

Luba Braude

From „A LETTER TO MY CHILDREN“

June 1991

I am not a writer, I never was good with words, but while I still can remember what happened in mine mishpoche (family) I like to write this down.



At last mother's wish came true, after four boys a little girl was born, all five children have blue eyes.

1927 was depression year, and I was born one week before our Jewish Passover, this didn't make life easier. Mother adapted very well to her hardships. As a girl she finished college in turn of the century in St. Petersburg and received a good Jewish and religion education between five boys and three girls. Haja Kaplan married Solomon Gordon second generation Estonian. After marriage parents settled in Narva on the boarder of Estonia and Russia.

In 1917 parents ran away from the Russian revolution and settled in Revel - Estonia. Revel was a little port on the Baltic sea. In 1918 independence year changed Revel to Tallinn and since then been the capital of Estonia.

After an old Jewish custom new born child should be named after deceased ancestor, so another Libe-Male was born. Libe in Russian language is Luba and this Luba is the third between her cousins, while she was the youngest from them all, always was called the little Luba.

As much as I can remember I had a happy childhood, my four brothers spoiled me with affection and love. Binja, the youngest of them, and five years older than me took me always to kindergarten and brought me back home.

In kindy, with my friend Sunda we always took part in all school plays and especially in musicals. I used to remember very well the tunes, but not so good the lyrics, while Sunda remembered very well the lyrics but not so good the tunes. So we always were together.



The two oldest brothers Jasha and Gabbi were very talented in music. Jasha couldn't finish the conservatorium because of financial difficulties, but he finished book-keeping classes and he went to work in a saw mill. He was managing this mill as long as I can remember. Gabbi won a scholarship, finished conservatorium with top marks in violin, piano and composition. We all loved listening to Gabbi playing the violin and Jasha accompany him on the piano. In yearly 30's we changed apartments a lot. I still remember the apartment in Raua street and in this dwelling, vaguely, Isi's Bar-mitzvah and then I remember very good in this street next to the bakery. I turned then 5 years old and mother bought a little cake for me to take to the kindy to celebrate my birthday.



Gordon family in 1936. Left to right: Jakob, Haja Gordon (Kaplan), Benjamin, Liba Braude (Gordon), Israel, Solomon, Gabriel.

Father used to make uniform, hats for the army but in depression years parents learned to make tailored men's trousers for market or for special shops. Papa cut and pressed, while mother machined them. In summer season mother had a girl helping her. Sometimes father took coupons instead of money for payment, he was able to buy cheaper shoes for all the family.

When I turned 7 years old we shifted to Tompi st. N 27-1, it was walking distance from Kadriorg (Catherine) park and to the beach.

In 1710 year Peter the Great concurred Estonia, he then built in Tallinn a most beautiful palace for Catherine the Great. Some of the palace is under National trust, there is a museum and Peter's sauna is still standing there.

In summer mother will wake me up early morning and we will go for a swim, walk through the park, admire the flowers and listen to the birds singing. Then she will rush back to the sewing machine. On Saturdays we will stay a little longer until lunch time, we had to be home by then, father will come back from shule (synagogue).

In the afternoon parents will take me again to the park and listen to the band and buy me an ice cream.

In Tompi street was a two storey house, four apartments were there. We had the ground floor apartment, three rooms, little entrance hall, kitchen, bathroom and a little cellar.

In entrance room was Binja's study desk and a book shelf. In winter this room was very cold and we hang there our all overcoats and kept the boots there. In the main room was a big dutch oven for heating in winter, big dining table with chairs, piano. On the piano - violins, a bookshelf. At one of the walls was standing a large buffet or a side board, the top reached the ceiling. Jasha, Gabbi and Isi slept around the table. At night the boys will put up beds on trestles. These trestles were kept in the bathroom. We never had a proper bath in the apartments. This room was kept more for storage.

Once a week we went to sauna, every day we washed under a tap. Mother and myself used this bathroom for daily wash. Parents had their bedroom, where we kept all our clothing and beddings. In third room parents had two sewing machines, a big heavy table where dad did the cutting and pressing of the trousers. In week days we had all our meals on this table, when I was 9-10 years old mine job was to put before each meal the oil cloth on the table. In a corner of this room I had mine bed and a little cupboard for mine school uniforms. Binja slept next to me on a folding bed until Jasha went to the army, then he was promoted to sleep in main room. Friday night, Sabbath dinner and high holidays meals we ate always in the main room.

