

'The Three Sisters' 1917 (oil on canvas) by Henri Matisse
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THE PERSEPHONE QUARTERLY

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OUR WINTER 2006-7 BOOKS

In July 1942 Irène Némirovsky, author of the now-bestselling *Suite Française*, wrote in her notebook on her last day of freedom before she was deported by the Nazis: 'The pine woods all around me. I am sitting on my blue cardigan in the middle of an ocean of leaves, wet and rotting from last night's storm, as if I were on a raft, my legs tucked under me! In my bag I have put Volume II of *Anna Karenina*, the *Journal* of KM and an orange.' 'Like Katherine Mansfield,' wrote Helen Dunmore in her *Guardian* review of *Suite Française*, 'Némirovsky was an incisive critic of her own work and her search for simplicity reflects Mansfield's own longing to purge her work of effective little writerly tricks.'

Katherine Mansfield's *Journal* is one of the great classics of twentieth century literature but has not been in print for many years. Yet it is a uniquely truthful record of a great writer at work, of the spirit of a genius in the last ten years of her life, and of the development of the modern mind during the early years of the last century.



Amenophis III' 1913 by Roger Fry for the Omega Workshops



David Gentleman's original cover, now endpapers, for Plais du Jour

Most Persephone readers will have read Katherine Mansfield's stories, some of them in *The Montana Stories* (Persephone Book No. 25), which contains everything she wrote during the last year of her life when she was living at Montana in Switzerland. The *Journal* was compiled by her husband John Middleton Murry soon after she died and was published in 1927. It consists of fragments of diary entries, unposted letters, scraps of writing, in other words anything that was dated or could have a date attributed to it and that could be woven into a volume called a 'journal'.

Katherine Mansfield had not thought of posterity reading anything she wrote apart from her short stories (even her dramatic monologue, 'The Black Cap', reprinted on p.10, was originally just an experiment in dramatic form); indeed, she asked Murry to publish 'as little as possible'. But failure to destroy something is

quite different from meaning something to be read by others; which is why Dorothy Parker said of the *Journal*, 'so private is it that one feels forever guilty of prying for having read it.' For it is indeed an intimate and self-revelatory record of a writer's mind, far more intimate, surely, than Katherine would have wanted it to be had she known it would be published.

Thus, unusually for its time, the *Journal* is honest, sharp, tragic and over-sensitive (which is why Virginia Woolf's 1927 review, which we have reprinted at the end of the Persephone edition, is headed 'A Terribly Sensitive Mind'): but a writer's sharpness and over-sensitivity, not a gossip's or a politician's or a mother's.

It is this aspect of being first and foremost a writer's journal that made us want to reprint it, for almost all the Persephone writers, the ones who were interested in the art of writing at

least, would have owned it and read and re-read it. When the *Journal* was first published in 1927 the poet Conrad Aiken said: 'It is a fascinating, and extraordinary, and in some respects an appalling book. And again and again one is reminded of Keats.' Partly he meant this because both died of consumption and he was referring to the consumptive temperament; partly because both were creative geniuses; and partly because both explored the art, the act, of writing every time they put pen to paper.

As in Virginia Woolf's *A Writer's Diary*, and then her complete Letters and Diaries, or in Keats's Letters, the reader can watch the act of creation as it happens in the mind of the writer who was above all else 'rooted in life'. This is why so many saw Katherine Mansfield as an ideal. Christopher Isherwood and Edward Upward, for example, bracketed her with Wilfred Owen and Emily Bronte:

'We talked about them as if they were our personal friends, wondered what they would have said on certain occasions, or how they would have behaved, what advice they would have given us.'

intensely observant, self-critical, self-chastising, confessional, atmospheric, agonised and funny, an essential document for anyone interested in women's writing of the last century and in one of its greatest writers.



'Portrait of Katherine Mansfield' by Anne Estelle Rice, June 1918, ©National Museum, Wellington. (Notice the similarity to 'The Three Sisters' on cover.)

Katherine Mansfield's *Journal* is far more than an intermittent record of twelve years of a writer's life: it is

Our second winter book,

Plats du Jour, first published in 1957, is the fifth in Persephone Books' very successful series of classic cookery books: the others are *Good Things in England*, *Kitchen Essays*, *Good Food on the Aga* and *They Can't Ration These*.

'Long before this book was thought of,' wrote the authors, 'we had separately evolved a system of cooking by which a variety of dishes was replaced by a single plat du jour accom-

panied, as a rule, by a green salad, a respectable cheese, and fruit in

season, and, wherever possible, by a bottle of wine. This conception of a meal underlies this book.' It appeared at a time

when dishes such as *pasta, risotto, soupe aux poireaux et aux haricots* or mackerel *au vin blanc* were still considered outlandish.

P*lats du Jour* was one of Jane Grigson's favourite books: if ever she saw one in a jumble sale she bought it to give as a present. For, as the well-known food historian, Alan Davidson, wrote, 'it is a very good book indeed. Its principal ingredients, the knowledge and amiable enthusiasm of the authors, have given it a lasting value.' And he pointed out that it is a very original cookery book, written in unpretentious language, in an unprescriptive, relaxed way by two cooks with whom it is easy to identify. (They were also running a small business during the two years they were writing *Plats du Jour*: we reproduce their card on p.12.)

The delightful and eye-catching jacket which is now the Persephone endpaper (half of which is reproduced on p.14) was designed by David Gentleman, who was 25 and had just left the Royal College of Art. He has written in his book *Art Work*: 'My illustrations were based on

drawings and watercolours made in Provence, Burgundy and Italy... They were not wholly Mediterranean. The cuts of meat were drawn in two butchers' shops, one in Essex and the other in the meat-preparing room at Harrods, underneath the Food Hall. The



Patience Gray in the 1950s

front cover shows a table at the start of a meal, while the back cover shows the tail end of it, with only the debris and the sleeping cats left. I had come across plenty of precedents for this before-and-after approach: strip cartoons, medieval chests and illuminations, and paintings

such as Uccello's great narrative scenes from the Old Testament.'

David Gentleman believes that 'Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd's admirable and practical *Plats du Jour* [is] every bit as good as Elizabeth David' and many will agree with him. In fact, in terms of sales and influence it was Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd who were the pioneers in introducing English cooks to French everyday cookery. *Plats du Jour* sold 50,000 copies in the first few months after publication and 100,000 in the next three years, an astonishing amount at the time. It was only in the 1960s that Elizabeth David started to become a symbol of the transformation of English middle-class eating habits. Before that *Plats du Jour* was

the favourite and most influential French cookery book. A few Persephone readers will still have their pink-covered 1957 copies; now everyone can have their own – in a slightly larger format, with David Gentleman's glorious cover as the endpapers, on paper that will not go brown with age.

