

1953-1983

30th Commemorative Year Edition

POEMS AND SONGS FOR
ETHEL AND JULIUS
ROSENBERG

by
EDITH SEGAL



Hugo Gellert



Steve Drum

1953-1983

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ROSENBERG**

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GIVE US YOUR HAND, *Poems & Songs for Ethel & Julius
Rosenberg in the Death House at Sing Sing.*

I CALL TO YOU ACROSS THE CONTINENT for
MORTON SOBELL *in Alcatraz.*

POEMS IN MEMORY of *ETHEL and JULIUS
ROSENBERG.*

*Drawings by
Hugo Gellert (Cover)
Samuel Kamen (portrait of Morton Sobell)
Pablo Picasso (back cover)*

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Also by Edith Segal

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PREFACE

AARON KATZ, *Director of the National Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg Case.*

“Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were the first Americans to be executed in America’s peace-time history as ‘spies or conspirators.’ That they were also *the last such victims* is a tribute to their courage and dignity in maintaining their innocence to the very end, instead of accepting the government’s offer to spare their lives in return for (false) confessions of guilt. (They knew this would be used by the FBI to justify its proposed terror and jailing of Communists, leftists and anti-war dissidents.) It is also a tribute to the various Rosenberg and Sobell Committees and to millions of protesters determined to expose the FBI-prosecution violations and to establish the innocence of the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell.”

WALTER and MIRIAM SCHNEIR, *Authors of INVITATION TO AN INQUEST, referring to HAROLD C. UREY and ALBERT EINSTEIN:*

“In January, also, the campaign for clemency gained two of its most important adherents: Nobelists Harold Urey and Albert Einstein. While other politically liberal notables in the United States had previously deplored the death sentences, Urey’s stand was unique in that he expressed serious reservations regarding the Rosenbergs’ guilt. “After reading the testimony of the Rosenberg case,” he wrote in a letter to the TIMES, “I find that I cannot put to rest my doubts about the verdict . . .” He had, he said, “found the Rosenbergs’ testimony more believable than that of the Greenglasses.” Shortly afterward, Einstein publicly announced that he had written the President requesting him to commute the death sentences for “the same reasons which were set forth so convincingly by my distinguished colleague, Harold C. Urey.”

See Urey letter to N.Y. TIMES 1.8.53 and Einstein’s letter 1.13.53.

Foreword to 1st Edition (1952) of *Give Us Your Hand*.

THE struggle to save the lives of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg reflects the universal humanitarian response at the plight of two individuals. It is an expression of genuine self-concern on the part of millions who know that the terror now stalking these two innocent people is a threat to the lives and liberties of all. A tremendous number of people, including leading scientists, lawyers, and jurists, have raised serious questions about the facts of the case and the judicial procedure involved. If, in the face of these questions, the Rosenbergs are executed by a vengeful state, no individual will be safe from unjust persecution.

* * *

IN the course of this struggle, the poems and songs of Edith Segal have been a beacon of inspiration and hope in the tradition of Emile Zola. To writers and artists she has given a brilliant example of the way to voice the deep-felt prayers of millions. To those who have marched on picket-lines and climbed endless flights of stairs in search of justice and truth, these lines of word and song have captured the burning emotions of the heart and mind. And to the two people now in Sing Sing's Death House, these poems echo the strength and compassion of an enraged world which will write the final song of justice triumphant to the case of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

People's Artists

Dear Ethel and Julius Rosenberg:

It is 5 a.m., April 6th, 1953. You are locked in your cells, asleep — or trying to sleep.

We have never met. Yet today, as for many months, you have been with me as with countless new friends, far into the inspired night.

Now in the seemingly quiet hour that welcomes another dawn, this little book stands ready for the printer. He will multiply it many times.

For its message we will find new ears, new hearts, new hands to hurry for you and Morton Sobell the dawn which will open the gates for your home-coming, and to peace for all of us.

Edith Segal

PART I

GIVE US YOUR HAND

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, accused of conspiracy to commit espionage, were executed June 19, 1953. It was the time of the undeclared Korean War abroad, and the time of McCarthy hysteria at home. This poem first appeared in *Masses and Mainstream* as part of the world-wide campaign to save their lives.

Tonight
as you quietly draw the curtain
on the day's activity
and reclining
contemplate the fertile promise
of unborn time
imagine
you
are Ethel or Julius Rosenberg
in the Death House at Sing Sing:

The dimness is a fog your eyes defy
Sleep is a luxury long lost . . .
Time being treasured,
measured by the hurrying steps of death—
even napping is a thief

Suddenly there's light in your cell,
in the prison block,
in the house on Monroe Street
where you lived with your children
in the narrow streets
of New York's lower east side—your city,
light
in every city in the land
in the assembly halls in all the schools,
your school, P.S. 88
where you stood with your hand upon your heart
as you faced the flag and said the words

that were to give your life direction:

With Liberty and Justice for All

Now

you stand at the bars of your cell
with your hands cupped wide at your mouth
and shout to the world at the top of your lungs:

If you sleep while they kill *us*
will they kill *you* while you sleep?

*If you ever breathed too deeply
the air of brotherhood,
clasped black and white hands
in your neighborhood*

*or gave a dime
for democratic Spain*

*or signed your name
to nominate your choice—
a voice for peace*

will they kill *you* while you sleep
if you sleep while they kill *us*?

We yearn to live and see our children grow
but if we burn, part of them
and part of you will turn to dust
and death will haunt our home, our land

Give us your hand!

Let us stand in the sunlight
when the wind is still
and the din of war subsides into the sea

and scales are righted
and our worth declared to be
among the living
to mold the fertile promise
of unborn time

Time!

