

A young woman's journey of self-discovery

Lorraine
A Free Spirit

Lorraine Walton

Co-written by Yvonne Walton

DISCLAIMER

All effort has been made to contact the people involved in this book. Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy and identity.

Lorraine; A Free Spirit

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my daughter Lorraine. It was her dream to write and to see some of her work published. In compiling this book, I hope I have made that dream become a reality.

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written from diary and letters, must have been a unique experience to say the least. I'm so grateful for your expertise and patience.

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I apologise to those who have been with me over the course of this endeavour whose names I have failed to mention.



Introduction

This book is the story of the last four years of the life of one of my beautiful daughters, Lorraine, told by her through her diary and letters to her sister Barbara and me. It is a true story - a story of life, of love and laughter, faith, happiness, despair, hope and courage, and the many challenges and experiences encountered on life's journey.

On the 3rd of January 1980 my daughters Rainey, twenty-six and Barbie, twenty-three, boarded a KLM flight to Amsterdam, and leaving behind their boyfriends David and Jeff, they departed on the first leg of their adventure of a lifetime. They had always talked of travelling in Europe ... to live and work there, to experience different countries and cultures in everyday life rather than as tourists. Their student exchange experiences reinforced this desire.

Rainey had always dreamed of living in Paris, even during her childhood, and this was to be the beginning of the realisation of that dream.

Through her diary and letters, Rainey has written her own story and compiling it has been a highly emotional journey for me, punctuated by much laughter, wonderful memories and many tears.

Rainey was thoughtful, sensitive and intuitive. She had a great depth of feeling, a wonderful sense of humour, loved life and approached it with enthusiasm. She loved to write, and it was her dream to one day see some of her work published. I hope this book will make her dream become a reality.

This is her story.

Yvonne Walton

Chapter 1

Diary, 25th March 1980

Barbie leaves tonight. We've done our last-minute shopping here in Amsterdam. I've covered all my books I'll need in Paris. Hope I'll get to use them. I'm looking forward to living and working there and settling down.

I keep getting these very strange feelings that everyone will read my diary. Not that I mind – I don't because I think it would be rather fun, but I just get these strange feelings that I'm going to die over here and never see anyone I love again. It's very real. It's like I have a secret no one else knows. But whatever happens, I know I'll be fine, and I want you to know that too. Maybe I'm just feeling fearful or apprehensive. It's strange ... I feel like I'm writing this for someone else to read. Well, read on.

We had a long talk about the end of an era finally rearing its ugly head and making you tear yourself away from it. Quite a conflict; almost as if you are an unwilling victim of circumstance in a realistic and necessarily fateful way. I know that feeling. I've had many such eras already. I feel I'm now on the verge of another; who knows what it will bring. I wonder. I feel sure it will be something intensely traumatic. Not sure which way, though.

But for now, we're back in Amsterdam after three incredible months of travelling. It's so nice to smell the welcoming aroma of Mr

Schroder's hotel ... staying in the same place with the same lovely man and his beautiful dog, a Weimaraner named Herta. Mr Schroder serves a wonderful breakfast and sitting in the dining room is like being at a meeting of the League of Nations. It's almost like coming home – so nice to relax into. I love being here.

The weirdest thing happened today. Barbie and I were in the *de Bijenkorf* department store looking at leather purses when a guy came up behind us. "Do you find those very practical?" he asked. And from there I launched into the pros and cons of this purse before realising we were talking to a guy we didn't even know, about a purse we didn't even want. He was a student studying French and photography in Paris. He lives in an apartment that overlooks the *Seine* to *Montmartre* and the *Eiffel Tower* ... and I have the key to his place in my purse!

He told me I could crash there for two weeks or a day, or however long. He would be back in two weeks on April 15th and "please to stay." It's probably safe, and I'd love to stay, but anyone who gives their keys to a stranger in a department store in Amsterdam has probably given keys to all his friends and other complete strangers. Who knows? Maybe something good will come of it, even if I don't stay there. Although on second thought, I should have my brains brushed for even entertaining the idea of taking that key.

I shouldn't have, after that experience in Paris a few months ago. That should have taught me not to trust anyone again. I had more reason to trust Ari than this guy, and look what happened. But I just thought here was I, this very day, wondering where to stay, and always wanting to be in an apartment in Paris. I'll probably be the only person staying in a sub-starvation place, sharing it with five or ten others while having a key to a free apartment in my purse!

We left on the bus at 4 pm. I couldn't believe Barbie was leaving. Arriving at the airport, she checked in and we went upstairs to have coffee. I just couldn't say much because I was too choked up.

After going through the departure gate, she walked back twice to and from the customs area waving and blowing kisses. I must have been

the only person carrying on like it was the arrival bay each time I saw her. At 8 pm I went up to the observation deck, watched the KLM flight take off, and I wept because Barbie was leaving and I too could have been that close to David.

I think I was in shock on the bus, still not truly realising that she had gone. Arriving back in Amsterdam, I went to our favourite brown café and had a hot chocolate and ham and cheese sandwich with our friend, the restaurant's cat. Gave him my ham and he sat in Barbie's chair. I crossed the road to our hotel. Mr Schroder heard me coming up the stairs and asked if Barbie got off okay.

Diary, 26th March 1980

Woke up at 6 am to a cheery, "Good morning lady!" from down the hall.

I managed to come forth with, "Good morning, Mr Schroder," born out of habit at that time in the morning, I'm sure. Got to the station at 7 am and waited for the 7:50 train to Paris.

A very sweet lady helped me on with my bags. The Dutch are beautiful people – so friendly. She reminded me of David's mum, a lovely lady. Hope I'm like that when I'm older. I didn't want to talk to anyone on the train. I felt strange.

I wrote some more of my letter to Barbie. I miss her so much. Slept for about three hours and woke up when the train jerked to a stop in Brussels. With me in the carriage were two Dutch ladies, a Frenchman and a Belgian. The Frenchman offered me a sweet, so I wrote in Barbie's letter, "If this ship crashes, I'll save him first!"

Slept some more, I was so incredibly tired!

The train finally pulled into Paris at *Gare du Nord* ... and then the fun started.



Lorraine: A Free Spirit

Here, I think I need to give you, the reader, some background and insight, which I will do as best I can throughout.

Rainey was born in Sydney on Mother's Day, Sunday, 10th May 1953, and Barbie on 1st August 1955.

In 1958, I moved with my daughters back to my home town in country New South Wales after leaving my husband, and a very distressing and abusive marriage. I brought the girls up on my own, and the three of us were very close.

In 1971 Rainey completed her Higher School Certificate, with excellent results in all subjects, including French, and gained a scholarship for her chosen degree in Education. She was then selected for the Rotary Student Exchange program, and in 1972 travelled to the United States where she lived for twelve months.

