

## **Expanded autobiography**

I was lucky to come on the publishing scene in the early 1970's at a time when a woman writing a book about contemporary women was new and trendy and what I had in hand was Bodies in Motion, a novel about a Manhattan woman juggling her desire to become a photographer with two kids in diapers and a husband -- and all this at the dawn of Second Wave feminism. It was also a time when an editor could take a book because he liked it and wanted to help his writers develop, never mind immediate sales. For me that was Bob Gottlieb at Alfred Knopf. He gave me a contract for a second novel, A Certain Man, about the life of my father, on a simple one-sentence description. And the same for my third, White Rising, which tells from both points of view the story of the 1675-76 war between the English settlers of New England and its indigenous Wampanoag people. But as it goes in the Bible, a new Pharoah rose up in Egypt and Joseph was cast into the dungeon.

By the 1980's Bob Gottlieb had left Random House for the New Yorker and my husband, the writer Norman Kotker, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Faced with the need to become the family's major wage earner, I took on the pen name of Maggie Strong, turned to magazine articles, and eventually wrote a book about the effects of chronic illness on a family. Readers of Mainstay joined with me to establish a national organization ([www.wellspouse.org](http://www.wellspouse.org)) for the support of people in our position and this effort pretty much took up the 1980s. Eventually I was freed back into fiction but by this time publishing had turned into the book business. For my fourth novel Try to Remember, I attempted a commercial novel about the four-year period from 1988 to 1992 that produced so many false accusations of sexual abuse.

In the new century I've turned to short stories and am working on a collection, as well as on a second historical novel. And more poems. You'll find one from my chapbook Old Ladies in the Locker Room and Pool at my website [www.zanekotker.com](http://www.zanekotker.com), as well as excerpts from novels, a couple of stories (one on audio), and lots of reviews.