I have lovely memories of Friday night and Sabbath. In winter, when we came home from school, you could smell the Sabbath cooking, the beautiful chalas and the cheese cake for Saturday afternoon when the aunties came to visit, while the man were in shule. The fish and cimes (stewed carrots with prunes). I'll help set the Sabbath table. Mother will make for each of us a little chala and I had my own little candle sticks. Saturday was mother's rest day, so when papa came from shule he will wash his hands and take out a handful of cutlery, put on the table and shout the blessing on the bread, then mother will come out from her bedroom and serve midday meal. On Friday we never took of the table cloth after a meal, left the candle sticks on the table until Sabbath finished.

In summer time we will have a light fish meal about 6 o'clock and kiddush about 9 o'clock. On Sabbath midday meal we will have cold veal, salad and strawberries or compote.

From 1935 we had only three boys at home. When Jasha returned from the

army service, then Gabbi went for army service, after 18 months of army service he continued to study music, and somebody in the Jewish community sponsored financially and he went to France, to Paris conservatorium.

Before he went to Paris, Gabbi organised a band of seven players, he called this band "The Silver Seven." Mother helped to make little banners, embroidered "Silver Seven" on each of them. Mostly they played in summer months in the resorts, in winter months in schools or clubs in the evenings, dance music. The last summer before Gabbi went to Paris, he played in Hapsalu. Sometimes parents got cheap railway tickets, we will go for the day there. Mother was so proud of Gabbi, he had his own 'orchestra'.



Jasha was working still in the mill, he didn't earn much, but we always had cheap fire wood for heating in the winter and for the cooking stove and hot water.

Isi didn't finish high school, he went to work in a men's department store, started as a message and delivery boy and after a couple of years was promoted and working in the store. He was providing the family with cheap underwear, socks and handkerchiefs.

In 1937, Gabbi came to visit us and celebrated mine 10th birthday. Gabbi brought me a hand watch. I was still wearing it in late 60's.

Binja and me attended the same Jewish school. He was in high school, I was in primary school. Many times we were in the same school play. Sunda lived very close to our place, so we always went together to school and back, did homework together and sometimes she will stay all day. But when we went to our Maccabee gymnastic practice, we always past Sunda's parents butcher shop to have a couple slices of salami. Twice a week late afternoon we had practice in our school building.

These years were the happiest in my childhood. Gabbi, before he went to Paris, he taught me and Binja the piano and the violin. Binja loved it, practised for hours the piano and the violin in front of the mirror like Gabbi used to do it. I wasn't very keen on practice, but I always had a love for music. On Saturdays or Sunday winter evenings Gabbi and Jasha played the music, mother will sing. It was just beautiful.

We lived very modest, we never went hungry, fresh fruit, apples and pears we had only in season, that means in autumn, and all kind of berries. Mother used to make jams and preserves for winter. When we used to visit our aunties or friends, or they will come to us , mother will compare the quality of their conserve with ours. Passover time Jasha or Isik will buy "Jaffa" oranges, Isik liked to peel the orange, made a little basket and put the orange segments in.

Parents never spent any money on sweets, but when I collected enough of clean paper bags from sugar, salt or any other items, I took them to the corner shop, the shop keeper will give me a little bag with lollies.

Uncle Aaron, when ever he visited us, mostly for high holidays dinner (he never married) brought me a little block of chocolate.

In winter school holidays we will go with Binja to an afternoon show or play or children's ballet. With Sunda we will go to Shirley Temple pictures.

In next door apartment lived Mr and Mrs Wark, they had an only daughter Linda, she was one year younger then me, a very sickly girl. Winter time we will play in the snow or go skating and she will finish up with a cold, had to stay in bed for a few days.

Before Christmas I helped Linda to decorate the Christmas tree, to learn the Christmas carols and to put up a Christmas play. Summer time I will accompany her to a summer house in pine forest, her aunty Lily looked after us. Lily made sure, that she won't cook with pork. Linda's parents had a small warehouse, they used to deliver on motorbike stationary to little shops. Mother was happy to let me play with Linda, our family could never afford to go away from the city for a summer holiday.

In 1940 the Soviet Union came to "liberate" Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Parents had more work and better paid. Jasha was still working in the same mill, Gabbi was in Paris, Isik was doing army service. Binja was in high school, I was in grade 6. The Russians closed the Hebrew school, so we had to study all subjects in Jewish (Yiddish). Jewish children had to leave English college and French lyceums and and other private schools and transfer to the only Jewish school. But it didn't last long, when the war started between Russia and Germany, they closed the school. It was a sunny Sunday morning 21/6/41 when the planes were crossing the sky.