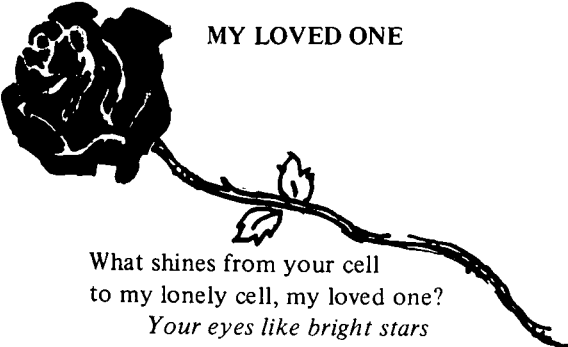
Tomorrow they die

Unless we make their cry a warning:

Death is in our land!

GIVE US YOUR HAND!

MY LOVED ONE



What shines from your cell
to my lonely cell, my loved one?

*Your eyes like bright stars
shining through prison bars,
your eyes like bright stars, my loved one.*

Oh if I could bring
oh what would I bring my loved one?

*I'd bring a red rose
and my heart I'd enclose,
I'd bring a red rose, my loved one.*

And if I could speak
oh what would I say, my loved one?

*I'd say "I love you,
our love's old, our love's new,"
I'd say "I love you," my loved one.*

And if we could sing
of what would we sing, my loved one?

*We'd sing of the light
that comes out of dark night,
We'd sing of the light, my loved one.*

Will our children laugh,
will we hear them laugh, my loved one?

*We know it will be
for the people and we
will fight till we're free, my loved one.*

MY LOVED ONE

For ETHEL AND JULIUS ROSENBERG

Poem and Music by
EDITH SEGAL

With dignity

F Am Bb6 C7

What shines from your cell to my lone - ly cell, my

F C7 Dm C

loved one? What shines from your cell to

F Am C7

my lone - ly cell, my loved one? Your

Bb F Last time to Coda Am C9

eyes like bright stars shin - ing through pri - son bars, Your

Bb F G7 C7 F CODA Am C7

eyes like bright stars, my loved one. peo - ple and we will

Bb F G7 C7 F

fight till we're free, My loved one.

Mon Seul Amour

(From *Les Lettres Françaises*, Paris, January, 1953)

*“... Plus haut que la démesure monte le chant raisonnable des hommes. Il est là, émouvant et tendre, dans cette chanson d'une Américaine, Edith Segal, MY LOVED ONE, dédiée à Ethel et Julius Rosenberg, “pour la pureté et la dignité de leur amour.”**

Oh! si je pouvais donner
Que donnerais-je à mon seul amour?
Je donnerais un rose rouge
Dans mon coeur je l'enfermerais
Pour la donner à mon seul amour.

Oh! si je pouvais chanter
Que chanterais-je à mon seul amour?
Je chanterais la lumière
Qui jaillit de la nuit noire
Je chanterais la lumière, mon seul amour.

Nos enfants riront-ils?
Les entendrons-nous rire, mon seul amour.
Nous savons, que oui
Car le peuple et nous-mêmes
Combattons jusqu'à la liberté, mon seul amour.

* *Translation:* The reasonable chant of mankind mounts immeasurably. Moving and tender, it is here in this song by an American, Edith Segal, dedicated to Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, “for the purity and dignity of their love.”

The Conscience Of Our Time

Innocent
must they die

or

must they lie
to live

falsely naming other names
for death

and living thus
not live at all?

Oh mortal man
and mortal woman!

with your love
and with your vision
making the supreme decision!

From the death house
moving the universe
to reverse this crime

Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
You
are the conscience of our time!

Valentine Vigil

Valentine's Day

February 14, 1952

Washington, D. C.

A vigil for lovers
 Whose love includes others,
A vigil for lovers
 On Valentine's Day

For husband and wife
 Who love truth, who love life,
A vigil for lovers
 On Valentine's Day

For mother and dad
 Of two lads, young and sad,
A vigil for lovers
 On Valentine's Day

For life, for humanity
 Chanting for clemency,
A vigil for lovers
 On Valentine's Day

The Power To Hope

"Mr. Bloch, I do not think any purpose would be served by further delay of the date of execution except to increase the mental anguish of the defendants, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, and possibly to raise false hopes for them."

Judge Kaufman, February 13, 1953

How shallow your heart?
How deep your blinding hate!
You ask, O servile Judge,
 "What purpose would it serve
 now to delay the date?"

What sets man apart from animal
If not the power to hope, to feel,
The thing we call the human heart?

You sniff for their hurried death
You snarl at their mounting hope

 The world's good people
 build it high,
 The Pope renews
 his strangely buried cry.

We seek to spare them even one faint sigh
One needless tear
Their eyes have been wept dry.
Two lives, two hearts we mean to spare,

Armed with our dream
We hurry forth to dare!

Two In Death Row

How many names
does it take
to shame our land?

two
in death row
at Sing Sing

How many crimes
does it take
to shake our land?

two
in death row
at Sing Sing

How many voices
does it take
to wake the world?

two
in death row
at Sing Sing

How many hands
does it take
to span the world?

two
and four
and millions more

for
two
in death row
at Sing Sing

A Daily Question

Everyday
I pass that way—
Saks' evening gown display

What are you wearing today
Ethel Rosenberg,
That same old prison grey?

Menu

On the Rosenberg Train
from Washington
someone sighed:

Oh for a juicy steak
with onions and french fried

What was your dish tonight,
Ethel and Julius,

served with death
on the side?

Chant For Life

The President's in the White House
Behind the iron gate,
The Clemency Vigil circles round
Early and late.

The Judge is in the Court House
In haste to set the date,
The Clemency Vigil circles round
Early and late.

He's ready at the switches,
The killer in robes of State,
The Clemency Vigil circles round
Early and late.

