

In Media Res



Julia Driscoll sat at the defendant's table in the courtroom, slumped over her arms. The trial was over, the long ordeal had climaxed with the judge's instructions and now twelve strangers, people to whom she had never spoken, people she had never met before the day they were picked by lot to serve on her jury were about to decide her guilt or innocence, whether she lived or died. She had looked at them during the trial and wondered what they thought of her, the teacher who was accused of killing her husband's lover because she had also been involved with her, she had been described as jealous but even she was not sure of whom she had been most jealous, her husband or Daisy.

Daisy. She remembered when she had first met Daisy and she and her husband had both fallen in love with her, she had shared their bed and their lives and then had come the night she had discovered their plans.

Her lawyer touched her. She looked up. The jury was coming back. The judge and the bailiffs were coming back. The Judge asked the foreman if they had reached a verdict, They had, the slip of paper that would decide her fate was passed up to the judge, he opened it and Julia could feel the blood draining from her face, her legs were weak, she doubted whether she could stand and face him. She rose and gripped the defendant's table with her hands. The judge read the paper with the verdict and asked if that was their verdict, it was, then the foreman rose and when asked how he found the defendant of the charge of murdering Daisy Sullivan said the single word that sealed her fate.

—Julia Driscoll, the jury has found you guilty of the the murder of Daisy Sullivan, do you have anything to say before I impose sentence?

Silence.

—Julia Driscoll, you have been found guilty of the murder of Daisy Sullivan, this murder was accompanied by her savage dismemberment. The jury has heard evidence that you dismembered the body of this woman, who had been at times your lover and your husband's lover, that having dismembered her you removed her viscera, heart and lungs and then in a macabre scene unequalled in my memory you set this before your husband as a stew. You told him that this was a dish that he loved. When the truth was revealed him he in turn attempted to kill you but in the process lost his own life. The jury has heard testimony that your husband, Tom Driscoll, intended to leave you for the young woman, Daisy Sullivan, whom you murdered and that you were motivated by your own consuming passion for her.

Was she? She wondered.

— Testimony has been heard about your alleged state of mind at the time of the murder and the jury has decided, by finding you guilty of murder, that you were in possession of your faculties at the the time of the murder, that you were fully cognizant of the meaning of your actions, and that you are and were able to distinguish right from wrong.

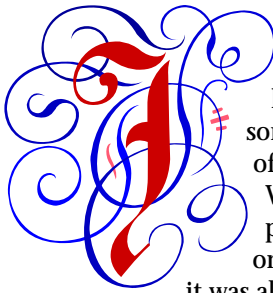
What is right and wrong, did anybody really know that, she doubted it.

— It is therefore my obligation under the laws of this state to sentence you to taken from here to the state penitentiary at Richmond and from thence to a place of execution where you will be put to death in the manner prescribed by law. May God have mercy on your soul.

What kind of just, loving, forgiving God would allow her to be executed. There was no God, that she knew, and her death would be as meaningless as her life.

She turned and walked out of the courtroom under the guidance of the matrons.

Ab Ovo



ulia had always hated the city where she was born. The men there were so filled with a sense of their own importance and the women seemed to derive their happiness not from anything they did or said or were but from their husband's position in the hierarchy of power. You were always hearing that someone was the chairman of this or that powerful committee or was somebody of importance in the White House and yet what did anyone ever accomplish in Washington. No ideas came from here, nothing was produced here, these people that were so important here were unknown in Los Angeles, Seattle, Detroit, or even New York. There was only an illusory existence in Washington, whether it was along the red-light district, that one block strip of four topless bars, one gay bar, three massage parlors, two porno theaters, one gay theatre and bookstore, the world's so-called largest adult bookstore, a litany of prostitutes and whores, or whether it was the gold coast of 16th St., the small, over-priced houses and trendy shops and boutiques of Georgetown, or in the colleges and universities of the city.

The bright, eager faces of the freshmen around George Washington University, how soon would they wear the mask of pain and frustration, bitterness and anger that she knew. A refrain from a song ran through her mind —the class of '57 had its dreams.

— Dreams, to dream, perchance to dream, aye there's the rub. What did you dream when you were their age.

