April 26th.

Carin Bendas

University of South Carolina

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APRIL 26TH.

by

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University of South Carolina

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Accepted by:

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DEDICATION

In honor of the courage of the ones who came before us.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Eternally grateful for the love and support of my family: my dearest love, Ben Blazer; Neila and Danny Bendas; Alon Bendas; Gilit, Pete, and Milo James; Dayna Greenfield; Rebecca Dealy; Kaitlin Genovese; Caulder Tempel; Martha Hearn. And to my mentors and co-conspirators, without whom this work never would have been realized: Robyn Hunt, Steve Pearson, Nicole Dietze, Candace Thomas, Rachel Kuhnle, Josh Jeffers, Matthew Cavender, Dimitri Woods, Benjamin Roberts, Neda Spalajkovic, Tamara Joksimovic, Baxter Engle, and Jane Hearn. This piece would be impossible without Ruth and Morry Hecht’s infinite love of one another and of all things good.
ABSTRACT

April 26th. is a solo theatre piece that takes the audience on a journey through a few moments in the lives of seven Jewish individuals across space and time. It is inspired by the struggles and survival of the Jewish people throughout history, with special inspiration from the playwright’s Bubie and Zadie, Ruth and Morry Hecht.
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THE SCRIPT

April 26th.

DSR is a red folding chair and an open army trunk.

DSL is a wooden folding chair, makeshift “table” (a stack of three wooden crates). On the table is a 1940’s-style typewriter. Behind/ beside the “table” is a wooden crate standing on its end. A khaki army shirt is hanging over the back of the folding chair.

There is a scrim US

HOUSELIGHTS/ STAGELIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 1.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in the South Pacific. April 26th, 1944.

A SOLDIER in a green WWII Army jacket and khaki Army “hard” hat stands beside the typewriter DSL

SOLDIER. Somewhere in the South Pacific, where they say the trade winds blow; Where your thoughts are always drifting to the ones you used to know. Where the moon shines down so brightly Where stars twinkle in the sky; Where eyes well up so quickly, full of tears, yet you don’t cry.

Somewhere in the South Pacific, where we seldom hear the news; Where the stories that we hear are mostly fables, someone’s views. Where you hear that you’ll be home ’ere long, you know it can’t be right; Yet it lifts your hopes like opium, makes you pray with all your might.

5 second fade to black as the YOUNG WOMAN removes the hat and places it on the chair.
SCENE 2.

_In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection._

_PROJECTION:_ **Somewhere in the Negev Desert.**

_April 26th, 73 A.D._

_A minimal amount of side lighting fades up, revealing a huddled mass behind the scrim USL of C. The lighting should be so that the audience can’t really see the actor. Just a general shape. The woman is wearing a scarf over her head._

_YOUNG WOMAN._ Hush, baby.

_CHILD._ But mama…

_YOUNG WOMAN._ HUSH BABY.

_CHILD._ But…why?

_YOUNG WOMAN._ I said hush.

_CHILD._ But…

_YOUNG WOMAN._ Let’s play a game, ok baby?

_CHILD._ Ok, mama. What game?

_YOUNG WOMAN._ Let’s pretend there’s a big dragon and he’s trying to find us so we have to hide from him.

 CHILD. But I like dragons.

_YOUNG WOMAN._ But this one is a mean dragon. He wants to blow fire in our faces until we are turned to ash.

_CHILD._ …sort of like Lot’s wife?

_YOUNG WOMAN._ Yes, baby. Sort of. (silence)

_CHILD._ Mama?

_YOUNG WOMAN._ Hush, baby.

_CHILD._ But it’s cold. And wet._
YOUNG WOMAN. I know, baby.

CHILD. Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby.

CHILD. Why are we here?

YOUNG WOMAN. Don’t ask questions, baby. Just stay quiet.

CHILD. …but…why?

YOUNG WOMAN. Because if the dragon sees us, we will die.

3 second fade to black.

SCENE 3.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in Poland.

April 26th, 1941.

A small strip of white light (as if it is coming from under a closet door) reveals a pile of coats behind the scrim USR of center. The audience should not be able to make out any details; only a general shape.

