

MARGOT DEMOPOULOS

# Patrick Leigh Fermor

## We May Just Forget to Die

I.

“*E* *ENGLISCHER STUDENT . . . zu Fuss nach Konstantinopel . . .*” eighteen-year-old Patrick Leigh Fermor told the kindly woman sewing by the fire that snowy night at Heidelberg’s Red Ox. He sat at a nearby table, recording the day’s events in a notebook, hunting for German words in a dictionary, consulting maps for the next leg of the journey, “thawing and tingling, with wine, bread, and cheese handy,” as melting snow pooled around his boots.

“Konstantinopel?” Frau Spengler said. “*Oh Wèh!*” O woe! So far!

Far indeed, especially in the snowdrifts of mid-winter, but there he was —undaunted, spirits high, finally setting out on his own path—nearly two months into his journey to cross Europe on foot, with Constantinople the terminus. Nearly forty-five years later, he would publish the story of that journey in *A Time of Gifts*.

In London he had yearned to heave off the “gloom and perplexity [that] descended with the start of the winter.” He was aiming for Sandhurst, but “the idea of [his] unsuitability for peace-time soldiering had begun to impinge. More serious still, the acceptance of two poems and the publication of one of them—admittedly, only on foxhunting—had fired [him] with the idea of authorship.”

Publication? Eighteen? Poor lad. Having been bitten, his fate was sealed.

He wrote about the moment when inspiration for the journey first struck. “About lamp-lighting time at the end of a wet November day, I was peering morosely at the dog-eared pages on my writing table and then through the panes at the streaming reflections of Shepherd Market . . .” when it came “with the speed and the completeness of a Japanese paper flower in a tumbler. To change scenery; abandon London and England and set out across Europe like a tramp . . . A new life! Freedom! Something to write about!”

At the Red Ox, Frau Spengler wouldn’t hear of him leaving the next day or the next, as it was the New Year holiday. “You can’t go wandering

about in the snow on Sylvesterabend!” Her husband heard the exchange. “Stay with us,” he said. “You must be our guest.”

Paddy’s second night at the inn foreshadowed what was coming. A “lint-haired young man at the next table” glared at him. “He suddenly rose with a stumble, came over, and said: ‘So? *Ein Engländer?*’ with a sardonic smile. ‘*Wunderbar!*’ Then his face changed to a mask of hate. Why had we stolen Germany’s colonies? Why shouldn’t Germany have a fleet and a proper army? Did I think Germany was going to take orders from a country that was run by the Jews? A catalogue of accusation followed ‘Adolf Hitler will change all that,’ he ended. ‘*Perhaps you’ve heard the name?*’”

Fritz Spengler heard the outburst and led the man out the door. He told Paddy, “I’m so sorry. You see what it’s like.”

Hitler had been named chancellor the year before, at the end of January 1933, and the Nazification of the Fatherland had escalated throughout the year with book burnings in pursuit of the new German culture, prohibitions against the performance of works by Jewish composers, Jewish producers, directors, and actors, and issuance of a mandate that newspaper editors in the Third Reich had to be politically and racially “clean.”

Later, Paddy wrote that he often thought about the time he had spent with Herr and Frau Spengler and their son Fritz, calling it “one of several high points of recollection that failed to succumb to the obliterating moods of war.” Decades after the war, Paddy sent a letter to the inn to ask about the family. Fritz’s son, born in 1939, replied. His grandparents were dead, his father had died in Norway (where the first battalion of Paddy’s own regiment was heavily engaged at the time) and was buried at Trondheim in 1940, just six years after he had shoved the rabid lint-haired Nazi out the door of the Red Ox.

By the time Hitler’s armies wrenched the Polish border, converging on Warsaw from the north, south, and west, Paddy had traveled from, politically speaking, “I didn’t give a damn,” to joining up and distinguishing himself in a long and brutal war. He was awarded the OBE in 1943 and the DSO in 1944.

That early journey—transformational and rich with substance—grounded him all his life. He had spent time educating himself the ideal way, *in context*, learning languages as he encountered new sounds, absorbing history as it revealed itself in the landscape, in the architecture, and in the company of the inheritors of those who had shaped it. About some regions he knew little, but travel itself had taught him more than he could ever acquire from just books. “All at once I was surrounded by

fresh clues—the moulding on a window, the cut of a beard, overheard syllables, an unfamiliar shape of a horse or a hat, a shift of accent, the taste of a new drink, the occasional unfamiliar lettering—the accumulating fragments were beginning to cohere like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.”

