

*Happy is he whom the Muses love, sweet flows the voice from his mouth.
For if someone has pain and fresh grief in his soul and his heart is
withered by anguish, when the poet, the servant of the Muses, chants
the fames of me of former times and the blessed gods who hold
Olympus, then straightway he forgets his sad thoughts and thinks not
of his grief, but the gifts of the gods quickly turn him away from these.
~ Hesiod, "Theogony"*

*I pray to Mnemosyne, the fair-robed daughter of Ouranos, and to her
daughters, to grant me ready resource; for the minds of men are blind,
whosoever, without the maids of Helicon, seeks the steep path of them
that walked it by their wisdom.
~ PINDAR, "PAEAN 7"*

CHAPTER ONE

PATHWAY

Buildings

My mother's death made me think over and over about my past. I became obsessed with it, not so much in relation to her, but rather with the past in its own right. Memory seemed to be associated with something far more important than merely a desire to think about bygone days when she was alive and with me. Perhaps my mother had given me a precious gift. She seemed to tell me, by her death, that I could not afford to lose memories. They were valuable for reasons that lay beyond their ability to retain her. And I was prepared to learn from this message. Forgetting my past, I began to see in an unclear way, would somehow make me unable to appreciate the meaning of the present. Memories, then, seemed to play as vital a role in the way life was being lived as events in the present. I no longer questioned why some memories I kept thinking about were unrelated to my mother. The need to reconstruct and preserve my past became so powerful that I started to look carefully and methodically at memories. These visions of my past would ultimately lead me into the larger implications of Mnemosyne's world. Recollections of "Poplar Point," the childhood cottage of one of my oldest friends, Sue Howard Lindell, on Lake Simcoe came first to my mind in this attempt to understand the meaning of my past for the present. I wanted, for some reason, to capture the physical layout of the place in words.

Today the cottage no longer exists. If you drive through the nearby town of Keswick and along the shore road that leads to the location, you would not be able to find where it once had been.

Everything is now subdivision. "Poplar Point" did exist, though, and in an environment that supported simple rural dwellings, a tree-lined waterfront, and small lakeside cabins. In its heyday, "Poplar Point" was a beautiful spot: a grassy property, which extended as a point into the lake, blessed with many tall Lombardy poplars, a rambling clapboard summer home, and the endless sound of moving water. The setting created vivid impressions on my childish mind which would endure into adulthood. I never hear the airy rustle of poplar leaves or the sound of a meadowlark without thinking of this spot, with two little girls playing on the sunny lawn. When Doug and I were first married, we lived on the ground floor of an old apartment building. The back window looked over a large cinder patch and a series of dilapidated garages. Beyond them stood a fine old poplar, and on still, hot summer nights when I lay restless, the endless whisper of its leaves would lull me to sleep as I imagined the murmur of the water against the breakwater shore of "Poplar Point."

The cottage at "Poplar Point" had three gabled bedrooms upstairs; a large, long living room with a central fireplace that dominated the space; a dining room looking over the breakwater; a bright kitchen; and, even more enchanting, a large sunroom, which in the off-season months contained a crazy assortment of toys. It was the summerhouse and the barn on the property, however, that I remembered the best.

Once off the veranda, a child could run quickly over the croquet lawn to the very end of the point where the summerhouse stood, guarded by aged and graceful Lombardy poplars. This small building stood on wooden stilts, forming a roof for an enchanting Victorian-type gazebo below it. The wooden floor of the gazebo, bleached and faded by many summer suns of whatever paint it might once have had, supported a quaint natural wood railing around it. The gazebo suggested olden times, with ladies and gentlemen sitting on white garden chairs sipping tea in the late afternoon sun, which would dance across the moving water that lay only a few feet away. I never saw anyone sit there and, in my time, there were no inviting chairs. The ancient wooden floor, weathered and some-

how ageless, seemed to present these possibilities to my imagination.

To the left side of the railing, an uneven, wooden staircase rose to the summerhouse itself. The height was truly awe inspiring to young children, but Sue and I felt brave enough to climb the steps. At the top, standing in the warm sunshine and feeling a breeze rising from the water, we would turn to open the door to the one room that made up the summerhouse. Warm musty air, perfumed with the breath of the past, immediately embraced us. How enchanting was this small bedroom with windows on all sides! Even with them closed, we could hear the ceaseless murmur of the lake. I could imagine how it would feel with all windows open on a warm summer night, with the moonlight streaming across the floor. The furniture was simple: a small dainty bedside table painted white and a large bed of wrought iron also painted white. No one slept here now, but Sue told me that her older sister, Janet, used it as a bedroom when she was a girl.

