so-well-off live, and Volker showed us tiny alleyways, made charming with flowers and decorations, lined with tiny apartments in which students and low income folks live. They are very close to their neighbors.

In the Square, there is a separate structure with handsome arches, a decorative cupola, and ancient wooden pillars to which women used to be tied up for a day and spat on by the passers-by. For what? Disobedience to their husbands? Dressing inappropriately? Grim to see and to contemplate.

At the edge of the square is a bronze model of Lübeck with information in Braille. A gift from a service organization, such as the International Rotary Club, for the blind.

Lastly, we visited the *Kunsthaus Lübeck* (Art House Lübeck) formerly a private residence, with some good sculpture in stone, ceramic and plaster, and some very fine art.

Gut Laack

Thursday, October 11

Last night, after he took us on a walk through a nearby wood, Volker took himself to bed with a bad chill. Elke, Henning and Elizabeth had supper and a pleasant conversation about common topics — weather, Christmas, children, travel. We continued the conversation over a glass of wine. Later in the evening, Volker got up to tell us he was still alive, but sounded so bad we urged him to return to bed. The next morning, Elke drove us to the train station, and our farewells were warm and heartfelt. They were wonderful hosts; we could not have had better guides to the wonderful city. Lübeck joins Dresden as a city in which Elizabeth could feel at home.

We took the train from Lübeck to Hamburg, where Henning's nephew, Friedjof, picked us up and drove us back to Freiburg, to the family farm Friedjof has managed since he inherited it from his parents when he got married. During the drive, Elizabeth asked about the fruit label, "Altes Land" (Old Land), which is advertised everywhere, and Friedjof told us that today the name is identified with fruit produced through tree mono-cropping. We saw heavy plastic stretched over cherry trees, and apple trees pruned so that only apples remain. The espalier method of pruning makes picking, mowing, spraying, easier to do, but looks as if the trees are being tortured and not allowed to live out their natural life cycles. Elizabeth winced a little at the four-hour drive Friedjof had today.

He and his wife, Inge, have two darling girls, Maria and Greta. Friedjof and Inga have done a lot of remodeling of the house, including the room we are staying in. Henning went on a farm tour with Friedjof this afternoon. They have a lot to talk about, one farmer to another, although their methods and goals are quite different.

Friday, October 12

Henning returned from helping Friedjof take dinner to four men who are working in the fields to bring in hay and silage and grain. One is Julius, Friedjof's apprentice, the others have their own equipment and hire out by the hour. Henning noted that farmers here are much more aware of environmental concerns than they used to be, but working with the government is more adversarial than co-operative. At issue are fields by the Elbe, owned by the government but leased to the farmers. The topic was one we discussed with Friedrich — birds vs. crops. According to Friedjof, *Nonnengänse* (Barnacle Geese) had been on the verge of disappearing until flood plains were again made available to them, and now their numbers are healthy. Farmers take one or two cuttings of grass per year. The geese, who have no natural predators, now appear in the hundreds of thousands, and can strip a field in one night. We saw them today, covering a field, as we walked along the Elbe. When

they flew, the flock was noisy, and made beautiful patterns over us.

The birds, however, destroy crops. The government pays for the loss, but the farmer wants to make a successful crop. Friedjof wrote his Master's thesis about finding a balance — being able to get into the fields for the first cutting before the last bird has flown. But the government flies (at 700 Euros per flight) scientists from Southern Germany to take statistics, and they are not interested in what the farmers have to say.

Wolves have started invading Germany, coming in from Poland. We saw an impressive map of reported sightings of packs, pairs, and solitaries, and the numbers are amazingly high. The government pays for lost sheep, but the farmers don't want the money, they want their sheep. There are probably plenty of incidents of "shoot, shovel, and shut up," as Ivan Doig once wrote about bears in the West. Wild boars are also prevalent — we've seen signs of them in every country place we've been, and their rooting does a lot of damage. They are protected, but Friedjof told us about sitting on the dike with his gun, watching boars move uphill when the Elbe floods. Unlike the geese, wild boar tastes good.

Friedjof practices organic methods whenever possible, but feels constrained by market demands and the need to maximize farm income to retire debt. He measures how many insects are infesting the canola or rape seed before he sprays, and does it as seldom as possible. He has planted a small orchard for family use, and will let the trees live naturally, without spraying, weeding and harvesting manually.

The apple orchards we passed on our way to the manor farm are "harvested" by violence. A metal tape is tied around the tree, and a machine yanks on the tree, so that the apples fall into a blanket. Trees are harvested in seconds, terribly stressed, and replaced every few years. More and more, human labor is being replaced by machines. A whole traditional way of life in agricultural work is rapidly being lost.

Most farmers, Friedjof argues, need to use glyphosate, or its equivalent, to "clean" a field before seeding. Lynn Weidenbach, our friend in the Skagit Valley, does the same, because he could not sell his grain if it contained weed seeds. Research shows that the effects (killing micro-and macrobiotic life as well as the weeds) of one spraying are gone — the salts metabolized — within 48 hours. Our interns opted to pull the mustard and dig the thistles and burdock rather than spraying, but the mustard especially came back year after year. Henning tried pulling, repeated mowing, and finally baled a whole field of mustard. Drying volatilized the toxins, and sheep and cows could eat it — another of Henning's creative responses to drought and a lack of pasture. When other farmers are feeding out their winter hay, we have cows and sheep in the woods or on the mustard. Grazing animals in the woods serves two purposes: they get grass and leafy greens, and the forest is cleared of the underbrush that could feed a fire.

Saturday, October 13

Friedjof drove us back to Hamburg. On Friday night we had all gone out to dinner. Conversation was not consequential, but there was a wonderful warm feeling among us. Maria and Greta have been a special delight. They are sweet, loving, active children; we enjoyed watching them on the trampoline and driving around the farm's acreage with their father, watering the cows, checking the fences. Inga is a loving and attentive wife and mother, and we felt welcome in their home.

This morning we gave them the poster of May Day on the S&S Homestead, Christa Malay's drawing of children winding the Maypole. Henning wrote a particularly heartfelt note about our appreciation for their family and our stay with them, and there were some tears at our parting.

