

# THE NAMING OF JUDITH

## A fiction by Michael Picardie

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Once Eve – Chavvah - was eminent. That's why she got a job at Hadassa Hospital in West Jerusalem. In 1946 when she was 26. Head of clinical psychology. Specialist in post-traumatic stress disorder.

Now it was 1957. Why was she now a kibbutz Hebrew teacher? She was 37 – an interesting age, not young, not old. I was 21.

Doing her doctoral degree from 1944 to 1946 in California on victims of rape, she then treated Holocaust survivors from the concentration camps who had managed to get to Vienna. Fortunately, her father and mother had studied all over Europe between the two world wars and taught her Polish, German, Dutch, Italian, French, Hebrew, Yiddish and English.

So, she rarely needed translators to help her Holocaust patients with the therapy which was devised to help them talk and emotionally purge themselves of the trauma and stigmata which scarred and still tormented them physically and mentally.

To keep her balance growing up knowing that relatives were being or had been murdered in Poland and Germany, Lithuania and Russia, she read Freud, Jung, Klein, and later Marcuse, Fromm and Frankl and majored in psychology. Not only psychoanalytic psychology. Eclectic, empirical psychology. That which works: as Aristotle put it in relation to poetics and ethics: a practice characterised by *nous*, *phronesis* and *sophia*, intuitive understanding, practical intelligence and interpretative wisdom.

First, with the rape victims, and then the traumatised sufferers at the hands of the Nazis: those who had got themselves to clinics in San Diego and Berkeley, and then the masses of them in the camps in and around Vienna and then again those who managed, against the pro-Arab policies of the British, to get into in what was still Palestine, first interned yet again, some of them, then admitted to psychiatric wards or out-patient clinics in hospitals like Hadassa.

She used simple, abreactive techniques, catharsis basically, as old as ancient Greek tragedy, which Aristotle described. After California she was employed by international welfare organisations to work in displaced persons camps in Austria near the bombed out capital, a shell of its once magnificent Imperial glory. Of which the ugliness of Nazism made a mockery.

She helped patients go into a light trance as perhaps happens when the Chorus speaks the magnificent, hypnotic lines of *Oedipus Tyrannos* praising the new King of Thebes who has solved the riddle of the Sphinx on his fateful journey from Corinth back past his unknown father Laius whom he kills almost by accident, a prelude to his disastrous incest with his unknown birth mother Jocasta who has literally abandoned him to avoid the Oedipal curse.

Her patients were also in some sense cursed by war, male violence, submission to the twists and turns of fate - Jewish identity with all its ambivalences. She, Eve Downey (she translated Eve into the Hebrew Chavva when she came to Palestine in 1947) posed this riddle to her Holocaust survivor

patients: “What can I be now that this catastrophe has taken away everything, but my ‘I’ and my ‘me.’ Do I even have that identity? What does it mean to be both a subject and an object? Of being-in-the-world as an indescribable, unconscious, immanent thing and an experiencing, suffering, acting transcendent being?”

She fought in the 1947-1948 War of Independence. Something terrible had happened to her during this. She lost her job at Hadassa Hospital. She came to this kibbutz in the Emek to teach Hebrew to immigrants.

It was soon going to be the summer vacation. Although my teacher we had become friends. She was now as Jewish as she would ever be, but she had a Christian mother in America and she wanted to go to Galilee to see where Jesus, the charismatic Jewish healer had been.

The overwork with the traumatised had produced burn-out. And what happened to her in the Arab-Jewish war compounded her sense of alienation. She wanted a contemplative religion or a religion in which she could meditate. That’s what she said, “Where Jesus was”.

“*Oi vey*” I thought, “Is she all there?” There’s nothing wrong with having half-Jewish half-Christian women from California looking for Jesus, but why drag me into it? Tall, beautiful, slightly harrowed blond she was. She would hum and sing liturgical synagogue songs, hum lovely *niggunim*, and Hebrew pop numbers like: “Land of milk and honey” in between talking and teaching Hebrew in the kibbutz immigrants’ modern Hebrew school - in between her research into the effect of deprivation and trauma on the cognitive abilities of immigrant children (some indeed Holocaust survivors) as compared with kibbutz-born children now that her adult Holocaust survivors’ research and therapy at Haddasa was finished.