The soft dreams of childhood, the terrors of unknown sounds and sights, the play of shadows along the walls, one's fingers transformed to become rabbits, snakes, puppet creatures of her imagination. Her father would come to her in the night and hold her. He would touch her. She was sick, prone to febrile convulsions, he stood over her rubbing her skin with alcohol. waving a magazine over her. It was dark in the room and her father stood there in the light that filtered through the window, the mixture of moonlight and the light from the street and from the neighbors' houses mingled and outlined his heavy, muscular form. He was large, slightly bald, the light shone across his face, while his body was only dimly illuminated, and he told her that she would be all right. The alcohol felt cool against her skin, the room smelled but she liked to have her father near her, to hear him talk to her, to see those muscular arms that she knew could bend steel, that could hit and pummel and yet be gentle, he could control those huge arms of muscle and use them to touch her, to stroke her face, to rub the alcohol across her body and then to fan her with a magazine so that she would cool down and the fever would break. When she had had her first convulsion her friend Paula had run to her mother crying —Julie dead; Julie dead. Then the rush to the hospital, the doctor's examination and then a lifetime of pills and visits to neurosurgeons. Lying in the dark, panting like a dog, the sticky stuff in your hair and then the nurse pulling it out, swabbing it with alcohol, again the smell of rubbing alcohol would permeate the room.

The soft childhood dreams of fairy tales come true. The princess who marries the the daring young man. Last minute escapes from ogres, witches and vampires.

That was not how it was with her parents. Her mother had come to Washington from the Mid-West and her father from upper New York state. What she remembered most about her grandparents were their funerals, particularly her paternal grandfather's. They had driven all night in the snow. Her father had come in to wake her and tell her that his father had died and that they were going up to his funeral. She remembered the deaf old man who had held her on his lap and she cried that he had died. Then after the bags were packed and she was bundled up they started for the funeral. When they had gotten about halfway to the funeral it began to snow and the snow came down blowing towards the windshield of the car, the headlights illuminating each flake as it did its mad little dance only to be swept off and onto the road beneath.

When they had gotten to the funeral there had been only the casket, closed, sealed tight, they had joined the funeral procession and when they reached the cemetery she sat with her parents near the front. The snow was still coming down, and she was cold, then the casket was lowered into the ground while the snow swirled in the air making gentle circles as the large flakes fell and melded into the carpet

that covered the ground. Was this what death was all about, ceasing to be, he was, he is no more, not even a face to be remembered, simply a memory. She cried and she thought of her own death, how would it be, would she be anything more than a body to be encased in wood and disposed of, was that all there was?

She would dream of death. She was alone in a room, candles burning, a coffin on a catafalque, she opens the coffin and a skeleton is in the coffin, bits of decayed flesh clinging to it. She does not run or scream, she reaches into the coffin, pulls the skeleton to her and embraces it. It starts to put on flesh,, she looks into its newly formed eyes and sees not her reflection but emptiness. She runs away and sees a man, someone she knows, she runs to him and the starts to dissolve, she reaches him before he completely melts away, embraces him and finds she is holding air. Nothingness.

She would dream of love, but that was the same dream and again she held nothing.

She would dream of her parents.

II

Julia's mother was born in Kansas. Six generation before her birth her ancestors, farmers from a small town in what was then part of Austria and was now part of Yugoslavia, had come over, just before the Civil War, to escape an outbreak of cholera. They had worked the land and they had taken from the land its gifts of corn and wheat and had given back to the land their dead. They had brought their faith with them from the old country and to that faith they had given sons and daughters as priests and nuns. Julia's mother had not kept to the faith.

Margery Kemp had come th Washington in 1936 after she had graduated from high school and gone to work in the Federal bureaucracy as a secretary working in the procurement branch of the Treasury department. A year later she had her first affair.

When the affair had started she went to confession and told the priest her story.

— Father, forgive me for I have sinned. It has been six weeks since my last confession. Father, I've been sleeping with a married man.

— How long has this been going on?

— About three weeks, father. He's been seeing me every night for about three weeks, and father, he's so unhappy. His wife has been drinking and he thinks she's been cheating on him. He says she can't have children and he wants to have children so desperately. He's talking of leaving her and marrying me, they aren't Catholic so we could be married in the Church, couldn't we, if he divorced her? Is it really such a bad sin for me to sleep with him when he's so unhappy and I can give him a little joy? Is it such a big sin for me to help him in this way?

— Daughter, it is not a little sin that you are talking about but a mortal sin, one which puts your soul in danger of hell. No matter how unhappy he is your friend is not entitled to have physical relations with you nor you with him. Now do you have any other sins to confess?

— No, father.

— Now for your penance say one rosary and offer it up for the poor souls in purgatory. And daughter....

— Yes, father?

— End your relationship with that man at once. No good can come of a relationship that is rooted in sin.

— Yes, father.

— Now make a good act of contrition.

She went out of the confessional, took her rosary out of her purse and knelt down in front of the tabernacle.

— Jesus, I love this man, but I love you more than anything else and if you want me to give him up I will but Jesus please give me the strength to break up with him.