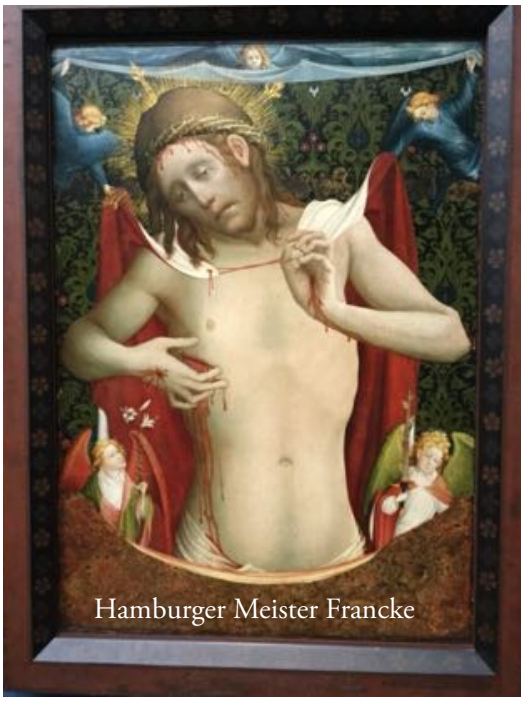
We started on the back roads to Hamburg, but Inga called, asking us to take pictures of ourselves. We turned around, went back to the *Hof* (farm), and took pictures of everybody. We're glad we did. They turned out well, and this morning we forwarded them to Gut Laack.

Hamburg again

On arriving in Hamburg, we checked in to our clean, well located, but not-very-cozy hotel, had coffee and a meal, took a walk by the Elbe, contacted Axel and went to bed. The difference between staying in a hotel and staying with family is dramatic. We always feel a bit lost in hotels.

Sunday, October 14

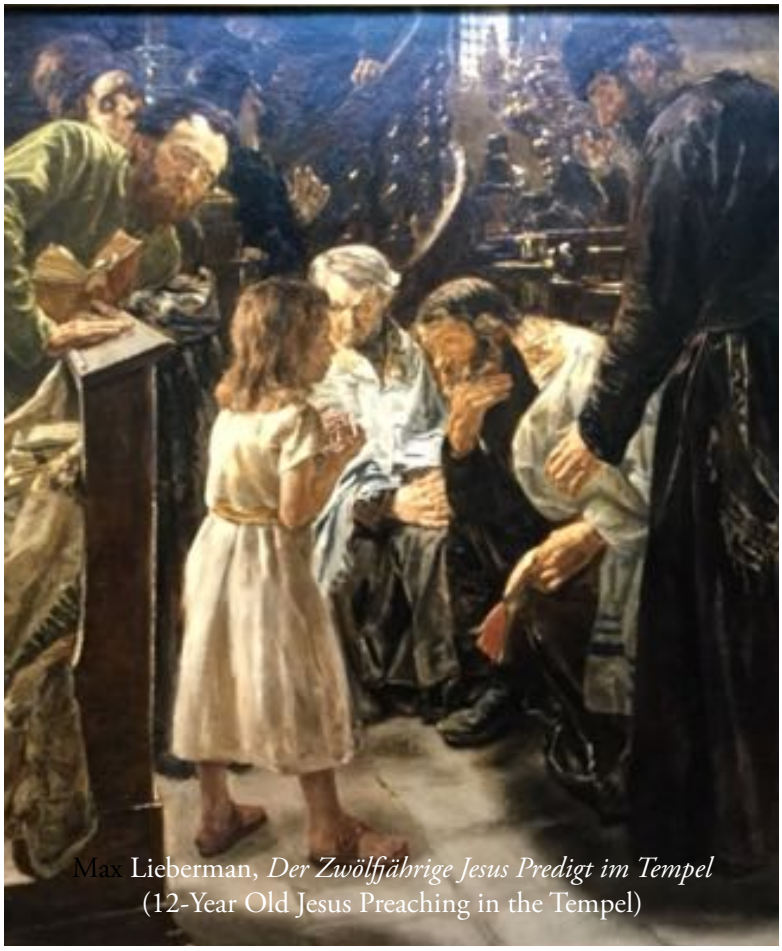
Since museums in Germany are closed on Mondays, we went to the *Kunsthalle* (Art Hall) on Sunday. We were escorted by Heino, Axel's closest friend (who had visited us on Lopez Island years ago), because he is an art lover, and Axel is not. The



Hamburger Meister Francke

exhibits there are wonderful. Religious and classical motifs predominated in the first part of the collection. Wall-mounted commentary pointed out that, in the Middle Ages, few people could read, and so paintings and altar pieces comprised a lot of their religious education, as for example in the portrait of the crucified Christ by the so-called *Hamburger Meister* (Hamburg Masters), active between 1425 and 1436.

The collection at the Kunsthalle is very impressive and varied, enough for a lifetime of study. We were struck by how many unknown artists of the highest quality were there, including several North German painters of the 15-16th centuries of whom we had never heard before. We reveled in the Romantics, of course, such as Philip Otto Runge (1777-1810), Carl Gustav Careus (1739-1864), the Norwegian Johan Christian Dahl (1788-1857), Ludwig Richter (1803-1884), Louis Gurlitt (1812-1897), Friedrich Wassmann (1805-1886), Friedrich Nerly (1807-1878), and



Max Lieberman, *Der Zwölfjährige Jesus Predigt im Tempel*
(12-Year Old Jesus Preaching in the Tempel)

Carl Spitzweg (1808-1848). The collection of paintings by Caspar David Friedrich (the painting of the traveler in the fog had come back from Berlin, and it was wonderful to see it again) was enthralling. There were some lovely examples of Impressionism: Renoir, Degas, Lautrec, Millet, Cezanne, Manet, Gauguin, as well as some characteristic pieces by "Jugendstil" painters, Max Klinger (1857-1920), Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882). We enjoyed the wonderful realism of Max Liebermann (1847-1935), for instance in his depiction of the 12-year old Jesus teaching his elders in the temple. As ever, we were moved by seeing originals rather than reproductions.

