

My friendship with Marco Schützenberger was the most extraordinary of my life. I knew little of his purely mathematical research. He had in 1979 arranged for me to spend a year at Paris so that we might work together on a book devoted to the Darwinian theory of evolution. We met almost every day. He talked and I listened. His conversation ranged over every conceivable intellectual topic. At the end of the year, I had compiled a mass of notes, but our book was never finished.

We stayed in touch thereafter; and I managed to visit him in Paris almost every year; but that year spent together in what was to have been research remains singular. He was healthy and happy, his family untouched by tragedy, and intellectually at the very height of his powers. Through his voice, I heard the echo of a vanished France, a way of life that is now gone.

Meeting Marco was like taking one's first sip of champagne. Those who never touch the stuff will never know what they are missing. I have tried in my book, *Black Mischief: Language, Life, Logic & Luck*, to make Marco live in the minds of other people. I do not know whether I have succeeded, but I hope that those who loved him, as I did, will read what I have written and see whether cigarette in hand Marco appears yet again for just a minute.

David Berlinski,  
San Francisco, CA, USA, September 30, 1996.