I could see that something terrible must have happened to make Hadassa take her job away from her.

But hadn’t I got enough problems of my own? Coming from apartheid South Africa on my way to Oxford from the Israeli autumn into the English winter and the wintry souls of the English – I mean *some* of the Oxford University English – the ones looking at me as a colonial and a Jew.

I was already depressed at the thought of more academic work after my four year stint at Witwatersrand University: now more - writing a B.Phil on Cecil Rhodes and the revolt of the Shona and the Ndebele against the first white Rhodesians who hanged Charwe Nehanda and the Kagubi spirit mediums. The brewing up of someone like a Robert Mugabe stirring the masses for the next bush war.

As if the Jews and the Arabs in Israel/Palestine weren’t enough to worry about. I was only 21 in 1957.

She saw me getting depressed in the kibbutz Hebrew class when the Bulgarians in the hay-barn were boasting about killing Egyptian prisoners of war in a desert fort on their way to Suez in 1956. Zipporah Cordevero the head teacher in the immigrants’ Hebrew school “referred” me to her - the Jesus-person – Eve “Chavva” Downey.

My South African and Dutch friends on the kibbutz were much relieved: I might get less depressed if Chavva and I became friends.

At Ein Kerem we saw Palestinian houses which had been bulldozed in 1947-1948. Our Dutch friend Yehudit put it in the context of the continuity of Jewish suffering: not only obviously in places like her parents' native Holland during the Holocaust and the expulsion of her own Sephardi family from Spain in 1492. All over Europe, Jews being killed everywhere you looked over 2000 years. But do a million anti-Semitic wrongs make a Zionist right? No? Or yes? Poor Palestinians. Two peoples, one more developed than the other in terms of national aspiration, political clout, military skill and determination, economic and educational resourcefulness.

But what happens when the whole Arab / Muslim world hits back?

History, like life, is more or less a shit sandwich. The more you eat the worse it gets. Until you fall in love. Again and again. Sometimes even with Jesus or Moses or Maimonides or YHVH Him/Herself. The Shekhina.

In 1947-1948 she had taken time off from Hadassa Hospital to fly fighter planes for the Haganah, the pre-Israel defence force.

And she was now celibate at this stage in 1957, when I first knew her on the kibbutz, I could feel it. But how in the first place had she managed to persuade a progressive rabbi from California to convert her? "Well," he may have thought. "If I can convert African Americans to Judaism why shouldn't I convert this blond, blue-eyed, half-Jewish future Zionist into an understanding of Jesus, a Jewish, charismatic healer, who read from the same Hebrew Torah that she does?"

Even in the heat of the Valley of Jezreel in the summer of July 1957 she smelt good and looked good and thought brilliantly and researched superbly. She told me on our walks through the kibbutz cemetery of how she was first sent here after she mutinied against the pre-Israel Haganah air force. Mutiny against South African racism was my philosophy of life. But it wasn't the same thing. Nationalism is not necessarily racism is it? Or is it?

She was charismatic. Like a combination of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene after Jesus redeemed the Magdalene from sin: in Eve-Chavva, a Jewish father, a Christian mother, a good gentile were reconciled. All the early, early Christians were Jews. Only Paul turned the Virgin, Jesus, and the rest of them into supernatural Christians, believing in the Imaginary Immaculate Conception, the Resurrection. The militant monastic orders like the Dominicans institutionalised anti-Semitism. Luther and the vile iconography of the *Judensau* did the rest.