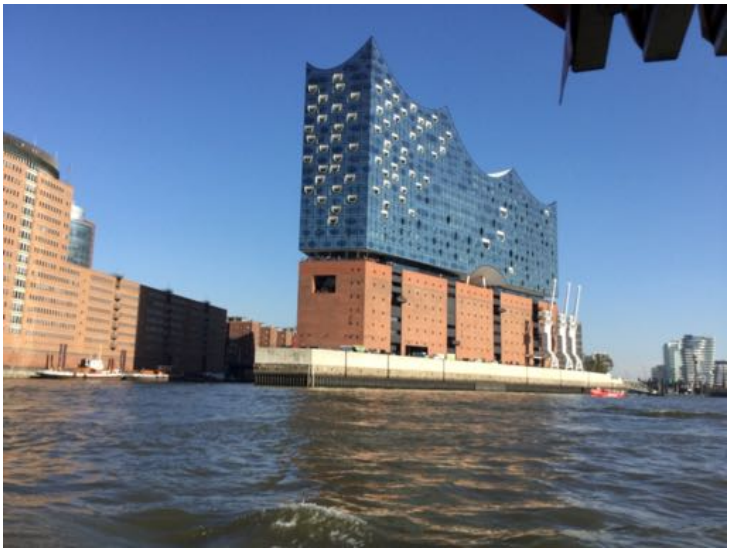

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Helen of Troy,* 1863

We were fascinated by the special exhibit (*Der Wendepunkt — Katastrophen als Neue Mythen* [The Turning Point — Catastrophies as New Myths]), which displayed paintings of natural disasters, made relevant to the threat of climate change — The Biblical Flood, Vesuvius swallowing up Pompeii, shipwrecks, fires, all based on mythical and historical events. There was a brief, affecting film of three Muslim men sitting on a bench regarding a painting of a shipwreck. The hull is huge, people drowning, trying to stay in a lifeboat or put a raft together. The painting evoked Nature dominating the tiny human figures. After a while, the three men in the film, still expressionless, get up and leave. A strong, subtle commentary on the current helplessness of governments, scientists and politicians in the face of impending ecological disaster.

After several hours at the Kunsthalle, the three of us drove through Hamburg and to a suburb, where Axel and Gabi awaited us in a very nice restaurant whose windows gave on to a riding ring. During our meal, a young woman put a horse through its well-trained paces. Heino and Gabi argued about wolves (Gabi has a friend who has rescued Arctic wolves that have become pets, and Gabi goes once a week to pet and play with them. She is a fan, Heino is not. Axel remains silent. Smart man.)

Monday, October 15

On Monday, Henning and Elizabeth walked along the Elbe, then caught a subway train to Altona, passing through beautiful woods and villages along the way. We walked to Axel's office, and then the three of us drove to the waterfront for a splendid boat tour of the astonishingly clean and dramatic harbor of Hamburg. The shipyards are mostly closed, since China and Korea build ships more cheaply than Germany does now. Container ships everywhere. The biggest yacht in the world, owned by a Russian oligarch who lives in England. We were told that the yacht cost billions of dollars, which could, used properly, feed and house a lot of Russians. Great views of sailing ships, a paddle steamer, a German



warship, and of the Elbphilharmonie situated in the middle of the harbor.

After the harbor tour, we walked to a nice little restaurant, where we were again overfed on fresh herring and other delicious fare. On the sidewalk outside the restaurant we walked over some brass tiles in the pavement commemorating Jews who had lived there and were deported and murdered in a concentration camp in Minsk, a town in Belarus.

Axel and Gabi drove us to our Temperance Hotel (no wine available). We said goodbye to Gabi, who has to work today. On the drive, Elizabeth tried to convince her that the Queen Mary II is a wonderful way to travel. She does not like to travel by air or water, but we assured her that she'd never know she was on a ship, and would never feel crowded, and she would need only one outfit for the gala evenings.

In the early evening, Henning and Elizabeth walked to a pleasant restaurant, the *Whithus* (White House), filled with young couples and families, where we had a pear brandy and small, satisfying meal. We're looking forward to smaller meals and shedding some pounds. Gesa called, and Henning told her about our visit with Friedjof and his family, about how sweet they are together. We hope something comes of these talks and visits, outside of the fact that we may be in for a lot of guests this coming year.

Back to New York by way of Southampton

Tuesday, October 16 to Wednesday, October 24

On Tuesday, October 16, we boarded the Queen Mary II in Hamburg for the return to New York. Elizabeth had her usual restless not-much-sleep the night before, as she always does before a travel day. Axel picked us up and dropped us off in good time. The computers choked up at the check-in counter and made everybody about an hour late in boarding, but our suitcases were in our stateroom when we got to it, and the cafeteria was still open for lunch.

Our dinner companions, Heather and Stuart from Australia, Esther and Charles from Corvallis, Oregon, are nice, friendly people, but have little to tell us about their lives at home because they travel all the time. This is the tenth trip on the Queen Mary II for Charles and Esther. We miss the warmth we developed with Helmut and Sabina, Peggy and Willis, with whom we shared a dinner table on the way over. There was a confiding tone to our conversations that we can't seem to develop with these folks.

Our day ashore at Southhampton on October 18 was a revelation. You can "walk the walls" that remain of medieval Southampton and reflect on the ancient and varied history of this city since the Bronze Age. Remains of Roman settlements (43-410 AD) dot the landscape around the city, but we did not have time to visit them. The Anglo-Saxons who swept up from Denmark and Northern Germany dominated the area from 400 on, followed by Vikings who established their rule in Eastern England between 700 and 1066, when both Saxons and Vikings were conquered by the Normans crossing the English Channel under the leadership of William, grandson of a Viking chieftain, Rollo, who had established himself as the ruler of the region of Normandy in the previous century. During the medieval period, 1154-1495, Henry II, the first king of the House of Plantagenets, established Southampton Castle, mostly to store the wine he imported from his ancestral France. The Black Death reached England in 1348 via the merchant ships regularly docking in Southampton Harbor. During World War I, Southampton became the principal point of embarkation for the British and American troops fighting on the continent. Hit hard during bombing raids during World War II, Southampton once again became the launching pad for the invasion of Europe on D-Day.

Reconstruction after the war left Southampton with the low architectural quality that strikes the visitor to the city today. Southampton is now the principal port of the cruise ship industry in England, including the Cunard Line which numbers the Mary Queen II in its fleet.

The Mayflower monument near the harbor is an odd stone pillar topped with a columned copula and a small model of the ship, with plaques put on rather haphazardly,

probably by the descendants of some people that sailed and made history, but the tributes are random. Henning felt that England must have been glad to get rid of a bunch of Puritan troublemakers, and grudgingly put up the monument.