She said her rosary and as she tolled the beads she could feel a sense of sureness and peace pass over her. yes, she could break up with John, she would see him and she would end the affair that night.

He came over to her apartment that night and when he came through the door he took her in his arms and kissed her. Where was her resolve now? She felt the courage drain out of her. She needed this

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man. She had lied to herself, to the priest, and to God, it was not his unhappiness that she sought to ease but her own. She was not lonely when she was with him. He thought as she did and his mind seemed to move in parallel with hers. When he made love to her her body was convulsed and afterwards she felt a feeling of peace and relaxation that she had never known before suffuse her body. She need his passion and his tenderness, his very presence meant more to her than anything else in the world or out of it.

— John, I went to confession today.

— You did?

— I told the priest about us and he told me that I had to give you up. I even asked Jesus to give me the strength to break up with you and I said that I loved Him more than anything else in the world but I was wrong. It's you that I love more than anything in this world or anybody out of it. I need you and I want to have you by me forever.

— And I love you and want to have you by my side forever too.

— When are you going to leave Teresa?

— I don't know when we'll be able to work out all the details of the divorce, there's so much that has yet to be settled. Community property, alimony, all of that has yet to be taken care of.

— I see.

She didn't really. Was it just that he wanted her, wanted her body, wanted her love, but didn't want to give her his body and love forever. Or was he telling her the truth, did he love her and did he want to marry her and all of his hesitancy was just the legal arrangements that he was talking about. She didn't know or understand all of this, all that she knew and that she understood was that she loved this man.

When he left he said he would call her and talk to her about the divorce.

She waited a day, two days, he didn't call. She looked for him at work and he was out. Finally she went to his house one night. She saw him come out of the house and kiss his wife as he went away. She was tall, with flaming red hair. She wore a cheap housecoat but Margery thought she was beautiful, perhaps one of the most beautiful women she had ever seen. She wanted to talk to her but decided to follow John instead.

She followed him from 17th and Q Sts over to Connecticut Avenue and saw him go into a bar. She went in after him. He sat down at the bar, she followed him and slid into a booth near the back where she hoped she would be unobserved. A blowsy looking blonde came in and sat down beside him. Margery saw him look at the blonde in that peculiar appraising way that men have of looking at a woman and undressing her with their eyes. What did he want with this harridan when he had her, when he had such a beautiful wife. Margery would have killed if she could have looked like his wife. John was holding the blonde's hand, she was smoking a cigarette and blowing little rings into the air. They finished their drinks, John leaned over and whispered something into her ear. She tossed her head back, laughed, a deep, warm, throaty laugh, picked up her purse and started out the door. John plunked some money down on the bar, picked up his overcoat and started to follow her out.

Margery paid for her drink and followed John and the blonde out onto the street. She saw him hail a cab and get into it with the blonde.

John finally called her and said he had to see her. She let him come over and make love to her. As she laid beside him she started to speak.

— I went by your house the other night.

— Oh.

— I saw your wife. She's beautiful. She doesn't look like a drunk at all.

— What do you expect a drunk to look like, some are beautiful, some are ugly, that's all there is to it.

— Well, I guess I mean that she doesn't look dirty and sloppy, all disheveled like some bum, she seems to be very attractive. I can't understand why you would want to leave her for me. Am I that much younger than she is, a better lover, it can't be because I'm prettier.

— Yes, you are all of those things, but most importantly I love you and you love me. You do love me don't you, or are you so unsure of yourself?

— Yes, I love you.

Then the picture of the blonde came to her mind.

— But if you love me then why did you go into that bar, Ben-bows on Connecticut Avenue and walk out with that blonde bimbo the other night.

— What blonde bimbo? How the hell would you know anything about that?

— I told you. I went to your house the other night. I saw you come out and I followed you. I went into the bar, you didn't see me, and I saw you pick up this blonde, you got into a taxi with her.

— That was my sister, not some bimbo off the streets, not some cheap tart like you're implying. My sister, do you hear me?

— You goddamn liar, you don't have a sister, don't you think I know that.

— Okay then it was my mother, does that make you feel any better, how do you like the idea that I was cheating on you with my mother, is that what you want to hear. God, you little tramp, you poor little country tramp, fresh off the train from the country, come to the big city to make your fortune. Well you've been made all right. You've been made by me. Do you think you were ever anything more to me than a fresh piece of ass. That's all you've ever been and all you'll ever be.

She started hitting him, she raked her nails up and down his bare back, clawing savagely at him.

— Get out, get out, you goddamn son of a bitch. If you ever come near me again I'll kill you, so help me God. That priest was right, he knew no good could come of this.