Pigs if looked after are clean, loyal and intelligent. Every other important church and cathedral in Germany had carvings of Jews eating pig-faeces and sucking a sow's teats. The Other as animal. Had you not noticed the resemblance between monkeys, bears, wolves and Jews. The "classic" Jew is Kafka's ape who in presenting his case to the academy explains how in a laboratory he was agonizingly taught to become human. The Jew is already human. The anti-Semite attributes to the Jew the ape-like characteristics he fears in his own inhuman psyche.

This Eve – Chavva – Downey - took Jesus seriously. It was already in Leviticus: love the neighbour as yourself: your neighbour in the true sense: not *any* neighbour: the neighbour that *is* yourself. When

she did yoga in the cobra posture she welcomed the serpent in the story of Eden for opening Adam's and Eve's eyes to the fruit of the knowledge of the tree of good and evil.

Now in Israel she was on the brink of transcending her love of the poor crucified Yid, smuggled out of a cave in which he was immured and then disappeared, hurriedly re-buried in a local cemetery – Golgotha- with other victims of the temple aristocracy and the procurator of Judea - subversive heretics, kings of the Jews, sons of God, sons of Man, the poor, the vagrant, the abandoned. And the myth of the Resurrection which became Real because this Imaginary was so much believed in through Symbolic theological reasoning. It was Real but not ordinary reality. I had discovered the French critical theorist Jacques Lacan who linked the three orders of meaning and transcended his master Freud's reification of reality *wholly* outside the id/ego/superego.

On our walks in the kibbutz cemetery she manifested a feeling for ecstasy which overcame psychopathology. After her all her exhausting clinical work she hungered for faith to overcome doubt. I don't think she believed in the resurrection and eternal life, except in a metaphorical worldly sense that some of us live in the memories of our descendants. She had to make Kierkegaard's leap of faith as beyond but not cut off from reason.

ANYway to cut a long story short, we needed a late summer holiday. We started hitch-hiking from the valley of Jezreel up to Kinneret or Tiberias named by the *kittim* (picturesque name for "the Romans" – from *Ket* – *Cyprians* - westerners). Kit they had in plenty. Lake Tiberias. Some nostalgic homesick Latin army officer named it after Rome's river.

I could tell she was hell bent on sublimation of libido. She was saving It (Id) up. I'd never known anything like it. She smiled beautifully, beatifically. Like she was in a *Stabat Mater* waiting for the Deposition, eyes looking up to heaven all the time past the Cross. But when you got close and dared to take her hand her smell was more Magdalene than Virgin. On the way to the Galil we stopped in Arab villages. To buy pita bread filled with humus and falafel and drink orange juice.

All this beatific inspiration and healthy too? And sympathetic to the indigenous - she refused to shoot civilians - up in her second-hand old Czech propeller plane with machine guns set into the wings – when she first came to Palestine in 1947 at 27.

She had a pistol in a shoulder holster, but under her loose, capacious blouse covered by a denim jacket. Revenge against the Jews could still keep happening. It was 1957, the Palestinians were still reeling from their defeat by what was after all a majority of fighting Jewish men and women in the theatre of war outnumbering the local militias and well able to take on the Arab countries' invaders. The Jews were fighting to the death, no surrender.

It turned out she has a Jewish father Dr Deshovitch who became Downey and she had a *gentle*, gentile mother. She wore a locket with both their tiny pictures on a delicate gold chain round her neck resting in the cleavage of her small but charming breasts. She was tall, long-legged, rangy, hungry for engagement. She was not ritually Jewish but by progressive Judaism and in her ardent commitment she was Jewish. But, sensibly, for her becoming a Jew wasn't the be all and the end all. It was a stage on her journey to become herself. Unless she was herself already. She had made the leap of faith and escaped the homeless mind alone in a cold, accidental universe.

She sat me down in the kibbutz cemetery amongst the lovely oleander and the jasmine and the pines and the cypresses and the olives told me her story more fully.

She had managed to get the British to let her into Palestine by plane on international hops to Lydda airport and, after securing a job at Hadassa Hospital, asked to be drafted into the Palmach, the strike force of the Haganah facing 5 – or was it 7? - Arab armies in 1947-1948 with the British pulling out of Mandated Palestine.

