

Eugenia Mary Felder Buchanan

Born 1823, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Died 1898, Chappell Hill, Texas

My name is Eugenia Mary Felder Buchanan and my life has not turned out as I expected. I wish the Africans had never graced our shores and slavery had never become part of our lives. I would have better lived without them than seen the destruction of our property over and over at the hands of Yankee soldiers. I miss South Carolina dearly but am also grateful to be here in Texas. I would *abhor* to witness our people walking about free and taking over our farms. My father Samuel Felder died in 1842 and I am glad he did not see what came to pass.

My husband John Buchanan was a man of foresight and intelligence. Soon after the start of the War Between the States he decided that we should move south to Alabama. We would thus be further away from the north and their harmful abolitionist ideas. Our people were already impossible to control. What did we do that God would curse us so? I was heartbroken to leave my baby daughter Adele behind with my sister Louise. There was no help for it. Building a new plantation would be hard work and only the five boys and our most faithful slaves could come.

In Alabama, Mr Buchanan was dead set on making sure our way of life was preserved. He joined Colonial John Gatewood and his raiders. Each night they set out packed with guns and rifles to make trouble for the Union Army. Stealing supplies and killing soldiers they came upon. General Sherman was incensed by this and placed a price on both their heads.

One day, soon after killing four union soldiers, Mr Buchanan and Colonial Gatewood fled to Mexico. That very night a Federal Raiding Party surrounded our house. The captain pointed his gun at me and said Ma'am, you have 30 minutes to gather your things.

I shoved the box of our silver flatware into my maid Bessie's hands. I told her to go quickly out the back and bury it by the river. Then run. I knew she and the rest of our people would not come to Texas with us. While my son Andrew hooked the horses to the wagon, the other boys gathered blankets and cookware. I grabbed a basket of bread. As we drove away, I smelled smoke. By the time we rounded the live oak, the entire house and barn were in flames.

Sneaking past blockades, we made it all the way to Chappell Hill, Texas, where my Felder cousins had already settled years before. They had helped form a community of Confederates from South Carolina, in hopes that Texas would stay a slave state.

Mr Buchanan sent word to me from Mexico that he had secured land north of Veracruz to plant sugar cane. I realized then he would never accept the end of slavery. It was up to me to prevail and keep our family together. My husband was broken.

I have to admit I was tired of being dependent on my cousins and not having my own home. When we left Texas, my Uncle Gabriel pressed his own gold watch into my hand in case we had need of cash.

The trip to Mexico will stay with me as a true test of my perseverance. Our ship from Galveston was beset by three different storms causing the boat to lose its centerboard and ability to steer. Somehow, after waiting in vain for a pilot, the captain chose to sail blindly in a storm over the bar into the Tuxpan River.

I wish I could report that our dream of regaining our former life was realized, but it was not to be. We worked side by side to clear the land for sugar cane. We ate nothing but corn meal for months at a time. I lived for the few letters my sister Lou sent from South Carolina. One by one our sons returned to Chappell Hill for their education. We finally gave up and joined them in Texas. I regret to say Mr Buchanan never recovered from the losses.

John Salley

1740-1794, Edisto River, South Carolina

Good Afternoon. My name is John Salley. See this land? It is all mine. Thousands of acres stretching from the north to the south fork of the Edisto River in South Carolina. It is so large, a rider can't cover it in a days riding. This plantation began with a small parcel granted to my family in 1735.

My father Henry told the story many times. He and Mutti were living with his parents on a small farm in the land around Basel. My father wished for his own farm but land was limited. One day their neighbors told about a man who was urging farmers to emigrate to the Colony of South Carolina in America. They would get passage from Hamburg, 250 acres of fertile river-bottom land, and one year's provisions. In exchange, all they had to do was settle on land in the interior of the colony and keep the Indians from invading Charles Town and the plantations along the coast. My parents said yes knowing that their lives would be changed forever.

It was not easy. We were only five years settled when I was born. In those early years, the Cherokee and Catawba tribes were troublesome. There was many a night we sat by the door with rifles at the ready. I remember my mother trembling and holding me close so I wouldn't cry out. All was well as long as the Indians kept supplying deerskins to the traders. But they often resisted.

Samuel, one of our Indian farm hands, once told me that his way of life was being destroyed. How could that be? We provided for him and his wife very well. Why would he want to return to the woods? I reckon they wanted to be lazy.

During the Revolutionary War I was a member of the South Carolina Provincial Congress and Captain of our local militia. Because the Tories and British soldiers seized all property, I resolved to save my favorite thoroughbred horse. I bricked her into the basement of our house. The horse received air, water, and food through a trap door in the living room floor. Late in the war Tory spies finally learned about the horse and stole her. It was a good thing that I was not present. I would have spilt my last drop of blood defending my beloved animal, and my genealogy would have ended then and there.

I am about to turn over a goodly number of acres to cotton and have added more slaves to total 50. They were a large investment with housing and such. But the new cotton gin will increase production considerably. We have heard that some states in the north have gone against nature and profit to prohibit slavery. Even Virginia

passed a law allowing slave owners to free their slaves! I am glad they realized their error and repealed it.

Without slaves, where do they expect to get cotton, tobacco, molasses and rice? I hope this isn't a sign of things to come. The thought that my property, my slaves, horses, cattle would be taken from me through the stupidity of others is detestable. I thank god the United States Congress just passed the Fugitive Slave Act. I trust the \$500 fine for assisting runaways will deter that immoral behavior.

