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The Gardener's Journal

by

James Farrington

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of English Language, Literature, and Creative Writing
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Master's Degree at the
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2010

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Abstract

The Gardener's Journal uses the literary form of the documentary-collage and follows the narrative of the florist business of the Eilers family. The “documentary-collage” form is a form that takes collected documents and narratives and arranges these elements in a collage like fashion throughout the text. The project traces the history of the Eilers family business through family documents such as a private family memoir and collected family narratives. The documentary-collage form allows for the juxtaposition of the disparate elements of family document and fictionalized family narrative. The juxtaposition of narrative and document highlights the intersection of different historically contextual discourses, represented by the family documents, in the characters of Alfred and Lotti. The text explores how these differing discourses (discourses of business, family, economics, war, gender etc.) both influence Alfred and Lotti and are possibly influenced by Alfred and Lotti.

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The Gardener's Journal

Agricultural Office for the Rhine Province

What can I report in my daily journal?

1. *About certain appearances or manifestations of those who came before*
2. *About completed work done:*
 Work with digging and searching
 Construction of cuttings
 binding and
 Designing arrangements
3. *About observations*
 Of words
 Etc.
4. *About books, stories, technical papers, documents, conversations, prices*
5. *About life experiences gaps in the narrative.*

Make your entries with neat handwriting and not too thick lines

* * *



AHNENPASS

Name: Eilers

Occupation: Gardener

This Ahnenpass is certified by The National Agency for Genealogical Research in Germany and Prussia. Many thanks from the Interior Ministry and the departments of the NSDAP.

For recommended official use.

Ahnenpass: “Ancestor Passport.” A document used to prove—to state, to show, to reveal and declare—the Aryan lineage of German citizens during the Nazi party reign.

Ancestor: from Latin *antecessor* (predecessor), from *antecedere* to go before, from *ante-* + *cedere* to go. **1 a** : one from whom a person is descended and who is usually more remote in the line of descent than a grandparent. **b** : forefather—foremother. **2** : forerunner, prototype—an experiment—splicing. **3** : a progenitor of a more recent or existing species or group—an original seed.

Passport: **1.** An official government document that certifies identity and citizenship—certified identity **2.** Something that gives right or privilege of passage, entry, or acceptance—certified privileged accepted identity.

Pass-port: An opening by which to pass; an outlet; a pore or stoma in a plant: Grew, Nehemiah, 1682: *Anat. Plants* IV. I. iv. 153 *The Skins, of at least many Plants, are formed with several Orifices or Pass-ports—pass-ports* for seed and name.

Antecedents on a page of an Ahnenpass

(for seed and name)

16. <u>Eilert</u> Heyen	17. Risode Tijarko
-------------------------	--------------------

∞ 27.6.1755 Timmel

27.6.1755: Date of marriage.		
The place <i>Timmel</i> by the North Sea.		
Surname: Eilert	Risode	
Husband		Wife
1755- first appearance of the family name—		
Ellers (Eilert)—in recorded form— # 16 in		
the family line on the page		
	original seed.	
Underlined	<i>Official</i> naming.	
	<i>Entry</i> into (a <i>pass-port</i> to) a continued	
	line	
Name that <i>gives the right of acceptance.</i>		
	<u>Eilert.</u> Tijarko	
Underlined		official story?

<i>Ancestor</i>	<i>Pass-port</i>
“This is where we start” (ignore the names before and beside	18. <i>Tocken Wridrich</i> 19. <i>Trientje Frerichs</i> 20. <i>Frerich Harms</i> 21. <i>Elschke Haxners</i> 22. <i>Gerd Waneke</i> 23. <i>Gretje Philipps</i>
This is the name	<i>Entry</i> <i>acceptance</i> <i>citizenship</i> <i>identity</i> <i>passing</i> test.
of our	

<i>8. Eilert Heie</i> * 20.2.1763 in Timmel + 28.4.1818 in Timmel	<i>9. Wridrich Reanste</i> * 5.8.1783 in Harthausen +22.4.1858 in Timmel
---	--

∞ 10.5.1801 in Timmel

More additions	his story	narrative of symbols
Dates of birth: *		Dates of death: +

<p>birth</p>	<p><i>Timmel</i> by the North Sea.</p> <p>death</p>
<p>marriage</p>	<p>in between.</p>
<p>basic narrative to follow a family line.</p>	
<p>Surname remembered</p>	<p>lives forgotten—</p>
<p>Narrative on the page:</p>	
	<p><i>Reanstte</i> leaves home.</p>
	<p>Travels 574 kilometers from Harthousen to Timmel</p>
	<p>Lives and dies on her husband's land</p>
<p>with her husband's name.</p>	
<p><i>Certified</i> name that gives</p>	<p>her</p>
<p><i>privilege to pass.</i></p>	

4. *Eilers Tijark Heyen*
*25.3.1804 in *Timmel*
+ 7.5.1881 in *Aurich*

5. *Frerichs Elshce*
* 30.1.1805 in *Aurich*
+ 23.1.1890 in *Emden*
buried in *Aurich*

∞ 15.5.1831 in *Aurich*

Shifts & changes.

Additions and removals.

<p>Changed name— <i>Eilers</i> a combination (<i>Tijarko, Heyen, Eliert</i>).</p>	<p>re-naming (get the numbers right)</p>
<p>genus of names,</p>	<p>splicing branches</p>
<p>The first to die away from</p>	<p>home—1.7 kilometers away from the North sea</p>
<p>Not too far away</p>	<p>(A movement of place requires a movement of name?)</p>
<p><i>Tijark</i> died</p>	<p>(Was it <i>Elsche</i> who caused the move?) <i>Elsche</i>—* in Aurich married and buried there. (she dies with his name) on her land</p>
<p>2. <i>Eilers Hermann Friedrich</i> * 23.9.1837 in Aurich <u>21.9.1837</u> <i>birthday</i> + 4.8.1917 in Teriojki/Finland. Buried in St. Petersburg</p>	<p>3. <i>Osterthun Emma Gesine</i> * 11.8.1851 in Osterburg + 5.2.1889 in St. Petersburg</p>
<p>Patriarch of gardens.</p>	<p>∞ 19.10.1873 in Ostenburg</p>

*Progenitor of a
species of gardeners.*

Start of a business.

(Occupation: Gardener)

Died in a foreign land

planted in a
Russian graveyard.

Branches bend with the
weight of additions:

2 birthdays.

The second—correcting

official certified Ministry approved version

with many thanks.

(What does a change by two numbers
change?)

get the numbers right.

Scattered seed

Seeds.

thoroughness false.

These *Pass-ports* we slip through.

(*Orifice* of history).

Many thanks—for proving you belong with
us.

Many thanks—for showing the name of
your

seed

Many thanks—for staying pure.

Many thanks—

There is no clear antecedent here.

openings by which to pass

* * *

Hermann sits at his desk. Typewriter at his fingertips. War. He types his life in a few pages—to show his family how to survive—to live. Subject to narration. Watching through a half opened window—his family—sons, daughters, grandchildren—visiting for the weekend. See him watch his flowers—his business—his family's name. He. H.E. Herman Eilers—white beard, black suit. Keep the memories as fingers touch the symbols of language in order to determine the direction of business and his family name.

When in sleepless nights I think about the journey of my life from my earliest youth, I see myself as in a dream—and realize that even at the beginning there were hints in which direction my life would go and what would become and must become of me.

Easy to see destiny in the end. Where one can construct patterns that fit together into symbols and meaning. Destiny is a dirty word. Filled with the dirt of the gardener's spade. Hermann's spade—determining the way his family should grow. Master of his own. Self-made. Patriarch of flowers—flowers the reason for a family's rise—family's fall.

* * *

For the harder digging in the garden we had a Tageloehner—a day labourer. He worked for little money—7am-7pm for a dollar—and at lunch he got one cup of weak coffee remade from the morning's brew. The Tageloehner shows Hermann how to make a compost out of an old window. And he accomplished to get a Cinerarie to make roots from just a piece of this plant, a stick, a cutting, which I stuck into the compost, which acted like a small greenhouse. It was pronounced that this proved that I had to become a gardener.

* * *

Hermann—a *Brueschen*—a weak little boy—carrying his father’s rifle. Guarding the fields with flintlock and gunpowder. His mother pulling potatoes from the ground to make dinner—*she “protected” me from my father. She. Mother.* He saw his mother’s *green thumb*. Saw her work in father’s garden. She is why he began to plant and sow. A *protector* from violent men.

Slapped in the face as a child, ran. The boss calls him *H.E.* but he does not turn. Hermann makes a *dive* into the street and walks the *5.5 hours* home. Reaches family fields. Father’s garden where mother works on dry days—only a few green leaves stretch from the ground. Pull the heavy wooden door open. The creak of iron hinges, fireplace cracking wood, oil lamp flame flicking in the sudden breeze. Mother stands over a black pot hanging above the orange flames. She turns with her hand flat against her chest just below her throat—eyes wide. Her shock slowly turns to a frown as she realizes her son is home early from work.

He tells her how he forgot the boss’s teacups outside. How the boss’s wife threatened him with violence. He said she’d be *sorry* if she hit him. The sting. The redness. The rough hand of the husband-boss standing behind—listening. How the boss yelled *Now go home! And there you can get more—more punishment for a job lost.* Pause. Mother raises her other hand—her right hand—from her side. Up to the table, to her waist and. She lifts a plate with a thick piece of rye bread and butter—hands it to him. Smiles. Protector.

* * *

Potato famine. At home the only plants that survived were the *tough* ones. *We tried to cultivate hardy plants from American seeds.* Breakfast: A floury soup made with grains mixed in water with milk added. Two cows at home helped. Dinner: Buttermilk soup and grainy meal. In the villages surrounding his home city, Aurich, *typhus* spreads.

but now the terrible year of 1854-55. Ships of grain from Odessa not allowed to leave port. *War* in Turkey. *Black bread was very scarce.* Hunger—without the ships of grain—tears at throat, belly, and intestines as he eats the poor food. Hands over shoulders for warmth, tears follow the curve of sunken cheeks.

* * *

Leave mother's home to work odd jobs with odd nurseries. Working with trees. Working late. Everyone likes him. He has good ideas. Working with Herr Walther—the overseer of the garden at the Duke of Oldenburg's nursery—*we do not think alike*. Hermann decides to make a *plant installation of ornamental and vegetable gardens*. Herr Walther was very angry but Walther's mother says, "Just let Herr Eilers do it." He convinces Walther the plant installation was Walther's idea first. *Walther likes this*. Place *American Oak* and *large rhododendron plants*. They grow money—the *rhododendrons grow 6-7 feet tall and four feet wide*. Gains more respect and, in turn, a respectable name: *Herr Eilers*.

* * *

Hermann—working a new job at Maybeir Nursery—loved by Herr Maybeir for his hard work. The brother of Herr Maybeir—jealous of Hermann’s success—destroys H.E.’s beloved *Ericeen* and *Epacris-Sortiment*. *I cultivated the pieces by bending them down with a wire...* The brother removes wires and plants die—*almost* cry. Resign instantly but Herr Maybeir refuses to let H.E. work in another nursery nearby. He contacts a wealthy Russian family known to be looking for workers, stating Hermann’s gifts are too great to stay in humble nurseries. Letter sent to Felix Yusupov—one of the richest men in Russia.

Felix comes to Germany. Herr Maybeir praises Hermann’s abilities and secures him new work. Felix and Hermann travel to Yusupov Palace in St. Petersburg.

* * *

Palace. Given manservant, apartment, and garden—*beautiful but neglected*. The Orangerie *60 meters long*. Walk below palm trees, orange trees, pears, plums, lemons. And ever-present Latin names: *Euonymus*, *Laurus Tunus*, *Lauras Ciracus*—Official names for an official position. Hermann being pruned, cut, shaped—into a higher social order.

* * *

100 cigars. Bought while leaving for Russia. *German Cigars.* Visiting gardens and greenhouses and nurseries in St. Petersburg. The tour given by a fellow German who smells the smoke expanding from lips. He asks for one. Hermann obliges. Both walk among the flowers and smoke. “Thank you for the tour.” “Thank you for the cigar.” Outside puffing and smiling. Someone yelling from behind—coming closer. The Russian policeman runs up to Hermann shouting a language he barely understands. *This is when I remembered there was no smoking outside in Petersburg.* Hand the cigar over. The angry stare from the policeman—sharply curved bushy eyebrows. *I was lucky I got off so lightly.* Quickly move to the next nursery on the list and light up again—inside. Smoke from *German cigars* filling lungs with home. Hermann’s tour guide takes the cigar from between lips without warning, *allow me,* he says and starts smoking *vigorously.* *In the third greenhouse he gave it back with thanks.*

Please enjoy the cigar, and keep smoking, I’ll light another, Hermann says in response to the *bizarre* actions.

As Hermann leaves nursery and smoke, he sees, across the street, *the policeman on the corner of Puschkarskaja, smoking my cigar with great pleasure.*

* * *

He walks into a restaurant in St. Petersburg—white table cloths, delicate wine glasses—fresh coffee. He takes a seat and orders a full meal of meat, pasta, vegetables. He enjoys it so much he asks to speak with the owner—Frau Meinert. A businesswoman—restaurant owner. With the money from his new position he agrees to pay for one month of meals in advance—she includes *free coffee*. He lets her know he works for the Yusupov family—her eyebrows rise—impressed.