The commanding officers of the Haganah, not realising how tough and experienced she was, offered her a position as psychologist in the medical and nursing corps who would support and rehabilitate wounded and traumatised Haganah soldiers. Smiling disarmingly, she produced an automatic pistol which she got from an underground Irgun Jewish defence force branch in Jerusalem with whom she had conducted a bloodless raid on a rich Jewish resident of Jerusalem in late 1947. They were collecting serious money to buy arms. She had to show her prowess to the top brass except they wore no brass. They all knew each other as *chaverim* - comrades. They wondered for a moment if she was a CIA spy not a serious Jewish Zionist. Not that America was averse to the Zionist cause, even Harry Truman once he saw the colour of Jewish money for another Democrat presidential campaign. But eventually, the Haganah recruitment / intelligence *chaverim* took her seriously. She took them into a back yard and she shot five (empty) beer cans off a wall with one shot each at 20 metres. They sent her off to the infantry, well away from the departing British. She went to a Palestinian barber and had her hair cut short and the neck shaved like a man. The Jewish army put her in long khaki pants and a khaki shirt and a sheepskin coat and boots: it was still the winter of 1947-1948. She got time off from Hadassa Hospital to do military service although they needed her clinical skills with the big influx of Holocaust survivors.

She told the trainers that she learned to fly when she got a job spraying crops in California. The Haganah was impressed. They sent off to a secret airfield and after a few lessons as co-pilot she flew alone in a fighter plane with guns in the wings loaded with ammunition. They told her to take off, do a circular manoeuvre and come down firing at a target which was a mock-up of a tank in which there was a barrel of petrol. She came down strafing the tank, successfully setting it on fire.

The British left. She trained to fly planes the Haganah bought second hand from the communist government in Czechoslovakia. The Iraqis were massing on the eastern border in Jordan. The Lebanese and Syrians to the north, the Egyptians to the south. The Jordanians and the Iraqis crossed the border into Palestine the day war was declared, the day the British left.

She flew in a squadron to attack the Jordanian and Iraqi tanks and armoured cars – the enemy taking tanks, troops and artillery westward to reach the hills of Judea. And then on to Samaria to the north. The Jewish air-force dive bombed, or strafed shooting into the enemy forces and wiped out a good few tanks incinerating tank crew and killing artillerymen who scattered till they were more or less annihilated. Hundreds dead or wounded - no military ambulances in sight. *She saw civilians, children, old people caught up in the attack.*

*She was suddenly appalled by what her squadron was doing. She dived but didn't shoot because of the civilians in village houses and mosques in amongst the Iraqis, Jordanians and the Palestinian militia.* In the excitement and danger no one noticed at first that she left the squadron and returned to the military airport. Until the squadron captain saw her disappearing over the horizon.

Then the deputy squadron leader ordered them towards the Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus areas to attack the Palestinian and the Arab League militias and invading armies naturally taking cover in mosques and amongst villagers' houses. What she had done was to pull away from the squadron and make for base – an improvised military airport, pursued by the captain of the squadron whilst the rest of the pilots did what they were told. On the intercom, he challenged her and said he would shoot her down for mutiny only he didn't want to destroy the Czechoslovak plane. She turned her plane round and buzzed his fighter, an attack he avoided by swerving and diving and flying up. He gave her up as a bad job and returned to the squadron still in the air attacking the invaders coming in from the other borders and local militias about which they had been briefed. She landed at the military airport and made straight for the air force commander and she reported her squadron leader for committing the squadron to atrocities in breach of the Geneva Convention: unwarranted attack on unarmed civilians. By this time her squadron leader had radioed in about the crazy woman volunteering for the air force and then screwing up. That's how he put it. This was in part a guerrilla war, and indeed had to do with local militias. How could it *not* involve local civilian populations? Hadn't she heard about Ben Gurion and the High Command's Plan Dalet which aimed at a contiguous territory for a Jewish state? In effect ethnic cleansing? The general or brigadier had her locked up in the secret military airport pending dishonourable discharge from the air-force and probable deportation back to California even though the British had stamped her passport as a legal entry, treating her as a Jew. She fought her case at a summary court martial lasting half an hour.

