



Mag City 12

Guillaume Apollinaire trans. by Ron Padgett with Nicole Ball	1
Allen Ginsberg	7
Allen Ginsberg/Ron Padgett	16
Jeff Wright	17
Elio Schneeman	20
Bernadette Mayer	24
Ted Berrigan	40
Bob Rosenthal	44
Bill Corbett	47
David Herz	49
Greg masters	59
Gary Lenhart	63
Michael Scholnick	66
Lewis Warsh	73
George Schneeman	
Chassler	

Cover
Ink constructions

Editors: Michael Scholnick
Greg Masters
Gary Lenhart

Mag City
437 E 12 St. #26
NYC, NY 10009

Made possible by a grant from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines which it has made through funds received from the National Endowment for the Arts and from the New York State Council on the Arts. And thanks again to The Poetry Project at St. Mark's for the use of their mimeo.

Copyright (c) 1981 All rights revert to authors

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

THE DEPARTURE OF THE SHADOW

to Mademoiselle Segre

It was more than ten years ago, and it isn't completely in the past, since I see, when I wish, the things and people of that time. I feel their substance and I hear the sounds and voices. These memories pester me, like flies you wave away and which immediately land again on your face or hands.

"When Louise Ancelette died I was no longer in love with her. For the past year her tenderness had slid off me like water off a duck's back. My disaffection, which I didn't want to show, suddenly shone forth, in a labial flash, in front of our friends, to whom my misgivings gave, I'm sure, a subject for conversation which I guessed at without actually hearing, as, without seeing it, you intuit a young girl's cadaver when you walk past a house where someone has died, with its door decorated with white hangings.

"Later I was told. Nearly a month before Louise's passing, I was saying she was going to die, that she had no more than three weeks left, then two weeks, then that she'd go next Wednesday, then that she'd die the next day. It was taken as joking, because Louise was in good health, youthful and gay.

"But the butcher can tell on which day the heifer will be slaughtered. My hate was wise, I knew the very day she would die and she died on the day I had predicted.

"She died suddenly. To the doctors her death made perfect sense, but I couldn't stop my friends from suspecting me of a crime. Their questions wound around me like hissing snakes that I didn't know how to charm.

"Old torments, I can still feel you..."

*

A month before Louise's death we had gone out together. It was a Saturday. We wandered silently through the Marais and, I remember, I watched our shadows ahead of us, overlapping.

"In the rue des France-Bourgeois we stopped in front of a shop on which could be read: Pawn Shop Merchandise. Through the windows all kinds of objects could be seen on display. The entire world and all periods were the suppliers for that shop where jewels, dresses, paintings, bronzes, trinkets, and books were side by side, like dead people in a cemetery. I was sadly reading the lamentable summary of civil history formed by all these curios, when Louise asked me to buy her a jewel she liked. We went in. Opening the door I read the name written on its panes in white letters: David Bakar, and I saw that our shadows, suddenly separated, came in only after we had.

*

David Bakar was sitting at his counter. He told us to take the jewel from the window and, after bargaining, when I was ready to pay, he told me he had no change and that I

should go next door for it. I understood that this man didn't want to work on the Sabbath, and when I came back and paid what I owed, the money stayed on the counter.

"---What a beautiful day," David Bakar said to us then. "It's true that today is Saturday: the sun always shines on Saturday. And it's the best day for examining a shadow. And every Saturday reminds me of one of the most moving moments of my long life. The wonderful memory of having been chance itself! The Christians have no such memories of childhood.

"I was born in Rome and didn't come to Paris until I was 25.

"You know that in Rome the Lotto drawing is every Saturday, on the piazza Ripetta, and that the care to draw the numbers at random falls to a Jewish boy who is chosen preferably by his pleasing face and curly hair.

"Once, it was I who drew Lotto. My mother, who was very beautiful, took me. And so, in the middle of the square, I became chance. And since then I have never seen so many anxious faces looking at me. At the end there were eyes flaming with anger and others with joy. Men shook their fists and insulted me while others exulted and called me Jesus, Easter lamb, savior, or other names flattering to a Christian.

"And I remember very clearly one man, in a frock coat and hatless, in the front row of the crowd. He seemed overwhelmed with sadness and, as the crowd was dispersing, I saw that in

the sun this man had no shadow. Quickly and discreetly he took a revolver out of his pocket and fired a shot into his mouth.

"Horrorified, for a moment I watched the people carry his body away. Then I looked for my mother, but I didn't find her and I went back home alone. She didn't come back that night.

"When she came back the next day my father scolded her as we felt she should be scolded, my sisters and I. But he stopped immediately when she said a few harsh words which I didn't understand.

"My uncle Penso, the rabbi, came that evening. He was irritated with my parents for their having let me draw Lotto. ---I saw David, he said, he was like the golden calf which our masters worshipped in Moses' absence. I was waiting for the winners to organize a dance around David. ---And his objurgations were mixed with citations from Maimonides and the Talmud."

*

I offered Bakar a cigar which he refused, pleading the sabbath.

*

"Oy," said Bakar, "I don't feel very well. Before leaving, lend me your shadows... I want to know if I have long to live. I know a little sciomancy or shadow divination.

I learned the principles of this science from that same uncle who didn't like the golden calf to be worshipped, but who, extremely rich and miserly, traveled only in third class. One day one of his friends asked him the reason for this stinginess. —Because there is no fourth, replied my uncle. Soon after, he emigrated to Germany, where the trains do have fourth class cars.

"Let's go outside and, in the sabbath sun, let us be sciomancers."

"You do have your shadows, don't you?"

"Because don't forget that according to our true beliefs the shadow leaves the body thirty days before it dies."

*

Outside the shop we happily saw that we still possessed our shadows. Baker placed us in such a way that our shadows mixed with his. Then he examined that quavering shape. He said:

"—Oy, the sign of fire! Oy, fire, asch! Oy, Adonai! Asch which is fire in Hebrew gives Aschen in German. That's ashes, the ashes of the dead. Oy, and hashish is from that, most likely. That will be a sound sleep. Oy, the sign of fire. Asch, Aschen, hashish and assassin, which I forgot, all come from that. Oy, oy! Asch, aschen, hashish, assassin, oy, Adonai, Adonai!"

And since he had come outside without a hat and perhaps as confirmation of a fatal foreboding symbolised by asch, the sign of fire, Bakar sneezed loudly:

"---Achoo! Achoo!"

"Deeply moved, I said:

"---God bless you!"

"But Bakar went back into his shop, saying:

"---I still have a long time to live."

"Then, seeing that the sun was going to disappear, he said to us:

"---Another time."

Because it was time for his prayer. And, walking away, we could see him, wearing an old top hat and standing in the shop doorway as he read from a Hebrew book, which, as is proper, he started at the end.

*

We were walking along without talking, and, after a while, when I wanted to see our shadows again, I saw with a singularly atrocious pleasure that Louise's had left her."

Translated from the French by Ron Padgett, with Nicole Ball

ALLEN GINSBERG

from journals

December 18, 1967

Brooklyn's bricks
 shine in the water
The whole river is moved
 by that one boat
Whose wake ropes out
 long blue waves to Manhattan

Gulls float watching the City,
 Warm golden winter dusk,
Eduardo Cianelli's dead,
 his bloody face on screen
forgotten with houses at waters edge
 Thirty years ago -- steam heat --
Now the City begins to die --
brown leaves drifted to the iron rail.

January 19, 1968

Are you prepared for the Atom Bomb
to Blast you out of your body to something familiar ?
Are you prepared for the Bomb to Fall
As always expected, as was designed ?
Are you prepared for the Bomb to descend
Brightness round the backyard Cherry tree
That stands revealed an ancient friend
Dear in the Moment before Last Light sends
Fire thru the house & Fire on the sky
& fire running between the tree & the eye ?

September 30, 1973

11:10 p.m.

Sat all day uneasy, no thoughts but repetitive contracts, bellies, unanswered letters, this mind in Anger with Chile, threaten to jail Kissinger if Nicanor Parra Chilean poet is harmed--in the prisoners' soccer field in Santiago my mind again--the geranium at the window's 6 buds poke forth deep crimson phallos, and a moth still climbs the flat glass pane in dark hours--sat outbreathing, watching air outbreathed frae nostrils, couldn't keep attention, sleepy eyed most all day, only in the afternoon tears, when heard W.H. Auden had died in the last days--end of thirties nostalgia remembering meeting him 1946 Earl Hall w/Jerry Rauch and riding him downtown on subway to Sheridan Square near where he lived--and wrote THE PLATONIC BLOW on Cornelia Street--How glamorous that apartment seemed--moderne entrance arch--and the loft 21st St. where he read EMPTY MIRROR & recommended David Jones as model for open verse form--and my shouting at him, "How dare you old poet discourage Spiritual revolution when I ask you serious the young?" on Ischia in 1958--and sitting on couch in St. Mark's Place, New York, offering again to sing for him he said "Oh no, I get too embarrassed when people sing to me alone..that's for concert hall"--and in London this year explaining a Welsh verse form by syllables --his poem Farewell to Skandhas--

Back to outbreathing my nose air, and tears on cheek walking meditation, our only aspen grove outside, our only mountains, our only meditation, our only Auden the real one in our only real world goal...as I'll go into old age sickness and Death's what all these 14 days of sitting been about--ah what'd Jack've said, & Chester Kallman weeping in Bavaria and tears in Plaka Athens, and in St. John's Wood, and tears in Columbia English Department, and sorrow at Oxford, and weeping in Spain and Iceland, and on upper Lexington Ave. N.Y., and at Swarthmore and Harvard, and melancholy in Hollywood Isherwood woeful, and Central Europe in lacrymae rerum, and Random House & Moscow alas heart struck, and many wet eyes in Austro-Hungarian empire, and old Berlin religious & sad, and old Vienna lachrymose, and lamenting in England and Ireland, and Auden's death making Robert Duncan & John Ashbery wan & sad, and myself in meditation silent Ah'ing his wrinkled soul. "Now a face like that tells a story...You don't get a face like that pushing strawberries in your mouth" said Edna Everege on London T V after Auden's woman-wrinklefaced image left the screen..O Rinpoche pray for Auden poet--sat stiff legged, sleepy legged, back ached in evening, no progress, no Nirvana, no hope, yea boredom, eventually began remembering to ride out the free outbreath so sat to 10 p.m. The aspen grove most lost its yellow leaf roof, 'tis end of September, kind Auden's gone away forever.

Ginsberg/8

October 31, 1974

John Giorno a Buddhist, I like it that his repetitious mantras bring us closer to world suffering First Noble Truth, crude art with a message, Calling out of mind's consciousness, vocal physically so poetic - ego? Who hasn't? So it's the same. The poems look pretty on the page, visual art, empty spine with different length ribs sticking out asymmetric, there's the feedback effect, with repetition, to see if, drummed into mind, the fact ears itself better. From search for consciousness to settled Dharma manifestations and expositions, there's psychological progress (from early to later work). Johnny one note, as far as style, but that one flower (like W.C. Williams' Saxifrage) splits through the rocks of pre-conception.

TOUGH AND SHY ON CHRISTOPHER STREET

Pissing by a car under the waning bright moon over the brick warehouse surrounded with Banknote Company trucks -

The heroes of night with pimples in Home Fry Heaven, it's 5:30 AM and some beautiful beardless Puerto Ricans haven't found sweethearts, tho the old tough blond Nurse with his alcohol smudged nose Pulls out a Camel pack from breast levi pocket and lips his love chat to the mustached swarthy sailor across the booth table's coffee cup & saucer.

While the bearded fellow with black Esterbrook ink pen & a pile of change gleaming table top under the lamps beside his copy book scribbles gay recollections, like a face winking in the windowpane across from the warehouse's neon arch, and brighteyed balding kid observant of thoughts formed to handscript-squiggles upside down, put his palm to cheek gazing open at the ketchup-stained empty plate under the jukebox robot Wall-o-matic Change Coin-mouth aluminum reflecting pink hand.

December 19, 1974

Where do you get your pictures

Mr Poet?

There's one right outside your eyeball!

There's one in your head

between black sheets

inside your eyeball.

What a pretty bookstore,

green pictures on the walls,

People talking into microphones, Roman haircuts

What a pretty head you got

empty as the night sky

with flashes of light

flowing like the Milky Way from ear to ear.

February 8, 1978--4:50

Afternoon dream, returning from Acupuncturist Dr. Ho with Peter, third visit relieving his sciatic pain, taxi downtown with Mr. Sommer from Poland who got mad at a snowbank--and told of hiding in woods from the Nazis--from the old cemetery hiding saw his mother taken among 73 people, shot and dumped in a mass grave, then his nephew shot in the arm age year and a half, and thrown in the fosse still bleeding, and for three days thereafter "the earth was still moving"--where the crowd of Jews was buried, many still alive, shot once and pushed into the hole and covered over. The driver was still enraged. "From 1938 to 1942 I saw Jews taken and didn't say anything. I made myself believe they violated a rule, not wearing an armband, or not obeying some regulations--maybe they were wrong about this or that, but why my mother--she would take the bread out of her mouth for anyone. Why?...I still hate them." He had yelled "Stupid!" through a closed window at another driver slipping by in the mushy snow on 34th Street, three days after a giant blizzard that stilled New York.

Home to Julie who'd set several fires in wastebaskets and garbage bins, putting out cigarettes and matches, dropping ashes on my office floor and tiled old bathroom fundament.

I dreamt I was in a foreign city sleepy-- as I had lain down sleepy to nap next to J.R.--and been too fatigued to move my head, with half closed eyes, to tell him goodbye when he rose clothed (from the night before passed sleeping "curled at my feet" as he'd promised, having come in late drinking)--

Ginsberg/10

I had been brought to a rooming house, still groggy, lain down my coat and shoulder bag full of mss. and address books and calender--When I woke, I found there was no room for me, found myself elsewhere--on a roof, a Spirit Angel, bald and golden, was instructing Levitation a patient--I lay down on the roof's edge as instructed by his assistant, and did as he told me, rolled off the building top falling into a deep narrow alley below-- "Watch out not to crush your feet"--Floating down I remembered popular picture of spirit leaving body, and exerted subtle energy to rise, so found myself slowly floating upward from the cement alleyfloor--up, up, with a rush...

returning to the rooming house to find my papers, the wrong alley, the wrong house, I wandered sleepily from one narrow street to another--woke as the phone rang, I'd arrived in the first room where I hoped to find the gray shoulder-bag with notebooks, address books, etc.

-edited & selected by Mag City editors

Capitol Air

I don't like the government where I live
I don't like dictatorship of the rich
I don't like bureaucrats telling me what to eat
I don't like Police dogs sniffing round my feet

I don't like Communist Censorship of my books
I don't like Marxists complaining about my looks
I don't like Castro insulting members of my sex
Leftists insisting we got the mystic Fix

I don't like Capitalists selling me gasoline Coke
Multinationals burning Amazon trees to smoke
Big Corporation takeover media mind
I don't like the Top-bananas that're robbing Guatamala banks blind

I don't like K.G.B. Gulag concentration camps
I don't like the Maoists' Cambodian Death Dance
15 Million were killed by Stalin Secretary of Terror
He has killed our old Red Revolution for ever

I don't like Anarchists screaming Love Is Free
I don't like the C.I.A. they killed John Kennedy
Paranoiac tanks sit in Prague and Hungary
But I don't like counterrevolution paid for by the C.I.A.

