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CLASSICAL LATIN PAX

< classical Latin *pax*, stem *pc-*, parallel form of *pg-*, stem of *pgina* (also *pag-*, stem of *pangere*) to fix, fasten, see *page*

My mom tired, says, I was
cleaning house and need a rest before finishing, and begins:
During *Kristallnacht*, shops were broken into, smashed,
(“Did you see or hear it? ” No, I overheard people talk)
men in the family deported, everyone walking on eggs.
People trying to leave,
my aunt sent her children to England,
there was *Save your Children* . . .

I scrawl terror terror terror and
draw cages around each entire word, add a
few rays

Leaving was scary,
we went on a train through Germany.
My parents were stateless, you know, had no citizenship protection from anyone;

not that that would matter, of course . . .
we stayed on the train until Sweden.
This was in 1939

we went to a pension. HIAS,
the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, found us a house on a fjord an hour
from Stockholm. Lived there for the summer, in September they moved us to
an apartment in the city—was pretty nice, went to school, learned to speak
Swedish, went sleigh-riding. People were
very nice.

“What language did you first
learn to read?”

We spoke German, I spoke German with my family.
In America I learned to speak English.
We also spoke Yiddish and my parents spoke Polish between themselves.

“When did you know you were
Jewish and that that was a problem?”

I didn’t understand until I was older.

My mother was pushing my sister in a stroller,
they both were dark-haired, I was light.
Heard a woman say, “What is that dark-haired woman
doing with that Aryan child?”

I heard about the parade in the street.
I was six,
my grandfather was very scared.
He was very Jewish,
he had a long beard.
There was fear; my mother, too.

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I overheard phone conversations between my mother, her sisters, and brothers.

My aunt was living with us. She lived in Palestine, had come to Vienna for medical attention. They were very worried about their parents and siblings in Poland. For a while, my mother sent kosher food to her family in Poland, where they couldn't get any.

I didn't understand until I was older,

The parade was the claim. Claim that Austria was part of Germany that German-speaking people are the same.

At night we had blackouts.

“Electricity off?”

We had to close the curtains so there wouldn't be any light outside.

My father was in America to settle an inheritance, then he came back. November of 1938. That was *Kristallnacht*.

My grandfather lived alone, he would babysit us during the day, and go back home to sleep. He came in one morning, my mother was trying to get us to school. He had a *sefer torah* in his hand, this was a big deal, he'd rescued it. I didn't go to school that day.

SS people came to the door and arrested my father, grandfather, and Uncle Carl. Deported them to the Polish border.

Somehow they made their way back to Vienna.

There was a struggle to get papers. I kept hearing quota number over and over again.

I don't remember going back to school.

My sister got sick, she was four
and needed to have her appendix removed,
but the hospital wasn't taking Jewish patients.

The hospitals were run by churches, the nurses were nuns.
I had had my appendix removed maybe
they remembered being treated well then, maybe
that's why they agreed to take my sister in

The war started in September and we left in July.
I knew we were leaving because we were Jewish,
everyone afraid we were going to be hurt.

I underline *be hurt* and extend
the line under the period's circle.
hurt.

“Killed?”

I didn't understand until I was older;

When we got to America,
I knew we were going to stay there.
We heard about the camps on the radio in America.
Heard people were being killed.
The radio was always on the
radio was always on

“Was your life affected by this
experience?”

Our life style was different in Vienna, my parents were established, there
was a graciousness about their lives had to start with nothing, it
was difficult for my parents to acculturate themselves, hardest for my father
would have had a very different social circle, more pleasant and gracious lives

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my parents were very disappointed with their daughters' marriages I would have had relatives and an extended family

around the word

I write terror and scrawl a cage

I need to travel light, never wanted a house,
have what I need, no extra possessions. Can walk away any time I
have to.

Never wanted to be rooted

I underline *to be rooted*,

and give a wing to the infinitive, dash—
a needle pricking the seamless white