* * *

Bored at the palace where he spends days tending the Orangerie—his gifts of making and arranging wasted on watering and trimming—nothing changing, no challenge. His real gifts needed only when there is a ball, festival, or party held on Palace grounds. Subject to Felix's whims, which do not include gardening. Plenty of time to spend with Frau Meinert.

After a month of eating and laughing he agrees to work for her on the side. Not because he needs the money, because he wants free coffee—and her. He clears tables, washes dishes, slowly works up to server, host, husband, co-owner. He falls in love with her strength—her business sense. But again he becomes bored running a restaurant with few flowers to shape and make. *I hated the work in my wife's restaurant.* He sees her freedom and she ignores his suggestions. *I was disappointed by her*—not the wife H.E. was hoping for. Makes choices without consultation—his position meaning nothing to her—she his boss. *She found without asking me some new quarters.* In her business a woman is free. *My wife against my wishes had her mother and her youngest brother come to stay with us. My dislike for these two people increased after my wife's death.* Her free coffee not enough. No flowers, no love, no choice. Too strong for a *Brueschen*—not a protector like his mother—not respecting his position. Troublesome behaviour—then her death. Disobedience, death. *I couldn't stand a woman's tears.*

* * *

Karoline Johanson from Holstein... came to the palace with 3 children of General Jodka's wife... She suggests Hermann make potted houseplants. "Everyone wants them," she says. "They are very fashionable." He follows her advice and makes good money. With money made from the Palace, selling the restaurant, and the house plants Hermann leaves the boredom of palace and restaurant life to start his own business. On the immediate corner of Morskaja in St. Petersburg. His shop the only flower shop with large plate glass windows where he can display his goods. What H.E. made. Need stock and trade—leaves with a friend for Liepzig, Dresden, Hannover, Belgium and even to Paris: where we bought small orange trees. Fill the window and sell to Russian customers.

Camellias. Without camellias you couldn't do business—the desires of the Russian crowds demanded camellias—understanding the market. He provides. The bouquets had to be made with camellias. They were bound flat even if they were very big. I had some wire stands made. So that the camellias lasted, I glued them all with wax. For example, I pushed the petals apart and let liquid wax drip in between the petals...

* * *

From camellias business expands. Acquires land: greenhouses, nurseries, orchards, homes, summer cottages. Largest flower business in St. Petersburg—largest in Russia. The size attracts attention and Emma—a friend of Hermann’s sister—enters his shop with her mother. Emma—born into a wealthy family—German businessmen. Her mother wanting a proper husband for her little girl. Hermann and Emma’s mother step into Hermann’s office. Arranged, pre-made wedding—prearranged by Emma’s mother.

H.E. and Emma—9 children—over 20 grandchildren. Build an empire—an institution worth millions. Florist to the Russian Czar. A business to keep his family secure—protected. Imparts his experience by typing it onto a page for coming generations to read—to learn to keep the flowers alive.

Only one person can be the leader or boss, one person must have the final decision or word of the whole business. He must be in charge of the finances—and the demands of the business that they are not set too high. He. H.E. the patriarch, the sons, to make sure there is no disappointment, no unexpected purchases. A large capital has to be in place of about 100 – 150,000.00 rubel besides the reserve for the business of about 100,000.00 rubel—Hermann’s wealth—millionaire florist to the Czar—rises in position and power—no longer in need of a protector—business protects—man-made, self-made—If this is achieved you can count on a yearly profit, live well yourself and have emergency money left over to help other family members, so long as it does not hurt the business. Business first. The main thing is that you live modestly and you don’t have too many demands for yourself. In this way the beautiful business of flowers can only bring you blessings. Beautiful flowers—beautiful business.

Through the loyalty of the future generations I can hope that the hundred year existence will be experienced by my children's children and that they will be inspired to pass on to their children the possessions and achievements written about here. Hermann dreams of generations of gardeners and children and businessmen. 100 years—longer. A tradition in the name Eilers. The root of all this or the seed must be kept alive. The beautiful nursery on the Besborodkin Prospekt and the flower shop on the large Morskaja 19. If these are kept intact it will flourish even longer than a hundred years.

Only in the nursery is it said "Man is free." I hope that all my following families will have success and bread from my life's work. Amen.

Amen—Hermann's prayer to business—until war breaks out across Europe and oceans—Germans in Russia—forced to flee. Everything lost in revolution. Family scattered—Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Germany—Hamburg. To start again.

* * *

My dear young Friend—Alfred Eilers. Grandchild of H.E. Apprentice gardener—reading and learning from a journal—a workbook—to be a good German worker—friend of beauty and growth.

You want to be a gardener! For that you have committed yourself to establish your ability and knowledge

let it grow and accumulate,

become a hard working gardener

Pay attention

Keep everything tidy and do not waste.

Orderly, clean

observe, explore

steady —

caring gardener.

achieve a gardener's happiness and call it your own.

Gaertnerglueck.

* * *

She—Charlotte—Lotti—20 years old—sweeps in a flurry of dirt and petals. She—florist made cleaner gets ready for the start of day. Opens the glass front door of the Hamburg shop and pushes the dirt onto the posh street where the wealthy will carry her dirt on the bottom of their polished shoes. A truck pulls up next to the plate glass front window—bold white letters on black doors: *EILERS BLUMEN*. The boss and her sons and stock. Lotti moves out of sight to the back room. Cleaned just in time.

He—Alfred—Knalle—25—taking crates from the wooden back of the truck. Piling crates on a trolley. Pushing soil, seed, and flowers to sell. He—moving too hastily too smoothly on the tiled floor dotted with pots and plants arranged for display. Wheel hits a potted cedar—wooden crates wobble and topple from top to bottom. A curse—a splintering smash. Soiled tiles.

Lotti rubs her forehead—forces air out and takes quick steps from the backroom. Cotton skirt already smeared with dirt and water. Pulls a leather apron over her brown skirt.

“So sorry so sorry,” Alfred says to Lotti as she walks towards the mess. “I can help you clean it up.”

Lotti does not respond as she grabs an empty flowerpot, the head of a straw broom and an iron dustpan. On her knees she lifts the soil and seed from the floor. “You should change your pants,” Lotti says pointing to where wet soil has left a dark stain. He looks down—nods—turns—takes one step to the back room. She grabs a fist full of fabric near his calf. He pauses—looks down at her hand—an eyebrow raised. “I meant,

after you help your brother. No point in changing clothes if you dump more dirt on them.” She lets go of his pant leg—pours spilt soil and seed in the empty flowerpot. “You are the boss’ son after all. Polished shoes” Lotti pauses as Alfred’s mother, Marie, walks by tugging at the fingers of her light-blue gloves—peeling them off violently from her elbow down. She shakes her head at the mess. A dead leaf falls from the slender brim of her light blue hat as she walks to the office—emphatic heels clicking on tiled floor. “Polished shoes are expected,” finishes Lotti.

Lotti sweeps the leaf into the dustpan. Dumps it in the flowerpot.

Lotti and Alfred stare at each other.

Silence splintered by their laughter.

* * *

Phone calls to nurseries—customers' orders to fill—merchandise to sell. Herbert, Alfred's brother, drives the truck—delivering large orders for parties, balls, parades, weddings, funerals. Alfred cuts and arranges flowers—roses, tulips, daisies, lilies, orchids, ferns—placed in bowls of water, wrapped in paper, placed in baskets, planted in pots. Marie writes down names and numbers in ledgers—who has bought what, when, and for how much—welcomes customers, argues over mixed-up orders, keeps the business running. Lotti sweeps the floors, cleans spilt dirt and foliage, keeps the front window clean and clear—when alone, she adjusts the flowers, trims, cuts, re-arranges too.

* * *

Marie—examining the store before customers arrive. Shifting plants and pots, straightening her blue skirt, adjusting hair. Appearance—performance—business. Examines a row of potted orchids displayed on the sill of the large window inside. Peers between the flowerpots—spots soil in the gaps between the plants. “Charlotte! I thought I told you to wipe down the shelves!”

Lotti—quickly filling a pail with water—grabs a rag and begins cleaning the window sill and smooth wood shelves near the front window—working her way back. Carefully lifting flowerpots—wiping underneath—wood growing darker as water soaks in.

Alfred—checking soil with his fingers—quickly glances at Lotti as she replaces a potted orchid on an upper shelf in the middle of the store floor. She notices his glance through leaves and petals—moves to clean the edge of the shelf so she can see him better. He—testing the soil of a potted fern with his fingers—tilts a metal watering can. Streams of water glide off leaves to the floor.

“Charlotte! It’s time to unlock the front door!” Marie calls from the office. “Herr Drennen will be here shortly for his pickup.”

Lotti exhales—deep breath—drops the wet rag into the bucket at her feet. Walks towards the glass front door—pushes the key into the lock—turns counter clockwise—pulls the door open. Herr Drennen. Waiting with a smile.

“Charlotte. Or is it Lotti? I am never sure.”

“Lotti is fi—“

“Wunderbar! Lotti! Tell me! You ride your bicycle here from so far away, correct? Well, I have just acquired a new Mercedes!” He points to a silver car outside. “I could drive you—“

“Herr Drennen! So lovely to see you. Tell me, who ate at your restaurant this week?” Marie asks as she quickly comes from her office to greet her regular customer. She brushes a little dirt away from her blue blouse and extends a hand to Herr Drennen.

“Ah, Frau Eilers.” Drennen takes her hand and gives it a courteous kiss. “Unfortunately no one of import this week.” He steps into the shop and removes his black fedora. Lotti can see a rounded reflection of the store in his black shoes. “But of course that is not true, as you and I both know that every customer is of import.” He laughs loudly as he removes his small round glasses and cleans them with a handkerchief. “I was just talking with Char—Lotti about my new Mercedes. I suggested I could drive her to work so she wouldn’t have to be out in this heat. Or get wet when it rains.”

“Oh! What a lovely idea.” Marie winks at Lotti as Alfred carries the three-dozen white tea roses Drennen had ordered for his restaurant a few days before.

“Thank you Alfred! If you can carry the flowers out to my car that would be wunderbar! It’s new! So please be careful!” His voice rises at the end of “careful.” Lotti closes her eyes and turns her head from the performance of Drennen’s upper-class voice—moves back to her rag and water.

“Now tell me Frau Eilers. Isn’t this new leader of ours wunderbar? Finally someone who can bring us all together! Yes! All his promises! If he can keep them, I dare say he will be the one, the best. The best!” Marie simply smiles and nods—politics—a game she does not care for but she must agree with the customer, who is

always right. Drennen pulls back the sleeve of his black jacket revealing a silver watch. “Well, well! I have to go. Always busy. Goodbye Frau Eilers, and Lotti!” he calls into the flowers Lotti hides behind. “Should you wish for a comfortable ride in this heat feel free to call. I’m sure someone here has my telephone number.” He tosses his fedora into the air and it lands on his head—he laughs slightly at his own display—lights a cigarette—turns to leave. He and Alfred meet at the front door. “Alfred! Thank you!” He leans in—whispers, “And I would most appreciate it if you could convince Lotti to accept my offer of rides.” A wink, a slap on the shoulder, a fix of the tie, ignition of engine. Gone.

* * *

represent the

branches of

The greenhouse nursery,

tree nursery and school,

seed culture and farming,

growing of cut flowers for flower shops to make bouquets,

etc.

These are equally represented according to political district or area.

agree with the entire Agricultural setup.

* * *

Lotti polishes the front window—business name printed on glass. Remembering the touch of rough lips on her neck. Waiting for a promise to be kept. She sees Alfred's reflection in the window—the cloth passes across his face—features becoming clearer as water dries—blond hair, concentrating eyes, straight jaw-line—tie askew.

Lotti turns and waits for Alfred to catch her gaze. She tilts her head towards the office when he looks up from trimming a small cedar. He smiles and nods. She watches the reflection of Alfred walking toward the office. Keeping a promise made between touching lips—a promise of business and respect. He knocks lightly on the wooden door to the office. Marie opens the office door. “What can I do for you son?” She asks.

Alfred swallows—rubs his hands together—takes a deep breath, “Mother, I think Lotti should be hired as a florist. She is trained. I've seen her work, it's very good.”

Marie's right eyebrow rises. “Perhaps we should discuss this in the office.” She opens the door wider to let Alfred walk past her—closes the door behind him. “So, you've seen her work have you? When was this?”

Alfred looks down at his fidgeting hands, “Well, once when you left early she showed me an arrangement she made—she bought the flowers herself. I can show it to you. The petals are now a bit wilted but you can see the craftsmanship.”

“Is it the one in the backroom on the table?”

He hesitates—trying to gauge the statement. “Yes,” he says slowly.

“Well, I suppose it looks fine. But you know the rules. She was hired as help, not as a business partner or florist. When you are in charge, then you can hire her. Until then....” She pauses—stares at her son—his head bent towards the ground. An old saying: *In the nursery a man is free*. She reaches out and lifts his head by the chin.

Adjusts his tie. “I suppose now is as good a time as any.” She lets out a heavy sigh. “You and Herbert know that I only took over the business because your father died and you were both too young to take over.” She pauses—sighs. “Well you are getting older and are going to be taking over the business soon. Perhaps even within the year.” She watches Alfred’s eyes grow wider—a smile spreading across his face. “It is only right.” She gives Alfred a pat on the cheek. “Your father would be proud of both of you.” She sits down behind the heavy oak desk. Alfred notices a single pink Camellia with its pot half over the edge—he pushes the flower back onto the desk—next to an old family photo of Hermann Eilers surrounded by his grandchildren. Alfred walks towards the door—smile expanding. “Oh,” his mother begins, “I should tell you that Herr Drennen is coming by. He wonders if you could put in a good word for him to Charlotte. He is one of our most loyal customers you know.” She watches his smile fade—shoulders drop. “Charlotte should be flattered—Herr Drennen is an accomplished businessman and for him to be interested in a woman of her position, well, she is very lucky. You can do what he asks can’t you?”