Gabbi was in Paris. Jasha and Isik were already in the army. It must have been end of June, one very late evening when two Russian soldiers came with a letter to mobilise Binja to the army. Next morning dad cut his beautiful curls and I cried.

Late July 1941 the Soviets asked the local people who would like to evacuate to deep Russia, the local wealthy Jews refused to go, because they were waiting for "gentleman German" to liberate them from the Soviet regime and to return them back their shops and factories which the Soviets confiscated in 1940. No one believed the stories the Polish refugees told us. All Jews, particular from Tallinn, could been saved, because Tallinn fell only in the end of August. Our Rabbi refused to flee, because many of his congregation stayed behind.

Our boys were in the army anyway, so Jasha organised our evacuation, he brought a truck and put our personal belongings, pillows blankets and on the last minute mama's sewing machine. More valuable furniture and the piano Jasha gave next door to the Wark family. Our luggage was put in the freight wagons and we travelled in passenger train. It was a very slow and long journey. The railway going

east to Chelyabinsk (it's on the border of Ural mountains and Siberia) were blocked with army echelons going west. We had to buy food whenever we got the opportunity on the little railway stations. Actually, in the beginning our echelon suppose to go to Ulyanovsk on the Volga river, but by the time we came close to Volga river the Germans were very close to Moscow, so we travelled further to Uvelka about 100 km from Chelyabinsk. A little settlement with a railway station. People came to see the refugees and particularly to see the Jews, the locals have never met Jews. The local people transported us all to school, we stayed there until we found our own accommodation. Most of the refugees run away south to Caucasia to the warmer climate. We stopped in kolkhoz Katajevka, about 2 km from station, an ex- Cossack took us in. His wife was fascinated with our underwear and our nightdresses, she couldn't get over that we undress and dress again to go to bed. The 'Cossack' or we called him dedushka, noticed how dad was praying in the mornings, he confessed that in his younger days he was involved in pogromes. When he found out that we have three boys on the front he changed his attitude to us. He was teaching me the Russian language, found customers for mother, sewing and making all kind of garments, and dedushka will tell them how much to pay.

Dedushka and his wife were very simple people and very superstitious, when babushka went milking the cow in the early morning hours, sometimes she will find the cow's tail twisted or plated, she was convinced that the devil did it at night, so she will give mother a little dish with lard, as a charity suggestion. Mother was happy to have some lard to fry potatoes for me. My parents haven't touched meat until we came back to Tallinn in August 1944.

By winter dedushka found us an empty hut. There was a big stove in the hut, enough room for a table and couple benches and two beds. Behind the hut there was a plot of land enough for a vegetable garden. My parents had to learn how to grow vegetables, to recognise the weeds from the plants. Outside the village the kolkhoz gave land how much we wanted to grow potatoes. It was very hard work, everything was done manually, digging, specially weeding, but we had plenty of vegetables for round the year. Under the floor we had a cellar where we kept the potatoes, carrots, pumpkins. Garlic and onions were hanging in the outer house where papa dried his tobacco. In autumn we collected enough mushrooms to marinate in big vat for winter. Parents used to do sewing for village people and take payments with a loaf of bread, a jug of milk or a dish of butter or a cup of oil, then mother will make potato latkes. For three years we didn't have meat or fish, but we didn't hear the bombs or the Nazis. In the summer months we all worked on fields, even the school children had to help. In winter father worked in factory sewing, they made clothing for the army. By winter I learned Russian language enough to go to school.

Mother had a brother in Moscow and a sister in Leningrad. Through them we kept contact with the boys in the army. Jasha was in the working battalion, they

repaired the roads. Isik and Binja were in the reserve. Isik got a few days leave, so he came to visit us. Mother nearly fainted when he came through our gate.

From early May to end of September everyone was working in the fields, digging or weeding, watering. Father was helping in the black-smith shop. Women and school children worked in the fields. In autumn, start of the school year, high school children had to present a certificate from any kolkhoz that they worked in the fields during the school holidays.

In October we will go with the school to different places to help collect potatoes or sugar beets. We loved to go away from home, firstly the kolkhoz had to feed the youngsters, and at the end of the day we will make a big camp fire, sing songs, bake potatoes and sugar beet until our stomachs couldn't take any more.

