

Szulim Rozenberg Today



This picture was taken in the Medem Library in Paris in 2006. This is what I look like now, as I'm telling you my story.

One day I come home, and I said: 'Lena, you know what, I think I'm closing the shop.' I'd worked hard, I was 67. What more did we need? So she says: 'Fine, I understand, you need to close down. But what are you doing, you can't sit at home for 5 minutes?' So I say: 'I'll go to the Medem Library.' She says: 'That's a good thing for you.' And I went to the Medem Library and from then on I've been in the Medem Library. The Medem Library was set up in 1929. As soon as I came to Paris I became a member of the library. I had to have books. My wife and I used to go to various lectures there.

In the library I did everything. Above all I took care of issuing books to the people of my generation, and then there were a lot of them. There were these women, for instance. If I wasn't there, she didn't want anyone else to give her the book. Apart from that, that was the period that the generation that had come here before the war was starting to die off. And there were libraries, some of them had fairly decent libraries.

I'm the librarian to this day, only now the books are in the cellar, and I find it hard going up and down steps. So now I send the boys and girls. But even so, I'm the brain. Everything goes through my hands.

My wife died on 15 February 2005. Only she left life 12 years ago. We came back from a walk, I met our nephew, and he kissed me and her, and when he went she asked who it was. He was 40-something then. She'd brought him up and didn't know who it was. So straight away we started going round the professors. And my daughter Dorote's father-in-law is the best specialist on that disease [Alzheimer's] in America, and he dictated to the doctors, but they couldn't do anything. She was on her feet another 10 years, but the last two she was in bed.

My life flows along with these memories of our life together, these memories of the children, of my grandchildren; that's the compensation that I have from life today. I miss having somebody close to lean on, lay my head on. And I don't have that, and that's a big thing. I had such a full life with my wife, we understood each other so well, we had so many shared desires in literature, in art, in music. It goes on, I come in from the library, make myself something to eat, look at the television a while, and listen to music. I like classical music very much, and I know it well, and that's how I fill my days and nights. And that's all.