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Eros

Figure 2.1 St Christopher's Hospice.

Courtesy: St Christopher's Hospice

... our Christian foundation welcomes people as themselves, with their own important beliefs and values and underpins a working community of the unlike.¹

On the route of the Network SouthEast train line that connects the leafy suburbs of Sutton and Caterham to London Bridge lies the unlikely site for one of the most far-reaching revolutions in twentieth-century health care. St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham, south-east London, opened its doors to dying people in

1967, sparking the contemporary hospice movement. The hospice was envisioned in the late 1940s by the evangelical Christian doctor Cicely Saunders and is said to have been inspired by the excessive demands of a dying Polish Jew.

St Christopher's first laid claim to me in the summer of 1992 when my mother had been diagnosed with a terminal cancer. She told Bernadette, her home care nurse, that she wanted a *peaceful, dignified exit*. It was one of those nurse-to-nurse, soul-to-soul exchanges, economic yet profound. Some six weeks later, with a syringe driver pumping infusions of morphine to her intravenously, my mother died without pain in our family home. I knew nothing of the towering cultural significance of my local hospice at the time or of the strange ways in which the work of mourning, which is always searching work, would lure me through a window into the hospice's past.

St Christopher's is a modest building, a hybrid of modernist and utopian postmodern architecture. Alongside inpatient wards there are quiet rooms for contemplation, a gym, and a bright and popular café that is open seven days a week and is used by local residents and patients.² The hospice is demarcated at the front from the tree-lined Lawrie Park Road by shrubbery, two driveways and a voluptuous ramp. Crystal Palace Park, with its eccentric prehistoric Dinosaur Court, lies to the south of the hospice, a sight that my father felt compelled to show us as new migrants to South London in the late 1960s. Here, huge cast iron models of the Jurassic monsters, lovingly restored in 2003 with all of their original anatomical errors intact, protrude incongruously out of the greenery in various poses. They have been there since 1852, a part of the Great Exhibition thought-up by Prince Albert to showcase Britain's military and economic might, materializing the Victorian imagining of civilization as one easily purveyed and taxonomical timeline where the extinct rub shoulders with the new.

It seems entirely fitting to me now that St Christopher's should nestle within the domain of the flawed imperial dinosaurs. As the founding story of the hospice goes, St Christopher's revived and reinvented the endangered craft of care for dying people, pioneered for centuries in Europe by monastic medicine. It did so through a blending of multidisciplinary *techné* with Christian ideals. And all at a time when death was akin to medical failure. A hospital doctor at the time remembers 'The surgical Grand Round did not acknowledge the terminally ill man but greeted all the other patients'.³

Cicely Saunders' approach to pain at the end of life grew from practices she had observed in early homes for terminal care in London. At St Luke's in Bayswater in the late 1940s, Saunders learned from Lillian Pipkin, a Salvation Army matron, of the benefits of the regular giving of a modified Brompton

Cocktail. The opioid elixir of morphine and other varying ingredients – gin, cocaine, cannabis, cherry syrup – had been first concocted to relieve the pain of tuberculosis among patients in the Royal Brompton Hospital. The St Luke's version Cicely wrote 'omitted the cannabis and, I think, the cocaine'.⁴

At St Joseph's Hospice in Hackney in the East End of London, more than a decade later, Saunders' ideas were further honed by the Irish Sisters of Charity, an order that had established Our Lady's Hospice at Harold Cross in Dublin in 1879. Going against convention and with what Cicely described as a 'compassionate matter-of-factness',⁵ the nuns gave their patients injections of morphine at regular intervals to keep their pain in abeyance, inspiring one of Cicely's often-used dictums 'constant pain calls for constant control'.

Karl Marx mistrusted religion as the opium of the people. He had not been able to foresee the revolutionary powers of religious administration as opium *for* the people.