The Rosenbergs in the Death House,
Oh what will be their fate?
The Clemency Vigil circles round
Early and late.

The People in their homelands
Watch the White House gate,
The Clemency Vigil circles round
Early and late.

For Helen Sobell

Your voice
subdued
in penetrating challenge
chills the blood
and wakens the sleeping heart:

*I have thirty years
to fight for my husband
but we have only days
to save the Rosenbergs*

You tower
above the crude,
the legal lies

Your clear brown eyes
envision the longed-for day

the reunion of lovers
of families
of children at play
with childhood ease

Sing Sing to Alcatraz
the span is long

but the Rosenbergs
and Mort Sobell
shall hear our song
which you have given depth
and soaring overtone

and he
and they
shall sing with us

Nightmare

I awoke in fright
out of the fevered night

*It was done
and they were dead!*

Staring blindly in the dark
confusion pounding at my heart

*I could have done much more
than I had done*

Trembling, I raised the blind
only to find

*Dark buildings
quiet as death*

Good people of the world now mourn
shame to our land and scorn!

*Suddenly the dawn
Brought sanity and speeding time!*

Emergency Memo

Electrocutioner's double pleasure
We must deny in double measure
Historic role placed in our hand
 Transform the current in our land
 Erect new poles, extend the line
 Direct from your town and from mine

To

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER
WASHINGTON, D. C.

RECALL DEATH SENTENCE!
GRANT CLEMENCY!

For Lovers

When two who love
are barred from their embrace

When the face, the eyes
wear the disguise of patience

and the yearning is slated
to find release in burning

Can we who love
be free?

Take Your Place

*“Little children sweet and gay,
Carousel is running
Hurry, hurry, take your place
Or you’ll surely be too late.”*
Children’s Singing Game

Endlessly circling
the near-White House pavement

The heart-beat of history
heard in our tread

Firmly grasping
our Rosenberg placards

We challenge the windstorm,
the Washington night

Across our proud chests
hang banners of cardboard

marked with the hope
of two innocent lives

resounding through factories
government chambers,
kitchens, farms, schools,
houses of prayer

through Africa, Asia,
Europe, Australia,
South America,
back to Times Square

Stronger the heart-beat
Our circle expanding

Standing in dignity
Mankind responds!

THREE POEMS FOR ROBERT and MICHAEL ROSENBERG

Some Day

Some day
to Dave Greenglass
we'll say:

“Uncle,
why did you lie that way?”

A Man Called Manny

There is a man called Manny,
We love to hold his hand
And tell him everything we feel
Because he'll understand.

Manny Bloch's a very great lawyer
But guess what he is even more!
The most wonderful friend we have in the world,
Though we didn't know him before.

Manny takes us to Sing Sing
To see our pop and mom
And that's the best of all the things —
Except if they'd come home.

Kids Grow Fast

When your mother and dad
are taken away

When you cry in the night
for yesterday

kids grow fast

When they call your parents
A-Bomb Spies

When you know they're telling
crazy lies

When they stare at you
with mean old eyes

kids grow fast

When the papers say
ROSENBERGS TO DIE

When you visit the jail
and try not to cry

kids grow fast

When millions of people
suddenly care

And write to the President
from everywhere

To save Mom and Dad
from the electric chair

kids grow fast





DREAMING OF WALTZING

I'm dreaming of waltzing, darling,
Just as we used to do,
Gliding and gently swaying,
Whisp'ring sweet words to you.
We step from our cells, they vanish,
With the magic of truth, we're away
Waltzing down the dim halls
Past the high prison walls
And into the light of day.

Remember our wedding party,
We danced for the family,
Joyously all applauded,
They said we'd live happily.
Again in your arms, you hold me,
The shadow of death torn away,
Waltzing down the dim halls
Past the high prison walls
And into the light of day.

Our children are waiting for us,
Like flow'rs in the sun they stand,
Their faith in us now rewarded,
Clapping their little hands.
The people who fought for justice,
Who saved us from death, we embrace,
Arm in arm we go forth,
Holding our sons aloft,
Building peace in the new life we face.

En hommage à Julius et Ethel ROSENBERG dans la prison de mort de Sing-Sing.

JE RÊVE À DES VALSES

**Adaptation française de
Henri-Jacques DUPUY**

**Paroles anglaises et
Musique de Edith SEGAL**

1.

Je rêve à des valse tendres
À nos valse d'autre fois
Quand je pouvais te prendre
Dans le creux de mes bras.
Un pas hors de nos cellule
Par ma gie, nous voici dans les rue!
Les mur ont disparu,
Nous valsons mon amour,
Nous allons vers la clarté du jour.

2.

Je rêve à notre mariage
Quand nous valsons tous les deux,
Je voyais ton visage
Et son sourire heureux.
Combien chères ces image
Quand la mort est si proche de nous,
Oublions les verrous,
Nous valsons, mon amour,
Nous allons vers la clarté du jour.

3.

Je rêve au jour de justice
Où nos grille s'ouvriront:
Fini l'affreux supplice!
Nos fils vers nous courent,
Enfants, vos parent reviennent,
Le front haut, fiers d'avoir triomphé.
Merci à tous les homme
Qui nous ont délivrés:
Nous avons combattu pour la Paix!

Dreaming of Waltzing

Words and Music by Edith Segal

I'm dream - ing of waltz - ing,
dar - ling, Just as we
used to do, Glid - ing and
gent - ly sway - ing,
Whisp' - ring sweet words to you.
We step from our cells, they
van - ish, With the ma - gic of
truth, we're a - way, Waltz - ing
down the dim halls, past the
high pri - son walls, And in - to the
light of day.