My family relies on me to maintain our property and position in society. I cannot show any doubt or fear. The last time I questioned the way things were was when I was a boy. I liked to roughhouse with Luke, the son of our farmhand and his Catawba wife even though my father frowned at us. But they moved away when the war broke out against the Cherokees. I was 18 and signed up to fight along with my father and brothers. I don't know what I would have done if Luke and I came face to face against each other in a battle. I was grateful it never happened.

Sometimes I do wonder if the slaves are truly as simple and childlike as some say. When I put some up for sale, I see their mothers stand there and openly weep. Imagine! Perhaps they really do feel as we do. But I banish that thought from my mind. I can't keep a business going with such sentiments. I am a good and kind master. These African slaves could not survive without me. They are better treated here than in the heathen land they came from. We clothe and feed them, give them shelter and medical care and the discipline they need. They have the benefit of civilized and white society.

My family worked hard to build this country. Even so I am surprised to be in this position. When I was a boy living in our small cabin that my father built, I thought we would always be doing backbreaking work carving a farm out of the wilderness. Our success now must mean that god has blessed our efforts and sees our work as worthy.

I must bid you goodbye now. My horse Primrose awaits and I must continue my rounds.

Desire Howland Gorham

Born 1623, Plymouth Colony

Died 1683, Barnstable, Massachusetts

Welcome to Barnstable and my home. Please honor me by sitting here in the sun. People call me Mistress Gorham but my full name is Desire Howland Gorham. I was named after a dear friend of my parents who did not survive the crossing on the Mayflower.

We are harvesting corn this day. I would not be alive without corn so I give thanks as the Wampanoag have taught me.

My father and mother were both goodly people. I have heard the story many times of how the first Pilgrims left England and settled this place. I have heard that it was God's will they survived the ocean voyage and the first winter in Plymouth Colony. And God's will that they found a rich land empty of people. Only a few remaining Patuxet and Wampanoag Indians to serve us. If God wills it, it must be so.

When I was 8 my mother sent me away to the Hopkins family. I was not the only one in the colony sent away. Parents were weak and unable to discipline their own children. Too much affection was dangerous. My mother told me they had to send me to the Hopkins because she loved me **too much**. I was the eldest of my parent's 10 children, and had to learn to help out. She also said I was too close to Indian Joe. My mother said often to me, They are not the same as us, as you well know. Even those who say they are Christian.

For two years I lived with the Hopkins and tried to be good. I prayed daily that I would be allowed to return home. Mistress Hopkins **whipped** me each time I forgot to stoke the fire at night and carry in new logs. At home Indian Joe carried in the logs. But the Hopkins only had outside Indians. One was a girl named Weetamoo. She and her brother worked in the fields. I liked to listen to her singing under her breath while we planted corn.

The hardest part was in the church meeting. The bench was hard and I tried not to peek up three rows to where my mother and sisters sat with their heads bowed. So I stared down at my apron, pulling on the loose threads. I didn't want to feel the sadness that wanted to reach up into my throat and make the sobs come.

My life changed twice. First when my husband Captain Gorham and I left Plymouth to build our own homestead and farm here in Barnstable. Second when Tooto came

to us. He was just a boy, left behind in the Indian praying village nearby in Nauset. His mother had died and his father was shipped to the West Indies as a slave. He became like a son to me. My husband was not pleased but Tooto made himself useful with the cattle. My husband often traveled north to trade for deerskins so was gone more days than not.

Now at the end of my life I am satisfied here in Barnstable. Or Cummaquid as Tooto calls it. My son Jabez begs me to come to Poppasquash Neck in Swansea [swanee]. It is fertile land won from the Narragansett nation after King Philip's War. But Captain Gorham died there fighting. It is land soiled by blood and war and I cannot abide it.

Tooto will soon bring me a mug of broth made with herbs and mussels he gathered in the bay. He remembers much that his mother taught him about the land. With my children grown and my husband gone, Tooto and I spend our days together. He now has his own house and farm next door.

Yesterday he told me he wants to be buried at my feet. I could not stop the tears coming to my eyes. How did he know how worried I had been about where he would be buried? I said I would be honored. He smiled and walked out the door. I pressed my apron to my eyes. God is surely good.

Mark Mawer

1640-1685, Urquhart, Moray, Scotland

I stand here before the great Cathedral in Elgin. Behind me also stands Gallows Hill, a place I will never forget. I may look happy, but that is only what I show to the world.

My brother John and I were born and raised in Urquhart, a small village in the county of Moray. Farming was our way of life and I did not envision anything other than that. Our Ma sang to us and read stories from the Bible. I thought I would never be apart from her my entire life. When she was pregnant she was so happy, hoping it would be a girl this time. But the birth did not go well. John and I sat in the kitchen listening to the cries. Father was nowhere in sight. When the cries changed into a deep wailing we knew the news would be sad. The door opened and the Widow Innes walked out. Our ma screamed after her. "It was you who caused my baby to die. You are a witch with your evil herbs and potions. I curse you to Hell forever."

From that moment Ma started to leave us. She cooked and cleaned but the light in her eyes had gone out. She died a few years later, when I was 12 and John was 10. If I close my eyes I can still see her eyes staring up into mine from the bed. She clutched my wrist and begged me to promise that I would read the Bible every day and obey the minister. Else she would not go from this world in peace. Then she pulled at my shirt. "Don't forget the Acts," she whispered. How could I forget the Acts? Ma spoke of it so often it was branded into my mind.