Tyranny in Turkey or Korea Nineteen Eighty
I don't like Right Wing Death Squad Democracy
Police State Iran Nicaragua yesterday
Laissez-faire please Government keep your secret police from me

I don't like Nationalist Supremacy White or Black
I don't like Narcs & Mafia marketing Smack
The General bullying Congress in his tweed vest
The President building up his Armies East and West

I don't like Argentine police assassinating Jews
Government Terrorist takeover Salvador news
I don't like Zionists acting Nazi Storm Troop
Palestine Liberation cooking Israel into Moslem soup

I don't like the Crown's Official Secrets Act
You can get away with murder in the Government that's a fact
Security cops teargassing radical kids
In Switzerland or Czechoslovakia God Forbids

In America it's Attica in Russia it's Lubyanka Wall
In China if you disappear you wouldn't know yourself at all
Arise Arise you citizens of the world use your lungs
Talk back to the Tyrants all they're afraid of is your tongues

Two hundred Billion dollars inflates World War
In United States every year They're asking for more
Russia's got as much in tanks and laser planes
Give or take Fifty Billion we can blow out everybody's brains

School's broke down 'cause History changes every night
Half the Free World nations are Dictatorships of the Right
The only place socialism works is in ***** bud
The Communist world's stuck together with prisoners' blood

The Generals say they know something worth fighting for
They never say what till they start an unjust war
Iranian hostage Media Hysteria sucks
The Shah ran away with 9 Billion Iranian bucks

Col. Roosevelt and his U.S. dollars overthrew Mossadeq
They wanted his oil now they got Ayatollah's dreck
They put in the Shah and they trained his police the Savak
All Iran was our hostage quarter-century That's right Jack

Bishop Romero wrote President Carter to stop
Guns to El Salvador's Junta so he got shot
Ambassador White blew the whistle on the White House lies
Reagan called him home cause he looked in dead nuns' eyes

Half the voters didn't vote they knew it was too late
Newspaper headlines called it a big Mandate
Some people voted for Reagan eyes open wide
3 out of 4 didn't vote for him That's a Landslide

Truth may be hard to find but Falsehood's easy
Read between the lines our Imperialism is sleazy
If you think the People's State is your Heart's Desire
Jump right back in the frying pan from the fire

The System the System in Russia & China the same
Criticise the System in Budapest lose your name
Coca Cola Pepsi Cola in Russia & China come true
Kruschev yelled in Hollywood "We will bury You"

America and Russia want to bomb themselves Okay
Everybody dead on both sides Everybody pray
All except the Generals in caves where they can hide
And fuck each other in the ass waiting for the next free ride

No hope Communism no hope Capitalism Yeah
Everybody's lying on both sides Nyeah nyeah nyeah
The bloody iron curtain of America Military Power
Is a mirror image of Russia's red Babel-Tower

Jesus Christ was spotless but was crucified by the Mob
Law & Order Herod's hired soldiers did the job
Flowerpower's fine but innocence has got no Protection
The man who shot John Lennon had a Hero-worshipper's connection

The moral of this song is that the world is in a horrible place
Scientific Industry devours the human race
Police in every country armed with Tear Gas & TV
Secret Masters everywhere bureaucratize for you & me

Terrorists and police together build an upperclass Rage
Propaganda murder manipulates the middleclass Stage
Can't tell the difference 'tween a turkey & a provocateur
If you're feeling confused the Government's in there for sure

Aware Aware wherever you are No Fear
Trust your heart Don't ride your Paranoia dear
Breathe together with an ordinary mind
Armed with Humor Feed & Help Enlighten Woe Mankind

Frankfurt--New York
December 15, 1980

Trungpa Lectures

Now that bow arrow brush & fan are balanced in the hand

--What about a glass of water?--

Holding my cock to pee, the Atlantic gushes out.

Sitting down to eat, Sun and Moon fill the plate.

July 8, 1981

ALLEN GINSBERG & RON PADGETT

Thundering Undies

Passing through Manhattan's sodium vapor sidestreet glare
with pink electric powderpuffs overhead,
mmmmm, that Catholic churchwall's old as Science
tho Science is older, but O please don't tell me about it tonight,
no pain please in the strange spring light,
tho my baby's waiting on the corner with 160 pounds of meat
on her 148 bones all for sale for 25 bucks.
Furious & Aurelius, now that we're back in town, tell her
to take cosmetics from the air, and let the dark blue city
sift slowly down to where lamplight shadows her cheeks
& her lips shine dayglo purple moist with sperm of her 300 adorers
---O come let us adore her, weird Madonna of the street
and not in real great shape, though we're in far-off Elsewhere
with our sad souls and aching teeth! Too late for old loves,
but a little nosegay of pansies cut by Time's tractor where
the pasture meets the dirt road and my heart meets the flower bed
dug up years ago to make East 12th Street, where you float
a little off the ground, thinking of the withered posy of pussy-
willows cox-stamens & rosepetal lips dumped in the garbage can
by unthinking lovers I used to sleep & giggle with,
crazed, hateful & disappointed, Catullus.

21 April 1981

JEFF WRIGHT

from Subway Poems

3

Adonis

The first thing I remember as gray light
splashed like felt about 7:15 you said,
"You haven't washed this pan for three days."
I was dreaming Danny, Rose & I
were smuggling a masterpiece past the border.
We were trying to get jobs at the dockyards.
Now I'm on the Broadway Local, the guy
in the Adonis teeshirt rubs his eyes awake.
Another guy with a type of shiteating grin
makes everyone suspicious. You'd think
to look at him he must have fresh sex
on his upper lip the way he won't stop smiling.
Could be he just got saved or
fired. So the first thing
I said today was, "You wash it." Then I thought
of love as a purple eagle in a phonebooth
in the dark listening to a busy signal. Then
I thought of freedom as a black eagle
in a purple phonebooth listening to Pink Floyd.
Then I thought of the woman next door, a Scorpio.
The gap between her two front teeth
filled entirely by her smile.

Whew!

Wet yellow leaves
Black empty windows
White steam goes up
into gray air
Red lights watch
dozing intersections
Occasional cars
Two highschool girls
looking good get on
the B train
A black man with
a radio & a mop
its head in a bag
checks their action
One leans on
a pole in the middle
My head hurts
after best fucking
reading last night
by best friend
giving me everything
to live up to.
Two more stops.
It's great to be 28.
This was the year
I thought I'd
do something. Now
my wife is
eating for two
& cooking for a family.
I still stay out
half the night
& I just remembered
Steve gave me
a yellow jacket
to help stay up
& I'm supposed
to remember to
retrieve it from
my cigarette pack
which I left
at home in an
effort to stay
healthy. The radio
breaks thru coffee
shop chatter to deliver
a tune from 10 years
ago now at 10 to 10.
Deliver me now
to my past,
just remind me
I had one.
It was great.

5

The first thing I notice when I wake up
is that I'm still alive after the party.
I got the new Poetry Comix in the mail.
The last thing I bought was a cup of coffee.
Before that the last thing I bought was also a cup of coffee.
My check got lost in the mail.
Today I have to call Richard about
working with him at PS. 115 near Washington Bridge.
I mailed the envelope to Hotwater Review
& left out the letter.
I was trying to do too much at once,
eating an apple, bullshitting & thumping Roland
on the back of his leather bomber's jacket.
Last night I slapped Bob on the back too.

ELIO SCHNEEMAN

PERENNIAL

The grace of antiquity is fragmented
Each arrangement almost perfect
Imperfection only visible
To the observant characters
Of another century.
Obscurity veils the face of this century,
Wrapped in a turbid swell of incidence.
The flag is interesting
As if interest were based on images,
Certain preferences for the vagaries of other times,
When in the frolicsome dell,
The handmade bridges fell.

VARIATIONS ON AN AUTUMN DAY

Pigeons fly in dark air.

Wind breathes music.

The concrete of the street
is a skeleton flattened to a sheet.

The will drifts without lantern
under atlantic stars.

We sat, shaken
beneath the leaves of the sea.
Our father sang his songs.

Under the tragic sun
where cold shores flow
old men are young stones.

An intentless shadow sits in a crow's nest.

The sea improvises exercises.

Bodies feel the same change as boats.

The spray of the sky is salty
and covers the sand on the sea.

I can only see the tip of my nose beaming.

JOURNAL ENTRIES

There is no comfort
in this broken framed room.

There's a large plant
growing out of my head
with a purple ribbon tied on the vase.

There is a voice unheard, with a gun.

My feet sink in the mud of ancestral storms.

A canvas dome above our heads
is breathless at first.

My footsteps are the sound of rain on a steeple.

The wind is guided by sleep,
the tree by worms.

My education is the greatest mistake.

To command the moment and give it breath
You lifted me out of the ballpark.

INTENTLESS

There is nothing to be gained
from the past but an example
I climb mountains
to attain this vague empty feeling

We walk on wooden legs
with frightened ideas of lumberjacks.

"Of who we and all they are
you all now know"

It is the season of ambiguity,
the final omission of intention.

"strange shy hidden skill"

It's another great grey day
when I open my eyes in the morning
the sky is the whiteness of snow.

BERNADETTE MAYER

To Lewis

Frank as a pledge of love you and I
would rather walk around not together
knowing we'll be concerned every second
with how each other does & doesn't do things

So when we get into bed it's not as if
we battle like the man & woman upstairs
fighting every second like people in love
we pretend instead we are stupid lunatics

You clown that you're another like a person
I might hate I stolidly admit I don't love you
Then you have to ask if that might not not be true
at which, disturbed from my book, I say oh yes o.k.

If I put my book down & look over at you
You avoid my glance as if we live in hell
But suddenly you're making love to me while
if I wanted I could actually still read my book

I toy with the sadism of continuing reading
But I notice your so-called whiskers are hurting me
I pretend to put my great book down noticeably
but you are going sadistically crazy down there anyway

you have a lovely method I'm used to I adore you
goddammit why can't you notice that that hurts
why don't you turn around now I'd be interested in
caressing you to show you how rude you're being

I'm afraid I'm coming let's turn around & be good
you suggest I turn over as if we were to be bad
you've always been good at enjoying being either good
or bad like a formal series of lapses between my moods

Often I think you think I might be something
to keep tuned or attuned to like a fucking devil
who is actually a car you hope will keep running
so against odds you can still get from here to there

It's sweet to notice it's so easy to make love
once and once again, ugly flowers, pretty animals,
on and on in all the time you're still living
till you make no note of love's end - my ass!

It's interesting to alternate the so-called good
with arbitrary images of what might in love be bad
otherwise among both I'd guess we'd all be bored
and have nothing to do - oh how I hate you

how come you're always in such a great fucking hurry
it's okay to be that way but it hurts like hell
I wonder if a man is any different from a woman
if you go to sleep I might eat a sandwich as well

I must admit I love a man who is not living
I find myself mating with him in all my sleeping
I meet him here & there, he takes different shapes
often I just see him off in the distance looking
& I always notice his eye and mine catch each other
in an awkward way but I've no idea who is he

I think of him every night when I go to bed
I'm sure this has to do with catholic adolescent sex

He's a lunatic I think but he turns me on
All the time I see him & I think of him
He sits on me because he's dead or living
He is not unscrupulous as I am unforgiving
I think sometimes he's my old aunt who was too simple
She had a regimen of chocolate and oranges to eat
But often I can make her more attractive than that
especially when no one else is awake in the house

My this lover I think made me commit murder
because of all the beauty in the world but when
he didnt do that he made me replete in my own arms
and that is the most unfortunate part which is why
I can never tell anybody about any of this or else
I'm going to go to someplace worse than American jail
I know I belong there because I like solitude
and besides I am nobody without this awful other
who I turn all the time into another like maybe you

You cant hate me for writing this down can you?
I could say anything I wanted couldnt I?
Besides this man has beautiful curly black hair
And I love to put my hands into it & make him
Kiss me all the way down till we are forgetting
the heads and feet of the bed we are in.

THE PRESENTATION OF FRUITSTANDS IN JANUARY

so-called inauguration 1981
proposal of love from an inept suitor
pity poor instinctual America love all
wrong greedy mismatched middle class mates
is all doesnt need to be said at Liberty meanwhile
on the streets powerless in the funny light
a man named "I cant remember anything" said "I'm not
doing bad I've got only a homeopathic alcoholism"
but otherwise he turned with Rastafarian braids
or sets of hair to the crowds behind shouting
"Hey! Narrative! I'm crossing, I'm waiting!"
Then I shot behind a single man thinking to make
things safe for me by crossing the street behind him,
he, the typical wayfaring dentist-type, jaywalked south
as I was going north. An inaugural woman in the xerox
place turned as I was nearly leaning on her stuff and
I saw she was white pale like she is with her bright
red lipstick, I was shocked as if I was watching a Herzog
movie no Fassbinder, in fact I'd been thinking of having
my manuscript put in a binding for Clark, I met Gerard.
I shot into the grocer's wondering if they thought I buy
too much beer there, I got the apple from the fruit market
the one where the Korean woman articulates "twenty cents"
so beautifully, once I bought a clementine there,
the same place where they have the best red potatoes,
very small ones. In Maria's near Marie's school they
do not have as much variety as good cheap ripeness,
Italian pasta and olive oil, and once they had purple
cauliflower which I'd never seen before. Maria or Sally
adds up the prices in Italian, quattroceto, millecento,
abracadabra felice navidad I am madly in love.
At the fruitstand next to hers, which is another Korean one,,
there they have everything, it's like entering the fucking World
Trade Center, the entire business of the center of the world
of fruits and vegetables - leeks, broccoli rabe, bibb lettuce,
red lettuce, sprouts, the accustomed luxury of watercress,
big red potatoes, fennel, giant peculiar-looking strawberries
from Florida, real loose spinach, it's winter, carrots with tops,
beets with greens and all the things the Korean markets can seem
to have that other places dont. Further down the street is a
perfunctory market that sometimes seems to have the cheapest apples
not only Cortland but also Macintosh and Delicious though I dont know
why the Delicious are always more expensive since they dont taste good.
Beyond is the famous 7th Street market which is open all night,
there you can obtain cheap baskets of aging fruits, cheap lettuce,
cheap broccoli and nuts but if you're not on your guard
you'll wind up buying 2 grapefruits for a dollar forty-nine.
Across the street before that, if you can cross the street,
is another of the famous Korean markets which has everything all
that is both precious and mundane but the carrots are expensive there.
Nearest our house is a tiny alleyway of a fruit market at which

the people are so slow to weigh what you buy that you'd best not have to stop there if in a hurry, however oranges and grapefruits are cheap and they have olives and figs. Behind that place hidden on 4th Street is another place that also sells flowers. This place is so expensive you can never go there, I don't understand how they manage it somebody told me they sell nickel bags there & once we bought flowers and the woman was as if out of Dickens so you could see having an

irrational devotion to her, the flowers are the only ones nearby. I forgot to mention

the new semi-religious health food place on 9th Street, that, when it's not

too cold, sells fruits & vegetables outdoors. They began to sell them very

cheap but now everything is expensive again. All the markets have to put some or most things inside when it gets to be zero or below, or they cover

the oranges and stuff with plastic. In the morning it's nice to watch the markets opening up and imagine running one, you could write on a crate.

