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DEDICATION

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and Eric Salem*

THE FOLLOWING ESSAYS, poems, and painting are offered to Eva Brann on the occasion of her fiftieth year as tutor at St. John's College in Annapolis. They are intended as a tribute from Eva's colleagues, friends, and former students, but even more as an expression of admiration and gratitude. Herewith we celebrate Eva's passion for learning and her deep love of books, her breadth of knowledge and interests, her boundless energy, her mastery of the spoken and of the written word, her virtues of leadership, and her bright and generous spirit.

The title for this collection was inspired by a passage in Eva's *The World of the Imagination*. Cautioning against the narrow imageless thinking that forms "the exoskeleton of contemporary life," Eva writes: "And yet, if, as someone once said, the unexamined life is not worth living, neither is this unenvisioned life—at least not if it preponderates."

Eva T. H. Brann was born in Berlin in 1929 ("T. H." for the names of her grandmothers, Toni and Helene). In 1941, Eva came to the United States, where she and her family, Jewish refugees from Hitler's Germany, settled in Brooklyn. Reading comic books helped her to develop her English vocabulary—"sinister" was one of the first words she remembers acquiring.

After studying history at Brooklyn College, Eva imagined she would become an archaeologist. She earned a master's degree in classics and a doctorate in archaeology at Yale. As part of her doctoral studies, she was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa scholarship to attend the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, where her love for classical Greek culture deepened. But soon she learned that digging for pots was not for her. As she would write many years later, "My outward purpose was to study Greek antiquities, but my inward desire was to see the world through an air that was actively transparent, an atmosphere through which places and things assumed a beautiful clarity and a clarified beauty." Eva's archaeological odyssey culminated in a dissertation on the Athenian agora that was later published by the American School of Classical Studies: *Late Geometric and Protoattic Pottery, Mid 8th to Late 7th Century B.C.* (1962).

In 1957, Eva came to St. John's from Stanford University, where she had been an instructor in archaeology. Eva fell in love with this tiny college in Annapolis "at first sight." She once reported about her early years: "It was conveyed to me that [Jacob Klein] had described me as behaving like a fish in water, and that was just how I felt—like one who was disporting herself in her element, to whom understanding came as she breathed." So intent was she on teaching Greek in her first year that she threatened her language students with sudden death if they failed to learn their irregular Greek verbs—Jacob Klein, who was dean at the time, had to have a little talk with her about that.

Eva recently recalled some high points of her half-century as a tutor. Working her way quickly through the program, she was thrilled to teach junior seminar, mathematics, and laboratory all in the same year: "I began to see what world I was living in." Her favorite classes over the years have been freshman seminar, freshman mathematics, and junior mathematics. Her most beloved activity has been advising senior essays, which has gained her more "friends for life" than anything else she has done at the college. An experience Eva remembers with particular warmth and excitement: spending nearly three days with fellow tutors listening to Mr. Klein read his book on Plato's *Meno*. This, she recalls, "was exhilarating beyond anything." A more recent peak came when Eva sang portions of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the St. John's Chorus. Thinking back over the time from her first days as a tutor to the present, Eva reflected: "It all seems like one day—like the *nunc stans* of heaven."

Eva became dean of the college in 1990 and served in that capacity for seven years. She brought to this office a much-needed mix of intellectual vigor, clarity of purpose, tough-minded practicality, and a spirit of just plain fun. She helped shepherd the college through hard financial times without compromising the program, and she educated a new president in the ways of the college. She promoted the intellectual life of students and tutors daily, and with disarming informality. In the days of Eva's "open door" policy, the dean's office was more than just a place for transacting business. It became a home for conversations of every kind—even a place where colleagues could translate Plato's *Sophist* together and read through Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

Students have always loved "Miss Brann." During her deanship, they asked her to play Yoda, the Jedi master, in a *Star Wars* skit that took place during "Reality weekend." (A group of cadets from the Naval Academy had agreed to represent the evil Empire!) Eva did not have to do any acting, or

even speaking, in order to be persuasive as the wise elfin mentor of Johnnie “knights.” She had only to appear.

Recalling that Mr. Klein once asserted that the college had no administrators, Eva liked to point out that administering means “ministering to.” And so, she kept a box of tissues in her desk, ready for the students (and sometimes tutors) who were dealing with bad news. She also made sure that cookies were always served at instruction committee meetings, much to the delight of her colleagues.

Eva has always been a prolific spokesman for the college. But during these years especially, she wrote about and explained the college’s unique program, defending it from its detractors and communicating to the alumni just how seriously she took her responsibilities to preserve and strengthen it. She also steered the college through a highly successful accreditation process.

When she left the deanship, she was praised for her many lasting contributions to St. John’s. “With the college it’s been one long love affair, starting from the day when, as a prospective tutor, I was up in Campbell and opened a closet door to find a red-painted skeleton with the Greek legend *Gnōthi sauton*, ‘Know thyself,’” Eva recalled at a celebration honoring her service as dean. In the same speech, she linked her love of the college with that of her adopted country: “It has been one of the delights of my life that this college seems to be made by and for this country, that it is at the same time one of a kind and yet an expression of the essence of America as I see it.”