OUR REVIEWERS WRITE

‘**M**uriel Stuart’s enthusiastic championing of a vanished style of small-scale English gardening is both charming and historically interesting,’ wrote Matthew Dennison in *House and Garden*. ‘*Gardener’s Nightcap* is, as its title suggests, a series of essays, nuggets, even single paragraphs, on all aspects of gardening, intended for reading last thing at night in the shadowy minutes before sleep. It combines determined practicality with a strongly poetic even fanciful streak. Last century it delighted its first generation of readers: for different reasons, it will delight again.’ And *Image* magazine in Ireland called *Gardener’s Nightcap* ‘a witty and beautifully illustrated collection of gardening advice.’

‘**E**dge publications’ Jason Salzenstein said that *The Runaway* ‘is more than just a children’s book. As pure and innocent as it is adventurous and fun to read, the fact that *The Runaway* is written in English long since past only adds to its charm and amusement. With dialogue like “... for a sensible, clever girl, which you undoubtedly are, you are a great little goose”, how could you not be amused? Elizabeth Anna Hart should be recognised for her sprightly, exciting and endearing

writing that has an appeal (to both children and adults) that has lasted well past its time. Lucky for us.’ The same reviewer began his piece about *Someone at a Distance* by saying, ‘I don’t know if I’m a complete feminist (or was in a former life) but there isn’t a book in Persephone’s collection that I haven’t liked. *Someone at a Distance* is another excellent selection, and a brilliant and entertaining novel. Of course the fact that it is the story of a “perfectly happy” family and the eerily before-its-time destruction of that marriage (and happiness) could have something to do with why I enjoyed this book so much. Or maybe it was because the seductress that comes to visit is a young French woman, so filled with sensuality that I just couldn’t help but get drawn in. All the books in the Persephone collection are interesting, engaging, and well written – *Someone at a Distance*, however, has that special something extra that sets it apart... It’s a rare find.’

‘**I**n the *Guardian* Maxim Jakubowski reviewed *The Expendable Man*: ‘Dorothy B Hughes is best remembered for *The Fallen Sparrow* and *In a Lonely Place*, both of which were made into cult movies. This reissue of her final novel, first published in 1963, is most welcome, an exhilarating no-holds-barred

semi-political *noir* thriller denouncing racial abuse in the American southwest. A doctor picks up an attractive teenage female hitchhiker and runaway on an Arizona road and begins a slow, systematic descent into an American hell. It took real guts to write [this novel] at the time of the Goldwater presidential campaign, Governor Wallace’s declarations and much simmering racism. The book still grips like a vice, and hasn’t dated one bit.’

‘**I**n an article in the *Guardian* the ‘food for free’ pioneer Richard Mabey referred to Vicomte de Mauduit’s ‘splendidly titled’ *They Can’t Ration These* (1940, Persephone Book No. 54) and the Ministry of Food’s own pamphlet, *Hedgerow Harvest* (1943), both of which ‘moved the Home Front out into the wild, with recipes for the obligatory rose-hip syrup, and sloe and marrow jam: “If possible crack some of the stones and add to the preserve before boiling to give a nutty flavour.” An epicurean touch, but prefaced by the first strictures about picking etiquette: “None of this harvest should be wasted, but be exceedingly careful how you gather it in... don’t injure the bushes or trees. When you pick mushrooms, cut the stalks neatly with a knife, leaving the roots in the ground.”’

FROM THE DEEPENING STREAM BY DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

One of Dorothy Canfield Fisher's central themes is the freedom of the child contrasted with the constraints of the adult. In **The Home-Maker** (Persephone Book No. 7) Lester and Evangeline 'role-swap' – he stays at home with the children and is a perfect Montessori father; she goes to work in a department store and is very happy. Throughout the book the unspoken question is asked: what are the children growing up for? Is it to slave behind an office desk; to stay at home cooking, cleaning, mending, grumbling; or to feel a sense of achievement and joy selling clothes and earning the family's living? Here, in *The Deepening Stream*, written six years after **The Home-Maker** in 1930, and also set in Vermont, Dorothy Canfield Fisher again contrasts children's play with adult work and again the question is asked – why don't grown-ups play?

After supper, 'Can-I-go-out-to-play?' rose in every dining-room. It was a mere formula. It meant, 'I am going out to play unless I am stopped', and it was followed – in spite of occasional grasping but usually futile grown-up efforts to get some chores done by the children – by a running dive out of the kitchen or dining-room door into enchantment.

There were always children around, who met like meeting drops of water. To the yelling and shouting of the game which they instantly started, flocked all the other children as soon as they were freed – freed from sitting respectably at the table to eat, from helping wash dishes or mind the baby, or from a spelling lesson to make up. Encountering in the twilight a group of children madly scattering, a newcomer needed but to shout, 'Who's it?' and 'Where's the goal?' and he was ready to turn and race as madly as the others, his heart contracting in the joyful anguish of the pursued, although the moment before he might have been sadly emptying out the garbage pail.

A foreigner would have thought them completely abandoned by their elders. But he would have been mistaken. Any child at any moment could be fished out of the sea of play. Their apparently lawless freedom was governed by one ordinance. No child under any condition was to 'go off the block' without permission. A call from any porch could reach the children wherever they were. 'Your mother's calling you!' had a certain fixed speech-tune to

which it was always sung, pre-ordained by tradition.

Moreover, the children were always either audible or visible to the mothers, who, as they worked inside their homes or sat on the porches sewing, watched over the playing children with as unforgetting a reflex faithfulness as that of the sentries of a grazing herd jerking their heads up after every three bites to make sure that all is well. It is true that nobody even glanced out of a window so long as the shrill chorus of screams was audible, near or far. But if a silence fell, the inmates of the houses, no matter how absorbed in their own affairs, soon looked to see what was happening. If there was no visible explanation of the silence in the shape of a mumble-de-peg or jack-stone group, mothers stepped out. One called to another, who passed it down the line, 'What are the children up to?' Almost always a reassuring bulletin was passed back, such as 'They're in Schaumberger's barn playing still pond.' By the unspoken tradition Mrs Schaumberger then became special guardian. She knew exactly how much noise and how frequent bursts of it were natural to that game, and if there were not enough, felt herself called upon to go out unobtrusively on an errand

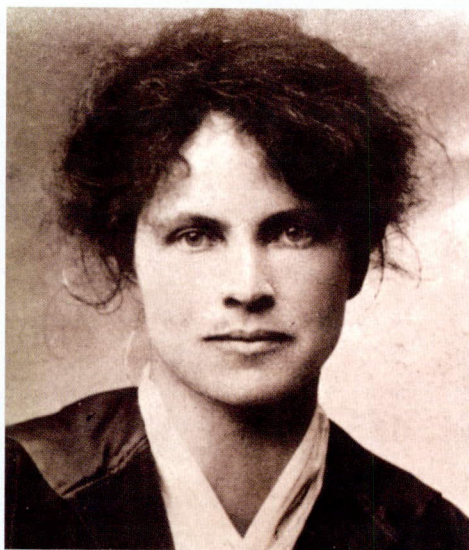
to the barn. That a silent child meant a child in mischief was an aphorism of all those parents.

