

whom Israel was essential but not the centre—their own countries were. Diasporism is about being connected to other Jews as central, and being active in the issues where one lives, where one will always live. This was a very provocative notion for me, and also a helpful concept in the sense of belonging to a community “within” my country.

Although there is enormous cultural/racial/ethnic diversity in Toronto, I grew up in a world that was (and in so many ways, still is) relentlessly Christian. The struggle to determine my place in this society has been waged by so many Jews before me—Germany in the '30s, Spain in the thirteenth century—are just two episodes I reflect upon frequently. How do we belong to the larger society? How do we stay a community of Jews?

I have answered the question by staking my place in both communities.

My bat mitzvah will confirm my choice to become a visible Jew.

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¹Grandmother.

²A Jew originally from central or eastern Europe.

³The Hebrew word for the spring holiday commemorating the exodus from Egypt.

⁴The festive meal during which the story of the flight from slavery in Egypt to freedom is read from the *Hagada*.

⁵The holiday which commemorates the rescue of the Jews of Persia by Queen Esther.

⁶Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were both left-wing Jews who were executed in 1953 as Soviet spies on what many still regard as trumped-up charges. Julius was an electrical engineer for the United States Army Signal Corps.

FOGEL

enough

the shul is small, but much larger than this child dressed for her mother. her childhands large and wide. not the little girl hands mother wants them to be.

she is suddenly standing, the awesome arc opened. man-cradled torahs float along and are kissed. the mother, absolute lady, maker of rules reaches across to touch and to kiss. love unconditional. this little girl's dress clings to moist skin, fabric hardly lifting in stale air of religion. and the sweltering heat of midday shabbas.

the home, family like lord-god: punitive, wrathful maker of laws. dictates of identity, wiry and thin pull across the girl's throat. the mother weeps them tighter. and this girl, now 13 is forbidden desired dungarees and big boots. she stands still in the necessary dress, acquiescent after hours of combat. but it is never enough. and she is reprobate: false woman, false jew. she stares at pieces of sky, languid blue through high rectangular windows. generous clouds moving out of frame. creaking of wooden shul bench returns her. to the back of mr. goldberg's head; he will pinch her cheeks red and white, affectionately sadistic, and promise the mother a jar of his herring. to the sneezing of mrs. cohen, just a tiny emitted gasp, under cover of kleenexed palm. to large bony knees, through the trousers of men. where hair is allowed to grow unshaven. accepted. to the mother who will cry at her later and love her like mr. goldberg's pinches.

there will be funerals, more metal leaves in shul foyer, noting the purchase of trees in israel. more names, one her sister's. but this little girl will turn 18. and she will tear up stockings shifting gears on her motorbike. roaring up to shul in the midday prairie sun. that glares off aluminum siding, and blinds the good small-city jews. who stand surreptitiously staring. tacit condolence to the mother, whom she will stand beside sometimes; yartzheit, pesach, rosh hashanah. all are days of atonement. for this girl is apostate as woman, as jew. and this world will tear at her self until it is only hinged to her.

years later there is chosen family. women who invite her to seders. she will tattoo her bicep, sleep only with women, observe sabbath in the dyke bar. under benediction of big city disco ball. lights dancing. and she will be one of the jews. at a seder, with loved ones. dayenu. because it is enough.

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