

Dear Rebecca and Tim,

3.19.13

Finally, after some 19 years during which I could not bear to even read these letters, let alone to part with them, I hereby enclose them to be included as part of the Alan Kaufman papers. They are an historical compilation of the first magnitude: a riveting first-hand account of my mother's experience as a French-Jewish child under the German Occupation. She composed and mailed them to me, at my request that she recount me a full accounting of her wartime ordeal, between 1993/1994, at which time -- in April to be exact -- she broke off the account, too ill to write. Four ~~months~~ months later, in August, 1994, she was dead. The survivor was dead. She died alone in the night in a hospital in Miami Beach. My father, who had stayed for days with her, had gone home to rest. On that night, she passed.

There are people who are alive and then there are those who somehow are even more than alive.



She was beautiful and indomitable,<sup>2</sup>  
and I loved her and also feared her. The  
narrator of the letters is a keen observer,  
unashamed of her uncertainty, frank  
about her despair, but also extraordinary  
resolute in her desire to live, and her  
faith in human goodness: her belief, despite  
all evidence to the contrary, that good  
people exist, that good itself exists. But  
she is unflinching in her observations of  
the cowardice, delusion and brutality  
raging all around her, and these, too,  
make the letters remarkable.

She died before she could complete the  
account but wrote enough to take  
us far enough to know what we need  
to know.

I miss and love her and looking back  
I know that without her I would never  
have become a writer or at least  
the writer I am. These letters are  
the last things of hers I have. and



So I do ~~not~~ not part with them easily. ③  
But I know that I must, that all along they  
were intended, written for more than just I --  
she meant them for the world to read.  
So that what she endured could stand  
as indictment but also warning. There  
was that warning been more necessary than  
now. I know that these letters,  
containing her wartime experiences --  
experiences which shaped her life and  
mine, and my writing, will provide  
a safe and final home and harbor for  
this woman, and the child who comes so  
alive in these letters, it is a safety,  
a safe harbor that she never felt in  
life, never reached. Now at last she  
can come home.

Sincerely,

Alan Karpman  
San Francisco



Writers Guild  
of America  
Tel: 245 6180

ADRIENNE

AUTHOR Guild

Tel 398-0838



ENDICOTT Books  
SALEERS

450 COLUMBUS Ave.  
Tel: 484-6300

ASK FOR: SUSAN

If you can't get in  
touch today; ~~will~~ go  
Wednesday (tomorrow)  
in early afternoon  
for interview

---

# A note about the letters, photos + documents ——— ①

## About the letters:

- I've put them as best I can into chronological order, but best check.
- There's a sheet of notes at the end I can't assign to anywhere -- perhaps you can
- There's a few letters still in their envelopes from my father
- There's a letter from my mother in the blue envelope - + amazing in its own right + non-Holocaust in subject -- recounting the horrible misfortunes of my father's family + in which my mother shares a side of her story not included in the war letters...
- The documents are photocopies. I have the originals which some day I'll donate to Ucal. They are also amazing. They were issued, in the main, right after the war + share



the extent of my mother's disenfranchisement  
not only as a French citizen but as  
a human being:

They attest that <sup>1</sup>she is a  
"survivor" <sup>2</sup>she is French <sup>3</sup>that  
she even exists!! All these needed  
to be reestablished on earth once  
she returned from her ordeal to  
Paris.

The other documents are her French  
birth certificate, her naturalization  
paper from Venezuela to which she  
fled after the war, and her  
"Livres de Famille" showing her  
husband & children's documentation  
by the French government.



About the photos —

I have identified the contents  
the best I can, affixed by  
post-it.

Some though I've left unidentified,  
for reasons that I can't as it really  
doesn't seem to matter.

There are photos of her taken in 1943  
during the war in which she looks  
even radiant -- proof that even  
amidst such horrors & privation  
as she experienced still the human  
urge to smile, to beam, to  
shine forth cannot be extinguished.  
In other photos, she looks less well.  
So too my grandparents in the  
war photos of them.

And some of the photos, unidentified,  
contain the explosive exuberance



of ~~the~~ liberated France in ②  
1945 + after. I don't know  
who the people are. It almost  
doesn't matter. Their energy,  
joy and vibrance tell its own  
story. It's been historical moment.

Best,

Alan Hooper