St. Mary's Church and Southampton Cathedral were both closed when we were there, the museum did not seem inviting, the signs were confusing (nothing on the map we had corresponded with actual street signs). Somewhat lost, we wandered into a civic building because it looked like a museum, and overheard a civil servant ream out a couple of young women, instead of helping them sign up for services they needed, and we thought, "Lord, this is the British social welfare system."

Seeing Southhampton makes you feel the despair the British must be feeling: every other office, shop or former public space is "To Let", cafes look like industrial sites, sidewalks are crumbling, businesses are closed.

It is interesting that the second crossing did not have the enchantment of the first.

Gratefully returning to the Queen Mary II for lunch, we met a couple from Scotland who expressed their support for Brexit, hoping that the British government will keep the money now going to Brussels at home, repair infrastructure and restore a crumbling health care system, once one of the best in the world.

Yesterday, we met two attractive, thoughtful women at lunch, and looked for them today without success. One is German, the other American, both live in Denver. We are hungry for intelligent conversation and not finding it in other folks on the ship at this point.

We attended a lecture on Dunkirk that Elizabeth liked, and Henning found holes in. Otherwise, the entertainment on this trip so far has been disappointing. As are the fellow passengers. Queen Mary II is trying to maintain the dress code, but it's an uphill battle, and we think they are going to lose. When a man wears flip-flops and a stained T-shirt to a formal dinner, it's Sayonara to the atmosphere the ship tries to create.

Henning and I, anticipating our arrival in New York, spent some time planning visits to the Frick and the Guggenheim, which lifted our spirits a bit. We have yet to review our months away from home: it will take time. Right now, we just want to slip quietly back into our life on Lopez Island.

It is interesting that the second crossing did not have the enchantment of the first. There are probably several reasons for our feeling a bit let down: first, on the last couple of days before we left our home on Lopez Island, with all the stress of Liz's suddenly announcing that she and Kim could not stay with Mom during our absence, and the pressure of finding others who could care for Mom; concern about how to get to the train station in Everett on the day of departure; last minute details and chores, Elizabeth kept thinking, "I just want to sink into a deck chair." She wanted relief from concern for her mother's care, from the daily responsibility for the farm, from anxiety about catching our train or missing connections in Chicago or New York. For a blissful week at sea, nothing to do that we were responsible for after a year of planning and preparation.

So on board ship on the way to Europe we enjoyed the brilliant sunshine, the food, our dinner companions, movies and music and dance lessons and the different bars and lounges. It was so much fun and relaxing and free that we left the ship with some reluctance.

The return trip was not as compelling. We had just come from city after city, church after church, museum after museum, friends and family, in a country that is rich and safe, with a social conscience, and were now headed home to an America riddled by massive violence on its southern border and in its cities, pathetically presided over by Donald Trump. We wanted to be home on our island, but didn't want to leave Germany. The lectures, movies, and entertainment on the trip back proved to be puerile — bad movies, Las Vegas-style entertainment, everything apparently aimed at a geriatric crowd.

This crossing, the food was plentiful without being satisfying. However, we make no complaint about a kitchen that produces fifteen

thousand meals a day. We have both put on unwanted pounds, because we were unable to turn down carefully prepared meals our hosts in Germany, Norway, and Austria had made for us when we were guests, and on ship, eating is a regular activity.

Our dinner companions were mixed — one couple we really enjoyed, the other less easy to talk or establish a relationship with. Lunch companions were, occasionally, comically awful — loud old men with distinctly regressive political opinions, who were rude or dismissive to the staff. Everyone seems to be a travel nut. Apparently there are people who live on board this ship and just go back and forth across the Atlantic. Elizabeth thought about this carefully. If she were old and rich and single, would she want to live on a ship where meals are provided, laundry is done, there are mixers and Bingo and board games and knitting and music in the lounges, swimming pools and hot tubs, Karaoke and Trivial Pursuit, two lectures a day, two movies a day, dancing, High Tea at 4:00, a library, and a steward to answer your bell? The predictable answer was, and remains, that the lifestyle offered on a cruise ship would drive her slowly but surely insane.

On our first crossing, there were many activities to choose from. The movies were all very good. On the crossing home, we had one or two things to tempt us each day, and the movies, almost without exception, were bad. (A movie about the romance between Meghan and Harry? Really? Maybe for the elderly Brits who were waving flags at the concert celebrating the glory days of the Empire).

Two good evening concerts, a good guitar concert, three fine demonstrations of the guitar techniques of Jimi Hendricks, Santana, and Eric Clapton, a nice Dixieland concert. No Shakespeare this time.

New on this crossing: Henning tried to take a hot tub and to swim every day, successfully a few times. But rough weather and crowded pools limited the opportunities. When he could do it, his hip improved (so much walking on concrete was causing him pain, and it is sore again today, despite exercises and swimming.)

Also new to us were some of the hard facts concerning the actual carbon footprint of cruise ships. We had naively assumed that traveling by ship would create a smaller carbon footprint per passenger than transcontinental flight, but that proved not to be true. We thought we had done our best on this trip to have as little environmental impact as possible, but during breakfast one day, the ship's captain bragged that the Queen Mary daily used as much electricity as the city of Liverpool (population of 760,000!), because the linens, dish ware, glasses, silverware, towels (for swimming as well as showering) for 2,500 guests, plus 1,600 staff required a lot of washing and laundry. The food waste was staggering — ok, so it is ground up and fed to the fish. Worse yet, we learned belatedly that when all the climate impacts beyond actual fuel use are factored in, a cruise liner such as Queen Mary II actually emits 0.43kg of CO2 per passenger mile, compared with 0.257kg for a long-haul flight, that the cruise industry has a poor record in terms of waste water treatment and disposal, that on a typical one-week voyage a cruise ship generates more than 50 tons of garbage and a million tons of waste water, 210,000 gallons of sewage and 35,000 gallons of oil-contaminated water. Would we have undertaken our long-awaited trip to Germany if we had been better informed about its true impact on the environment?

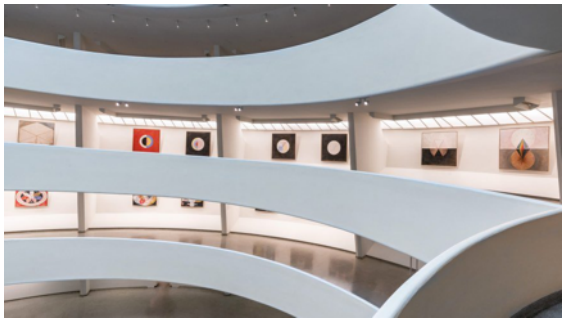
We had naively assumed that traveling by ship would create a smaller carbon footprint (per passenger) than transcontinental flight, but that proved not to be true.