He played bicycle polo, sheltered in abandoned barns (“huddled in a ball with my arms round my knees, stirring every few minutes to stamp and flap my arms . . .”) and in manor houses (“. . . the white gloved hand of the Lincoln green footman poured out coffee and placed little silver vermeil-lined goblets beside the Count’s cup and mine”), learned that “the Danube played a rôle in the *Nibelungenlied* that was just as important as the Rhine,” caught his first glimpse of Gypsies (“Sinuous and beautiful fortune-tellers, stagily coifed and ear-ringed and flounced in tiers of yellow and magenta and apple-green, perfunctorily shuffled their cards and proffered them in dog-eared fans as they strolled through the crowds, laying soft-voiced and unrelenting siege to every stranger they met”), heard Slav sounds for the first time from balalaika players and from the Slovak and Czech he heard in the streets, was mistaken for a notorious smuggler called Černý Josef—Black Joseph—who plied his trade from Čenke across the Danube into Hungary”), crossed the Hungarian Plain (“At one moment the plain looked empty for miles; and at another, soon after, you were among fields and water-meadows, or, as though it had suddenly risen from the puszta, walking across the yard of a moor-farm full of ducks and guinea fowl”), lived with monks on Mount Athos, read Shakespeare and Horace and *Good Soldier Švejk*, taught himself German, Rumanian, and Greek, and fell in love with a Rumanian princess, Balaşa Cantacuzène, as the decade of the thirties swept away that world for good.

When Hitler assaulted the island of Crete in May 1941—the first parachute invasion in military history—Paddy was a junior officer at battle HQ in the rock cliffs of Iraklion. After the first wave of parachutists dropped, a captured German document was brought to him. He wrote of the incident, of the astonishing appearance of a friend from his prewar life, on the opposite side of the chessboard. “The spearhead of the attack, it disclosed, was under the command of a Captain von der Heydte: his battalion had been dropped near Galata, at the other end of the island, between Canea and Maleme aerodrome: close to where I had been stationed until a few days before. A German officer who was taken prisoner soon after cleared up any doubt. It was Einer, beyond question: he had transferred from the cavalry to a parachute unit some time before.”

Back in Vienna in 1934, the sister-in-law of an old friend had put Paddy up in a large flat. Through her acquaintances, he met Basset Parry-Jones, a teacher at the Konsularakademie, and through him, a colleague of his known as Einer, “a great friend of everyone, and soon of mine. In his middle twenties, civilized, quiet, thoughtful and amusing, he belonged to a family of Catholic landowners and soldiers in Bavaria, but his style and manner were far removed from what foreigners consider the German military tradition; and with the Nazi movement he had still less in common.”

As the Battle of Crete raged on, Paddy “couldn’t stop thinking of this strange coincidence. . . Again and again, in those whistling and echoing ravines, where a new and unknown smell was beginning to usurp the scents of spring, my thoughts flew back to the winter of 1934 and the tunes and jokes and guessing games, the candlelight and the scent of burning pine-cones when nothing was flying through the air more solid than snowflakes.”

Paddy does not mention any exchange with Einer when he became a prisoner of war (“No chance now, like Cardigan and Radziwill recognizing each other from London ballrooms, of exchanging brief and ceremonious greetings through the smoke of the Russian guns”), but we do know that after the war they were in touch. Einer’s book about the battle of Crete, *Daedalus Returned*, was published in 1958, and he became a professor of International Law at Würzburg University. In a letter to Paddy, posted during a trip across Ethiopia, Einer wrote: “I hope we may meet soon and wander once more along the silver streets of our youth.”

Paddy knew well that nothing is permanent.

## 2.

A DRIVING URGENCY to *know* ran through Paddy’s life like a current in a river. When reading his books, even with all the digressions into abbeys and castles and caves—he can’t stop himself from intruding on his own narrative—one gets the feeling that he is looking in the right direction, that one would follow him no matter what. He swerves away from the predictable, preferring to go where no one thought to look. He doesn’t rush. He doesn’t ever rush. He takes time to *see*, to find the pieces, discovering them bit by bit, layer by layer. He wanders off, pays attention to tributaries as if he’s lost his way, then arrives at the very heart of the matter, where everything falls into place. He made memory an art.