YOUNG WOMAN. Hush, baby.

CHILD. But Mama…

YOUNG WOMAN. I said HUSH, child. Hush.

CHILD. But mama…please. I have to pee.

YOUNG WOMAN. Hold it. And hush.

CHILD. But I really really really need to go.

YOUNG WOMAN. Think of something else.

CHILD. But mama…
YOUNG WOMAN. Hush, baby. Please.

CHILD. Mama…

YOUNG WOMAN. Let’s play a game, okay baby?

CHILD. Ok Mama.

YOUNG WOMAN. Let’s pretend we’re playing hide and seek with a big scary monster.

And if we make a peep, the monster will find us.

CHILD. Ok Mama. (silence) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Hush, baby.

CHILD. But it’s dark in here. And too small. And it’s hot under all these coats. I can’t breathe.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, baby. Hush now. We don’t want the monster to find us.

CHILD. But mama…

YOUNG WOMAN. What, baby?

CHILD. If we’re hiding from a monster, why are we in the closet?

YOUNG WOMAN. (becoming exasperated) Because we don’t want him to find us, baby.

CHILD. But monsters live in the closet. And under the bed. Everybody knows that.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, baby.

CHILD. And monsters only come out at night. It’s lunchtime.

YOUNG WOMAN. You’re right, baby. Usually they do. But this monster is different.

CHILD. Why?

YOUNG WOMAN. He just is. Hush now.

CHILD. Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. What, baby.

CHILD. When is Papa coming home?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don’t know, baby. I don’t know…

3 second fade to black.
SCENE 5.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in the Negev Desert.

April 26th, 73 A.D.

Dim light fades up behind scrim USL of center

CHILD. Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby.

CHILD. What does the dragon look like?

YOUNG WOMAN. He is the largest thing you have ever seen. Larger than our whole town. He looks like ten thousand men. Each man is a scale on the dragon’s back.

CHILD. Hm…

YOUNG WOMAN. Sounds like a pretty scary dragon, doesn’t it?

CHILD. Yes, mama.

YOUNG WOMAN. That’s why we need to be very quiet.

CHILD. Yes, mama. (pause) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby.

CHILD. Where is Papa? (her mother doesn’t answer) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. He’s gone, baby.

CHILD. Did the dragon get him?

YOUNG WOMAN. No, baby.

CHILD. Then where is he? (her mother doesn’t answer) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. He’s gone.

CHILD. Dead? (her mother doesn’t answer) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby.

CHILD. And Uncle Joseph?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby.

CHILD. And…
YOUNG WOMAN. (cuts her off. but not harshly) Everyone we know.

CHILD. Oh. (her lip begins to quiver as she realizes this truth)

YOUNG WOMAN. Now hush, baby.

CHILD. (pause) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby?

CHILD. How long do we have to hide here?

YOUNG WOMAN. I don’t know, baby.

CHILD. Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby?

CHILD. It’s cold, mama.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, baby. I know…

3 second fade to black.

SCENE 6.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in Poland.

April 26th, 1941.

Closet light fades up USR of C

CHILD. Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby?

CHILD. I still have to pee.

YOUNG WOMAN. I know, baby.

CHILD. (pause) Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby.

CHILD. (tears in her voice) I’m sorry.

YOUNG WOMAN. For what, baby?
CHILD. I couldn’t hold it anymore.

YOUNG WOMAN. (pause) It’s ok, baby.

CHILD. Mama?

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, baby?

CHILD. I love you.

3 second fade to black.

SCENE 7.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in the South Pacific.

April 26th, 1944.

Lights fade up on YOUNG WOMAN crossing from USL truss to typewriter

SOLDIER. Somewhere in the South Pacific, where you have a million friends, Yet loneliness consumes you and hurts worse than the bends. Where time has lost its meaning and to pass a single day Makes the tortures of the damned seem so easy, light, and gay.

Somewhere in the South Pacific, sounds like a pleasant spot, You’ve seen it in the movies, ads for cruises plug it a lot. With saronged gals, the Southern Cross, and whiskey by the case, The Goddamn fool that wrote that shit should be here in my place.