There, she attended a further year of school in Seattle, Washington, and later moved with her second host family to Baltimore, Maryland. During her stay in Seattle, she had the opportunity to work as a teacher's aide in several schools outside her normal school hours. She returned with some wonderful references and experiences; as did Barbie, who was also selected for the Rotary Exchange Program, spending a year in Brazil in 1974.

On her return from the US in 1973, Rainey commenced her Diploma of Education at Mitchell College of Advanced Education in Bathurst, (now Charles Sturt University). She graduated with excellent results in 1976.

For the next four years, she taught at Rosehill Primary School in Sydney. She loved the children and loved teaching. She also loved the sun, the beach, nature, sunsets, her family and friends, and life itself.

During this time, she met David, and they were in a relationship at the time the girls left for Europe. He continued to be an important part of her life.



Diary, 27th March 1980

I knew I would be lonely, but God, not this *alone!* Oh! I cried till I made myself sick and couldn't stop. That's when I got my room in a student hostel without having any proof of being a student. I suppose I *was* a bit suspect. Then when the lady at the desk told me I needed to give her a traveller's cheque, okay, but to *sign!* That was the last straw because the value of the cheque was so much more than the cost of the accommodation. I was so tired, upset, didn't know who I could trust, and threw a tantrum ... told her what I thought, grabbed the pen, signed it, and oh, did I have the poos. She didn't like me, and I don't blame her. No student ID card, no cash, and a tantrum to boot. I suppose I'm lucky to be here.

The room looked very much lived in, but I was too tired to care. I didn't have the energy or the incentive to get my bags from the train station locker, so in time-honoured tradition, I fell into bed and slept in my clothes.

I'd never felt so hopelessly alone. God, how I wanted to ring David. I was too sick to go out, even if I *did* have the cash. I know he said to call collect, but under the circumstances of his last angry call, I couldn't. How I wanted to, so much. If ever there was a time it was last night. I felt hopelessly alone.

Crawled into bed at about 5 pm and woke in a semi-conscious state to a knock on the door at 8 pm. The guy who rents the room permanently wanted to get his books. Nice guy – a student who is currently on holidays. Then I went back to sleep ... a most confusing sleep. Couldn't work out where I was, or whether I was alone or not.

Woke early today and didn't even have to get dressed! Arrived at the breakfast table and asked, "What's the procedure?" even before I said *bonjour*. How rude!

It was a lovely breakfast with a bottomless pot of coffee, and I kept a bread roll to have for lunch.

I must be some weird individual to do this on my own. That's what I thought last night when I was so upset. I thought, *What the hell am*

I doing here? I want out ... home. Well, thank God for a new day and for the sunrise. It's true – things *do* look better in the morning. They couldn't have looked much worse than last night, I can tell you.

After breakfast I went to the train station to collect my bags and managed to talk to the taxi driver in my high school French the whole way. That was good. He was surprised that I didn't know anyone here in Paris.

I came back, showered and dressed ready for interviews with some prospective families for *au pair*, then rang Mum and Barbie from the post office. I needed that.

Found my way to *Alliance Française* and enrolled. I start French classes on Monday 31st March. Found out a six-month working visa is needed even to *au pair*. I hope I can get one tomorrow... and I must ring David and send a telegram for his birthday. Then I did some grocery shopping because in this room you can cook yourself ... no, not yourself ... the food. Tonight, I'm writing, listening to music, saying a big prayer that the embassy people will be kind to me tomorrow, and having an early night.

Diary, 28th March 1980

As I write I'm sitting in a little restaurant near the Opera Metro Station and American Express to rest my feet. These boots are killing me.

I do so hope I can work here. I knew I needed a visa to work but didn't think I needed one to be an *au pair*. I guess you do if you get a job through agencies like *Alliance Française*, but maybe I'm meant to get one outside of them.

I can stay here for three months or for ages, but not to work. God how I need the money! Maybe that employment agency contact will have one for me. I hope so. Maybe she knows a family who needs an *au pair*.

Today I've been to no end of trouble to visit the Australian Embassy, Prefecture of Police and the Department of Foreign Affairs for them all

to say *no way* to a six-month working visa – my key to legal work. Not just *legal* work, but the *choice* of work. Anyway, when the guy in the Department of Foreign Affairs told me no, it was the last straw. I burst into tears and had to make a quick exit. I mean, I knew I didn't have a visa, and I couldn't get one but figured if I went and made my final plea, there may be a chance. It was just that I'd run around all day going to places on the Metro – some of the places had changed addresses, and I was tired - no, exhausted, and I just cried. I'm itching to start working and to settle in properly. Maybe I'll have to go through a back door somewhere. Anyway, I'm still hopeful. I'll keep looking, and try not to be as upset as I was today when they all said no. It's just that it has always been my dream and goal to live and work here; even while I was at school. To have it threatened at this point would be devastating.

So here I am at the restaurant. It's been raining for two days now. I bought Easter cards for Barbie and Jeff and David and will post them tomorrow. I wrote and told David how I was looking forward to calling him. I hope it's a nice call, don't think I could cope with another call like the last one.

I usually try to avoid the subject, or even thinking about David ... not always but often, because it hurts terribly. At least when Barbie is sad it's a definite quantity to be sad about, but with us (David and me) it's so indefinite, but with the same feeling of caring. I suppose I'm pretty confused really, and that doesn't reduce the feeling to any lesser degree – just the validity. But who's to say what feelings are valid and what are invalid? No ... I think it's simply a matter of being true to yourself in terms of feeling, acting and valuing. I know David wanted me to go home with Barbie. He was so angry when I told him on our last phone call that I'd be staying longer.

“Well, goodbye and have a good trip, and don't you expect me to be waiting here with open arms when you *do* decide to come home!” he'd said.

I know he's hurt and angry that I'm not going home, but he knows how much I want to live and work here. How am I supposed to cater

for my need in staying here? I'm trying to be fair and trying to be true to myself in doing this, and I want him to understand that I must. I want him to understand that he must give me this time before we can move on and continue our journey together. Perhaps it would be different if we were engaged, but time still does things without you being considered, even though you are given a choice that may be yours if you reach out and take it.

At about 6 pm I went up to *Montmartre* to *Sacr -Coeur* when it was still light and came out of the church about 8 pm. It was beautiful; so nice not to go there just to 'ave a look' like tourists do. I went there to sit and pray and think.

Before I went inside the church, I was standing at the lookout. It's very high, overlooking the city, and the view from there must be the most spectacular in all of Paris. It looks more like an artist's impression on canvas. And the light! The light that surrounds this city is mystical, but then again, almost tangible. It's so completely different to any other place I've seen. No wonder Paris is called the "City of Light." I think this is what drew so many of the old master painters to Paris.