Morton Sobell was accused, with Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, of conspiracy to commit espionage. The Rosenbergs were executed June 19th, 1953. Sobell was sentenced to thirty years.

PART II

I CALL TO YOU ACROSS THE CONTINENT

for Morton Sobell in Alcatraz

Foreword to 1st Edition (1953) of I Call To You Across The Continent.

So many sighs, so many tears, so many hopes went into the cry for the lives for Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, so many more are needed to free Morton Sobell from the living death of thirty years in Alcatraz. It has become a way of life ingrained into the minds and hearts of millions of people to remember the death of the Rosenbergs and their sacrifice upon a political altar of fear and hysteria. To these millions the scientist in Alcatraz is the living symbol of the terror, the lawlessness, and the vindictiveness of those who must have conformity regardless of human life or principle.

In this way of life led by Ethel and Julius Rosenberg and Morton Sobell who steadfastly refused to buy their lives with lies, who held tightly to the truth of their innocence, there is the need for every type of expression. As the heart of the world protests inhumanity it distills its pain into the song of music and the song of words. The poet who is attuned to this music and plays it back to us so that we too can become part of a whole strengthens and ennobles us. Such a poet is Edith Segal. My respect, my thanks and my admiration for this addition to the literature of living.

Helen Sobell

I CALL TO YOU ACROSS THE CONTINENT

For Morton Sobell

"If you do not believe Max Elitcher, you must acquit Morton Sobell."

Judge Irving Kaufman

On the wave-swept rock that is Alcatraz,
grave of the branded, forgotten,

I stand chained
by the word of one creature (once man)

Sped across the continent in darkness
Torn from the eyes of my children.

I look back beyond the Rockies, the Mississippi,
the Ohio, the Alleghenies, the Hudson—

(What does the Hudson mean to you?)

To me it once meant Palisades—
an all day ride on the River Line

now it means The Rosenbergs—
Death House on the Hudson)

I look back—

I see fields and factories
adorned with the harvest of labor

I see mansions
I see windowless shacks

I see the engineers of destruction
hurriedly scanning maps

for concentration camps
to thwart left dissidents

From Boyle Heights in Los Angeles
to New York's lower East Side
(where the Rosenbergs lived)

I see the tenement sleepers

dreaming simple dreams
Peace for their babies

dreaming as I dreamed
Peace for my babies

dreaming as the Rosenbergs dreamed
Peace for their babies

The Pacific is not calm tonight
and has not been for many a hundred nights

By the word of one creature
I stand chained

tossed by the icy waters of loneliness

harassed by tales of adultery
(Private Vintage F.B.I.)

taunted by memories of family laughter—

the baby saying his first word
which only we could understand

I lift my eyes to the slow-rising sun
and reach out to touch my loved ones

Thirty years to stand on this rock
Thirty years to be taunted and tossed
Thirty years to reach out and not touch

How long will you kiss your baby good-night?
How long will he smile in his sleep?
How long will your home be a castle of dreams?

Do you hear a strange knock at your door?

From the rock that is Alcatraz

I call to you as you read your morning paper

(mine has been halted
and there are no newsboys here
yet I remember the turbulent morning paper)

I call to you

across the roaring waves of hysteria
through the blinding fog of fear
through the lightning that killed the Rosenbergs

Do you hear me?

*Does the engineered storm
Hide the vultures
Carving America's heart?
Will they bleed her cold as Alcatraz,
Brand her a dreamer's grave?*

As you bless your sleeping child, O friend,
with peace and a parent's kiss,

remember mine
and the Rosenberg boys,

Lift your eyes towards Alcatraz.

Will the word of one creature
chain you

to reach for thirty years?
for thirty years not to touch?
forgotten for thirty years?

*Do you hear me, America, the beautiful
America, the people of peace?*

Let our reaching hands touch

Across the continent

I call to you!

THIRTY YEARS

Thirty years, a time for living,
Thirty years, a time to die,
Thirty years, the judge pronounced it,
Innocent, I swear, am I!

Thirty years, my life, my manhood,
seized, uprooted, cast away
by the mighty robed in falsehood,
by the bigots of the day.

Listen all who walk in freedom,
Listen all who treasure time,
Listen all who've tasted terror:
what is justice, what is crime?
Shall I languish here forgotten
on the perjured word of one
Or will valiant men and women
cry for justice to be done?

Ten gone years lie cold and fallow,
twenty more? It cannot be!
Voices rise and high walls crumble,
days of home again I see!
I'll return to you dear children,
brave, sweet mother, sterling wife,
We will welcome Spring together,
we'll retrieve our stolen life.

Oh to walk among the people,
clasp their hands, their faces see
in the sunlight, working, singing,
soon, oh soon I must be free!
Oh to walk among the people,
clasp their hands, their faces see,
Voices rise and high walls crumble,
days of home again I see,
Soon, oh soon I must be free!

THIRTY YEARS

For MORTON SOBELL

Poem and Music by
EDITH SEGAL

Slow, with dignity

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 2/4 time. It begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Slow, with dignity'. The score consists of seven lines of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics. Chord symbols are placed above the staff to indicate the harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'Thir - ty years, a time for liv - ing, Thir - ty years, a time to die, Thir - ty years, the judge pro - nounced it, In - no - cent, I swear, am I! Thir - ty years, my life my man - hood, Seized, up - root - ed, cast a - way By the might - y robed in false - hood, By the bi - gots of the day. see, Soon oh soon I must be free!'. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Above the final measure, there are two options for the ending: '1, 2, 3. Dm' and '4. Dm'.

Thir - ty years, a time for liv - ing, Thir - ty
years, a time to die, Thir - ty years, the judge pro -
nounced it, In - no - cent, I swear, am I! Thir - ty
years, my life my man - hood, Seized, up - root - ed, cast a -
way By the might - y robed in false - hood, By the
bi - gots of the day. see, Soon oh soon I must be free!

