



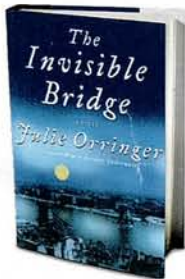
# War and Remembrance

If history is the best teacher, these two stories of horror, hope, and heroics go a long way toward showing us how we lived then—and how we live now.



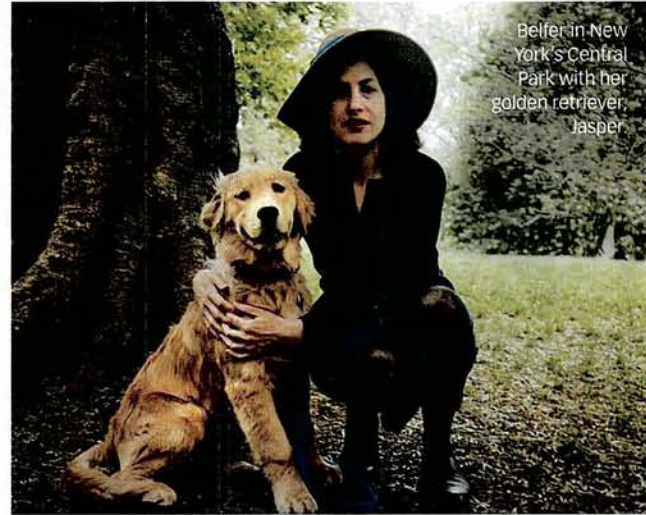
Orringer, photographed by husband Ryan Harty, July 2009.

## A NOT-SO-SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION



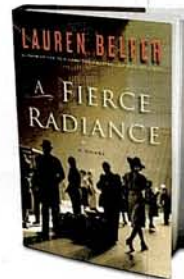
AN OLD-FASHIONED ROMANTIC drama, Julie Orringer's **The Invisible Bridge** (Knopf) is as rich in historical detail as it is human in its cast of sympathetic characters. The novel begins in 1937 Budapest, where a discriminatory quota system has forced a 22-year-old Hungarian Jew named Andras Lévi to seek his education

abroad. He heads to architecture school in Paris, a place of modernist ferment, and finds an even fuller education in the arms of Klara Morgenstern, a 31-year-old ballet instructor and Hungarian émigré with a shadowy past. But Hitler's Third Reich is on the march, and when Andras's visa expires, he and Klara return to Hungary, a Nazi-allied country that nevertheless seems an uneasy sanctuary for Jews. Over the next four years, Andras serves in several labor services while Klara and her relatives are fleeced by corrupt authorities. Despite the clearly imminent doom, Orringer keeps these chapters surprisingly buoyant: Andras works for one subversive newspaper after another in the labor camps (a sports section covers "wheelbarrow-pushing, snow-shoveling, and tree-felling"), and is saved from certain death by a pair of officers. But as the Nazis advance, thousands of Hungarians die in a wave of bombings that leaves Budapest's bridges "in ruins, their steel cables and concrete supports melting into the sand-colored rush of the river." This is a painful novel of war. And it is a hopeful one that speaks to the power of love and the steadfastness of the heart. —TAYLOR ANTRIM



Belfer in New York's Central Park with her golden retriever, Jasper.

## LOVE AND OTHER DRUGS



LAUREN BELFER'S PANORAMIC NEW novel is a love story wrapped around a spy story with a pivotal medical breakthrough at its center. **A Fierce Radiance** (Harper) begins days after the attack on Pearl Harbor propels the United States into World War II. Claire Shipley, a savvy *Life* magazine photographer, has been assigned a

photo essay on a young father whose life might be saved by the new miracle antibiotic, penicillin. The divorced Claire has a particular interest in the case, both because she is still mourning the death of her 3-year-old daughter from blood poisoning, which the drug might have cured, and because she is drawn to James Stanton, the doctor overseeing its clinical trials. At first Jamie seems perfect; he respects Claire's work and loves her son. But he soon grows preoccupied with the suspicious death of his scientist sister Tia, who was also on the track of new medications. He starts to disappear on secret missions, and is soon presumed dead in an explosion in North Africa. So Claire begins to tend to her own life. She strengthens her ties with her wealthy father, from whom she had been estranged—although he, too, behaves suspiciously—and has a fling with Jamie's colleague Nick, who might or might not be a suspect in Tia's murder. She also plunges into some important government work of her own, photographing companies developing antibiotics for the troops. Talented, determined, and vulnerable, Belfer's Claire proves herself a war hero on the home front. —JANE CIABATTARI