



# (AN)ARCHIVE

CHILDHOOD, MEMORY, AND THE COLD WAR

EDITED BY MNEMOZIN



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# Breakfast Across Borders<sup>1</sup>

Stefanie Weiss

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*She goes down a stone staircase. She wears pink pajamas, shorts with a shirt, and has long hair. The light enters the room through the dining room window on the left side, the living room area and the stone fireplace are still in darkness. The floor is almost black. She turns right and then again to the right and enters the kitchen, which is large and wide. The sun begins to enter through the window above the sink. The stove is at the bottom of the kitchen. There is a long L-shaped bar covered with tiles painted with blue birds, in the middle a wooden table. Her place is the one with the wall behind, she does not like the open space behind her. She approaches the cupboard under the left side of the stove, takes out a blue pewter pitcher to boil water, from the top drawer takes a thermos can that her mother brought on the return trip from Germany, which they left after the German grandmother died. Then she goes to the big cupboard in the shape of a triangle and takes out a coffee filter from a green and red cardboard box that says Melita. She opens the top drawer again, takes out a white porcelain filter that has stripes inside and at the bottom has been dyed with the color of coffee. She puts the porcelain filter on top of the white thermos can from which she already had removed the lid, puts the Melita filter inside the porcelain filter that belongs to the grandmother and is one of the things they carried across the sea. She brings coffee from the cupboard, which is in a can of Lebkuchen. She likes the smell when she opens the can. Then she pours five tablespoons in the filter. Now she goes to one of the drawers and takes out four oval wicker tablecloths, puts one on each side of the round table, mom's place, brother's place, dad's place and her own place. She takes out four medium plates of the Corniware dishes that her mother bought in San Antonio Texas and that 'does not break'.*

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1 This is a childhood memory produced as part of the Reconnect/Recollect project discussed in the introduction to this book.

*The plates have a green line that goes around the edge and then is surrounded by small flowers; now she takes out four coffee plates from the same tableware and puts them on the upper right side of the plate in each place, then goes for the cups and puts them on top of the coffee plates. Now she takes out four forks, four knives and four small teaspoons. Meanwhile, her mother has gone down, they greeted each other, kissed each other on the cheek. She felt her mother's large, warm chest in the hug. Her mother has begun to prepare machaca with egg. For that, she is cutting onions into strips, then putting them to fry in the pan and it smells great. After that, the mother is threading the dried meat they bought last time they went to visit the grandparents in Monterrey. The meat was bought at a greenhouse in the great-grandmother's village where the meat hung from a clothesline. The brother comes down and says hello, he sees what each one is doing and starts to chop a melon. The door of the house opens, it is her father who comes in with a smile and a bag of bread. He takes out a basket and puts the bolillos and sweet bread in there. The water is boiling now. This is what this family does every weekend, they can change roles in preparing breakfast, but they will maintain this breakfast get-together as an important thing across borders.*