At one of the Korean ones there's always a child running around:

On this inauguration day of the most hateful ideals

I like to think nostalgically of fruits and vegetables

because the sight of them gives gives pleasure

the fruits and vegetables, their weight and measure, are

transient enough that there is stuff to give away or sell

at reduced costs to those whose exigencies are more primary,

though we are all feebly observably ready to marry

with our most ideal love a grief at the most sorry most

sublime state of being human among the ages of the people

I see this January on First and Second Avenues between 4th Street

and 12th Street (this is not the half of it), I wish I could meet

a man or woman who would say to me today looks this way don't worry

& if each color passes by you like a lover so lent to the streets

a bright presence like a person then the sadness of a person's desire

doesn't matter, to reflect like the transient vegetables this joy

as if an object was the way people say it's a girl or boy!

Sentient apple, quite fat, did love my stealing it.

Happiest tree-like broccoli was endeavoring to seduce me.

Enticing fancy leek enabled me to be meek (poor man's

asparagus), so I saw everything & was able to calm down

by stopping to look and see if the famous comice pears were

almost ripe enough for us to have the patience to wait to eat them.

It may sound opulent to mention so much stuff

but actually all this this and that - don't be fooled-

this as it should be and thus I pray is as it would be

if only you, impatient sullen mushroom, would love me.

THE NEW MALFUNCTIONING BUSES

Scattered aptitudes I went to
Delancey & Essex Streets
Not a sweet place in fact an offal
Place in the market they sell entrails
And underground the men and women have no limbs
Because they've lost them or at least
They used to have lost them I havent been
Down in that station in years
I wish I knew how to write short poems
It was a place to change trains in high school
& all the people of all the races, sexes,
Persuasions and aptitudes changed trains there
& there were so many people on a rush hour
Morning running through the iron-dust runners
Some taller than me, some shorter than me
Some on this side going this way
Some on that side going that way
Some lost or perverse running against the traffic

Today when I saw the place from above ground
What they call one's haunted old hunting grounds
Where Claire Bauer and I used to hang around
It was a dismal frightening hot damp static day
The sky green-gray but it didnt rain all day
Sister Aloysia in Shakespeare & Religion class one day
Noticed the curls I had set in my hair had come out
She said "Why?" I said "because it's damp out"
She said "Did you say you were again in a damn pout?"

And I was disgruntled I was always being told
"Dont think so much" in the buses and subways leave your future
To the absent winds you might be yourself but then another
Might come & take you over (man) what's the difference I said
Between liberals & conservatives & why does the boy
From the Red Cross not know how to pronounce the word
"Exodus" while he is being my date & we are taking
The elevated line from Brooklyn to Manhattan to see a show
It wasnt "Frantic" which I saw with Michael O'Reilly
When he asked me to go steady not before we had supper
With Vito & Rosemary & I found an interesting green worm
In the salad which they all said I shouldnt have told them about

It's a relief to be a woman of 35
All the children was just a question of proliferation
If you watch the buds in quick succession you will know what
Anybody like Lewis & I were doing without any intention
Even to our return to what we call a home town this silly city
Of the myriad of poets now full of memories noisy as cicadas
In the countryside we dallied with, didnt come from, found lonely, left
As I hope to leave explanations behind, in fact tear out my tongue
Or make me speechless so I can subject myself to the torture
Of writing a shorter poem and without ending with mentioning
Love at all, or the heart, or the city subways

DENTIST FICTION

He actually said that among the accurate oral histories there ought to be a fiction, some more imagination or something. Well I'd been thinking of writing this down anyway so this is for him:

First I think it was Doctor VanderWater who lived in a frame house on Forest Avenue in Ridgewood Queens, right around the corner and all he could say was how much silver (I might remind you these are the same teeth I have today) had to be put in, then I think we switched to Doctor A.A. Amendola, he was down on Catalpa Avenue and his daughter went to our school, poor man he was a pig and a sadist too, I don't use the words lightly. When I go to the dentist now I still shiver to think of Dr. A.A. Amendola. He said to take out all the fillings that Dr. VanderWater had put in and replace them with new ones, he didn't like the old man, that nice man in the frame house painted gray as if it weren't the city it was still like the country, is that an inept filling?

Then years went by, I neglected my teeth, not too good in the first place, I'd been the subject of too much Kool-Aid and candy and too I'd inherited Lower class teeth to begin with. I let the years go by, I did this & that.

On the Lower East Side one Sunday I got a fantastic toothache and paid a man of whom I was frightened five dollars in cash to pull the thing out, that was not the last time.

Living eccentrically on 75th and York I got a Medicaid card and across the street was a man, Dr. Malcolm Zeller, who would honor it. He did my teeth. He did everything for me in two weeks, I saw him every day, because he knew and I knew that in two weeks the Medicaid program was ending for people my age. He even did a root canal. Meanwhile he developed an odd attraction for me and for my friend, Ed Bowes. He would act eccentrically when we both came to his office at the same time. It was hard to tell what was going on. He was nice, and he was a communist or perhaps a Marxist and he would often say to me, "Nobody pays you to have bad teeth" which was his way of saying,

implying
that he thought I might want to be in Ed's movies some day. I didnt
feel that
that mattered and just wanted the pain to go away. At least he
didnt say,
like the other dentists, you'll lose all your teeth by the time
you're thirty.
(Once a provincial gynecologist told me that after having two
babies
I was in terrible shape, I had an invisible torn muscle & should
have surgery
then he fitted me for a diaphragm which resulted in the conception
of Max)

In New England I saw a man, a dentist named NoMan at the anonymous
clinic
in Worthington, who, when I said my teeth hurt, drilled and filled
one up
that turned out to be the wrong one, he was violent unremitting
& stupid.

In Lenox Massachusetts finally I went to Clark & Susan Coolidge's
dentist
a wonderful man named Dr. Ira Colby who not only fitted me with
cheap silver fillings
but tried to get us a job too and never gave novocaine, still
managing not to hurt one
But when I got in real trouble Dr. Colby couldn't help out,
I needed a root canal or an extraction and he sent me to a man
on Pittsfield's main street who was so slick and made me lie down
in a chair so low I was completely helpless and reclining and
started
to do this thing with a woman by him suctioning out my mouth every
two seconds
with such a kind of rapidness & automation I felt I was not a
human being
so I said no I dont like this at all it makes me nervous I would
rather
have the thing out by a human being, sadists are more human than
this slickness
Then this strange man called me up & said many people were made
nervous
by what he did but that I should try to calm down and come back
to him
I said no never! I cannot do that you have a fucked-up manner!

I had it pulled by a young Turk dentist in Town, in Lenox, a strange
boy
with no style who had alot of plants in his office & was the only
other local dentist
besides the mentally impaired one in the mini-mall. So there I
had my
fourth extraction of my life in the sadistic little office with
a scared
blonde woman still suctioning at my mouth with her new-found vacuum
& me forcing Lewis to wait with me so I wouldnt be too scared or
think

that at the hands of these lunatics I might die without anybody ever knowing it was I. The next day I weaned Marie.

Then Dr. Colby sort of finished up my teeth very nicely and the last
time
I saw him he said these teeth, though a mess, are well-maintained.
In Henniker I thought to see the dentist but the local man
had just gotten a friend of the midwife's pregnant, without his being
willing to acknowledge it, so I never went, so now after two years
of neglect again
my dentist on St. Mark's Place says to me, knowing full well how
terrified I am
"Is your husband jealous? We're going to have to have quite a long
affair together."
He offers me his hand, I tell him I'm a poet, it turns out he wrote
poetry too
when he was in the war and writing to his mother, he couldn't think
of what to say
so he decided to write poetry and it got published in "The Stars &
Stripes,"
he is a nice man who grew up in the neighborhood and I hope he'll
be able
to save me from all pain, he once put in a filling for Peter Orlovsky.

That is my partial dental history, I have four missing teeth,
all pulled in poverty, two root canals done at great expense, one in a
front tooth I couldn't really afford to lose by the communist dentist
who other dentists have told me kind of messed it up, I have hardly
any chance of keeping my teeth throughout life unless I die very soon,
and when I die I'll be glad not to think about them ever again.
I don't know why it would be scary to lose all one's teeth & get what
they
call false ones except that Ted said they make you feel like you're
choking
and also I still want my teeth rooted to my mouth and brain as they are.

Not to prolong this torture like a dental visit but I've had in my life
an enormous number of what you call toothaches. Aches I thought today
was exactly the right word, except that the kind of aches I've had
have often turned into such pain I've wished I was a primitive person
with access to more remorseless cures than there are in 20th century.

People often think they're lucky in one way or the other, but one way
I have not been lucky is in relation to my remorselessly bad teeth.
My sister too, she has a lot of problems with hers but she also tends
to believe what the dentists tell her & spends more money. I feel
that the dentists
are a fiction and that they are a sample or example, generally, though
they're people
of society's devotion to occupations that make money, so that I, as
a poet,
could conceivably say, Listen if you want me to try and write about
that
well it will not be easy, I might have to do this and that to make
it true

and then, who knows, but I'm telling you the best way for me to
write about that
is to be sure that I can do it and I don't want to cause you any pain,
so let me open your mouth and get close to your brain, now lie down,
now
lie down and relax, I just want you to forget everything and give it
to me,
oh yes I see that you are lovely but I have to change you in this
one way,
hold on! don't panic, and you will still be the same after what I have
to say
and do, your mouth with your bared teeth like a tiger's is like my
mouth,
we are the same, we are only human, I have small fingers like the
letters
of the alphabet I will not offend you, I'm relieved that you're so
lovely
and I love all mouths, mouths that you put things into, who, what is
your age?

Deft and curtailed as poetry might be
So is dentistry with dentists free
As the letters of the alphabet to torture others
With their apparatus, detritus of all
The emotions, isn't fiction silly?

TO ADMIRAL SCOTT ABOUT SPACE
courting a form for mr space

Fractious glaciers, there is
in it no mention of the rest
some of the stuff seemed his
oh god, the house was a mess

next antimatter drove spaces
to shuttle a black white ink
into homogenization of races
and the old hole of the sink

once in connection with poem
mention was made of emending
the chaos as if it were home
which too is merely unending

nothing to neat- or deadness
ever, is there? Or is there?
On Jupiter red was a redness
as Picasso pitied a red pear

generosity makes even a date
look silly & I wouldn't like
her/him to have to stew/wait
as I sewed dumplings of pike

or put soles back on my feet
that had fallen off from any
reason - frostbite and sweet
unconscious love of the many

discovery is an artful ninny
as people know from the home
maybe these verses are tinny
but they do look like a poem

odd about freest achievement
it wrecks us stoned & giving
off our repeated bereavement
cold feet of immortal living

To Mr Dead Scott about space
Alive I mention to Ms. Alone
The cannibal who would erase
All that's been writ & known

Amen! a deal has been struck
let's all get back to our bed
let's all be back to our bed
let's all go back to our bed
and perfectly entirely fuck,
and idealistically utopianly
and headlong utopianly fuck,
and atavistically, utopianly
& how can we fuck? utopianly
Let's all go back to our bed
and fuck and fuck utopianly,
and fuck, and utopianly fuck
until we are done in & dead,
until we're done in and dead

Amen! a deal has been struck
let's all go back to our bed
and fuck, and utopianly fuck
until we're done in and dead

O.K. would you mind moving o
okay and would you mind that
OK and would you mind moving
over a little bit so I could
have some room and would you
please abdicate the form and
kiss me right there where it
kiss me exactly there where,
kiss me just there where I'm
pointing and please do it oh
exactly the way you did it I
just the way you once did he
do it precisely as it was if
do it exactly as you did it.
do it just as you once did o
OK and would you mind moving
but they do look like a poem
just as I noticed you'd done
something like that before I
something similar which was,
something I remember & it is
something I recall which was
quite perfect & not like any
quite perfect unlike anyone,
I'd ever had the fortune to,
but they do look like a poem
fractious glaciers, there is
quite perfect & unlike notes
quite perfect & not like her

something I recall which was
amazing, not like anything I
ever think I had felt before
in the rigorous form of love
in the rigorous trek of love
over the continent's wastes,
over my dead body continents
in love all this walking and
all this work & I say love o
all this working, I say love
seems like a tight belt that
as people know from the home
cold feet of the only living
love who is a tight belt I'm
love's a tight belt I'm to o
love's a tight belt I wear &
love's a tight belt I put on
every morning before I get a
when every morning I forget,
where every morning I forget
the form while you still are
the form while you know me &
the form wherein you know me
the form in which I and you,
as people know from the home
like a litany of exacting be
like a litany of purest love
from the living to the dead,
from the living to wild dead
from the wild living to dead
wild living to wild dead was
wild living to the wild dead
just in bed mention the dead
space goes on forever I went
space doesn't go on forever I
am just coming by to see you
for a visit onto your street
for a little visit your home
for a little visit my friend
for a visit I seem to love a
for a visit I do love you, I
for a visit I really love oh
as people know from the home
for a visit I still love you
till the spacious bitter end
with thought to everything I
with a thought to everything
that I can go over & correct
you're my fortune & my form,

you're my fortune in a form,
you're my blessing and form,
what's this rigid form you I
is this rigid form you and I
do you and I make this rigid
do you make this rigid or I?
we shuttle & return to earth
we dont pay homage to anyone
we dont give credit to kings
we're only in love's straits
all hope we'll get thru this
with exactitude and dignity,
we dont, but with bravery we
shuttle, and return to earth
without a form without forms

FOR ALICE

In late July 1981 in New York City
they had blackberries for \$1.39 in
strawberry-sized boxes and we picked them up
thinking to get them for you after you
were in the cab that ran into a truck
& you had to have stitches and got two shiners
but when we got on line on Avenue A
we couldn't resist tasting one or two
of the commonest most rarest berries
(like they say in Brooklyn or in the Bronx)
because we had to wait so fucking long & then
ugh Marie said these are not right like berries
& sour I said this is all wrong for berries
therefore I'm writing to say I'm sorry
about the absence of blackberries
in our night.

Expensive treasures are often what
we cupbearing poets have already got
anyway in the world that is for free -
wanting blackberries in the city is tricky -
& I know they'd be good for your black eyes
which accumulate love faster than anybody's
just normally, without any injuries,
you have a fucking fast eye which sees
nearly impertinently (where's my dictionary?)
your impudent eyes make mine seem lazy
as if the lesson that ovaries are memory
were taught exclusively by you to me.