3 second fade to black.

SCENE 8.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in the U.S.

April 26th, 2015.
Lights fade up on a YOUNG WOMAN by the army trunk DSR.

YOUNG WOMAN. When I was really little, I wanted to be a meter maid. It didn’t work out that way. My illustrious career instead began at Victoria’s Secret. And at night I counted rows of panties instead of sheep. Teenage boys giggling like teenage girls. Asking what Victoria’s Secret is. “If I told you, it wouldn’t be a secret, now would it?”

Nannying- parks and playgrounds in good weather; TV on the couch in bad. Teaching Hebrew School. Teaching Sunday School. Bar-Mitzvah tutor and once I almost missed a kid’s final dress rehearsal because I was in my apartment eating brie and smoking a bong. Hebrew tutor for a pair of brothers with behavior problems explained by their parents’ battlefield divorce. Lots of shaking fists from the very wealthy father. A traveling children’s show about eating right and exercising. We drank coffee and smoked cigarettes in the van, then got out, loaded meadowland into the cafetorium, turned into forest animals, and preached “Moooooooooderation!” to a room stinking of deep fried dreams.

I spent a few months working for KOOL Cigarettes in loud crowded bars and dark thumping clubs, giving out two free packs of cancer to any idiot drunk enough to actually smoke KOOLS. I wore a wedding ring to keep the creeps away. All it did was keep the nice guys away. The creeps pressed in closer, breathing hot beer and tequila into my neck. “So? Husband ain’t here, is he.”

My first modeling job was a nude shoot for an international shower and jacuzzi company. They slathered me in baby oil and sprayed me with water droplets to make it look like I was really in the shower. A quarterly fashion magazine. We shot the cover photo in a greenhouse. I’m squinting. Fisher-Price photo studios; an ad for Fisher-Price’s first carseat. It was the first in a long line of “young mom poor mom single mom” jobs. A training video for Sally Beauty Supply recreating those old iPod commercials with the silhouettes dancing. A sexual harassment training video for Dick’s Sporting Goods. A scene in a SAG film that shot in an abandoned hospital. An episode of Army Wives where I wore a pregnancy belly. A jet-ski safety video that shot on a frigid March day. I got an extra 50 bucks cash to jump off the dock into the icy lake at the end. It wasn’t worth it. One year as a preschool teacher for two year olds. On the first day, three tiny screaming peanuts clawed at my skin as a voice exiting the room said, “Liri, Liron, and Roni. They don’t speak any English.” A few months later, I find myself in a fetus sized bathroom, fake-crying so one of these peanuts will finally take a shit on the toilet instead of in her dora the explorer leggings. Three years inventorying diamonds in a
fancy office downtown. A four-part mud-slinging ad campaign for Lt. Governor of Texas. Seven more jobs for Fisher Price. 8ft Print Ads in my favorite discount clothing store. A promotional job for a huge oil company where I had to pretend to be French. A promotional job for a huge fracking company where I had to pretend to be from Kentucky. A promotional job for a huge British fabric company where I scared the shit out of people as a living mannequin. A series of commercials for Dolby that aired in the U.K. An ongoing camera gig for a car dealership.

After a few years, my agent started submitting me for jobs with the last two letters of my last name changed to “ez.” He marketed me as a Latina, and my bookings tripled.

The last photo I have of my grandmother was taken the night before she died. Her glowing face is inches away from my computer screen. She is watching my newest car commercial. It is the happiest she has been since losing my grandfather. He was her everything. Always.

3 second fade to black.

SCENE 9.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Somewhere in the U.S.
April 26th, 1945.

Lights fade up as the YOUNG WOMAN transitions into the 1940’s sweetheart, who reads a letter standing CS.