The clouds were so low and moving so fast. Parisian skies are hard to describe. It was so beautiful, and I was inspired to write about Time in relation to those clouds, so I wrote a poem right there and then in about five minutes. Then I went into the church through the little door with the sign that read, 'Enter here only if you want to pray.' I wanted to feel apart from the visitors. I know it doesn't matter *where* you pray, but it seemed better there.

I love going there, even though I'm not Catholic; not for the ceremony of it all, but for the simple communion with God. I find that inexplicably beautiful. Doctrine ... yes, I have doctrine ... taught beliefs. In fact everyone does, depending on the direction of their upbringing. That differs mostly from person to person, religion to religion, but the one thing that holds us together is our faith. No one can dispute what you have inside you – that's a very personal thing between you and your God.

I cried, I prayed, I thought, and I lit a candle for David. It was dark when I came outside. I went to the post office on *Rue de Louvre, Metro Louvre*, and called David for his birthday. And yes, it was a gentle call. Then I came home.



Clouds

*The clouds are so low you can all but reach out
To touch their elusive silence
And like time, their intangibility is stunningly visible.
Oh, to be able to grasp and hold their beauty
For a time,
Forever.
Love and beauty can never be
Strong enough to hold their timeless impetuosity*

- Lorraine, 1980



Letter, 28th March 1980

Dear Mum,

I've now officially joined the thriving ranks of impoverished students. It's so expensive to live in Paris, and I still don't have a job. I really do love it here. Never thought I would fall in love with a city so much. I can find my way around well and ask for things, etc., so the language doesn't bother me for day to day living. I even held a conversation with a taxi driver the other day when I enrolled with *Alliance Française*.

Now for the bad news. I knew you had to have a six-month working visa to be able to work here. I had originally thought about working in

England, remember, but changed my mind. If I'd known, I would have applied for a French working visa before leaving, just in case; and no, you can't get one for me as you have to apply in person in your own country.

Today I went to the Australian Embassy, Prefecture of Police, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and they all told me what I just told you, so I have to go through a back door somewhere. But I'm still hopeful. I'm ready to start working and settling in properly.

Now let me tell you about my room here at the student hostel. I know I like to picture someone in a place ... not just have an idea of what they're doing. This place is for full-time students. Everyone here studies something full time, so when I'm asked, 'What do you study?' I suddenly become a student teacher from Australia on leave. I have to remember to write 'student' on papers that may bounce back too.

My room belongs to a guy who lives here all year-round, (he's currently on holidays) so as opposed to other temporary bare rooms, this one has all the mod cons like radio, coffee-making facilities, bookcase crammed with books, and walls crammed with posters. There's a desk under the window complete with reading lamp, and carpet on the floor. It's a private room with unlimited free hot showers. The guy is very nice; I've met him several times. He just knocked on the door and said, "I suppose you notice that I sleep on a board. I have a bad back. You can take it out if you like."

I felt like saying, 'You better believe it. That bed is not a bed; it's concrete!'

When he left, I checked it out – pulling it out with brute strength. Do you know what he had under the mattress? A bloody two-inch-thick wooden door! I couldn't believe it! Well, I could really, I've been trying to sleep on it! So, I'm standing in the middle of the room holding this door, and wondering where the hell I was going to put it. It's huge! I was laughing because it was so funny, trying to find somewhere to store it. It's longer than the bed because now the mattress is flopping over the end. No wonder he has a bad back! I finally wedged it against the wall at

the head of the bed. Hope it stays there. I have visions of it falling and squashing me in the middle of the night.

Breakfast here is a bottomless pot of coffee and huge bread rolls that, for me, double as lunch. Pretty good for Paris if you ask me. I mean even to sleep in the park you have to buy a newspaper, and that costs eighty cents!

These last few days have been go, go, go. Admin things like finding this place, enrolling at *Alliance*, the visa drama, looking for a job, and incidentals. The days are beginning to have no name – just a continuum of time, day and night. This morning when I woke, my first task was to find out what day it was. No one at breakfast seemed to want to come forth with any hints, so I spared myself the embarrassment of asking, and bought a newspaper. Yes, I do believe it's Friday, so the papers say. The alternative was, "Excuse me, do you have the time, and can you also tell me what day it is?" and, "No, I don't wear a name tag."

I can hear Jeff saying, 'My God, no wonder she hasn't got a job yet.'

About jobs ... with no visa, and the few channels I have open to me (i.e., agencies that require you to have that six-month working visa), I had to look for another plan of attack. Now it's a matter of *who* I know. I went through my diary and sifted out all the people and acquaintances I knew in Paris, and the grand total came to four; all of whom Barbie and I had met, ever so briefly, while travelling during the last three and a half months:

1. *The Hotel des Balcones* Manager and Manageress
2. The hairdresser we met at the Vidal Sassoon training salon in London
3. The Dutch lady's sister at the employment office in Amsterdam (I don't know her, but I soon will)
4. Randy Garret (who seems to have his finger on the pulse of Paris)

I've met some of them only once, some never. Not to worry, I can't afford to have any class in my predicament. So, I donned my best clothes and shoes and made a personal visit to all. No class, heaps of flair, but definitely no class. I figure I have to reach out and grab because no one here is going to come to me.

Well, Randy wasn't in his den. He lives in the basement of American Express and is rather *au fait* (just practising my French) with all the legal and not so legal deals going around town. Now *there's* another story for later.

Then I went to the hairdressing salon, which would be the French salon of your dreams. This lady, Vivienne, had cut Barbie's hair in London at the Vidal Sassoon College for hairdressers. Barbie knew her, I didn't really, but I was getting desperate. She was pleased to see me and called her husband over to introduce me. She's so sweet. Their salon is out of this world ... all white with flowers everywhere, and all the staff dress in white. She even said, "Why don't you let me wash and trim your hair for free, just as a souvenir?"

Guess where I'll be going back to? She is lovely. I gave her Barbie's regards, told her about my situation, and she asked, "Would you be interested in teaching English to adults at the Berlitz School of Language?" Inside I was ecstatic!

I managed a very dignified and positive, "Yes, I would be most interested." It almost killed me to remain composed.

Vivienne is a friend of the principal of the school. She told me they only have French teachers of English and would welcome a native speaker. But the visa still worries me. The money would be very good, but I don't know. I should have applied for a visa before I left, but then I had every intention of working in England, remember? I couldn't stand working in England now; I'd go mental. Even if worst comes to worst, I'm going to offer my services as an aid in conversational practice classes for free, just as a 'foot in the door.' I know I'd enjoy it, and I would meet people too.

So, you must be anxious to know what happens there. Not half as anxious as I am! In positive anticipation, I went to *Saint-Germain* post office and made copies of all my references. Now is when I need to have my teaching diploma with me. I can fake it; I've had heaps of practice recently, but hope so much that something good comes of it.

I also have another contact given to me by the Irish girl - the travel agent who Barbie and I had met on the train to Italy.