Cicely's fund-raising and plans for the building of St Christopher's came to fruition in the late 1960s, a time when, despite new legislative restrictions, the impact of immigration from the Commonwealth was becoming increasingly manifest. Not long before the Conservative politician Enoch Powell made his potent *rivers of blood* speech, conjuring the perils of a nation close to inflammatory destruction due to immigration, a Statement of Aims for St Christopher's proclaimed 'St Christopher's Hospice is based on the full Christian faith in God, through Christ. There are no barriers of race, colour or creed'.⁶

The honouring of difference by Cicely Saunders in the foundations of hospice care as a *working community of the unlike*⁷ was more than philosophical and abstract. Twice she had close relationships with dying Polish men in her care. The first was David Tasma in 1948 when Cicely was working as a hospital almoner – the predecessors to medical social workers. The second man, Antoni Michniewicz, was a patient at St Joseph's hospice in 1960 when Cicely was a newly qualified doctor. Cicely went on to have a long-term partnership with the artist Marian Bohusz-Szyszko whom she met in 1963. Bohusz-Szyszko's Catholicism and an estranged wife in Poland constrained the formalities of the relationship. Only when he was widowed in 1980 did they marry. Marian was 79, Cicely 61.

With others from her privileged class background – the novelist Virginia Woolf and the labour politician Hugh Gaitskell among them – Cicely Saunders' English xenophilia comes close to what the cultural theorist Mica Nava has called *visceral cosmopolitanism*.⁸ Alongside the pull towards a diffident insularity in the interwar years, Nava has identified contingent and libidinal fault lines of hospitality and openness to cultural others in British consumer culture, the

arts and in politics. It seems that those who have allowed themselves to feel the precariousness of belonging or the dull flatness of sameness can find themselves desiring of, and empathizing with, outsiders.

Such affinities surface throughout Saunders' biography. She articulated them most strongly in her recollections of her parents' troubled marriage and her isolation at the exclusive private English boarding school, Roedean. Speaking of her formative experiences at Roedean – where she says she was sent against her wishes – Cicely has said 'In a sense, I was an outsider there, which was good for me in that being unpopular when you are young gives you a feeling for others who feel like they don't belong.'⁹

From the 1940s onwards, Cicely Saunders' chaste, almost anti-erotic cosmopolitanism, pushed to the limits cultural and professional mores and her own emotional resilience. The facts of these dissident attractions can never be fully known. But the mythic figure of the foreigner in the founding scripts of palliative care is an origins story that carries an ambivalent, if much neglected, symbolic weight.

The theologian Karen Armstrong, among others, makes the point that in modern times we have forgotten that creation myths were always regarded as more therapeutic than factual. They demanded belief or *pistis* – trust, faithfulness, involvement.¹⁰ But in whom should we place our trust? Just what is it that we are being faithful to? What involvement might a creation myth incite for those who are most often the objects of knowledge rather than its subjects? What sort of faithfulness is it when a migrant researcher is drawn to the flickering fragments and remnants of other migrant biographies passed over by others in a cultural archive?

There are parallels here with the story *Rodinsky's Room* told by Rachel Lichtenstein and Iain Sinclair.¹¹ David Rodinsky, a Russian Jew, was the reclusive cabbalist scholar and caretaker of a synagogue at 19 Princelet Street, Whitechapel. He disappeared suddenly in the late 1960s and his room was left undisturbed for over a decade. For Sinclair, Rodinsky was the man who had become a room, a Vanishing Jew whose enigmatic story would be fodder in the reimagining of Spitalfields by property developers in the 1980s. Rodinsky's hold over Lichtenstein is a story of crossed paths and personal histories, of narrative ghosts passing each other without quite touching on London's streets.

Lichtenstein's grandparents, like David Tasma, had left Poland in the early 1930s and settled for a time in East London. They had a home and a watchmaking shop in Princelet Street. Rereading *Rodinsky's Room* and its descriptions of Jewish businesses and restaurants in writing this chapter, David Tasma began to wander across the pages. Might my David have worked in the Kosher Luncheon

Club in Greatorex Street or bought a watch in Princelet Street, catching glimpses of the young David Rodinsky above the synagogue, on the way? The man who became a room meets the man who became a window; unfinished, abandoned stories reaching out to migrants' children across the archive.

An archive is a collection of historical records and the physical place in which they are located. The archive of the contemporary hospice movement as you will see is more than this. It includes dreams, promises and windows.

