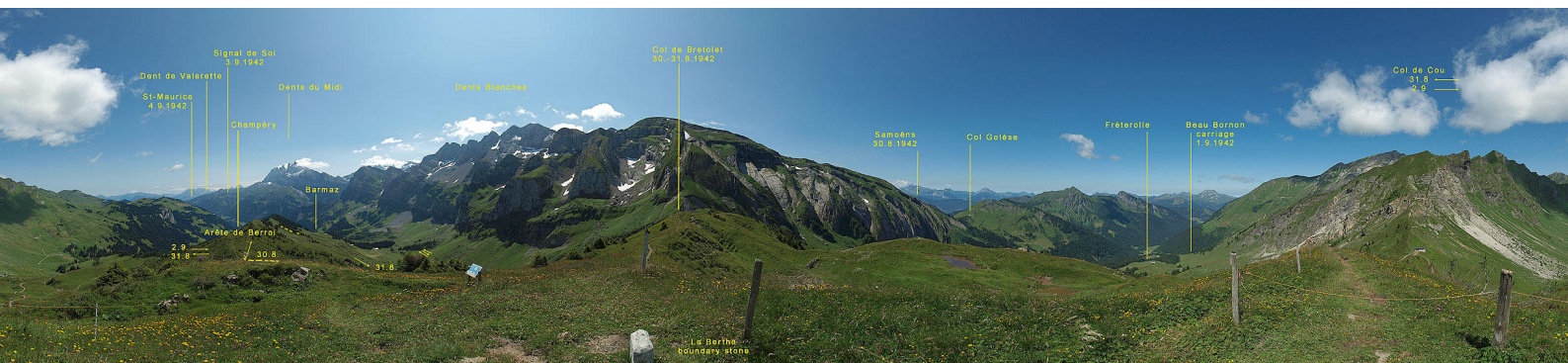


Postcards to Nora
February-March 2013

With quotations from:
Paul Burmetz, *Our Share of Morning*, New York 1961



(enlarge to 300%)



To Nora
United States of
America

Col de la Golèse, July 17th 2012
Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

I was crushed by the terrible implication that lay in the picture I contemplated. The Swiss boundary was on that far away, high, rocky crest of the main mountain range; it was not where we now were. The hill we were standing on was merely a little foothill of the main range. Between us and the boundary lay a wide valley. We would have to go all the way down to its bottom, down to the woods, before we could start climbing that awe-inspiring ridge on the other side. 209

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

(Col de la Golèse, Chardonnière), Col de Bretolet, July 17th 2012

Ueli Raz, Indermühlweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

Although we were walking upright, our faces were close to the ground. The man who carried Mignon had to clutch her close to him, lest he should fall over backward; and Mignon kept complaining of being hugged too tightly.

It was clearly understood: sliding was not dangerous and could easily be stopped; tumbling over backward meant the end.

During the climb not a word was spoken. We were all using every ounce of energy in us and were occupied with breathing as fast and as deeply as possible. Our two friends worked at least twice as hard as we did, and without them we would never have been able to make it, even if we had had the best mountain boots and nothing to carry. Sometimes I felt one of them pulling my whole weight up, and without this support I would have tumbled over backward on several occasions. Several times I heard Alice say "We must rest, I cannot climb any more." But the men simply pulled her harder and kept climbing.

Finally we arrived at the top of the ridge. It was nearly dark. 219f

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Col de Bretolet, (+ Arête de Berroi), June 23rd 2010

Ueli Raz, Indermühlweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

Here we were now, the three of us, on top of a sharp ridge, a deep glacial cirque below us on either side, and night creeping up. 220

I arrived just in time to hold her back by force.

"Look carefully," I said, holding her arm firmly. "Do you see what there is here to the right of the path?" I can't see exactly," she said, "but it's either grass or rock, and my hat must be lying there just within reach of my hand."

I picked up a flat piece of stone from the path. I showed it to Alice, and had her feel its size. It was about six inches across. Then I stretched out my arm holding the stone.

I am just going to drop it now," I said, "follow it with your eyes."

"That is exactly where my hat is lying; the stone will fall straight into it, or at least close by."

"In that case, you better listen sharply to hear it hit the ground. I'll drop it now. One, two, three, drop."