My dearest,

Sometimes I still can’t believe my luck to be back stateside and only a train ride away from my doll! You looked so sad at the station as I watched you through the train window that you made me feel just like jelly. A sad sack is just the word for you, “baby,” but I love you that way. True love is such a wonderful thing and I do pray that nothing ever changes our feelings for one another. I love that smile that you promise to wear from now on because on you it’s so becoming. You’re such a doll. The moon on the ride down to camp was very beautiful because I could see your face in it all the way down. That is when I wasn’t having trouble with this loony goon.
He started his first fight when some unfortunate individual standing beside him was talking to his friend. They had some words at first about him talking so this unfortunate individual moved away. Then about three minutes later the goon gets up and dashes at the unfortunate character and starts slugging him. Nobody attempts to end hostilities so being the only officer in the car I feel that it’s my duty. So up I gets and with my superman strength I grab the goon from the rear and calm him down until he goes back to his seat.

Thought nothing more of it until a sailor comes walking by on his way to the Men’s room and trips over the goon’s feet. Well up he goes again and jumps the sailor. This time I had about half a dozen servicemen help me and they beat him to submission. The conductor was warned about him and he made arrangements to have him placed in irons when we arrived at the station.

The third incident occurred when he flew out of his seat at a startled Marine who happened to flush the toilet. He missed his first attack and the sailor behind me began pounding the daylights out of him. Observing that the goon was badly battered I slugged him once myself because I had the thirst for blood in that cold heart of mine. Couldn’t have hit him too hard because he woke up ten minutes later and was meek as a kitten. Anyhow the Civil authorities took him in hand when we arrived at the station, so all’s well that ends well.

My two hour jaw breaker today went off fairly well and I managed to keep the men awake, which surprised me because it was right after chow and held indoors. Maybe I should be a teacher, huh?

Don’t think I’ll prepare tomorrow’s lesson now because it’s now after 11 and I have to get some shut eye some time. Give the folks my best and tell mom that I won’t write until Thursday, that goes for you too doll. Good night and don’t dream about any sailors.

My love Always.

3 second fade to black.

SCENE 10.

In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.

PROJECTION: Everywhere.

Always.
Lights fade up (just barely) on all acting areas

YOUNG WOMAN, SINGING.   Ani Ma’amín, Ani Ma’amín, Ani Ma’amín.
B’emunah shlemah. B’viat HaMashiach,
b’viat HaMashiach Ani Ma’amín.
V’af al pi, sh’hitnameah,
b’viat HaMashiach, Ani Ma’amín…

3 second fade to black.

**SCENE II.**

*In the darkness, the sound of a typewriter clacking. The clacking coincides with the words appearing on the projection.*

**PROJECTION:** *Here.*

*Now.*

Lights fade up as the YOUNG WOMAN removes the poem from the typewriter and crosses to the army trunk SR, reading the poem.

YOUNG WOMAN. Somewhere in the South Pacific, where a battle has been won;
Where the Stars and Stripes Forever will be flying in the sun.
Where you talk about the future, planning things that you will do,
And then you stop and wonder—when will these dreams come true?

Somewhere in the Southern Ocean where the sea-birds moan and cry,
Where the lumbering deep sea turtle comes up on the beach to die.
Please God take me back to the U.S.A., the place I love so well;
For the South Sea Island Paradise is awfully close to Hell.

The YOUNG WOMAN reaches into the army trunk and pulls out another letter. She sits on the floor and begins to read..., as lights fade out and the final PROJECTION appears, coinciding with the final sound cue, “Don’t Fence Me In,” performed by Roy Rogers. The music fades up as the YOUNG WOMAN’s reading fades out…

YOUNG WOMAN: My darling, Oh for the life of an officer. Man alive, they won’t even give me time to write to my doll, which as far as I’m concerned, is the most important thing in the world…
The idea of writing a solo performance piece was terrifying to me. While I’ve always loved writing, I hadn’t written anything in years, and I’d certainly never written anything for the stage. Add in the challenge of writing for only one actor, with no budget for anything flashy, like a hologram with which to interact, and I was completely lost. The bigger question, however, was: “What do I want to say?” I made lists of subjects and ideas that interest or are important to me. It was a good, mathematical way to begin. Math isn’t always the answer to a question about creativity, but there’s no wrong way to create art. I dug into the list.

I’ve always had a (horrified) fascination with the WWII era, and the Holocaust was a subject that topped my list. I wasn’t sure if or how it would be involved in the solo piece, but I did know that I had to explore it. I decided not to push anything and to let the idea do its thing, floating through conscious, subconscious, and unconscious thoughts.