It was the other way around for the grown-ups. With the exception of a very few academic and professional families, the grown-ups on any block were silent enough. Life for them was work, as life for the children was play. When they stopped work at traditional resting-times it was as though they stopped living. They sat indoors in upholstered 'stationary rockers', their eyes fixed on the newspapers held up in front of them, or they sat outdoors in wooden or wicker rockers on the front porch, their eyes fixed on nothing at all. Either way, silence was a by-product of the hour.

Sometimes they recognised their dullness and felt depressed, but for the most part they thought they were too tired to do more than sit in a peaceable quiet in their own houses, rocking and letting the drained-out pool of energy fill slowly up so that they could go back to work the next day. The disagreeable sensation of stagnation was averted from the men by the occasional attentions needed by pipe or cigar, from the women by crocheting or darning.

These sagging grown-ups did not purposefully thus create

vacancy about them in their leisure hours. What was there for them to do which would be interesting enough for people of their age to pay for the exertion of doing it? The block was



divided into children who played for their lives, and adults who worked for their livings. Such elders cast a reflection into the lives of the children. Not only of their own, but of all the hard-playing throng streaming around them like a school of swift small fish, flashing about barnacle-covered barges. The children could not help seeing that the grown-ups were not having half 'such a good time' in their off hours as they. Half? There was no comparison. Day is not merely twice as bright as night: it is something different. The children saw this and knew

that the grown-ups saw it too. Their own instincts told the children that it was a great pity to grow up and stop playing and go to work. Since the grown-ups thought so too, there could be no doubt about it.

Once a man left behind him at the end of business hours the grim interest in exacting work, he saw nothing for it but to give himself up to resignation. But resignation could not shut his eyes to the vitality of the child who darted quivering out of the twilight to hide behind his chair. At the sight of it, his own middle-aged flesh felt lead-heavy on his bones.

Envy the children their passionate enjoyment, they sat heavily in their rockers, their cigar-tips red in the twilight, the kindly bored wistful fathers on the block, carpenter, plumber, butcher, storekeeper, grocer, too conscientious, too tired, too responsible to look for passionate enjoyment in whisky and women, the only grown-up sources of it of which they had ever heard. They envied the playing children, and out of the love for them which was perhaps the deepest joy in their own lives, they pitied them, because every day was taking them farther away from the best and happiest passage in human life.

THE PERSEPHONE 70

1. William - an Englishman by Cicely Hamilton: 1919 prize-winning novel about the effect of WW1 on a socialist clerk and a suffragette. Preface: Nicola Beauman

2. Mariana by Monica Dickens: First published in 1940, this very funny first novel describes a young girl's life in the 1930s. Preface: Harriet Lane

3. Someone at a Distance by Dorothy Whipple: 'A very good novel indeed' (*Spectator*) about the tragic destruction of a formerly happy marriage (pub. 1953). Preface: Nina Bawden

4. Fidelity by Susan Glaspell: 1915 novel by a Pulitzer-winning author brilliantly describing the long-term consequences of a girl in Iowa running off with a married man. Preface: Laura Godwin

5. An Interrupted Life by Etty Hillesum: From 1941-3 a young woman in Amsterdam, 'the Anne Frank for grown-ups', wrote diaries and letters which are among the great documents of our time. Preface: Eva Hoffman

6. The Victorian Chaise-longue by Marghanita Laski: A 'little jewel of horror': 'Melly' lies on a chaise-longue in the 1950s and wakes as 'Milly' 80 years before. Preface: PD James

7. The Home-Maker by Dorothy Canfield Fisher: Ahead of its time 'remarkable and brave 1924 novel about being a house-husband' (Carol Shields). Preface: Karen Knox

8. Good Evening, Mrs Craven: the Wartime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes: Superbly written short stories, first published in *The New Yorker* from 1938-44. Five of them were twice read on R4. Preface: Gregory LeStage

9. Few Eggs and No Oranges by Vere Hodgson: A 600-page diary, written from 1940-45 in Notting Hill Gate, full of acute observation, wit and humanity. Preface: Jenny Hartley

10. Good Things in England by Florence White: This comprehensive 1932 collection of recipes inspired many, including Elizabeth David.

11. Julian Grenfell by Nicholas Mosley: A biography of the First World War poet, and of his mother Ettie Desborough. Preface: author

12. It's Hard to be Hip over Thirty and Other Tragedies of Married Life by Judith Viorst: Funny, wise and weary 1960s poems about marriage, children and reality. Preface: author

13. Consequences by EM Delafield: By the author of *The Diary of a Provincial Lady*, this 1919 novel is about a girl entering a convent after she fails to marry. Preface: Nicola Beauman

14. Farewell Leicester Square by Betty Miller: Novel (by Jonathan Miller's mother) about a Jewish film-director and 'the discreet discrimination of the bourgeoisie' (*Guardian*). Preface: Jane Miller

15. Tell It to a Stranger by Elizabeth Berridge: 1947 short stories which were twice in the *Evening Standard* bestseller list; they are funny, observant and bleak. Preface: AN Wilson

16. Saplings by Noel Streatfeild: An adult novel by the well-known author of *Ballet Shoes*, about the destruction of a family during WW11; a R4 ten-part serial. Afterword: Jeremy Holmes

17. Marjory Fleming by Oriel Malet: A deeply empathetic novel about the real life of the Scottish child prodigy who lived from 1803-11; now published in France; was a play on Radio Scotland.

18. Every Eye by Isobel English: An unusual 1956 novel about a girl travelling to Spain, highly praised by Muriel Spark: a R4 'Afternoon Play' in 2004. Preface: Neville Braybrooke

19. They Knew Mr Knight by Dorothy Whipple: An absorbing 1934 novel about a man driven to committing fraud and what happens to him and his family; a 1943 film. Preface: Terence Handley MacMath

20. A Woman's Place by Ruth Adam: A survey of C20th women's lives, very readably written by a novelist-historian: an overview full of insights. Preface: Yvonne Roberts

21. Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day by Winifred Watson: A delightful 1938 novel about a governess and a night-club singer. Read on R4 by Maureen Lipman; to be published in France this autumn. Preface: Henrietta Twycross-Martin

22. Consider the Years by Virginia Graham: Sharp, funny, evocative WWII poems by Joyce Grenfell's closest friend and collaborator. Preface: Anne Harvey

23. Reuben Sachs by Amy Levy: A fierce 1880s satire on the London Jewish community by 'the Jewish Jane Austen' who was a friend of Oscar Wilde. Preface: Julia Neuberger.

