

## 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 Pharaoh 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.