She sat in military detention for a week. At the reconvened hearing, back in Jerusalem the court-martial found she was found guilty of mutiny and the squadron leader was exonerated. The Zionist authorities had mutated into the State of Israel whilst she was on bail pending deportation on condition that she stayed on Kibbutz Mishmar HaYez'ri'el where they put her in charge of teaching Hebrew to new immigrants and treating them with abreaction / catharsis if they were traumatised - whilst waiting for the outcome of the deportation issue. The authorities needed her as a teacher/ therapist – and did not need her as a fighter-pilot or in the Haganah at all.

The new Israeli air-force withdrew their charges and the Interior Department dropped their case against her. She was regarded as a joke. After all what do you expect from a half-Jewish American psychologist with a Ph.D. – a *woman* flying a warplane? A *meshuggener*. Only the disturbed went into clinical psychology. Then they looked at her CV and shook their heads in a mixture of admiration and regret that she had, with all her learning and experience not really learned the reality of how to be on the victorious side in a desperate war to fulfil two millennia of Zionist aspiration, at last a courageous – yes ruthless – conquest of an albeit invented and disputed homeland of two albeit invented peoples who felt they only belonged in Judea and Samaria and Galilee.

The British – successive waves of European immigrants – similarly invented Britain. But to be British or Israeli was now Real.

She only had the Hebrew and the Christian bibles to read in detention in the improvised military airport. In Hebrew. She was amazed by the gospels. And Isaiah. And the psalms. They told her to go and teach and treat the survivors on the kibbutz. She couldn't be trusted with sensitive cases of Holocaust victims at Hadassa if she could behave with such reckless dereliction of duty, betraying the trust the Haganah put in her. She lost her job.

After we hitch-hiked to Lake Kinneret we slept in our separate sleeping bags out in the open whilst she chanted an evening hymn welcoming the Sabbath bride: "*L'chah dod!*". She taught me meditation. The hillside smelt of fragrant herbs, thyme and marjoram. Her rabbi in California had taught her meditation and kabbalah. Sitting in the lotus position she taught me how to visualise the YodHeyVavHey, the YHVH name of God called Adonai. On my shut eyelids. Assembling the dots and flashes into strokes of a pen in one's mind's eye. Whilst breathing deeply. Yoga breathing. She and I were islands of peace and tranquillity.

She whispered she could visualise Jesus preaching from a fishing boat, only appearing to the crowds on the shore to be walking on the water. We swam across a corner of the lake and in our swim-suits ran back to our things left up on a high tussock where we had camped without a tent.

She took out her Hebrew bible produced by the Christian bible society for the conversion of the Jews and read up on Jesus miraculous birth in Bethlehem and so on through the gospels, and then back to the Jewish Hebrew bible - Isaiah and Ezekiel. The coming of Moshiach and the resurrection and re-embodiment of the bones buried on the Mount of Olives and the Suffering Servant. Sitting, closing her eyes she visualised Jesus behind us in the Sermon on the Mount. She uttered it word for word. "Blessed be the poor for they shall inherit the earth." "Tis harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle". I replied: "Vanity of vanities. All is vanity."

"What is this all about?" I asked. "All your heroism in '47 to '48?. Are you an Israeli Jew or not? It's 1957. You're 37 already. Are you going to stay on in the kibbutz all your life? Driving a tractor and milking cows? I'm only 21. I'm going to Oxford. I'm going to be alone there. I hate been alone. I have to be alone to do my history research and my creative writing."