24. Family Roundabout by Richmal Crompton: By the *William* books author, 1948 family saga contrasting two matriarchs and their very different children. Preface: Juliet Aykroyd

25. The Montana Stories by Katherine Mansfield: Collects together the short stories written during the author's last year; with a detailed publisher's note and the contemporary illustrations. Five were read on R4 in 2002.

26. Brook Evans by Susan Glaspell: A very unusual novel, written in the same year as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, about the enduring effect of a love affair on three generations of a family.

27. The Children who Lived in a Barn by Eleanor Graham: A 1938 classic about five children fending for themselves; starring the unforgettable hay-box. Preface: Jacqueline Wilson

28. Little Boy Lost by Marghanita Laski: Novel about a father's search for his son in France in 1945, chosen by the *Guardian's* Nicholas Lezard as his 2001 Paperback Choice. A R4 'Book at Bedtime' read by Jamie Glover. Afterword: Anne Sebba

29. The Making of a Marchioness by Frances Hodgson Burnett: A wonderfully entertaining 1901 novel about the ensuing melodrama when a governess marries well. Preface: Isabel Raphael, Afterword: Gretchen Gerzina

30. Kitchen Essays by Agnes Jekyll: Witty and useful essays about cooking, with recipes, published in *The Times* and reprinted as a book in 1922. 'This is one of the best reads outside Elizabeth David' wrote gastropoda.com.

31. A House in the Country by Jocelyn Playfair: An unusual and very interesting 1944 novel about a group of people living in the country during WW11. Preface: Ruth Gorb

32. The Carlyles at Home by Thea Holme: A 1965 mixture of biography and social history which very entertainingly describes Thomas and Jane Carlyle's life in Chelsea.

33. The Far Cry by Emma Smith: A beautifully written 1949 novel about a young girl's passage to India: a great Persephone favourite. 'Book at Bedtime' in 2004. Preface: author

34. Minnie's Room: The Peacetime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes 1947-1965: Second volume of short stories first published in *The New Yorker*, previously unknown in the UK.

35. Greenery Street by Denis Mackail: A delightful, very funny 1925 novel about a young couple's first year of married life in a (real) street in Chelsea. Preface: Rebecca Cohen

- 36. Lettice Delmer** by Susan Miles: A unique 1920s novel in verse describing a girl's stormy adolescence and path to redemption, much admired by TS Eliot.
- 37. The Runaway** by Elizabeth Anna Hart: A Victorian novel for children and grown-ups, illustrated by Gwen Raverat. 'There never was a happier book' (*Country Life*, 1936). Afterwords: Anne Harvey, Frances Spalding.
- 38. Cheerful Weather for the Wedding** by Julia Strachey: A funny and quirky 1932 novella by a niece of Lytton Strachey, praised by Virginia Woolf. Preface: Frances Partridge. *Also read on two cds or two cassettes by Miriam Margolyes*
- 39. Manja** by Anna Gmeyner: A 1938 German novel, newly translated, about five children conceived on the same night in 1920 and their lives until the Nazi takeover. Preface: Eva Ibbotson (daughter of the author)
- 40. The Priory** by Dorothy Whipple: A much-loved 1939 novel about three generations of a family, and their servants, living in a large country house. Preface: David Conville.
- 41. Hostages to Fortune** by Elizabeth Cambridge: 'Deals with domesticity without being in the least bit cosy' (Harriet Lane, *Observer*), a remarkable fictional portrait of a doctor's family in rural Oxfordshire in the 1920s.
- 42. The Blank Wall** by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding: 'The top suspense writer of them all' (Chandler). A 1947 thriller about a mother who shields her daughter from a blackmailer, filmed as both *The Reckless Moment* in 1949 and *The Deep End* in 2001. A BBC R4 serial in 2006.
- 43. The Wise Virgins** by Leonard Woolf: This is a wise and witty 1914 novel contrasting the bohemian Virginia and Vanessa with Gwen, the girl next door in 'Richstead' (Putney). Preface: Lyndall Gordon
- 44. Tea with Mr Rochester** by Frances Towers: Magical and unsettling 1949 stories, a surprise favourite, that are unusually beautifully written; read on R4 in 2003 and 2006. Preface: Frances Thomas
- 45. Good Food on the Aga** by Ambrose Heath: A 1932 cookery book for Aga users which can nevertheless be used by anyone; with numerous illustrations by Edward Bawden.
- 46. Miss Ranskill Comes Home** by Barbara Euphan Todd: An unsparing, wry 1946 novel: Miss Ranskill is shipwrecked and returns to wartime England. Preface: Wendy Pollard
- 47. The New House** by Lettice Cooper: 1936 portrayal of the day a family moves to a new house, and the resulting tensions and adjustments. Preface: Jilly Cooper.
- 48. The Casino** by Margaret Bonham: Short stories by a 1940s writer with a unique voice and dark sense of humour; they were read on BBC Radio 4 in 2004 and 2005. Preface: Cary Bazalgette.
- 49. Bricks and Mortar** by Helen Ashton: An excellent 1932 novel by a very popular pre- and post-war writer, chronicling the life of a hard-working and kindly London architect over thirty-five years.
- 50. The World that was Ours** by Hilda Bernstein: An extraordinary memoir that reads like a novel of the events before and after the 1964 Rivonia Trial. Mandela was given a life sentence but the Bernsteins escaped to England. Preface and Afterword: the author
- 51. Operation Heartbreak** by Duff Cooper: A soldier misses going to war – until the end of his life. 'The novel I enjoyed more than any other in the immediate post-war years' (Nina Bawden). Afterword: Max Arthur
- 52. The Village** by Marghanita Laski: This 1952 comedy of manners describes post-war readjustments in village life when love ignores the class barrier. Afterword: Juliet Gardiner
- 53. Lady Rose and Mrs Memmery** by Ruby Ferguson: A romantic 1937 novel about Lady Rose Targenet, who inherits a great house, marries well – and then meets the love of her life on a park bench. Preface: Candia McWilliam
- 54. They Can't Ration These** by Vicomte de Mauduit: A 1940 cookery book about 'food for free', full of excellent (and now fashionable) recipes.
- 55. Flush** by Virginia Woolf: A light-hearted but surprisingly feminist 1933 'life' of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spaniel, 'a little masterpiece of comedy' (*TLS*). Preface: Sally Beauman
- 56. They Were Sisters** by Dorothy Whipple: The fourth Persephone book by this wonderful writer, a 1943 novel that contrasts three very different marriages. Preface: Celia Brayfield
- 57. The Hopkins Manuscript** by RC Sherriff: What might happen if the moon crashed into the earth in 1946: 1939 science fiction 'written' by 'Mr Hopkins'. Preface: Michael Moorcock, Afterword: the late George Gamow
- 58. Hetty Dorval** by Ethel Wilson: First novel (1947) set in the beautiful landscape of British Columbia; a young girl is befriended by a beautiful and selfish 'Menace' – but is she? Afterword: the late Northrop Frye
- 59. There Were No Windows** by Norah Hoult: A touching and funny novel, written in 1944, about an elderly woman with memory loss living in Kensington during the blitz. Afterword: Julia Briggs.
- 60. Doreen** by Barbara Noble: A 1946 novel about a child who is evacuated to the country during the war. Her mother regrets it; the family that takes her in wants to keep her. Preface: Jessica Mann
- 61. A London Child of the 1870s** by Molly Hughes: A classic autobiography, written in 1934, about an 'ordinary, suburban Victorian family' in Islington, a great favourite with all ages. Preface: Adam Gopnik.
- 62. How to Run Your Home Without Help** by Kay Smallshaw: A 1949 manual for the newly servantless housewife full of advice that is historically interesting, useful nowadays and, as well, unintentionally humorous. Preface: Christina Hardymont
- 63. Princes in the Land** by Joanna Cannan: A novel published in 1938 about a daughter of the aristocracy who marries an Oxford don; her three children fail to turn out as she had hoped.
- 64. The Woman Novelist and Other Stories** by Diana Gardner: short stories written in the late 1930s and early 1940s that are witty, sharp and with an unusual undertone. Preface: Claire Gardner
- 65. Alas, Poor Lady** by Rachel Ferguson: A 1937 novel, which is polemical but intensely readable about the unthinking cruelty with which Victorian parents gave birth to daughters without anticipating any future for them apart from marriage.
- 66. Gardener's Nightcap** by Muriel Stuart: A huge variety of miniature essays on gardening – such as Dark Ladies (fritillary), Better Gooseberries, Phlox Failure – which will be enjoyed by all gardeners, keen or lukewarm. First published in 1938.
- 67. The Fortnight in September** by RC Sherriff: A 1931 novel by the author of *Journey's End*, and *The Hopkins Manuscript*, about a family on holiday in Bognor Regis; a quiet masterpiece.
- 68. The Expendable Man** by Dorothy B Hughes: A 1963 thriller set in Arizona by the well-known American crime writer; it was chosen by the critic HRF Keating as one of his hundred best crime novels. Afterword: Dominic Power
- 69. Journal of Katherine Mansfield**: The husband of the great short story writer (cf. **The Montana Stories**) assembled this journal from unposted letters, scraps of writing etc, to give a unique portrait of a woman writer.
- 70. Plats du Jour** by Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd: a 1957 cookery book which was a bestseller at the time and a pioneering work for British cooks. The superb black and white illustrations and the coloured endpapers are by David Gentleman.