The barn at "Poplar Point" evoked in me equally strong, but different, emotions and thoughts. The graceful driveway, which wound its way out of the heart of the point, led to the main road, and in those days the barn, with its cultivated field beside it, lay across that road. Today you will see nothing but houses where the barn and its field used to be. Sue's family had once owned a great deal of land around the barn, but in my time the barn, one field, and the point itself were all that remained in the family. The building with its neighbouring field spoke of a way of life unfamiliar to me. It was possible to imagine how people farmed the land, and how they housed their animals. I remember the smell and feel of the earth, in which vegetables could be seen growing in well-tended rows. Sections within the barn made me think of grain bins and stanchions for cows.

The old structure was a paradise for children. Long unused as a working barn, it still maintained a soul, as barns will. The barn was always cool, always dark, and drowned in a soft scent, faded by time, of wood, manure, hay, and dampness. The ground floor lay clean and quite empty. Wide doors opened at the front and a dim passageway led to similar wide doors that opened off the other side of the barn.

The floor space was partitioned; the front part appeared to have been used for cars, and earlier for horse-drawn carriages. Beyond this open area and nearer the back doors stood stalls, both open and box, for horses. Janet had once had a pony, and Mr. Howard, in his youth, had riding horses. To my mind, the idea of early morning rides on the point, amid sunlight falling on dewy grass and the lake's wavelets, seemed about as close to heaven on earth as could be imagined.

A wooden stairway rose to the hayloft. The loft had not held hay for many a year and was then used as a storage place for old trunks and furniture. It was a fascinating place for children to explore, where wrought-iron furniture and trunks of old china, clothes, and cooking utensils could be expropriated for play downstairs. In effect, we were using the material culture of the past. There was something strange and delicious about that blurring of time barriers: it was palpable to me, even if I couldn't explain why.

A strange catharsis came over me when I looked carefully at my thoughts about "Poplar Point." I felt relief. I sensed that I had resolved something by externalizing these memories. Why? Had my reconstruction somehow helped my grieving, even if it did not relate directly to my mother? Had the act of composition healed me, by allowing me to let go of the past? Or had the thinking process somehow convinced me that the past had been brought into the present? Why had my feelings surrounding the memories in effect become ones of relief?

Resolution of some sort of pain seemed to be linked to the act of depiction within the mind. Soon I realized why. My memories, my past, my history told me something that was larger than I alone. I had a glimmering that I would learn about the way people perceive their past, their history, through memory. When I thought about "Poplar Point," there was a definite pattern to the way I relived memories. I focused on buildings. I had been compelled to outline three-dimensional space and the way humanly made structures interacted with that space. Human activity had been appreciated by me within the framework of both. The simple act of depiction within the mind drew me into issues unrelated to the memories themselves. Does

interest in space generally become part of the formula that makes memory, I wondered, or that translates sensations evoked by certain memories into something new? Is there something particularly important about humanly constructed space that relates directly to the power of memory?

Gaston Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space*, provided me with some information on that problem. Interested in the effects physical space has on our psyche, he spoke of the childhood house in memories. He pointed out that the building that is home shapes our senses of the environment outside. We learn to see reality – the entire natural world – in connection with certain humanly constructed spaces. In my recapturing of “Poplar Point” through memory, I had uncovered something about this pattern of human interaction with nature. It is evident that humanly built space (even if not my home) – this cottage, but especially its summerhouse and barn – played a powerful role in the way I had related to sky, water, grass, flowers, trees, wind, and light. Nature moved effortlessly through the buildings, like summer-scented breezes through an open window. Reality of nature can meet reality of human behaviour particularly vividly in memories defined by humanly constructed space. I realized that I had lived, not thought about, Bachelard’s philosophy. Experiencing philosophy, rather than contemplating it, gave an authenticity that was intoxicating to certain conceptions.

My mother’s message through death seemed to release something in me: my past, my memories, my history might be able to teach me about the meaning of things for people.