For the 50th Birthday of Morton Sobell, April 11, 1967

The Trumpet of a Prophecy for Morton Sobell

*“Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”*

from *Ode to the West Wind*
by Percy Bysshe Shelley

WINTER came
and winter came
and winter came.
Prison bars are cold.
How far behind is Spring?
Winter is old, old!

Green vines climb the high grey walls,
Reach beyond this living tomb;
Blossoms need not beg for birth,
Truth as well must bloom.

Seventeen winter years
have tried to freeze
this heart, this mind.
If truth should bloom
and bloom it must,
can what is left
of Spring
be far behind?

AN UNSENT LETTER *

*To Morton Sobell, No. 31408
Federal Penitentiary
Lewisburg, Pa.*

Long ago you too must have gone hiking
up the Palisades to Bear Mountain.
We went back the other day to retrace old trails
and dream young dreams.

At the mountain's peak, in bronze, stands Walt Whitman
silhouetted against the sky,
his *Song of the Open Road* carved in the rock below.
He seemed to be singing to you:

*"Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money.
I give you myself before preaching or law."*

Walt would have loved you, Mort.
He would have understood your longing
when you wrote from Alcatraz years ago:

*"If I could listen to a symphony once again
I would be willing to spend a week
in solitary confinement."*

We've never met, Mort. "Soon, soon" . . . all of us
to whom "*love is more precious than money, than law,*"
will join hands across the continent
and march towards the Hudson
and on towards that mountain.
As we hike along the river we'll come within sight
of the Death House at Sing Sing on the other side.

Written across the sky will be:

ETHEL AND JULIUS ROSENBERG JUNE 19, 1953

We'll chant Ethel's words written in that Death House
January 24th, 1953:

IF WE DIE

*You shall know, my sons, shall know
why we leave the song unsung,
the book unread, the work undone
to rest beneath the sod.*

*Mourn no more, my sons, no more—
why the lies and smears were framed,
the tears we shed, the hurt we bore
to all shall be proclaimed.*

*Earth shall smile, my sons. shall smile
and green above our resting place
the killing end, the world rejoice
in brotherhood and peace.*

*Work and build, my sons, and build
a monument to love and joy,
to human worth, to faith we kept
for you, my sons, for you.*

In silence we'll proceed. Walt Whitman will speak for us:

*"You road I enter upon and look around,
I believe you are not all that is here.
I believe that much unseen is also here."*

Time to close, Mort, time to work
to open *your* road to that mountain
remembering with humility and with wonder
the words you wrote on your *Season's Greeting Card*
which you sent from Lewisburg dated December 1967,
words written in the eighteenth year
of your cruel and unjust imprisonment:

*"Dear Edith, dear friends,
Hold on . . . soon, soon!"*

So long, Mort.
Yes, we'll hold on!

September 1958

**Sobell was allowed to receive letters only from those
designated by prison authorities.*



WELCOME HOME!

*For Morton Sobell **

We hurried to see, to hear, to meet
the man we'd known for eighteen years
as someone in some prison, in some cell.
We knew him well . . . as just a photograph,
a written word . . .
I'd never seen his face . . .
I'd never heard his voice. . . .

The faces of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
I saw . . . in death
as they lay in their open coffins
side by side . . .

The cry of people of every land
to stay the executioner,
the swelling cry of millions
two presidents defied!
They burned The Rosenbergs!

For eighteen years they tried to break Sobell:
seized at thirty-three
entombed in West Street, Alcatraz,
Atlanta, Springfield, Lewisburg—
he knows the taste of terror
he knows the treasure of time.

Morton stepped into freedom
into the arms of his Helen,
his children, his mother Rose!
The news wires carried his words
to his countrymen and to the world:

*"It is you
who saw beyond the fear-fogged fifties,
It is you
who believed our innocence,
It is you
who gave me life in timeless death . . . "*

At fifty-one he walks among us free . . .

His sentence—	30 years
Time stolen—	18
Parole—	12

free . . . but not full circle free.

Yes, we met him in the winter wind
with springtime flowers

We looked at each other and clasped hands . . .

*"You are part of us," I said . . .
"You are part of me," said he . . .*

January 1969

* Morton Sobell was released from the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pa., January 14, 1969. Among the world figures who appealed "to stay the executioner" were: President Vincent Auriol of France, Martin Buber, Pablo Casals, Queen Mother Elizabeth of Belgium, Pope Pius XII, Jean Paul Sartre, Nobel Prize Laureates Albert Einstein, Linus Pauling and Harold C. Urey.



Julius 10 from Michael A. Holly Rosenberg
Julius 10

**"History will record . . . that
we were victims of the most
monstrous frame-up of our
country. . . .**

**"We die with honor and dignity
—knowing we must be vindicated
by history."**

**Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
June 1953**

PART III
IN MEMORY OF ETHEL & JULIUS ROSENBERG

I SAW TWO BIRDS

I saw two birds take flight today
Side by side they flew
Into the storm clouds, on to the sun
Singing for me and you

A song so gentle, babes would smile,
A song so haunting it could beguile
 All but those whose hearts were stone,
 All but those to whom love was unknown,
A song for the singer without a song,
A song for the wounded whose night is long

Though they are gone beyond return
Their song is never done,
When storm clouds darken morning skies
Their song will bring the sun.

Dawn June 20, 1953

TWO ADDED JOLTS

A Rosenberg Chant

Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, accused of conspiracy to commit espionage, were executed June 19, 1953. It was the time of the undeclared Korean War abroad, the time of McCarthy hysteria at home.

