

THREE  
JUNES

*a novel*



JULIA GLASS



*Three Junes*

*Three  
Junes*

JULIA GLASS



PANTHEON BOOKS, NEW YORK

Copyright © 2002 by Julia Glass

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Published in the United States by Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, and simultaneously in Canada by Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.

Pantheon Books and colophon are registered trademarks of Random House, Inc.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Michael Goldsen, Inc. for permission to reprint song lyrics from "If I Had a Boat" by Lyle Lovett.

Copyright © 1987 by Michael Goldsen, Inc./Lyle Lovett (ASCAP).

All rights reserved. International copyright secured.

Reprinted by permission of Michael Goldsen, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Glass, Julia, 1956–

Three Junes / Julia Glass.

ISBN 0-375-42241-2

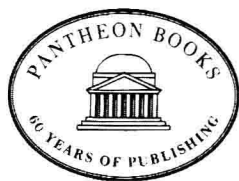
1. Scots—United States—Fiction. 2. Long Island (N.Y.)—Fiction. 3. Fathers and sons—Fiction. 4. Scotland—Fiction. 5. Gay men—Fiction. I. Title.

PS3607.L37 T48 2002 813'.6—dc21 2001055448

[www.pantheonbooks.com](http://www.pantheonbooks.com)

Printed in the United States of America

2 4 6 8 9 7 5 3 1



For  
Alec and Oliver,  
my extraordinary sons

Assuming that our energies are sufficient,  
love is interminable.

—JIM HARRISON, *The Road Home*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOR THEIR SPONSORSHIP of prizes and grants that helped support and encourage my work, I thank the New York Foundation for the Arts, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Bellingham Review*, *Literal Latté*, and the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society (especially Joe DeSalvo, Rosemary James, and H. Paul and Michael X. St. Martin). For giving generously of their time and expertise to answer various research questions, I thank Dr. John Andrilli of Saint Vincents Medical Center in New York City and John and Christine Southern of C&J Medals in Reading, England. And for sharing with me their wee bit of Scotland (which I have embellished), I am happily indebted to my McKerrow cousins across the ocean, most of all Matthew, Gordon, and Allan.

For support of a more intimate kind, I thank my longtime companion, Dennis Cowley, and my parents, as well as Bette Slayton. Thanks must also go to the readers whose thoughtful responses helped me persevere: Lindsay Boyer, Shelley Henderson, Alec Lobrano, Daniel Menaker, Katherine Mosby, Nick Pappas, Tim and Jessalyn Peters, Mark Pothier, Lory Skwerer, Lisa Wederquist, James Wilcox . . . and the late Robert Trent, unforgettable and deeply missed.

Finally, for the enthusiasm, trust, and know-how that turned this story into a book, I am profoundly grateful to Dan Frank and, above all, to three remarkable women: my agent, Gail Hochman; my editor, Deborah Garrison; and Laura Mathews, loyal friend and muse.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JULIA GLASS was awarded a 2000 New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship in fiction writing and has won several prizes for her short stories, including three Nelson Algren Awards and the Tobias Wolff Award. "Collies," the first part of *Three Junes*, won the 1999 Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society Medal for Best Novella. She lives with her family in New York City, where she works as a freelance journalist and editor.

## A NOTE ON THE TYPE

The text of this book was set in Garamond No. 3. It is not a true copy of any of the designs of Claude Garamond (ca. 1480–1561) but an adaptation of his types, which set the European standard for two centuries. It probably owes as much to the designs of Jean Jannon, a Protestant printer working in Sedan in the early seventeenth century, who had worked with Garamond's romans earlier, in Paris, but who was denied their use because of Catholic censorship. Jannon's matrices came into the possession of the Imprimerie Nationale, where they were thought to be by Garamond himself, and were so described when the Imprimerie revived the type in 1900. This particular version is based on an adaptation by Morris Fuller Benton.

Composed by MD Linocomp, Westminster, Maryland

Printed and bound by Berryville Graphics, Berryville, Virginia

Book design by M. Kristen Bearse

*Collies*

1989



## ONE

**P**AUL CHOSE GREECE for its predictable whiteness: the blanching heat by day, the rush of stars at night, the glint of the lime-washed houses crowding its coast. Blinding, searing, somnolent, fossilized Greece.

Joining a tour—that was the gamble, because Paul is not a gregarious sort. He dreads fund-raisers and drinks parties, all occasions at which he must give an account of himself to people he will never see again. Yet there are advantages to the company of strangers. You can tell them whatever you please: no lies perhaps, but no affecting truths. Paul does not fabricate well (though once, foolishly, he believed that he could), and the single truth he's offered these random companions—that recently he lost his wife—brought down a flurry of theatrical condolence. (A hand on his at the breakfast table in Athens, the very first day: "Time, time, and more time. Let Monsignor Time do his tedious, devious work." Marjorie, a breathy schoolmistress from Devon.)