The three of us listened. But we heard nothing. 222

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Alpage de Berroi, July 17th 2012

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

It was a large wooden house, built against the hillside. On the side from which we approached the house, the attic was at floor level. It must have been shortly before dawn, and we were tired and sleepy. We could not resist going through the attic door and dropping into the hay.

“We are safe here,” I said, “even if the guards do go by. We can all take a nap for ten or fifteen minutes.” We must all have fallen asleep instantly.

I woke up in a panic.

I jumped outdoors and immediately returned to wake Alice: “It is broad daylight: we should have been down in the woods before daybreak. At least we are lucky in that the sun has not yet risen.” 227f

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Barme = Barmaz, July 17th 2012

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

August 31st 1942, 9 am – 2 pm: As we passed the house with the flag, a young woman came running out. "You are escaping from France," she said in a low voice. 229 ... I remember our arrival at the DuMont house. M. DuMont came out to meet the guards. He took them aside for a brief conversation, then came to us. 241 ... As soon as we left the DuMonts we were out of the woods. The trail continued along the valley, then led up the slope on the right. There the climb was steeper, and the guards' pace was fast for us, even though they had all the load to carry. 246f

September 2nd & 3rd 1942: It seemed to me I had been waiting for about three minutes when I started to knock the second time. At that moment the door opened, and Mme. DuMont came out, in her nightgown, put her arms around me, kissing Mignon and me. Then she burst into tears. "I knew you would come back! Thank God! Thank God! You are back!" 274 ... We were nervous when we left the old house. Cautiously and slowly we picked our way across the meadows at the back of the DuMont property, then cut across to the right to join the main trail just where the settlement ended. We reached the woods, but at first we were unable to see our two young guides at all. 280

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Mauvais Pas, July 17th 2012
Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

COPIE

CHAMPS SUISSES
Champfey, le 17.07.1942.

Gardes-Frontières de
T^e. Arrondissement
No. 145
App. Paloumier
présentation et
renouvellement de
passeports.

la Poste de gardes-frontières.
Champfey.

Passant l'inspection d'un service commandé le
31.07.1942 de 0705-1205 au "Hervais Pas" arrêté un groupe de trois
personnes venant de Harang à 0750. En constatant leur identité, je
constate qu'il s'agit d'une famille juive ayant quitté clandestinement
la France pour se réfugier en Suisse.

1/ Etat civil des personnes en cause :
M. Heller Isidore, né le 19 fév. 1906 à Szafar (Bohême) originaire de
Suisse, domicilié à Albi (dépt. de Tarn) France.
Mrs. Heller Gertrude née Froehner, épouse de Heller Isidore née le
17 janvier 1906 à Tignes (Austrie) et leur fille Gertrude Heller
née à Tignes le 19 juin 1936.

2/ M. Heller se déclare : " Je lui-ci ai été avisé de rester à
mon domicile à disposition des autorités qui vénéraient se pencher
avec ma famille pour nous conduire dans un camp d'internement. Ne que
j'étais profane, je savais la résolution de chercher un refuge en Suisse.
Nous sommes partis en chemin de fer jusqu'à Savoie, puis à pied par
Les Allanches-La Golène, où deux Français nous offrirent leurs services
pour nous aider à passer la frontière. Aidés de ces Français, nous avons
passé le col de Breulet le dimanche 30 août à 1850. Nous avons passé la
nuit au refuge à Breulet et maintenant nous cherchons à atteindre Zurich
où j'ai des amis " Professeur de M. Heller : Professeur en mathématique.

3/ Conformément aux ordres reçus, je prends la résolution de renvoyer ces
personnes par le col de Breulet le dimanche 30 août à 1850. Nous avons passé la
nuit au refuge à Breulet et maintenant, cette famille ayant des bagages
et une voiture d'entant que nous transporterons nous-mêmes à dos d'homme
jusqu'au Col. Le renouvellement a eu lieu le 1845 au No. 72. le 31.8.42.
A 1100 le chef de poste était mis au courant de cette arrestation par
le g^{de}. Fr. Rydigger qui téléphona de Bernas.

(S) Aoc. Paloumier J. int. : 511.
Le chef de poste : Cpl. Dellen.

Ueli

F.S.V.P.