In Katajevka I had a friend Elia Sazonov. She and her mother came from Voronezh. Elia's father was in the army, mother worked as a librarian in Voronezh, in Uvelka she found a job in one of the government offices. We had with Elia a lot in common. We were the same age, here in Katajevka we were in the same class; back home we both played the piano, more or less on the same level. At school we both had the highest marks in algebra, but I had the lowest in Russian language, but highest in German language. Elia was the highest in Russian language and literature but not so good in German language, so we helped each other. While Russia was in war with Germany, it was compulsory at school to learn German language. For me it was easy because Estonian alphabet is latin, similar to German, and we spoke Yiddish with German dialect.

The school was at the railway station, about 3 km from our kolkhoz. While we were walking we always discussed our homework. We didn't have any school books or exercise books. We bought pamphlets from cooperative shop and wrote down the notes between the printed lines. Elia was better and quicker than me, so I used to copy from her after school. Sometime we will receive a parcel with clean paper, father will try and make a little exercise book. In winter 41-42 grade 7 and 8 went to school in the morning shift, but in 42-43 the school had more children and the school day was organised in two shifts, primary classes in the morning, classes 7-10 in the afternoon. So by the time we finished school, especially in November, December months, when the days are very short, was dark and the road was very close to forest, in winter we could hear wolfs howling. It was very frightening. In winter 43 Elia and her mother settled in Uvelka, so in winter I stayed many times overnight in uncle Abram's place, uncle Abram came in the same echelon that we came, but he settled with his wife Nusha, daughters Anetta, Nesia and grandchildren Zipa, Yosi in Uvelka. He was tailoring for the big bosses. Anetta got a job in the coupon office, so their house never was lacking of bread, sugar or soap, but when I stayed overnight I always brought my own food.

Fresh water we carried from the village well. In summer it was always a

pleasant gathering place, but in the winter was always ice around the well, very slippery to carry two buckets on a joke, but we did it, this was the only way to get some water. We never went hungry. Mother made bread from mashed potatoes, bran and mixed with powdered potatoe peels.

In summer 43 dad got a job to provide the factory sauna with veniki, they are made from silver birch leaves little brushes and you beat lightly of course your body in the steam, it's good for your circulation. So all three of us were involved in this job and we got first time coupons for bread. Papa brought the first two loaves of bread on a Saturday morning. At midday meal he blessed the bread and had a good cry. It took me quite a long time to understand why.

I was growing up without friends, outings or dancing, any other teenage pleasures, but at least I got good education, no bombs, no Nazis.

In 1942 arrived to Katajevka another Jewish family from Ukraine. Mr. Rabinovich and two daughters, they worked in military factory, they had good food coupons, so we were able to exchange vegetables from our garden especially little cucumbers for pickles for a cup of oil, sugar or a bar of soap. Mr. Rabinovitch taught me about our levakh (Jewish calendar), how to record our high holidays and how many days are in the months. He was very religious. On Saturdays and high holidays he will come to our hut to pray with papa.

In 1944 Tallinn was liberated, I received first letter from Linda. Jasha and Binja were there in the Russian army. Isik was in Sverdlovsk working in a factory where he met Biba and married her. Jasha came from the war with a wife Lidiya and a little girl Shura. Later in 1945 or 46 we found out through HIAS or was it The International Red Cross that the family in Paris and our Gabbi survived the Nazis. They were hiding themselves in the Pyrenees.

The few Estonian people which were around Uvelka started to organise the trip back home, so they got a cattle wagon, the men put up planks and made berths around the wagon; each family had its own corner. In the middle of the wagon was a little stove where we boiled water or warmed up the little food what we had. So in the end of October 1944 we left kolkhoz Katajevka. The local people gave us a nice send off. They put all our belongings on an ox-cart, gave for our journey dry biscuits and took us to the railway station. The railway master gave each family coupons for bread and for children powdered milk and powdered eggs. The send off was very sad. The journey west was very slow. The war was still on, the railways were busy transporting troops to the west. Sometimes our wagon will stay a few days on a side line. The men will go to the railway master and demand food on our coupons. Instead to give the 20 people food he will rearrange our wagon, put it on the front line, and we will move again. But sometimes the men were able to buy from black market concentrated soup, made in USA, then everybody was happy. On every station we were able to get boiling water and little wood for fire.