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When Doug and I were married in the late 1960s, we quickly found that we shared a love for the land. Many weekends we spent roaming the countryside just outside the city of Toronto, looking at land we dreamed of buying but could not afford. Over the next few years, two children were born, Alison and David. Life became so busy that, for the time being, we stopped exploring country properties. I took up my old love of drawing and painting, and in doing so I plunged myself into an exciting intellectual world. Because I had not been to

art school, I read anything I could on how to paint and draw. My work improved, and I managed to sell my art by undertaking commissions to do portraits. They could be of cats, dogs, horses, children, or even houses. I produced images in both oil and watercolour, preferring these two mediums to pastel. My art did not bring in much money, but the occupation allowed me to stay at home with the babies. In the years ahead, I participated in joint exhibitions and also had a number of solo shows. Doug was busy, at the same time, building his career as a chartered accountant.

We never forgot our love of the land, and, before long, we started to look again. It might be possible, we thought, at last to fulfill our dream. Shortly before my mother died, we did manage to buy a farm, which we named "Poplar Lane Farm." While some of the richest farmland in Canada can be found in the county where this farm was located, the district of Caledon was, and is, poor in comparison. Hilly and stony, much of it has always been hard to cultivate. Settlement of land began here in the 1850s. Our farm's patent from the Crown dates back to 1856, and a small house was built here about 1875, using stones collected from the fields. A large bank barn was later constructed near the house, using field stones to make the foundations. To this day, hemp ropes and wooden pulleys rise up high in the upper level of the barn. This equipment allowed horses to power the lift of hay into the lofts. Below, stanchions for cattle had been constructed. They are still there, with rusting chains attached to the neck braces, through which the animals could reach mangers holding feed. One family farmed the property over three generations, the last of which raised Angus beef cattle. In the early 1960s the livestock was auctioned off and the place was sold to a Toronto lawyer. He and his family used it as a vacation spot. We bought the property from him.

Almost immediately, the farm evoked strong sensations of the past, of nostalgia, and of grieving in me – yet a sense of beauty, too, strangely connected with all those feelings. This complex reaction to the farm had begun to set in just before my mother died, but her death served to intensify the response. I pondered on this queer collage of emotions. Why did I associate the past with a farm we had just

bought, when I had never before lived on a farm? I loved the beauty of the land – the rolling green of pastures, the arching sugar maples, the souging of the wind in the poplars on the lane. But I could recognize this beauty fully, I realized, only through what seemed to be a sensation of nostalgia. Was beauty, then, part of the nostalgia? I looked at various definitions of the word. Nostalgia is defined as “longing for familiar or beloved circumstances that are now remote or irrecoverable” or “any longing for something far away or long ago,” but it’s also derived from the Greek words meaning to “return home” and to “feel pain.” A wish to return to anything means also to go back in time. Also critical to the meaning of nostalgia is the sense of grieving over loss, but it seems clear that the pain carries a sense of beauty through love. We do not feel nostalgia for something we do not love or hold as beautiful through that love. I wondered whether I could define nostalgia as that form of memory that perceives aspects of the past with an appreciation of beauty and love in the present.

I felt intense nostalgia when walking into the barn’s dim musty coolness. Why was it so disturbing? How could our barn provoke nostalgia without some real base for memory? Or was there memory? And memory of what? Of course I recalled the “Poplar Point” barn and heard again the music of poplars near the lake. But surely that barn at Lake Simcoe could not be responsible for such powerful feelings. I wanted to understand more about the power of nostalgia, especially its characteristics of love and beauty, in relation to physical space. I wondered if these qualities had anything to do with its apparent ability to blur past into present. A humanly constructed space, this time our old barn, served me in my exploration of these ideas.

I thought about any barn memories I had. One concerned a barn on a farm near my childhood friend Dale Robinette’s place at Southampton, Ontario. Several times Dale and I had played at this farm near the Lake Huron cottage. I remembered the fieldstone farmhouse and the wide pastures in the late summer afternoon sun, with cattle grazing peacefully in them, and a broad sleepy barn at the edge of the fields. The farm provided a physical setting for the



barn, which was usually the focus of our attention. How we loved playing in its hayloft, where sweet and soft hay was made golden by thin fingers of sunlight filtering through cracks between the boards. I still remember the warm scent of sun-bleached wood, of hay, and of dust in that particular barn. We ran and jumped in that glorious loft until we were hot and tired, and then we went out to the cooler pasture to see the cows. We wandered over the fields that seemed so large and full of tall grass. I feared the cows might charge us, but they never did.

