

Nunc committis

A paper read to the Literary Club

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My paper this evening has two false titles instead of the customary one. That on the masthead – nunc committis -- could very well be true if it were not false, given that we are gathered together tonight to begin the 161st year of our beloved club. We could be “recommitting” ourselves to the high ideals (and drunken antics) of our remote ancestors, or to the more restrained if soporific standards of more recent times. Of course, we will also indulge in those sideways glances at our fellow Literarians to judge who has weathered the long vacation well or ill, and what will be the likely effect on the year’s program of papers.

My second false title – Nunc dimittis – is very like my first falsity, derived from the same Latin verb, which itself has come into English with the similar meaning of dismissal or discharge. The former choristers among you will recognize these words as the incipit of the *Song of Simeon*, derived from Luke’s gospel. In Jerome’s Vulgate it is

“Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace:

Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum

Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:

Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.”

Simeon’s words are most familiar to us in the 1662 translation of *The Book of Common Prayer* -- “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace : according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the Gentiles : and to be the glory of thy people Israel.”

From the identity of Simeon, a devout Jew, whom God had promised that he would not die before he had seen the Savior, to the adoption of the four-line scripture by both eastern and western monastic traditions in their evening liturgies, there is ample material for a paper here. There is even the richly suggestive fact that the Anglican liturgical tradition continued to use the *Nunc* along with the *Magnificat* (Mag) in its service of Evensong, which combined the Roman Catholic services of vespers and compline into one. We are fortunate that many fine composers set this text to music, and there are literally dozens of wonderfully

conceived evocations of an elderly Simeon realizing that his life's purpose has been fulfilled and that he can die in peace. These things are not the subject of my paper tonight, however.

Yet my false title also allows for another Simeon song, this one a rather longer version by T.S. Eliot, "A Song for Simeon" this time:

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;
The stubborn season had made stand.
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,
Like a feather on the back of my hand.
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.
Grant us thy peace.
I have walked many years in this city,
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,
Have given and taken honour and ease.
There went never any rejected from my door.
Who shall remember my house, where shall live my children's children
When the time of sorrow is come?
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.
Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation
Grant us thy peace.
Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,
Now at this birth season of decease,
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,
Grant Israel's consolation

To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow.
According to thy word.
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation
With glory and derision,
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.
Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision.
Grant me thy peace.
(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,
Thine also).
I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,
I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after me.
Let thy servant depart,
Having seen thy salvation.

This remarkable poem is itself a commentary and interpretation of Simeon and was composed by Eliot as he joined the Church of England after being raised a Unitarian in St. Louis, Missouri. Its Simeon was probably his grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, a Unitarian minister and missionary, whose memory dominated Eliot's family. Like some "Moses.." Elliott wrote, who "had brought down the table of the Law, any deviation from which would be sinful." But neither the Evangelist Luke's nor Eliot's Simeon are of interest to me tonight.

Not the "Nunc dimittis" but the "nunc-dimittal" is my subject and proper title, although once again I am forced to create a word that the language does not possess. It describes the spirit of Simeon: judging the worth and measure of a life as it ends. Reflecting a fullness, a wisdom of both a life's achievements and shortcomings, these "songs" capture an urge that is quintessentially human – to memorialize – in language that is neither maudlin nor triumphalist. The obituary is the most frequent form of the nunc-dimittal and is perhaps the oldest continuously written literary form in Western Civilization. We still possess obituary rolls, carried by monks from monastery to monastery across Dark Ages Europe, each dedicated to the passing of a notable abbot. Besides the memorial penned by the departed's own monks, each monastery on the way added its own testament, written in the very best Latin of its leading scholar. But not all obituaries are nunc-dimittal, especially those of recent days, which too often sink to the level of "obitainment" – an ugly neologism invented to describe products that feed the morbid fascination with a

celebrity's death. Jon Stewart of "The Daily Show" ridiculed the form in creating his "RIP Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Obitainment" during the frenzy following the death of Michael Jackson. Seldom has so much been said and written signifying nothing.