'THE BLACK CAP' BY KATHERINE MANSFIELD

One of Katherine Mansfield's
Experiments in Dialogue, first published
in *New Age* May 17th 1917.

(A lady and her husband are seated at breakfast. He is quite calm, reading the newspaper and eating; but she is strangely excited, dressed for travelling and only pretending to eat.)

She: Oh, if you should want your flannel shirts, they are on the right-hand bottom shelf of the linen press.

He: (at a board meeting of the Meat Export Company). No.

She: You didn't hear what I said. I said if you should want your flannel shirts, they are on the right-hand bottom shelf of the linen press.

He: (positively). I quite agree!

She: It does seem rather extraordinary that on the very morning that I am going away you cannot leave the newspaper alone for five minutes.

He: (mildly). My dear woman, I don't want you to go. In fact, I have asked you not to go. I can't for the life of me see...

She: You know perfectly well that I am only going because I absolutely must. I've been putting it off and putting it off, and the dentist said last time...

He: Good! Good! Don't let's go over the ground again. We've

thrashed it out pretty thoroughly, haven't we?

Servant. Cab's here, m'm.

She: Please put my luggage in.

Servant. Very good, m'm.

(She gives a tremendous sigh.)

He: You haven't got too much time if you want to catch that train.

She: I know. I'm going. *(In a changed tone.)* Darling, don't let us part like this. It makes me feel so wretched. Why is it that you always seem to take a positive delight in spoiling my enjoyment?

He: I don't think going to the dentist is so positively enjoyable.

She: Oh, you know that's not what I mean. You're only saying that to hurt me. You know you are begging the question.

He: (laughing). And you are losing your train. You'll be back on Thursday evening, won't you?

She: (in a low, desperate voice). Yes, on Thursday evening. Good-bye, then. *(Comes over to him, and takes his head in her hands.)* Is there anything really the matter? Do at least look at me. Don't you – care – at – all?

He: My darling girl! This is like an exit on the cinema.

She: (letting her hands fall). Very well. Goodbye. *(Gives a quick tragic glance round the dining-room and goes.)*

(On the way to the station.)

She: How strange life is! I didn't think I should feel like this at all.

All the glamour seems to have gone, somehow. Oh, I'd give anything for the cab to turn round and go back. The most curious thing is that I feel if he really had made me believe he loved me it would have been much easier to have left him. But that's absurd. How strong the hay smells. It's going to be a very hot day. I shall never see these fields again. Never! never! But in another way I am glad that it happened like this; it puts me so finally, absolutely in the right for ever! He doesn't want a woman at all. A woman has no meaning for him. He's not the type of man to care deeply for anybody except himself. I've become the person who remembers to take the links out of his shirts before they go to the wash – that is all! And that's not enough for me. I'm young – I'm too proud. I'm not the type of woman to vegetate in the country and rave over 'our' own lettuces...

