The film explores the ideas of loneliness and growth and self-discovery. Its title is adapted from “apoptosis,” the programmed cell death that occurs as a normal part of an organism’s growth and development. At first, she said, she was “quite embarrassed” about the film. “I have no idea what I just made,” she thought. “If no one likes it, I’ll bury it forever.”

Eventually she worked up the nerve to show it to Lingford. “She seemed to like it,” Zhan said, “so I was encouraged”—and in January, the film took the top prize for animated shorts at this year’s Sundance Film Festival. CineVue critic Christopher Machell, reviewing its appearance at the Toronto International Film Festival, called it “strange and charming in equal measure...an often beautiful and funny journey through the landscape of self-discovery.”

Currently Zhan is studying at the National Film and Television School in London. It’s likely that the themes she’s been working on will be those she continues to explore. “[‘Hold Me’] started out a much larger film—there was this whole narrative where the bird goes to a bird club and there’s a bird rave,” she said. “I’m writing a feature now, and the bird club is back in there.”

Toward the Negotiated City
In the history of urban renewal, a glimmer of the possibilities of social policy today
by ANN FORSYTH

How to ensure that everyone can live a life with opportunity and meaning is an enduring question. It is also a question related in part to where people live. Are homes and neighborhoods vibrant, safe, affordable, and nurturing? Do they support different kinds of people living different kinds of dreams? What are the roles of the private sector, individuals, and experts in building these good communities? What roles do governments have in making places healthy, supporting local initiatives and preferences, and creating a framework so that everyone contributes toward the common good? At a time when such questions are barely being asked, at least at a national level, an historical perspective is especially valuable.

In Saving America’s Cities, Lizabeth Cohen—dean emerita of the Radcliffe Institute and Jones professor of American studies—addresses these larger questions about what people owe each other in society. She uses the life of “top city saver,” “Mr. Urban Renewal,” and “master rebuilder” Ed Logue to tell the story of urban policy in the United States from the 1950s to the 1980s. Like Winston Groom’s Forrest Gump or Virginia Woolf’s Orlando, Logue during his working life found himself in the center of a series of major federal and state approaches to revitalizing urban areas. A controversial figure who died in 2000, he was very active in taking advantage of programs and creating new opportunities, using his skills as a negotiator to capture funds from newly approved programs and his capacity as an innovator to launch additional policy and program initiatives in three cities. Focusing
most attention on the central cities of medium to larger metropolitan areas, he also dabbled in working at a metropolitan and state level. He had a lifetime commitment to racial equity, particularly notable in his hiring practices.

Cohen’s project is, in part, one of rescuing urban renewal from the image of “abject failure” cultivated from both the left and the right. As Cohen argues, her book “aims to present an alternative, more nuanced history of postwar American city building that does not dismiss the federal role in renewing cities and subsidizing housing as pure folly. It claims instead that there is a usable past of successful government involvement in urban redevelopment from which we can benefit today as we grapple with the current challenges of persistent economic and racial inequality, unaffordable housing, and crumbling infrastructure.”

In this history those who led urban renewal certainly made mistakes, insensitively displacing people, imposing flawed design theories, and underestimating resistance to racial inclusion. However, they learned from their mistakes and did better the next time. As Cohen argues, “Urban renewal as experienced in 1972 was far different from that in 1952.” By 1982, it had become almost unrecognizable.

The first phases of urban renewal generally included a great deal of demolition and rebuilding in single-use zones, along with innovative social programs; in later years there was more revitalization, mixed use, and human-scale design. In the early years, Logue used a pluralist, expert-led model that too often alienated neighborhoods; in later years his approach to democracy was more direct. He faced opposition throughout his work life, however, both from those not wanting to be displaced and those re-
Montage

Chapter & Verse
Correspondence on not-so-famous lost words

Laurinda Morway writes, “Years ago an author described the phenomenon of hearing or seeing something for the first time and then experiencing it repeatedly as a ‘Junio Sparrow’ (that being the name that popped up unexpectedly again and again). I can’t remember where I read it, and I love the expression. But if I use it I ought to be able to explain where I got it. Can anyone help?”

Charles Cassady seeks a source for “It’s not the dark I fear. It’s the things moving around in the dark,” or “a more popular variation: ‘I’m not afraid of the dark. I’m afraid of the things moving around in the dark.’ I think the second version has been popularized by the Web phenomenon of creepypasta. The first version I came across was quoted by infamous filmmaker Ed Wood Jr. in his posthumously published Hollywood Rat Race, so it goes back at least to the 1970s. It is clear Wood derived it from some other source, unknown to me.”


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A New Way of Being in the World

Elizabeth Marshall Thomas’s “laser beam” insights into the lives of animals and humans

by MARINA N. BOLOTKNIKOVA

Sitting in her kitchen in Peterborough, New Hampshire, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas ’54 is talking about animal consciousness when her two dogs, chihuahua Chapek and pug mix Kafka, begin madly snarling at each other. “What are you doing, and why!” she demands. She appears to believe the dogs really understand her, and judging by their sudden hush, they might.

Thomas would know: she has spent half a century chasing stories about life on earth, and has written 14 books, from anthropology texts to novels to studies of cats, deer, and canines. The Hidden Life of Dogs (1993)—for which she traveled to the Canadian Arctic to research wolf packs—became an unexpected New York Times bestseller. As she explains in her memoir Dreaming of Lions (2016), “While wandering down the road of life, it helps to look for something more meaningful than oneself. Some find it in religion...I find it by keeping my eyes open.”

Virtually every book she has written—including two memoirs and photography of the communities today.