An early in-class writing prompt brought about a hastily-written dialogue between a young Jewish woman and her child as they hid in a water cistern at Masada in the Negev Desert on April 26th, 73 A.D. The story of Masada, in the briefest of terms, is that the community of Jews living there committed mass suicide rather than be captured and slaughtered or forced into slavery by the Roman Army. It is said that a woman and her two children hid underground in a large water cistern and survived the siege. The
imagined words of this young woman and her child so closely reflected the experiences of so many Jews during the Holocaust that I immediately wrote a mirrored dialogue for a young Jewish woman and her child in Poland in 1941. The original, unedited script of this hastily-written dialogue became a part of the final script of *April 26th*. I didn’t know it at the time, but the play had officially begun.

I’ve always had a strong and powerful personal connection to Masada. In 1997, I had the honor and good fortune to have a Bat Mitzvah on Masada— in the ruins of the original synagogue of the Jewish people who had lived and died there. I returned in 1998 with my classmates and teachers and watched in awe as the sun rose over the Dead Sea as we said our morning prayers, just as our ancestors likely did. In 2011, my husband and I climbed Masada together as part of our honeymoon, and I got to share this incredibly special and personal place with him, as well. Although it wasn’t planned, it made a lot of sense that Masada found its way into my piece. Not only did it find its way in, but it was truly the cornerstone and foundation of the piece. The title of the play itself comes from the date of the siege: April 26th.

Over the course of the next month, I wrote fragments of several other plays. In reading and re-reading all of these fragments, and trying to figure out where to go next, I discovered that some of these seemingly unrelated fragments could actually be sewn together into one theatrical piece. Others may turn into full pieces of their own one day.

In early 2012, I came across a poem, typewritten on two crumbling sheets of onionskin paper and sitting on top of a pile of things in an old WWII army trunk in my grandparents’ basement. The poem had neither a title nor a credited author. My
grandfather had passed away a few months earlier and never spoke of his time in the army. We knew only that he served in the South Pacific during WWII and had spent part of his time at camp doing clerical work. The poem made me cry, and I read it over and over again. I closed my eyes and imagined him hunched over a typewriter in the cramped tent that functioned as the field office. I imagine that the words are his own: art created out of the mixture of anger and exhaustion and hurt and love and betrayal and desperation that must be war. The jaded tone of the poem speaks volumes about the morale of our soldiers, and it touched me in ways I still cannot describe. Fragments of that poem found their way into the piece, and the role of the Soldier began to take shape.

Farther down into the trunk, but not touched until a year after my grandmother’s death in 2014, were bundles of love letters wrapped in string. It was my grandparents’ wish that no one read their love letters until after they were both gone. I instantly regretted respecting their wishes. As I began the long and wonderful journey through their brief, but beautifully endearing and passionate WWII courtship, I had hundreds of questions whose answers were no longer in this world. I knew that Bubie and Zadie needed to be a part of the piece, and the love letters were the key. The most difficult part was choosing one letter out of the hundreds. In the end, I chose a light one from my Zadie with a funny story and some dreams about the future. Both the poem and the love letters had to be slightly adjusted for performance in front of a modern-day audience; some words that were considered the norm in the 1940’s are no longer acceptable today. The idea was for the original words to make the audience think, not to distract them with what they might deem to be offensive language. I was as true as possible to the written
words I had inherited, but a few changes were unavoidably necessary. The essence and feelings behind the words remained the same.

The last character to become a part of the piece was the present-day Young Woman. I vacillated for a while on the decision of whether or not to include a part of my own personal life in the piece. Would it be/ seem too arrogant and self-centered to think anyone would care or want to hear about my own life when they came to the theatre? After sharing what has come to be called the Jobs Monologue with several colleagues and friends, I was finally convinced that this section about my own life needed to be a part of the piece. In addition to tying in the story of a Young Jewish Woman in 2015 in the United States with a Young Jewish Woman in 73 in the Middle East, a Young Jewish Woman in 1941 in Eastern Europe, and a Young Jewish Woman in 1945 in the United States, it was a light and somewhat humorous break for the audience amidst an otherwise very heavy and sobering historical piece.