What you have been trying to do, ever since you married me is to make me submit, to turn me into your shadow, to rely on me so utterly that you'd only to glance up to find the right time printed on me somehow, as if I

were a clock. You have never been curious about me; you never wanted to explore my soul. No; you wanted me to settle down to your peaceful existence. Oh! how your blindness has outraged me – how I hate you for it! I am glad – thankful – thankful to have left you! I'm not a green girl; I am not conceited, but I do know my powers. It's not for nothing that I've always longed for riches and passion and freedom, and felt that they were mine by right. (*She leans against the buttoned back of the cab and murmurs.*) 'You are a Queen. Let mine be the joy of giving you your kingdom.' (*She smiles at her little royal hands.*) I wish my heart didn't beat so hard. It really hurts me. It tires me so and excites me so. It's like someone in a dreadful hurry beating against a door... This cab is only crawling along; we shall never be at the station at this rate. Hurry! Hurry! My love, I am coming as quickly as ever I can. Yes, I am suffering just like you. It's dreadful, isn't it unbearable – this last half-hour without each other... Oh, God! the horse has begun to walk again. Why doesn't he beat the great strong brute of a thing... Our wonderful life! We shall travel all over the world together. The whole world shall be ours because of our love. Oh, be patient! I am coming as fast as I possibly can... Ah, now it's downhill; now we really are going faster. (*An old man attempts to cross the road.*) Get out of my way, you old fool! He deserves to be run over... Dearest – dearest; I am nearly there. Only be patient!

(*At the station.*)
Put it in a first-class smoker... There's plenty of time after all. A full ten minutes before the train goes. No wonder he's not here. I mustn't appear to be looking for him. But I must say I'm disappointed. I never dreamed of being the first to arrive. I thought he would have been here and engaged a carriage and bought papers and flowers... How curious! I absolutely saw in my mind a paper of pink carnations... He knows how fond I am of carnations. But pink ones are not my favourites. I prefer dark red or pale yellow. He really will be late if he doesn't come now. The guard has begun to shut the doors. Whatever can have happened? Something dreadful. Perhaps at the last moment he has shot himself... I could not bear the thought of ruining your life... But you are not ruining my life. Ah, where are you? I shall have to get into the carriage... Who is this? That's not him! It can't be – yes, it is. What on earth has he got on his head? A black cap. But how awful! He's utterly changed. What can he be wearing a black cap for? I wouldn't have known him. How absurd he looks coming towards me, smiling, in that appalling cap!
He: My darling, I shall never forgive myself. But the most absurd, tragic-comic thing happened. (*They get into the carriage.*) I lost my hat. It simply disappeared. I had half the hotel looking for it. Not a sign! So finally, in despair, I had to

borrow this from another man who was staying there. (*The train moves off.*) You're not angry? (*Tries to take her in his arms.*)
She: Don't! We're not even out of the station yet.
He: (*ardently*). Great God! What do I care if the whole world were to see us I (*Tries to take her in his arms.*) My wonder! My joy!
She: Please don't! I hate being kissed in trains.
He: (*profoundly hurt*). Oh, very well. You are angry. It's serious. You can't get over the fact that I was late. But if you only knew the agony I suffered...
She: How can you think I could be so small-minded? I am not angry at all.
He: Then why won't you let me kiss you?
She (*laughing hysterically*). You look so different somehow – almost a stranger.
He: (*jumps up and looks at himself in the glass anxiously, and fatuously, she decides*). But it's all right, isn't it?
She: Oh, quite all right; perfectly all right. Oh, oh, oh! (*She begins to laugh and cry with rage.*)

(*They arrive.*)
She: (*while he gets a cab*). I must get over this. It's an obsession. It's incredible that anything should change a man so. I must tell him. Surely it's quite simple to say: Don't you think now that you are in the city you had better buy yourself a hat? But that will make him realise how frightful the cap has been. And the extraordinary thing is that he doesn't realise it himself. I mean if he has looked at himself in the

glass, and doesn't think that cap too ridiculous, how different our points of view must be... How deeply different! I mean, if I had seen him in the street I would have said I could not possibly love a man who wore a cap like that. I couldn't even have got to know him. He isn't my style at all. *(She looks round.)* Everybody is smiling at it. Well, I don't wonder! The way it makes his ears stick out, and the way it makes him have no back to his head at all.

He: The cab is ready, my darling. *(They get in.)*

He: *(tries to take her hand.)* The miracle that we two should be driving together, so simply, like this.

(She arranges her veil.)

He: *(tries to take her hand, very ardent.)* I'll engage one room, my love.

She: Oh, no! Of course you must take two.

He: But don't you think it would be wiser not to create suspicion?

She: I must have my own room.

(To herself) You can hang your cap behind your own door! *(She begins to laugh hysterically.)*

He: Ah! thank God! My queen is her happy self again!

(At the hotel.)

Manager: Yes, Sir, I quite understand. I think I've got the very thing for you, Sir. Kindly step this way. *(He takes them into a small sitting-room, with a bedroom leading out of it.)* This would suit you nicely, wouldn't it? And if you liked, we could make you up a bed on the sofa.

He: Oh, admirable! Admirable! *(The Manager goes.)*

She: *(furious.)* But I told you I wanted a room to myself. What a trick to play upon me! I told you I did not want to share a room. How dare you treat me like this? *(She mimics)* Admirable! Admirable! I shall never forgive you for that!

He: *(overcome.)* Oh, God, what is happening! I don't understand – I'm in the dark. Why have you suddenly, on this day of days, ceased to love me? What have I

done? Tell me!

She: *(sinks on the sofa.)* I'm very tired. If you do love me, please leave me alone. I – I only want to be alone for a little.

He: *(tenderly.)* Very well. I shall try to understand. I do begin to understand. I'll go out for half-an-hour, and then, my love, you may feel calmer. *(He looks round, distracted.)*

She: What is it?

He: My heart – you are sitting on my cap. *(She gives a positive scream and moves into the bedroom. He goes. She waits a moment, and then puts down her veil, and takes up her suitcase.)*

(In the taxi.)

She: Yes, Waterloo. *(She leans back.)* Ah, I've escaped – I've escaped! I shall just be in time to catch the afternoon train home. Oh, it's like a dream – I'll be home before supper. I'll tell him that the city was too hot or the dentist away. What does it matter? I've a right to my own home... It will be wonderful

driving up from the station: the fields will smell so delicious. There is cold fowl for supper left over from yesterday, and orange jelly... I have been mad, but now I am sane again. Oh, my husband!

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THE PERSEPHONE CLASSICS

Next year Persephone is taking a new direction, in fact those of you who have been to the shop recently may already have noticed some changes: the former kitchen has become a room of one's own for Joanna Everard, who starts on December 4th as Director, Persephone Classics.

The reason for this new development is as follows: some of our books, we are proud to say, have sold between five and ten thousand copies (with *Miss Pettigrew* out ahead at an amazing twenty thousand). Yet we are sure there are potential Persephone readers who are not on our mailing list.

