## RALPH PENNER

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I left Yale, as most of us did, in 1969. I went to Hong Kong with the Yale-in-China program and taught English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for two years. I went to Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia during the Christmas holidays, 1969-70. I sang folk songs in cabarets in Hong Kong, played roles in dramatic productions, acted as the drama critic for a local radio station, and became the first nonlocal regular on a local television variety series.

During the summer of 1971 I went to Europe, via Thailand and Pakistan. I made an unscheduled stop in Pakistan because a part of the airplane malfunctioned—I was in Karachi illegally for five days. In Europe I traveled to Ostend, Brussels, Paris, London, and assorted small towns and villages in England and France.

Then, in 1971, I came back to the United States because of the draft. As it turned out I did not go into the army.

In 1974, on the upper west side of Manhattan, I met Ty McConnell, who became my lifetime companion. We are still living together, as of July 1993, in Manhattan Plaza, a federally subsidized housing project for people in the performing arts, on West 43 d Street.

My sister Karen moved to Longmont, Colorado, in 1982. I stay in close touch with her, her daughter, and her son. We are a support system for one another.

I have written advertising copy, acted in summer stock, taught college students, worked as a waiter, performed in off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway shows, and typed and edited teleprompter scripts (for soap operas and for Mike Wallace on “Sixty Minutes”).

In 1983 I fell into what seems to have become my metier: editing and writing textbooks. Yes, textbooks—from kindergarten through twelfth grade and beyond. Think about that: I may be responsible for what your children are studying in school.

As I write this, in July 1993, I am pleased to say that the educational publishing business has, so far, been quite good to me.

I have, as so many of us have, lost my mother, my father, one of my companion’s brothers, a beloved pet of fifteen years, and my much-loved stepmother. Such losses take a toll, but so go the steps of life.

I am waiting for the next step.