"You've got a fantastic brain. You could come with me to Oxford. We could get married in Cyprus since they're not likely to convert you into an Orthodox Jewish woman or even marry us in this new theocratic state. I'm also a lonely only child wondering what will become of me. You cannot imagine what I have been through in South Africa. The contempt and loathing of liberalism even though my father flew in the South African Air Force, was shot down over Libya, lucky not to be burned alive, never gave up hope that '39 to '45 was also a war for a liberalised South Africa not only against Hitler."

We hitched back, to the kibbutz where I was learning Hebrew, taught by Chavva and Zipporah when I was not working for Kol Tzion L'gola – the overseas English service of Israel Radio in Jerusalem. We met up in Haifa and sailed for Cyprus where we found the registry of births, marriages and deaths on the second story of an elegant old villa in Famagusta set up by the British on the Greek side of the island. We slept together that night in a Cypriot pension. We made love all night. It was joyous.

We then, somehow woke up out of our dream of – love – or unwise infatuation? We couldn't just get married on a whim. It was the middle of her cycle. She could have got pregnant. That was all we needed to complete our chaotic but happy, impulsive union. There was the big age gap, the differences in cultures.... It all looked like an impending disaster.

We considered the risk of "marry in haste – repent at leisure."

She went back to Palestine which was now Israel, but no Palestinian state and 700,000 refugees driven out or frightened by the atrocity at Deir Yassin against Palestinian civilians committed by the

Irgun. Ben Gurion himself had criticised the pleas of the Jewish Mayor of Haifa to the Palestinians not to flee – ten years before.

She was going to work with the Jewish refugees who had been drafted to our kibbutz in the Emek and the few Arabs who stayed and worked as builders for the kibbutz. Through teaching Hebrew and abreaction / catharsis you could cure souls. Hah! Tell that the Palestinian refugees!

My Dutch/English and South African friends on the kibbutz` had returned to Great Missenden and Johannesburg.

I went to Britain alone and stayed with Ella Erdmann my actor friend in Earl's Court and told her my latest *geschichte* - my stories and adventures. She was at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Over a period of a year I had written a play called "The White African" she and I were going to produce and perform at the RADA theatre as her B.A. Honours degree project.

The play was done. Ella Erdmann launched on a glittering career of star roles in Shakespeare, Chekhov, Racine in the West End and Stratford on Avon.

Chavva was pregnant alright and wondered how she would cope. But she wanted the child. She didn't want England or America. Her post-doctoral research on Holocaust trauma was published in a book in Hebrew of which she was the sole author in Jerusalem and then in English and some of the European languages which made her name. She was offered a senior post at a new Israeli university. Her fellowship was based partly on the child and family department of the local hospital. She was still a member of the Emek Kibbutz.

Judith was born at the maternity wing of Hadassa Hospital in 1958. Chavva was happy in Israel. She was not concerned with conventional marriage and the family. Her family was the kibbutz. I went out to be with the mother and our child. But the kibbutz had given up on me as a Zionist. I was a diaspora Jew. I would fly to Israel for Judith's birthdays every year.

My B.Phil on early Rhodesia mutated into a D.Phil with stacks of documentary material in the possession of Rhodes House detailing the atrocious settlers' response to the uprising of the Shona and Ndebele of the mid-1890s. There were also the British South Africa Company's papers in London and Salisbury in what was then still Rhodesia. I had to travel to read these appalling accounts of colonial conquest and indigenous revolt.

My supervisor was Bill Torrance at Magdalene who was producing books on the Randlords behind the Boer War of 1899-1902 and the British South Africa Company which invaded Matabeleland and Mashonaland and the Umtali areas in the early 1890s.