Is the barn in Southampton the one I am thinking of when I enter our barn and look up into the decaying loft shrouded in ancient hay? No, I thought, there is something else. Best to look even deeper into my past. One barn came to mind quite easily. When I was about four years old, I visited the farm of Mother's aunt. Even though the farm fields are long gone now, from the expansion of the highway, I still remember the old place well. After dinner, my father took me outside. We walked from the house east to the barn. My father held my hand and led me, with the evening summer sun warming our backs. The wide doors stood open, and I could see the barn's dim interior. We went in. Faded memories of animals in the gloom and of the scent of fresh hay return to me. But that memory carries little nostalgia.

Something in my mind began to happen. From the depths came other memories that I knew had vital meaning. And then I realized that the nostalgia evoked by our barn was, in fact, rooted in real memory. I came at last to the place I recognized to be the memory I had been trying to find or relocate. I knew what I had been seeking in my past with respect to this farm and this barn. I understood, too, why I had always wanted a farm. I wanted to recapture life rhythms found on a property on the main street of Brampton.

Brampton was where my mother's old home had been. The house still stands today, but it is now so surrounded with other buildings – houses, a school, and a church – that the setting I remember has gone forever. I can see in my mind's eye the old property as it was years ago – the wide sunlit lawns, a large Victorian house set among tall trees, the rose garden, the pond, the corn fields, the orchard, and

the red and green barns. I have memories of Brampton from before my grandmother died, when I was five years old (my grandfather had died before I was born), and others that date from after the time she died. Several years before her death she had sold the family home and built a new, smaller one for herself beside the old house. But she kept the property – the fields, barns, orchards, and rose garden. Here we would come from Toronto for dinner. I remember one spring evening, when we stepped out of the car to hear the fluttering song of robins, how excited my mother was as she showed her mother a new diamond ring. I wondered why everyone looked so interested. The stone seemed too small to be of any significance. I knew of much larger and more beautiful rocks of translucent silica that could be found at our family cottage in Killarney!

Early recollections of the Brampton property fused together to form one overarching memory, which could be characterized by the sensation of prevailing love. From the enfolding warmth of that love, I saw and felt the larger environment around me. There was the sound of a train at dusk beyond the corn fields, the beauty of the roses in the garden and over the white wooden trellis. The creek that ran through the property flowed into the centre of town, and I remember it across from the park. When I spent a weekend alone with my grandmother shortly before she died, we went to hear a band in that park and to a fair where she bought me a doll with pink feathers. I do not recall her face, but I remember the person because she personified love.

The Brampton memories after her death were those that revolved around a barn, and they ultimately tied barns to all the sensations around Brampton. After my grandmother died, Mother sold the little house but kept the property for a short period of time. We used to go out on Sundays from Toronto, and my parents fixed up the green barn with cushions and garden furniture. We would take these things outdoors, never using the barn really as anything more than a storage place. These are my clearest memories of Brampton – and how I loved it! The smell of the long grass and corn, the heat, the flies, and the stony walk down by the creek. I found a flattish stone

there, cracked in half, and I felt it looked like a loaf of bread. We often put up a hammock, overlooking the fields, and there we could drowse away hot afternoons, bothered only by flies. I used to wish that time would stand still, that those moments would last forever. But, with a piercing sadness, I knew that soon we would get into the car and return to the city, leaving the barn to dream in its loneliness and to hold its impenetrable secrets about the past.

The barn was full of odd things to play with. An ancient wheelbarrow, sawhorse, strawberry box, bit, and rope made a horse and carriage for my dolls and me. The loft might have been empty of hay, but it was still fun to walk on and dream. The height, the smell of ancient wood, and odd pieces of harness made it a treasure box of the past – one that I even then unconsciously recognized as being part of my own. No wonder the barn in Brampton presented agelessness to me, a heritage that later came to mean beauty through nostalgia for that barn.

By means of these attempts to understand memories, I had more understanding of how meaningful buildings could be – and not just buildings we are familiar with, such as the childhood home or cottage. I could not go back to the Brampton barn, but it could heal me through other barns. Buildings new to us can provoke nostalgia, with its abiding sensation of love and beauty, from hidden memories. There is something quite strange about experiencing what could only be described as aesthetic – an appreciation for beauty – in an environment where it is least expected. Perhaps nostalgia from hidden memories explains why. My memories and history had now shown me that, while I might understand my past in the present through buildings, that past shaped my ideas about beauty and art. I wondered if this pattern was not only mine: the linkage of aesthetics to memory might be universal. Memory and the past could be personal or collective, and probably both went into the moulding of human thought. Mnemosyne and the muses seemed to work on a double level. They might allow people to use their own past and history to understand art, but the goddess and her daughters worked together to wire the human mind. Understanding their gifts meant

perceiving how memory could interpret the past and synthesize beauty from historical happenings.