"There must be no heart-beat at all."

Dr. H.W. Kipp of Sing Sing

We gave her three jolts
Yet a heart-beat I hear
Not the usual heart
Still beating, I fear

*there must be no heart-beat
no heart-beat
no heart-beat
there must be no heart-beat
no heart-beat
at all*

Two added jolts
Prison Doctor decreed
Two added jolts
Executioner agreed

*there must be no heart-beat
no heart-beat
no heart-beat
there must be no heart-beat
no heart-beat
at all*

Two years to name names
Yet none did we hear
Not the usual minds
Still resisting, it's clear

*there must be no heart-beat
no heart-beat
no heart-beat
there must be no heart-beat
no heart-beat
at all*

Two moments remain
Speak now or die!

*THEIR LIPS SEALED WITH INNOCENCE
DEATH THEY DEFY!*

*no heart-beat
. no heart-beat
.. no heart-beat
... no heart-beat
there....is... no heart-beat
..... no heart-beat
.....at all*

Hearts long asleep
have wakened today
with two added jolts

To the killers we say:

Our hearts beat with fury
with fury
with fury
**OUR HEARTS BEAT WITH FURY
WITH FURY
TODAY!**

THE SUPREME COURT RECONVENES

June 18th to hear Government argument for lifting of stay of execution granted Julius and Ethel Rosenberg by Justice Douglas June 17th, 1953.

*In sombre robes of black
you sit in high-backed seats*

Nine facing millions

whose tread you cannot tame
with floors well carpeted

whose eyes you cannot blind
with whiteness of your marble walls

Nine facing millions

who seek the justice
immortalized in your sculptured murals
of mankind's elders
who fought and fashioned honest scales of law

Our cause, complexed by recent strange discoveries
is just
and death must be detained

for justice proudly stands protected
by the hand of this high court

(we passionately desire so to believe
though history warns the young, naive:

*The people they have long betrayed
Upon their scales the truth cannot
be weighed*

Listen, world, two lives may quickly fade!

The honest voices are too few—
Black and Douglas, history will remember you

And you, Felix Frankfurter,*
seasoned long ago by Sacco and Vanzetti,
where was your voice for two long Rosenberg years?

Our fears are real
They mean to kill!

the rusty dagger inherited from our recent enemy
they've given a shiny coat
with proper democratic vote

remarkably direct its shadow falls
upon these stately walls

Oh pillars of whitest stone
now stained with innocent blood!

Oh mural of mankind's elders
covered with ash and dung!

We turn from you, oh hypocritical crew
to seek the truth among our own, the People,

Who will convene within these walls

*And judge with wisdom drawn from
Bitter days, for better days!*

*Felix Frankfurter *was there* all along, unbeknownst to the general public, fighting to persuade his Supreme Court colleagues including Justice Douglas, to review the case and prevent the execution. When all failed, and the die was cast with the

Supreme Court's overturning Justice Douglas' last stay, Frankfurter's protest became loud and public.

"To be writing an opinion in a case affecting two lives after the curtain has been rung down upon them has the appearance of pathetic futility. But history has its claims."

Justice Felix Frankfurter

Written three days after the execution of the Rosenbergs. (See *American Historical Review* October 1977 issue, Michael R. Parrish COLD WAR JUSTICE: THE SUPREME COURT AND ROSENBERGS.)

The other stalwart Rosenberg defender, Justice Hugo Black, also voted for review from the very beginning. On the day of the execution he bitterly protested: "It is not amiss to point out that this court has never reviewed this record and has never affirmed the fairness of the trial . . . there will always be doubts. . . ."

TO THE EXECUTIONERS OF THE ROSENBERGS

*"Several times he (Judge Kaufman) went to his synagogue seeking spiritual guidance."
N.Y. Times, April 6, 1951*

*"According to the press, Judge Kaufman announced that before passing sentence, he went to a synagogue to take counsel with his conscience and his God."
Jewish Examiner, March 4, 1952*

And it is said:

On the Sabbath
God draws aside the curtain
and observes his flock
and judges their earthly deeds
Which in His name they do perform

And it is said:

On the Sabbath
the innocent be not accused
False witness be not heard
Death be not administered
Which in His name they do perform

Therefore you did hasten

to stay the setting sun
to stay the Sabbath moon
to stay God's judgment of your crime
Which in His name you did perform

And be it said:

On the nineteenth of June
in the year one thousand nine hundred fifty-three
God's Sabbath was serene
Yet your crime went not unheeded
Which in His name you did perform

For be it said:

The Sabbath of the People is each day
The Justice of the People is each day
The Judgment of the People is each day
Which in Their name **THEY WILL PERFORM!**

I SEE, I HEAR, I SPEAK
THE ROSENBERGS

Whatever I see
I see The Rosenbergs

lying in their coffins
side by side
lying in their coffins
groom and bride
a veil of white
upon her youthful face
their dignity
no torture could erase

Whatever I hear
I hear The Rosenbergs

"Take my hand, dear Ethel,"
"Take my hand, dear Julius,"
"We have sealed our marriage vow
with our last breath
We have loved
and we have honored until death."

Whatever I speak
I speak The Rosenbergs

I answer to the question
"How are you?"
"I live
yet The Rosenbergs are dead!"

A million times a day
it must be said
till out of the shroud of shame
America awakes to vindicate their name!

LET'S MAKE BELIEVE

Let's make believe
that we could make them live—

sit and chat
this soft June night
like neighbors often do

* * *

Good evening Ethel and Julius
How are you?

*Good to be back
to breathe in and out*

*see our city
and the faces of friends*

*kiss the kids
and hear them laugh—*

*and how are you,
what's new?*

Oh, we're the same—
day in, day out

work when there's work
eat when there's eats

coffee's gone up
to over a buck

fare's fifteen
did you know?