With archives we must always work from and read between the lines of the 'real' and the imagined, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan argues. Rajan advocates attention to the spaces and inconsistencies between competing stories, putting these into relation with the disparities within communities, where those who are on the margins are 'more often the sites of . . . contests than participants in them'.¹²

Mariam Motamedi Fraser makes a related but different point. She recognizes that the distinctions drawn between fact and fiction, art and science are at best unstable and shaky. At the least they are not self-evident 'Archival documents, for instance, are "artful" in a banal sense insofar as an archive is, necessarily, a collection of artificially gathered-together entities'.¹³ Second, the archive is always evolving Motamedi Fraser argues because archival objects and those who work with them are in the process of quietly transforming each other. Each is working upon, augmenting and moving the other. The affective and methodological terrain of archival research Motamedi Fraser suggests entails 'learning, in part from the materials, what kind of relation we are in. How do I open this letter? How does this letter open me?'¹⁴

Opening is one word for it. Another is susceptibility. And to the extent that we can be opened up by the archive there is also obsession or 'archive fever', to use Jacques Derrida's term.¹⁵ As I began working with the hospice archive and its founding stories I found myself 'opened', caught up with and diverted by the Saunders-Tasma story and three artefacts: the story of an English social worker's relationship with a dying Polish Jew, a 500 pound bequest, and its accompanying exergue 'I will be a window in your home'.

Come with me.

The promise

The exergue is a citation, a found object or quote . . . a frisson that communicates the intention and the spirit behind that intention in advance of the thing itself. Whether a quotation from a famous philosopher or poet, a tombstone, a snatch

*from a popular song or an advertising jingle, it sets the tone, maps out the archive in advance of its constitution as such, and delivers a promise.*¹⁶

For some thinkers an *exergue* – as a citation, theme, or object in an archive – is a historical fragment, a fragile precursor and a sort of promise.¹⁷ And because the archive is populated by contested and incomplete discourses – ‘how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?’¹⁸ – it can be misleading. So an *exergue* is always problematic; inheritance and what is bequeathed, always uncertain.

But we need to start somewhere. And in following the trails leading to and from the hospice archives, I have been drawn to David Tasma’s ambivalent presence in hospice histories as simultaneously commemorated and neglected. There can be little doubt that David’s words – and those of other dying people – in Cicely Saunders’ campaigning and autobiographical stories give the narrative arc of this origins story its sense of novelty and progress. This is a break with the past. We are on new ground: discursive territory that in the next decades will be further democratized by dying people writing and blogging pathographies, bad-mouthing and speaking-up for themselves.¹⁹

At the same time there are the enigmas and omissions in David’s story that interrupt the smooth plotline of hospice stories. It is also the case that when an archive and its stories are so interwoven with care institutions, philosophies and practices, as they are in this case, the archive extends like the roots of a tree, across materials and space.

As well as working with documents from the Cicely Saunders Archive at the King’s College campus in the Strand, I viewed other materials exhibited at *The Cicely Saunders Institute of Palliative Care* at the King’s College campus in Denmark Hill in South-East London (where my mother had also worked as a clinical nurse tutor). The items include books, letters, photographs, inspirational poems and newspaper cuttings that are exhibited in glass cases inside the atrium of the Institute. The atrium ranges over four floors and is encased largely by glass so that it is flooded by light, becoming an exhibit. Also in the atrium is the work of two artists: an audio-visual installation *Birch* by Tania Kovats and Caroline McCarthy’s *Light for Cicely* consisting of photographs (and a dedicated website) of lighted lamps in the homes of people that Cicely had collaborated with during her working life.²⁰ Describing McCarthy’s work, Jenni Walwin, Curatorial Advisor to the project, has said that the photographs bring a sense of each person’s home into the building,

The notion of 'home' as an antidote to the institution was central to Saunders' concept of a suitable environment for those living with terminal illness – a radical idea in her time.²¹

It was in moving through and between these different spaces and objects in the hospice archives that I first began to wonder if I had been looking in the 'wrong' places for David Tasma, or rather whether it had been my limited understanding of the archive that had restricted my thinking. As I wandered through London and across different spaces and materials, as I read more about Cicely's mission to recognize and alleviate 'total pain,' and as I read Cicely's correspondence and the articles and books that she was reading, a new question began to take form. To what extent is modern end-of-life care and its quest to relieve *total pain* a response to the atrocities of the Shoah?

The suggestion is not as fanciful as it might first seem. Numerous innovations in medicine and care grew out of personal experiences of the Second World War (and we must not forget the legacies of Nazi medicine). As well as Cicely Saunders, Paul Weindling in his work on the psychiatrist John W. Thompson, records the work of others.