The Witchcraft Act of 1649 made capital offences of blasphemy, the worship of false gods and for beaters and cursers of their parents. It also extended the existing act of 1563 so that anyone who even consulted with devils and familiar spirits, would also be punished with death.

Of course I nodded. Anything to give her the peace she yearned for. Ma released my hand and sank back into the pillow, exhausted, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth.

For the next decade I tried to fulfill my promises, despite Father's beatings. When he finally passed away two years ago, I became the owner of our small farm with John.

It was early November in 1662 when the summons came to John and me. We were chosen to serve as jurors on a trial for witchcraft. We were young so I was surprised that we were chosen. I had kept my promises to Ma. The minister preached almost

every Sunday about the dangers of witches and their pagan beliefs. If not stopped, it would infect our vulnerable children and destroy our communities. Was this really true?

During the trial I stared at the two accused women. Barbara Innes, known as the Widow Innes, was my Ma's age. Her face was cast down and hidden from me. Beside her stood Mary Collie, a younger woman who looked straight at us in the jury, defiant. As if she was daring us to challenge the whole town. But I could not. They knew and we all knew there would be no sentence other than guilty. The judge read out the verdict. I have never forgotten those words.

"Therefore the sentence is that they are ordained to be taken outwith the west port of the Burgh of Elgin, being the 11th November and at 1 o'clock in the afternoon and there, first to be strangled to death, and thereafter their bodies to be burned to ashes, and that for their doom, which was accordingly put into execution."

John and I stumbled out into the street. Somehow we found ourselves sitting in the tavern holding glasses of whiskey that someone had put into our hands. I thought I would rejoice. Instead all I could see were the faces of the two women hovering in my mind, and my Ma's fingers gripping my hand.

I decided that day never to have anything to do with women again. I did not want to be the cause of women's suffering like I had witnessed growing up. That would be the only way to avoid the grief and remorse that still sits in my belly like a stone reminding me of my cowardice. So I never married. I live in a small hut beside the house where John and his wife live. I take my meals alone and pray every day for God's mercy.

Sir Nicholas Baganel

Born 1510, Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire, England

Died 1590, Newry, Ireland

I was born fighting my mother always said, right before she spanked my behind. All I knew was that I wanted what I couldn't have. I wanted to be a noble, overseeing my estate. I wanted to live a life of honor, fighting for England and the king. But I was just the younger son of a mayor in a small town. I had no prospects or wealth to be had. I had no education because my father refused to send me to the monks. Evil papists, he would say and spit. Them and their accursed monasteries taking up good land. Good riddance to them.

So I was angry much of the time. When I was 25 I got into a pub brawl and a man was killed. They accused me of the murder so I fled to Ireland. It was not because I had a love for the Irish. They are Catholic after all, and so wild they do not deserve the land they live on. They can barely settle into towns but herd their cattle here and there with no respect for private property. While there I fell in with the Irish collaborator Conn O'Neil, who was allied with King Henry VIII to subjugate the Irish. He was lucky to have my services. As thanks, he negotiated a pardon of all murders and felonies that I committed.

After that I resolved to only fight for money or for a greater cause. I also vowed that I would return to England a wealthy and respected man. I spent three years in France fighting, where I cemented my reputation as a fearsome soldier. But Henry the 8th needed me again in Ireland so I returned gladly. I fought against the Irish raiders and kept them out of the English Pale, a defended area on the east coast of Ireland. To control those Irish who insisted on migrating, we burned fields and pastures. We then rounded them up into plantations run by English settlers. To keep down the rebellions, we killed local chiefs and lords and seized land. We also enforced the English custom of inheritance by the first-born son. Anything to reduce the distribution of landed wealth.

The king appointed me Marshall General of the Army in Ireland in 1547. Soon after I was knighted and granted the lands around Newry, including two abbeys. Imagine me owning an abbey! If my father was still alive he would roar with laughter. I built a manor house in Newry and married Eleanor Griffith of Penryn in North Wales. With her estate and lands of Plas Newydd my holdings grew even more. Pretty good for a younger son I'd say.

My luck changed with Queen Mary's accession to the throne. That catholic witch who executed Protestants left and right. Of course I lost my office as Marshall, and to top it off was fined a thousand pounds! In protest I returned to England and was soon elected to Parliament for my birthplace of Newcastle under Lyme.

I am glad to say I am back in Ireland now that Queen Elizabeth is on the throne. I immediately wrote her to complain that my lands in Newry had been plundered by Shane O'Neill and thus were bringing in little income. What kind of thanks is that for a loyal servant to the crown? As a result, she reappointed me Marshall. At least she can recognize my talents. Just today, I was also appointed chief commissioner of Ulster with my son Henry as my assistant.

I am not naïve. I know the fickleness of politics. I have seen kings and queens come and go throughout my long life. I understand how fragile power can be. I am a survivor and proud of it.

Magdalen Stroman 1332-1376, Basel (Switzerland)

Cheese for sale. Cheese for sale. Will you buy?

I was born the daughter of a farmer and expected to work hard my whole life. That has come to pass. But I never expected to live in a city. I had never even visited Basel before I married Karl. He was a cheese maker and bought milk from our farm. There is no better cheese in all of Basel. We use a secret recipe passed down in my husband's family.