O Friend overcome by poetry and now a taxi
momentarily under the weather on account of it
please about your startled eyes don't worry
they are on all accounts so equally above it

It's easy to write endlessly about your eyes
to give you pleasure, but to illuminate in my poem
what you've shown me would imply that my
love's vision could eventually mention you are my own

Get better soon
so I don't have to be sorry
we'll work on our collaboration
again about being horny

Meanwhile accept my formal sentiments
of emotive and emergency love
against your most accurate presentiments
that those things don't come from above

& let's get together as soon as you're better
I cant believe we'll ever be locked in to lacking luck
We master-mistress-minds in finest fettle
who get to see everything when & as we want to
Fuck! it's impossible to end I hope you're fine
You could see from my eyes now though how they are thine

TED BERRIGAN

PARIS, FRANCES

I tried to put the coffee back together
For I knew I would not be able to raise the fine
Lady who sits wrapped in her amber shawl
Mrs. of everything that's mine right now, an interior
Noon smokes in its streets, as useless as
Mein host's London Fog, and black umbrella, & these pills
Is it Easter? Did we go? All around the purple heather?
Go fly! my dears. Go fly! I'm in the weather.

PAUL ELUARD

for Anne Waldman

a nose, heavy, square, & massive;
large, flesh irrigated with blood;
a light grave voice; his face
a long rectangle; pink;
poetry pours out of it like kool-aid
At unofficial noon it is crumpled
 like a kleenex;
here, blow.

ANGST

I had angst.

FROM THE EXECUTION POSITION

"Members of the brain, welcome to New York City
on a soft day weighted with rain, where
slightly ahead of time, trifoliate, but humanly low,
reading in a man's book this line, you fibrillate --

'It is easier to die than to remember.' --

You turn to the nurse, but he shakes your hand
With the fin of a fish: &
Why this self-deprivation of full human heritage?
& this does not happen all that seldom.

However, these days you do get
to do what you will, if
not always what you would wish. Tell me, is it
Ghost or Dancer straight? Substance or shadow, who is
swish?"

The weight of the rain remains inside
trying to read, sorting, ordering,
doing in the waves of her walking
from coffee to cup & back to chair, sitting unseen
by the bed
where by now I am
going in the execution position.

BOB ROSENTHAL

PORTRAIT OF PEOPLE ON THE PORCH

the tall lamp flickers
a moth bats into the screen
a drink or few on the coffee table
(it usta be a picture frame)
blue smoke from three cigars
scoots the family talk out of mind

8 12 81

THE CHANGING BATHTUB

the pink porcelain galaxy
whirled bubbles into reach
the house numbers get bigger
in my dimstore eyesight

the old elm went dutch
the pills yellowed in
their plastic samples

the first shelf
thus first seen
are my father's
medical books

Studies In The Psychology
Of Sex by Havelock
Ellis my primer
on masturbation

Sexual Behavior In The
Human Male Kinsey et al
three shelves comprising
the complete Freud

forsythia would bloom
beneath my window
the popcorn trees
fattened in August

what purpose
to grow
what change
to stop

I got fat
just thinking
how quiet
on the disappearance line

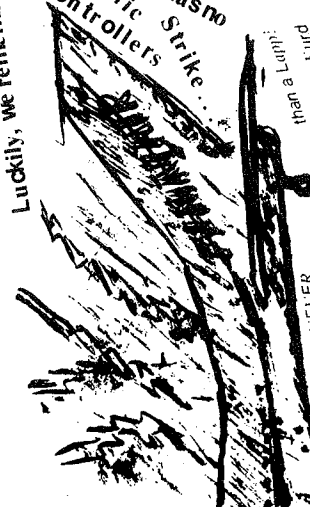
in Wilmette
a truck sprays
the cars and
the night

8 12 81

THE CHEESE STANDS ALONE

the carpet was a disgrace we threw it out
the old kitchen cabinet was knocked apart
the pieces of decayed future rot under the porch
the harshness of the blue yellows the grass
eight miles away traversing Clam Lake is ELF
100 miles of buried antenna equipt to send
tremendous low waves directly through the
Earth's core and thus communicate with subs
on a straight line to where they be anywhere
on a globe or driving on County D I saw
a green Buick license plate Wisconsin Mr ELF
souvenir shops sell mugs with a sub on it and ELF
\$2.95 a collector's item when after the war?
Wisconsin is known for its cheese Colby is a
town on Highway 13 an early memory for me is
being chased through this cottage by my father
who wanted to thrust a piece of Linburger
into my throat and in fact did yet today I
blithely eat Beercase so much for bad experience
how many professions have been fabricated by
apending experience with abstract morality
or psychology why not just call it a brown
experience esp. since it tasted like dreck
you might wonder how I know but I do know and
that was an even earlier brown experience
the outhouse still stands about fifty yards
off into the green experience it is white
the door is shut & it is a two seater
the back half has rotted off and the holes
have fallen into themselves just as all
allusions to pre-world war II are calcified
with lime and the path to a pre-nuclear
future is lost in the weeds folk consider
life-style a purely pink experience like
an electric rotisserie dripping rosy fat
onto the fire and white experience filling
the eyes of corporate season upon seasons'
human rape -- destruction -- profit hording
in the final vote of no experience the
Earth and Air interface will not mushroom
like recurring celluloid forties' and fifties'
A-bomb visions no the next time
it'll just be a giant CHEESE
no farmer no wife no nurse no child
no dog no cat no rat

SOON
 We arrived at the AMSTERDAM airport 6 hours late. THREE hrs of the time in the plane because of a STORM!!
 Luckily, we remembered that



President Raygun had said that there was no Air Traffic Strike...
 We were at the Hotel where we got introduced to people around Paris to cheer us on.

Well, actually, we any pot around tonight & after 'cause I'm really nervous is reducible to logic plus set around with our own private thought!



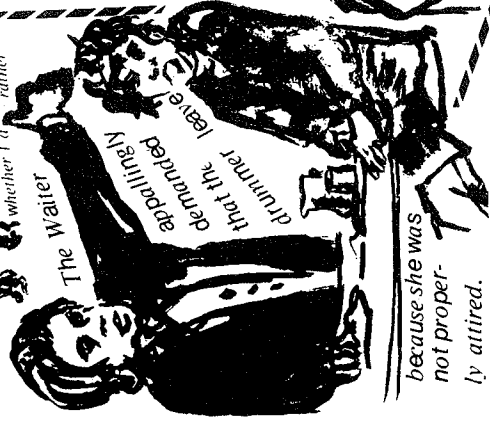
THE AUDIENCE AT THE PARADISO WAS QUITE POLITE TO US!! they say arithmetic afterword, we sat around with our own private thought!

MEAN WHILE

UP THE STREET at the MAKWER was where the significant poetry action was going on. MY MOTHER IN AMSTERDAM 'cause it's legal. In fact, even accompanied by native guides we had to walk for hours to find a "hash bar".



AT BREAKFAST
 We had our Interview



No, I've NEVER CONSIDERED whether I'd rather have a KURD than a LUMP!

THANK YOU! We play very nice music. Lots of other bands in NY is the kind of product kind of UNALIENATED BUT VERY VERY CRABBY LABOR!!

EVERYBODY SAYS how it's super easy to buy hashish in the Harlem DAGBLA.



DRUNK sailor of drunker songs have the time of drunker...
 We had our Interview



we passed many quaint houses and canals and we were scarcely injured by any number of passing cars and bicycles

OF COURSE, you could buy the STRIFF at the Melk We...



ON HOPM CATS I'M I SLAYIN' TOO BUT I JUST KEEP MY MOTHER IN AMSTERDAM 'cause it's legal. In fact, even accompanied by native guides we had to walk for hours to find a "hash bar".

two much like a Student Union.

We did not look very cool.



Through

We got a gig in HAARLEM which is a suburb of AMSTERDAM.



UP
MENT
EQUIP
THEIR
BAND MOVED
LOCAL
THIS NICE

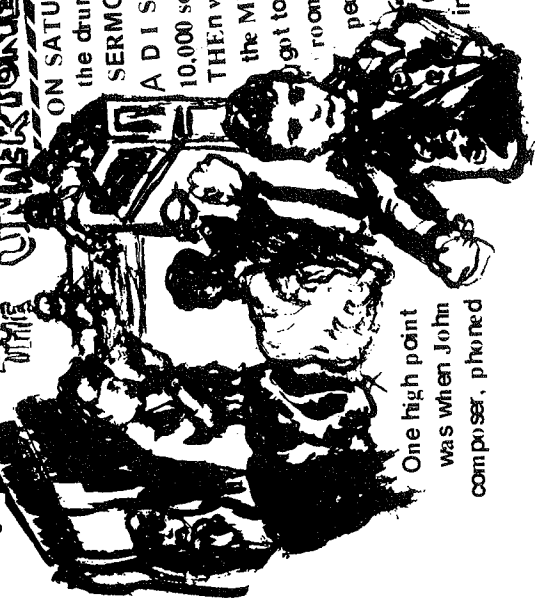
There's one black guy in Haarlem... he came on before us and he played new lost city drummers tunes on the burjo and 12-string!

This Haarlem band said they could get us on the bill with them in a North Netherlands university town Groningen!

THE UNDERSTONES

ON SATURDAY NIGHT the drummer read a SERMON at P A R A D I S O in front of 10,000 screaming punks. THEN we went over to the MEIKWEG. We got to sit in the green room with famous people from CALIF.

One high point was when John composer, phoned



BETWEEN

wednesday & Saturday, many FAMOUS people arrived SOME Were from the SIXTIES



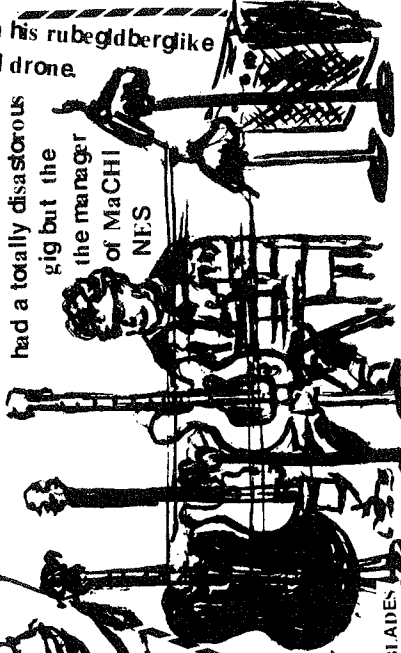
and some weren't but looked like they were

Letter from AmSTERDAM

opened with his rubegddberglike rock and drone.

OKTOPUSS

The OKTOPUSS is a state-funded youth club where we had a totally disastrous gig but the manager of MaCHI NES

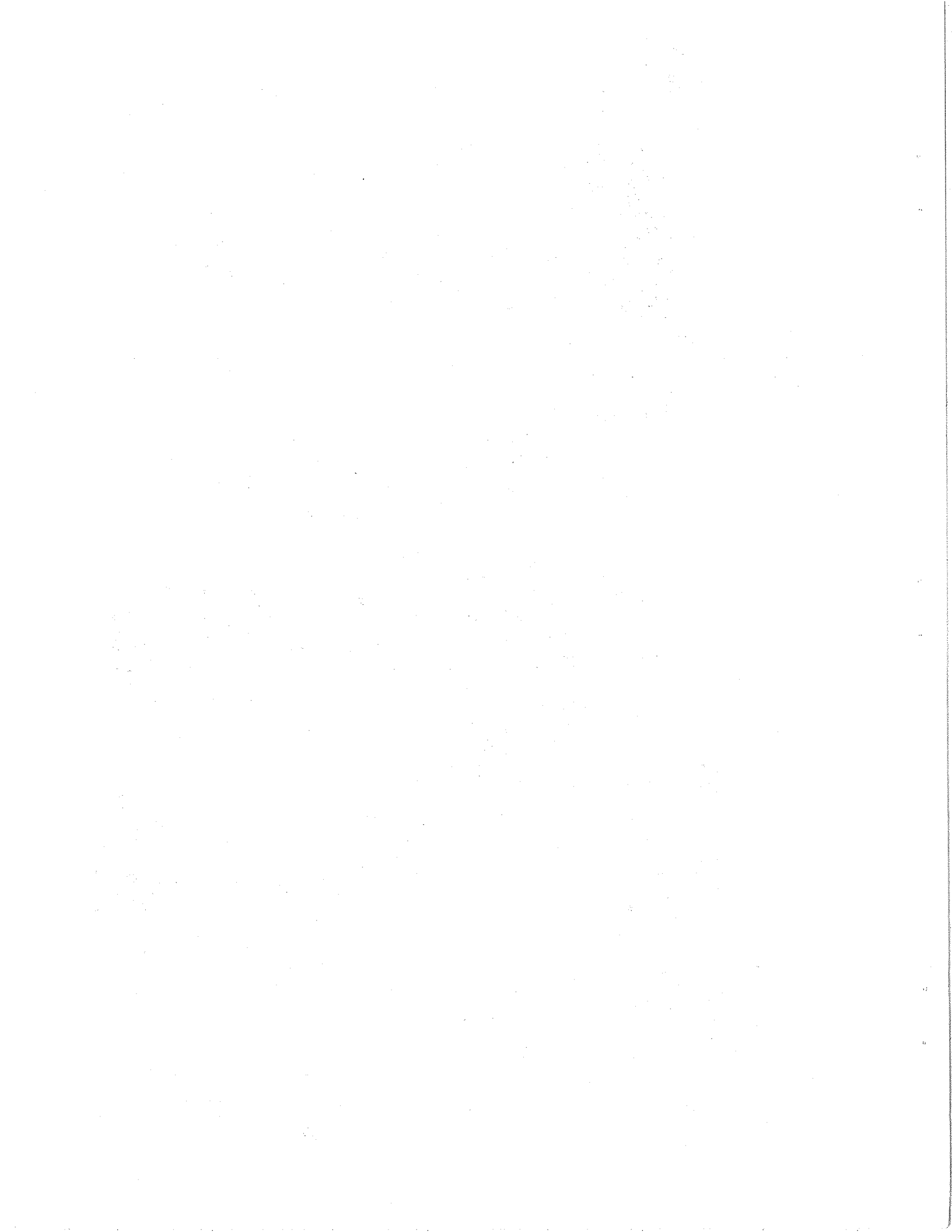


WHEN THE BLADES MOVE THE LINES ARE DRAWN RHYTHMICALLY ACROSS STRINGS OF AMPLIFIED GUITARS HELD STEADY IN VICES



which consisted of organic silence which was amplified and transAtlantic





BILL CORBETT

Crossing Borders

The mailman. Gold hood.
The mailman. Cold out.
How many are there
like me sitting at
desk, unshaven, 10 a.m.
the radio on one
ear cocked for the crash
of mail through the slot?
You can't live
for yourself alone.
Oh, you can but
is that all
there is to it?
Demonstrate charm,
advertise connectedness,
know the different
cheeses, how to garden
where to travel
until the dark rises
out of the indifferent bushes.