Alfred leaves the office and walks towards Lotti—leans in close—whispers, “Herr Drennen is coming. Maybe I can ‘accidentally’ drop a flowerpot on his car.” She tries to stifle a laugh—covering her mouth with her hand.

“Don’t worry,” she says. “I’ll bat my eyes a few times and he’ll buy some more flowers. That man is paying my salary by how many times he comes here.” Alfred laughs—Lotti gives him a quick kiss on the cheek. “Now, what about my promotion?” He shakes his head. “I’m sorry but the answer was no. But there is good news. I’ll tell you later tonight.”

* * *

“Another man has asked me to marry him.”

Alfred drops the rose in his hands. She continues to pick up red tea roses one by one, placing them in paper, preparing them for display and purchase.

“Was it Drennen?”

She says nothing. Takes a rose—cuts off thorns with a knife.

“What did you say?”

“I didn’t say anything. I just left.”

“What about me?”

She throws the rose onto the ground and points the knife at his chest.

“What about you? You tinker with your flowers all day. You let me help you arrange roses by night. We have to sneak out together because your mother disapproves. In the nursery a man is free. He doesn’t seem free of his flowers or family.”

He slowly puts his hands around Lotti’s hand and gently takes the knife.

“What should I do?”

She exhales heavily through her nose. “I don’t want to be different people with you anymore. One inside the store—one outside.”

“Was it Drennen?” Light reflecting off the blade.

“Does it matter?”

“His hat is ugly.” He puts the knife down and smiles.

“Knalle. Don’t change the subject.”

“I thought the subject was Drennen.”

“No. The subject is you.”

“Fine, but don’t pick up the knife again. It takes me long enough to get a tie right. I don’t need a hole in it.”

“No, you certainly don’t need that. What you need is a hole between your lips for—”

“You?”

Tension scatters with her laugh—and a push into his shoulder.

“Always quick with your words.”

He picks up a rose and begins shearing thorns.

“If he asks you again, will you say no?”

“I’m not sure. He does have a nice car.”

Alfred grips the rose in his hand by the stem and lightly thumps her over the head with the petals.

“Abuse doesn’t help your cause.” She offers him a sly smile. “But then again, his hat is a bit too large for his head isn’t it? I guess I’ll have to say no.”

* * *

Frau. Married. No longer sweeping floors. Tells the workers what to do.

Married to a higher class. A family in the past. Never been Frau. Always her first name—Charlotte, or her nickname—Lotti. Now Mushi—name for a lover. Frau Eilers. Spliced. New name. New position. New job. No longer dustpan and broom—business partner—making calls, arranging flowers, filling paperwork. Frau Eilers—gardeniere.

* * *

The designs and examples herein will show you how you can work and complete this book.

take your hand

and enter your observations progress with pleasure –compare

and take courage from the mistakes, unfinished samples and dropped flower pots.

* * *

The door to the shop barely closes as dollar signs make signs of war. Flowers for soldiers and lovers—engagements and weddings. A march into Poland followed by a march to the florist. Money given to military wages—military pockets. Arranging, trimming, cutting, making. Pressed and polished uniforms expecting discounts. New titles, new power, new celebrations. Orders for flowers—calls to nurseries around the country. Supplies stretch—the freshest flowers for fresh power fill the shop floor—empty by day’s end. Restocking, recounting, reselling, reshaping.

Asked to join the party once—by Herr Drennen in tailored suit.

Nein

Asked to join the party twice—by Herr Drennen in uniform.

Nein

No one buys for future funerals and graves.

No one buys from a shop that does not buy the party way.

* * *

Always dress in a way that will not attract attention

A plain work suit that will work with soil.

dirty or ripped.

Clean and put yourself in order

work

The clothes make the florist.

* * *

Grey uniform. White chevron. Silver and black eagle. Symbols of power tattooed on his body for public display. He picks up his son and spins him around. Giggling together. Lotti watches from the kitchen. Clumsy florist turned Nazi soldier. War has cut the vessels of family, separated after only a short time. The radio now plays good German music and has ostracized her jazz.

“Mushi. Come play with us.” He spins Hajo around on his shoulders. Giggles.

“Watch this!” he cries from the family room.

He breaks off a small leaf from a fern. Holds it under nose with left hand. Extends right arm. “This is how I have re-learned to walk, son.” Legs straighten—no bend at knee. Heavy clomps of army boots. Clomp! Clomp! Hajo cries out as daddy cries out in a high-pitched voice, “Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler!”

Lotti smiles—pauses—turns from the spectacle. Men at war clomping around like fools.

He sees her back turned to him. “Don’t worry, Mushi. How could I hurt anyone?” He clomps over to Lotti and places his arms around her and slowly dances with no music. “I’m more likely to shoot a star out of the sky than shoot anyone. Besides I’m stationed at barracks security. No fighting. And I get a German Shepherd!”

She twists around in his arms, presses her face against the eagle on his chest. She hugs the uniform feeling for Knalle underneath.

* * *

Siren.

Raid.

Silence.

Run.

Secure.

Rest.

Bunker filled with pajama people, well-dressed, wide-eyed, closed-eyed people—staring people. Hands reaching out to touch the blond hair. “Can I hold him” “May I hold him” “Please.” Rest. She grips harder around her child’s chest. Covers his eyes with her free hand to block the craving eyes of those who have lost. (They will take him. They will take).

“Please, I just want to hold him” “touch him.” But they don’t want him.

They want what they have lost. They want to cling and close their eyes.

Feel his lungs fill and expel air. To imagine—to fictionalize their sons

and daughters—to feel still breathing growing youth. Unbury the dead

and reconstruct the living—replace the pulse of bombs with the pulse of

blood. Hide from the echoing bass-notes above—in the underground-

bunker-stories below. Here everyone is equal and all are subject to war.

No wealth, no status. Fear and clinging fingers for youth.

Another thud. And dust comes down in sheets onto blond hair.

* * *

You want to continue. look into
what is available; some of it will probably interest you.
especially those
concerning the
subject
you

* * *

Advertisement for a new home—article in a newspaper. A place of refuge and rest away from the Hamburg harbour—target. Away from the bunkers and occasional bombs. Advertisement for families to get away from cities—live in the Austrian Alps.

“Well, what do you think Lotti?” Meinlien, Lotti’s sister, asks. The two of them sitting across from each other at Lotti’s kitchen table. Their boys playing outside. Lotti’s hands holding the edges of the newspaper.

“How will I tell Alfred?”

“Write him. He will understand, and if he doesn’t then he is a fool.”

Meinlien lifts a camera from the floor next to her purse—frames her sister—takes a picture. The camera—her profession—her life.

Lotti’s eyes scan the newspaper one more time. “When would we leave?”

“As soon as we can.” The shutter makes a metallic click.

“What can we take?”

Click. “Not much. We can’t be held down by baggage.”

“For how long?” Lotti lets the newspaper fall from her fingers to the table’s smooth wooden surface.

Meinlien slowly puts her camera on the table and brushes a stray strand of brown hair from her forehead. “You know I can’t answer that.” She reaches out and grips her sister’s right hand. “Lotti. We need to leave as soon as possible... We can’t carry a newborn with us. It will be too much. For both of us.” She pauses and stares into her sister’s eyes. “I am going either way. I don’t want to leave you here alone...but...I can’t stay here. It will only get harder and harder. Now is the time.”

Lotti looks away and reads the article again—

Remembers the wedding reception with Hitler's face framed on the wall.

Remembers the bunker.

The soldiers, flags.

Meinlien takes another picture—winds the film back. Lotti rises from the table to check on the boys. The boys—playing with a pair of sticks. Manfred—Meinlien's son—swinging his stick in Hajo's direction. Knights? Warriors? Soldiers? She turns away from the game and locks her eyes on the newspaper.

“Tell them we are coming,” Lotti says.

Meinlien takes the wound film out of the camera—drops it in her purse. “It is the right decision. You don't want your child born in a battlefield. Life is hard enough.” She pauses and takes a deep breath. “I will arrange everything tomorrow.” She pulls out a fresh roll of film from her purse and wonders if she can find more before they leave.

* * *

Limo—black Mercedes Benz—polished, open top in the summer heat—with uniformed driver behind the wheel. Driving officers to parties, meetings, gatherings, and home. Safe. A job away from frontline war—within war. Officers complain. Worry they will be ordered to the front. For now they enjoy the drive and tell their tales to the private in the driver's seat. Officers with tightly-clothed women with tailored hair and a bouquet of flowers on the seat beside them as lips and hands caress. Officially wrapped officers with ornate medals and polished black and silver eagles. Wait out front of the buildings with the other drivers. Jokes and smokes. Cards and games. Headlights on the ride back home. Uniforms crooked—eagle's head cocked to the side. Officers fearful of war—member number risen through the ranks—shipped with gun in hand to lead and fight. Letters written to family. Officer secrets disseminated among private drivers. Fear. Enjoy the perks of war—flowers bought with officer wages for mistresses and wives. Fear the pain of war—battle and the dead. Enjoy the ride in the backseat—led instead of leading. Until called to fight—and die. Crooked eagles set straight from the back to the front.

* * *

Kitzbühl. Lotti with Hajo and pregnant with another. Meinlien with her son Manfred—taking pictures. One suitcase each. Disheveled hair. Manfred and Hajo—feet free of the confined space of the train—run around the sisters—weaving between Lotti, Meinlien, and two suitcases. Snowcapped mountains surround. Even here there are soldiers, Nazi flags, pictures of Hitler. Waiting for another train to take them to their new homes. A young Nazi soldier asks if they need help. “Nein.” A pregnant woman should not be traveling alone he insists. Meinlien frames him in the viewfinder. The click startles him. “You should not be taking pictures so freely. Especially of train stations.” The two women freeze as the children run around the soldier’s legs, laughing. The soldier stares at each woman, the children—pregnant belly. “If I see the camera again I will take it.” He moves toward one of his fellow guards. Lights a cigarette. The train arrives and they leave with a deep exhale of air.

* * *

An elderly woman named Gertrude meets them at the platform. She is wearing a wide dress that reaches her ankles, grey below the waist, and a black top with a wide white collar tight around her neck. Her hat is tall and black with a wide brim. She directs the family to where they will be staying. Living in farmhouses—other people's homes. They hear a bell ringing in the distance. Followed by another, high-pitched, and a third lower than the other two. Chorus of ringing. Lotti instinctively grabs Hajo's hand, drops her suitcase, and runs for cover under a nearby wooden roof overhang. Gertrude stands her ground. "I never knew you Germans were afraid of dinner."

Bells—distinct to each home. A message to farmers in the fields.

Everyone knows the sound of their home.

* * *

The letter placed slowly back in the torn envelope. Hand tuning the small radio to the news. Listen from official sources. Need more news. Eyewitness accounts not enough. Gone:

Sirens rang in the streets as usual. Each time before it had been minor—a few bombs, a few deaths. In war “a few” is never too great, “it could have been worse.” Into the shelters, the bunkers, the basements. Grip children by the arm, “It will all be over soon.” Waiting for the first deep bass-note to start the trickle of dust from the ceiling. Look up. Thousands of silver shards floating on the dry breeze. Soldiers manning the guns wait for radar information. Thousands of tiny dots on the screen—all over—floating on the breeze. This time is different. The sound. Air fills with a buzz.

Staccato rhythm.

Not stopping.

Smoke.

Fire.

They’ve felt the heat before, seen destruction. But this time is different. Hidden in tiny spaces with faces of strangers. Watching lights flicker. Sheets of grey-black smoke seeping through unseen cracks. Heat. Rising. A hot July suffocation. Safe in the bunkers. A roar of wind outside. “Is it a storm?” Lights go out. Smoke seeps in. Heat. Rises. The roar sucks away air. Heat. Smoke. Suffocate. “We have to get out of h—” roar drowns out speech. Fire consuming oxygen faster than people do. Suffocating in the streets. Melting streets. Orange winds swallow groups whole. Not stopping. The rhythm. Staccato punches. Clothes burned away. Singed to skin—the clothes make the

man(y). Hair ripped from scalps by flame. Temples erupt. Skin melts from bone. Twisted husks shriveled like black and rotting flowers dotting the ground, streets, buildings, homes. Blackened bones. Eyes burnt away. Feuersturm. Orange-red winds strip the city bare. Not so much flattened as dissolves.

Friends gone. Shop gone. City gone. Three days. Day and night. July heat.

She runs to Meinlien in the farmhouse down the street gripping her youngest to her breast as thousands of the soot-covered stagger from the smoking city. Dressed for bed, nightdresses and pajamas. A hairless woman lies down on her back. Screams and screams. Ash covered legs spread apart. No one bothers to help. Merely step around as if she is another burnt husk on the ground. Meinlien opens the door.

“Have you heard! My home!”

In the distance a bell rings for a farmer to come inside.

* * *

Aim down the iron sights. Black helmet on white fence. Breathe out—slow.
Right index finger on warm trigger.

Sound shatters the end of his breath—pushes head and shoulders back. Helmet gone.