The wanderings of that headstrong, inquisitive, polymath across old Europe was perfect training for the valorous leader he became in Crete. He was twenty-six when the Germans invaded Crete, and during the long occupation became an extraordinary, and much admired, leader of the Resistance. Because of Paddy and other British officers who organized and led the Resistance, not to mention the island-wide fiercely brave Cretans who worked and lived with them, the Germans never subdued Crete. Paddy's bond with the locals was immediate and unbreakable, reciprocal and transmuting, as if their island had become his lodestar. Decades later, in a work about a completely different region in Greece, Crete resurfaced. In *Roumeli*, one of the finest books ever written on northern Greece, Paddy strayed back: "Crete gave my retrogressive hankerings their final twist. In spite of the insular pride of the inhabitants, their aloofness from the mainland and the idiosyncrasy of their dialect and their customs, this island is an epitome of Greece. Greek virtues and vices, under sharper mountains and a hotter sun, reach exasperation point."

For nearly three years, dizzying mountains and dank caves were home. "We lived in goat-folds and abandoned conical cheese-makers' huts and above all, in the myriad caverns that mercifully riddle the island's stiff spine . . . Under the dripping firelit stalactites we sprawled and sat cross-legged, our eyes red with smoke, on the branches that padded the cave's floor and spooned our suppers out of a communal tin plate: beans, lentils, cooked snails and herbs, accompanied by that twice-baked herdsman's bread that must be soaked in water or goats' milk before it is eaten." He dyed his hair and beard a darkish brown to blend in. He spoke Greek fluently, and adopted the clipped Cretan dialect, dressed in knee-high boots and voluminous dark blue breeches ("crap-catchers" the Brits called them), and learned to live with lice, fleas, flies, old sweat, one atop the other.

Crete was never far from Paddy's mind. Letters to Zan Fielding opened several of his books, and digressions to his time with the Resistance appear and reappear. The May 1944 kidnapping of General Kreipe remained present, but he wrote very little about what we expected he would write most. W. Stanley Moss, his second-in-command, kept a diary throughout the three weeks on the move with their hostage. It was published as *Ill Met by Moonlight* when the War Office finally cleared it in 1950. Gentleman to the bone that he was, Paddy probably didn't want to offer up his own competing account.

But there were other reasons, far more troubling reasons, for not taking it on. Until Paddy's death on June 10, 2011—in fact, even since his

death—mention of the kidnapping has often been coupled with groundless assertions that it had brought terrible vengeance on the local population. In an article by Richard B. Woodward, published June 11, 2011, in the *New York Times*, the reference to the kidnapping is followed by this unsubstantiated statement: “The operation provoked brutal reprisals toward the local population.” Similarly, in the *Guardian’s* 2006 obituary of George Psychoundakis, author of *The Cretan Runner* and Paddy’s close friend and expert guide and runner, it was stated that villages had been burned in reprisal for abducting Kreipe, although the claim was denied and later corrected.

How and when Paddy came up with the plan is often, and regrettably, disregarded. Until September 1943, Germans occupied the central and western portions of Crete, and Italians from the Siena Division under the command of General Carta occupied the east. In August 1943, Paris had been liberated and remnants of the German army were in full retreat. German forces in the west had lost 500,000 men, half of them as prisoners, and nearly all tanks, artillery, and trucks. The defense of the Fatherland had taken a decided turn for the worse. Closer to Crete, battles raged on the islands of Cos and Leros. That September, word of the impending Italian surrender quickly spread across Crete. The Germans ordered Carta to turn over all arms and ammunition. He refused. Even at the risk of his own arrest, he held firm. Lieutenant Tavana, Carta’s chief of counter-intelligence, contacted Paddy, who was then in charge of the Iraklion region. They arranged for as many weapons as possible to be dropped by air into the mountain strongholds of the Resistance, leaving local fighters well armed. The concern was that these local bands might strike before the time was ripe, on the mistaken belief that an Allied invasion was imminent, but to leave the arms for the Germans was out of the question. Orders commanded local fighters to hold their fire, but Kapetan Manoli Bandouvas defied them. On September 11, his band assaulted an enemy column in the Viannos area, killing over a hundred Germans, obliterated two of their small garrisons, and ambushed the detachment sent out to restore control.