Then it would be my turn to help Bill Torrance find documents written by and about the first Rhodesians concerning the uprising in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. He was interested in the broad outlines. The fine analytical detail he passed onto me for my D.Phil. Skip the B.Phil., he said,

Judith's birth in June 1958 was another miracle: she was born with the caul (the placenta) round her head. According to folk legend, this meant she would never drown. Sailors would pay good money for a caul. They gave me the placenta in a sterile plastic bag as a memento but suggested I burn it. Now I was allowed to share a flat/chalet on the kibbutz with Chavva and the baby. I took a

photograph of the placenta and then, sadly, burnt it in the back garden of the kibbutz chalet-flat where the leaves were put into a brazier. I prayed for Judith, Chavva, my parents, her parents, all our well-wishers as if to make this Imaginary sacrifice to an Imaginary God Real, through affirmation of an ethical Symbolic. It sounds inflated. The neo-Freudian in Paris Jacques Lacan had discovered through a revived French Freudianism that what was not strictly reality could, by affirmation of the Imaginary and the intellectual working out of the Symbolic become Real. Only in this sense was "God" an ethical Real.

When my and Chavva's parents arrived, they stayed on the kibbutz. We revisited Kinneret. There was a visiting liberal rabbi on this secular kibbutz, teaching a course "Comparative Theologies in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religions" at the Hebrew University. We had a picnic and Chavva breast-fed Judith. While Judith was sleeping peacefully he blessed her and named her *Yehudit bat Chavva v' Mordechai*. We sang a hymn *Adon Olam* "Lord of the World."

Our parents and in-laws got on surprisingly well and visited each other in California and Johannesburg.

*May this be the truth.*

*I have the vague memory that this phrase in Hebrew is how a rabbi ends a sermon. But a rabbi is not a priest, not an intermediary between God and man/woman. A short story should not be a sermon.*

*Just a truthful story composed of multiple stories. It wasn't God that joined us together. Not the Jewish God anyway with his damnation of other ethnicities and his chauvinism about the chosen people and the promised land. Everyone is potentially chosen. Every land is potentially the land not just of the autochthonous, the native born, but those who aspire to it in admiration. Not necessarily those who conquer it. We avoided the god of war, Ares..... We tried not to fight each other.*

*But it was the 1960s and the gender war was on. Everybody fought that war. Must have been Minerva or Athene, goddesses of wisdom who presided over us. No not them either. They were born out of Zeus-Jupiter's forehead.*

*We decided in the end since both Judith and later Rachel who were actually born on a Saturday and a Sunday respectively that they, the children born on the Sabbath day(s) were bonnie and good and blithe and gay. Not sublimely so. They lived through their own tragedies too.*

*Especially Rachel. She died at the age of 33. Of medical negligence to do with a treatable breast cancer when her twins were 2.*

*Grieving. As all of us grieve.*

*As Beckett says: I can't go on.*

*Pause.*

*I'll go on.*

*They do not move.*

I eventually gave up history and took up theatre. When I came to direct *Godot* 50 or more years later I came to see Vladimir's and Estragon's tree which miraculously buds forth new leaves overnight as an eternal return of spring. Rachel is not dead. She springs alive in her twins Sharon and Jonatan. Sharon teaches sociology to Arab and Jewish students at Beersheba University and Jonatan is an actor with the Habimah Theatre. The *kaddish* which commemorates God as eternal being commemorates the dead as not dead. Only Nietzsche's madman said "God is dead and we have killed him." It was only Hamlet's defensive, protective madness transcending death that saved him and indeed created the eternal truth and beauty of the play. In God.

*Exeunt. They all exit.*

*"The rest is silence"*

This is not true. The rest is not silence. Judith's son Tuvya and daughter Yael are composers and musicians who tour Palestine and Israel, London, New York bringing together various strands of Middle Eastern and Spanish culture, song and dance.

*Chavva in her '90s draws and paints posters for the kibbutzim advertising concerts, arts, and makes toys for our great-grandchildren.*

*I in my early '80s direct a whole new generation of Israeli / Palestinian plays reflecting the agony and the joys of the new millennium for the Jewish and Arab world. Sometimes we translate them into English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian so the world can see we – Arabs and Jews – can give effect to Abraham's covenant with not the reality of God but with the Real containing the Imaginary and the Symbolic of the great fulfilments and betrayals of history.*

May this be the truth.