Above the cold
snow-filling street.
of the wig maker
and pen seller
Neill's Roman pink
and red clay marks
on cream paper.
Drawings pinned up
so that when
something catches his
eye he can stop
to look and tell
those that work
from those that don't.
They declare themselves
clefts, triangles and
nervous pencil lines
scoring the faded
gray air. Perfect day
for work. The snow
an aid to meditation
hastening the drowse
that is wakefulness
to one thing
entwined with many
like a cable
until you step back
look up and find
there what has been
in you a long time
now presents itself
for you to recognize.

DAVID HERZ

Remedial

I may be old. He counts three fingers. I might be getting old. Yes I might. But I know I'm tired. And I'm not getting any stronger. Nor younger.

Age, by now, was in him a finished product which would momentarily appear to rob him of youth, something he felt had not left him since his 20th year. So If I leave? One more case makes one more history, add another mother with a beaten son, a vanished husband who drinks: Case history. Beats the eggs. I've been interviewing for ten years. We've handed out all the governments money. And it all comes back... If you believe in casualty figures all our enemies are dead. Therefore the government couldn't have any more cash and from here on out it was promissory notes. Next rising prices will fill the void and food will fall into their vacuum.

Less food. Meat's going up. Potatoes. Potatoes fed a line of images that flicked him to the tragedy. A relative bending over, uprooting them, before the machines spilling them out of the soil, plowing. She'd said something about his boy, a fine figure yes. Since then 'potatoes' worked quickly and unearthed his son. Tubers. A serious business yes.

'And how old are you? Where are your parents? Why don't you have a job? We can give you no assistance if you have no job'. No use for you at all. And how old is your daughter? Does she live with you? Can you show me an electric bill?' An electric chair.

The state needed to know everything. The state knows everything. it needs to be conversant with you. Your first duty is to learn its language and only then to tap benefits: The state is a computer program hot to be summoned by a cunning number or a well-punched call card. You do codework into the seraglio where the underenumerated do not exist. They've disappeared into the computer program. Har. Very well.

He also knew a thing or two about the state. The state killed his son. From the catbird seat in the capital came an accident ten thousand miles away that took away all his civil liberties. God knew this. Before his disappearance they said he'd been "nursing ties with undesirable elements." Haha. What's that? Spraying iodine at the haberdasher's?

When you thought about it there wasn't much freedom going against the state. He pleated his forearm, looking for fat. He looked down to his feet looking for exit from the sandals. My this body presses down too much. Makes my feet wanna slide away. Young man sitting across the desk didn't remind him of his son.

'Have you tried? You know the government always has loads of jobs waiting to be filled. Why it's your obligation.'

The boy looked at him like he'd mispronounced something intellectual. With nose flare scorn. Dead pigeon on the sidewalk and he'd said 'obligation' with a straight face. Boy he wishes I wasn't here to block his leisure time. Boy oh boy me and the state, insatiable, got all these computer numerals to satisfy.

'I'm sorry your place of residence (why not just 'residence'?) puts you outside this office's jurisdiction. Anyway.' Did not mean to sound authoritative. Going to leave. Going to take my story out with me. Not going to let this country know. They'll never know. Let em hear it on enemy radio. Not that they're going to give a hoot or holler. But I'm leaving with the evidence. And these bones are not gonna get steamrollered in no accident. Certain. Ah.

Your admission into the fraternity of the perfectly poor has been blackballed. The young man sensed this and became what we of the profession call "someone cheeping the one last 'I'm good, I'm poor.'"

Our enormous room has a fake ceiling, desks disorderly like fat black pollywogs cupped in the ooze on a pond bottom. The room was not at all like that. We did try wriggling away when someone sat down across from us but the fluorescent bulbs buzzing through the old bone plastic above our heads weren't dragonflies. Understand, our attachment to our desks is simple, a notch for our chairs is cut into the rectangle and when we sit we complete the puzzle.

There still, the young man was trying to draw God out of his hat. God, prescient, had already gotten out so the young man left. A light that started blinking two weeks ago kept it up and faster. They never replace anything here.

His desk was six feet from his neighbor's but he and that lady didn't talk. Took him too much trouble to pull the sense out of the accent. Six feet or a million. Never got along. You wanted them to know you wanted to know what they were saying. But drawing them out changed them into a mass of face muscle twisting to chaw out the sounds of a foreign tongue: His damn own goddam it! Everyone gone to flab and stupid with hostility. And me I'm hostile too.

You got to understand that we're looking for the perfectly poor. It was noon and yes the waiting room was swamped but that's what it was for I guess. Ha ha. The perfectly poor is a rare one that excludes the destitute but not the clever. If you're too poor you got no papers, you got no proof of being poor. Only if you got papers do we know what you're about. Let's face it, there's no situation of unlimited wealth. It's funny, one of my colleagues trying to sound wise actually said this.

The receptionist cut into the line and out of the twenty-five in the waiting room always picked the most collegiate to send me because they knew, the bastards, that this man understood no screwed-up dictions...

Apnoea fright bit his tonsils when one leg touching another hit a calf and took him home to his desk and under it where the plump suitcases were. Ooh deception. He pressed his knees together.

All the college boys and girls wanted to slip art in and let the great big government feed them. They weren't poor but they were all smart enough to be perfectly poor. Worked at least twenty hours a week. Paid minimum rent. Very low phone bills. A telephone for the poor. Call your Mas collect. Hi mother I'm poor. Too poor to be out in the daylight.

He respected more the people that did it all alone. He almost saluted them. It looked like hello. It's your luck. I can take misfortune. But ten years' exile is too much. Was a time I spoke with the cohorts and you know I was sure when they split and I stayed and they brought in people more alike the new poor that I wouldn't last here. Why should I want to last, grief.

Rumble of communal chairs. The lunch hour was taken seriously. He didn't move from his chair. Little facula. My bags are packed so I get my story out of the country. I don't want it known here. I don't want it out here. I don't want it in print on the papers on tv I mean I don't want it out of my sight. But I want it out. A story such as this with no media to rollercoast its message, broaden the appeal. Make a lie dammit. His death comes to the surface. Without floating. An accident. Accidensity.

A percentage of the lights were turned off and squares of white plastic went black. The lunch shift took a breath. The lucky ones in the waiting room who'd come in twos sent out one to find food. The others held onto their names and kept ready. What we needed from them was their name and number. They were our prisoners. I'd told this to my neighbor, explaining it in shining phonemes you'd hear clear across a river and she'd answered 'isn't that cute' with a bass plunge on the 'ute' like she was having to do with a drooling basket case.

A young dancer took the seat. The electric chair we called it. 'Your name and number' he asked; much too dreamily. 'Which one?' she'd answered brightly. Under her checked cotton shirt he saw the straps of her dance tights. And she was healthy such elastic essence from her pointy forehead to her quickly tapping feet. Everyone who sat there was nervous. But these people of mine were so polite. Until they get that big Government Arts Grant, then you never see them again.

If the government gives them art money they think it means we know they have it like their name was on one big debit sheet up in the government's sky and now they can't come here anymore, having become wealthy. We should be so efficient. Then they miss their appointments.

'I'm sorry miss we can't deduct your whole phone bill.'
'Oh I'm sorry!' She dove her hands into her lap as her head pigeoned forward. 'It's nothing' I said. He wanted to ask her how her troupe was doing. Normally an insane question but he was cutting out now, he could caress the moon, compare blood types to the Kaballah.

Her cheeks twitched. Would he ask her to calm down? 'Do you have your pay stubs?' 'What?' Stubs are what is left after an amputation. He didn't say this and she emptied a manilla envelope of receipts, bills, prescriptions, and checks covered with the six figure number that could only be a bicycle lock combination onto the desk.

At home, hanging in his bare closet, were rolls of unwound silk paper sprayed with a fixative slowly drying, hopefully killing cockroaches. Each written line followed the unwind of the roll in an immense boustrophedon text that went six fine print meters in one direction, returned in the other, and covered the page.

'I'm afraid we're not going to give you very much.'
Calm didn't work. Her nervousness added on fevered ticks and her torso twists sent her hands out to tap little piles of stubs and receipts into place.

Her sortilege at first brings no syntax to view but as her jiggles shake these tea leaves and knuckle bone stubs they drop right on the desk into geomantic solution. 'I see the figure we need,' I said. I was reading the marrow of the universe. Now a simple razor cut would bleed the circuits of a mighty metropolis. 'Ah,' she breathed in, whiteness touching her knobby temples. Prescriptions were the magic discovery, silver frosting singing a threnody of consumptive illness that made the other papers confetti: This year's stock of allergy doctor receipts. Of course the fact that each one; a weekly injection of this city's air and its killer allergens, came to one quarter of her month's salary leaving her with just enough money after paying the telephone bill to buy either fifteen pounds of potatoes or six bowls of soup, was none of my business. This was one of the perfectly poor. But, Jesus, I don't know how she lives her life. And she was my last case.

He pulled his hands together and said, 'You know my dear I would normally be able to give you a fifteen per cent discount on your food bill but because I'm through, why don't you and your friends celebrate. True you don't eat very much, dancing, but I suppose the present will mean something.' Of this she understood not a word. Inelastic as the day is long she'd froze still, plaster cast, as if my improvised

gift had been a chanted curse called up from the dinosaurs to damn her in place. Water began building up behind her and I tapped her on the shoulder. 'Oh yes thank you' she smiled. She'd understood it all. I couldn't recognize gratitude if it bit me on the nose. He must leave fast. Human rights groups had disinterred his son's case while he'd been dipping and then emptying his quill across the page, shadoofing with the black tide of his son's political murder and the rites of bureaucracy the white sparkling silk brought from the East by a disoriented grandfather. Sensing their interest he'd woven faster.

If we get out into public space where these humaniacal rights people spill screaming television light on my son's casket - they'll ruin it. It was much too sensitive for description. They need the media. The news calls up things to be forgotten. I won't let them have it. I won't let it get there. In the media is rest, where things stop dead after shouting their one yell.

He'd had to destroy all trace of the son, stealing his birth certificate, and far more vital, deprogramming his entire bureaucratized legacy. He had the access. He had the right to handle his boy's traces. No dossier. The five year old death stayed in the neurons and he'd erased it from computer tape.

That afternoon he'd left the office blundering all along the way between the desks, wishing everyone 'good night' or 'take care', things he'd never done before and falling in the corridor between rows of supplicants; he pretended he was tying his shoes on the way down. He left his briefcase inside the building's iron doors. Maybe they'll think it's a bomb.

Outside the cool air carried a fine level sprinkle. He'd covered his glasses and then taken his hand away. On one block the gutter ran clear to the next street without a single car. In ten years that street'd never been clear. His mouth was dry and he felt his heart. Shopkeepers who liked his nonsense or knew his loss were surprised he didn't answer their hello.

Outside the door to his apartment he dropped his keys three times. 'Jesus Mother Mary!' He entered, spun, and quickly closed the door. No one had been by in months and his neighbors did not know how bare it'd become. Struck for a moment by his suitcases, alone by the window, then remembered he'd sold his desk last week. Each week another piece of furniture in stop-action movements had emptied the apartment until now only the brown leather suitcases lacera- ted in black whip scars were left. Last night all the cutlery lumped two canvas mail sacks sealed with a sliding metal latch. He'd carried them down the stairway fearful for his discs and

dishes and up the street to the mission. They were closed. He left the bags outside their door.

It was funny to open the closet and be drawn into a party mood by the white streamers pulled into the transverse wave of the swinging door. He'd cut the scroll into three-inch strips and as the air righted itself, the bands dropped back into the closet under their coat hangers leaving the sweet chemical smell of the fixative.

'Everyone must hear my hollow step.' We marvel at the thin electric leap that followed his voice's bounce off the walls. He tap danced feeling much taller in his empty room. The flat patter lifted dust into his nose and the sneeze was a sword crash in a Kabuki theater.

To the right of his text curling in the dark were two foot-wide rolls of surgical cloth taped to coathangers. He took off his clothes catching his pinky in three different buttonholes.

Rubbing the palms over his slack frame emptied of tonus, he stopped at his testicles, cupping them fondly for examination. 'Useless.' His ring finger scoured the lint in his naval bringing dry nausea to his throat because fooling with the omphalos sets up a deep seismic disturbance in the body and soul.

When his feeble buttocks touched the tensile surface of the full and steaming tub an explosion in his brain lit up his intentions like a prison spotlight. 'Ha ha.' Fear of the bankrupt in his plans left him nerveless and he saw his assumptions tripling and disappearing into bath oil foam. Much too late now. And he'd forgot to sweep the place. 'Nuts.' No one knew he was leaving, they'd empty it at the end of the month.

Two empty cannisters of baby powder lay on the floor and white footprints followed him from the bathroom to the closet. 'Hotcha.' He patted his powdered body. Below the chin he was a perfect picket fence white, dry as china.

In the tub, ferocious scrubbing had uncovered the rosy derma and venous blue dendrites of his true skin. This un-earthed needed an instant's wonder and then he wrapped it in surgical cloth beginning with a neckband held up by a golden safety pin and, careful to go lightly, wound his torso leaving a bare right shoulder and a nude triangle whose base was the left armpit.

Ravelling downwards to the behind he saw the enforced flatness of his stomach and, reminded of mummies, wiped powdery fingertips on his nose. When I eat my stomach swells, some. He unwound the cloth to just below the front of the ribcage, left two twists of slack, and kept descending. Scrupulous preparation. He stopped at the butt. He began again

at his thighs and stopped at the knees to start just below them ending at the knob of the Achilles' tendon. At each stop the bandaging was held up by a golden safety pin.

He wound his "Book of the Dead" hanging in the closet around the empty cloth spools. The edges of the strips went beyond the width of the spools. Then he undid a coathanger, fed the two reels onto it, and hung them back up in the closet. He squirted a thin line of paper paste in hoola hoop ringlets over the cloth and spread it with his fingers. The trickle was hard to control but nothing could be ruined now.

The text unwound like toilet paper from its rolls in the closet onto the moist cloth around his body. He kept to the dilation of the cloth and only in a very few places did the glue pull through. He tried walking, diligent platypus. It was bearable. Why didn't I do a runthrough?

He put his clothes back on and covered the text around his neck with a turtleneck sweater, the first time one had touched his body. And it was, almost winter. He closed the closet.

The tab ends of the manuscript tucked into his shoes, under his socks. Not a syllable lost. Crossreferences and dates: my testimony unto God, the seraphim, and the angels. I am a crackling temple. Rancor wattage. 'Ha!' The count was made. I smell like a baby. He looked just old enough to get by with the stiff walk that would stop the paper crinkling. Try not to be terrified of sweat. Lowered his zipper and pants. Yes yes.

At the airport he waited until the counter was empty. It was embarrassing for a snob to take a charter flight but he had no choice. Paper crimped and uncrimped. In the hostess's hands and on his body. No one had seen him, no one knew him.

But feeling too dependent on the senses his eyes shut and a squad of finely mutilated doubts tipped fat white lines into his humming brainbox. Sitting in the terminal, waiting for the line, the incredible had happened. As he stood up, a man groomed for all conferences had come rushing by and planted a briefcase flat into his elevating knuckles. He'd dropped his suitcases but held in the scream that would have shred the text.