The Nazi payback was one of the most savage reprisal attacks ever unleashed on Crete. In mid-September 1943, 2,000 Germans burned down seven villages in Viannos, killing over 500 Cretans. Bandouvas, and what remained of his band, fled. Recognizing that General Carta was in greater danger, Paddy and his senior SOE officer, the archaeologist and scholar Tom Dunbabin, arranged for his evacuation. Carta and some of his staff

were spirited across the mountains to the south coast, where the Royal Navy picked them up. On board with Carta, Paddy wondered how to respond to the German onslaught without provoking more trouble. Not blowing up a Messerschmitt or a petrol dump, but something unprecedented—symbolic, and bloodless—hitting the enemy on a different level, offering no pretext for reprisals. The escape across Crete with Carta suggested the enemy general as quarry. Later, in Cairo, Paddy’s mission was authorized to proceed.

### 3.

ABOUT EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE in the days and months following the April 26, 1944, abduction of General Kreipe, this is what we know. During the first days of May 1944, while Paddy’s party was still struggling to get Kreipe off the island, several villages were burned and destroyed, but these reprisals were for longstanding Resistance activity that pre-dated the kidnapping. The Germans announced why they’d burned those villages in a contemporaneous announcement on May 5 in *Paratiritis*, a German-controlled newspaper in Crete. The nine-day-old kidnapping was not even mentioned.

#### NOTIFICATION

The villages of Kamares, Lokhria, Margarikari and Saktouria and the neighboring parts of the Nome of Iraklion have been destroyed and extinguished. The men have been taken prisoner and the women and children moved to other villages. These villagers had offered shelter and protection for months to Communist bands under the leadership of mercenary individuals. . .

According to Antony Beevor’s account in *Crete: The Battle and the Resistance*, the Germans had searched Lokhria on March 14, 1944, and found weapons. Villagers in Kamares had sheltered armed Resistance fighters. Margarikari was the home of the “bandit” Kapetan Petrakageorgis, who had committed the unforgivable deed of celebrating Easter in his village church. When Petrakageorgis’s mother died, and villagers turned out in great numbers to view the open coffin and give a last kiss to the departed, it was viewed by the Germans as a message of mass defiance. Five Greek Orthodox priests officiated at the Divine Liturgy for the mother of one of the most notorious and wanted freedom fighters in Crete. “Be mindful, O Lord, of our parents and brethren who have

fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection to eternal life . . .” Such pomp grated the enemy. For these acts, and not the Kreipe kidnapping, the Germans struck back.

Still more coincidental dust was kicking around in the wind. On April 29, a German patrol west of Saktouria arrested three shepherds for grazing flocks within a prohibited coastal zone. A local band ambushed the enemy, the Germans shot two of the shepherds, but five Germans were killed and the two taken prisoner were shot the next day. This unexpected turmoil forced Paddy’s party to change direction, heading north with Kreipe, then west, to find a safer place farther along the coast for the pickup. Initially, they took the general to a sheepfold above Yerakari.

Other errors of attribution have been made. The ruthless strikes in August 1944 that leveled Anogeia and the Amari villages were also unrelated to the kidnapping. They were in reprisal for attacks on German units between the first and tenth of August and were later recognized as pre-withdrawal strikes. The kidnapping had taken place four months earlier. The enemy would never strike back in August for an event that had taken place in April. Celerity remained a constant in their reprisals. Germans knew that Anogeia and the Amari villages were areas of vehement resistance from nearly the moment that Generalmajor Kurt Student’s paratroopers were dropped over Crete. “[G]eography and the character of the inhabitants seem to have singled out those regions for a very special role. The Amari in particular, and for a long period, became a sort of transit camp in which innumerable Allied soldiers were assembled, fed, clothed, looked after and eventually guided across the dangerous Messara plain to be rescued by sea. For years on end these mountains sheltered the intelligence Headquarters of the Allied Mission to the resistance and the frequently shifting hideouts of their transmitting sets. Other regions fulfilled the same dangerous role . . . Asigonia, Alones, Vafé, Koustoyerako and many others but [the Amari] covered the longest span of time.”

