Bibliography

It is rather clear by now that I did not have the wherewithal to execute an exhaustive codex for the nation of Corsica—a comprehensive history, political study, bestiary, anthropological record, and economic analysis of the island—except, at times, as presented in ontological doodads germane to the story. To be honest, the reader I seek does not have the wherewithal for such stuff, either. I did have the wherewithal to read several other volumes both comprehensive and idiosyncratic, and if you're looking for some real tough-minded wherewithal, the books most useful and enjoyable include *Corsica: Portrait of a Granite Island* (1971) by Dorothy Carrington (a writer who, according to Paul Theroux in his book *The Pillars of Hercules*, lives there to this day in self-imposed exile after perpetrating some sort of scandal upon her noble family); an odd-duck volume most in the spirit of this book, called *Concerning Corsica* (1926) by Rene Juta, a sassy sister to a minor artist of the 1920s who seems to have been friends with D. H. Lawrence, reportedly a cranky man by disposition (“What fun we all had! All? I wonder,” writes Juta, “D. H., simmering in fury generally, boiling over, hot enough to melt all the snows of Etna. . . .”); James Boswell’s dry, sometimes witheringly dry volume from 1765, *An Account of Corsica, the Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* (possibly the flattest title for a
book prior to *Closely Observed Trains*); and more recently but sadly more scarce, the *Journal of a Landscape Painter in Corsica*, by Edward Lear (1870). This last I got hold of before my trip, and read (perhaps disastrously) more closely than my own guidebooks, so that Lear’s vision of Corsica, depicted both in gouache images and pointy-nosed text, colored my own trip in quite a lurid way. Besides being a painter of great ability, Lear was perhaps better known, as can be divined in the limerick that opens the author’s note, as the poet of absurd lines (good job, Ed, rhyming “Corsica” with “Corsica”!), and more than once did I find myself, while walking the crazy trails of Corsica, reciting much of Lear’s wise nonsense: “Far and few, far and few / Are the lands where the Jumblies live / Their heads are green and their hands are blue / And they went to sea in a sieve.”