We arrived to Kivioli karantine in middle of December. This place is a few hours drive north from Tallinn. It was very cold and heavily snowing. We were all infested with body lice. It took a lot of cleaning and fumigating until we got it clean. Mother's legs were swollen, from sitting nearly two months in one position. It took her nearly a week laying in bed to recover from it. Dad helped in the kitchen, chop wood and carry water, in repayment he was able to bring mother food to her bedside. Jasha was in Tallinn and kept a track of our movements. In those days to get a living permit for Tallin was impossible. Tallin was and is a big port and the country was still at war. Even our family were old Tallin citizens, we couldn't get a permit to stay in Tallinn. Jasha found Mr Wark (Linda's father), he worked in the shire where they registered new arrivals. So the Wark family gave us one room from their flat. They were the caretakers of their own building. Before 1940 it belonged to them. There were four flats in this building. So when the Soviets confiscated, the Warks were lucky to stay as caretakers. It was situated in Nemme suburb, about 15 km from Tallinn. Mr Wark registered us on his accommodation so we got a permit to stay in Tallinn. Jasha, Lidiya and 2 years old Shura were staying in the army barracks. After couple of weeks with Mr Wark's help Jasha found in a private house in Nemme a three room flat. It was on the second floor. The house was surrounded with berry shrubs and cherry trees and was in walking distance to pine forest.

The first room was our sitting room, one room was Jasha's, Lidiya's and Shura's, in the third room we had three beds and a wardrobe. A very big kitchen with a wooden stove. Most of our meals we had in the kitchen. Wark family kept our piano, dinning table, chairs, wardrobes. We were lucky to have them back.

Papa found work in the same sewing cooperative where he was working before the war, making army and navy caps. I went back to school to finish high school. Because I studied all subjects in Russian language for the last three years, it was easier for me to enrol to a Russian high school.

We communicated with the city on electric railway. Mother insisted that I'll resume my piano lessons. Schools were very overcrowded, so the high school classes attended in the afternoon. In the morning I had piano lessons, have some lunch and then to school so the days were very busy, some mornings I'll have time to do home work or practice the piano. Jasha always managed to get free tickets to some piano concerts or chamber music, he will meet me at the school and we will enjoy ourselves. Lidiya didn't like classical music. But our mother still had a lovely voice and taught our little Shura many Russian songs. The three year old Shura bribed the Bobba many times with a song to get an extra biscuit. She was a beautiful child with curly blond hair.

When spring 45 was approaching us, our parents found a little vegetable plot on outskirts of the city. Mostly they were growing potatoes and cabbages for winter, they attended the plot on regular intervals. The plot was very close to army barracks.

So one day when they were crossing the army field a soldier was running after them, they were shocked and frightened what ever did they do wrong. But Leib Epstein (this was the soldiers name) explained, he heard parents speaking in Yiddish which he hasn't spoken since he left Poland in 1941. Parents were very happy to meet a Jewish soldier, invited him to our place, Leib asked permission to bring his best friend Majrim (Misha in Russian language) with whom he ran away from the Nazis and finished up fighting in the Russian army. Couple of days later the men got a pass and came visiting us. Leib was sergeant, lost all his family during the Nazi regime. Misha was an officer, lieutenant, and he lost the family in the war, except sister Tarda and brother Solomon, they left Poland in 1936 and settled in Canada.

In may 1945 we celebrated the end of the war all together. Isia and Binja came home, both well, but stayed in the army because of work and accommodation. Through Red Cross we found Gabbi somewhere in France, but in those Stalin's years we were not allowed to correspond outside Soviet Union, so we lost contact with him. Now, while I am uniting this book, I have tried very hard through HIAS organisation and through the Red Cross to find him, and resume correspondence, but not such luck.

From my old school friends only a few survived the war, one of them was Jaffa Rosinko, from Binja's class Chone Aranovich, he was an officer still in the army, we went out a lot before he was transferred to Leningrad.

To our school finishing party I invited Misha and from then on we made a foursome Leib and Jaffa, me and Misha. He always came with a little gift, nicely dressed, most beautiful smile on his face. Mother made Leib and Misha very welcome in our house. Misha found a new family in our household.

After I finished high school I wanted to study medicine, but there wasn't any medical school in Tallinn, the closest was in Leningrad. By autumn mother was ailing from cancer, so I couldn't leave home. I started to work in the same workshop where father was working, as a message girl, after a few months I started to learn dressmaking.

Misha had a motorbike with a side cart, on the weekends and whenever the weather permitted we drove with his co-workers to Pirita or to forest for picnic. Misha never saw a sea before he came to Tallinn, so he was so fascinated by the beauty of the sea, and the long summer days when ever we had time we went to Pirita. As a child on our summer camps I learned to swim, so comparing with Misha I was quite a good swimmer. I kept working in the same place and playing the piano. Jasha, as an ex-serviceman, was able to buy an old little house with a little garden, so he shifted out from Nemme flat. Isi and Biba were able to get our old apartment in Tompi street. Binja came to live with us and sometimes Misha staved over the weekend.