Not counting Jack, they are ten. Paul is one of three men; the other two, Ray and Solly, are appended to wives. And then, besides Marjorie, there are two pairs of women traveling together, in their seventies at least: a surprisingly spry quartet who carry oversize binoculars with which they ogle everything and everyone, at appallingly close range. Seeing the sights, they wear identical, brand-new hiking boots; to the group's communal dinners, cork-soled sandals with white crocheted tops. Paul thinks of them as the quadruplets.

In the beginning, there was an all-around well-mannered effort to mingle, but then, sure as sedimentation, the two married couples fell together and the quadruplets reverted more or less to themselves. Only Marjorie, trained by profession to dole out affection equally, continues to treat everyone like a new friend, and with her as their muse, the women coddle Paul like an infant. His room always has the best view, his seat on the boat is always in shade; the women always insist. The

husbands treat him as though he were vaguely leprous. Jack finds the whole thing amusing: “Delightful, watching you cringe.” Jack is their guide: young and irreverent, thank God. Reverence would send Paul over the edge.

Even this far from home there are reminders, like camera flashes or shooting pains. On the streets, in the plazas, on the open-decked ferries, he is constantly sighting Maureen: any tall lively blonde, any sun-struck girl with a touch of the brazen. German or Swedish or Dutch, there she is, again and again. Today she happens to be an American, one of two girls at a nearby table. Jack has noticed them too, Paul can tell, though both men pretend to read their shared paper—day before yesterday’s *Times*. By no means beautiful, this girl, but she has a garish spirit, a laugh she makes no effort to stifle. She wears an eccentrically wide-brimmed hat, tied under her chin with a feathery scarf. (“Miss Forties Nostalgic,” Maureen would have pegged her. “These gals think they missed some grand swinging party.”) Little good the hat seems to have done her, though: she is sunburnt geranium pink, her arms crazed with freckles. The second girl is the beauty, with perfect pale skin and thick cocoa-colored hair; Jack will have an eye on that one.

The girls talk too loudly, but Paul enjoys listening. In their mid-twenties, he guesses, ten years younger than his sons. “Heaven. I am telling you exquisite,” says the dark-haired girl in a husky, all-knowing voice. “A sensual sort of *coup de foudre*.”

“You go up on donkeys? Where?” the blonde answers eagerly.

“This dishy farmer rents them. He looks like Giancarlo Giannini. Those soulful sad-dog eyes alone are worth the price of admission. He rides alongside and whacks them with a stick when they get ornery.”

“Whacks them?”

“Oh just prods them a little, for God’s sake. Nothing inhumane. Listen—I’m sure the ones that hump olives all day really get whacked. By donkey standards, these guys live like royalty.” She rattles through a large canvas satchel and pulls out a map, which she opens across the table. The girls lean together.

“Valley of the Butterflies!” The blonde points.

Jack snorts quietly from behind his section of the *Times*. “Don’t tell the dears, but it’s moths.”

Paul folds his section and lays it on the table. He is the owner and

publisher of the *Yeoman*, the Dumfries-Galloway paper. When he left, he promised to call in every other day. He has called once in ten and felt grateful not to be needed. Paging through the news from afar, he finds himself tired of it all. Tired of Maggie Thatcher, her hedgehog eyes, her vacuous hair, her cotton-mouthed edicts on jobs, on taxes, on terrorist acts. Tired of bickering over the Chunnel, over untapped oil off the Isle of Mull. Tired of rainy foggy pewtered skies. Here, too, there are clouds, but they are inconsequential, each one benign as a bridal veil. And wind, but the wind is warm, making a cheerful fuss of the awning over the tables, carrying loose napkins like birds to the edge of the harbor, slapping waves hard against the hulls of fishing boats.

Paul closes his eyes and sips his ice coffee, a new pleasure. He hasn't caught the name for it yet; Jack, who is fluent, orders it for him. Greek is elusive, maddening. In ten days, Paul can say three words. He can say yes, the thoroughly counterintuitive *neb*. He can wish passersby in the evening—as everyone here does him—*kalespera*. And he can stumble over “if you please,” something like *paricolo* (ought to be a musical term, he decides, meaning “joyfully, but with caution”). Greek seems to Paul, more than French or Italian, the language of love: watery, reflective, steeped in thespian whispers. A language of words without barbs, without corners.

When he opens his eyes, he is shocked to see her staring at him. She smiles at his alarm. “You don't mind, I hope.”

“Mind?” He blushes, but then sees that she is holding a pencil in one hand and, with the other, bracing a large book on the edge of her table. Her beautiful companion is gone.

