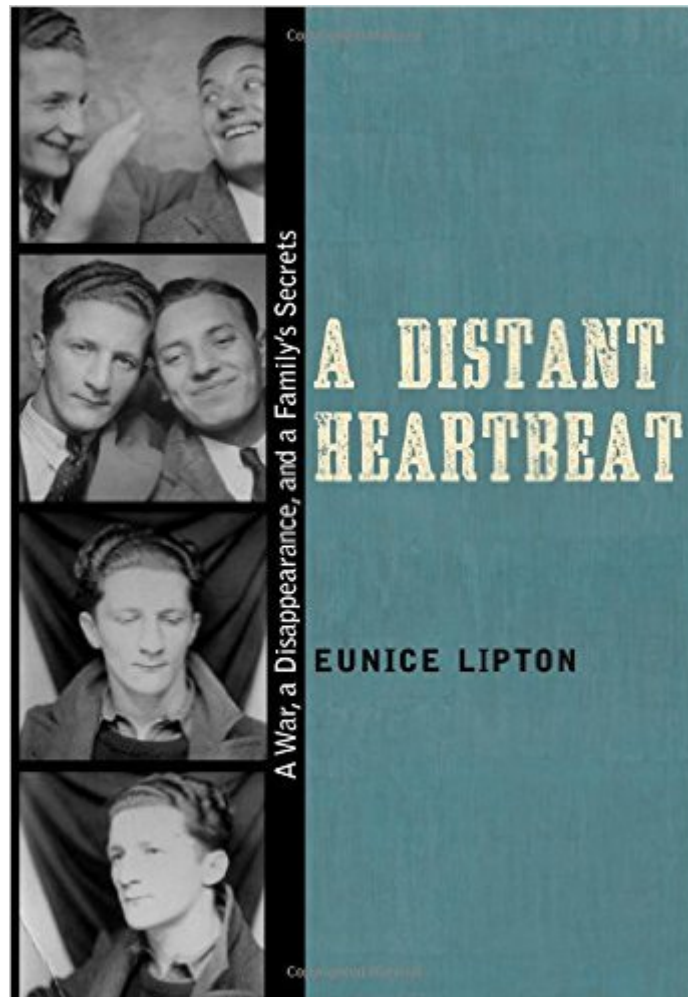


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A Distant Heartbeat: A War, A Disappearance, And A Family's Secrets



Synopsis

On May 20, 1938, a young man from the Bronx informs his parents that he is leaving for the Catskills to begin his new job as a waiter. Instead, he sails for Europe to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, the opening round in the fight against Hitler and Mussolini. The man, Dave Lipton—the author’s uncle—sends letter after letter home detailing his hopes and begging for forgiveness. He never receives a reply. Decades later, Eunice Lipton stumbles upon clues for this silence, uncovering details of Dave’s exhilarating political life in New York, his shuttered romantic life, and his deep friendship with another volunteer. *A Distant Heartbeat* tells a tale of passion and heroism, centered on a fierce competition between brothers, a packet of missing letters, and the unforeseen results of family betrayal.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Behind the great movements of history lie myriad tiny decisions taken by individuals, the complexity of personalities and relationships pushing some of us in one direction, some of us in another, when we are called upon to act or to choose a side. In her memoir, *A Distant Heartbeat* (University of New Mexico Press), Eunice Lipton takes us back to the 1930s, an era whose economic divisions, social upheavals and political polarisation today feel all too familiar, but with the added anxiety that nations only recently emerged from one world war had come to realize that war was building anew. Lipton’s uncle was one of those youths from 52 countries whose conscience was stirred by the rise of fascism in Spain and who, like Auden, like Spender, like Virginia Woolf’s nephew

Julian Bell and tens of thousands of others, felt a sense of duty to act. As the overthrow of Madrid's democratically elected government devolved into civil war, Dave Lipton, a young Communist, became one of the 2,800 Americans who left their country, most of them clandestinely, to fight with the International Brigades in Spain. With the patience of a detective, Lipton pieces together what fragments she can gather about her uncle's story. She delves into the archives; she seeks out her uncle's old friends and comrades in an effort to gain some insight into why he left; she tracks down those surviving Brigade members who might still remember him to find out what happened before he died near Gandesa, on Hill 666, at the end of the Ebro offensive.

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