The man stopped and bent down to him. 'I'm terribly sorry. Won't you let me take you to the infirmary? ... Hey I know you from the sixth grade!' A shock, he goes jactating into a soft, long upward shudder that separate witnesses would have called shoulder shrugs. 'No, thank you,' he said, feeding the spasms down his neck and into his stomach, there the cloth was loose. He knew that face and felt pain throb in his hand and buzzes sit him down. He stopped shaking. 'Downright ghoulis remembering a face you saw forty years ago.' Terrible. 'Can't forget yours,' he said, moving back and walking away.

This was not the time for that to happen. He walked to the counter rustling handheld newspapers. They were closing. 'Wait' shrieked out turning the last heads toward him. Why had he walked away? What could anyone know? 'Your ticket please.' He emptied his travel bag onto her desk. Magazines, gum, papers, the reels that had held the cloth, and a spool of microfilm. 'James Bond, hee hee.' He choked, terrified to perspire through the cloth, and the acrid sweat of fear and unease ate through the baby powder. Heat. She looked at him, fed her submergible fingers into the amass, and surfaced with his ticket.

He walked down the long aisles dragging his feet through the carpet and wondering without any rush of fear or surprise why his friend from the Pleistocene had left, how he'd found his way here, why the reel holding the documents which stood his case up had been left in his satchel instead of his suitcase, and in the broad corridors leading to his flight, why was he alone?

As he bent without needing to through the gaping latch into the plane, dismal and touching deja vus escorted him down the aisle, tumbled him into his sheet, the seat, how appropriate. Crumple. He saw not the steward's face but his son's saying he'd been accepted into engineering school, married, and been taken to war by a bureaucracy he his father didn't know was disassemblable.

This isn't remembrance he thought, no, no one remembers like this. Rusty in reminiscence his mind had spliced in the logic of a TV advertisement with his son as the meat of a camera pan and the Grand Canyon the gorgeous spot for a diarrhea commercial. Think of the erosion! He had to remember to remember. True memories are not cartoons, the innate doesn't tear out your privates; you remember someone in their silence and the kindness and undeliberate cruelty they sent your way, how strange they looked getting on a bicycle and everything that drew them out of their habits, changed the volume of their voice, and especially, whether you thought they were happy or not, whether time passed quickly for them because "it" was all the same, or slowly, because "it" was different ... or maybe the other way.

He looked up to clear his eyes and saw his son through the inside of a kaleidoscope; face split along a cheekbone and multiplied in his sight. 'Why I'm crying.' 'Yes so you are,' said his neighbor, 'going to visit relatives?' 'Why no. Yes. To bring them back.' 'Yup heard it's easier for someone outside to come in and get em. They can't leave on their own.' Never look back he thought. His neighbor had the window. They were already in the clouds. Write it down to my ding-a-ling. He remembered nothing after the young dancer. She'd thanked him.

His neighbor turned back to the window with a smile that worked out well on his hairless puffy face.

I've got to recite my manuscript he thought, joining his palms between his legs and leaning back and forwards, fixing a light cadence, a trochaic mumble to the dovening. No blurring of the text and the cloth pulled at his chest and shoulders, hot and sending a sweaty spume down the middle of his ribcage and into the underwear. A turncoat.

He mouthed over passages: his son taken to war against their will, and the discovery at the front that goods were circulating to the benefit of higher ups. As an orderly in the dispensary he felt it both duty and vengeance to bring crime to light. A banal affair of wartime blackmarket and intimidation. Unaccustomed to slowness in satisfaction he pressed harder.

The flight was a long one, he skipped passages, lisped with the early biography: at his wife's death lurched a hand to the fontanelle suddenly soft and burning in his forehead, and returned to the murder in teletype. 'Would you like to eat sir? Why don't you remove some of your clothing? The cabin is kept at a comfy temperature.' 'No no. Thankyou thankyou.'

He watched his neighbor eat. A thanatogram from the military, sacrosanct bureaucracy at its briefest. Glabrous fib. Baldfaced lie. Justice is such a cowboy word. Here I'm riding my aeroplane areopagus five years to the day of the deed, going to lynch the holy little flame of truth, pull it up by its indelible roots, plaster it on a wall, everyone will see. Except the papers, got to keep it from their banal fluff, silly explosion. The flight was a very long one. De-crepitations.

After hours of chanting his whisper came from hypnagogy, addressed thousands, yelled revelations while underlining each knavery with a whap to the plastron. He was a chained male dressed as knight, as dragonkiller. 'What you got on there?' He snapped to, blinking and annoyed, but answered softly 'life story,' the testimony had been crackling to his back and forth weaving.

He stopped bobbing and asked: when can I unwind it onto the rolls? He heard the jet's engines for the first time and the cabin shuddered. He sensed the ooze of distant Muzak. My proof. Reaching under the turtleneck he undid his shirt buttons and pulled the sweater over his head. 'Well what's that?' The captain announced a landing. He took the spools out of his travel bag and then took off and folded his clothes under the embarrassed fascination of his neighbor.

He began at the neck, peeling the paper off its moist glue and uncovering the golden safety pin that held the cloth.

The text had filled one roll and most of another when he sighted the towers of Peking's airport through the mist. He didn't know its name. He pulled the tabs out of his shoes, and then, undoing the golden safety pin at the neck, unwound the cloth onto the cabin floor. He put his clothes on over moist flesh left by soggy cloth. The cabin was chill to nude skin. He looked at his neighbor: 'Somewhere down there is a wall to take my dazibao... wow.'

GREG MASTERS

On the night after
I can't call you cause of complications
that I thought right past on my way
to your bed & the arabian night
of not answering the phone calls &
not opening the shades on the morning
whose traffic & double parked trucks
we slept a wall away from
We were right there, caught the alley sunlight
as another visitor & we let it in
part of the progression which was
some bright eclipse - love is make-up
what a world we won
Just hours ago I suddenly had my
coat on leaving & on the streets no one
could hurt me, I held open doors for
old lady shoppers who smiled at my manners
Did they see my lover's walk
You thinking of me the way I've had splashing
molecules of what we'd done & what you are
constant as an ocean following me through rooms
making everything else parenthetical
I walked back across town like a man before
railroads, at home a little coke poke
& 137 pages of passion & filtered obsession
to make me smooth as lawn. Half of everyone says,
I forget, but I talked about you.

It Worked Before

House wine in a reused Bolla bottle with the label half peeled off reminds me of the fresh hot milk I'd walk over to a farm in Ireland to get most mornings which story, once I was done telling it, you told me I'd already told you, no matter, I ate half your chicken livers in wine sauce & mushrooms & gladly gave the guitarist 50¢ earned minstrel money & when we walked out of there the world was a place like some summers, it seems, pebbles were easier to walk on barefoot there on that street we were friends of human time not war victims not lost in the supermarket we could have been etched tho one bastard waved our street kiss on, convoluted logic of the customer, as if we had our fingers on the trigger of a gun instead of the beginnings of a silly romance which we've entered against all logic in this city which squeezes it into quadrants. That's OK, we found a piss eroded spot from which could be seen 2 of the city's few sky tunnels connecting buildings, one east one west & the Flat Iron building south which people, you tell me, used to jump off into shallow pools & I remember that like it was a newsreel which I've never seen, the way everything that's happening is if I entered the wrong movie I didn't ask for this tonight, you at the end of a jetty with the tide in & the breakers crashing, I mean cross-town, a promise

Yesterday, after your phone call,
I made the adjustment necessary if
we're to continue being an us
and that consisted of abandoning
all my conceptions of ownership
& possessiveness which I found to be
a struggle and conflict against
the grain of not just taught values
but primitive instinct as well
not to mention what I want of your
attention so that responding to
your example (focusing in on what
you'll continue) has moved me into
this new era which continues, today

Witness to your hours in a rocker
I called you over you said I'm fine here
Divided in the quiet like a bargain
Hustled, a wall away from night-built streets
Inside with you, seemed you didn't agree to
Or I couldn't decide if that were true
Maybe you're just dumb and haven't any thoughts
I hadn't anything to do but hear them
Waiting patiently for what was usually brought
Together by our sharing this torched night
So let you do the staring calm completes
Assuming this is what's possibly right
Arriving and eroding to some type
Of virgin I wanted to be first in

GARY LENHART

FARM ROAD

I.

The summer I worked in the Schoharie Valley,
Friends in the city were having breakdowns.
Sole hired hand, too horny to relax,
I put in overtime hauling rocks,
Drank beer until I fell out.
Up at dawn, headed for the barn.

Old farmer Long, too lame to get about,
Would lean on the fence, farm coach,
Instruct what was beets, what chard.
With knowledge accrued from a life
In the barnyard he could eye a black angus cow
And predict the day she'd drop her calf,
Although months away, exactly, at a glance.

A member of the draft board
-- I'd refused to be inducted --
He would invite me in mid-mornings
For a cup of coffee or tea,
Commend my neophytic energy. He could see
I enjoyed being up on the John Deere tractor,
Stacking bales in the hayloft
(Put up two wagonloads one afternoon myself),
Hoeing a row hours
He would have sprayed in five minutes.

His son, the "crack shot" who draped
Groundhog pellets the length of the gate,
Hanged himself in the barn.
Almost every day I would catch the old man
Contemplating the rope
That stayed knotted about the rafter.
At last, within sight of that knot,
With his son's shotgun he put himself away.
None of his children remained on the farm.
His daughter married a snowmobile mechanic from Amsterdam.

II.

My paternal grandfather, vaguely Pennsylvania Dutch
(I fancy Amish or Schwenkfelder), beyond that
His family lost, found my grandmother
On the Muskingum River
On the shanty-boat she grew up in.

Their only son ran off to Hollywood,
Where he worked as an usher
In a movie theater, waiting for The Big Break
Until 1939, when he enlisted and served the duration.

Back seven years later from the European Theater,
On a weekend pass he met my mother in a dance hall
Where her boyfriend played the clarinet.

Her family, Canucks,
-- "Eh, pet'un!" "Eh, chi'blut!" --
Bootleggers, horse traders, boarding house
Proprietors for the men who worked
In the mines of the Adirondacks, from
Rouses Point through Champlain, Keeseville,
Ellenburg, Jericho, Plattsburgh before
The Air Force brought comparative prosperity,
Sciota, Witherbee, Miner's Farm, Port Henry,
Made their way down to Albany
To cop, truck driver, civil employee.

Off went the newlyweds to Fort Bragg, South Carolina;
Then, mustered out, to Ohio, the Licking River.

I spent years hiking around,
Even got my toes wet as a gearjammer,
But the only places I paid rent
Long enough to vote were Madison
In Dane County, the Dairy State;
Adobe-motelled Tucson; a town in Jersey
That escapes my mind; Schoharie Valley;
And New York City: three of those five
University towns.

REFLECTIONS

The reflections off the desk
Appear to be yellow flaws
In the wood. The professor
On the street, bereted
With pipe and beard, faint
Of flesh but vigorous
In exhibiting eccentricity
Among the targeted clock-punchers,
Might not be a professor at all
But studied his role by watching
A paper chaser on television.
The garbage in the gutters
Does not exceed that
In the walk-up flat sections
Of Europe's cultural capitals,
A Polish blues guitarist
Once assured me. I was present
When he rebuked his wife,
"Your family were peasants!"
The snappy financier
With the fine black
Italian leather briefcase
May translate melancholic Tibullus
After he ascends from the subway
To sunset.

MICHAEL SCHOLNICK

from chapter A Dreaming World

As a long time resident of sparsely populated oasis I'm used to the soldiers and the warring governments of the people of Libo. New troops ousting Israeli blues and whites are yellow & red. The red boots lend austerity to a quiet occupation. Fair, they have a reputation as the most educated army. The takeover is in its beginning hours. A rooster, I creep up to an off-duty american mercenary to catch up on the news. From this vantage point, I see Simon Schuchat dock a lonesome dinghy. Shining with the busy-bodied love of Jesus Christ, he slowly climbs the lake hill. "Wonder if you would give hand?" he asks, to manners conformed, expressing his primary concern.

Humorously, the honorable one I'm rapping to, pretending to answer, deal and respond directly in a breath to Simon, resumes a story.

Simon's transporting cases of wines, bouncy and inebriating.

5 - 30 - 81

The late, great Shakespeare idea is the party's theme. Beforehand, though, charmingly enthusiastic Ron expresses in no uncertain terms a favorable classification of my story -- "I liked it very much." -- He's read it clandestinely. The comment produces the occasion's scene: kitchen table materializes, round its three corners Ron, Pat and I. They're cooing, bestowing praise, Pat gorgeously large-eyed, like Scarlet O'Hara. I'm practically befuddled by their practised method of simultaneous intertelepathy, noble chatter, carefully attuned and measured. I sincerely (helplessly) try to understand the stereophonic sentences an uncommon grasp of each other's style inhabits.

The party's a confessional experience in a pad in vast beauty-and-the-beast outer space of esthetics and glass end-tables. Tom Carey is hurt. "I thought this week I'd see you," he maintains, addressing my person. Alas, it's Monday. We agree, I've been invited to the Berrigans for dinner at 9, to see each other there, then.

I feel a standard, conditional degree of belief, a whole set-up on Kenneth Koch's part to suspend our fear of socializing with elephants. "The spotlights," we're told, "are elephant guns." If an elephant makes the slightest move to attack, acts reluctantly or is somehow improper, the offending beast shall be blown to smithereens. Yet when Kenneth appears in an elephant mask grooping along convincingly, flapping diving board a twanging trunk, I leap under couch's cover skirts. My mistake embarrasses me though Greg and a female Cellist think I reacted with aplomb perfectly. Counseling, Kenneth says, "This is something we expected from a father or a nitwit." I rely on Wisdom to briefly, in reply, soliloquize thus: "Given with an obvious eye to artificiality," sanctioning the fair trick played on me and providing the apparent cowardice commentary.

The training Cello girl, exiting, says to me slightly dismayed,
"That's right."

For fun, I'd gazed into Kenneth's slide-viewer at filmy,
hazed picture screen, dust crinkled like Gestetner stencil
typing protection plates and saw Pissaro-ish study in wound,
mud-red lines of five buxom peasants, heads bowed, turbaned,
modeling, without faces -- "Mostly Cezanne," Koch says (of the
slides in general).

6 - 9 - 81

Helena's graciously speeding West (on a tree-lined street) and abroad, no time, no time, to comment extensively with Tom's rushing words of love.