This morning it's a Catholic organisation. In my best French on the phone, I explained then went to see them. They are an *au pair* aid organisation – very prim and strict but very nice. They wanted to know the ins and outs of how I came to find them – ME, not even a Catholic! One of their first questions was, “Are you a Catholic?”

I felt like saying, ‘No, I’m an atheist,’ but because I had my best clothes on, I had to play ladies too. I’ve left my name and phone number and feel sure they’ll call. I think they thought I was okay for a Protestant. Told them I had just come from visiting an elementary school down the road as I was a teacher, etc.

I had. I invited myself in because the door was open, and spoke to the teachers in my best French. I’m sure my best high school French has a heavy accent and questionable grammar. I must sound like that all the time. But they understood me ... at least I think they did. Maybe they just nodded their heads in polite amazement that the words, let alone the structure of it all, could possibly fall out of anyone’s mouth like that. They were so nice. I left my name with them, and I hope they’ll call. I hope someone can help me.

Haven’t managed to get to the *Hotel des Balcones* yet but I was thinking that wasn’t bad going for only knowing four people in Paris, was it? I was happy with the success of my day.

Lectures at *Alliance* start on Monday 31st for two hours per day. What I see as being ideal, (hope I’m not dreaming too much) is *au pair* five hours a day, lectures two hours a day, and work at the Berlitz language school. That’s heavy considering I have my acupuncture to read, study, and review, and my French class homework and study. I *have* to because *Alliance* costs \$65 a month and I want to do it well. I’d also like to *live* somewhere in there.

I find it amazing to think that most of the events that led me to these contacts happened outside France before I even got here. The way I see it is, the past is forever working towards a *related* something in the future. I mean things just don’t happen without rhyme or reason. It’s amazing, isn’t it, that the past can be so incredibly in touch with the future. I tend to think that there’s no such thing as ‘past’ or ‘future’ *per*

se; it's almost as if everything has already happened at once, but for the sake of living, it's all just been spaced out in time somehow.

All very illogical I'm sure, but I'm very wrapped up in Time as a subject. Most of my poems have been about Time. I'm glad you liked the last one. It's nice when someone gets a little pleasure or meaning out of something I wrote. It's so easy to be subjective and insular where the meaning is so totally related to the writer, and so un-meaningful to all else.

Now I've got that little outburst out of my system ...

I also find my English spelling is becoming progressively worse. I have to stop, think, and say the word to get the sounds in some sort of order on paper. Very strange ... then again, what else can you expect from someone who doesn't know what day it is?

This evening I went up to *Sacré-Coeur* again. It was lovely. I just love going there. I'll go at Easter too, I think. That's where I'll celebrate all the special occasions like birthdays, etc. I know I'm a bit crazy, but I feel closer to home when I'm there.

It must be lovely to see Barbie. It was better for her that she went home. Her place isn't over here; I know that now. She wouldn't enjoy it at all without Jeff. But I do miss her so much.



I was constantly amazed at the serendipity of how Rainey's needs were met in the way of accommodation, contacts and unexpected events during her early days in Paris. She achieved much in that time due to her positive attitude, belief and determination. So many things just seemed to fall into place, though not without some varying degrees of stress and pressure.



Letter, 31st March 1980

Dearest Barbie and Mum,

Guess who I saw in the subway today Barbie? Christopher, the busker we met in the metro and who we had invited for coffee. I heard this singing that sounded familiar, so I just stood by until he finished his song. He has a fantastic voice. Then I asked, “Do you remember me?”

He didn't straight-away, as I had worn a head scarf that day; then he actually remembered. He asked about you and what we had done on our travels, and if we had visited his friend in Amsterdam at the address he had given us. No, he didn't ask, he said, “You didn't visit my friend, did you? I knew you wouldn't.”

He lives with his girlfriend and invited me to their house for dinner, which was nice. He also suggested I put signs up at the universities in both French and English, for English tutoring, private lessons and/or group lessons, so I'll do that tomorrow.

Went to see Mr and Mrs 'Hotel des Balcones', who were very nice; they remembered me (the infamous one) and took my phone number and address.

Then I went over to the Luxembourg Gardens across the road from where I live. Being there is just like walking through a painting. They are so beautiful now in the spring. But it was cold and started to rain, so I left and will come back on a sunny day.

After leaving the gardens, I went to *Jeu de Paume* in the *Tuileries Gardens*, a little *musée d'art* near the *Louvre* ... a wonderful place! You know I'm not an avid lover of art, but to go into these places to see the originals of the greats – Renoir, Monet, Gauguin, Van Gough, Toulouse-Lautrec – it's quite breathtaking. The paintings are so beautiful; you just wonder what sort of talented, creative mind could capture a thought or a vision and place it so perfectly and so beautifully on canvas. I was there for about two hours. Kept saying to myself, *I'll just go back one more time and have a last look at that*

one, so it was ages before I left. It's only a very small place, two floors, but fantastic.

I can remember as a little girl at the infants' school in Dubbo; there was a painting on the wall that I just loved to look at ... that one of Renoir's - a garden scene, bright and happy. I loved that painting, and to see the original was a strange feeling indeed.

On my way to *Jeu de Paume*, I was fined twenty francs for riding in the wrong metro carriage. I couldn't believe it! The controllers (all ladies) were out in force on Saturday, briskly and almost coldly going through their paces of physically escorting people off the train! As they came into my carriage, the number of people who bolted for the door was unreal. But the doors lock automatically, remember? I figured I'd be okay because I had my ticket and thought it was all quite amusing watching people dashing for the locked doors, and watching others being removed and presented with their fines – until we got to the next stop where, on having my ticket checked I was also physically escorted off the train and had to pay the fine.

I felt like a criminal and was so upset. Didn't think it was very funny then, I can tell you! Apparently, (I didn't know this) the carnet of ten tickets, which 90% of the people buy, is for *second* class travel. There are always a couple of carriages dispersed through the train that carry the No 1 (second class is not numbered). So, guess who watches what carriage she travels in now?

That night I came home and cooked tea in the community kitchen with everyone else. I have two special friends here. One is a Mexican guy, Anton, a real scream; we get on very well. Another guy, Gabriel from the Dominican Republic, helps me with my French. He's a student at the Sorbonne. We ate tea together then went to a soiree where I met and talked with so many people. The punch was red wine and orange – just up my alley! Had a great evening and got to bed at 2 am. I do like staying here; it's just like a home away from home.

The next morning I was supposed to go to the flea market at the end of *Porte de Clignancourt* with Anton and Gabriel, but I didn't surface until 11:30 so I went to the *Georges Pompidou* Centre. We should have

gone there Barbie, it's incredible! Outside, the buskers have to be seen to be believed. Inside there are musées d'art, films, plays, expositions, a library and an incredibly lovely view from the top. It's open from 10 am to 10 pm.

