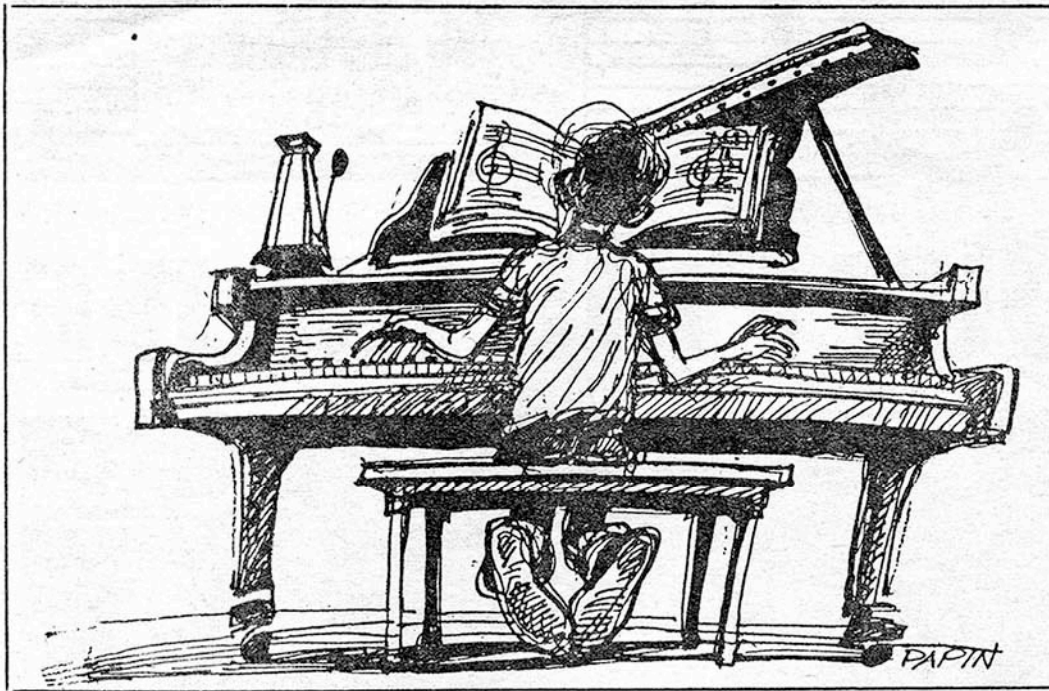


ABOUT GLENN'S PERSONAL TURNING POINT



He was a miserably unhappy child—paperclip-skinny, unathletic, and constantly taunted. Nobody protected him. And the coward, terrified of fighting back himself, stared out the window at school each day, floating in fantasy, mindlessly twisting his hair and dreading the hour of gym class. On his tenth birthday, he and his mother were pulled into the principals' office in Eggertsville, New York, to discuss the ramifications of a D- average. "Don't feel bad," Principal Northrup told the mother. "Although your son has a low IQ, garbage collectors can be happy too."



To escape the humiliation of bad grades, the boy began piano lessons and turned an above-average affinity into a cottage industry. By thirteen, the kid nicknamed "Fingers" was banging out Chopin nocturnes and his own ragtime version of "Alley Cat." By eighteen he had escaped into pianoland altogether, burying himself for the next nine years at a conservatory of music. Imprisoned in the isolation of a practice room, the young man was now dreaming of a concert career, though never quite believing it possible. Somehow he was unable to shed a painful self-consciousness – his hands and legs trembled during recitals. Finally, at age twenty-six, suffering from ulcerative colitis, barely able to play with the tendons of his arms locked in spasms, and never having had a job or earned a dime, he quit the piano, borrowed three hundred dollars and moved from Baltimore to New York.

Unconsciously, with desperation his guide, he plucked from midair a solution, concocting the fantasy of writing the biography of his favorite pianist, Vladimir Horowitz, a task that took four years – years followed by more writing, high hopes, fingers typing – with self-esteem rising, slowly.

The words of the kid's seventh-grade English teacher, Mrs. Breverman, came echoing back in time: "He should write." He does now, he's grateful, and he has learned that careers don't travel in straight lines, that turning points happen when they need to, that when one dream fails, another can take its place. Even if a kid has a "low IQ."

That kid was me.