Over the years, Eva has received many honors, most notably the National Humanities Medal, awarded to her in 2005 at a ceremony in the White House. The medal is given to those “whose work has deepened the nation’s understanding of the humanities, broadened citizens’ engagement with the humanities, or helped preserve and expand America’s access to important humanistic resources.” It was a pleasure to see how much this award meant to Eva, yet in characteristic fashion, she insisted that the real honors were due to St. John’s. Her only disappointment was that a personal hero, Dolly Parton, who was to receive a National Arts Medal at the same ceremony, could not attend.

Eva has been a member of the Institute for Advanced Study; a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on International Education and Cultural Affairs; a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; and a fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Yale University Graduate School recently honored her with the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal, the highest honor it bestows on its alumni. In the citation to the honorary doctorate it awarded her, Middlebury College described Eva in

the following way: “As a refugee from Nazi Germany, you have been a true friend of the Republic that has made it possible for you to pursue the good life. You have shown in word and deed that the careful study of great books is a republican, or conversational, activity among fellow students. You have also gently chided Americans not to pursue utility as the end of liberal education.”

Eva’s range of intellectual interests is evident in the dazzling variety of her many lectures. To name just a few: *The Music of the Republic* (her first lecture at the college, 1966), *The Venetian Phaedrus* (a reading of Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*, 1971), *The Poet of the Odyssey* (1972), *What is a Body in Kant’s System?* (1974), *The Perfections of Jane Austen* (1975), *Plato’s Theory of Ideas* (1979), *Against Time* (1983), *Intellect and Intuition* (1984), *Mental Imagery: The College and Contemporary Cognitive Science* (1985), and *The Empires of the Sun and the West* (an exploration of the differences in character between the Aztec civilization and that of its Western conquerors, 2003).

Many of Eva’s talks, especially her opening lectures as dean, are about education and reading: *Depth and Desire* (1990), *What is a Book?* (1992), *Why Read Books?* (1996).

The American republic and its founders hold a central place in Eva’s lectures and writings, as they do in her heart. On this topic, Eva has written: *A Reading of the Gettysburg Address* (1968), *Concerning the Declaration of Independence* (1976), *Madison’s “Memorial and Remonstrance”: A Model of American Eloquence* (1981), and *Was Jefferson a Philosopher?* (1992).

Finally, there are Eva’s reviews of everything from Paul Scott’s *Raj Quartet* and Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* to Pope John Paul’s Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* and the movie *High Noon*.

Translating has been a special joy in Eva’s intellectual life. Very early in her career at St. John’s (1962), she translated Euclid’s book on the mathematical construction of the musical scale (the *Sectio canonis* or *Cutting of the Canon*). A few years later, her translation of Jacob Klein’s *Die griechische Logistik und die Entstehung der Algebra* (originally published in the thirties) made this foundational work known to the English-reading public as *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra* (1968). Her translation of Heidegger’s essay *What Is That—Philosophy?* (1991) is the penultimate reading in the senior seminar on the Annapolis campus. She has also translated, with colleagues, Plato’s *Sophist* (1996) and *Phaedo* (1998). True to form, Eva has not only engaged in the activity of translation but also reflected on it in the delightful essay *On Translating the Sophist* (2000).

Eva is emphatically an author. Her concentrated inquiries into topics especially dear to her have become crystallized in a series of books, in which her luminous intelligence has reached a wider public: *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic* (1989), *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance* (1991), *The Past-Present: Selected Writings of Eva Brann* (1997), *What, Then, is Time?* (1999), *The Ways of Naysaying: No, Not, Nothing, and Nonbeing* (2001), *Homeric Moments: Clues to Delight in Reading the Odyssey and the Iliad* (2002), *The Music of the Republic: Essays on Socrates' Conversations and Plato's Writings* (2004), and *Open Secrets/Inward Prospects: Reflections on World and Soul* (2004). Soon to appear is her book on the passions: *Feeling Our Feelings: What Philosophers Think and People Know*.

These large-scale “Flowers of Eva” are a further blossoming of Eva as teacher and learner. They are the adventures of a mind striving to be fully awake. Eva’s style is expansive and pointed, intricate and direct. Her tone is a summons to the reader: “Now let’s get down to business—and enjoy!” As her friends know, Eva likes to write, and read, while taking a bath. Not since Archimedes, we are sure, has a tub been put to better use.

Eva is more than a prolific author and a beloved teacher. She is also a muse. For half a century, she has inspired her fellow tutors, her many friends, and generations of students to stretch their powers of thinking and imagining. She enthusiastically supports the projects of her colleagues and friends. An avid reader of anything her colleagues write, she has produced many appreciative and penetrating reviews of their work.

Taking aim at a trendy word, Eva once remarked that she was sure she had a life, and hoped she had a style, but did not have a “lifestyle.” The many-sidedness of that life is evident in her eclectic, non-academic interests: sailing, woodworking, reading children’s books, playing the flute, and occasionally singing. Reading remains her most beloved private activity. Whether it is Homer or Hegel or Louis L’Amour, “Give me a book, and I’m apt to swallow it whole,” she once said.

To this Eva, then, teacher and learner, friend and colleague; woman of many ways, traveler in the world of spirit and the world at large; wily, resourceful, and circumspect; lover of books and words and wide-open spaces; light-bearer, cookie-bearer, sailor, and flute-player; multiplex and Yodaform—to this Eva, who has united so gracefully the examined and the envisioned life, we dedicate this feast of words and works.