I arrived there at 1 pm and left at 9:30 pm. The Salvador Dali Exhibit was incredible! I was so amazed and thrilled when I read about the film that he and Walt Disney were to make, a surrealist film about what time does to love – just what I write about. It's said they had a falling out, so only a short segment was recorded. What a shame, but knowing Dali's work, I probably wouldn't have been able to understand it anyway.

Thought I'd go to the top and work my way down; got half way down after four hours of looking at everything. Got to the library and stayed there for the next three hours, sifting out books on acupuncture. I read one through and took heaps of notes. It was so interesting; it was a layman's book with many wonderful explanations that clarify so much. I've been wondering when I'll be able to complete my acupuncture course. Maybe I could complete it here.

Anyway, this was one of those rare occasions when I'd not taken any note paper with me. All I had were the paper bags from my postcard purchases. The French girl and her boyfriend sitting opposite kept looking at me (between their amorous kisses) as I wrote notes on my brown paper bags. I think it got all too much for her because she offered me some of her paper.

I have this habit of going somewhere in the daytime and becoming so immersed in my surroundings that it is night when I come out and I don't know where the time has gone! Had tea – boiled eggs which my friend Anton cooked with some of his beans, bread, pâté, orange and milk. What a mixture! Had a late night again – sat up talking and laughing with Gabriel. I want to get up early tomorrow so I can find my lecture room at *Alliance Française* before the class starts.

Next day now and today I went to my first French class. It was great. I loved it! I feel sorry for those who've had no grounding in structure, grammar and pronunciation. It really helps me. I understand it very well

so far. I've just done an hour review of the lesson. I've been speaking French into the cassette recorder. The first try I had might have been too much for the little recorder. It collapsed all over my desk in a little heap and shouted, "Please! Why me? No more!"

I've improved a little now. I think it just humours me. It has its little chuckles.

My lectures are from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. I barged into the wrong class this morning (true to form), and the teacher invited me to stay. I was in another class, more advanced than mine, for half an hour before my class started. The teacher asked one guy a question in French (it's all in French), and the poor fellow didn't know the answer. Then the teacher looked at me and raised his eyebrows. I took the cue and answered it in French, at which point he started jumping up and down on the spot and yelling in French – very dynamic, not cranky, just dynamic.

"She's been here ten minutes, and she knows. What's wrong with you?"

At that stage, I was wishing I had waited outside.

So my high school French is an incredible help. The method here is oral – conversational, and even though the students can say it, half of them, or most, don't know what it looks like on paper or the structure. Fortunately, I have that advantage.

Tuesday 1st April

My accommodation here is like a house full of family. I'm so glad I didn't take that apartment offered in Amsterdam - I wouldn't have met so many nice people. I'll be sad to leave here when I find a job. At the moment I have so many channels open to me to find work. It's quite amazing. Every day incredible things happen – unexpected things. I told you about the hairdresser with that opportunity to teach at the Berlitz School; I'll see her tomorrow.

You might say I got waylaid a little today – had a wonderful day!

Went to collect my mail from American Express and who should be there propping up the client's mail counter but Randy Garret, an American

ex-pat who has made Paris his home. He's the guy who told us to "go out and live life" while we were here, and who gave me a lot of contacts to follow up. During our conversation when we first met him in January, I remember he had said to us, "So, you have someone at home? Are you going to say, 'No, all I want is a purely platonic relationship'? You could be missing out on a worthy friendship or experience for someone at home who will be there if it's right when you get home. Ride with the wind ... go with the tide ... go with your feelings ... with discretion of course, and live life to the full, with respect to yourself and others."

That seemed like okay advice.

Well, I was standing there with a grin from ear to ear. It was so good to see him. He kept staring at me. "Do I know you?" he asked. When I began speaking, he said, "Of course! What have you done to your hair? You look so chic!"

When we first met Randy in January, my hair was very long. Now it's short, all one length and in a pageboy style. I love the new cut Vivienne at the salon has given me.

Randy and I talked for an hour over coffee in a little sidewalk café. He wanted to know what you and I had been doing on our travels Barbie, and gave me more helpful advice on job hunting and contacts. He told me what I already knew.

"You don't need any visa," he said. "You can do it. You have to *sell* yourself to the right contacts. Make special note of your qualifications to all, dress well for the interview, be ... how do you say ... confident, well presented, and make them think, 'Here's a special lady – good profession, etc.' and visa or no visa, if they want you they will make provision. You must *sell* yourself, of course. I know you can do it."

I've been putting my best foot forward, as it were. He seems very cluey.

We were deep in conversation when we heard an Australian voice at the next table ask, "Do you have any sausages and gravy?" In a sidewalk café in Paris! I almost fell apart laughing.

"My God - who said that?" asked Randy.

That's how we met this couple. The lady was ready to leave Paris; she hated it. She was a nervous wreck, a real case. Her husband was a high

school teacher – both very nice. She was a compulsive worrier and told me she was on valium – just couldn't cope and believed she was going to fall apart. I would venture to say that she was on the way to a nervous breakdown. After a while, Randy and I decided we should go and eat. We invited them to join us, and they happily agreed.

Remember the restaurant Randy had invited us to, Barbie? Well, that's where we went. It's like walking onto the set of an old movie ... so old, so beautiful, *and* so cheap! In the early days, some of the restaurants in Paris didn't supply cutlery. The regulars brought their own and kept them in little boxes in the wall for when they would return, and the boxes are still there today!

Anyway, on the way to the restaurant I talked to this lady, Margaret, about worry and she said, "You are very understanding. You know exactly how I feel – I can't believe it – I'm so glad someone understands."

She really couldn't believe it and said it made her feel so much better to talk to me. Said I was a real tonic. I told her of some things to do to help herself – relaxing things, positive thinking, etc. And Randy... well, you know what he's like Barbie. They couldn't believe him.

We had a wonderful time. They had eaten, but came anyway. Randy talked to the guy the whole way to the restaurant, and I talked to Margaret, who couldn't believe I was here in Paris on my own.

Well, as they had already eaten, she just ordered an entrée and when the waiter came to ask for our main meal, Margaret (and I'm serious) almost fell apart because she thought she had to order a main course. The waiter kept pressing her for her order, and she really didn't know what to do, so I said to her, "Margaret, don't worry, just don't worry. The worst they can do is pick you up and throw you out of the restaurant, and they won't do that. Besides, if they did, Randy would have them plastered all over the walls in one hit." Randy laughingly agreed.

She looked at her husband and said, "Aren't they wonderful? They cope so well."

We had a great time, and they enjoyed it. We talked about the locals, and Randy agreed that when the French are put out, you have

never seen or can't imagine how cold they can be, so you either ignore them or stand up for yourself.