So we have decided to try and find them and in the Spring of 2008 we will relaunch some of our best-selling titles in a new edition and they will be sold in bookshops; we are tentatively calling these the Persephone Classics (tentative because aren't the others classics too?) Although we are keeping the grey, and part of the endpapers, the Classics will look slightly different, with a beautiful picture on the cover, the kind that has been appearing on the front of the *Quarterly*; quotes from reviews on the back; and bookshop-friendly blurbs rather than a quotation on the flap.

The Persephone Seventy (as it now is) will go on, we hope, to

become Eighty or Ninety or a Hundred, but we plan in future to publish four new books a year instead of eight, two in April and two in October; the *Persephone Quarterly* will become the *Persephone Biannually* (in the sense of twice a year not every other year). The shop, the events, the cards, the mugs, indeed all the elements of which our ten thousand readers have grown fond will remain unchanged. But in 2008 you will be able to go into a bookshop and see some of your favourite books, for example *Someone at a Distance*, *Little Boy Lost* and *The Making of a Marchioness*, in a new format. We do hope you approve.

HILDA BERNSTEIN 1915-2006

In 2002 Hilda Bernstein was brought by the writer Lyndall Gordon to a Persephone Tea in Oxford. Then aged 87, she was white-haired, charming and modest; one would have had no idea, on first meeting her, of her importance in the history of South Africa.

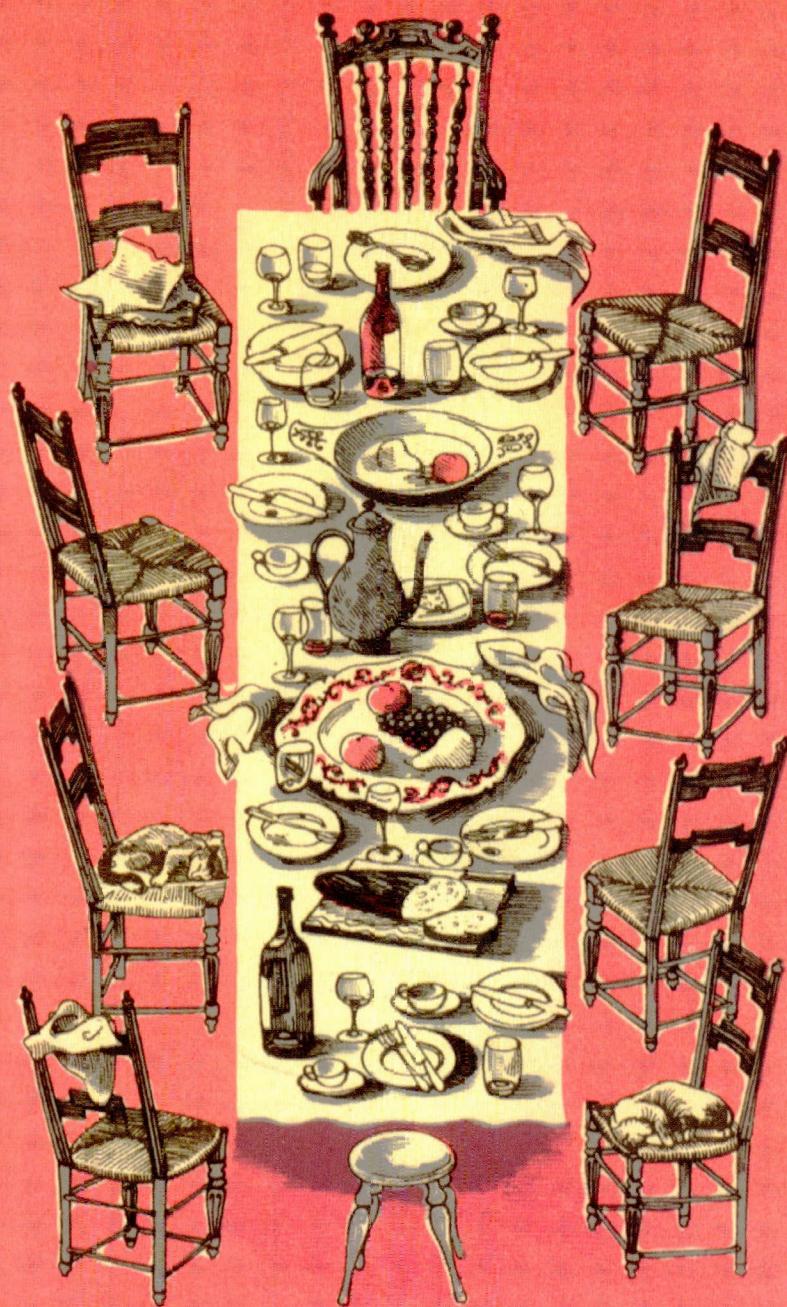
Lyndall suggested that she send us a copy of Hilda's 1967 book *The World that was Ours* and from the very first paragraph we were shaken and involved. It is a memoir of the months leading up to the 1964 Rivonia Trial at which Nelson Mandela was found guilty but Hilda's