After a moment Alfred lets his lungs fill with air. Brushes his hand through his hair and walks toward the fence—the helmet. Black army boots pressing into grass and sheep shit. Edge of a farm and grazing hills. Smoke curls from the end of his rifle. He reaches out for the fence—the paint is chipped and peeling. The bullet is stuck in a post—crooked splintered hole. Looks over the fence. Smiles at the round hole in the helmet on the ground.

He brushes off grass and dirt from the helmet. Presses his finger against the nearly perfect round hole. Smiles. Fingers run through hair—rifle resting against fence. Places helmet on his head.

Hole over forehead as he walks back to the men at camp. Rifles and helmets ready. Hole in forehead. Men gawk. Mouths open. Fingers point. Smile. In line for rations. Laughing. Sits next to friends. Newcomers stare.

A friend breaks the silence:

“Knalle! What happened to your head? How did you survive?”

“Simple.” He pauses and looks at the soldiers around him. “My skull is thicker than the helmet.”

The men explode in fits of laughter.

* * *

Pain. Pain. Wooden steps, slowly down. (don't fall don't fall). No one home (school, working farms). Alone. Work the door hand—pain. Grip belly. Open the door. Close without locking. Few people in the streets, wrap the thin wool jacket round breasts. Walk to the train station with laboured steps.

The train (won't arrive for another 5 minutes). Sit and wait and wait and wait and wait and wait. Screeching breaks, steaming engine. Step over gap between platform and train. A few look—stare. Wait and wait and wait (please wait). Step over gap from train to platform.

Hospital. White. Nurse in white runs to your side. Wheelchair. Doctor. Bed. Grip.

Mother.

* * *

Train passing through villages and towns—past emaciated people and dead fields. Sent into the Soviet Union—Russia—his place of birth—birth of a floral business. Train stops and soldiers spill from train cars—orders yelled over the sounds of rattling equipment and men. Ordered to help build a radio tower on enemy land.

Driving to meet a team—to send signals back home. Waiting for the rest of the team. Birthplace for a tower on a hill. Russians ask for food and cigarettes. Laugh and play cards with the locals. Surprised by the kindness—the symbols on his uniform ignored or confused. Trading stories and smokes in the language of his youth.

Wait three days—no sign of the second team. Converse with the men and discuss consequences. Of staying: possible death by enemy fire. Of leaving: chewed out by command.

They pack their army bags and gear. Four men—a truck of equipment. Alfred starts the engine. The truck splashes through mud and rain—people reaching out on the way back to base—away from home.

Symbols and signals lost in the air.

* * *

Dörte hides beside the open door. Mother lying in bed—doctor standing over her. Doctor—older man, skinny like all other villagers—suit and tie hanging from his neck and shoulders. Cloth mask hiding unfamiliar face.

Lotti's weak body under white sheets—doctor bending over poking and prodding listening to the heaving chest. A harsh sigh—pause. "I don't know how you could get Diphtheria at a time like this. Now the whole village is going to get it." He shakes his head and packs up his stethoscope. "I'll come by each day to check on you. Try not to spread it around," he says, leaving the room.

He walks past Dörte who stares at him while he removes his mask. She quickly shifts her gaze from the suddenly revealed face—stares at the floor and waits for him to leave. Doctor's heavy steps down staircase, creak of front door, resonating slam of heavy wood against doorframe.

Dörte breathes more deeply with the stranger gone. She peeks around the wall into the room. Mother's hair sprawled over the pillow. Her body shivers—uncontrolled. Lotti turns her head to the door. Raises a hand to wave. Smiles—but her arm drops back to her side. Dörte remains by the door, unable to move into the room.

* * *

What do you do in your spare time?

*You want to spend this time thinking about your future, moving forward and for
completion and perfection .*

Then think first of loyalty

* * *

Italy. Sent to fight. Heat. Nervousness. Uniform sweat—dark under arms and around neck. Dripping from under helmet across his face to the end of his nose. Rifle at the ready. Hunkered down with other soldiers. Gunfire coming closer. German and English shouted together—orders to be followed and obeyed. Last cries of breath—voices snatched away by bullet and bomb. Orders that must be obeyed. Opa, Alfred, Knalle—Soldier. Avoided the fighting for so long. Years. There are no jokes he can say here, no fake wounds to make the men laugh—gunshot surprisingly close—high-pitched whine in the air over top the hill the men hide behind. English words never heard before.

Alfred's commanding officer sits crouched with his men. Gripping his rifle—staring at the grass at his feet. No orders. English words coming closer, equipment rattling against equipment—enemy footsteps. “Billy check up behind that hill. We don't wanna get flanked.”

No one breathes. Still no orders. Alfred wipes his stinging eyes as he scans the hunched and tense bodies of soldiers—ready for the ambush. Each one looking like the next—mass of green men on green grass. One of the soldiers holds a white handkerchief in his hands, rubbing it over and over between thumb and fingers. Alfred crawls between the sweating bodies and attempts to take the handkerchief. The soldier protests and tries to beat Alfred away, slapping Alfred's helmet and blubbing incomprehensibly. Alfred wrestles the handkerchief away and pushes the soldier back. The soldier's helmet tumbles from his head—brown hair assaults Alfred's eyes as the young man lands on the men behind him. They push him further away and protest in harsh whispers. The mass of men begin to shove each other and grow louder. The officer stares at the ground. Alfred takes out his knife and cuts a hole in the handkerchief and places it over the end of

his gun. He lifts his Karabiner—long wooden and metallic rifle—into the air as far as he can—small white handkerchief with a green embroidered vine around its edge fluttering in the warm breeze.

“Oh shit! Lieutenant! We got Krauts back here.” The mass of struggling men behind Alfred fall silent.

“Careful Billy! It might be a trap! Stay where you are and stay at the ready. McConnel! Mathews! Take your men and check out what’s behind that hill. We might have some Gerries wanting to surrender.”

A group of twenty Americans, ten on either side, charge around the hill.

“Drop your weapons now!” “Surrender!” “Don’t move!”

The German soldiers do not understand. The officer looks up at the Americans’ pointing M 1 Garand rifles, Thomson submachine guns, and black Colt pistols. He stands. All guns shift to him. He places the butt of his MP40 on the ground and gently lays the gun down where he had been crouching. The German soldiers stare at each other and one by one they slowly follow the unsaid command and drop their guns.

As Alfred begins to lower his rifle the handkerchief slips from the end, gripped by the breeze—the owner jumps to grab it—chase it.

“We got a runner boys! Take him down!”

Alfred covers his ears—his rifle falls to his feet. The running soldier falls—handkerchief skipping along the ground.

“Go check him Jay. And be careful. ”

Jay cautiously moves forward. Around the mass of men hidden behind a hill. He stands over the soldier. Pokes the body with the end of his rifle. No movement.

No one speaks. No one breathes.

Another German soldier reaches for his gun. An American fires a shot into the air and screams “NEIN!” The sound of their language coming from the enemy freezes the soldiers in place. More American soldiers climb the top of the hill. Guns trained on the Germans.

Alfred stares at the rifles in the Americans’ hands.

“All right! That’s enough!” One American soldier yells. “Radio HQ and tell them we have prisoners that need to be picked up. And for God’s sake take their rifles away! And find someone who can speak Krautish! I don’t want another soldier being shot, understand!”

Alfred looks to the soldier lying face down a few yards away. The handkerchief gone.

* * *

Rumble along dirt roads. Dust cloud in the distance. A local boy running—pauses—gulps down air. “Amerikaner!” he says and dashes to the next farmhouse. Americans. Deep breath—pause—exhale. Children are gathered into arms, bells ringing above homes. Rumble of dust grows louder. Fields abandoned, cows rushed back into fenced-in lands. Drapes pulled closed, doors locked.

Diesel rumble drowns out breath. Crunching dirt and stone under heavy tires. Dust cloud surrounds the canvas-covered truck. Yelling: “Jackson get out and organize the men. Prepare to march!” Dust clears: a lone soldier, painted black and green, sticks and leaves attached to his helmet, bullets wrapped across his chest and back. “Alright men! Get in formation.” Soldiers pour from the back of the truck into neat lines. “We don’t want these folks to get the wrong idea. Keep it professional boys. And MARCH!” The soldiers give a military show to a small crowd of people. Lotti holds her children in her arms—keeping them from the windows. Dörte squirms and pulls, slips free. Runs for the front door—the sound of the marching tune grasping her imagination. She pulls the front door open and stands gaping and breathless. Jackson with bullets across his chest and trees for hair is standing at the door.

Lotti calls her daughter’s name but Dörte is frozen staring at the whites of eyes in a green and black face. Jackson smiles—a slice across the expanse of paint—a brilliant disruption of camouflage.

Jackson bends down to Dörte. He pulls out a small silver strip that reflects the sunlight. He peels the silver away to reveal a pink fleshy sliver. He opens his mouth—places the pink strip on the pink of his tongue and chews. Dörte frowns at his moving lips and cocks her head to the side. Jackson reaches into the pouch on his belt and

reveals a second reflective bit of silver. He holds it out to the tiny blond-haired girl. She looks back—mother frozen. Brother unable to breath in her arms. Dörte turns back to the soldier, shifts her gaze to the silver in his hand—reaches forward. Warmth. The warmth of the thing makes her pull her hand back. “It’s all right,” Jackson says and smiles. The words mean nothing to her, but his smile encompasses her. She places her fingers on the wrapper. Quickly, and without warning, she takes the offering.

She slowly opens the silver to reveal the soft white inside. She tests the texture with her fingers and puts it to her nose. The scent explodes in her body. Strange—foreign. Sweeter and more potent than any flower-scent in the gardens or fields. She cannot contain herself as she bites it in half. Her eyebrows raise, shoulders move in half circles around her center. Sweet. More sweetness. Never has anything been so sweet! She places the rest in her mouth. The soldier has another piece of gum waiting in his hands. She does not hesitate. The sweetness in silver skin is tucked away in a pocket for safekeeping. The soldier stands as Dörte runs back to her mother, who has not moved.

Soldiers march into the home. Some of these soldiers also look like animated plant-life. Dörte wonders if these are figures from her fairytales. One speaks in German and says “Do you have weapons on the premises?” No one answers. “Any guns? Do you have any guns?” Lotti shakes her head. “You sure? Your son looks old enough to be in the Hitler Youth, he doesn’t have a gun?” No response. “Fine. Then we will have to search your home. The only things we are looking for are weapons. We won’t take anything.” Strangers in uniform begin opening cupboard doors, moving furniture to see underneath, going into bedrooms and cellar. One soldier comes up from the basement carrying some pickled fruit. He opens the jar and begins eating. Lotti begins yelling at

the soldier, “That’s our food! You can’t eat our food! We hid it for a reason!” The soldier pushes her back. Hajo clenches his fists. Dörte begins to cry—gum falling from her mouth to the floor. Lotti screaming at the soldiers as more pickled, canned, and preserved food is brought from under the floorboards of the cellar. “What is going on here!” Jackson yells over the commotion inside. His voice silences the men—Lotti looks to Jackson, “They are eating our food! You said only guns!” she yells while pointing to the soldiers with her jars and cans. Jackson looks at the men under his command. “Barry, what’s she saying?” The rest of the men look to the translator.

“She says we are taking her food, sir.”

“And are we?” No one responds. “Put the food back! We are here for weapons only! Private Marshall, could you explain how a jar of fruit is a weapon?”

Private Marshall twists the lid back onto the jar. “No, sir.”

“Then give it back, Private.”

Marshall walks over to Lotti and hands her the jar. “Sorry miss. I didn’t mean anything by it.”

“The rest of you put down anything that is not yours and is not a weapon, NOW!”

A few soldiers bend down and place cans and jars on the floor.

“Barry, have we found any weapons?”

“No sir.”

“Then tell her we apologize for our behaviour and we will leave her and her family be.”

Barry repeats Jackson’s words back to Lotti as Jackson takes out the full package of gum and tries to hand it to Dörte—still crying. “Nein, nein, nein!” is all she can say.

* * *

Get out! War over and bitterness sets in. No one wants Germans around even though they have been friends for years. Gave birth and bled in Austria. Three months to go back to their own land—separated by a line on a map and an accent to words. French soldiers arrive—steal, loot, abuse—no silver-wrapped gum—silver-wrapped guns.

Three months for all Germans to leave Austria. Today is the day. There is not much to take: one pair of shoes each, a few bits of clothing, some dry bread for the journey. One suitcase. An old farmer named Friedeich waits outside with a horse-drawn cart. Meinlin and Manfred are already seated behind Frederich, who is smoking a rolled cigarette. Lotti lifts Dörte into the cart—Hajo climbs in by himself. They sit on the hard wood and feel each bump and rut in the roads. Roads they have called home three years. Once refugees, now intruders led to a train to take them home and away from home.

The train station is crowded with other German families who sought refuge along with families of stationed soldiers. Children listen for the train. The whistle of excitement, the puffy steam. The screaming brakes. Cattle cars. People cry their outrage—demand proper treatment. Gunfire aimed at the sky cuts a silence through the crowd. Sliding doors open—ramps come down. Each family climbs into the carts smelling of cow shit and wet straw. Soldiers and those who fled. Doors slam shut. Train lurches forward. Speed picking up. A rattling noise inside like crackling fire. Sound of hail hitting bottom of the cart. Lotti feels hard stones falling on her hair. She looks out between gaps in the wood. Soldiers pointing machine guns at the train. Orange blooms

at metallic tips. She grabs the children and throws them to the ground—covers their bodies in filth. Anger fired at the roof of a train.