But where to seek the nunc-dimittal: places where writers take the measure of lives lived and deaths died, before dismissing the individual to the collective forgetting – that "rich loam" of past lives as John Updike called it? My personal answer is to look to British journalism in general and *The Economist* magazine in particular, for obituaries that contain the essential elements that give this most ancient of literary forms any value other than relief at not seeing yourself the subject of one. Admittedly, the "premature obituary" is an important obituary subgenre, and literary figures of the stature of Robert Graves, Ernest Hemingway, Ken Kesey and of course Mark Twain, all lived to belie and reflect on their "exaggerated deaths."

Why is there such a flourishing of the dark art among our linguistic cousins? British newspapers have also been subject to a similar wave of consolidation and cutbacks that have devastated American journalism, yet the unique role of the obituary in British social life seems to have withstood the forces of decline. Perhaps the reason is the harshness of British libel laws, which protect even public figures from the kinds of vituperation so commonly dished out in America. Hence obituaries function as a means of settling accounts with the recent dead, which does explain the harsh tone and ample inclusion of embarrassing details of some obituaries. British papers also seem to employ some of their best writers to write of the dead, while in America the job is typically given to cub reporters for them to learn the craft of writing. There also seems less of a separation between the paid obits and those deemed newsworthy in American newspapers, indicating perhaps a partial surrender to the profit potential of the obituary page.

The exception in this as in much else is the *New York Times*, which despite recent financial crises remains dedicated to publishing first-class work in its obituary section, employing some of its best writers for the purpose. Three years ago, it featured the obituaries editor, Bill McDonald, who answered questions put to him by readers about how the work of obituary writing is done at the *Times*. Last year, (2008) it was the turn of one of his writers, Bruce Weber, to have questions put to him. In their answers we learn that the department employs five full-time writers (up from three in 2006) and an unnumbered host of *Times* staffers and stringers who pre-prepare the vast number of obituaries kept on file waiting for the death of their subjects. Between 2006 and 2008 these increased from 1200 to 1300, and even then the paper was unprepared for the deaths of Tim Russert and David Foster Wallace. Judging by the careers of McDonald and Weber, we see that veteran reporters are preferred as line writers, though Weber admitted to taking the obituary job following a leave from the paper to write a book. He selected it over other possibilities because he liked the "freedom from the rigors of the news-writing

form..." and the obituary's "essayistic" quality, as well as the opportunity to write about "renegades, oddballs, eccentrics, and people who achieved great things."

Yet "newsworthiness" remains the central selection criterion for the Times's obituary page, and it is Bill McDonald who decides who merits space and even more important, who gets the "Verb." This is a euphemism for the importance assigned to obituaries on the same page. You may or may not have noticed that in cases of obituaries sharing the same page, only one has a headline that includes a verb. That is editorial shorthand for which obituary the editor considers the most significant on the page. Clearly, the *Times* devotes considerable resources and talent to its obituaries, but the news imperative, in my opinion, prevents the paper from achieving the "Nunc dimittal" standard I am advocating. Is there a medium that is a more reliable source of writing of that quality?

I believe there is, but it is a newspaper of another sort, founded like this club, in the 1840s, *The Economist* has been a favorite of mine for more than thirty years. Rather surprisingly, this weekly newspaper (as its writers insist on calling it) has grown in popularity at the same time as our domestic weeklies – *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News and World Report* – have faded. This rare case of quality driving out mediocrity is quite difficult to explain, since reading *The Economist* cover to cover cannot be approached without an effort. Its vocabulary is not pitched at the level of a twelve-year old, it regularly features deeply researched articles, and it takes seriously parts of the world that the average American could not find on a map. And beyond all that, there is the very relentlessness of it all. As a new one falls through the mail slot before its predecessor has been read, I often sympathize with the Duke of Gloucester, who when presented with the second volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, quipped "Another damn'd thick, square book! Always, scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh! Mr. Gibbon?"