To Nora
United States of
America

Col de Cou, July 17th 2012

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

August 31st 1942, at about 6 pm: There was an air of petrifying solemnity; a deadening silence. The last rays of the sun fell through the window, almost horizontally across the table, touching the tea glasses. I felt as if that sun controlled the whole situation; my eyes were fixed on it as it neared the distant mountaintops; soon it would touch them and then begin to disappear behind them. I could not turn my eyes away from it; as if it were a mirror of our fate. Slowly it turned from yellow to red.

It was time to go. Without a word one of the guards slipped my arm through the shoulder straps of the basket with food. Mignon was already sitting in the carriage. 254

September 2nd 1942, at about 11 pm: Suddenly I felt as if I were approaching a huge rock, rising up in front of me. And immediately afterward I saw it: it was a wall! Just six to ten feet away. Another step and I saw it clearly.

The guardhouse! flashed through my mind.

I felt almost riveted to the spot. I held my breath. This was the terrace across which we had entered, and left, the guardhouse the day before! – it felt like a year before! – and I was standing right between a window and the door. 266f

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Fréterolle & Le Beau Bornon (Carriage), July 17th 2012

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

After breakfast our host told us our hide-out was ready, and took us to it. It was an old barn about five hundred yards away, no longer in use. In the back was a ladder leading to the hayloft, which was the place they had chosen for us.

“You are completely safe here. Nobody will come to this old, abandoned barn.” ... We climbed up to the loft and pulled up the ladder. ... We had all our belongings with us in the loft; even the carriage had been brought there, so that there would be no traces of us in the house. ... It was agreed that we would start out some time after dark. Now I told Alice of a decision I had made during the day, to leave all our belongings behind, including the carriage. We would take only what we could wear. 260-262

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Above Illiez, July 23th 2005
Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

Signal de Soi: The terrain was against us. The trail had left the wood and was climbing a steep slope above timberline, to avoid a steeper rocky wall below. 287f
Chalin: "It's too bad we are going down so low," I said, "but otherwise it doesn't matter much. This valley seems to be fairly secluded, and I don't think we shall meet anybody here." 288

At the bottom of La Dent de Valerette: These three houses had been built on a small, less steep part of the meadow. Now the slope became even steeper than it had been before. 290

On top of La Dent de Valerette: However, we made it and without incident. Shortly before sunset we were standing on the top of the ridge. 293

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Chalin below Les Dents du Midi May 23th 2010

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

We had reached the top (of the Signal de Soi) and were on our way down on the other side of the ridge, before the sun had risen. The way down was easy... However, the trail continued downward after we had crossed the timberline again, and this was not to our liking. ... We were on one side of a very narrow valley, so narrow that the opposite side seemed almost within reach.

On our side, farther up along the trail, the meadow was bathed in sunshine while we were still in shadow. It was the kind of spot where, normally, we would have wanted to stay for weeks to relax and enjoy the scenery.

For a minute we stood and absorbed the freshness and beauty of that corner, but then we came back to reality and thought of the time and effort this steep climb ahead of us would demand.

As we went slowly up the trail, we heard the faint sound of church bells floating up from the distance. 288f

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Vérossaz, July 16th 2011

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

Around midmorning we approached the large alpine terrace halfway down. It was a huge plateau of meadows, with the sizable village of Verossaz in the center. We made a detour through the outskirts of the village and reached the border of the terrace shortly before noon.

From there we could see directly down to the valley. The trail was steeper here, and the switchbacks more frequent. Before we knew it, we had left the pine woods and were walking through the broad-leaf woods lower down. We were coming close to the bottom of the valley and our final objective. 296f

Ueli



To Nora
United States of
America

Croix de Javerne, July 15th 2008

Ueli Raz, Indermühleweg 9, CH-3018 Bern Switzerland

1 Dent de Valerette: "We are much higher up above the valley, than I would have judged from the map," I said. ... "I'm afraid it will take us a full day to get down. And even then, we shall get pretty weak in the knees from going down that much in one day." 294

2 Les Plans: The farmers were up too, and I borrowed a pair of brushes from them for clothes and shoes, and also a razor. We worked hard on ourselves until we began to look like normal people again. And then we were off on our way down to the valley. 296

3 Vérossaz, Vers la haut sur les sasses: Overe there on the Rocks.

4 Above Les Cases: From there we could see directly down to the valley. The trail was steeper here, and the switchbacks more frequent. 297

5 Railway station: In this way, acting out a sort of hilarious mood of a family who had just spent a lovely afternoon in the woods, we danced right into the crowded main street of Saint-Maurice. 299

Ueli