* * *

Six years apart. Wreckage surrounds home—Hamburg. Rebuilding. Alfred slowly extends a hand to a daughter and Dörte slowly opens her palm to a father. A family covering Dörte's eyes from remainders of war—leading along streets cleared of debris. Faking wholeness and safety. Together again in the city—Alfred and Lotti—passions fueled by the touch of fingertips on skin.

The flower shop—charred crumbling walls, glass melted to sand and ash. No orders to be filled. No inventory to count. No names for ledgers. No lists. Nothing to sell.

With Hajo, scrounge through British garbage near British soldiers. Half-chewed mouldy bread, old animal bones to suck out the marrow—search for cigarettes—cut fingers on sharp edges of glass and metal. Grab, steal and loot cigarettes for trade. Lotti holds out the packages to British soldiers who offer white bread. Smokes for food—life. She makes sure they see her newly pregnant belly—tight clothes that do not cover her stomach fully. Makes sure the men know she is more deserving—anything to keep family fed, she tells herself.

* * *

A good friend is worth gold!

Stay away from sloppy people of both sexes so you will not get sick or suffer in body or soul. Have the courage to stay true in your thoughts, so that you never set foot where you would not want to be seen by your loving parents.

Instead be proud that you are seen as a happy gardener in any society.

* * *

Michael—born a few months after the flower shop is rebuilt—a year and half after the war. Few nurseries and greenhouses are able to provide flowers to sell. “Besides, who has the money to buy?” Alfred says to Lotti while they lie in bed.

Begging and stealing.

Slowly growers are able to provide stock to trade. So few have the money—or want—to buy. “Flowers are for happier times,” Lotti says to Alfred as he inspects a potted cedar. “What good is a flower in a home with no money and no food?”

“What good is a flower shop without customers,” replies Alfred.

Wait for business to resume. Customers trickle in as homes are rebuilt. Michael growing—running through the home, running through the streets as Dörte and Hajo chase him to keep him safe.

Waiting for customers to buy. Waiting for borders to open. Inquire—send letters—look for work—talk to gardeners. “Flowers grow just as well across the ocean,” says Lotti. Soil is soil. Seed is seed. Home.

A flower shop in Port Dover Canada ready to hire as Germans are allowed to immigrate again. Alfred prepares to leave alone. “I can get things started over there, and then you can come once I have settled in.”

“We have been apart before,” Lotti replies. “I will not have our family separated again. We work better together, we always have. There is no need to keep us away. We will manage... and survive, we always have.”

He tries to argue more but she covers his mouth with her hand. “We are staying together Knalle. And that is that.”

* * *

Arrive in Port Dover on July 1st. Train station empty except for the few families being gathered by relatives and ushered into waiting cars. Sound of drums and trumpets in the distance. Sweat drips onto Alfred's upper lip—memories of Italy.

“Where are we supposed to go?” Lotti asks, children gripping her skirt, sleepy and shy.

“Someone is supposed to meet us. Someone from the flower shop.”

“Daddy, what is that sound?”

Cheers and applause. Out-of-tune brass instruments, rapid drumming. Marching music. Italy. Alfred tells them to rest on a bench against the brick wall of the ticket office. A sliver of shade drapes over them as they rest. He walks around the old red brick ticket-office. Window boxes of wilting flowers under windows reflecting the station and tracks.

Crowds of people line a street a few blocks away.

“It's a parade!” Alfred says, a wide smile crossing his face.

The children jump to their feet and run to the sound of their father's voice. Lotti grabs the suitcases, cautious not to leave them lying in foreign shade—no matter how refreshing. They stare at marching bands, balloons, and dancers in a line.

“They must have known we were coming!” Dörte says looking up at her father.

“But why did they start the parade without us?”

A German woman walking towards the revelry—past the empty station—hears the language of her home slipping from the lips of strangers. A conversation begins.

She offers them a place to rest and sleep. A single room upstairs. Her home is not far. “Just until you find work,” she says. “We need to stick together,” she says. “You should find work quickly,” she says.

Oiled hair, sticky clothes, thoughts of work and home arrive lazily. Children sleep. Pounds leaving the body through pores. July heat carries salt to their eyes, bodies weeping. Rummage through suitcases and clothes—pictures and memories. Forgotten by the flower shop—no work. Heat lulling to sleep—too exhausted to stay awake

* * *

What good is it if you only do bad work? So that nobody thanks you – it is a wasted effort!

Don't make haste just to get a lot done. Make an honest effort at good work.

completed work

Alfred and Lotti slowly mixing the soil where flowers and family grow.

try to establish the amount of work

the quality of your work

try to measure the work of other people through calculations.

Measuring against the rest to see where they belong.

How much you have repotted, moved from one area to another,

made cuttings, cultivated

to make

* * *

Work for another. Black suit and tie and a black skirt. Last-minute additions to the belongings brought from home. Job as servers (servants) for a party of those who belong. Open doors, serve food, pour wine, don't touch, don't look, don't talk. Oh you can't speak English? Good. Don't try. Eyes down, head bowed. Stop looking at the flowers, they are not for you. Tuxedo? Check. Black shoes? Check. Bowtie? Check. White gloves? White gloves? Mushi stares at the silver platters. White gloves? Omi looks at the flowers in porcelain vases. White? Lotti scans the number of seats set: 24. Gloves? Charlotte gazes at the spectacle of home and wealth—adjusts her black skirt. Fixes her hair in a polished silver platter—practical. “Gloves?” Knalle calls out to Mushi and together they leave in servant costumes—quitting before they finish their job. Tuxedo and ironed blouse with black skirt. Two pairs of black shoes.

“This is not me,” he says as they leave. “White gloves! Hands are made to get dirty. If they don't want us touching their dishes then why hire us? I want a job I can get my hands dirty.”

“I miss the feel of dirt under my fingernails.”

* * *

Whatever is found in the field, forest and meadow, which is beautiful and sublime, and inspiring must accompany a young gardener and make him happy. This is true relaxation, harmony of nature, there you will find in the unforced community of all creation examples of your creations, and an explanation of your work. There your spirit or self will expand and you will be aware of the great table of the Creator accept his gifts.

* * *

Tomatoes. Cans of tomatoes. Tomato juice. Tomato paste. Tomato peels. Tomatoes picked from vines, from gardens. Shipped across the country. Shipped to factories where workers wait.

Alfred follows the group of men to the factory doors. Feels the warmth of the sun on his face and hands. Wishes he could remain outdoors—with plants and vegetation. A few steps towards the factory doors—a strong boney hand grips his wrist. Alfred quickly looks to his right to see the source of aggression—a sun burnt bare head, smiling face with cracked lips spread wide in a grin—yellowed teeth. Alfred looks down at the grinning man—stained white shirt drapes over stooped shoulders, a too-tight belt keeps jeans from falling. Alfred resists the pulls of the man who is beckoning Alfred to follow with his free hand—unsure if the grin is one of peace or deceit. The man releases his grip on Alfred’s wrist—releases a deep bass-note laugh—pats Alfred on the back, “New here I gather?” The man says, “Well I’m Joseph—Joe—and I need you to follow me.” Alfred frowns. “No... English...” “Ah,” Joe says and puts his arm around Alfred’s shoulder and points to the edge of the red brick factory. “Work,” he says and walks in the direction he pointed. Alfred follows a few paces behind.

Nose scrunches and eyes narrow. Scent of rotting food.

Joe walks towards a large pile of tomato skins in the sun. A stream of red juice and skin flows down a rusted metal chute sticking out of the side of the building. Joe picks up a red stained rope from the ground and places it in Alfred’s right hand and stands eight meters to Alfred’s right—beckons Alfred to follow. Alfred lets go of the wet and slippery rope. Joe shakes his head. Points back at the rope on the ground—Alfred picks up the rope again. Joe begins making pulling motions—bringing his right hand into

his chest and back out then gestures with his right hand for Alfred to walk towards him. Alfred pulls on the rope. A metallic screech slices the silence of language between them. As he pulls he sees the rope is attached to the chute—a stream of red skin and juice pours over his brown shoes but he does not stop until he stands next to the man.

Joe pats Alfred on the back and says, “Don’t let the pile get too high—spread it out—it makes it easier for the workers to clean up.” Alfred stares blankly at Joe’s mouth—trying to understand. “I’m sure you’ll get it soon enough,” Joe says as he leaves—another stream flows down the chute. A waste, Alfred thinks, have they never heard of compost here? What soil he could make, what seeds he could plant. As workers begin removing the first pile with shovels and wheel barrows—they nod at Alfred but he does not respond—only wonders where the mess is taken.

The sun cuts into his scalp and the flies lick salt from his arms. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a white handkerchief to wipe the top of his head. Not exactly how he wanted to be working with plants—dealing with refuse of vegetation, the leftovers of Campbell’s soup. Not growing, not shaping, not making. Simply making do. A rare breeze grips the handkerchief and pulls it free from Alfred’s hand. It flutters momentarily in the air and lands in a pool of red juice. Slowly a red—uneven—circle soaks into the white of the fabric—like a wound. The white transformed to a stinking juicy redness. Alfred—paralyzed by the sight—the heat—sweat under arms—soldier collapsed on the ground—unsure of what to do. Another mass of skin and juice topples off the end of the chute—pushes the refuse over the handkerchief—covering it from sight. A waste. Waste. Was—“Hey!” a worker yells at Alfred, “You gotta move the chute—the pile is getting too high!” Alfred turns to the man—carrying a shovel and

wearing a uniform of jean overalls like the rest of the shovellers—coming towards him. The man grabs Alfred’s shoulders—fingertips dig in—pulled along further to the right. Handkerchief gone—“Pay attention next time! I don’t wanna have to do more work because of you.” As the man walks back to his team of workers he bends down and pulls on the corner of the handkerchief—lifts it dripping, “And I don’t clean up after you either.” The man tosses the handkerchief at Alfred—it lands a few feet away from Alfred’s wet shoes. Alfred lets go of the rope and picks up the soaked bit of cloth—stuffs it in his pocket. Resumes the boredom—the sweating—the smell of rotting food. Sensation of cool wet liquid soaking through his pocket—down his leg. Sensing this new place—able to breathe—able to start again.

* * *

When you have put the correct names on the page and put everything in order of type, gene and family then you will gain joy and knowledge.

* * *

“Hello D— uh, and Mrs. Eilers. I am Principal Schumer,” the smiling man sitting behind his desk wearing a suit and tie says to Lotti and Dörte. “Please have a seat,” he says pointing to two wooden chairs in front of his desk. Lotti and Dörte sit down. Lotti stares at the man while Dörte examines the office. “I think that Duh...or...teh... will find a loving and compassionate environment here. However, as you can see, I am afraid that some of our staff and students will find it difficult to pronounce her name. Which could be awkward for her. We don’t want her feeling like she does not belong... so we think it best if she goes by Dorothy.”

Charlotte looks at the man through half closed eyes and a slight frown.

Change, name, afraid. Change what? Name what? Afraid of what? The language still beyond her.

“Dorothy, that is how you will be known now.” He stares from behind his thick glasses and smiles at the young girl before him. Dörte shifts the position of her body in the uncomfortable wooden chair.

“Does that sound good? It’s a nice sounding name isn’t it, Dorothy?”

He pauses, smiling wider at the woman and young girl before him.

Dörte scans the bookshelf tucked in the corner, next to an open window—does not recognize any books.

“Well, as I have said I think that it would be good to avoid ridicule and shame if she adjusted her name to sound more, uh, Canadian. Dorothy is very similar to her name and it is a good name...” He pauses. Smiles again. “Oh yes! One more thing.” He opens a drawer in his desk and pulls out a sheet of paper. “I just need you to sign this.” He passes Lotti a pen and the sheet paper needed to enroll students into the school. Lotti

does not know what to do with the paper and pen. She stares at the page and back to the principal.

“Just sign here,” Principal Schumer says pointing at the blank lines.

Lotti stares at the man, “I... not... English.”

The principal takes off his glasses and pinches his nose. Takes a deep breath and begins again. “YOUR—NAME—HERE.” He points to the blank line at the bottom left. “CHAR-LOTTE—EILERS” he says tapping rapidly at the line.

Lotti nods and writes “Lotti Eilers.”

Principal Schumer sighs.

“Good, now please print your daughter’s name on the line bellow, oh, uh...

YOUR—DAUGHTER’S—NAME,” pointing to the other blank line on the bottom right.

Lotti signs her own name in the space.

“No! no. DOR-O-THY. Your daughters name.” He points to Dörte.

Dörte quickly turns her head from staring out the window to staring at Principal Schumer’s pointing hand. She wonders if she has done something wrong to have him raise his voice. She looks to her mother beside her.

Lotti crosses out her name and writes, “Dörte” and hands the page back.

Principal Schumer takes the sheet. Shakes his head. Crosses out the *te*—writes *othy* just above. Smiles again.

Schumer stands and shows them to the door.

“Dorothy will find a loving and nurturing environment here at our school. I assure you. She will be speaking fluent English in no time.” They step outside his office,

down the hallway—past rows of lockers. “See you in September, Dorothy,” Principal Schumer says as they leave the building for the August air.

* * *

On weekends Lotti cleans large stone homes with old oak and maple trees spreading shadows on flat lawns—dusting crystal bowls shaped like flowers. Scrubbing tiled floors with intricate mosaics and colours.