German sources corroborate these facts. In 1993, Paddy received a copy of a German letter from Moss’s widow. While going through old papers, she had found a letter sent to her husband in 1950 from Dr. Ludwig Beutin, a Nazi officer who had served in Crete. What prompted the letter was the publication of Moss’s book. In his letter to Moss, Beutin said that Kreipe had been unpopular with his fellow officers and with the men under his command, and that the Germans knew that the important centers of resistance were Yerakari, Anogeia and Asigonia, but could never locate and capture the secret transmitting stations in the

mountains. Dr. Beutin also mentioned the massacres and destruction that took place four months after the kidnapping at Anogeia and in the Amari villages. In "Postscript to Dr. Beutin's Letter" dated 20 June 1994, Paddy noted that "[Beutin] attributes these reprisals entirely to recent attacks on German units between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. These accounted for 50 killed and 30 wounded. There is no mention whatever of these reprisals having anything to do with the capture of the General four months earlier."

Paddy had intended to go to Freiburg-im-Breisgau to consult the archives himself, but work, and other reasons, prevented it. He wanted to postpone publishing Beutin's letter until he had done so. In his "Postscript to Dr. Beutin's Letter," he said: "Of course, I have a personal interest in this matter, and I am well aware that all theories about it, for or against, including mine, have so far necessarily been guesswork. The only truth, almost certainly, must lie with an impartial study of the German wartime archives. Dr Beutin's implied opinions seem to me logical, truthful and balanced, and the verdicts of Professor Schramm and Dr von Xylander, based on research at Freiburg and elsewhere, point—in my case beyond question—to a total lack of connection between the April Abduction and the August reprisals. It was surely the very real and immediate fear of a wholesale onslaught on their westward retreat which occupied the minds of the Germans, not a pointless and now obsolete revenge for the four-months-old imprisonment of their general. We must remember that in wartime, four months seem longer than a year."

No account of the kidnapping would be complete without reference to the plight of Kreipe's driver. One of the saddest days after the abduction was when Antoni Zoidakis arrived at the hideout to report what had happened. Paddy wrote: "'It was no good, Kyrie Mihali,' Antoni Zoidakis explained, handing me a German paybook and some faded family snaps. He was very upset. Hans, the driver, had been half stunned, poor devil. He could only walk at the rate of a tortoise. They'd almost carried him across the plain to the eastern foothills; then, during the afternoon, the hunt was up: motorized infantry had de-trucked in all the villages round the eastern flanks of the mountains and begun to advance up the hillside in open order. If they left the driver behind for the Germans to overtake, the whole plan, and the fiction of non-local participation, was exploded; the entire region would be laid waste with flame and massacre; if they stayed with him, they themselves would have been captured. There was only one thing for it; the enemy were too

close to risk a gun's report; how then? Antoni leant forwards urgently, put one hand on the branching ivory hilt of his silver-scabbarded dagger and, with the side of his other hand, made a violent slash through the air. 'By surprise. In one second.' 'He didn't know a thing,' said one of the others. There was a deep crevasse handy and lots of stones; he would never be found. 'It was a pity. He seemed quite a nice chap, even though he was a German.'"

This news was deeply distressing. The operation, as indicated, was intended from the outset to be bloodless. The plan called for the driver, Corporal Hans Frunze, to leave Crete with the rest of the party. A somewhat different account of this incident indicates that the driver had been allowed one last look at a snapshot of his family by the light of a shaded torch before he was killed.

The final word on the whole enterprise must be given to Paddy: "There were so many things that could go fatally wrong in our undertaking that nobody can be blamed for anxiety on that score; these possibilities must have seemed more dangerous at a distance than they did to the men taking part. We must remember that the participants were old friends. The last two years had formed strong bonds of shared dangers, friendships and even *syntechnies*.<sup>2</sup> (These links were very apparent to Billy Moss, who was a newcomer to our Resistance world.) Based on experience and trust, they bred great confidence. Nothing looked impossible. Our *paréa*<sup>3</sup> seemed the very symbol and embodiment of what allies and friends should be, and we felt not a moment's doubt that with secrecy, careful planning, surprise and geography on our side, greater speed than the enemy across the mountains, avoidance of all villages, a quick getaway, and, above all, final and convincing evidence of our prisoner's safety, the operation would be successfully carried out, and performed without incurring revenge. Perhaps we can now look back on this strange event with gratitude for our good luck and the hope that it was a high point in our struggle and not a hindrance. In the end, after the unpredictable set-back at Sachtouria success was due to the help of hundreds of Cretans and to the gift for improvisation in adversity and the resilience and courage of what, at the time, seemed like the whole of Crete. It would seem strange if this story—beginning in the air above the Lasithi mountains, developing in the nome of Heraklion, continuing across Rethymnon and ending on the seashore at Rhodakino—had never taken place. Of one thing we can be quite certain: It could only have happened in Crete."