7 - 1 - 81

Scholnick/69

Saint Lewis

I want to cry
the surf is shackled
to green barricades of
slavery and passion

How unfair that to decency
sered animals without souls
appoint death

I bolster no clutter
Youth's crystalline shadows smile
Mirrors vengeance in old age
And scorn succumbing to a lover's form

Queen of turnips, starved world of Authority
Women with hearts of stone
Avenue A gunfire pumped like cash
infuriates my nose irreducibly

How unfair, how unfair

Resolve

Upright coffee
Ham n' eggs
The Daily News

Looking in
A special morning
The woman's straw

A shadow
A ladder
Ketchup pins

The empirical child's wings
Napkin entity empurpled
The nurse, brooding

Self-absorbed
Silver, Red and maple-gold
The fucking colors dry

2 Chapters from AGNES & SALLY

"I like long hair," Bob Price said, meaning your hair, Sally assumed. It was the summer before they were married, she'd just begun working at the diner, and had mentioned to someone sitting at the counter that she was thinking of getting her hair cut short; pixie-style, like Mia Farrow. Bob's interest in her physical appearance, that he noticed her at all, came as a shock, and the more attention he gave her, the more they worked together and brushed by one another in the narrow aisle behind the counter, the more she began to feel like a different person, more herself than any image she could summon up or imagine. Though she'd looked down on Bob all the time they'd been classmates in Huntington, she began to weigh and attempt to balance the things he said, realizing that during their school years they'd never spoken directly, one to one. And it was hard to ignore him; he was there when she showed up for work at nine in the morning; and when she left, at five o'clock, he was still there, along with his father, her boss at the time, "Old Man Price." Sally had never thought of Bob as a romantic person; the only thing that set him apart from the other boys in town, in her mind, was his height. "There's the tall one," she'd say to herself, it was a kind of instant recognition, but the two -- when they passed on the street or in the hallway at school -- never even said hello. Bob's friends were the other guys at school who

were interested in sports, the jocks, and his girlfriends -- though Sally hardly kept track of such things -- were the cheerleaders, girls half his size or so it seemed when you saw him with his arm around one of them, girls who were sophomores and freshmen when he was a senior and who were attracted to Bob for his reputation as local hero (just floating in the periphery of his attention was a kind of status symbol). Until she met Agnes Sally though of herself in a world of her own, and knew enough about herself to realize she was better off not inflicting her feverish nun-like qualities on anyone else. It was Agnes who articulated her own negativity and hostility to people like Bob and small town life in general, and her friendship represented a small island of sanity -- a place Sally could actually point towards -- in the world outside. When Agnes said something Sally recognized in her words an accurate description of what she herself was feeling but had been frightened of admitting ("you're so timid," Agnes would say), and her first attempts at writing were prompted by the need to put into her own words the ideas and attitudes she'd learned from her friend.

The train doesn't stop in Huntington anymore. Why, I can remember the time when you could hear the whistle from five miles off and the kids, you kids, used to stop what you were doing and race off to the station as if the Pied Piper were calling your names, each individually: Come aboard, come aboard -- and people would get off and on and wave goodbye, girls on their way to college would press their faces to the tinted glass while their parents and boyfriends and other friends who'd remained at home

to take jobs as waitresses or gas station attendants wiped the tears of regret from their eyes as they waved goodbye. And old Hank Jones would hoist the luggage from his old dolly onto the rack above your seat and you'd ride out of town, triumphant, with the noon whistle shrieking in your ears. Goodbye, Huntington. See you later. Au revoir!

When Agnes left town Sally tried to make friends with Sue Amundsen, the doctor's daughter. Sally envied the younger girl, first for having a father -- her own father had died the summer after high school -- but mainly for having a father who was practically the only person in town Sally could talk to, now that Agnes was gone, in any reasonable way. Consequently, she used her relationship with Susan as an excuse to visit the Amundsen household whenever she imagined the doctor was alone.

Susan was still in high school. Cheerleading practice Tuesday and Friday. Bob was at the diner. The doctor looked up and turned off the tape.

"Sally dear," Agnes's letter began. The inversion of the two words made Sally pause, light a cigarette.

There were magazines sold on every city street corner, from outdoor newstands to tobacco shops, in which famous basketball players posed with young blond girls whose first names were Roxanne, Roseanna, Babs, Mandy and Ilona. The athlete held a basketball in one hand, palming it, the fingertips of his other grazing the breasts of the girl nearest him. Jacob sat at his

desk in his office, during lunch hour, turning the pages.

"When you get off the bus at Port Authority take a cab to our apartment."

Agnes's handwriting was legible and girlish and Sally was grateful for her tone: decisive, direct -- no mention of Bob, no questions asked. As she reread the letter Sally remembered the afternoons they'd spent together, on the porch of Agnes's house or upstairs in Agnes's bedroom, bent over identical paperback editions of Six Plays by August Strindberg, making notes in the margin as they prepared for the school play.

"My mother wasn't well-born, she came of quite humble people, and was brought up with all those new ideas of sex equality and women's rights and so on. She thought marriage was quite wrong. So when my father proposed to her, she said she would never become his wife...."

Bob: "I think it would be good for you to get away" or (laughing): "New York? You must be kidding!" Or: "Are you sure it's safe?" Or: "My father's coming for dinner tonight. Let's talk about it then."

Old man Price drank his coffee black. Blank.

The conductor walked through the car of the train shouting: "Huntington, Huntington."

Henry Quire Jones, Jr., sat down at the counter and ordered a milkshake. He watched Sally, as she turned her back to him, focusing on the knotted apron at the base of her spine.

"No, I've never been to New York, Mrs. Price. You thinkin' "

of goin'?"

Jan. 5. Went to see Susan today, but she wasn't home. The doctor asked if anything was wrong and I lied and said "no." He asked about Bob's leg, and I sort of shrugged as if it wasn't important. I think he must know something's wrong and is just waiting for me to open up. He looked surprised when I asked if I could get him anything, even though it's something I always ask. He never comes into the diner and I miss the chance to wait on him. He asked if I'd make a pot of tea and I told him I knew where everything was. We sat in the dining room and drank tea together. There was a white manila folder on the table but I'm not sure if it was "my" folder. When Susan came home (she was still wearing her cheerleading outfit) she looked annoyed -- as if my presence there bothered her -- so I left after a few minutes telling them I had to get back to the diner. I don't think Bob notices anything but who knows?

When they moved to New York from Boston, and before they'd found their own apartment, Agnes and Jacob stayed with Jacob's father in the Bronx, in the same apartment where Jacob had spent the first seventeen years of his life. Every morning he would wake early and relive a brief episode from his childhood by going out and getting the newspaper at the candystore on the corner, then returning with it to sit at the kitchen table over morning coffee. "Getting the newspaper" had been a Saturday and Sunday morning ritual, one of his first childhood responsibilities. Now while Agnes, his wife, and his father were sleeping, he mulled over the ads for apartments in the back of The Times. Jacob's father, a retired vacuum cleaner repairman and salesman, who had once owned his own store and had somehow retired on his savings, fell asleep most afternoons in front of the television in the living room. On days when they weren't answering the few interesting ads ("interesting" meaning in this case apartments they could afford) either by phoning the number listed in the ad or actually journeying downtown to see the apartment, Jacob took Agnes on a tour of his old neighborhood, pointing out the building where he'd gone to public school and the schoolyard where he used to play softball (odd how the walk from his apartment to the school seemed so short, now, and how the schoolyard -- the center of a universe once -- was just a long stretch of broken concrete

surrounded by wire fences), the delicatessen where he used to go to buy food on evenings when his mother was working -- he and his father and Tony would make sandwiches for themselves, the apartment where his grandmother used to live and where Jacob had eaten lunch, every day, when both his parents were working. At night, on the foldout couch in the living room, he and Agnes "practiced perversions," or so they called it, too self-conscious to make love in the usual sense with Jacob's father so nearby. Being

Some women who travel alone remove their wedding bands, in an attempt not to discourage complete strangers from starting conversations. They make up intelligent reasons for travelling from place to place, but what they're most interested in is who they might meet in the course of the trip. Sally had never travelled by herself before, and though it was an adventure to finally be out in the world and alone, she still wished there was someone with her -- not so much to protect her as she'd felt on that first honeymoon visit to New York with Bob, but someone she knew well and with whom she could share her impressions. If a stranger asked her where she was from she'd tell him or her -- there was no reason to lie -- but beyond that she wondered what information she would divulge about herself if called upon. (Some women who travel alone lie about their name and where they come from as a means of protecting themselves, since meeting people on the road -- and even sleeping with them, which is always possible -- requires that at least one of the parties is a good judge of character: quick to get a take on just what this person sitting next to you is really like before you hop into bed with him...should we use our real names?) In Huntington it was a rare event when someone she didn't know entered the diner. She knew most of the people in town by their first names, everyone knew her. They all knew too much about each other, and the predictability of all their lives cancelled out any feelings of intimacy that might normally occur. Sally's main experience of the world outside Huntington was through the books she'd read, and her own imagination which lead her to assume every person in the world represented a different way of acting or responding -- individual qualities overrided whatever common attributes might be possible, anyone could say anything, do anything, and she wouldn't be surprised. When she packed her suitcase and was dressing for the trip she wasn't thinking about who she might meet that day -- or who would see her. She hadn't been planning on making

around someone like Jacob's father who had worked all his life and was now content "just to do nothing," plus the fact that Jacob genuinely enjoyed being back in the Bronx, in "the old neighborhood," made them lazy, and even their idea of perversion was a way of admitting to themselves that they were too tired to give or take real pleasure. It was only when their money started to run low and they found themselves on the verge of spending the money they'd planned to use for the apartment, the first month's rent and security, that they began to see the

an impression on anyone. She'd been thinking, despite herself, of Bob (who had left the house before her that morning, angry because she'd refused to sleep with him the night before) and the idea that this might be the last night in the house they'd lived in together for five years. She wouldn't miss any of it. She had a thousand dollars and hopefully she could find some kind of work in New York, possibly through Agnes's husband whom she knew worked for a publishing company. She would find a place to live -- even if it was only a rented, furnished room -- and go back to school at night. Her thoughts took her out of the present and cut her off from what she was looking at out the tinted windows of the half-empty bus which was overheated (it was Spring, after all) and made her want to nod off and it wasn't until she reached Boston and was told that she had to change for the New York bus (there was a half-hour wait) that the finality of what she'd done took over. Goodbye Huntington. It didn't exist. If someone asked her where she came from, some stranger, she would tell the truth -- what difference could it possibly make?

"I've only had one lover -- I've never done this before -- "

But she couldn't tell that to anyone. Agnes knew, and the doctor. Her wedding ring slipped off easily and she dropped it in the bottom of her shoulder bag. She'd become hardened, inured, like all the other girls who came from small country towns to the big city. People would take advantage of her and she wouldn't even know what was happening until one morning she woke up in a strange apartment and the thousand dollars in her wallet was gone and she didn't even have a clean dress or a brush to comb her hair. By then even Bob wouldn't want her back (he doesn't even want me now), and if Agnes or Jacob saw her on the street they'd look the other way. "I'm busy today, Sally, sorry -- " There would

necessity of making some move, and quickly, remembering all the plans they'd made in Boston just a few weeks before. The apartments listed in The Times were too expensive. The only way to find an apartment was to go to the neighborhood where they wanted to live and locate a real estate agency, even though that meant paying

be no alternative except to take an elevator to the 100th floor of one of those buildings where every window is a sheet of glass and propel herself like a human missile to the street below. "Class valedictorian, waitress in Price's Diner for five years."

It was 9:30 A.M. and the terminal was filling up. Young men in cowboy boots leaned back against the terminal walls smoking cigarettes and occasionally spitting into soiled handkerchiefs, looking as if they'd slept in their clothing -- if they'd slept at all. The terminal itself was a long narrow rectangle, with ticket windows on one wall and rows of plastic seats running in columns down the center, small TVs attached to each seat. At one end was a glass door where you went when your bus arrived. Sally took a seat opposite the door and watched the young men who were obviously not waiting for a bus as they played the pinball machines situated in one corner, adjacent to a snack bar and a magazine-newspaper stand. One man who reminded Sally of Tim, one of the highschool kids who hung out in the game room in the back of the diner, caught her eye -- she was trapped, she'd gone too far -- and she watched him motion to his friend without making any attempt to disguise his gestures or what he was saying or who he was pointing at or why (though for Sally, "why" could have meant anything: Why me?) She averted her eyes, but everywhere she looked there were people, strangers, whom she felt compelled to stare at. She had to learn how to look beyond people, or through them. If you looked at them directly it was necessary to pretend that you were thinking of something else at the same time, that you weren't really aware of what you were doing. If you looked too hard they thought you wanted something from them. It made them nervous, all except the young men in the terminal who thought, apparently, that being stared at by someone like her was funny. Everyone sitting down in the terminal appeared to be locked into gray pockets of anonymity, as if around the neck of each person there was a sign similar to the ones young married couples post on the doors of their hotelrooms: do not disturb. As always, there was the conflict between wanting to be alone and wanting someone to be there. If she was travelling with someone those guys at the pinball machine wouldn't dream of bothering her, and here they were now,

another sum of money to the realtor, usually a month's rent or in some cases a percentage of the yearly rent. The first apartment they saw by this method was in the West Village, one medium-sized room with a kitchen built into one wall and a bathroom, filled with enough furniture left by a previous tenant so that if they wanted they could move in immediately. "Yes, we'll take it." There was no time to lose. The alarm rang at seven and Jacob was up, getting dressed, on his way out to look for a job. After weeks of inactivity they were suddenly overcome with things to do. Agnes

smirking, surrounding her chair. No one except herself seemed bothered by their presence in the terminal, not even the policeman who lounged in the coffeeshop chatting with the cashier. I could get a job in a place like this and wait on all the young men with bleached hair who wander in off the streets, a waitress for lost waifs. Trying to pretend that no one was watching her (and no one was, really), she left her seat, bought a copy of Newsweek at the magazine stand, then crossed the threshold into the coffeeshop.

The stools had red upholstered cushions, just like at Price's. The lady in her late twenties behind the counter wore a white short sleeve uniform with the name Sara stitched on the pocket. Sally didn't feel hungry -- she'd had a cup of coffee and a slice of toast before leaving the house -- but when the waitress placed a napkin, knife and spoon on the counter in front of her she felt obligated to say something, though she barely trusted her voice, "I'd like a cup of coffee and one of those --" pointing to a random assortment of dayold donuts under a glass jar.

"Milk in your coffee?"

The restaurant wasn't crowded, maybe every third seat was taken, but Sally felt guilty (overly empathetic) for providing more work for this thin waisted Jane Eyre whose narrow arms floated freely in her stained uniform and who'd probably been on her feet since 6 A.M. She wished she was more adept at making conversation: the alternative was to forego that possibility or pretend the possibility of making contact didn't exist, and obey the mores of whatever setting you were in where people were too rushed to acknowledge what anyone else might be thinking or feeling. Pointless to expend energy on a relationship which you couldn't pursue past the half hour you spent waiting for a bus to come, in a terminal where you've never been and would probably never return

to: though the reverse of this was also true i.e. it was possible to condense intimacy into a few brief moments by conveying, and this was the doctor's secret, a sense of genuine understanding and sympathy. Most people think you're feeling sorry for them, "I don't need your sympathy, lady -- I have two kids at home to support." Yet there was something intimate, not demeaning, about being served by another person. The finite number of people who entered the diner each day allowed Sally to relate to them all as individuals and she was quick to tell if their presence in the diner somehow related to their momentary need to be administered to in the simplest of ways. People would complain to her and she'd turn around and listen and watch their faces light up when she smiled. She could go through the motions of whatever she was doing, rinsing coffee cups or fixing milk shakes, without giving the person who was talking to her the impression that she was no longer listening. ("You'd make a good doctor yourself," Dr. Amundsen once told her.) Like the doctor, she could listen to people's problems all day. But learning how to get people to open up and talk -- that was the hard part, and in the city there were too many unknowns, too many variables, and anyone at any given time might question your motive ("do you really care about all this?" and turn off suddenly, mid-sentence. And if you just blurted out what was on your mind, oh well, she's probably crazy.