Helen Bamber, who was with the Jewish Relief Unit eventually allowed into Belsen, later organized the Foundation for the Victims of Human Torture. After working with the UNRRA in Poland, Sue Ryder devoted her life to caring for survivors. Elisabeth Kübler (later *Elisabeth Kübler-Ross*) was moved by the trauma and death she observed at the camp at Majdenek to develop a psychology of dying.²²

Cicely Saunders drew upon Holocaust stories throughout her working life. Dr Viktor Frankl, survivor of Auschwitz and other concentration camps, whose work Cicely Saunders admired and often quoted, has written in vivid detail about the numerous ways in which camp regimes turned men into objects and until 'the last ounce of his physical resources'.²³ Saunders wanted dying people to be assured of their sacred personhood. 'You matter because you are you. You matter to the last moment of your life, and we will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but to live until you die.'²⁴

Is the modern hospice movement an allegoric mirror image of the Holocaust, reversing the philosophy and regimes of the camps and ghettos that sought to inflict total suffering and abjection to the point of death? To begin to imagine this other genealogy of hospices, we must turn back once again to the story that began in London in the aftermath of the war and at the deathbed of 'David' Ela Tasma.

David

The love between Cicely and David was a strange love, underwritten by teeming asymmetries, not least the professional-patient relationship. These are matters that hospice histories tend to sidestep. Of her subsequent relationship with Antoni Michniewicz, Cicely has said ‘Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. I think love is so important that it doesn’t matter that it’s vulnerable. When you fall in love you feel that you have no choice, but in a sense it’s the freest thing you ever do.’²⁵ Yet both David Tasma and Antoni Michniewicz as dying people in Cicely’s care were quite literally captivated. It is difficult not to question how ‘free’ each man was to fall in love with Cicely.

The relationship between Cicely Saunders and David Tasma began to flourish at the beginning of 1948 (they had first met in July 1947) as England was recovering from six years of aerial bombardment and the losses and austerity of war. When I first began this chapter I had written ‘love affair’. But just as love can take different forms so too can our memories and rendering of love. Cicely talked about her bond with David at different times as the love of eros and agape. What remains constant in her stories is the trope of David Tasma’s window. ‘David’s influence on my life was enormous’ Cicely has said

He was very poetic and when he died he left me £500 in his will and said, ‘I will be a window in your home’, meaning the Hospice. It took me 19 years to build a home around the window, but the core principles of our approach were born out of my conversations with him as he was dying. His use of the word ‘window’ led me to understand that we should be open to the world, to all who would come – patients, families and those who wanted to learn.²⁶

So 19 years after David’s death, and following her retraining as a doctor and extensive public fund-raising, Cicely Saunders had transposed and thickened David’s exergue into a real window. Until the summer of 2009, the window lay on the right-hand side of the main entrance to St Christopher’s Hospice, providing a bland view of the parking bays and the street.

The window is still there today, even though the main entrance and the everyday hustle and bustle have been moved away from it. The pane of glass that has become synonymous with David Tasma is legendary in the world of palliative care. I had expected it to be more spectacular, obvious at least. For curious historians, sentimentalists or ‘psychic tourists’²⁷ the window does not give up its secrets too readily. I am glad of that.

Figure 2.2 Cicely Saunders and David Tasma's window.

Courtesy: St Christopher's Hospice

The Saunders-Tasma window is a practical window, undifferentiated architecturally from those that flank it, inciting its own effacement and forgetting. Before the hospice was renovated and reorganized as a part of its 40-year Anniversary Project, the window fronted the reception area. Relatives would congregate unknowingly around it, sharing news from the wards upstairs, dispensing tissues and consoling embraces. No matter how close they would draw to the small inscribed silver plaque on the window's sill, few seemed to take in the epigram underneath the exergue, *David Tasma of Warsaw who died 25 February 1948 and made the first gift to St Christopher's*.

What David had in mind for his gift and why he chose the symbol or perhaps the eye-like prosthetics of a window are mysterious. But there is a poignancy to the very ordinariness of the Tasma-Saunders window and how again and again it recedes into the background. Is this effacement of David's volition, the window asks me, a condition of day-to-day surviving in post-war London? Why did only his employer, Mr Biedak and Cicely attend his funeral? Did he harbour secrets or disturbing emotions and memories that intimacy threatened to unearth? Did he face differential exclusions from local communities because of his Jewishness or low social standing?