Scribbling of a high order is what *The Economist* delivers. It has always been a niche publication, intended for a "global elite" that desires a clever distillation of global news with occasional in-depth specials. Its writing is smart, concise and sometimes eloquent, with a consistency of style that gives it a remarkable single-authored quality, enhanced by the suppression of any authors' name. This semi-anonymous writing staff has included Richard Lyman, the former president of Stanford University and the Rockefeller foundation, as well as perhaps the best reporter ever on Africa, Allister Sparks. Occasional articles are commissioned from notable experts and are published under their names; other recurring features are columns devoted to significant geographical areas. The US has *Lexington*, Britain, *Bagehot* (named after an early editor), *Charlemagne* comments on European affairs, *Banyan* on Asia, and *Buttonwood* a column on finance named for the tree where early Wall Street traders gathered. To complete the package there is a lively "Letters" section, sections on science and the arts including book reviews, and a few beloved specials. My favorite of these is the *Big Mac Index*, which illustrates the economic principle of price parity by tracking the cost in dollars of the Big Mac hamburger at current exchange rates around the world. This semi-serious exercise

in tracking a global commodity gives surprisingly accurate insights into patterns of global currency valuation. A table of statistics on the state of the fifty or so most significant national economies in the world always occupies the last page.

Yet in my opinion it is the nunc dimittal, or the obituary, that completes and enhances the successful package that is *The Economist*. Every week's issue ends with an essay on a single life recently ended written with an idiosyncratic verve that captures both the defining thread of the subject's three-score-and-ten as well its more general significance to the streaming narrative of human history. Given how natural this weekly order now seems, it is surprising that the feature dates only from 1995, shortly after Robert Cottrell came to the magazine from *The Independent* newspaper. At the latter he had participated in the lively revolution in British obituary writing that pitted the accomplished writers of his paper against those of *The Daily Telegraph* and others. His idea that "a single obituary each week would add zest to the back pages...and provide a way of looking at issues and achievements outside the usual scope of current events.." won the assent of the managing editor, Bill Emmott. After a trial run in the Christmas 1994 double issue, the valedictory obituary has appeared without fail in every issue since.

As one would expect of *The Economist*, the obituary section has a unique quality that sets it apart from any other published source of death notices. First there is the sheer magnitude of the task, given that the World Health Organization's "Real Time Death Counter" clicks off approximately 1.25 million deaths per week. The task of selection among this multitude falls to a single obituary editor, who researches and writes up his or her choice under a very tight deadline, usually two days from start to finish. There is no team of staff writers, or large "morgue" of ready items as at the *New York Times*, just the considerable writing talents of the two people who have held that job. The first was the novelist, John Colquhoun, who defined the form of the thousand-word piece, occupying 132 lines with an accompanying photograph. Colquhoun has not yet left a written reminiscence of his eight-years as editor, but he seems to have had a soft spot for the minor players in humanity's spectacles, especially gardeners, cricketers and odd balls. In 2003, he passed on the editorship to Ann Wroe, whose background includes a PhD in Medieval history from Oxford, as well as stints as Books and Arts editor and US editor ; she is also an acknowledged expert on the poetry of Shelley. Colquhoun's advice to her when she took the job was to "keep down the number of Americans, and try to include more Asians and women.." a task she has found easier said than done.

Wroe has recently done her fans a signal service by publishing a selection of *The Economist's* first fifteen years of obituaries in which she emerges from the shadows of anonymity to write about the selection criteria and mechanics of her job before allowing the reader to browse through the aisles of her and Colquhoun's work. In this *Book of Obituaries* (Bloomberg Press, New York, 2008) she describes her task as avoiding "eulogies or appreciations" and instead selecting "interesting and thought-provoking lives.." with the admission that "the bad, the immoral, or the

flighty sometimes make the best copy.” Calling her weekly work a “sheer joy” and her purpose as “to try to distil the essence of that life as it passes, and to try to describe it as far as possible from the point of view of the subject. For what has gone away from the world, for better or worse, is that particular perspective and that particular voice.” She and Colquhoun thought first to name the book “Sparrowflight” after the image invented by the Venerable Bede to describe a human life as the brief journey of a bird passing through the brightness of the king’s Mede Hall on a path from one unknown darkness to another. Her writing seeks to capture “that flickering of wings amid the hubbub of earth.” (*Book of Obituaries*, pp. 1-2)