That's so?

high prices—
talk of war

They blamed you
for the Korean mess

Yes,
Judge Kaufman's fantasy.

He called you *spies*.

Lies!

We were innocent.

When we were kids
we used to shout:

*Sticks and stones
Can break your bones
But names can never
Harm you*

Disagree with that guy Joe,
Joe McCarthy
they call your *red*

It's just a year
since you've been...

What's that you said?

Just thinking—
Korea
This Indochina thing
sounds the same.

They'll have to find
another pair to name
another pair to blame
They'll try

We refused to lie

Instead you chose to...

*We live
in Mort Sobell.*

Sobell, in Alcatraz,
a living hell

He'd soon be free
If he'd agree—

*Buy his time
by falsely naming you
and others too?*

You mean
he's standing up for me?
my dignity?
for *thirty years?*

*It needn't be—
He's in for you.
and others too.
You can set him free.*

We can set him free?

That's what we said.

*This soft June night.
We two are dead.*

*Instead of tears
Instead of fears*

*Hurry
to find your dignity
and Morton's 30 YEARS!*

• • •

Time to go—
So good to know
You're there!

AT LAST WE MET, DEAR FRIENDS

At the open coffins in the funeral parlor.

At last we met, dear friends,
Not as I dreamed it would be—
With handclasps, embraces, smiles and new faces,
I dreamed that you would be free.

That we would gather with all our friends,
The children, yours and ours,
We'd march along and sing our song
And carry bouquets of flowers.

The Rosenberg friends around the world
Would drink a well-earned toast,
We'd reminisce the battle days—
We'd have a right to boast.

At last we met, dear Julius,
I imagined you standing tall,
Towering above the pitiful pack
Of beasts with hearts of gall.

At last we met, dear Ethel,
Your lips formed a living smile.
I thought you'd awake and speak to me,
So I lingered there a while.

But they murdered you, Ethel and Julius,
Their gift to the god of war,
With obscene haste the switch was pulled.
They think you are no more.

But even in death, as indeed in life,
Millions you set astir,
We lift our heads, inhale your strength,
We're finer than we were.

With beauty borrowed from your life
We face the coming day.
We will avenge this crime, this shame—
And you will lead the way!

LEAN HARD UPON THE MEMORY OF *THE TWO*

In a moment of despair
when pain imposes cruel punishment
when fear entangles you
when terror pounds within

In that moment
lean hard upon the memory of *The Two*

Shadowed by death
for seven-hundred-forty-four nights and days
they never panicked, never fell
even as they walked their final steps
to the high-voltage throne of hell

Tempered by their heritage
they would not bear false witness
the young husband and wife
would not wear the mantle of disgrace
even at the forfeit price of life

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
forever to our land are wed
they honored and protected it with life
they rise in quiet glory from the dead

In a moment of despair
when pain imposes cruel punishment
when fear entangles you
when terror pounds within

In that moment
lean hard upon the memory of *The Two*

Come Place A Red Rose

Dedicated to the memory of
Ethel and Julius Rosenberg

Poem by Edith Segal
Music by Christoph von Gluck

Majestically

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and piano accompaniment. The piano part features chords and a steady bass line. The lyrics are: "The in-no-cent dead, our Eth-el and Ju-lius in earth's fro-zen bed,— Oh come for their love. Come ha-ters of wrong, for Eth-el and".

The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo/mood is marked "Majestically".

The second system contains the lyrics: "The in-no-cent dead, our Eth-el and Ju-lius in". Above the notes are the chords G and D7.

The third system contains the lyrics: "earth's fro-zen bed,— Oh come for their love." Above the notes are the chords C, G, D7, and G.

The fourth system contains the lyrics: "Come ha-ters of wrong, for Eth-el and". Above the notes is the chord D7.

Ju - lius To you they be - long, — Oh come for their

love. Come place a red rose — up — on — their

grave, A rose — of life, — A rose — of love.

2

Come husband, come wife,
 For Ethel and Julius
 Come makers of life,
 Oh come with your love,
 Come Young, come old,
 For Ethel and Julius
 Their glory unfold,
 Oh come for their love.

3

You who waited dark years,
 As did Ethel and Julius
 And tasted their tears,
 Oh come with your love.
 Bells of peace shall ring,
 Oh Ethel and Julius
 The silent shall sing,
 Oh come with your songs.

Refrain

Come place a red rose upon their grave,
 A rose of life, a rose of love.

Copyright 1955 by Edith Segal

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Edith Segal's roots are deep in the poverty, the dignity and the rich spiritual beauty of New York's lower east side, where she was born and grew up and where she danced on the sidewalks to the music of a hand organ. In her early teens she won first prize for her lyrics and music in a contest for a Henry Street Settlement Camp song.

Miss Segal received her early training in theatre arts at the old Neighborhood Playhouse on Grand Street, and chose dancing as her profession. However, she always had a poem "cooking," finding words a more direct medium of expression than dance.



Edith Segal

Photo by Kamen

From *Death House Letters* Page 114

November 28, 1952

Dear Manny,

I see by the papers that the holiday is in full swing, and since "justice" enjoins me from doing my "shopping early," late, or otherwise, it will have to be undertaken for me. I have fairly pounced upon each *Guardian*, in the hope of finding some guide to the perplexing problem of choosing books for the children. Of course, I want them to have *Be My Friend*,* *Tony and the Wonderful Door*, and *The Races of Mankind*, among others, but these are but a small fraction of the titles listed elsewhere and I don't want anything overlooked that might conceivably further their all-round development. The same holds true of phonograph records.