With the text mostly written, I turned my attention to the question of how to keep the audience informed and clear on where and when each scene was taking place. Switching back and forth between several different locations and times (and characters) was a problem I had created for myself, and I knew that I wanted to use projections to solve it. I got to work designing and creating a series of projections that guided the audience on their journey, all typewritten to match the style of the original poem found in Zadie’s army chest. The projections solved another technical problem as well: they covered the time it took for me to change from one character/ location without an energy-sucking break in the action.
After many drafts, edits, and re-writes, I faced another seemingly-insurmountable challenge: designing, memorizing, staging, directing, embodying, breathing, living, and becoming *April 26th*. I don’t actually remember too much about this whirlwind period. It was so intense that there was no time to even think; only to do. There was no room for stress or anxieties because the piece was every part of my life, and nothing else existed in the short days leading up to production. Then, suddenly, it was happening. One soldier, four young women, and two children were coming to life before an audience’s eyes.
My dear Bubie,

Of the 12th of the month, as well as getting over with the sick workers because you can't get the moment off for yourself. Besides doing your mouth off all day and taking your pipe away from time to time after hours, you have to spend your off duty time working else. From 7 to 9 you are duty in the company and then when you go back to the barracks, you have to sit down and prepare your Louise for the following days lecture. Which means the mid-night oil to be burned.

Now aside they won't even give me time to write to my doll, which as far as the concerned is the most important thing in the world. Tonight we had to pull our chain down and be at headquarters at 5:30 so then we proceeded to wait for the hour for the Colonel to show up. Then he took me for a looker than all over the countryside which was the silliest thing this ever did.

We went over the Blue Mountains in the back.
If a U.S. truck and forget our family off War 7th, it seems like this, too. Work, and I just finished. Have two hours to prepare for tomorrow. But I'm in it. I don't have to stand alone so it will have to wait until the week and ready.

Today I also had to go for a physical exam again and they pumped all the blood out of me from the way my arm feels. Since they can't get enough blood, these days and it's physical always serves me a great service.

And made me so much all because I'm always feeling off and like a fail. I'm probably always will be taking it but on you,

I might go into Harrisburg tomorrow night to give the thing the once over. My roommate John convinced me that I should do a little something with him. But didn't worry still, he also get himself engaged when he went home, on leave. Mae Dave dug up a nice place for him because he wants to come in to Philadelphia this weekend with me.

I still haven't had the opportunity to get myself a haircut and the very things I'm asking here I won't get the chance for. But that's what makes.
Figure 2.3 Zadie’s letter to Bubie p. 3
Figure 2.4 Zadie’s letter to Bubie p. 4
Anyhow the civil authorities took him in hand when we arrived at Turin [Turin]. When what a lovely gonna.

Well I wasn’t even married last night at all nothing to worry about and also all the end of all.

My two have you talked today went off fairly well and I managed to help the need was which surprised me because it was right after now don’t help in show. Maybe I should do a teacher, trust.

Don’t think I prepare tomorrow’s lesson now because it’s too late! But to put it all right after a week I have 40 exams what up don’t know.

Try to follow my best and tell me that I write until 10th Thursday that you forgive it.

Good night and don’t dream about any.