## 4.

PADDY KEPT THE SPIRIT of that mischievous, inquisitive *Englischer Student* with a strong independent streak all his life. His interests ranged from taxi drivers (he often sat in the front passenger seat in Greek taxis to chat up the driver) to the queen. He found beauty in whatever was around him. The first time he saw Kardamyli, the village in the Mani where he made his home, he wrote: "It was unlike any village I had seen in Greece. These houses, resembling small castles built of golden stone with medieval-looking pepper-pot turrets, were topped by a fine church. The mountains rushed down almost to the water's edge with, here and there among the whitewashed fisherman's houses near the sea, great rustling groves of calamus reed ten feet high and all swaying together in the slightest whisper of wind. There was sand underfoot and nets were looped from tree to tree. Whitewashed ribbed amphorae for oil or wine, almost the size of those dug up in the palace of Minos, stood by many a doorway. Once more I wondered how these immense vessels were made. They are obviously too big for any potter smaller than a titan with arms two yards long. As usual, theories abound. In *Mani*, Paddy wrote that "some say a man gets inside the incipient jar like a robber in the Arabian Nights, and builds up the expanding and tapering walls as they rotate on a great wheel; some, that the halves are constructed separately and then put together; others that they are cast in huge moulds; yet others assert that they are built up from a rope of clay that is paid out in an expanding and then a contracting coil until the final circle of the rim is complete; which is made to account for the ribs and the fluting that gird them from top to bottom . . ."

Not content with theories, Paddy went straight to the source, to Coroni, where he asked a potter how it's done: "We build them bit by bit from the bottom," the potter said, "just as a swallow builds its nest." His appreciation of what he saw, wherever he was, knew no bounds. In the Mani, he watched Evstratios Mourtzinis weave a huge globular fish-trap ("The reel of twine revolved around the floor, the thread unwinding between his big toe and its neighbour as the airy sphere turned and shifted in his skilful brown fingers with a dazzling interplay of symmetrical parabolas"), and he learned that the trouble with dyes made from pine cones—the ordinary brown kind—is that the fish can see the nets a mile off and swim away, but you have to use them or the twine rots in a week.

He transformed the image of women washing, ironing, and weaving into art: "Her foreshortened torso thumping and rinsing before daybreak

in a stone trough in the yard and later spreading the laundry to dry on boulders and cactus branches. Now with this soft singing the delicious childhood smell of ironing floated up through the trap door. A floor further down her mother was weaving at her great loom which sent forth a muted and regular click-clack of treadles.” He described the interior of a Maniot home: “Down a few steps we found a long, barrel-vaulted room. Pinned to the whitewashed walls were Singer sewing machine advertisements, pictures of King Paul and Queen Frederika, and of the late King George of England, the Queen Mother and Queen Elizabeth II. Leaning into the cooking alcove a thin handsome woman was delicately arranging twigs, with the economy that treeless regions compel, under a sizzling frying pan.” He found local dialogue captivating: “. . . ‘The year before the war we had so much rain that it carried all the plants away, all the trees, every speck of earth, licked the rocks clean to the bone. It even emptied the cemeteries and scattered skulls and bones and ribs for miles over the hillside! When God had finished making the world, he had a sack of stones left over and he emptied it here . . .’ He kicked one of them. ‘If only we could find a merchant who bought stones, we’d all be millionaires . . . You wouldn’t find me sweating along the roads with *this*,’ he said, giving a resentful slap to the sack of salt.”

A revealing anecdote, recounted by a New Zealander, tells of an exchange with Paddy. He was giving thanks for his many gifts and told the young man: “You know we are very fortunate we live in Kardamyli. We have the mountains . . . we have good food . . . we have clean air to breathe . . . we have the beautiful sea to swim in.

And for all these reasons and more, we may just forget to die.”

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Patrick Leigh Fermor’s *Words of Mercury* (John Murray, 2003), p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Patrick Leigh Fermor became a godfather for a number of the infant daughters of Cretan friends. The relationship between godfather and parents of the baptized child is referred to as *koumbáries* in other parts of Greece, but *syntekhníes* in Crete.

<sup>3</sup>*Paréa* is Greek for “group,” or “companions.”