Last night I lay awake, smelling the fires and hearing the wails of my neighbors up and down the streets. But at least the Jews were finally gone and we were safe from the Black Death. All I have left is this cheese shop and my son.

Somehow I survived the epidemic, even though I was weak from taking care of my husband and daughter. It was horrible watching the march of the disease through their bodies. Fever, chills, abdominal pain, then blackness covering their skin. The day my daughter died I **resolved** to make someone pay. That was the only thing that kept me going. Where was God? There was also the milk to gather and the cheese to make. My son Jürgen and I went through the motions day after day as in a trance. Would there be any customers to even buy our cheese?

I believed that being a good Christian would protect me from evil. So the priests told me. I was obedient to the church and Karl and I were honest with our customers. I was always leery of the Jews, though. Skulking around in their tall hats and long furry robes carrying bags that must be filled with money. I never saw the women. Did they even have women?

Then news came from Strasbourg that Jews had caused the Black Death by poisoning the wells. It traveled fast through Basel's merchants and guilds. It stood to reason. We had all noticed that fewer Jews were dying from the sickness. It pained me to see so many still alive, going about their business. I imagined them holding their daughters who could still skip and play. My sadness and anger rose up inside me so I could not see anything else. Jews all over Europe were poisoning wells and we had to take action to stop this horrible crime. They must be punished. Didn't they murder Christ?

At first the city fathers refused. Cowards! They said the Pope had issued a proclamation protecting the Jews. So even the Pope was brainwashed by those clever Jews.

I went from door to door, reminding the other guild members of our agreement to stick together against the Jews. Together we stormed city hall and demanded justice.

Yesterday, all 600 of Basel's Jews were rounded up on an island in the Rhine, locked in a barn, and burned alive. All that is left are some Jewish children who will convert to Christianity. And thankfully, the law will not allow any Jew to set foot in our city for 250 years.

Today I rose at dawn as usual to set the milk to ferment. I was alone. There were no sounds of my husband and daughter. The execution of the Jews did not bring them back. I am left with the question. Did I treasure Karl and my Liesle enough when they were alive?

Katherine Wydeville

Born 1458, Northamptonshire, England

Died 1497, Cambridgeshire, England

I am Katherine Wydeville, Duchess of Buckingham. That is until Richard the pretender to the throne robbed me of my estates and title. You have perhaps heard of me? At one time I would have cared about a title. Now I only care about my children and their safety. I confess that this war between cousins still confounds me. Sons and grandsons of old King Edward the third squabbling over the crown. But squabbling that caused death and mayhem all over the kingdom for more than 30 years!

This moment I am remembering happier times, when my Harry was alive and being a duchess was the most wonderful thing in the world. I was born the 12th and last child of a minor landowner, Richard Wydeville. But my mother, Jacquetta, had other ambitions. When I was 6, my sister Elizabeth caught the eye of King Edward the fourth and our lives changed forever. She became Queen and the entire Wydeville family joined the royal court. My brothers became lords and my sisters and I were married off to other important men.

Even though we were part of the royal court, our family was still referred to as those lowly Wydevilles. There were so many of us, I suppose we overwhelmed the court. But the king adopted us as his family. He never waivered from his commitment to my sister. It was common knowledge, though, that he sired bastards from one end of the kingdom to the other.

When I was seven I was married to Henry Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham. I called him Harry. He was eleven and more interested in sword practice than playing with me. I used to watch him in the courtyard, clanking with an oversized sword. One day I was a little girl being ordered around. The next day I was a duchess with my own retinue of servants. I am embarrassed to say I made them fetch me new linens and drinks and food I didn't even want. Just to see them jump.

One summer day when I was still a child I noticed a mass of soldiers gathering outside the castle wall. The knights rode on horseback through the crowd, prodding the men into orderly lines. I recognized my father and brother on horseback from their colors. I tried to call out to them but they couldn't hear me. The men on foot looked poor, without any armor or horses or even swords, just a few spears and sticks. They must be about to go to battle again. It was late summer. Who would get in the harvest without all the farmers?

The worst moment was the day my father and brother were captured by the Earl of Warwick. Wicked man. They could have been ransomed like the others. But my father and brother were related to the king. They were beheaded right there in the town square. When the news came I ran into the highest tower in the castle and hid under the blankets until my mother came and found me. It was then I saw the foolishness of this war between cousins. Of course my opinion hardly mattered.

I was lucky King Edward kept Harry out of the battles and political fighting. But Harry was not content to stay at home on our estates with our children and me. After Edward died, Harry tried to gain power by supporting his friend Richard, Duke of Gloucester. If I had known, I would have tried to stop him. I never liked Richard. He lied and used people around him. My dear Harry finally realized his mistake. He then led a rebellion to put young Henry Tudor on the throne. But Richard captured Harry and accused him of treason. Harry was beheaded before I could arrive to say goodbye.

I regret every time I fretted about not having dresses as nice as my sister the queen or being married to a duke and not a king. I wish I could tear the Earl of Warwick apart with my bare hands. He took my beloved father and brother from me. This cousin's war also robbed my children of their father.

I have heard that the new King Henry Tudor will restore my lands and title. I am relieved for my sons. I am a widow with four young children. What will happen to me? What use will I have? Is the war finally over and will the Tudors prevail?