Archival stories are never mimetic descriptions. And stories always change in the retelling. As the oral historian Alessandro Portelli has recognized, although

Figure 2.3 David Tasma's grave.

Courtesy: Nadia Bettega

oral sources are not always reliable with regard to facts, this is also their strength. '... errors, inventions, and myths', Portelli believes 'lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings.'²⁸ That said, there is something that riles me about the easy verbatim reciting of what David Tasma said and meant in hospice histories. To my biased ears, there is so much that is glossed over, forgotten, excluded.

What has always struck me is how cryptic David's reported speech is. Possibly the result of pain and of speaking in a foreign tongue and/or a quality of the translation of oral accounts into written records. We must also bear in mind Cicely's practice of selecting and using sound-bite type quotes for her campaigning work as 'a propagandist for patients'. 'I was trying to get patients to speak, to be a voice for the voiceless' she has explained.²⁹ She was adept at this sort of *in absentia* ventriloquism, working creatively and efficiently with patient stories, translating them into unequivocal evidence for the need for more humane end-of-life care.

Saunders' biographer, Shirley du Boulay, reports this story that Cicely told her of another often-cited quotation from David Tasma.

One day when he was very sad, he suddenly said to her, 'Can't you say something to comfort me?' and she, respecting his Jewish roots, said the twenty-third Psalm . . . He asked her to go on, so she said the Venite (Psalm 95) and then, perhaps running out of suitable things she knew by heart, offered to read to him, as she had the New Testament and the Psalms in her handbag. 'No', he said, 'I only want what is in your mind and in your heart.' So that night she learnt the *De Profundis* – a Psalm pleading for forgiveness – in order to be able to say it to him by heart the next day; a loving gesture, if not quite the spirit of a remark that was to become one of the corner-stones of hospice philosophy.³⁰

We know of all these small details because Cicely spoke about them in lectures and interviews and recorded some of them in her diaries. In fact, she maintained a prolific archive of every aspect of her working life, including her appointment and prayer diaries (she recorded 28 meetings with David). And although David Tasma was a recurring figure in Cicely's published writing and in her speeches and lectures, biographical details of David are scant.

Figure 2.4 Cicely Saunders' diary.

Courtesy: Kings College (London) Archive

In Warsaw he had been called Ela and later took the name David. He had three brothers and his mother had died when he was young. David was the grandson of a rabbi, an autodidact who despite being multilingual and reading widely did not think of himself as well-educated. An annotation in Cicely's diary suggests a verbatim self-description from David – 'only a rude old fellow'. David began his working life early at 14. In London he worked as a waiter in a Jewish Restaurant in the East End, owned by Mr Biedak (in Polish *biedak* is a word for impoverishment).

We should not be shocked by the exclusions of the archive the historian Carolyn Steedman advises.³¹ In form and content, archives show us how power and morality have operated at different historical moments. And they always hold the traces – the 'dust' – of their exclusions.

The face

David Tasma was 40 years old when he met Cicely Saunders. He had inoperable and obstructed carcinoma of the rectum and had received a colostomy. His symptoms included pain and vomiting. In the busy London hospital wards where he was cared for, staff did not seem to have the time, or perhaps the courage, to accompany David in his attempts to make sense of his harrowing short life. It is the circumstances of this abbreviated life that I have found myself drawn to, piecing together and counterposing fragile fragments against the towering events of the Warsaw ghetto and the Holocaust.

What we learn from Cicely's stories is that David had left the Jewish quarter of Warsaw in the early 1930s because of an infatuation with the wife of a friend. So he had migrated before the Warsaw ghetto had been built and before the uprising in 1943. The Warsaw uprising was an attempt to resist the Nazi's last efforts to transport the remaining residents of the ghetto, mainly Jews and Roma, to the Treblinka extermination camp. Although Cicely does not tell us about David's family and how they were affected, it appears that his immediate family lost their lives during the Holocaust. Facing death alone in London, David feared that his own life would be inconsequential, that as the last surviving member of his family he would disappear into nothingness.

We do not know about the journey that David made from Poland to France. Neither do we know how he survived in Paris as a waiter or whether in his second migration to England he was once again escaping from the tightening grip of Facism. As the keeper of David's life story, Cicely was vague about when

David migrated to England ‘I believe he reached London before the War’ is all she has written on the matter.³² The timing is crucial in understanding David’s situation in France, why and how he was able to leave and also his status as a refugee in London. As we learn from Hannah Arendt’s rueful account of Walter Benjamin’s ‘bungling’ fatal decision to leave Paris for Meaux in the winter of 1939³³ – each decision taken, to stay or to keep moving at that time, was buoyed in a current of history where life could be extinguished by a single wrong turning.