Jaffa left Tallinn, Leib met Ruth Sher at his work, she was working there as a men's hairdresser, both were very lonely, they married in November 1946.

Mother was ailing very quickly. Misha took her to the best military hospital with the best doctors and professors, but she had advanced cancer of the liver, so she wanted to be on her only daughter's wedding.

I was going around with Misha for the last 18 months, and when he proposed to me I realised that he is 12 years older. On a Sunday morning Leib was with him, when he asked father for my hand and father gave his consent. But I wasn't ready to get married and especially with a 12 years older man. So Binja had a long talk with me, do I love Misha, yes I do, if he had lied, I would not know the correct age would I have married him? Suppose so, then what is the problem? I decided to get married, while I'm waiting this story we have been happily married nearly 45 years.

So we started to prepare ourselves to our wedding. Misha was demobilised from army service, but he stayed in the navy workshop, where they repaired all cars for this unit. He was the technical supervisor and in charge of this workshop. He got coupon to make civilian clothing and he made himself a beautiful suit. Father was still making for the navy white sailor's hats, from there he got material for my wedding frock. A friend of mine from technical school made it beautifully. Now it is left to find a veil. Mother found some gauze from curtains, and Anna, my cousin, made a beautiful veil.

We decided to get married on the 31st of December 1946, so we will have at least one day off work, the 1st of January. The biggest problem how to get food for our wedding. All the family helped to cook and bake under mother's supervision, she sat on a chair in the kitchen and told us what to do. Mostly the food we got from black market. Misha got from somewhere 10 litres 90° spirit, which he was hoping to dilute and make vodka. The man who was delivering the spirit could not start the car, so he started with a hand starter, after using it he threw the starter into the back of the car and broke the 10 litre bottle, what a problem we had, lucky, Misha had many good friends so we got a new supply.

In the morning of the 31st of December, we went to a registry office and registrar married us, Leib was our witness. In the evening we had the chupa in our house. This was the first religious wedding in Tallinn after the war. We were lucky we found our old chazan, Gurevitz, who performed our ceremony. My parents were so happy, the only daughter and the only one from the five children had a proper religious ceremony, and I walked under the canopy around Misha seven times and then I set on a chair and Misha uncovered my face. After the ceremony, the boys helped to put away the chupa and then everybody sat down eating and drinking. We had about seventy people at the wedding. Most of them were our relations, who survived the war and came back to Tallinn, from Misha's side no relations whatsoever, but his officers friends and co-workers. Of course Jasha was playing on our old piano and we danced away the night. We met the 1947 half drunk. We found uncle Mulia asleep on the steps in the passage. After our wedding I dyed my frock in pale blue and

I wore it to all our dances. Misha danced well and he taught me all the new dancing steps.

After our wedding mother deteriorated very quickly, she died at the end of February, one week before Purim. It was Friday, she helped to chop up the carrots for cimes, in the evening she blessed the Sabbath candles and late in the night died, Misha was with her, I couldn't take it. After mum's death I was lost, the funeral was on Sunday, a very cold winter day, how much I cried and screamed, I couldn't bring her back, I wanted to ask forgiveness for all the nasty things I did as a child, but it was too late. The almighty in heaven knew only how I was lost. Lucky Misha was and is a very devoted husband and he helped to get over the grief.

After a couple of months, when I found out that I'm pregnant we changed our apartment from Nemme to the city. We had luck. Three large rooms, bathroom, kitchen and next to the kitchen a little room where father had his sewing machine and worked there.

In next street was a technical college. I enrolled there, finished as a dressmaker. As I mentioned before, I couldn't study medicine, and this college was very convenient, I attended during my pregnancy, they gave me pre and post natal leave.

It was walking distance from our apartment. Lunch time I'll go home and feed Ima, Frieda was looking after him.

After 12 months of mourning father remarried, I think auntie Niuta, father's sister, made the matchmaking. I was very annoyed with father when he told us that he is getting married. But I reminded myself, when mother on this particular Friday morning called me to her bedside and said that she is going to die today, father will remarry, let him, he needs a woman, but make sure that his new wife won't get mother's things.

Frieda was an old maid, never been married, very quiet person, she tried very hard to please me, so she looked after Ima very well. After a few months I was lucky to find a full time nanny. But that later.