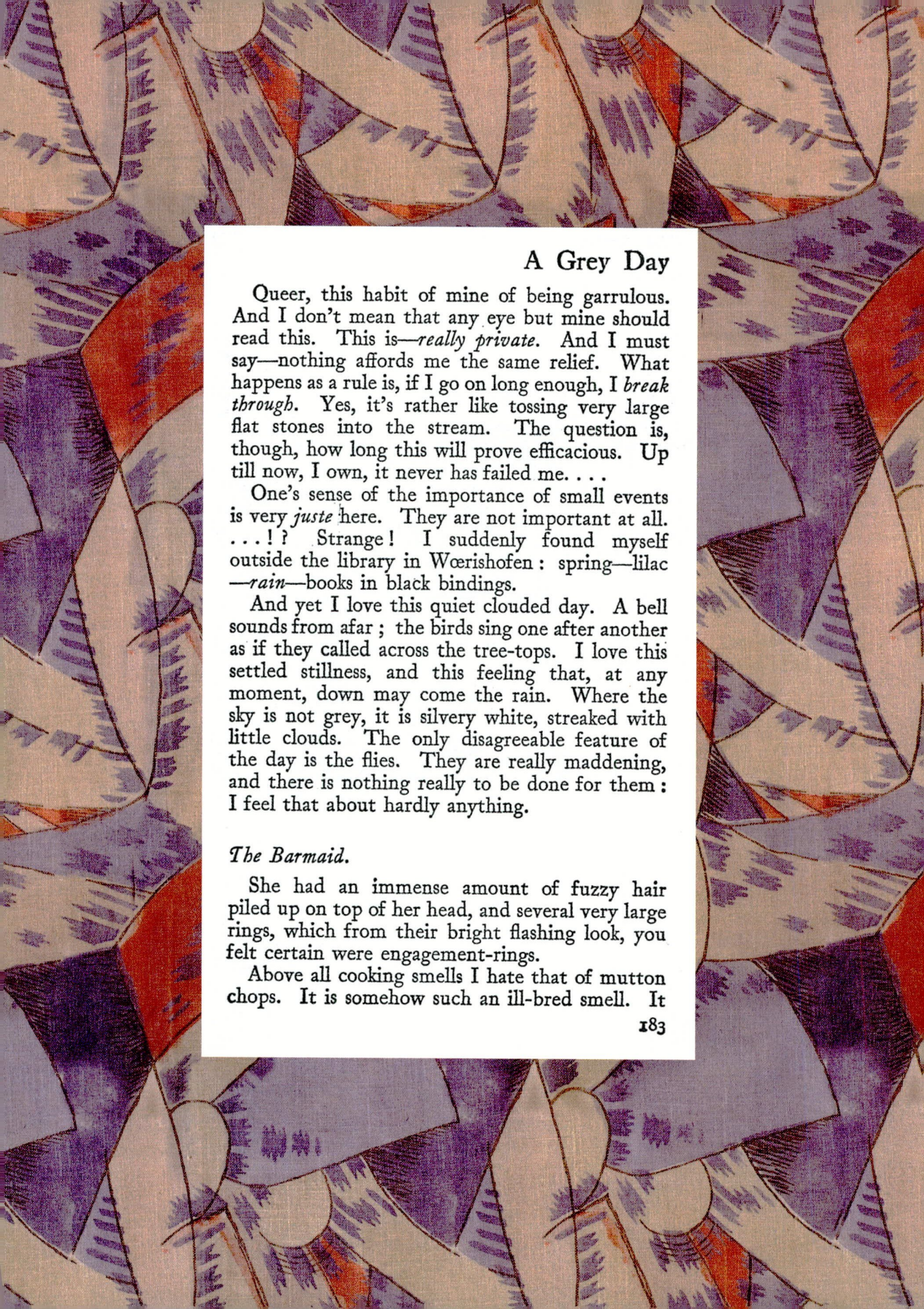


husband Rusty, on trial with the other 'men of Rivonia', was acquitted; he and Hilda then managed to escape from South Africa and the last third of the book, an account of their flight over the border, is as gripping as any thriller.

Hilda agreed to write a new Preface and Afterword for a Persephone edition of *The World that was Ours*, and then began a wonderful period when we visited her at her small house on the canal at Kidlington, near Oxford, and got to know this extraordinarily brave woman – because, as a speaker, activist and writer, she had opposed apartheid with the utmost courage and determination, all the while looking after her family and maintaining the facade of being 'only a housewife'.

Hilda died in September 2006.





A Grey Day

Queer, this habit of mine of being garrulous. And I don't mean that any eye but mine should read this. This is—*really private*. And I must say—nothing affords me the same relief. What happens as a rule is, if I go on long enough, I *break through*. Yes, it's rather like tossing very large flat stones into the stream. The question is, though, how long this will prove efficacious. Up till now, I own, it never has failed me. . . .

One's sense of the importance of small events is very *juste* here. They are not important at all. . . .!? Strange! I suddenly found myself outside the library in Wørishofen: spring—lilac—rain—books in black bindings.

And yet I love this quiet clouded day. A bell sounds from afar; the birds sing one after another as if they called across the tree-tops. I love this settled stillness, and this feeling that, at any moment, down may come the rain. Where the sky is not grey, it is silvery white, streaked with little clouds. The only disagreeable feature of the day is the flies. They are really maddening, and there is nothing really to be done for them: I feel that about hardly anything.

The Barmaid.

She had an immense amount of fuzzy hair piled up on top of her head, and several very large rings, which from their bright flashing look, you felt certain were engagement-rings.

Above all cooking smells I hate that of mutton chops. It is somehow such an ill-bred smell. It

FINALLY

There are still some places available for the *Persephone Teas* near Chichester on November 25th and near Bath on December 2nd – please phone for further details. There are no tickets left for Hermione Lee's lecture but a few for the *Persephone Lunch* on December 7th at which Pamela Norris will talk about 'Women Writers and the Romantic Hero'. There will be a *Christmas Party* at the shop from 6-8 on Tuesday December 12th; Joanna Everard will say a few words about starting work on the Persephone Classics; mince pies and mulled wine will be served; and our books will be for sale for £9 instead of £10. There is no charge for this event but it would be helpful if you would let us know if you would like to attend.

2007 events: the film of *They Were Sisters* in January is sold out. On Thursday March 15th there will be a *Persephone Lunch* from 12.30-2.30 to commemorate Hilda Bernstein, at which her daughter Frances Bernstein will talk about her mother. And at a *Lunch* on Thursday April 26th Virginia McKenna, Anne Harvey and Patricia Brake will give a repeat performance of 'Secret Gardens': a Celebration of Women Gardeners, a programme devised partly to celebrate

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Gardener's Nightcap by Muriel Stuart, Persephone Book No. 66. Places at these two events cost £28 each. And do try and come along to the book group in the shop from 6.30-8 on the first Wednesday of each month: in December we shall discuss *The Victorian Chaise-longue*, in



The Store Cupboard

January (the 10th *not* the 3rd) *The Home-Maker*, in February *Good Evening, Mrs Craven*, in March *Few Eggs and No Oranges* and in April *Julian Grenfell*. Lastly: on Saturday April 14th there will be a Persephone Tea in New York. Details will be sent out to East Coast Persephone readers in January.

The *Independent* chose ten of our books for the 'Hit List' in its Box Office column. The following week it chose our website as one of 'The Fifty Best E-Boutiques' along with, for example, Net-à-Porter, Abe books, Topshop, Graham and Green and the Science Museum Store.

The first Spring 2007 book will be *House-Bound* by Winifred Peck. In 1985 the *TLS* asked contributors to choose an unjustly neglected book which they would like to see reprinted and the late Penelope Fitzgerald chose this novel which is by her aunt: 'The story – as the title suggests – never moves out of middle-class Edinburgh. The satire on genteel living, though, is always kept in relation to the vast severance and waste of the war beyond.' Five years ago Penelope Fitzgerald wrote a Persephone Afterword for *House-Bound* and this will now be published for the first time. Our other Spring book is a new selection of short stories by Dorothy Whipple, which we have called *Saturday Afternoon and Other Stories*. There will be very few people reading this quarterly who need an introduction to the wonderful Dorothy Whipple – four of her novels appear on our list and two of her short stories have been published in the *Persephone Quarterly*.

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If we have failed to acknowledge something that appears in the *Persephone Quarterly*, please let us know.

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