I couldn't believe this lady – worry and fear totally controlled her; she told me it just engulfed her. We had a good talk, and she said we had saved her day. Randy had them in disbelief with his stories; they were so “go by every rule in the book, regardless.” After lunch, she was a completely different person.

When I asked, “Now what will you do this afternoon?” She replied with a wave of her hand.

“Whatever - who cares!”

Diary, 2nd April 1980

Today I went again to *Alliance Française*, then to the American Église to see about au pair work. They have a notice board full of ads for live-in au pair positions. I made a list of names, phoned some, and made an appointment for 6 pm with a couple at *Ponte d'Auteuil* at their apartment.

First, I went home to change and freshen up for the appointment. On the way I met a friend, and we sat for an hour over coffee in *Le Café de l'Odéon* on the corner. That cafe has a lovely, lively atmosphere that reminds you of what Paris is all about. Then on to the appointment.

The other *au pair* was there, but I don't know – I'm not sure. Think I could get a better job, like teaching. This one might be too restrictive. I'll ring them tomorrow. Maybe they'll say no. I don't mind ... sort of hope they do. They have high expectations. Working five to six hours a day for \$15 a week, plus lodging ... I can't save on that, so I think I must wait. I feel it. Yes, I must, and trust that I get a better job.

I got home and talked with my friend Gabriel. Then we were ousted from the kitchen, so we sat on the stairs and talked 'til 2 am.

Diary, 3rd April 1980

Went again to *Alliance Française* then to see my friend Andrea for lunch and we had arranged to meet another girl for coffee. Later, I went to

American Express to cash a cheque for Easter. I did some shopping at *Uniprix*, met up with two people from the hostel, and then went home.

As I was entering the front door, a man suddenly came up behind me and told me not to carry those parcels like that. He helped me carry them, and suddenly he was inside on the stairs – where I entertain all my men friends, it seems. Well, I'm going to have coffee with him tomorrow! *Je ne sais pas!*

Tonight, I have to write my resume for work, on Saturday I'm going out with some friends to walk in the gardens, on Sunday I'll meet up with Randy, and tomorrow I'll have coffee with Henri, the parcel guy.

Diary, 4th April 1980

Well, today wasn't my day. I went to sleep at 2 am after talking with Gabrielle and woke late this morning for *Alliance*. I then caught the wrong metro in *Châtelet* and to top it all off, I couldn't concentrate in class. The teacher always asks me questions.

I met Henri at the *Café Grande Cluny* at 2 pm. He was waiting. We talked for four hours over coffee – the proverbial rendezvous. I just knew he was married, but I didn't ask, even when he asked me if I was. He's a maths teacher and is married with two boys, aged twelve and ten. My God, later he told me all about his marriage, and I still don't know whether his situation is as he says it is. I don't believe it, I just don't. It just doesn't gel with me. I like him, but with some reservation.

"Same place, same time," he said, and told me to think about what he said and that he would be waiting in the café at 4 pm.

"So, you like adventure?"

"Yes, but that's not why I'm here with you."

Venice would be wonderful. Good story for a movie, great setting. Someone should take it up ... took it up. I write in riddles because I think I know my diary will be read in my absence. I've got nothing to hide and never do anything to be ashamed of, but some things are very hard to explain.

Anyway, here I am, two weeks in Paris but it feels so much longer.

Diary, 5th April 1980

At 4 pm today I met Henri again at *Grand Cluny Café* where he was waiting. We had coffee. He looked different in jeans. I don't believe this, I just don't, don't, don't. Seeing a married man? *Mon Dieu - c'est pas possible.*

We drove to *Versailles* and spent time walking through the gardens. Saw the small *Trianon* palace. It was wonderful, so wonderful. It was a bit like a movie set but very real. We kept walking for a long time until it was dark, crossed moats, ponds, fences, walls, and finally had to scale the huge front gate!

About Henri – it's almost as if he is two people. Unsure, almost clumsy, timid, and then frightfully mature like a father. We had dinner at a little restaurant in *Versailles*.

He told me, "Lorraine, choose carefully a husband. You need a father in a husband, strong enough to support you psychologically, then for the father portion to go away and then remain the husband." And I thought I was the strong one.

He said about David that two years together is more than enough time to be sure of a relationship and you can't leave if you love. Maybe he's right ... maybe not.

We drove back in comfortable silence, went to a couple of jazz clubs – great music – and then he dropped me home.



A note to you, the Reader; you may find some repetition as you are reading. As Rainey tells her story through diary and letters, I have omitted parts that are repetitious, but she speaks more freely in her diary. There, she is more open, and I feel that including both letter and diary in these instances is necessary for the reader to truly understand her thoughts.



Letter, 6th April 1980

Dear Mum and Barbie,

Now, where to start? I've been running around after jobs all week. You know I've been a lady of leisure for the past four months, and honestly don't know how I'm going to handle work. I mean, I'm really looking forward to working, but I'm not sure about *au pair*.

I had another offer of an *au pair* position. Went for the interview and they wanted me for six hours per day (sometimes longer), with occasional evening babysitting during the week, and they ask an occasional day on weekends. I would do all housework and take care of a two-year-old. Had visions of being shut away, with little money and no time. They had high expectations and wanted me to stay for six months, so again it was 'no thank you.' I'm trying for a job that pays. It's very hard, but I have contacts now. I'm writing letters in answer to ads and have some people looking out for me too.

Had a lovely week last week; kept running into people I know from the student house and we would end up having coffee, sitting for ages in those wonderful sidewalk cafes, talking and watching the passing parade. The weather is still crisp and fresh, and everything is blooming or about to. Spring in Paris is just beautiful. Honestly, the clichés about Paris in the spring aren't just clichés, they're actually true.

Just now I'm waiting in my room for my friend Anton, and we'll go over to the *Luxembourg Gardens* to study our French. It's beautiful there.

You would never believe yesterday ... a wonderful day. I have a lot of friends here, it's nice, but I also like to be by myself if you know what I mean – I don't like being suffocated. Anyway, I had coffee with Henri near the *Musée de Cluny*. Do you remember, Barbie? It was across the road from where we had our first meal in Paris. From there we went to *Versailles* – not into the palace but walking in the palace gardens. Oh, they are a picture – I wish so much we could have gone there together.

We drove to *Versailles*, arriving quite late in the afternoon and became so engrossed walking around the gardens, palaces and pavilions there. They have to be seen to be believed. Oh, so gorgeous!

By the time we were to leave it was twilight, it was magical ... like walking up to the *Heidelberg* Castle at night. Remember that? Yesterday I felt like I'd been back in time.

We were in there so long that the gates had been closed and we were locked in. To get out we climbed walls, contorted ourselves around fences and puddled through moats and ponds. It was such fun and so beautiful to be there at that time of the evening. We left from the front of the palace and had to scale over those huge wrought iron gates. My God, I'm sure I could climb anything now!