King Edward I 1239-1307 England

I am King Edward the First, of England, Gascony, Ireland, Wales and soon Scotland. You may call me Your majesty.

My first memory is of a warm hand and my nurse Sarah leading me into my mother the Queen's library. I did not see my mother often so I hung onto Sarah's hand even harder. But she unwound my fingers one by one and set me on the bench beside my mother. Sarah whispered to me that it will be fine, Neddy. She bowed and slipped away and emptiness swirled around me like a cold wind.

Mother peered at me from behind a large red book. I saw a face surrounded by white and gold like the flowers in the garden. Her voice seemed to come from far away. She told me that today I would begin to learn about King Arthur and my destiny.

I had never heard about King Arthur, of course, but that was soon remedied. Mother read to me every day about King Arthur from the History of the Kings of Britain so I would know what was expected of me.

I began to learn sword fighting when I was seven. I love the sound of battle and armies marching together. I love the horses and knights with gleaming armor and our flags and banners flying. I love knowing that my cause is just and God has blessed our victory.

In 1276, Llewelyn, The Prince of Wales, made the mistake of refusing to pay homage to me as overlord. I could not tolerate such insolence from the Welsh barbarians. Refusing to fight openly and living in scattered settlements, not real towns. They were lazy and did not use money like civilized people. They also did not spare their enemies in battle, and worse of all, married blood relatives. My father had failed to conquer them. I would not fail.

I raised an army larger than anything seen before. Llewelyn and his brother Dafydd would never be able to defend themselves against us. But all did not go smoothly. Within a month we found ourselves surrounded. I regret to say that our numbers were reduced by desertion and battle casualties. But I had my eye on the lowland island of Anglesey. It contained the best arable land in Wales. It was also August and the height of the grain harvest. We captured the island and I shipped 300 men there with scythes to harvest the grain. Hah! My army was fed while Wales was left to starve all winter. Llewelyn surrendered and publicly paid homage to me.

Of course I was confident. My ambition to unite Britain was noble and right, thus divine judgment would always be with me. Even the soul of King Arthur must be sitting at the round table among us. My only challenge was in raising funds to pay for my wars and crusades. After the conquest of Wales, the knights resisted another tax. I had no choice but to use the Jews. For generations Jewish moneylenders had forced landowners into debt. So I issued the Statute of Jewry. This banned Jews from moneylending and erased the debts. In thanks, funds poured in from the knights. No matter that the Jews were losing their main source of livelihood. They should have been grateful. I even placed them in protected cities and towns away from Christians. I also required every Jew over age 7 to wear a badge of yellow felt for their own security.

That was only the beginning. In 1290 I was in debt again to the Riccardi banking family and needed to raise another tax. My cousin Charles of Salerno in France had already expelled his Jews for usury and for *cohabitating with Christian maidens*. The English Jews were still lending money underground. And more important, nobles were saying the queen was buying properties from landowners in debt to Jews. As long as that continued I could not raise a tax from the knights. I also would not allow scandal to touch my wife. With the Edict of Expulsion I removed the remaining 2000 Jews from England in one fell swoop. The knights were so pleased, they agreed to a massive tax grant of 416,000 pounds. The largest tax ever collected, I'm proud to say.

The hawk sees all from on high then dives straight in for the kill. Once he is committed, there is no hesitation. That is the kind of king I wanted to be. I daresay people will so speak and write of me down the ages. Like King Arthur, my dream was to unite all of Britain under one banner, one king. I have nearly succeeded.

Sibylla d'Anjou

Born 1112, Anjou (France)

Died 1165, Bethany, Kingdom of Jerusalem

Melisande, the Queen of Jerusalem, died yesterday. Without her, I would not be here in the Holy Land at this Abbey. I would still be shackled to Thierry, Count of Flanders and more war.

My first memory as a child in Anjou was the pealing of a bell, loud and insistent, and a sharp rectangle of light above me. Then shouting outside and footsteps thudding in the castle hallways. Our lives were built on war. I was not allowed to learn sword fighting with my brothers but I knew about attacking and strategy all the same. I had ears and eyes. Not like the peasants out in the fields spending their days staring at the soil. Their only purpose was to supply my father the taxes and supplies he needed to defend Anjou. If we didn't protect them, they would perish.

My other memory was something different. We lived near the Fontevraud Abbey. Each time we ventured out of the castle I could hear the voices of the nuns singing. Sometimes I would spy them walking through the hallways, heads bent together. I longed to walk among them.

However my life was laid out for me. Obedience. Marriage. Children to serve as heirs to whatever husband was arranged for me. So all was as expected until my husband Thierry, Count of Flanders, left on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Like most crusaders, he wanted to expand his wealth while ensuring his entrance into heaven. Our son Philip was too young to rule. So Thierry named me regent of Flanders. This was the first time I was in charge of my life and I relished it.

The test of my new power came soon enough. Baldwin, the neighboring Count of Hainault, attacked Artois, one of our valuable counties. Of course Baldwin wanted Flanders, we were one of the most affluent and powerful counties in France. But he didn't know me. I was enraged and swore to fight back. But first I had to give birth to our son Peter and asked for a week's truce. We did not waste that time. Before the week was out, my knights had marched into Hainault. They burned fields and houses, taking no prisoners and foraging for treasure in churches and abbeys.