New York once more

Tuesday, October 25

We are sitting in the Queen's Room waiting to disembark. We have been here for some time, because the steward needed to set up our room for passengers boarding for the trip back across the Atlantic. This morning at 5:30 we went to the balcony to cheer the ship's passing under the Verrazano Bridge; by 6:00 the ship was parked in its slot at the Brooklyn pier. The weather was bright, and the view, sweeping from the Statue of Liberty to the Brooklyn Bridge, was beautiful in the morning light. We had coffee in bed with the news on — bomb threats against Obama, Hillary Clinton, and other prominent Democrats is grim and scary.

We breakfasted, made sandwiches, and cleared out of our stateroom to go to the Queen's Room so that the steward could make up our room for new folks. Said goodbye to Stuart and Heather, the couple from Australia who were our dinner table companions.



Disembarkation went smoothly, and we had no trouble getting an Uber car to drive us to the Airbnb. Taxi drivers are not happy about the competition.

We are in our room in the Upper East Side now — a narrow table, a closet, a creaky bed, very noisy streets eleven floors below. The apartment is dirty — bathroom floors grimy, kitchen stove greasy, people coming and going. Very different from our cozy digs in Brooklyn three months earlier. But we have a beautiful view of the East River and a lot of Manhattan. The location, on 1st Avenue and 101 1st Street, is handy for walking to places we want to go, although the neighborhood is seedy and there is no place to get a cup of coffee or have an evening repast.

The next morning, we walked to the Frick Museum through the low-rent neighborhood of the apartment up 2nd Avenue, crossing Lexington, Madison, and 5th Avenue. A few short blocks from poverty to prosperity.

The Frick is an intimate museum in the Frick Mansion, another example of a robber baron who left something behind. The small bronzes — particularly the one of Eve — are exquisite — and there are paintings by van Gogh, Rembrandt, Turner, Vermeer, Manet, and El Greco. No photographs allowed, unfortunately.

After a couple of hours, we had museum legs, feet, and backs. We found the "Cognac Restaurant," a charming place, and ate a marvelous cassoulet with a glass of Malbec, some mineral water, (of which we had become very fond in Germany) and a cup of good coffee. Found a great place for breakfast tomorrow morning on Lexington Avenue.

Despite our mostly positive experiences so far in New York, we both had a yearning to just head for Penn Station, get on a train, and start for home. But we knew that we would see New York City growing smaller and smaller behind us and kick ourselves for missing the opportunity for museums, concerts, and just being in this interesting city.

One of the pleasant surprises of walking the streets was discovering the 92Y — the Jewish community center, which has classes in dance and art, talks and readings, presentations on Jewish life, programs for seniors, continuing education programs, and fitness classes. A kindly security guard explained to us how the 92Y functions in the community and how to access its programs. We planned to attend a performance of Brahms by pianist Garick Ohlson on Saturday.

Friday, October 26

We slept amazingly well last night — the bed was quieter with both of us in it, separate blankets kept us from uncovering each other, and Elizabeth's trusty Kindle got her back to sleep when she did wake up. We dressed and walked up to Lexington and 88th St. for breakfast at a bakery/cafe and enjoyed coffee, eggs and bread at New York prices.

Today was a study in class and food in this city. Yesterday's lunch/dinner at "Cognac" was upper middle class — very good, expensive food and excellent service in a pleasant neighborhood close to the Frick Museum. This morning's breakfast was the same — organic food, upper middle class clientele. Lunch was definitely lower class — a deli frequented by cops, construction workers, food just a scratch above fast food, though Henning's pasta was cooked on the spot, and the sauce hot. Elizabeth's panini came from a case but was pressed and heated properly. Salads pretty much pre-made. Reasonable prices. The relatively poor food, however, gave Henning an immediate stomach ache. We had wanted a good hot meal but not to get too far from Central Park, and paid in discomfort for the compromise.

We made up for the poor quality of both food and service with a late afternoon visit to the Cafe Sabarsky at the *Neue Galerie* (New Gallery), coffee and cake, both excellent, the cake made in house. At the end of the day, we sought some fresh fruit, and finally found a couple of apples at a market a block away from the apartment. There are fruit stands here and there, lots of fast food carts, and ice cream vendors on the streets. Adam Drewnowski's epochal studies on diabetes, which measure the effects of diet-related obesity by zip code, make sense: The expensive quality food stores on high-rent Park Avenue, Central Park, and the Museum mile are just blocks away from the 7-Elevens and MacDonalds in the low rent warrens of the district where our Airbnb is located. Quality, prices and health effects differ.

The streets are filled with dogs being "walked" and babies in strollers, the parks (and in one case, a blocked-off street) filled with children in hectic, supervised play. Henning wanted to take pictures, but Elizabeth stopped him, knowing that there would be a fuss and possible attempt to confiscate the ipad. These days, people are sensitive about having their children photographed.

The cultural part of our day was equally memorable. After breakfast, we went to the Guggenheim, that marvelous final creation of Frank Lloyd Wright, and found three lines of people: members, pre-sold ticket holders, and those without tickets, and people entered in that order. Everyone opened bags and were subjected to a "wand" check, but the procedures were efficient, and we were in the museum in fifteen minutes.

The galleries wrap in undulating, sloping circles around an open center. We had been told to start at the top of the spirals and make our way down, and that approach worked well — we were able to see paintings at lower levels from different angles as we descended the spirals. Five levels were given over to a Swedish artist, Hilma af Klint. She practiced her skills at the Swedish Art Academy, and we saw one of the paintings she did there, a lovely landscape done in Realistic style. But her later, mature work was the focus of the special exhibit — paintings large and small, highly symbolic in form

Pablo Picasso, *Woman Ironing*

and use of color, expressions of spirituality that reflected her engagement with Hinduism, Buddhism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and Christianity. She was influenced (and reproved) by Rudolf Steiner, who did not like her reliance on

Hilma af Klint, Paintings for the Future

beings from the spirit world, who spoke to her and others. She responded to their behest to create paintings for a temple. She produced the paintings, hundreds of them, although the temple was never built.