Dörte plays in the back yard in a playhouse—a perfect family home. White walls, small picket fence, window boxes with real flowers. Dörte can see the mansion her mother works in from the front windows of her hiding place—the mansion’s shadow stretching out across the large property of green grass, maple and oak trees. She pets her doll’s brown hair while sitting in a small blue chair next to a small round red table. She repeats her new name she has learned from her first few days at school—Dor-o-thy—slips to Dörte when not thinking hard on the sounds.

On her hands and knees Charlotte considers the words and phrases she has learned: where is _____, how much does this cost, where can I find _____, Hello, how are you, good morning, good afternoon, goodnight, good. Simple words for simple deeds. She stands, having finished polishing the floor and looks at the ceiling above her, imagines the music that could ricochet off that high place—shoes sliding and bouncing off the flat hard floor—lovers and friends dancing. Parties of the past brought to the present—mosaic of memories and future thoughts and distant dreams.

Dörte talks to her skinny doll. German and English words coming together—name sliding back and forth. She imagines the doll calls her Dörte, a perfect friend in a perfect house. She places the doll in the seat across the table. Stares at the doll’s never-closing eyes. “Dorothy,” she says. Dörte imagines the doll smiles back. She enjoys this place where she can say her name to a friend without confusion or questions she does not understand.

* * *

“Uebung macht den Meister”

Practice makes perfect.

Alfred and Lotti practicing the arranging of sounds and words in order—to belong—to advertise—to sell—to get back to the ways of gardening learned in a bombed-out flower shop—restored.

* * *

Work in Hamilton. Florist. Move from Port Dover. New place, new home.

Work: Take a tea rose and dip the petals in wax. Shape it to match the ideal rose shape.

Let it harden then place in a glass bowl filled with water. Perfection reproduced fifty

times a day with fifty different roses. “There is no creativity in it,” Alfred says. Every

day, dip each flower in wax, separate the petals, shape and form. Go to school at night to

learn the language. Try to have the words form on lips and tongue. Shape the mouth into

new positions. Language never sounding perfect—the wax always melting in accent.

Hidden unless they speak. Bodies hide—voice reveals. The wax melts and the rose

slides to new meanings: Survival, work, pay, learn, hide.

* * *

Open your eyes to your neighbouring nurseries, look around to see what goes on there. Alfred and Lotti follow new economic models—they discard the models that die off—old German models—and use the ones that measure up. And on walks and hikes on your days off go to these nurseries; owners and friends will be happy to show you their work place. If there are larger gardens or plant collections near your place of study emulate and venerate—size matters and sells better. Build and build again the family name of H.E.

* * *

Years of saving money and learning language—working for others. Perfect plants and polished floors. Saved and saved to buy and build a shop of their own. Knalle and Mushi, Charlotte and Alfred. He—maker—arranger of flowers, she—president and CEO—keeper of books and dates. He buys the flowers and cuts and places them in order to provoke purchase. Hajo and Dörte helping in the arranging, writing cards attached to bouquets. Lotti takes the ledgers and learns to figure out the Canadian processes of book-keeping and taxes. “I have done this before,” says Lotti in response to Alfred asking if she needs help. “Money is money wherever you are. As long as you have the right numbers down who cares what it looks like!”

Hamilton florists—lucrative and busy: Weddings, funerals, dinners. Parades—now they order and arrange the flowers for floats. No longer a mystery as to the reasons for a spectacle on the streets—income for business and home. Flowers for lovers, for lobbies, for lawyers, and laymen. For remembering and forgetting. For sickness and health—renewal and loss. Lotti tries to keep the numbers straight in the twisted branches of the ledger. Try to bend and twist it all down as if under a wire. Slowly she learns to write and fill forms in the Canadian way. *Uebung macht den Meister.*

Arrange the flowers. Arrange the flowers. Arrange the flowers. Flowers in rows and boxes. Flowers in trays and soil. Flowers grown and bought. Arrange.

The namesake of Hermann comes through during late-night pruning as Alfred sheds the final leaf from a pink Camellia placed in the middle of a bouquet. An easier way. Practical mind, thinking of heritage and ingenuity. Grandfather’s instincts resurface looking across the flower shop at pots and plants—things he has made. Idea springs to life.

Wholesale.

Sell to flower shops prefabricated merchandise. Sell his work to others and let them sell to customers. This is the way it works now—the future is warehouse and mass production. In an age of production, why not produce gardens? Turn them from placed displays at midnight to bought pre-arranged displays. Pre-placed. Pre-fab.

Sell gardens to gardeners.

He needs a new—larger—space to work. A space for placed arranging. A new home. Another move.

* * *

Dörte lies on her stomach by the large fireplace on hardwood floor—in her new home. A piece of paper on the floor in front of her—drawing pictures of flowers with coloured pencils. Listening to the sounds of expansion outside in the summer heat—hammers nailing boards together, drills, saws, a barn gutted as old wood clatters to the ground in a pile—Michael runs into the room and snatches the paper away. Dörte yells and runs after him through the house.

Building a shed for two propane kilns. Alfred and Hajo and Lotti hammering nails into planks of wood. Converting barn into greenhouse. UV lights overtop rows of tables. Land to build to produce. Arrange a home for living and breathing. Surrounded by cornfields and farms.

Michael runs down the narrow hallway towards the front door. Turns wildly into the dining room and through the kitchen. “Flowers, flowers, I got yer flowers!” He charges through the kitchen and back out towards the stone fireplace. Dörte—pumping her legs after him.

Small cacti shipped from California—some sharp and prickly, some smooth and round, and some with small bright-red, -pink, or -white flowers growing on the surface. Figurines made of clay—small frogs painted green. Dishes— small clay bowls to hold soil, cacti, and figurines—to keep the gardens together. The dishes and figures made at home in the fire of propane kilns—different sizes for differently-priced gardens. From

the imported cacti new cacti grow as clay dishes harden in the kiln. All things made at home. No more orders, no more waiting, no more mix-ups—home-grown.

Michael turns to the back door and takes deep breaths as he runs towards the willow tree. He grabs a handful of vine-like leaves and branches and kicks off—ground blurring—lets go and flies through the air. Dörte stops at the back door—lets him escape into the heat.

* * *

Fourth Annual Tour Reveals Fine Homes

Other people's houses, especially big, old houses, hold a special fascination for those who have never been inside them. Knowing this, the Committee organized the fourth annual House Tour for April 22 from 1:30 to 5p.m.

Prepare for strangers to move from exterior to interior. To see the lives of people from within. See the home of immigrants. A chance to glimpse those who furnished and arranged.

Spacious grounds set off the Eilers home built in 1840 of stone quarried on the property. A family room with a huge natural stone fireplace and an oak-beamed ceiling is a focal point of this home, which is furnished in a comfortable lived-in style.

Second-hand sofas and chairs, space for playing and lounging in front of a large fireplace.

Space for family and flowers—created—not bought. It is the home they want. “A home is for living, not show,” Lotti says to the organizers of the tour. Lived-in—the style of Alfred and Lotti.

* * *

Hajo—driving the small moving truck—with Lotti, returning home from a delivery. Turns onto the dirt driveway—ditch on the right—tall grasses either side of road. The truck churns up dust in the rear-view mirror. Slow tight turn towards the back of their home. Headlights briefly illuminate the giant weeping willow in a field behind the house—still in the windless evening.

Hajo and Lotti both climb out of the truck—stretch and walk along the stone path to the back door—unlocked and welcoming—into the family room. Alfred asleep on a large second-hand green sofa. Fire burnt down to embers in the stone fireplace—metal skewers poking out of the coal suggests marshmallows were made. Lotti can see a small, partially-white sticky handprint on the brown coffee table in front of the sofa.

“Knalle,” whispers Lotti. “Knalle we are home.”

Knalle’s eyes slowly open—smile. Lotti leans in and presses her lips against Alfred’s. “How did it go?” he asks.

“No problems. Just a long drive. Is there any food?”

“Leftovers in the fridge.”

“Hi dad,” Hajo says as he makes his way to the kitchen.

“I see you had fun with Michael and Dörte,” Lotti says pointing to the fireplace.

“Ah. That. Well... Michael can be very persuasive.”

“I see. And are you feeling any better?”

“A little. I still have a cough though.”

“Well you should be in bed. I’m going to eat something and then I’ll join you.”

Lotti and Hajo heat up baked potatoes, green beans, and over-cooked chicken. Sit at the kitchen table in front of a window that looks out to a birdhouse—now enveloped in

shadow. No words pass between them as they eat hurriedly from hunger and want of sleep. Stop. Each holding a fork midway between their plates and their mouths.

“Do you smell that?” asks Hajo—lowering his fork to his plate.

“It’s probably from the fireplace,” Lotti responds—putting the food in her mouth.

“But it didn’t smell this strong when we came in.”

“It’s nothing sweetie. Eat your dinner.”

Hajo pushes his chair back and takes in a deep breath through his nose. Follows the smell of smoke to the basement door. Slowly opens the door and inhales—black smoke. He slams the door closed—coughing his way to the kitchen.

“Have you caught what your father has?” Lotti looks at the wide eyes of her son—the gripping of the throat. “FIRE!” She screams and runs towards the stairs. Wooden stairs up give hollow sounds to slamming feet. “Fire, fire! Everyone out!” she charges into Dörte’s room and shakes her awake. “Stay next to me,” she says. Grips Dörte’s hand and leads her to Michael’s and Hajo’s room. Alfred meets her at Michael’s door. “What is going on?” She slams the door open—picks Michael—crying—out of his bed and passes him to Alfred. They charge down the stairs, slipping near the bottom.

“I called the fire departme—” Hajo says in a fit of coughing.

They charge out the back door—cool grass, cold autumn air. Alfred leads them to the barn—past the willow tree. When they reach the barn they hear the sirens in the distance. Lotti grips the children close to her—looks at Hajo—sirens and safety—images of a charred flower shop—dust falling onto blonde hair. Begins to shiver in the cold. Alfred runs to the incoming trucks—bare feet stinging on loose stones on dirt driveway.

Smoke rising from the house. As uniformed men pull out hoses and send water to the flames.

Pennies in a fuse box the firefighters say. A circuit breaker could have stopped it they say. A part of the house burnt and charred. Lived-in. Homemade remedies. “It could have been much worse,” says Alfred as he puts his arm around Lotti’s shoulders. “You must have used lucky pennies.” A small laugh parts her lips. Presses her head into his shoulder—cries.

* * *

Michael counts backwards from 30—hands over eyes. Dörte—babysitting Michael while her family is delivering a large order of dish gardens—runs in a random direction. Feet thumping on the hardwood. Through the white door to—temperature noticeably warmer in the new addition to the house—after fire. Azaleas, begonias, camellias, and an assortment of ferns—mother fern, tree fern, Boston fern. House plants—not for sale, for home—greenhouse attached to homehouse. Red clay pots piled under wooden tables that run along the walls and one thin long table in the room’s centre. Tables cracked and uneven in their use, surfaces dark from plants resting and dripping. Touch the rough dark wood of the centre table. Fingertips pulled across the grain and lines of the wood—bumping and skipping along wrinkles of use. Damp smells. Humid. A little green porcelain frog on the table near the door to the house proper. It sits between two cracked flowerpots—one with soil spilling through a hole in its side. Fingers grasp the smooth skin of the frog. Eyes painted white with a black dot—near—the centre of the white.

“Ready or not! Here I come!”

Forgot to hide. Duck behind the centre table. Pots and tools clutter the ground. Dörte waits to be found.

* * *

CHINESE GARDENS

- **DISH GARDENS**
- **TROPICAL GARDENS**
- **CANADIAN FIGURINES**
- **POTTERY**
- **ALL NECESSARY GARDEN SUPPLIES**

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(Shipped when in Season)

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* * *

**Canada Week
In
Philadelphia
November 11-16, 1963**

It is a source of considerable pride and satisfaction for the City of Philadelphia that the Canadian Government, in recognition of the strategic trade and sales opportunities of this area, selected Philadelphia as the site for a major exposition of Canadian products and culture.

Applied to represent Canada in a trade show. Language learned. Home bought and lived-in. Contribute to economy and trade. Application accepted—belonging. Travel across another border. Lotti laughs at the idea of a family of Germans featuring Canadian culture with trade of Chinese dish gardens and cacti. Merchandise to match the beliefs and desires of a culture—they know that exotic and foreign sells just as well across the border.

The reception for nearly one hundred Canadian Businessmen on November 13th will afford Philadelphians an opportunity to meet and greet their counterparts in a relaxed atmosphere for a few hours away from the Trade Fair. After viewing the Philadelphia Panorama and the Canadian exhibits, guests will be welcome in the Center for International Visitors, on the second floor. The Pastimers, popular unit of the Philadelphia Police and Fireman's Band, will entertain.

Invited to a party for Canadians and Americans. Share tricks of the trade. Trade secrets. Secret recipes. Recipes for success. Successful people mingling to the music of politics and police and pastime memories of business booms and business busts. Share insights and methods—learn from fellow businessmen. Alfred and Lotti measuring the work of others—comparing and contrasting—learn to sell.

* * *

find

Representatives of society

of gardeners –

names.

hear how people experience—The pain, worries and burdens carried by them but also the

joy of

the profession

the gardeners

counted among these

Businessmen setting up different-sized booths in the large open concrete space. Alfred busy assembling flower arrangements as Lotti places the dish gardens around their booth. The last box to open is an extra box of frog figurines and clay fishermen ordered from a wholesale company to supplement their own—more to sell. Lotti grabs a knife, slides it along the tape at the top of the box and pulls back the cardboard flaps. No green frogs. Instead Lotti stares at a collection of giant-headed, small-bodied nuns, priests and popes.