How to assess the published result? First, Wroe never alerts the reader to the fact that her book is a selection of obituaries, not a compendium. It is not clear whether these were chosen because they are solely the work of the editors, or stand out for other reasons. *The Economist’s* web site lists more than seven-hundred obits, albeit that list includes those published in issues after 2008. Other sections of the magazine also do obituaries: Ted Kennedy’s appeared in Lexington; John Updike, Michael Jackson and William F. Buckley merited space in Arts and Books, and Edmund Hillary’s obit appeared in the Asia section. *Economist* staff members seemingly receive web-only obituaries. Thus the two hundred and two republished obits represent a contrived order, indeed an alphabetical order, oddly disembodied and deprived of that hebdomadal quality of the magazine. Nonetheless, they represent a rich field of inquiry into what was found most noteworthy in the lives that unfold and end around us.

As an economic historian, my first impulse is to do a bit of counting, though as my friend Richard Gass usually notes, exercises in “historian math” seldom produce edifying results. Yet careful counting on fingers and toes yields such curious numbers as a gender ratio of three to one in favor of men, with 1 parrot and two alter egos filling the “other” column. Alex, the genius African Grey parrot, died unexpectedly at age 31, after telling his handler/researcher, Irene Pepperberg, “to be good” and that he loved her. By the end of his life, Alex reportedly had the intelligence of a five-year old child with a vocabulary of 150 words. More recently the magazine published the obituary of “Benson, England’s best-loved fish” who was found floating lifelessly in Kingfisher lake near Peterborough in the English Midlands. Hers is the only obituary that mentions body weight (64 lb 2 oz) and the fact that “Some wag had named her after a small black hole in her dorsal fin which looked to him, like a cigarette burn. It was as beautiful and distinctive as a mole on an 18th century belle. Her lips were full, sultry or sulking, her expression unblinking; she seldom smiled.” She was quite a carp.

Memorializing the characters upon the death of their actors is a sly way of pointing out that an actor’s roles are sometimes much more memorable than his life. That was the case with Ben Chapman, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, whose obituary notes the passing with his death of a “line of sad-monster players that stretched back through Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff, before more heartless and mechanized species arrived in Hollywood.” Seven weeks of playing the monster

provided enough celebrity to last Chapman a lifetime, even though he was denied a credit in the movie itself because the publicity men at Universal Pictures did not want “people to think that this was just a man in a suit. Mr Chapman said he doubted audiences were so stupid..” but was told, “You’d be amazed what people will believe. Such as that when he climbed onto the scientists’ boat, out of the black water, his eyes burning at the sight of a female butt in shorts, he represented all mankind in its fishy origins, evolving out of the deep.” (*The Economist*, 8 March 2008)

The second character accorded an obituary was Bip, the wordless clown who was the performing face of his interpreter, Marcel Marceau. The date of Bip’s birth was unknown, but he came to symbolize the horrors and attempts at redemption of mid-twentieth century Europe. Marceau’s own father perished in Auschwitz in 1944, while he himself as a member of the Resistance quietly led children to Switzerland and safety. “Bip,” said Marceau “is a hero of our time. His gaze is turned not only towards heaven, but into the hearts of men.” The obituary concludes: “Bip simply moved on the stage, bird, fish, song, wind, tempestuously without a word, until he too became invisible.” (*Book of Obituaries*, p. 31).

As these snippets show there is little of the ordinary about *Economist* obits: no cause of death, schools attended, clubs joined, spouses -- late, former, or present - - mentioned. They are often irreverent and creative. An example is the combined obituary of Robert Brooks (owner of the Hooters restaurant chain) and author Mickey Spillane in which Mike Hammer goes to Hooters. “A waitress approached him. Her orange crotch was on a level with his chin, and her legs went on and on. “What’ll you have?” she asked him. “Anything you’ve got, honey.” The menu offered a Gourmet Chicken Wing Dinner: 20 wings and a bottle of Dom Perignon. Or an Oyster Roast: “Shuck at your own risk”. He ordered the Chicken Wing Dinner with secret sauce. “Breaded or naked?” she asked. He liked this place.” (*Book of Obituaries*, p. 43)