It was only the intervention of the Archbishop of Reims that stopped us from absorbing Hainault into Flanders. When Thierry returned, he took more revenge on Baldwin at Bouchain. Then he turned around and married our daughter Marguerite

to Baldwin's son. I never forgave him for that, though I understood. I had also been married in order to form allegiances.

Ten years later Thierry wanted to return to Jerusalem. The loss of Damascus during his last trip had sat heavily on him. This time I insisted on coming despite the dangers of the long trip. I longed to make my own pilgrimage. I also wanted to meet my stepmother Melisande, the Queen of Jerusalem in her own right. My father Fulk, her consort, had died in a hunting accident. I was curious about her sister Iovetta who was an abbess in nearby Bethany. This decision was about to change my life.

My heart grew lighter the farther we got from Flanders. It was like I was drawn east like a moth to a flame. Looking back I can only credit God. Even stepping aboard the ship in Italy was like embracing a warm hand carrying me home.

Finally we arrived in Jerusalem and I stood at the entrance of the Holy Sepulchre, the holiest place for pilgrims. I was surprised that the call came. Like my entire trip east, it was sure and instant. I had no love for Flanders and my children were mostly grown. And not only that, I wanted to stay here. I turned to Thierry and told him I was going to become a nun. He raged at me, saying it was my duty to be his wife. That he and the children would not be able to live without me. I did not wish to cause him pain but I had no choice.

Thierry first refused to give me the funds I needed to join the order. But in the end Melisande ordered the Patriarch of Jerusalem to give Thierry a holy relic containing of a drop of Christ's blood in trade for me. He agreed and I was free.

Today Abbess Iovetta and I sat beside Melisande's body until the servants cleaned and dressed her for burial. Then we walked along the wall with the view east over the village of Bethany and the fig and pomegranate trees spreading down the hillside. The bells calling us to prayer cascaded all around us like a silvery rain.

Roger de Montgomery

Born 1022, St Germaine, Normandy

Died 1094, Shrewsbury, England

I, Roger, who they call Montgomery, was raised to be a loyal knight. I was eager to become lord of my home of St Germaine and ride off to fight in battles. But that all changed when I was 14 and met William. He was just 8 years old and the bastard son of Robert, Duke of Normandy. The courtyard was filled with boys holding wooden practice swords. I was new to the court and hung back to observe. William was the smallest but had the loudest voice. He was directing the group into armies ready to assault each other. He spied me standing by the wall. "You there," he roared, "I have need of your strong arm beside me." As if in a trance, I ran to stand beside him, and never left.

Some say I was the mind behind the invasion of England in 1066. I laugh whenever that old story comes up. I could never have conceived of such a massive effort. It was all William from beginning to end. I was the loyal one, William always said. That was why he pulled me aside on the eve of the invasion and ordered me to stay in Normandy. He needed a strong knight to serve as co-regent with his wife Matilda. I was disappointed to miss the first invasion on the beaches of England. I longed to be beside him when we advanced on the English. I had already supplied 60 ships, built from scratch. We planned to fly Pope Alexander's banner, proving that our invasion was blessed by God and the church. But again I was surprised by his trust of me. Of course my lord, I said. My time would come we knew.

Of course you know what happened. Many had tried to conquer England. William succeeded. Harold Godwinson, that usurper, was killed during the Battle of Hastings and William was crowned King. The following year William brought me to England. For my loyalty he awarded me the whole of Shropshire County, the Earldom of Shrewsbury and more land along the coast of Sussex to serve as security. Over the next few years I fought against the remnants of English nobles who tried to stop us. After each battle, I let loose my knights and nobles to plunder villages and castles for their pay. I became one of the wealthiest men in England.

The Bible states Thou shalt not kill. But the Church decreed that war is permitted as long as the cause is morally just and the soldiers fight correctly. It was right to invade England. Edward the confessor, king before Harold, had named William as his rightful heir. Harold's death and failure to defend England reveals this truth. But just in case, William and his loyal followers pledged to build churches and abbeys on our lands as penance.

For my part, on the advice of my chaplain, I built the Abbey of St Peter and St Paul in Shrewsbury. It is on the site of the old Saxon Church of St Peter. But my brother in arms and lord King William also made such amends for the blood he shed. Before his death he distributed his vast treasure to the poor and the churches in Normandy. He even released all the prisoners in his custody since he was crowned King. But all these atonements did not assure him a noble death. I regret not being in Normandy with him when he died. I would have rid the place of all the scavengers who ransacked his castle, stole every stitch of his clothes and left him naked on the floor.

The penitential ordinances instituted by Duke William will not accomplish enough for me. One years penance for each man killed, forty days for wounding a man. I have done egregious things to men in war. I can't count the number I have killed or have ordered other men to kill. Even so, I do not regret being at William's side through the conquest and installation of him as the rightful King of England.

I have just returned from Wales where I completed building another castle. On the way home I fell sick. I fear that my death is near. My son Everard begs me to clear my conscience before god, else I will languish in purgatory. I will do better than that. I will enter the monastery and put my life into His hands.

Ragnhilde Hrolfsdottir 850-915 Norway, Orkney

When does a story begin? And how many stories can a life contain? The wheel behind me whirls like time itself. I, Ragnhilde Hrolfsdottir, grew up with the waves in my ears and that has followed me from one story to the next. We lived in Norway on a small farm between two cliffs. I watched my sisters flirt and laugh with the men who came to our farm. I did not. It was only when I roamed the cliffs looking for healing plants and feeling the movement of the stars and moon that I was not lonely. My mother noticed and sent me out often. Without her I would have been lost. I hold these branches of holly leaves and berries as a remembrance.