Lotti picks up one of the priests. As she raises the silver-haired, grinning, black-robed figure its head begins to jiggle forward backward and side-to-side in an uncontrollable seizure of the neck. The more she tries to steady the figure the more its head bobs around its shoulders. She sets it on a display case behind her, its head still bouncing about with a white-toothed grin. She grabs a nun with the same effect. Slowly she reaches down for the pope, tall white hat and white robes, and sets it on the display next to the others. All three figurines—enlarged heads and wide toothy grins—bouncing around as if each were frantically trying to nod “yes” and shake “no” at the same time.

“What the hell are those?” exclaims Alfred.

“They’re our frogs,” replies Lotti. “What are we going to do?”

“Put them back. We don’t want to offend anyone. We can’t afford to.”

“But we spent all that money on them.”

“On frogs, we spent money on frogs.”

“We also can’t afford to lose money.”

“So what are you saying?”

“I am saying we put a few out on display and see what happens. We can explain the mix-up if anyone asks.” She takes three more of the figurines and places them behind the others on the display. Waits.

The exhibition opens—customers arrive. An old woman wearing a bright flowerprint dress makes her way into the booth. She sees the bobble-heads and picks up the pope. “Oh, how cute!” she exclaims, letting the head bounce around.

“We are terribly sorry, we were given the wrong order,” explains Lotti.

“They are just so adorable,” says the customer.

“We don’t want to offend anyone.”

“I must have one.”

“We understand if you are upset, we can put them away.”

“Oh, all right. I’ll take one of each.”

Lotti stares at the woman. It seems to Lotti that all the bobble-heads were now nodding forward and back.

“That will be one-fifty.”

The woman walks away with three bobble-heads from the Vatican and a cactus dish garden with an orientalist motif from a booth representing Canada. Knalle and Lotti laugh as they sell more “yes and no” priests than flowers.

* * *

Anything But Dull

Canada's week long trade fair proved a show-stopper in Philadelphia recently. It was aimed at capturing a share of the Pennsylvania market.

If the Philadelphia fair is an instance of the commerce department's impact, those who incline to criticize the civil service as bureaucratically enchained will have to make an exception of those who set up the show in the Quaker centre. This fair is reportedly the biggest of its kind, a fact which always impresses an American.

It's much more—it is a presentation of Canada's many sides—from scarlet uniformed RCMP to 1,300 visiting sailors in five Canadian destroyers in Philly's harbor; from displays of ancient Quebec military drills to ice shows by Canadian skating champions.

In a brief week, interested Philadelphians saw and learned more about Canada and Canadians

than many Canadians know about their own country. Among the displays were ookpik, a stuffed Arctic owl; and Arctic char, a fish featured in Philadelphia cafes.

Industrial exhibits, revealing Canadian inventiveness, included a new kind of wheel chair that can climb stairs; and an amphibious rubber-tired roadster that can take to water like a duck.

All this sounds anything but dull. On the contrary, it's an exciting picture of an intriguing country, and an interesting people.

The day is gone when Canada can wait in an old rocking chair for customers to come to its factory steps. We have to shout about our wares if we are to be heard in the din of world markets. Better than the shout is the display, for the buyer is attracted more by the goods themselves than by talk about them.

* * *

Hajo picks up pebbles of stone slag bought from the Sudbury mines—paints each small stone a distinct colour. Dörte has a blank flyer in front of her and pencil in hand. Hajo with four flowerpots for four colours—drops the painted slag into the correct pot. Dörte guiding a pencil along the paper—creating and shaping the symbol to sell. Red, green, blue, and white coloured stones for decoration. An eraser—erasure—scratches the page—lines trimmed then grafted to other lines. The painting done, Hajo begins loading the truck for delivery—a small moving truck for shipments to florist boutiques. Dörte arranges the last line of the German man drawn on the flyer used to sell Chinese dish gardens by German immigrants from Russia and Austria—fat, wearing lederhosen and smoking a cigar—a small flower cupped in his hands. The truck rumbles down the driveway. Dörte begins another draft, a different symbol to sell. A man in long robes, standing tall. A long—thin—white beard stretching to his navel. Large circular hat and fishing poll with a fish dangling from its end. She completes the man designed to sell exotic flowers—cacti and Venus fly traps—by drawing an orchid in his right hand. Dörte—bored with drawing advertisement icons—returns to her sketchbook in the greenhouse—stares at flowers and cacti, sketches the plants in the humid space, whimsically moving from plant to plant—drawing the colourful, the dull, the wilted. Hajo drives down the dark dirt road leading to the main streets and highways as Dörte adds shadows to cactus and rose.

* * *

How much time

how large the compost heaps

how large the buildings are

how often things are fertilized

how long a certain amount of coal burns.

Pay attention also to when you sow and reap and

how long it takes

until you sell.

This knowledge will make you a profession.

* * *

The tiny black dot near the centre of the eye completes the colour of the frog.
Next—the glaze.

Pour clay mixed with water into plaster mould—wait for water to soak into plaster—then wait for clay to dry. Slowly. Carefully. Pry the two halves of the mould apart. Place the still soft dish into the propane kiln in the shed at the back.

Take the small round cacti in a small flowerpot from the greenhouse in the wooden barn. Hundreds of cacti placed on long wooden tables—the ones with small flowers stand out from the rest with a flourish of bravado and charm. Prickly—painful—dig out from the soil and place them in the bowl-like dish with a bit of soil brought from the compost. Fill the dish with regular slag—tiny stones to hide the dirt and work—to make it look clean and perfect. Then use a teaspoon to place the painted slag. One tiny painted stone at a time to produce colourful designs to attract the eye. Put a green frog near the right edge.

Michael lifts a metal watering can with Alfred's help—blue paint chipped and flaking off its sides—and waters the garden ever so slightly.

* * *

Alfred, Opa, Knalle—walks into the barn/greenhouse in the early morning—sun just above the roof of the barn. He inspects the cacti, the roses, the tulips, the daisies, watering and clipping, turning and adjusting. Charlotte, Omi, Lotti, Mushi—looking over names in a ledger, dates, prices, merchandise, cataloguing and indexing, arranging and ordering. She looks out her office window and sees Knalle carrying a tray of clay dishes to the kiln. He sets them on a small table and turns the propane on and goes back to the barn to get another tray of dishes as he waits for the temperature to rise. Lotti makes sure the bills and payments are in their proper places. Lists and sub-lists. Knalle opens the kiln and pushes the trays of formed clay—into the heat. Rows of dishes and Chinese fishermen setting into fixed positions. Lotti, satisfied with the order of things, closes her books and lists—walks to the barn to help Knalle with a large order Hajo must deliver today. Lotti enters the barn as Alfred carries a dead cactus—wilted and hanging over the side of its pot—to the compost. She looks over the rows of plants—the straight chamaecereus, round and flat “silver dollar” cactus, some just beginning to peek out of the soil, others ready to be placed in a clay dish for sale. Small cardboard boxes ready to be filled with individual gardens for transport. Alfred begins placing the completed dish gardens gently into the allotted box. Closing the flaps at the top and sealing with clear tape. Lotti labels the boxes with a black felt-tipped marker—the size of garden (small, medium, or large) and type (*Opuntia Robusta*, *Echevaria*, *Agave victoriae-reginae*)—ready to sell.

* * *

you will find on the front, inside the cover, a number of questions. Read these carefully and they will remind you of what you have learned

AFTERWORD

History and Discourse

The Gardener's Journal (TGJ) is concerned with the ways that historical contexts determine how we act and think. That is, the text asks the question: How does history shape us, define us, make us subjects to historical contexts? And is it possible for us to change those historical contexts? The historical contexts I am interested in are the discourses, in the Foucauldian tradition, that exist in a given historical time period. A discourse for Michel Foucault is part of a discursive field which is, as described in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, a historically contextualized set of statements, practices, and rules that govern the ways one can and will engage within society (151). One such example of a discourse is the continually repeated discourse of a heterosexual lifestyle as the “normal” way to live. The repetition of this discourse and its dissemination through social institutions (such as church and marriage laws) both affirms and substantiates the discourse as the norm, which in turn can make people internalize the discourse and believe that it is the norm affecting the way people think, act and behave. Foucault articulates that in any historical time period there are many intersecting and contrasting discourses at play (74-75).

It is the intersection and contrasts between discourses with which *TGJ* engages. The text engages with the Foucauldian notion of discourse through the use of documents in what critic Manina Jones calls a “documentary-collage” form. By placing the documents and characters, specifically Lotti and Alfred, at the intersection of differing discourses *TGJ* attempts to negotiate the question of one’s ability to choose between and shape different discourses. Robert Dale Parker highlights in *How to Interpret Literature*

that there seems to be an ambiguity in Foucault as to whether one is able to resist dominant discourses (231). There is debate among critics of Foucault whether or not Foucault's framework of discourse allows for resistance or personal choice (231). *TGJ* supports the side of the argument that suggests there is room for agency within a Foucauldian paradigm. *TGJ* offers an account of agency that suggests, given the right circumstances, a subject can acquire agency when his or her constituting discourses intersect, which allows for the opportunity to choose which discourse(s) to adopt and which ones to reject. I will explore these ideas by first showing how the documents in *TGJ* relate to specific discourses of the time, then how the documentary-collage form highlights how the documents in *TGJ* expose the interrelation of discourses in the text. Finally (by examining the characters of Alfred and Lotti) I will examine how the interrelation/contradiction between discourses can potentially lead to one choosing between multiple discourses.

Discourses and Document

Each of the found documents in *The Gardener's Journal* represents a discourse at work in the characters of Alfred and Lotti. For example, one of the predominant discourses is of gardening/business and capitalism represented by Hermann's memoir at the beginning (10-22). Hermann's memoir ends with a patriarchal statement about the gardening business: "*Only one person can be the leader or boss, at least one person must have the final decision or word of the whole business. He must be in charge of the finances and the demands of the business that they are not set too high*" (21). Here one can see the discourses of gender and economics combined. This relation between gender and economics is present throughout the text. It is both familial and social as well as a

discourse of power. For example, Hermann wishes the business he has created to last for over one-hundred years: “*Through the loyalty of the future generations I can hope that the hundred year existence will be experienced by my children’s children and that they will be inspired to pass on to their children the possessions and achievements written about here*” (21). Hermann is engaging with dominant economic discourses of capitalism and trade present at the time in order to show his family how to maintain the institution (his multi-million dollar business) that he started. Hermann is using the discourses of patriarchal business ownership to constitute his future family as subjects to that discourse. This patriarchal discourse is the discourse that Alfred and Lotti enter into by being part of the family business. It is a discourse that Alfred and Lotti work with and against in order to assert their own positions in the world. This discourse is also picked up in the gardening journal (dispersed throughout the text) that teaches Alfred how to be a good, and proper, German florist. An example of this is where the document is presented as a list, suggesting a discourse of order that a gardener should follow:

establish your ability and knowledge

let it grow and accumulate,

become a hard working gardener

Pay attention

Keep everything tidy and do not waste

orderly clean

observe, explore

steady—

caring gardener.

achieve a gardener's happiness and call it your own.

Gaertnerglueck (23)

The final two lines on this page echo the desire of Hermann for his family to be secure and “inspired” to continue the business. As well, the discourses associated with the flower shop and the flower business are also in relation to other discourses, such as the discourses of the Nazi regime. The Ahnenpass at the start of the text (2-9) by simply being a document used to prove one’s Aryan lineage epitomizes the Nazi regime’s discourse of power, oppression, and control. It is significant that once WWII begins the documents related to gardening and business greatly diminish within the text. The lack of documents during the WWII narrative exposes how the war, which has its own set of overpowering discourses, dominates all other forms of discourse. This connection between the war and the lack of documents (showing how the war influences and changes the Eilers and their family business) is one example of how the narrative and documents interrelate. The interrelation between document and narrative is made possible through the documentary-collage form.

Documentary-Collage

The documentary-collage form described by Manina Jones allows for documentary evidence (the documents) to be presented in a collage form. This combination of documentary and collage allows for the intersection of discourses to be presented throughout the text. Since documentary-collage deals with both the documentary and collage traditions it is important to briefly outline each of those

traditions, how Jones sees them working together in her notion of documentary-collage and how this form works in *TGJ*.

Marjorie Perloff describes collage as the act of taking one object (or more), often a non-artistic object, from its original context and placing it in a new work of art (47-48). The recontextualization of the object creates juxtaposition between the “outside” object and the new work of art (47-48). An example of this kind of collage is cutting out newspaper clippings and pasting them onto a painting. Manina Jones’s notion of collage in a documentary-collage is similar to what Perloff outlines:

[A] common formal strategy of a body of contemporary Canadian works is a ‘collage’ technique that self-consciously transcribes documents into the literary text, registering them as ‘outside’ writings that readers recognize both as taken from a spatial or temporal ‘elsewhere’ and as participating in a historical-referential discourse of ‘non-fiction’... The document... is foregrounded as a strategic site/cite of contending readings (13-14)

It is the “strategic site/cite of contending readings” that is created through the juxtaposition of document and new text. This site/cite aspect also relates to the ways that the discourses in the *TGJ* intersect. Recontextualizing the documents, which are representative of dominant discourses, into *TGJ* allows for those documents to be juxtaposed with each other and the narrative. The interplay of document and fiction, this site/cite of contending reading, can show how discourses intersect within a character. One example of this occurs when the authoritative discourse of the gardener’s journal describes how a gardener should dress and work:

Always dress in a way that will not attract attention

A plain work suit that will work with soil.

dirty or ripped.