She created books of notes and drawings and was sure they would not be understood: she stipulated that none should be shown publicly until twenty years after her death.

Henning related to the paintings immediately. If he expressed himself through painting, his work, although it would not look like hers, would most certainly express the emergent spirit in the material world around us. Elizabeth appreciated the complexity of her work: scientific symbols which give form to what cannot be seen with the eyes, abstract renderings of religious philosophies.

Two levels of the show were given to the work of one R.H. Quaytman, whose paintings "engage with the legacy of Hilma af Klint." The tribute brings home (again) how little attention, respect, or support women artists have received over the years. Women scientists. Doctors. Writers. (George Sand and George Eliot were not christened so, and both of the Bronte sisters published under male pseudonyms.)

After a coffee break, we were off to the permanent collections of Degas, Gauguin, Kandinsky, Picasso, Manet. Elizabeth loved Picasso's painting of "Woman Ironing".

The museum has a small, wonderful reading room; what a great addition! Most museums have books about featured artists chained to benches so that you can peruse them during a break, but the reading room (accessed by a door that looks like a keyhole) has a wall full of books you can spend time with.

A third exhibit was a collection of the sculptures (wood and marble) of Constantin Brancusi. One was a sweeping shape called "Miracle" and "Seal". Henning noted that, in this marvelous piece, which reminded both of us of Raven Skyriver's glass figures, Hilma af Klint and Brancusi come together: the seal is an expression of spirit, a miracle of beauty and adaptation, and the

Constantin Brancusi, *Miracle (Seal)*

sculpture itself is a miracle. In many ways, the exhibits we saw today express in art what Henning expresses in his life.

After lunch we went for a walk in Central Park. We did not get to all the beautiful places shown in the movies. We expected beds of flowers and bridges over flowing water, sweeping vistas. Checking the entry in *Fodor's Guide*, we certainly did not see it all, although we walked around about half the reservoir, saw the greens and the baseball fields and Turtle Pond, the theater with wonderful statues in tribute to *The Tempest* and an erotically portrayed Romeo and Juliet. The gravel paths were, like the streets of New York, filled with strollers and frustrated dogs on leashes, walkers and joggers. Mercifully, bicyclists walk their bikes instead of menacing pedestrians.

The park reminded us of Elke, who goes "into the nature" at every opportunity, but she's mostly on groomed, flat paths, dodging bicyclists and joggers. Most areas in Germany set aside for walking feature signs asking people not to destroy plants and animals as they whiz by.

We are back again in our Airbnb bedroom, hearing the TV on in the living room. Unlike our cozy digs in Brooklyn, which gave us (and our hosts) some privacy, and there was a safe and charming neighborhood where we could take a walk in the evening and stop in a bar for a nightcap, we are in a bedroom in a high rise in a neighborhood that is neither safe nor welcoming. However, we are within walking distance of world class museums.

Saturday, October 27

Today, our last day in New York City, was our first day of bad weather on the whole trip, not counting the day at sea that was so stormy the crew closed off the decks. As promised, it rained and blew from early in the morning until noon, and we had no desire to get soaked in the first block.

Our host kindly invited Henning to watch a soccer game with him, and made us a welcome cup of tea, so we were fine until the rain let up.

We returned to Neue Galerie and had a very fine dinner at the *Fledermaus* (Bat), the Austrian restaurant in the basement of the gallery. We had intended to go to the Metropolitan to revisit the Greek section, but the lines were double around the block, hundreds of umbrellas patiently waiting in the rain.

The same press of people were at the Guggenheim, and we were very glad we had gone the day before, and gotten there early. We went to the Jewish Museum instead, which we found very interesting. The second floor was all about Marc Chagall, with only one painting (*The Wandering Jew*) that we had seen in print before. We learned a great deal about Chagall's early years. The Russian Revolution gave Jews citizenship, so Chagall had full civic rights for the first time in his life.

He opened an art school with two other painters, both of whom were interested in cubism, and students drifted to them as teachers. Chagall's playful, colorful individualistic style gradually

squeezed him out of the school. The work of the others was swallowed by Soviet politics, and they are long forgotten, except by historians.

The third floor was dedicated to artifacts of Jewish worship, an entire room for Hanukkah menorahs, for example, another for covers and tools surrounding the Torah. It was interesting to refresh our memories about Jewish holy days, most of which are thanksgiving for rescue and release from an oppressive power or threat. We were surprised to see very little about the Holocaust, except one touching set of Hannukah cups carved from rough wood by the inmate at a concentration camp. On a lighter note, there was a entertaining

film about Jewish humor, particularly as reflected in TV shows and movies. The clips from films like *Goodbye, Columbus* highlighted, and sometimes satirized, contemporary Jewish middle class life.

After leaving the Jewish Museum, we found a decent Italian restaurant, enjoyed a solid meal, and then, at 6:00pm, could not come up with anything meaningful to do before the concert at 8:00pm, so we returned to the apartment. The concert, Brahms, would have been very good, but we could not imagine walking for two hours and then sitting for an hour and a half with no rest in between. Three days of walking on concrete and strolling through museums has left us both tired and achy. Henning needs his tub. We both need our own bed in our own home.

Sunday, October 28

Good old *Fodors*! We read last night that the Jewish Museum has substantial exhibits on events leading up to the Holocaust, the Holocaust itself, and the aftermath. Stands to reason. There were only two floors open to visitors yesterday; apparently the other floors are being set up for new exhibits. Doubtless the Holocaust exhibits will be there; the museum would be incomplete without them.

We spent the morning packing, hung around the room for a while, then called a cab and went to Penn Station. As the holders of first class (sleeper) tickets, we were entitled to a comfortable waiting room and a place to safely stow our bags. We took a despairing look at food options (fast food with no place to sit, by golly) but finally found a reasonable looking restaurant in the station with good food and service. We had a meal, Henning watched a bit of football through the gauzy cobwebs (decorations for Halloween are rampant in New York City) and returned to the waiting room to watch a couple of hours of coverage of the shooting in the synagogue in Pittsburg and heated discussions about how Trump

and Republicans, starting with Newt Gingrich, have begun what amounts to name calling and hate speech, and how inflammatory that speech is, and how nut cases (like the guy who made the pipe bombs sent to Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and well known supporters of the Democratic party) could be set off, even encouraged, by that example. Social media came in for its share of the blame.