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About 1906 my mother's family built a cottage near Killarney. This small village in north Georgian Bay lies on a protected but deep channel of water. It is beautiful here. On one side of the channel, the pink granite rock faces of an island, clad in green pines, rise high above sparkling water. On the other side lies the mainland, where the shore is lined with huge willows and grassy spaces, amid the docks and buildings of the village. As early as 1837 Anna Jameson, a well-known English writer and the wife of Upper Canada's attorney general, described the channel's setting with such clarity that it is possible to identify the exact locations where she saw campfires and native encampments. This place has an ancient history. Formally named Killarney in 1854, the area had served as a settlement for the Ojibwa for centuries. As the nineteenth century advanced, the village became a centre of commercial fishing. Lumbering developed near by – at Collin's Inlet, for example – and shipping increased. Steamers regularly went through the pretty channel on their way north to Manitoulin Island and the Lakehead on Lake Superior, or south to Ontario's heartland cities. Boats docked at Killarney to unload supplies and to take on tons of whitefish. It was a busy place by the end of the century, but it was not cottage country.

"Grandpa" and "Maimie" Bell, my mother's grandparents, who lived on the Ontario side of Lake Erie, took steamer trips along the Georgian Bay shore for several years around 1900. They fell in love with Killarney and the beauty of its surrounding country. They decided to build a summer home on the George Island side of the channel. With no road access to Killarney (there was no road until the early 1960s), they had to bring everything they needed to build and furnish their house by steamer to the town, and thence across the water by local fishing vessel. The small cottage they designed had one room and an outhouse. There was a tiny kitchen, but they had most dinners at the hotel in the village. In 1920 they built a small fireplace to replace a wood stove for heat. Electricity came

after 1950 and running water in the late 1960s. It never had gas.

When my mother was a child, she spent many summers with her grandparents in Killarney, and she would eventually inherit the property – thus it would be my childhood cottage. Killarney was the love of her life. The fact that she died there, that she loved it, and that it was so full of my past with her made it a difficult place for me to think about. But I often felt compelled to do so, especially when I was not actually there. Killarney's past could flood my mind. As memories engulfed me, I focused again on the physical aspects of buildings.

It was as though the years fell away and I could walk again as a child along the moss-covered cement path beside the cottage wall. The wall and the walk, as they were when I was a child and as they still are now, always seemed to hold the souls of people, newly gone or long gone, who lived and loved there. Somehow I could almost touch and smell the wood. Vision in the mind's eye of this mossy path triggered powerful nostalgia: I seemed actually to be living in the past again. With nostalgia came that twin sensation of beauty and love.

Contemplation of these aspects of a specific building – the cottage wall and the cement walk that ran beside it – opened the floodgates to splintered sensations of life as it was for me years ago. The sense of bleached heat on rocky picnic islands. Heat and space that drown time. Endless blue of water and sky fading into each other at the horizon, seen beyond the smooth pink rock of the shoreline. Mother, walking along in front of me, carrying a bird feather. The sense that the only reality was that moment, a delirium with no beginning or end, the knowledge that there simply was no room in your heart for pain or distress. Other memories crowded into my mind, like flitting moths. The doorway open, allowing the entrance of all the sensations of late afternoons into the old home cottage: gull calls, boat sounds, and flooding sunshine. The smell of Mother's baked potatoes and roast beef in the oven, and the sun's warmth stealing through the south window, dappled with shade from the old trees. I thought of the walk down the path, peppered with acorns, to the outhouse, the sound of the steamship *Norgoma's* blast as she entered the channel from Little Current in the early evening.

These memories brought back to me the words of Henry Williamson in his *Flax of Dream* series:

From the memories of those taintless days I draw my strength; by the past, man's mind is made strong with beauty. My brain is a forge of fire where from the precious metal of those taintless days, I hammer out my images. Sometimes under the stars I feel my love is with me, my love lost forever, and misery quenches my mind-fire, and the images are corroded, and all is illusion; and I am alone, on an alien planet ... Could I but tell you of the glamour of those fled springtimes, when the meadow grasses waved their plumes in the wind, among the ox-eye daisies and the sorrel. Or the nightingale singing in the copse at night! ... I pray for power to bring back the awareness into the human mind; I feel in my mind all the flowers and the songs of boyhood are stored, and I must pour them out, giving them shape and in sentences which will ring in the hearts of all who read, and soften them, and bring back to them the simplicity and clarity of the child-heart.