I didn't object when my father arranged a marriage with Rognvald Eyesteinsson. Marriage was to be expected. But my husband was a younger son with no prospects of land and we lived in his father's house. It was busy and my life was filled with cooking, cleaning, weaving, sewing, and childbirth. Rognvald was gone often, fighting with Harold Fairhair to unite Norway.

My story is hidden from history, overlaid with men's lives and concerns. So what I tell you may be surprising. It was not enough to sit waiting at home, listening to tales from Vikings who had traveled far away. They described places with wealth and abundant land for farming. I wanted to follow them and settle far away from the squabbling over limited land and opportunities here. Mostly I wanted to be free.

In time Harald Fairhair became King of Norway and as is customary, awarded his warriors with land and titles. Rognvald was given Earldoms of More, an area in central Norway, and Orkney, a group of islands just north of Scotland. But when Rognvald told me that he planned to refuse Orkney, I was horrified. My chance to fly might never come again. I cried out to him to not be so hasty. He **must** accept this honor and go there as if he plans to rule it. But then he must give Orkney to his brother Sigurd to rule along with me, the mother of his first-born son. Sigurd was only interested in raiding and his wife was meek and would not challenge me.

I used the last of my bride price to build a small fleet of five ships. We carried warriors loyal to Rognvald and Sigurd, and freemen wanting to farm on new land. I also made sure we brought cattle and sheep. Plus a number of thralls sitting at the oars of each ship.

The voyage to Orkney was long and wet. On the afternoon of the second day, the low islands finally came into view. I had never seen such flat land before. We sailed by a

stone tower on a small island. Sometimes monks had treasures to take, but that pile of stones didn't look worth plundering right away. We would return later.

Our first destination was a settlement to the west. As we entered the bay, cries of the Pictish people on the shore carried over the water. They knew our warriors would quickly overcome them. They would be lucky to survive as thralls. Most would be traded as slaves. And so it was. By the time my ship struck land, most of the Picts were rounded up. On the shore lay the dead, mostly men, their arms and heads hacked off.

I did not expect so many Picts to be here. There must have been over a hundred before our attack. For a moment I felt doubt. What kind of people were they? I brushed those thoughts aside. It did not matter. They had little of the gold and treasure we were after. But they had land and that was now ours.

I pointed to two people off to the side, a young woman clutching a small child against her skirts, and a man next to her. I was not completely heartless. I would keep these for my personal servants. I waved my hand. The rest can be removed. I turned my head and blocked out the cries. My warriors Thorir and Ivar fastened metal collars around their necks. This was how life was. We needed better land to settle and these islands were an ideal base for making raiding voyages to Scotland and Ireland.

As agreed, Rognvald my husband departed a month later back to Norway and his concubines. Sigurd took over the earldom of Orkney with me as housekeeper. He died soon after on a raid to the south.

The darkness has deepened. All I hear are the cows shuffling in their barn and waves lapping on the shore. I keep remembering and turning.

Durst 300-250 BCE central Europe

Giobniu [GOY-neeoo] oh strong one
Bless this forge and the fire within
Bless this hammer and its force
Bless this day and the work to do
I offer up my hands and heart
So you can guide my creations for the good of the people

I say this blessing and burn herbs on the altar every morning before beginning work, as did my father. He would not miss it even when he was too sick to raise himself out of his furs. We must remind Giobniu [GOY-neeoo] of our gratefulness. He works through our hands to create the metal objects the chieftain and warriors demand of us. Brooches, rings, bracelets, necklaces, harnesses, coins, armor, swords. They all ensure the balance of our tribe and our place in the world.

Today I oversaw the annual sacrifice at the mine. There was no way to avoid it. *We must have more gold.* My head slave had already chosen the victim, an older man not needed in his family anymore. He lay drugged and unconscious on the flat stone by the river. His family stood alongside him, proud to offer this gift to the tribe. The priest first struck his head with a stone, then tightened the thin rope around his neck to garret him, and with help from the family, lowered him into the river. Three deaths for the three phases of life.

My earliest memories were the heat of the forge and the clanging of hammers. Watching my father shape the metal into beautiful swords, jewelry, and horse harnesses. They were essential to honor our tribe and give our warriors the strength to win battles. I thought my father all-powerful. I wanted that, too. I wanted to contribute to the tribe and serve my chief and his warriors. I could not imagine any other path.

That changed the night I sneaked into the chieftain's lodge during a feast. I was a young boy and should not have been there at all, but I was curious. I hid behind an amphora of wine. I will never forget the circle of warriors sitting on the floor around the fire with their reddened faces. Slaves scurrying around with planks of roast pig and cattle. Around the walls hung heads, some still fresh from combat and others dried and shrunken. Some of the men were slumped over already from the wine. The rest vied with each other to tell the best story. Then I saw my father approach the chieftain on the far side. The warriors still conscious fell silent and all eyes were

on my father. The chieftain raised his sword and we could all see that it had broken off halfway down the blade.

He called out, "See this sword, my warriors. Our honor was injured this day when my sword broke."

Then he stood and held the jagged tip under my father's chin.