A CNN host noted that Trump had not called any of the intended victims of the bombs. But how could he? "Gee, Hillary, I'm sorry your life was threatened, but I got a lot of mileage out of saying you were a criminal and should be locked up." "Gee, Barak, I know I'm crazy jealous of you and am undoing everything you did, out of spite and ego, but I'm sure sorry you and your family were in danger." The man burns his bridges every time he opens his mouth. How will this country ever return to civil discourse? Civil behavior?

Once on the train, we discovered that dining on the Lake Shore Limited had gone to prepared meals, but they are quite tasty. The awful thing is the waste. Every separate item is wrapped in plastic (sometimes doubly so) in a box, with plastic ware and heavy napkins. Those, and food waste, are all dumped in the garbage.

We had stunning views along the Hudson, all the trees flirting their fall colors, and a piratical-looking ship on the water. Some small, pretty towns. A bumpy night, broken sleep. Good breakfast of fruit, granola with yogurt and blueberries, good coffee, pleasant staff, and WiFi so that Henning was able to read and send email, including photos he took from the train. Arrived in Chicago midday.

Chicago & Home

Monday, October 29

We had enough of a layover in Chicago to get a cab and go to the University of Chicago campus. Henning was in heaven. Some buildings that are part of his history, some new ones built on a space that used to be for soccer or tennis; warm weather, trees in the full shout of color. A pleasure to see the handsome, intelligent-looking students stride by.

Henning chose the two most beautiful campuses in America, Chicago and University of Washington, to be a student and to teach. His return to this campus was something like our brief stay in Oslo. Both places shaped him profoundly. How different his life would have been had he taken up Chicago's offer of a job!

The walk around campus released a flood of memories. Henning had opted for the University of Chicago because of its focus on graduate research (there were twice as many graduate as undergraduate students, and still are today) and because he wanted to learn from the Chicago Critics. Except for plenary lectures on special topics, all classes were seminars taught in the library stacks with direct access to the sources, and with no more than six students. Students wrote papers every week. At the University of Rochester (New York), Lewis White Beck had introduced Henning to Kant's critique of Descartes' separation of matter and mind, and of the consequent epistemological skepticism of the English empiricists. A year later, at the University of Frankfurt (Germany), he had thrilled at Adorno's synthesis of Romantic science, philosophy, art and poetry. These seeds bore rich fruit at the University of Chicago, where Henning spent six intellectually delirious years on full scholarship to earn his master's and doctorate degrees. The Program in Comparative Literature was the home of the Chicago School of Critics. Its nestor, Ronald Crane, long since professor emeritus, still taught an annual seminar demonstrating the neo-Aristotelian method in analyzing the works of Jane Austen. A co-founder of the School, Richard McKeon, showed the way through Aristotle's "Poetics;" a third member, Wayne Booth, taught the rhetoric of fiction; a fourth, Elder Olson, how to read modern poetry; a fifth, Norman MacLean, led his students through the English Romantic philosophers and poets; brilliant visiting professor from Oxford, Sigmund S. Prawer, held Henning captive with his lectures on German Romantic literature, and especially on the poet, Heinrich Heine. Stefan Schultz guided him through the symbolist poetry of Stefan George; Saul Bellow taught a seminar on the "Hero in the American Novel;" Edward Wasiolek lectured on the great Russian novelists; in that tower over there,

Helena Gamer and Kenneth Northcott taught ancient Germanic languages and introduced their students to the medieval epic. And in Cobb Hall, Henning listened to Mircea Eliade lecture on universal mythological patterns in cultures and literatures and, perhaps more important, he listened to the great Protestant theologian and philosopher, Paul Tillich, expound on all religions as attempts to comprehend the "ultimate ground of being."

Tillich, like Henning, was born in Prussia. With the rise of the Nazis, he, in collaboration with German-Jewish mystic, Martin Buber (author of the famous *Ich und Du* (I and Thou, 1937 & 1957), founded "Religious Socialism" to compete with the rising "National Socialist" movement. Predictably, when the Nazis came to power in 1934, both Tillich and Buber were dismissed from their academic posts, and Buber went to Jerusalem, while Tillich emigrated to the U.S. He taught for years at Union Theological Seminary in New York, then for a long stretch at Harvard and finally joined the theological faculty at the University of Chicago, where he died in 1965. His lectures were legendary.

On his weekends, Henning explored the world of art and sculpture at the Chicago Art Institute downtown; at the Oriental Institute Museum on campus, he immersed himself in the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Assyria, Egypt, Israel and Persia. All this while, he frequented the Chicago Symphony gloriously conducted first by Hungarian Fritz Reiner who favored Richard Strauss and Béla Bartok, then by Jean Martinon who championed 20th century French and Russian repertoires; and he sought out the jazz alleys in downtown Chicago, where Muddy Waters and other jazz greats played.

These were glorious, heady years of study and writing and endless nights of discussion, during which Henning met Jean Kavanaugh, a doctoral student, to whom he was briefly married at the end of his stay at Chicago. One summer he and Jean worked at a Danish dairy farm in Wisconsin, and during two other summers they undertook two excursions out West with university friends in an old VW bus, to hike the wildernesses of the Grand Tetons, Bryce and Zion and Grand Canyons, as yet undisturbed by mass tourism.

However, while his education at Chicago was like heady wine, Henning was also keenly aware of the socio-economic inequities and racial tensions shaping the lives of mostly non-white people in the immediate vicinity of the University. Students were warned to stay out of the slum districts just south of Midway (since then the University has bought and incorporated the entire area). Living in privilege next to a neighborhood in extreme poverty and distress created not only tension but outright fear. Occasionally this fear found relief in encounters that would be comical if they didn't express deep underlying distrust and anxiety. For example, during the first year of his stay at the University (1962), Henning lived at International House, where he rubbed shoulders with students from around the world, among them two students from the Soviet Union. These two young men quite deliberately ventured into the slums to see for themselves what the underbelly of capitalist America looked like. They were promptly held up at knife point, but when they proffered the only money they had, which were rubles, the would-be robber refused them saying that "he didn't want to give these Commies the wrong impression of America." What a howler the Russians told fellow students over coffee!

Henning had a similar experience. After his stay at International House, he moved together with his friend Benjamin Ray (a lanky fellow from New England who later became professor of religious anthropology and provost at the University of Virginia), to the same district south of Midway, probably from some naive refusal to accept the blatant racism infesting Chicago like most American cities. So one day, Henning was walking across the "tiger cage" (skybridge encased in hurricane fencing to keep people from throwing things on the cars below), which spanned the multi-lane super-highway separating the university campus from Jackson Park on the shores of Lake Michigan.