Now Tuesday 8th

My days are cram-packed between lectures, study, looking for work and meeting and talking with friends. I've met a lot of great people staying at this hostel.

Actually, what I love is *not* being a tourist in Paris. It's so nice. Yesterday a group of us from the student house went to the *Bois de Boulogne*. It's a wonderful place at the end of one of the metro lines on the very outskirts of Paris. It's huge – 850 acres of beautiful woodland with waterfalls, ponds, streams, lakes and swans – the essence of spring. Families, complete with their dogs, were boating on the lakes (the French take their dogs everywhere). It was so relaxing.

These woods were originally a hiding place for bandits in the early days and later became a hunting ground for the kings and the aristocracy. The Duke of Windsor and his wife, Wallace Simpson, lived in the *Bois de Boulogne* in the Villa Windsor, and it's where they both died.

We just walked and talked and sat and laughed. Quite frankly, the French seem a lot more sophisticated than Australians. That's not necessarily either good or bad, but they are very different. Then that night I went with two friends (a German girl and an Italian guy) to the movies. We saw *Kramer vs Kramer* – wonderful movie, you must see it. It was in French with no subtitles, but strangely enough, I managed.

It's rather exciting; it's all coming back to me – the French language I mean. It's all in my head, and I can follow conversations well enough now to understand most and also speak a little. It's weird; when I first arrived here almost three weeks ago, I barely knew enough to get a room, but now I know and understand so much more.

I really enjoy my classes at *Alliance Française*. I go every day, of course, buy the paper on the way to the lectures and scan it on the metro. This morning I found something! "English Sales Assistant Wanted."

After the lesson I went home, changed and donned my good gear. It's a French perfumery. There are two shops, one near the Opera and the other near American Express, and they want someone for their American tourist clientele. They gave me the third degree, and asked me back tomorrow to watch me work and be interviewed by the manager! Have to rustle up a few 'let's play ladies' manners between now and then.

I do need a job with a wage – it would be impossible to live here otherwise. *Au pair* would be okay, but I can't survive economically on \$15 a week here in Paris and save for other things. I'd have to work two jobs, and I wouldn't have much time for anything else. So, I look now for a regular job.

I've also written letters to language centres that require your whole educational history. It's amazing what one can concoct with a little imagination! Well, now I wait, and tomorrow when I go for the interview, I must remember to 'ave me best manners.'

It's now April 13th and this letter has taken ages to write. I'm having a lovely time and ... *I have the job!* Yes, I'm working at the French Perfumery, Eden! They also sell leather bags, suede, beautiful scarves, but mainly French perfume. It's a very classy and elegant shop about three minutes' walk from the Opera.

The five girls working there look like they've just stepped out of *Vogue* magazine, especially Caroline on the make-up counter. We are required to be well groomed and well dressed. The manager told me that I have the manner, the looks, and all else will come with experience. Oh, the perfumes are wonderful. We were each given a bottle on Saturday –

we could choose whichever one we wanted. I chose *Vivre* and received a huge spray bottle. I really enjoy selling perfumes.

Fifty percent of their clientele are the *haute couture de Paris* (classy French ladies), and the others are mostly English and American tourists. I work with the English-speaking clientele. All the girls in the shop speak French to each other and to me, so I'm getting plenty of practice there too.

My lectures at *Alliance* are from 8:30 to 10:30 am, and from there I go straight to work at 11 am to 6 pm. It's great!

In the afternoon, we have aperitifs – drinks, salami, olives and cheese. I have to keep practising my elegance because the shop, Eden, is *très chic* and everything for their clientele must be beautifully gift wrapped. So now I get \$130 per week, plus my stock of French perfumes. I can live comfortably on that. With *au pair* work I would have been getting \$15 per week, plus lodgings.

My friends at the student house are stunned that I have a well-paying job and no visa. They all say it's impossible, but I just *knew* I could find one and I did! The manager doesn't require you to have a visa, thank God. I didn't tell at the interview, and he didn't ask. Later I think I can slip into a teaching position when I have a little more French. This job means I have no preparation to do after hours, so I have time for French study and going out socially.

I told you about Henri. He's the one I went to *Versailles* with. Since then we've been to *Chartres* to see the beautiful 12th-century cathedral and to *Rouen* where they burnt *Jean d' Arc* at the stake. She was only nineteen. We walked around the towns; the French countryside is lovely, the buildings there so quaint and so old.

The other day I had lectures from 8:30 to 10:30 am and then worked from 11 am to 7 pm. Met Henri in a café on my way home from work as planned and I was absolutely exhausted ... so tired. So instead of going outside of Paris, which is a nice change of pace, we sat for a long time over coffee just to relax and rest.

Wow, a week has passed and it's Sunday, my day of rest, and believe me I deserve it. It's been 'go, go, go' looking for work ever since I

arrived here. I go out a lot with people from this hostel, attend my French lectures, study, work at Eden, and I see Henri a little too. I'm also doing two extra night classes at *Alliance* with two friends from the student house.

Today I slept till Anton knocked on my door, so got up and we went over to the gardens to study. The sun was lovely; we just sat and relaxed. I'll do something tonight; don't know what ... might go for a walk. It stays light now until 9 pm with daylight saving.

I haven't been to collect mail for about five days. By the time I finish work the American Express office is closed, so I must see if I can hurry and go before work. It's hard, because I don't leave the *Alliance* till 10:30 am. With the metro it's quick, but I think I can find a quicker way by studying the metro map.

I'm so excited that you'll be coming over. We'll have to plan your trip. There are so many places I want you to see. I have this job until the end of summer and seeing that good jobs are so few and far between (especially the well-paying ones) I want to stay there for as long as possible. I can leave whenever I want I suppose, but I need the money and I want to settle for a while. Not to mention how much I'm enjoying it. So why don't you come over in about three or four months? It wouldn't be so good to come when I was working as you would be stuck in Paris by yourself. I'll leave the job in about four or five months so that when you come over, we can travel. May as well make the most of it and not be limited just to Paris, as lovely as it is, so I think that's better.

There are not enough hours in the day for me. I had to work yesterday, Saturday, as there are squillions of tourists now. Eden is an incredibly classy shop, and you always have to look glamorous. I try hard. The other day the manager told me I looked "a million dollars," so that was encouraging. All the Australians who come into the shop want to know how I got such a lovely job. I'm still trying to work that one out myself. There was a couple from Taree in the shop the other day. The Aussie accent sounds so funny to me now. When I hear it, I think, *My God, do I sound like that?*

The manager told me that Mrs Nixon, President Nixon's wife, does her perfume shopping here when she comes to Paris, and proudly showed me the photo. Very classy! I'm familiar with the French currency and giving change too. The shop has its own cashier on the till, so we just hand the docket to her, but we have to count the change back and work out the difference in English, American and Australian currencies.