To know of David but not about how history affected him sets in train a kind of churning bewilderment and loss. And so it is that I keep coming back to David, asking Who were you David? *How* were you?

The face that returns my gaze is earnest and composed. The hint of a smile, the immaculate hair, the white shirt, tie and jacket, all suggest that this remaining image of David Tasma belongs to the formality and occasion of the photographic studio. It is a comportment that is increasingly out of place these days among the mobile phone and Facebook generation, where images are contrived to display spontaneity. In so many ways the photograph of David Tasma records a lost era, not least because from 1940 until the end of the war it had become illegal for Poles to use a camera. Cicely has said that the photograph was taken just before David left for Paris.³⁴ What hopes does the photograph capture? What memories and history does it carry and offer?

Figure 2.5 David Tasma.

Courtesy: St Christopher’s Hospice

The staging of the image lends itself to what Roland Barthes has called the social game of the photographic ritual: the subject and the spectator know very well that the image is staged but there remains an impossible longing for something of the 'precious essence' of the true self to make itself known. For Barthes there was an unbridgeable divide between the leaden image mortified in the photograph and the sprightly 'myself' who 'like a bottle-imp . . . doesn't hold still, giggling in my jar'.³⁵ And so it is with the images and stories of David Tasma frozen into the archive and the mythology of modern hospices. The selective dissociation of David from his past and his own story of total pain produces other distances and divides. The longing to see and to know is as enticing as it is ethically fraught.

In an exhibition *Balkanising Taxonomy*, the artist and researcher Nela Milic placed Balkan cultural artefacts in covered light boxes made of black felt, perforated selectively with peepholes.³⁶ Photographs of Balkan people were bottled in glass jars, preserved and visible but out of reach. Viewing and holding the Balkan other becomes mediated. As you stand on tiptoe or contort yourself into uncomfortable positions to see better, impulses and desires take form, but they are kept in check by the structuring of the installation. And so uncomfortable questions materialize in the craning of the neck, the straining of eyes, the mounting pressure in the balls of the feet. 'What are you looking for?'³⁷ but also 'Where are you looking *from*?'

Figure 2.6 *Balkanizing taxonomy, light boxes.*

Courtesy: Nela Milic

Figure 2.7 Balkanizing taxonomy, jars.

Courtesy: Nela Milic

Dust and guts

Arrival is more fraught when escaping from danger. The psyche and the body can protest. Guts seize up or turn to jelly. It can be difficult to make sense of bodily signs and symptoms, to even remember what is normal.

David Tasma's cancer was advanced and inoperable when it was discovered, which means that it had either been overlooked or was misdiagnosed earlier. It could also have grown and spread ponderously over time without symptoms or David's conscious knowledge. Ensnared by the demands of reassembling a life – learning a new language, finding social networks, a job and somewhere to live – it is not always possible to disentangle the physicality of a pathological discomfort from other unsettlements and losses. Social workers are usually closer to such matters than doctors or nurses, so it is all the more surprising that Cicely has said so little about David's biography.

What is apparent is that trust was growing between this social worker and her charge. On 5 January 1948, David collapsed at his home. His landlady Mrs

Spreadborough telephoned Cicely and David's General Practitioner, Dr Ripka, who arranged for David to be admitted into Archway hospital in North London. 'I visited him while he was waiting for the ambulance and he asked me directly if he was going to die,' Cicely has written. 'I gave him an equally direct answer, believing that he deserved to face the truth and that I had no alternative. He thanked me and I promised to visit him.'³⁸

If the cruel fate of having escaped the Holocaust only to die from cancer was a perverse injustice that could not be spoken, it seems that David could express through bleak humour, lower case torments, 'all my life I've been waiting for a nice girl and now here you are and look at me.'³⁹

When David Tasma died he left Cicely Saunders the remains of everything that he owned – money from his life insurance policy (the 500 pounds would be worth about 15,000 pounds today), photographs and his watch. David was agnostic when he met Cicely. She says that shortly before he died he had told a nurse that he had made his peace with God. At David's funeral in the Jewish cemetery in Streatham, South London, Mr Biedak and Cicely read the sublime poetry of the ninety-first Psalm ascribed to Moses, another founder foreigner *Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day.*

David Tasma brought godlessness and the Holocaust into metropolitan London and into the founding principles and architecture of a social movement concerned with recognizing and alleviating 'total pain.' Yet the dark coordinates of David's life have been lost by the hospice movement, even with Cicely's meticulous self-archiving. There are so many questions. What was said but not recorded? What was expressed and could not be understood? What could not be put into words but became attached to the ordinary matters of attraction, talking, reading, handholding, crying and laughing?