You may be wondering why I have as yet made no mention of toys, nor of clothes for that matter; let me assure you that I have been positively wallowing in advertisements of late, penciling here, clipping there, now accepting, now rejecting!

You see, I am determined to go on living and planning as though naught awaited me save a husband's fond kiss, a son's noisy welcome.

Ethel

**Be My Friend* by Edith Segal.

COMMENTS:

SEAN O'CASEY:

"Your verses make one long for the time when there would rise up no need to write such lines again;* when the call for friendship across the continent would be heard by all, and the clasping for all hands come to pass; when the hardest pressure one will be called to bear will be the pressure in the handclasp of a friend; when we will no longer hear the frightened call of 'Halt—who goes there!' but the favoring one of Be My Friend to be met with the ready answer of 'I will'"

*O'Casey's reference is to the author's collection *GIVE US YOUR HAND, Poems & Songs for Ethel and Julius Rosenberg in the Death House at Sing Sing, and to I CALL TO YOU ACROSS THE CONTINENT, for Morton Sobell in Alcatraz and in memory of the Rosenbergs.*

OSSIE DAVIS in his introduction to *TAKE MY HAND, Poems & Songs for Lovers & Rebels*:

"... Edith preaches the triumph of the human spirit over all its circumstances... Her touching ballad *MY LOVED ONE* for the Rosenbergs made me cry. It is possibly her finest poem..."

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN, *Masses & Mainstream*

In one poem—*TWO ADDED JOLTS*—she reminds her readers and listeners of the last moments of the Rosenbergs. She makes powerful use of the remark of the prison doctor supervising the execution, "There must be no heart-beat at all." As the poem proceeds, we realize that the intention of the frameup was to make certain that among the American people as a whole there is "no heart-beat," no sympathy for the poor, the exploited, the suffering, the brave fighting for their independence... Edith Segal has earned our respect and gratitude for having written these poems.

WARREN MILLER, Masses & Mainstream

“Edith Segal’s book of poetry is no small achievement. Out of a monstrous injustice she has created poems that are gentle, compassionate, and moving. It is from such poets that the best poems will come; for these writers do not merely celebrate, but participate in events.”

Emerson cried out in the finest words he ever uttered: "John Brown has made the gallows more sacred than the Cross!"

It is to the great credit of Edith Segal that she has refused to share this silence on the premeditated crime in the case of the plotted killing of innocent Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

In her new booklet of poems all written on the Rosenberg case, produced in the very acts of struggle to save their lives, she vindicates the honor not only of America but of the entire progressive and Left in the field of culture.

The walls of Italy blazon with poster-paintings of the Rosenbergs and their children. Aragon and Sartre in France, opposite poles one might say in politics and art, join in their common manifesto for saving the Rosenbergs, a plea joined in by Nobel Prize winner Francois Mauriac and by George Duhamel, the masters of conservative French literature.

Thus far, we Americans have not let the fiery moral truth of this case crash through the walls of routinism, the infections of fatalism, or the poisonous lies of McCarthyism. If America had not cried out to save Mooney and Sacco and Vanzetti and the Scottsboro Boys would the America of Roosevelt, the New Deal and the American-Soviet alliance against Hitler been possible? Would the rise of trade union armies within the open shop fortresses of Pittsburgh and Detroit have been possible?

* * *

EDITH SEGAL'S VERSES

spring from a complete identification with the passion and pain of the victimized New York parents on whose shattered bodies the most evil men in America today hope to climb to power, the better to betray America.

She writes of the Rosenbergs in the great tradition of passionate anger at wrong.

Edith Segal has not waited to find the tortured image nor the obscurantist formulation; she has sprung into the heart of the crusade, putting into simple verse forms something of the emotion, something of the pity and tragedy with which this crime abounds. She has not been afraid to speak the sentiments which spring humanly from this situation. Let her example spur other poets and writers to speak out too so that poetry can resume its rightful place as the sword and the lyre!

This small booklet contains the song "My Loved One" which moves its hearers to tears. It contains the skillfully realized "Nightmare" and the impassioned "Give Us Your Hand" with its outcry "Death is in the land!"

A living fighting movement needs poetry, "simple sensuous and passionate" as John Milton proudly said when he was the poet of the English Revolution.

Let Edith Segal's example be followed. Let there be anthologies of the Rosenberg poems (Martha Millett, Rella, etc.) Let us act to go forward to save the Rosenbergs, to save our poetry and our land.

We ought to sell thousands of copies of this booklet.

Daily Worker April 1953

A NEW BOOK OF POEMS TO HELP SAVE ETHEL AND JULIUS ROSENBERG



July 10 for Michael & Polly Rosenberg
Peters

Give Us Your Hand—Poems and Songs for the Rosenbergs. By Edith Segal. Published by Peoples Artists.

By MILTON HOWARD

The Rosenberg case must produce not corpses, but a revolution in the conscience and soul of the nation.

If it does not, then we will be on the way to being lost, sunk deeper in the abyss out of whose depths we will ultimately climb, but only at greater cost than if we enter the battle now before we lose it.

America must choose between the cause of the Rosenbergs and the aggression of the McCarthys, just as America had to choose between the Tories and the cause of Washington, Paine and their poet, Philip Freneau,

at the birth of our country; between the slavocrats, or the cause of Lincoln, John Brown and their poet, Walt Whitman.

We had to choose between Sacco and Vanzetti and their murderers just as France had to choose between the monsters who tried to steal the name of France from Dreyfus and Emile Zola.

* * *

THE SILENCE of America's poets in the face of the Rosenberg tragedy, in the face of its sublime heroism which scorns the executioner in the shadow of the death chair is a silence which is unworthy of us.

It was not with silence that the gaunt New England conscience met the murder of the heroic John Brown when Ralph Waldo
continued inside cover.