The editors have a weakness for old soldiers so their essays sometimes take in the vanishing veterans of the Great War, who found themselves, to their own surprise, celebrities as they became the last to speak of that war’s horrors. There was Lazare Ponticelli, dead at the age of 110, the last survivor of roughly 8.4 million *poilus*, or foot soldiers, who had gloriously defended *la belle France*, and perished by the million at places like Verdun. Ponticelli was not even born in the land he fought for, immigrating to France as a young boy from Italy and joining the Foreign Legion at age sixteen. With Italy in the war in 1915 he transferred to an Italian alpine regiment and fought the war’s remaining three years on that front against the Austrians, neither hating those he fought, nor really understanding what it was he fought for. *C’est complètement idiot la guerre* – War is utter foolishness, was his conclusion. Ponticelli was preceded in death by Alex Campbell, perhaps the last veteran of Gallipoli, that nearly forgotten 1915 invasion of Turkey undertaken by a multinational force of 500,000 drawn from the four corners of the British Empire. Unlike Ponticelli,, who is pictured in extreme old age, Campbell’s picture dates from

his war service in the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps – the ANZAC. He is sixteen but looks much younger. That youthful appearance probably saved his life, as his older Aussie chums gave him the relatively safe job of running water to the men in the front line. Falling ill after a few months in the trenches and evacuated home, Campbell escaped the fate of tens of thousands of Australians and New Zealanders who were killed in what a later British government report conceded was an “ill conceived” attack. (*Book of Obituaries* p. 51) Albert Marshall, called “the last British cavalryman of the first world war,” spent his war in the “quixotic” hope that he and his fellow horsemen would sweep the field of the enemy as their ancestors had done at Waterloo. Instead he spent the war fighting trench foot, caring for the horses and burying the dead of both sides. His nickname, Smiler, came from an act of insubordination directed at his drill sergeant, and allowed this fine conclusion to his obituary: “He sang on the boat that took him to France, sang as he returned, and sang when he was there...His smile was one of the last of the crowd of sunny recruits who look out of their fading photographs in blithe and cocky ignorance of the horror they were to see. No faces are more haunting.” (*Book of Obituaries*, p. 245)

Survivors of the Second World War have not quite yet reached the “last of” category necessary for selection, except for Ted Briggs, the last to die of the three survivors of the HMS Hood, sunk by the Bismarck in May, 1941. The other two obits devoted to world war veterans remind us of the human dimension behind the war: Thomas Ferebee was the bombardier on the American B-29 the *Enola Gay*, who was often asked about what he thought of the action that killed so many and changed war forever. He always believed that the bomb shortened the war and that had it lasted many more people would have been killed. Another old soldier’s tale was told in the obituary of Shoichi Yokoi, a sergeant in the Japanese Imperial army who, with 22,000 of his comrades, faced the American invasion of Guam in 1944. Eighty-five percent of those men died in the island’s defense; Yokoi and two thousand others fled to the jungle to fight another day. He did not emerge and surrender until 1972, twenty-seven years after most had heeded the call to lay down their arms, and eight years after the deaths of his two comrades. And yet he was ashamed to have come home alive, believing he had let down the emperor whom he had been taught to worship as a god.

There are disappointments and surprises: only two historians were worthy of note, the Pole Bronislaw Geremek and the American, John Hope Franklin, though neither was remembered for the quality of his written history, but for the history he made. John Hope Franklin is the only obituary subject I met in person as he was the teacher of several of my University of Cincinnati colleagues, and once came as a visiting speaker during my time there. Tall and very distinguished looking, he embodied the successful struggle of a black intellectual to gain an effective role in rewriting American history and reinstructing generations of black and white Americans in a history that for the first time included black people and race as elements in the defining narrative of the American past. He wrote and lived a history that included unimaginable cruelty meted out to slaves, and the destruction