"Oh, sorry" some of the coffee had spilled over the side of the cup, it was the waitress's fault (may I call you Sara?), staining the front of Sally's dress. The last time I wore this dress what was I doing? "Take off your dress." "Here, help me with the zipper."

Sally patted the damp spot with the napkin and smiled at the waitress as if she -- both of them -- had just received invitations to a private party neither of them knew was being given in their honor, the anniversary of the occasion of the time they first met ("We met in a coffeeshop in Boston, 1980").

"Come with me -- I'm going to New York -- the next bus -- "

If she were a man she might be permitted to say: "Meet me after work" or "When do you get off?"

(I had a husband too, if you must know, but he left me.)

Sally sipped her coffee and watched the waitress walk down the aisle to another customer, a bald business man in suit and tie, who placed his suitcase -- as Sally had done -- on the ledge beneath the counter. If she did stay in New York, as she planned, it would be necessary for her to begin her life over again -- the clothing she brought with her wouldn't last long. Maybe, after a while, Bob would become reconciled to the idea, that she wasn't returning and would pack all her belongings -- her books, especially, and all the diaries and letters she'd saved from childhood -- into a big carton and ship it all to her new address. She sank her teeth into the sugar-coated object the waitress had placed in front of her and swiveled slightly on the stool, the faces of three Cuban refugees staring at her from the glossy cover

spent half her day cleaning the apartment, the rest of her time checking the listings in the theatrical papers for auditions. Once they were settled they began taking turns going out separately at night so they could each have a chance to spend some time in the apartment alone. One night, on her way home from a play, Agnes was followed into the lobby of the building by two men who stole her pocketbook, and in her own words: "Could have raped me." (She was too embarrassed to tell Jacob what really happened, and somehow managed to get into the bathroom to change out of her clothes and rinse the taste of semen from her mouth, before he knew what was happening.) When she did speak her words echoed off the bare walls which seemed to shrink in around them as they

of the magazine she resisted opening but which she'd bought for moments when she had to pretend she was doing something else other than staring into space, or at the waitress who smiled back at her as their eyes met as if to say: I am free -- say what you want -- I'll go with you anywhere.

Sally turned towards the glass door of the coffeeshop and saw the same two young men, a tall blonde twenty year old in tight dungarees and a rose colored cashmere sweater with nothing underneath and his friend who was older and swarthy with a blue bandana around his neck, whom she'd been watching before. They were standing at the door making animated animal gestures as if unable to decide whether they should enter the restaurant, maybe they didn't have enough money, when a third person brushed by them, a short man in his late thirties who reminded Sally of Pete (it was hard for her not to associate all the new faces with those most familiar to her: there were echoes and reflections everywhere), baggy army pants and a blue dungaree jacket catching his magical body like a deer on a mountain ledge or a wild dog in the Arctics leaping over the snow, he'd been moving forcefully, possibly he'd just stepped off a bus and was hurrying out into the morning streets to meet a friend or a lover or a wife when one of the two gazelles said something which made him break stride suddenly as if an arrow had pierced his side and in the same

sat on the edge of the bed ("here, drink this") which jutted out from one wall into the center of the single room, and a few days later they decided to move to what they imagined would be a "safer" neighborhood. Jacob, by this time, had found a full time job in the research department of a publishing company on lower Park Avenue. They broke the lease on the first apartment and moved uptown, to the top floor of a brownstone, just off Central Park, in the eighties. Months went by. This new apartment was so expensive it sometimes seemed that half of Jacob's paycheck was going to pay the rent. But after the "incident", as they referred to it, they rarely went out at night. For awhile Agnes had trouble sleeping and Jacob encouraged her to see a psychiatrist or at least make friends with the woman across the hall who had a young child but apparently no husband and one afternoon when

motion strike out with his fist, propelling it upwards into the face of the blonde who at the moment of contact began to fall backwards against the window of the coffeeshop. As the man with the bandana reached into his pocket Sally's attention narrowed into one tiny frame where the only thing that existed was the reflection of the overhead beam of fluorescent on the point of the knifeblade that had emerged and was moving in an arc so quick the picture blurred as it passed through all the points in space in the universe before disappearing in a tangle of arms and legs, the bodies of the three men -- now surrounded by other men and women leering over them -- in a ragged pile on the terminal floor. The policeman and the cashier, this was happening on their turf after all and they didn't have time to be stunned, acted first, they couldn't just continue doing what they were doing or stand in place shouting "stop" or "help" or whatever word Sally had screamed aloud, unable to contain herself (and why should she, Bob was right, city life sucked, I'm going home). Except for Sally and Sara the restaurant was empty, coffeecups and half-eaten sandwiches -- inedible anyway -- abandoned in a long row on the counter. The crowd of people only moments before

Jacob was at work Agnes convinced herself that she was being silly and overly self-conscious about just knocking on someone's door but when the door opened and her neighbor appeared still wearing her nightgown which it looked like she had just put on for the purpose of answering the door and Agnes could hear the voice of another woman in the background she backtracked immediately without even attempting to invite herself in. There was the possibility, as well, that she might be pregnant. Each morning, before he left for work, Jacob asked if she'd gotten her period. If she were pregnant they'd have to move to an even larger place (the

caught up in their own soap operas (I owe Herb \$500 but I won't be able to pay him back until August etc) had been drawn as if by radar to the violent drama.

"You spilled your coffee again," Sara said, she was being Sally's mother.

The cup was empty, on its side in the middle of the saucer, while a brown fountain trickled down the edge, staining the hem of Sally's dress which Bob lifted over her head before cascading onto her suitcase. She remembered how shocked he'd been to discover she wasn't wearing anything else and in her naivete she'd thought maybe he's a virgin too and she knew it was because he knew she was a virgin and virgins at least wore underpants, right? Just like the girls in the magazine Pete was turning the pages there were coffee stains on her suitcase too and all life was reduced to simply refilling someone's cup, day after day. Here's a napkin. "Thanks -- Sara." Patting the circles on her dress.

"I know that guy -- his name is Gene -- that's the blonde -- and the one with the knife, they're in here almost everyday. Just yesterday they were sitting right here, both of them, Gene right where you're sitting and the other guy over there, right here I mean and they'd just gotten money from somewhere, usually they pick up older guys, businessmen like the one who was sitting over there and go off with them to some hotel, you know...."

She was talking not as a waitress but as a private person now, and in a quick bored monotone which made Sally think that what she'd just seen was a routine event on the city's agenda, tune in tomorrow for the great rape scene, same time same station. Not trusting her own voice, she could only stare back at the girl -- wondering what she looked like without eye makeup or lipstick.

new apartment had three rooms). When her period finally arrived it took her a day before she admitted it to Jacob, who pretended he was disappointed that they weren't going to have a baby, at least not right now. He didn't realize that Agnes knew he was pretending, and Agnes knew he didn't know. "He doesn't know what I want either," she thought to herself, in anger; it was the kind of blanket appraisal of everything that had happened to them since they left Boston. Their new schedule, along with

Whether she was surprised or disturbed by what had happened she'd adjusted in a matter of moments -- that guy outside wasn't her boyfriend or husband, after all, just another customer, and there were many customers, many faces, new ones, different ones, every-day -- and was taking advantage of the break in activity to display some semblance of her off-duty personality.

"I knew there was going to be some action today -- felt it, as I was coming to work there was a fight in the train station and someone almost fell onto the tracks, accidents happen in groups you know like plane crashes." She could have been talking to anyone. "You from Boston?"

As she talked she stared through the window at the crowd, now mainly composed of policemen and people who worked in the terminal, the bystanders standing on tiptoe around the inner circle like a fringe on which a row of buttons had been stitched -- eyes glazed and bloodshot from all the hours spent waiting for buses in terminals like this one, so even an act of violence -- a stabbing, a murder, the sense that they were near death and in that way courting it (if only accidentally) -- wasn't enough to give life to the vacant expressions on their faces. It wasn't quite the feeling of intimacy Sally had imagined, but now that they had shared this experience -- and it was still continuing, she was still sitting at the lunch counter -- there was still the chance something else would occur. In a few moments an ambulance would arrive, and a police van, and the three men would be taken away, the cashier return to his position behind the register; the business man to his abandoned plate of food -- new people, who knew nothing of what had just happened, would push through the restaurant door and fill up the seats along the counter.

"Huntington? Sure I know that place. I have a sister in Concord."

She scrawled a few numbers on her checkpad with a yellow pencil and handed the check to Sally, more out of habit -- it

the thoughts and fears of getting pregnant, had made them nervous about making love, "going all the way" as the girls in high school, the girls Sally and Agnes had disdained, all of Bob Price's ex-girlfriends for that matter, called it. The more time they spent in bed, reading or eating or watching television, the less physical contact seemed to matter, as if actually being part of the city had altered their metabolisms, and left them preoccupied, but not with one another. Each, in turn, began to superimpose characteristics of the people they saw everyday on

was a gesture Sally recognized, she'd done it so often herself -- than as a way of saying goodbye, in the formal sense. Sally wanted to tell the girl where to find her if she ever visited Huntington again -- it was the equivalent of telling someone: here's my address, let's stay in touch -- but as she searched her purse for loose change to pay for the coffee and donut she knew that the only time she'd ever see this girl was if she, Sally, returned to this bus station. She imagined herself coming back and standing at the window of the restaurant and pressing her face against the glass, waiting for the woman behind the counter to turn her way. Some people kept their jobs forever, others quit after a few months or were fired and collected unemployment, while some women -- and men as well -- regarded themselves as waitress or waiter, that was their identity, their profession, and worked their way up the steps of an imaginary hierarchy till they reached the small niche in life where they felt most comfortable about what they were doing.

"Did you see that? Did you see what happened?"

The cashier was a tall, overweight man, with broad shoulders -- possibly, like Bob, an ex-athlete, whose career had been cut short by a freak accident -- and short thinning hair swept back in an old fashioned pompadour. His cheeks were red from all the excitement and as he returned to his stool behind the cash register he loosened his tie and took a soiled handkerchief from the pocket of his linen sport jacket, wiping the perspiration from his forehead and eyes. His return to the restaurant was a signal to Sara that she had to resume her role as waitress or at least look like she was busy, even though there were still no customers in the coffeeshop except Sally. From a shelf behind the counter she took a damp cloth and began wiping the surface, emptying plates

the body of the person lying beside them, as a way of incorporating the collective psychic energy of the city without letting any specific person become a threat. Once every two or three weeks they took the subway back up to the Bronx to visit Jacob's father, and go with him to dinner at a local Chinese restaurant, and one weekend they took a bus to Huntington to see Agnes's mother, but otherwise they remained faithful to the pattern of

and cups into hidden receptacles and bins. When she was finished she circled back to where Sally was preparing to leave, all the while carrying on a conversation with the cashier (Sally noticed that they called each other by their first names), asking questions about what had just happened. At one point Sara looked up, surprised that Sally was still there ("can I get you anything else? more coffee?"), and Sally knew the spell had been broken by the presence of the third person. It was hard to keep moving. One of the reasons people stayed in one place for most of their lives was because of the energy necessary to propel oneself forward into a future about which they knew nothing. Just contemplating the unknown, as Sally was now doing, took energy, and a sense of perspective -- when to save the energy, when to expend it -- which Sally knew nothing about. Part of her wanted to sit at that lunch counter forever and hold on to some bit of knowledge which she had learned and which seemed as valuable as anything that had happened to her before. She wanted to digest the new experience before she was confronted by something else which she didn't understand. Her knowledge of herself had been limited to who she was in relation to her immediate environment, her life in Huntington, but now that she was no longer "Sally Price, waitress" she felt that there was some kind of gap which could be filled with almost anything, a tabula rasa, in the real sense of having no identity at all. She was on a bridge between two points, the bridge was swaying in the wind, there was water below and boats and she was walking slowly with her old winter coat, collar turned up, wrapped tight around her shoulders while the people in the cars crossing the bridge passed her and looked out the car windows and honked their horns and shouted at her as if she was somehow intruding on some ideal image, out for a country drive and there she was like a character in a poem by Wordsworth stumbling along. The cashier, and Sally too, and the blonde prince whom the swarthy old man had punched and who in turn had possibly been stabbed by the third man who moved like a deer, were people whom Sally knew she would dream

streets and stores, subway entrances and neon signs, restaurants, luncheonettes and bars, hotel lobbys and offices, advertisements in newspapers and magazines, people in the street, parked cars, all the things they thought they might want to do and could never afford. Sunday was the best time to sleep late, linger over coffee, do The Times crossword puzzle, watch a ballgame, and enjoy the feeling of equanimity (if it was truly possible to enjoy being bored) which came from existing separately while still being together. Agnes stared at herself in the bathroom mirror for what seemed like

about or talk about to Agnes -- they were part of her life now, part of the repertoire of stories, something she could relate to the person she was lying in bed with -- and she couldn't imagine who that person was except she knew it wasn't Bob, Bob had been eliminated, someone else was sleeping beside him in her bed, in their bed, where she used to lie awake head propped against pillows and read till it was too late to even think he would come home (often he'd come home and find her asleep with the light on and the book still open, floating on the quilt). "Why should he come home anyway -- he knows I won't sleep with him." She imagined herself sitting at a booth in a coffee-shop opposite Sara while a third woman served them. They were telling each other their life stories ("are you really interested?") and drinking coffee, iced, because it was the middle of summer and though the restaurant was air conditioned they'd been walking a long time hand in hand down an imaginary thoroughfare that reminded Sally of pictures she'd seen of Les Champs Elysees. Sara's shoulders were bare and Sally wanted to reach across the table and run her fingers through the girl's hair, but stopped herself and lit a cigarette instead. They were in a big city, New York, Boston, San Francisco -- maybe they'd go visit Susan Amundsen who lived up the California coast with her supposed (ha ha) boyfriend. Agnes, it occurred to her, was probably as miserable as she was, so there was no reason why they all couldn't rent a car together and take off. Wouldn't that be fun?

hours, making faces at herself as she tried on new clothes, while Jacob, caught in a time warp of his own, puffed on a Camel at the kitchen table. He'd grown addicted to espresso coffee, Medaglia d'Oro or Bustelo, and bought a special pot which only made two cups at a time. On the radio Geza Anda was playing Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto. Later they might take a subway ride to Battery Park, where everyone spoke a different language and carried a camera.