Williamson described the pain, the beauty, and the love that nostalgia provokes, but he also suggested that nostalgia can be a teacher, and that it seems to work through the sense of love and beauty it arouses in us. I had begun to suspect the same thing. Childhood years create the fabric out of which all later thought will devolve. We continuously remould the present into the terms we know and often love. Without the past, we could give the present no heart. The reasons to feel and the tools with which to feel are created at the beginning of life. And we use and remodel information of delight later in life with these tools. Nostalgia, then, helps form the way we think.

Nostalgia is obviously important if we want to understand the meaning of beauty. And I wanted this knowledge because of my deepening concern with art. On the next trip to Killarney, I was anxious to feel the beauty of this nostalgia, and not the pain of loss. The

physical presence of the walk and the cottage wall, I thought, would make me sense the beauty of the past and the strength of its meaningfulness even more powerfully than the mere contemplation of them. Something strange happened, though, when I went to the old home cottage. I walked along the mossy cement at the cottage wall, but I did not feel what I sensed in my visions while at home. I tried. I would walk the path but realize as I stepped onto the veranda that I had not felt the compelling beauty that nostalgic memory could provoke. That puzzled me.

Then something really significant hit me. Nostalgia, and probably the most powerful form of it in relation to the sensation of love and beauty, seems to be triggered by the mind alone, not the physical environment. I could, I realized, experience two types of nostalgia with respect to Killarney, one stimulated by being at the place, and one that lived only in the mind. As I stepped onto the cement walk, I had failed to see that two distinct nostalgia forms existed: one form could intermingle with the other, and each could also stand on its own. I could go to Killarney, see the cement path, and imagine the people there as they once had been. But there was no other physical place from my past that I could revisit. Brampton, the barns there, and even "Poplar Point," I would never see again as they were in the past. It was only the Killarney cottage I could see today much as it was yesterday. Little, from a physical point of view, had changed. As a result, it had been difficult for me to understand that it was the nostalgia in the mind's eye which provided the most aesthetic sense of the past. Nostalgia, a form of memory that arouses sensations of beauty and love in relation to the evolution of time, inspired me when it lay in the mind only. I called this form of nostalgia "aesthetic nostalgia" because I realized that it made me want to create art – images that portrayed the past in terms of symmetry and balance, love and beauty.

I don't think this idea is new – that the nostalgia used in creativity lives only in the mind. Writers like Marcel Proust, who dwelt on the meaning of the past in the present, did not seem to want to return physically to the location where the events actually took place. Creative or aesthetic nostalgia is a process of the mind which

evolves from a crucible of memory. Mnemosyne, not the work of scholars, taught me this reality. The very fact that I learned to understand the process of nostalgia in this way struck me as important. Discovering knowledge through the muses and memory allows for greater appreciation of what others have to say on the same subject.

Luckily I could test my theory by revisiting the old cottage and then seeing what type of nostalgia I felt. I went back. As I walked again over the mossy cement walk onto the veranda of the old cottage, I could feel, in the stillness, myself as a child swinging in the hammock in the old grove or playing on the rocks above the dock. I could see my father reading on the veranda in the mornings and late afternoons. And Mother sitting inside by the east window, wearing the old brown sweater and knitting her bedspread. And I remembered my father's parents crossing the walk from the sleeping cabin, Dad's mother in a flower-print dress and his father in a white suit. When I looked at the old ice box, I could sense the presence of other old people – the Bells who built the cottage, walking the cement walk, Mother's Maimie Bell in stiff, full-length dresses and her Grandpa Bell in a three-piece suit with his watch chain. But this was nostalgia evoked by a certain location. It was different from the nostalgia brought forth by the mental vision of the cement walk. I had experienced nostalgia triggered by the physical environment.

Death and grieving made me revisit memories. I came to see that this invasion of my past into contemporary existence via memories was related to something other than grieving. It was related to humanness itself. Mental descriptions of my past quickly brought me to Mnemosyne and her daughters. I learned about aesthetic nostalgia through experiences surrounding buildings. My memories informed me about the world of aesthetics, and I came to see memory generally as part of art. I began to think about memory and, therefore, the issue of time in relation to art. I was increasingly interested in those daughters of Mnemosyne. I wanted to know more. The idea that I could learn about the human spirit by looking at my own memories had taken root in my mind. My journey into understanding the importance of the past to human thinking, though, had only just begun.