of his father's law office in the Tulsa race riot of 1921; lynching of blacks from Reconstruction to the eve of the New Deal, to personal affronts as when the archivist in Montgomery, Louisiana called him a "Harvard nigger" to his face. He was the first to move from the classrooms of historically black colleges to those of Brooklyn College, where he was the first black department chair of an all-white department; to the University of Chicago, where he trained generations of graduate students. He returned late in life to his family's roots in North Carolina by taking up a professorship at Duke University, where in 1940 he had been refused use of the library cafeteria and washroom, and where he remained after retirement. He lived long enough to endorse Barack Obama for the presidency and to see him elected; he never despaired that "the color line" as he called, it "America's most tragic and persistent problem" would one day fade away.

Like John Hope Franklin, Geremek preferred his study, but was pulled from it to resist his own country's experience of twentieth-century tyranny. The Poland of his birth was ground under by the *Wehrmacht* in 1939, leaving this son of a Jewish businessman defenseless in the face of the annihilating wave of the Holocaust. Geremek himself escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and only survived because his stepfather gave him his name and identity as a Catholic. At 18 he joined the Communist party, which then ruled his country, and used his position to study in Paris at the Sorbonne and to write important works of medieval social history I read in graduate school. He exchanged the security of an academic job by quitting the Party after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, becoming the leading figure in Warsaw's intellectual underground. His history-making moment came when he pledged his fellow intellectuals' support to Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement in 1980, suffering imprisonment after the military crackdown of 1981. Released from jail in 1983 he worked to bring the tottering communist regime to an end, helping to design the 1989 elections that were just free enough to bring an overwhelming victory to Solidarity-backed candidates. As a parliamentary and government leader of the new Poland, it was Geremek who counseled patient resolve to lead Poland on the path to membership in NATO, the EU, and an identity "anchored in Europe." In his last job as a member of the European parliament, it was he who called for Europe's next task when he said, "We have created Europe. Now we have to create Europeans."

It is surprising that the obituary pages of *The Economist* contain so few economists. John Kenneth Galbraith appears of course, no doubt to the dismay of many in his profession, since he committed the two unforgivable sins of eschewing econometrics and writing best-selling books. On the other hand, the magazine did note the death of John Harsanyi, "a pioneer game theorist" who, unlike Galbraith, won the Nobel prize in economics. His life was another tale of the twentieth century, with survival as a Jew in axis-allied Hungary, flight to Australia after the war, and an eventual long career at UC Berkeley's business school. Habitues of bow ties are in similar short supply as only three are pictured, and one, Christian Barnard, appears in evening dress, which may not count. Beyond numbers there are delicious stories and bits of information: the aviation pioneer and manual writer

Elrey Jeppesen advised pilots who lost their bearings to search the ground for an outhouse because outhouse doors usually face south; the former prime minister of Dominica, Eugenia Charles, who, in an address in the White House rose garden, complimented then president Reagan on his “big balls.” Last but not least, was the obituary of the “ambassador and courtesan” Pamela Harriman, whose obituary noted her life-long trim figure and expertise “between the sheets”, but called her ability to “fix her concentration on one man – one at a time, and convince him that she was utterly enthralled..” her greatest talent. Good writing in the service of conveying the rich variety of modern life is what all obituary writing should be about.

It didn't occur to me before writing this essay that the very variety of modern obituary writing stands in stark contrast to the narrowness of memorial writing in past times. When Shakespeare imagined the victorious Henry V at Agincourt reading out the butcher's bill of his dead, he has Henry begin with “Edward, duke of York,” and end with “none else of name and of all other men, but five and twenty.” (Henry V, act IV) How vastly the number of “those of name” has expanded in our day; but how even more numerous remain the unnamed, those whose life and death pass unnoticed and unremembered. Remembering seems to me the one duty the living owe the dead, a duty we often take far too lightly as we adhere to the practice of “nil nisi bonum” in our writing on past lives, or forget altogether the debt that we owe to the past. Good histories, biographies, and yes obituaries, are monuments to the hard work of memory in which we all must share. For as a historian friend recently wrote, “We can only hope that as we struggle to find the past, the future will someday look for us.”