Paul straightens his spine, aware how crumpled and slouched he must look.

“Oh no. Down the way you were. Please.”

“Sorry. How was I?” Paul laughs. “A little more like this?” He sinks in the chair and crosses his arms.

“That's it.” She resumes her drawing. “You're Scottish, am I right?”

“Well thank God she hasn't mistook us for a pair of Huns,” says Jack.

“Not you. You're English. But you,” she says to Paul. “I can tell, the way you said *little*, the particular way your *t*'s disappeared. I'm wild about Scotland. Last year I went to the festival. I biked around one of

the lochs. . . . Also, I shouldn't say this, you'll think I'm so typically rudely American, but you look, you know, like you marched right out of that Dewars ad. The one, you know, with the collies?"

"Collies?" Paul sits up again.

"Oh, sorry—Madison Avenue nonsense. They show this shepherd, I mean a modern one, very tweedy, rugged, kind of motley but dashing, on the moors with his Border collies. Probably a studio setup out in L.A. But I like to think it's real. The shepherd. The heather. The red phone booth—call box, right? . . . *Inverness*." She draws the name out like a tail of mist, evoking a Brigadoon sort of Scotland. "I'd love to have one of those collies, I've heard they're the smartest dogs."

"Would you?" says Paul, but leaves it at that. Not long ago he would have said, My wife raises collies—national champions, shipped clear to New Zealand. And yes, they are the smartest. The most cunning, the most watchful.

"Hello *here* you are, you truants you." Marjorie, who's marched up behind Jack, bats his arm with her guidebook. "We're off to maraud some poor unsuspecting shopkeepers. Lunch, say, at half past one, convene in the hotel lobby?" Paul waves to the others, who wait beyond the café awning. They look like a lost platoon in their knife-pleated khakis and sensible hats, bent over maps, gazing and pointing in all directions.

"Tally ho, Marj!" says Jack. "Half one in the hotel lobby. Half two, a little siesta; half three, a little . . . adventure. Pass muster with you?"

"Right-oh," she says, saluting. She winks, accepting his tease.

This has become their routine: The first full day of each new place, Marjorie directs an expedition for souvenirs—as if to gather up the memories before the experience. While the others trail happily behind her, Jack and Paul read in a taverna, hike the streets, or wander through nondescript local ruins and talk about bland things, picking up odd stones to examine and discard. Paul buys no souvenirs. He should send cards to the boys—he did when they were in fact boys—but the kinds of messages adults send one another on postcards remind him precisely of the chatter he dislikes so much at drinks parties or sitting on a plane beside yet another, more alarming breed of strangers: those from whom you have no escape but the loo.

There's one on every tour, Jack says of Marjorie: a den mother, some-



one who likes to do his job for him. And Marj is a good sport, he says, not a bad traveler. He likes her. But she exasperates Paul. She is a heroine out of a Barbara Pym novel: bookish, dependable, magnanimously stubborn, and no doubt beneath it all profoundly disappointed. At an age when she might do well to tint her hair, she's taken up pride in her plainness as if it were a charitable cause. She dresses and walks like a soldier, keeps her hair cropped blunt at the earlobes. She proclaims herself a romantic but seems desperately earthbound, a stickler for schedules. Jack tells her again and again how un-Greek this attitude is, but she is not a when-in-Rome type of tourist. ("Right then: three on the dot at the Oracle, tea time!" Marjorie, sizing up Delphi.)

She turns now and waves to her regiment, strutting through the maze of tables. Jack smiles fondly. "O gird up thy loins, ye salesmen of Minotaur tea towels!" The American girl laughs loudly, a laugh of unblemished joy.

WHEN THE WAR ENDED, when Paul shipped back to Dumfries from Verona, he found out, along with his mates, that half the girls they'd known in school had promised themselves to Americans—even, God forbid, to Canadians. Many were already married, awaiting their journey across the Atlantic with the restless thrill of birds preparing to migrate. Among them were some of the prettiest, cleverest, most accomplished and winning of the girls Paul remembered.

Maureen might have been one of those brides, if she'd chosen to be. But Maureen, pretty, outspoken, intrepid, knew what she wanted. She did not intend to wager away her future. "Those gals haven't a clue what they're in for, no sir. The man may be a prince, sure, but what's he hauling you home to? You haven't a clue, not a blistering clue." She said this to Paul when she hardly knew him. Paul admired her frankness—that and her curly pinkish blond hair, her muscular arms, her Adriatic eyes.

When Paul came back, he was depressed. Not because he missed the war; what idiot would? Not because he lacked direction, some sort of career; how thoroughly *that* was mapped out. Not even because he longed for a girl; for someone like Paul, there were plenty of prospects. He was sad because the war had not made him into what he had hoped