The enigmatic position of the outsider in origins stories is not unusual. It is part of a long history in the symbolic politics of foreignness in Western cultures. In the book *Democracy and the Foreigner*,⁴⁰ the political scientist Bonnie Honig reverses the recurring question *What should we do about foreigners?* Instead she ruminates upon *What problems might foreigners solve for us?* For social invention and founding scripts, Honig believes that the foreigner allows regimes to import much needed but potentially threatening qualities and perspectives that they lack. The most useful foreigner founder is the one who makes a timely departure before their foreignness becomes too dangerous or unruly.

So why in giving legitimacy to a new regime would *a nice girl* like Cicely Saunders need recourse to an outsider, and an uneducated, demanding one at that?

Creating something new from within is discomfoting, sometimes painful. It means facing-up to lack, insufficiency and the deep injustices of the world in which we participate and from which we draw our day-to-day privileges. Reading Cicely's stories of the origins of hospice care as a foreigner founder script, it is possible to understand David Tasma's symbolic significance as an outsider whose overflowing body and passions expose the limits and the excesses of the modern rationalism of Western bureaucracy and medicine, a rationalism where *in extremis* individuals are reduced to faceless categories and numbers. Through David, violations and inadequacies can be exposed. A break can be instigated with what has gone before. Brutality against the most vulnerable can be confined to another era.

The cost of such a reading is that we can render the social life of power less ambivalent and contradictory than it is. And in turning David into another political conduit, a name and a couple of anecdotes passed on from one unthinking mouth to mouth, we dehumanize him once more.

Cicely Saunders's fidelity to the memory of David Tasma is as much generous as it is generative, serving as a founding narrative of the modern hospice movement. Beneath the rational coherence of this narrative there is another untold story where language falters and 'The story traces the edges of a wound that can only be told around'.⁴¹ If we are attentive to its silences and disjunctures it asks that we think about the stuttering ineloquence of trauma, and of stories as an opening to other demands and conversations.

Part of the enigma of David Tasma in Cicely's stories is that he is a virtual survivor, rescued and betrayed by the randomness of history as much as everyday life. David was someone who in the turmoil of an unforeseen 'ordinary' death, amid monstrous schemes of annihilation – events that were not fully public at the time – lived the reverberations of catastrophe in the fabric of his life even though he did not seem to know, or was unable to tell, what had been survived. With nothing left to lose, David put his trust in Cicely Saunders. It was a canny, risky decision, but trust does not need facts or reasons. And 'every act of loyalty open(s) an opportunity for disloyalty' Alphonso Lingis reminds us.⁴²

It matters that David Tasma's life could well have been of little consequence had it not been for Cicely Saunders. And it matters that David's past has been selectively neglected. But neither was David reduced to a victim of Holocaust mythology in Cicely's stories. The Holocaust did not come to define David or his pain. Cicely literalized David's musings on windows and dematerialized his concrete predicaments. Yet she did not sever David from the future. In bringing David Tasma's fractured story with her into the public domain, it has been put

into a relation with injustices suffered by other dying people, allowing pain to be many things, weighty in its historical content, but not without company.

The living always cohabitate with the dead Robert Pogue Harrison argues. In his book *The Dominion of the Dead* Harrison investigates what he calls the 'humic foundations' of everyday life.⁴³ 'A humic foundation is one whose contents have been buried so that they may be reclaimed in the future', Harrison explains. 'The humic holds in its conserving element the unfinished story of what has come to pass.'⁴⁴

This is an unfinished story with a legacy that will not go away. Not only because the archive of contemporary hospices is marked by violence and injustice, but also because in the face of all that has been overlooked, avoided or suppressed, David and Cicely somehow managed to leave a window open to all *those who want to learn*.