Clean and put yourself in order

work

The clothes make the florist. (38)

The narrative fragment that follows has Alfred coming home wearing his German military uniform for the first time (39). The focus of this narrative fragment is the uniform itself and how it has (or has not) changed Alfred. The discourse of proper attire for a gardener is juxtaposed with the discourse of proper attire for a soldier and this juxtaposition is rooted within the character of Alfred who is both a gardener (expected to follow the teachings of the gardener's journal) and a soldier (expected to follow the discipline of a soldier). Thus, Alfred represents the point of intersection between two discourses of power. This intersection is key to understanding how choice works within intersecting discourses.

Jones takes her notion of documentary from the tradition of the Canadian long poem. Steven Scobie in *Signature Event Context* offers a clear description of the kind of documentary Jones is interested in exploring. Scobie describes documentary as a genre consisting of a narrative about actual historical events (though the poet may modify or add to these events), a narrative that uses extraliterary documents as historical fact, and a narrative that is focused on a character that took part in the historical events described (121). Scobie's description of the documentary form reflects the form of *TGJ*. Many of the events in *TGJ* are actual events that took place and each narrative section is based

upon the subjective memories of family members, though the events and subjective memories and events are frequently modified and fictionalized. The text brings in extraliterary documents to represent historical fact and to represent the discourses embedded in those documents. Hermann's memoir (10-22), as well any section that is italicized comes from an outside source. The text focuses on Alfred and Lotti Eilers, actual people who were part of the events the text outlines.

Jones expands upon Scobie's notion of documentary by situating it in relation to collage (as part of the documentary-collage form): "The 'documentary' [within the documentary-collage] paradoxically reminds readers both of the 'factuality' of history and of the construction of that factuality through the collection and interpretation of textual or materially 'documentary evidence'" (Jones 8). Jones's comments stress how the documents within a documentary-collage are situated within a particular discourse and history. At the same time, through the arrangement (collection/collage) of documents, the reader is exposed to the constructed nature of those documents and in turn to the constructed nature of the discourses of authority those documents represent. Therefore, the "documentary" aspect of a documentary-collage does not denote historical accuracy or fact, but connotes historical contingency and reliance on interpretation as a means to understanding the discursive elements of the documentary evidence. The type of questioning of historical fact and authority that Jones outlines as central to the documentary-collage is also present in *TGJ*. The ahnenpass (2-10) is an example of the documentary-collage form where the documentary form and the collage form combine to highlight the interrelation of discourses within the text.

The ahnenpass is an official Nazi document meant to determine the Aryan lineage of the individual in question. An ahnenpass is supposed to represent factual and accurate history. However, this accuracy is questioned in *TGJ* when juxtaposed with definitions that begin with the word “Ahnenpass,” which literally translates as “ancestor passport” (3). This leads to the next definition, “ancestor” (3). The definition of “ancestor” begins to break down the authority of the ahnenpass by having “un-official” additions to the definitions such as “an experiment—a splicing” (3). The notions of experiment and of splicing suggest a possibility for uncontrolled outcomes as well as the possibility of intersection and combination of discourses. Since these definitions are meant to define the ahnenpass, one can see that *TGJ* positions the ahnenpass as a kind of experiment or splicing. Of course, one can have a controlled experiment but the idea of a controlled experiment in this context is questionable when two contrasting definitions of “passport” are presented (3). The first definition of “passport” promotes a discourse of control and official regulation: “An official government document that certifies identity and citizenship—certified identity **2**. Something that gives right or privilege of passage, entry, or acceptance—certified privileged accepted identity” (3). However, the second definition, “pass-port,” breaks down the first definition’s official and regulated aspect: “An opening by which to pass; an outlet; a pore or stoma in a plant” (3). The second definition of pass-port removes the official notion of passage; it is simply an opening that anyone can pass through. As well, the introduction of plant life has no place in the first definition. These definitions combined together expose how official history and dominant official discourse are always in relation to other ways of interpreting history

and in relation to other discourses (such as in this case, discourses of family, government regulation, Nazism, and even gardening).

The text constructed from these definitions further complicates notions of historical accuracy by openly questioning the historical record: for example, “Underlined... official story?”(4), which questions the “official story (history)” the ahnenpass represents. As well the line: “surnames remembered...lives forgotten” (6), suggests that history is selective, some events and people are remembered and considered important (based upon what discourses are dominant) and others forgotten or excluded. Also, the columns of the text are gendered, males in the left and females in the right column. This separation of genders exposes the patriarchal discourse of regulation and control that the Nazi regime utilized. Finally, the discourses embedded in the ahnenpass and the historical “accuracy” of the ahnenpass are fully questioned by the actual structure of the text. The structure is set up in a grid-like fashion, but the grid only has sides, no lines on the top or bottom (4-9). This lack of literal closure (closing off of the grids) is expressed in the final line of the poem, “*openings by which to pass*” (9), which is situated outside the grid. This concept of openings connects back to Jones’s notion of a site/cite of contending readings. The last line and lack of grid closure suggests that the discourses the ahnenpass uses are not blocked off from one another, but are in relation to each other and in contrast to each other. The end “opens up” the entire text to a site/cite of contending readings that can expose how the discourses of gender and regulation are intermixed and may lead to “openings” into other discourses. There are several examples in *TGJ* of these “openings” and sites/cites of intersecting discourses in relation to the

characters. The characters represented as sites/sites of contending discourses highlight the possibility of choice between discourses.

Discourse and Character

The first example of a character's dealing with multiple intersecting discourses is when Herr Drennen comes to offer the Eilers a place in the Nazi party (37). The scene opens with the line: "The door to the shop [the flower shop] barely closes as dollar signs make signs of war" (37). Here the discourses of the flower shop (the discourse of Hermann and of the journal) are in relation to the discourses of Nazism (discourses of war, expansion, and economic growth). For example, the relation between the discourses of the family business and Nazism are favourable for the Eilers as the economic growth brought about by war allows the Eilers to sell flowers to the soldiers with new military wages (37). The economic expansion of war offers economic expansion to the Eilers flower shop. However, these two discourses (business and Nazism) eventually contrast:

Asked to join the party once—by Herr. Drennen in tailored suit.

Nein

Asked to join the party twice—by Herr. Drennen in uniform.

Nein

No one buys for future funerals and graves.

No one buys from a shop that does not buy the party way (37)

The Eilers are fine with engaging with the Nazi party in terms of economics and business, but not in terms of politics and regulation. Therefore, it seems the Eilers make a choice initially to avoid the politics. They choose between two discourses at the risk, and eventuality, of losing business. Therefore, in the flower shop alone are several discourses

at play and the choice the Eilers make highlights how agency can exist within the relations between discourses.

Another, more complex example, is Lotti's eventual acceptance into the Eilers family business. Lotti begins as a cleaner, a common worker (24, 27-29, 31-32). Lotti is stopped in her attempts to get a promotion both by the discourse of the business and by Marie. The business is situated within a patriarchal discourse, since Hermann states in his memoirs that a man must be in charge of the business (21-22). This patriarchal notion already places women in the business at a disadvantage. However, Marie is in charge of the flower shop. Yet, she is only in charge because Alfred and Herbert's father died before they were old enough to take over the business (31). Marie's circumstance shows how she is a character constituted within specific historical contexts that can allow for the potential for one to gain power. However, it is Marie's position of power in the business that prevents Lotti from being promoted (31). Yet Lotti does not stop in her endeavour for a more prominent role in the flower shop as she finally gains what she wants through her relationship with Alfred. It is already clear that Alfred is willing to hire Lotti as a florist since he already asked his mother to hire her (31). So, it seems that Lotti is using Alfred, the man who is supposed to be "free" in a flower shop, to get her a job as a florist in the shop. This is made clear when Lotti convinces Alfred to marry her.

Lotti tells Alfred that another man has asked her to marry him (33). Lotti, it appears, is using the discourse of marriage to both further her relationship with Alfred and her relationship in the business. This is clear when Lotti's complaint against Alfred is: "What about you [Alfred]? You tinker with your flowers all day. You let me help you arrange roses by night. We have to sneak out together because your mother

disapproves. In the nursery a man is free. He doesn't seem free of his flowers or family'" (33). Here Lotti sums up the discourse of work in their lives. The focus on arranging flowers at night, and sneaking around, shows that Lotti would like a higher position to be able to stop sneaking and to arrange flowers during the day. Connect this with her earlier attempts at using Alfred to gain a position in the flower shop (31-32) and it appears as though Lotti is working within the discourses that confine her choices in order to gain her desires. For after she marries Alfred she gains a more prominent role in the business (35). Furthermore, once they move to Canada Lotti's position in the business is raised even higher as she eventually becomes the president of Eilers Products in Canada (82). Thus, Lotti, who is subjected to multiple patriarchal discourses, still manages to act within those discourses to gain her desires. She works within the intersection of multiple discourses to achieve her aims. She is still subjected to patriarchal discourse, such as having to marry a man to rise in social status, but it is a choice she makes. Lotti's choices, though not ideal, highlight the complexity of trying to assert one's agency within discourses of power. Therefore, agency and choice may not be something that one is able to acquire at all times, but only at specific moments when certain discourses intersect.

Discourse and Culture

TGJ further complicates notions of intersecting discourses when Lotti and Alfred arrive in Canada and use the flower shop as a means to acquire economic stability in Canada. Canadian culture is represented in the found documents of the latter half of the text, such as a newspaper article (95), a flyer for a trade show (91), and a flyer advertising "Eilers Products Ltd." (90). Each of these documents represents a new discourse Alfred

and Lotti must deal with. The way they choose to deal with these new discourses is through the family business (itself a site/cite of discourses in the text). However, by re-inventing, or recontextualizing, the flower business to match a wholesale economic model they in turn reveal their ability to change, adjust, and shape the discourse and institution of the flower business (82-83). In this context Alfred and Lotti engage with and negotiate in a strategic way discourses of capitalism, family history, and the florist business to create a stable and secure life in Canada. The way the Eilers negotiate the discourses found in Canada suggests that Canadian culture is comprised of and constituted by intersecting discourses. This is best exemplified in the sentence: “Lotti laughs at the idea of a family of Germans featuring Canadian culture with trade of Chinese dish gardens and cacti” (91). Here we see multiple discourses converging in the notion of “Canadian culture.” By connecting Canadian culture to the text, *TGJ* suggests that “Canadian culture” is a kind of collage that is historically constituted through discourse. If Canadian culture is a “collage” of intersecting discourses then subjects who are part of that culture are potentially able, given the right circumstances, to shift and change what constitutes Canadian culture by potentially adopting or rejecting certain discourses.

However, this notion of Canada as a collage of discourses can also lead to the perpetuation of oppressive discourses. For example, the Eilers engage with what Edward Said calls “orientalism” in order to sell their cacti gardens. Said argues that the discourse of orientalism is a way of talking about Asia from a Western perspective that gives the west a kind of authority over how Asia is described and talked about (Said 3). Often an orientalist discourse is used to describe Asia as an exotic and romantic part of

the world (1), which reduces the complex social and cultural groups of Asia to a single stereotype. The Eilers perpetuate the use of orientalism in their flyer and advertisement of “Chinese Dish Gardens” (90, 96). Through the Eilers use of orientalism *TGJ* shows that within the collage of Canada there exists iniquities between discourses and who is able to say what about whom. The Eilers perpetuate an oppressive discourse in order to secure their own position in Canada. Thus, through the complex relation between economy, family, and race the Eilers are potentially both securing their place in Canada and/by oppressing others (in this case Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Canadians). The complex intersection of discourses in the Eilers business shows that the collage of Canada can be volatile and can lead to an exclusivity where some are welcomed and included in society (such as the Eilers), while others might be stereotyped and shunned.

Conclusion

The Gardener's Journal offers a documentary-collage style that engages with history and complex understandings of discourse and agency. The fragmentary and intertextual structure of *The Gardener's Journal* represents the relations we have with discourse, social institutions and power. The form of *TGJ* exemplifies and exposes the relational and heterogeneous aspects of society, culture and history. Documentary-collage can show how discourses are historically constituted and as such can shift and change over time and across cultural boundaries. Though *The Gardener's Journal* is focused on a particular florist business and a particular family, the narrative and form show the differing discourses at work on and within that particular business and family. Therefore, the particularity of the text can point to larger social constructions and how those social constructions work in the lives of historically constituted individuals. The

complexity of form, style, and narrative all point to the complexity of a life lived in relation to intersecting discourses, where choice and meaning are seen as complex relations between the individual, history and discourse. Perloff articulates this relation between the individual and discourse when she writes:

Indeed, to collage elements from impersonal, external sources—the newspaper, magazines, television, billboards—is to understand...that, in a technological age, consciousness itself becomes a process of graft or citation by means of which we make the public world our own (77).

In Perloff's statement one can see Alfred's and Lotti's attempts at negotiating their world by adopting and changing different discourses to find a space for themselves in the public world. It is this "grafting" and "arranging" that *The Gardener Journal* stresses as the means by which we negotiate daily life and daily experiences.

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VITA AUCTORIS

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