As he got to the top of the stairs and entered the "tiger cage," he saw a "mean," large black man enter from the opposite side. This made

Henning nervous, but he kept on going, clutching his pocket knife in his jacket. They met in the middle and in the claustrophobically narrow space of the cage, bumped into each other. Henning felt for his watch — it was gone! In a blind fury he turned around and shouted: "Give me that watch!" And the man did! Henning stuffed the watch into his pocket, stomped around on the beach at Lake Michigan for a while, returned back to his apartment still in a white fury, where he told Benjamin what had happened. "But, Henning," said Benjamin, "there's your watch lying on top of the dresser!" So this is the only time Henning has been held up in all the years since he immigrated 63 years ago!

Henning's sojourn at the University of Chicago, of course, also bracketed that tragic Friday on November 22, 1963 when President Kennedy was assassinated, just about a year after Henning arrived in the city, and nine days after he pledged his allegiance to America by becoming a citizen. Like most Americans alive at that time, he remembers exactly where he was at 12:30pm, walking out of the L-station near the Chicago Museum of Modern Art. The racket of the trains rattling overhead was suddenly pierced by a hysterical scream coming from a man running out of a nearby store with a portable radio in his hand and shouting that "the President has been shot!" People massed around the man, moaning, wailing, cursing and standing in silence until half an hour later, the strangely calm voice of a reporter from Dallas, Texas announced that Kennedy had died. Elizabeth, then 12 years old, remembers the announcement in her classroom at school in her home town of Hood River, Oregon. "It was as if all the air had been sucked out of the room…I couldn't breathe!" Henning doesn't recall how or when he got back to campus that afternoon or what happened then. He felt dazed by the incomprehensible enormity of the murder of this young president who had so memorably challenged his countrymen to put country before self-interest.

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Ten months later the Warren Commission concluded that Kennedy had been killed by a single shooter acting on his own, a conclusion countermanded by a subsequent congressional investigation which held that the president's assassination was probably carried out by conspiracy. Later yet, the U.S. Justice Department ended all investigations on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence to support the charge of conspiracy, let alone identify the putative conspirators. However, to this day some eighty percent of Americans still harbor suspicions of a cover-up and theories of conspiracy from the right or the left bedevil the political discourse, theories that are unfortunately stirred up by the current occupant of the White House to deepen the political divide of the country.

Our memorable visit to the University of Chicago was much too brief, but we had a train to catch for the final leg of our journey. Our cab driver reliably showed up, and on the ride back from the University to Union Station along the waterfront and through the city, we admired the beautiful buildings, broad, clean streets and sidewalks. Generously sized restaurants. Large, elegant museums. We wished we had more time to spend there. The underbelly of poverty, dirt, and violence was not visible — but we know that it's there.

Then on the Empire Builder, out of a clean, handsome station that makes New York's Penn Station look like a scary dark slum. The usual trip though suburbs and ex-urbs and ugly urbs and commuter spaces (they are not communities) where there are housing developments and impersonal shopping malls.

The train trip from Chicago across the northern part of the Great Plains showed us grain fields from horizon to horizon, beautiful in their own way, but sad, too, because people who work them don't live close to them any more. We would see silos, the occasional cluster of buildings that might provide fuel, equipment parts and other farming necessities, but we did not see communities — schools, churches, clinics, homesteads with shade trees and a house and barns and pastures with animals. The Midwest and the West used to have viable towns and farms and ranches before "Get big or get out" became the order of the day, and we hope that industrial farming will someday give way to family farming once again.

We did keep in mind that our view was limited because we were watching out of train windows, seeing the backside of this region, and, of course, we slept through half the journey. Elizabeth loved waking in the night or the early morning, seeing the lights of a town where the train was stopping and wondering what the lives of people who lived there were like.

We were missing mountains and water and sweet Northwest air. After two days' travel, we detrained at Everett, where Johann picked us up. We had a meal together in Anacortes, he dropped us off at the ferry, Mary picked us up on the other side and brought us home.

Postscript

Returning home, we found Elizabeth's 100-year old mother in good condition, for which we thank the nine caring women who met her needs during our absence. Given her dementia, Mother was not aware that we had been gone, for which we were grateful. We also were grateful for Mother's longterm planning for her retirement for which she (as public school teacher and single mother, no less!) prepared by setting the moneys aside that paid for the services which allowed Elizabeth and Henning to make this journey. Mother lived another six months after our return and died peacefully at home on June 12, this year.

We returned to a farm that was viable and well taken care of by Mary and Rafael. The cattle had recovered from their bout with pneumonia in the summer, and Mary presented us with a plenitude of fresh produce and foods processed for the winter.

We came back feeling that we had reestablished deep ties with family and friends in Norway, Germany and Austria and had gained a better understanding of the family in the present and in the past, going back in time hundreds of years.

We developed an updated appreciation of how well social democracy works in Europe, with discourse among politicians, the media and the public working to improve socio-economic conditions for everyone, while at the same time paying close attention to the challenges of climate change, north-west migration of large populations wanting to escape conditions in their homelands the West had a large hand in creating, and nascent populist movements calling the liberal, democratic freedoms of the West into question.

We were impressed by the pervasive sense of peace in the countries we visited, the longest period without war in the history of the continent.

We relished our immersion in our cultural heritage enshrined in the vast art collections of Germany and Norway, in the architecture of German cities painstakingly rebuilt after the devastation of the country during World War II, and we deeply appreciated the demonstration of the German people to take responsibility for the moral outrage of the Holocaust.

We deeply felt the progressive secularization of Germany which left its magnificent places of worship empty and reduced to venues of cultural events, concerts, lectures and popular happenings.

We were struck by how much daily life in Germany, Norway and Austria had become like that of Americans in clothing styles, popular music, interaction between the generations, mobility, and travel.

We experienced at first hand the mostly negative impacts of mass tourism on local economies, and on the physical and cultural environments overrun by too many travelers. We became aware of tourism as a major driver of climate change.

Thus, we came to the conclusion that, in good conscience, we could not participate in touristic travel in the future. We concluded that the journey we have endeavored to describe here, must remain

OUR LAST TRIP TO GERMANY.