Now, what else can I tell you? I'm still at the student house. I still have my own room (very comfortable), free hot showers (as many as you like), and all for \$8 per day, including breakfast. I buy at the markets and cook my evening meal with everyone in the community kitchen. I like it here, and it's just like a big family.

I've been away from home now for nearly four months and only about three weeks here in Paris. It's just gone so fast. I look back and wonder where the time has gone. It's about 8 pm now and still very light. I love living in Paris and feel like I really belong here.

My cassette recorder is so good; I'm always playing my music, and I practice French with it too. You know I'm so busy with people, work and going out, that I look forward to being on my own occasionally. I would never have thought that would be the case. I spent this morning studying in the gardens, and tonight I might go for a walk, stop for coffee in a café, and have an early night.

It's spring in Paris, and it's beautiful – so green, with everything in bud. Paris in the spring is truly a picture. All the cafés and restaurants have moved a lot of their tables outside now onto the sidewalk – it's lovely. Well, I'll close now and go for that walk.

All my love, always.

Diary, 14th April 1980

I mentioned before that Henri and I drove out to *Chartres* about fifty miles out of Paris. It was lovely. He gets so incredibly immersed in all the affectivity of it all. I feel that sometimes he's in a different world. I still can't get used to the way he's so absent-minded with everything except

culture. We had to leave the *Grande Cluny* early so that we could find where he parked the car. It's an adventure in itself looking for it. When he's driving and doesn't know where to go, he stops in the middle of the road and figures the guy behind him has to stop too. When they do, he gets out of the car and asks them for directions! Heaps of style but no class! Then in a block or so, he's forgotten. Incredible!

Henri is like two personalities – sensitive and strong, yet so absent-minded and 'in another world,' but he has something special. He wanted us to spend the night together in *Chartres*, but no thanks. Been there, seen this, done that. No thank you. Well, we must have arrived back in Paris at 5 am. Needless to say, I went to sleep in the car.

The next day we met again and went to *Rouen*. There I learned Henri was thirty-nine, not thirty-four. He has to analyse everything culturally, logically, and emotionally. I analyse, but only in terms of feeling, and not consciously.

Well, I slept on the way home from *Rouen*, and we got home at 5 am again. I had to change my *Alliance* lecture time from 8:30 to 10:30 am. I had a bugger of a day at work, and fronted up at the *Café de Cluny* at 7 pm, very tired. We just had a drink and I went home and got my gear. I didn't feel uncomfortable at all. I knew, but still, I should have had my head read. Why! After my last little episode! But it was nice just being close.

Fancy being married – I don't suppose it makes you feel that much different. I don't believe it – here I am in Paris almost three weeks; top job, busy with friends, and seeing a married man to boot. Well ... I hope when someone reads this I can explain, because it's not quite as deadly as it reads.

Diary, 21st April 1980

Well, it's a week since I last wrote in my diary.

Today I got up, treated myself to breakfast of coffee and croissant, and then went to work. Henri couldn't see me yesterday, Sunday, because his family was coming home from holidays. I had a case of the downs in

the afternoon and only wanted to be by myself. I suppose I was realising the change that had occurred with Henri. I sort of expected it, but it was very abrupt. I suppose I naively thought differently. One thing I do know, the French attitude toward many things is confusing.

So, I spent the morning with my friend Anton. He knocked on my door and woke me at 11 am, and we went over to the gardens to study our French. It was good until I got sick of feeling cramped and closed in. I just wanted to be alone. I wonder what's the matter with me.

I told Anton I wanted to be by myself. I felt so suffocated that I almost ended up in tears. I was tired and had been working all week too. I just wanted to be alone. Told him we would catch up later, and then left to walk to the *Notre Dame la Seine* and around that area. Had tea at *Cluny* and enjoyed being in my own company.

When I got back to the house, Anton confronted me with, "What happened?" and he walked off in a huff. I don't blame him, but I know what I want. I'm a little crazy, but sanely so. He ignored me again at breakfast this morning. Bugger him – that's all I can say. I'm not here for hassles. He's a lovely person though. But then again, so am I. It doesn't work when you always try to bend to another person's needs and neglect your own. I just have to have the space to breathe.

Today I worked at the other perfume shop – Eden on *Rue de Rivoli* near the *Tuileries Gardens*. It's much more relaxing and not so busy there. Tonight at the *Café Odeon* on my way home from work at 8 pm, I read my mail over coffee and sat there for about an hour. I bought an alarm clock and shopped at the *Monoprix* for food too.

Tomorrow I move to *Anvers*.



It was at this point, for some reason, Rainey stopped writing in her diary. The next and final entry was dated 21st October 1980. Perhaps Henri was the catalyst for no longer recording her thoughts and feelings in her diary. They were no longer seeing each other as before, but remained friends for a time.

She expressed much in her letters to me and also in her poetry and prose. The rest of her story is told through her letters, the many loose pages of her writing I have found, our talks and time together, my knowledge of what was happening in her life from this point, my intuition as a mother and later, speaking with some of her friends.



Letter, 5th May 1980

Dear Mum,

Happy Mother's Day! I hope you have a lovely one because I'll be thinking of you all day.

I'm tired today because Henri drove me to Dover, crossing on the ferry; I needed to get a new re-entry stamp in my passport. We left Paris Saturday after work at 6 pm and arrived in Dover at 5:00 the next morning. We spent a lovely day there ... so relaxing. Left Dover at 9:30 pm to return to Paris at 4:30 am ... all in the one day, and still alive to tell the tale.

I had to hurry because of the expiry date on the stamps in my passport. So now I have my re-entry stamps to France updated. I'm still here illegally as of May 4th but it's a chance – better than nothing – so I'm pleased.

That was Saturday night and Sunday. I'm having an early night tonight.

I'd like to go there again. Actually, it felt very strange to be where I felt at home. Not that I've been out of England that long, but the time in Paris has been completely different to anything, and so intense, that it seemed ages. Anyway, I know I sound strange, but I enjoyed speaking in English. It was like a little game for me; such a different feeling to be able to speak English with ease and to know that you will be understood and get a reply.

I enjoyed that. Dover is a little country border town, very nice, but it was good to return to Paris. I love living here.

I hope you get this card on Mother's Day Mum.

All my love always and especially on Mother's Day.

Postcard, 11th May 1980

I'm sitting on the bank of the Seine, soaking up this wonderful sun. Boats go past all the time – it's very relaxing here. I bought some bread, salami and cheese and had a little picnic. I also wrote another poem. I must write them up. I think I'm getting sunburnt!

New leaves are covering the trees and some already have blossoms. It's so lovely here in the spring, so fresh, clean and new. I just love the flowers and the new growth this time of year, so much. On the bridge a little further along, a man is playing a piano accordion and singing French songs. I walked very far this morning. I really feel like I belong here now.

Love you.