He called out even louder. "We cannot tolerate this. Our weapons are the best in the world. Even the Greeks and Romans say so though they think us barbarians. In exchange for this broken sword, I demand a new one and one for each of my warriors here."

My father lowered his head and nodded. Of course, that shall be done.

Then my foot slipped and all eyes looked toward my corner. I scrambled to the door and was gone before my father could get to me. But I heard the laughter all the way back to our lodge.

That was the night I knew we were not free and our survival depended on pleasing the chief. The entire household witnessed my whipping. My father saw to that. Forever after, each time I looked at my father, I saw dishonor in his face.

I don't like sacrificing humans. I do it because I can't risk not having enough silver and gold. I dislike seeing the miners die for the sake of the warriors who do not even acknowledge their existence. How could the chief trade away our beautiful metalwork that took many months of labor and death for wine? That wine will disappear down the gullets of the warriors in a night's time. Does he not realize what he is doing? I know that he is trapped also and needs to keep his warriors happy.

The only time I feel content is when I stand by the heat of the forge. I let the metal form itself into designs that show the movement of water and wind and plants. Everything I do is for those moments. Sometimes I wonder what would have happened if I had not gone into the lodge that night.

Anne Mavor

1952-

Maryland, Massachusetts, Los Angeles, Oregon

Hi, my name is Anne Mavor and I am going to try and be honest about my life. This is my art studio, a huge garage remodeled to my specifications. It has high ceilings, skylights, large windows and tall French doors for even more light. I insist on the best.

I have never fully supported myself. I mostly live on inherited wealth from my maternal grandfather. He spent his life investing in the stock market so that his descendants would never have to worry about money. It didn't work. I worry about money constantly. Each time my husband gives away money, I am gripped with terror. But if there is something I want, I will buy it. My weaknesses are alternative health care, travel, my art studio, and giant projects like the one you are looking at.

It makes no sense, I know. How is it that a person who has sufficient money, education, friends, and intelligence can walk around feeling so incompetent and scared? Well, it started early. Mum liked to brag that I slept through the night at two weeks old. She brought this up every time the conversation veered into child-raising as if this made her a good mother. Ironically Mum didn't have anything to do with this feat. Like so many women of her social set, Mum hired a nurse who specialized in very early sleep training. Rosalind kept Mum out of the nursery so she could "make baby Anne comfortable." I know what she was really doing. She was leaning over the crib bars hissing in my ear, "I don't want to hear a peep out of you." I got the message. I wonder if this was the beginning of my stuttering.

On the other hand, I was born to the most interesting and best family that ever existed. At least that was what they told me. All other people were to be pitied and sometimes helped. They were not the same as us. Even though I did have friends who were working class, deep down I wondered if that was really ok.

When Mum was in graduate school trying to be an art teacher my brother and sister and I spent time at the Handys. They were a large family squashed into a small house. Mrs Handy baked cookies to sell and did other small jobs. I loved going there since there was so much laughter and wonder of wonders, powdered milk. Dinners were noisy with all the children vying with each other to talk. Quite a contrast to our near silent meals at home. Sometimes I also spent the night in a trundle bed next to my friend Debby, one of the Handy kids. We talked about boys for hours. I had never had a friend like that before. I learned many years later that my mother paid

for us to stay there. Did they even like me or was it all about the money? I'll never know.

The obliviousness continued. In my senior year of boarding school, I invited my roommate Denise, who was African American, to Thanksgiving at our house. I was crushed when Mum said I had to disinvite her. So I blurted out, "you can't come for Thanksgiving because my grandmother is from the south." Would it have been better to make up another reason? I didn't even consider standing up to my family. But I brushed it off, thinking, She must be used to this. I think Denise started to give up on me then. Losing her is one of my biggest regrets.

I got my first real job when I was 28. It was in the production department of a newspaper in Los Angeles. After 5 years I was finally promoted to Art director. But really I felt out of my league and compensated with arrogance. When a sales rep told me to accept an ad after the deadline, I was outraged. Being in charge was my birthright. How dare he tell me what to do? I stalked into the salesroom, picked up a random stack of newspapers and hit him over the head. They fired me, which I just took as a sign to work on my art career more seriously. It helped that Mum had just sent me a check for \$10,000. If I wasn't trying to be honest, I would lie a little and say I worked as a freelance graphic designer after that. It was partly true. I just didn't support myself on it.

It wasn't until I was 41 that I began to understand. I was at a workshop for women artists in Huntington Beach, California. The leader started talking about how our class backgrounds affect us as artists. She described four classes: raised poor, working class, middle class, and owning class. Then she asked a woman from each class to share what was good about her background and what was hard. I sat with my mouth open, riveted. For the first time I realized that working class and poor people knew things about connection and working that I had no idea about. I learned that as an owning class person I had opportunities for education and travel, but was left alone and isolated.

Nowadays I am less ignorant. I know that my family was not the best in the world and what they taught me was not always accurate. But I still act like that I don't have to pull my own weight. I live in an intentional community that has nine required work hours per month. That's not much but it's like torture for me. I hate weeding and cleaning, the most common tasks. But I force myself to join in. It's like when I fly. I am always glad to be in coach. The people in first class look so alone sitting there with their drinks while the rest of us file by. I prefer to sit so close to other

people we share an armrest. And I don't mind waiting in line for the restroom. I feel included.