Yours always,

Mary
Figure 2.6 Zadie serving in the South Pacific
Figure 2.7 Bubie posing in Frick Park
SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where the sun is like a curse,
where each long day is followed by another slightly worse,
where coral dust blows thicker than the shifting desert sands,
and white man dreams are mostly of a slightly cooler land.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where you have a million friends,
yet loneliness comes over you and hurts worse than the beatle,
where time has lost its meaning and to pass a single day
make the imprisoned tortures of the damned seem so easy, light and gay.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where a woman is never seen
where the sky is never cloudy, and the grass is never green,
where the money birds face nightly, robbing men of blessed sleep.
Where there isn't any whiskey, maybe one warm beer a week.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where the movies that one sees
are 'The Beat in Entertainment For Our Boys Across the Seas';
where you get so tired of eating dehydrated food as every day,
where work is thought a pleasure just to pass the time away.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where the sunshine bakes the ground,
where ice-water's non-existent, and your skin is slightly brown,
where you get so tired and lonesome for the girl you left behind,
And then you write a letter telling her that you are fine.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where your castle is a tent,
with dust a carpet, a canvas bed, a rip, your cold air vent.
Where mosquitoes are just a trap for bugs and friendly snakes.
And the guy across from you snores 'til the bunk's all quak.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where the mosquitoes own the place
where the sweat from off your brow slowly trickles down your face,
where lonely days are numbered until times sunset you face.
So you work your bloomin' tail off in this God-forsaken-place.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where your mail is always late.
Where Christmas cards in April are considered up to date.
Where we always sign the payroll, but never receive a cent.
Thought we never miss the money, there's no place where its spent.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, where they say the trade winds blow
where your thoughts are always drifting to the ones you used to know.
Where the moon shines down so brightly, where stars twinkles in the sky,
Where eyes well up so quickly, full of tears, yet you don't cry.

SOMEBODY in the South Pacific, sounds like a pleasant spot,
You've seen it in the movies, add for cruises ping it a lot.
With carved galls, the southern cross, and whisky by the case.
The Goddam fool that wrote that stuff should be here in my place.
SOMEWHERE in the South Pacific, where a battle has been won,
SOMEWHERE in the South Pacific, where a battle has been won,
Some where the Stars and Stripes forever will be flying in the same way,
Where you talk about the future, planning things that you will do,
And when you stop and wonder—when will these dreams come true?
SOMEWHERE in the South Pacific, where we seldom hear the news.
SOMEWHERE in the South Pacific, where we seldom hear the news.
Some where the stories that were here are mostly fables, someone's views, right
Some where you hear that you will be home—long you know it can't be right
Yet it lifts your hopes like opium, makes you pray with all your might.

SOMEWHERE in the Southern Ocean where the sea-birds roam and dry;
And the lumbering deep-set turtle comes up on the beach to die,
Please God take me back to the U.S.A. the place I love so well
For the South Sea Island paradise is awfully close to hell.
Once the houselights went down and the sound of a typewriter began clacking in the dark, a new leg of my journey began. The writer, designer, and director of the play disappeared, and there was only the actor. The Young Woman giving voice to millions of Jews throughout history. A simple, tiny peep, but a voice. The beginning of something. Something important.

As discussed in the Jobs Monologue, I’ve taught Hebrew School and Sunday School. There is a synagogue in Columbia, SC where I taught from 2008-2009, and a young Rabbi and I started there at the same time. When I moved back to Columbia in pursuit of my MFA, my husband and I reconnected with this Rabbi, and he and his wife came to see a performance of April 26th. After the show, they waited teary-eyed by the door. They asked if I would perform a slightly modified version of the piece at the synagogue on Shabbat in a few weeks in honor of Chanukah.

I never could’ve imagined that April 26th would be remounted so soon. I made some changes in the script because of both language and content, but mostly the text remained largely unchanged. In this new version, however, the role of the Soldier was played by my husband. Having another actor there was a relief for my voice and my psyche. The fact that the Soldier was played by my real-life husband added a fascinating cross-generational type of dynamic to the piece (and was also a pleasure for me).
The great thing about remounting so quickly was that *April 26th.* immediately had a larger scope than the thesis project. I had figured out how to adapt the piece for a completely different environment with no scrim, no projections, no lights, no sound, and no real stage. I now have two versions of the script, appropriate for different types of audiences. If the opportunity to re-mount *April 26th* presented itself in the future, I would jump on it. After some time away, I think I could look at the piece with fresh eyes and make a lot of new discoveries. I’d like to let the piece tell me what it wants to be.

Looking back on the project as a whole, my biggest wish is that I had more time. During the writing process, the rehearsal process, the performance process…I wish I had more time during which to explore each and every part of the journey. However, I don’t mind that the last thing I’m left feeling is hunger. I want more time with the piece. So what? It’s what life and art are about in the end, isn’t it? Never really being finished…