— What would some priest know about anything like this?

He got out of bed and started dressing.

— He knew that this affair was wrong. He knew it was a sin to see you. He said no good could come from a relationship that was rooted in sin. That's all this has ever been a sin. Sin, do you hear me? I've been nothing but somebody you lusted for. Was that blonde tart anything more than I was was she just a passing lust like me?

— Look, it s going to do me no good to talk to you when you're like this, I'll call you tomorrow when you've calmed down.

He left and Margery broke down and cried.

He called her at work, Margery listened for a few minutes and then slammed the phone down. She decided to see his wife. when her lunch hour came she left and she walked to his house. His wife came to the door. She was dressed in slacks and a blouse, she was slightly disheveled but she looked like she had been working, her nails were filled with dirt.

— Hello, may I help you?

— Mrs. Carroll, you don't know me but I'm a friend of your husband and I have to talk to you about him.

— A friend of my husband. You mean that you're one of his little paramours.

— His what?

— His lover, his girlfriend if you will.

— I suppose so, but still I have to talk to you, may I come in?

— I suppose so, if you think it will help but I really don't see what good will come out of it. You don't think you're the first of his little tramps do you.

— Mrs. Carroll I know that you have every right to hate me but I don't think I'm a tramp or a tart or any other bad name that you want to call me. I loved your husband and I think he lied to me and I want to talk to you about it. Please let me come in.

— All right then, come in.

She followed the woman into a small room filled with plants and flowers. The table was covered with plants that Margery could not identify, pottery that was upturned with the soil and plant removed, plants with dirt clinging to their roots, a potting trowel laying on the table, some rubber gloves, and some empty clay pots.

— I was just doing some repotting. If you don't mind I'll keep on working while you say what you have to say.

— Mrs. Carroll, John told me about you. He told me that you drank and that you cheated on him, that he wanted to have children and that you couldn't and I believed him. Then one night I asked him when he was going to divorce you.

— You did, and what did he say?

— Well, he gave me some story about needing to see lawyers and arranging a settlement but I could tell that he was lying to me and so I came out here one night and saw him come out. He went to a bar and picked up some cheap blonde tart. I couldn't understand why he'd want to do that when he said he

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loves me. I asked him about the woman and he said she was his sister but I didn't believe him and I threw him out.

— Look...I just realized I don't even know your name, what is your name?

— Margery, Margery Kemp.

— Margery, John lied when he said I was a drunk. I saw my father drunk often enough and I swore I would never have anything to do with that. As for children, it's John's fault, he's sterile and has been for years. What kind of father do you think he'd make anyhow, always out chasing some skirt. No, Margery, John's problem is not me or my drinking. John's problem is himself. He looks upon every woman as a potential conquest. He likes to think of himself as a conqueror, but instead of working upon the world, like a warrior, like Alexander, he thinks of himself as making his conquests in bed, you know he seriously fancies himself to be a Don Juan figure, not just a womanizer, which would be bad enough, but a philosophical womanizer, which is almost intolerable.

— But why do you stay with with him.

— I thought I loved him once, but that has passed. Maybe because I loved him, out of loyalty to that love and the hope that it can be born again, maybe that's why I stay with him. He really is very sweet and he leaves me alone pretty much. I have my plants, my books, my friends. As for lovers, I don't have any. Now, are you satisfied?

— I suppose, but did you know Mrs. Carroll that when I saw you for the first time I thought that you were one of the most beautiful women I'd ever seen and I couldn't understand why John would want to cheat on you, especially with someone like me.

— Margery, why can't you understand that. You're very attractive and John's passion, his compulsion if you want to be analytical about it, has nothing to do with how attractive a woman is. It has more to do with revenge, with anger, and with uncertainty about himself than it has to do with wanting you or wanting any other woman. Let me tell you a story. One night John and I had a fight and didn't make up for a couple of days. He kept silent or when he spoke to me it was to snarl at me or to make some comment, finally he calmed down, or he seemed to and he apologized to me for the way he acted. I could tell he was still upset but I accepted his apology. However, I was still suspicious of him and one night after we had made up I followed him to a bar, possibly the same one you saw him go to, and he picked up some woman, I think she was a tart, and go off with her. When I told him what I had seen he acted to me just the way he acted towards you. He tried to deny everything, then he became sarcastic and defensive. I decided then that I would go on and live my life without him. He could have his affairs, his little flings and I would remain content with what I could have of his love, as for the rest I would find other things, like work, that would fill my life. Maybe it's just sheer inertia, the desire to stay motionless, that keeps me here with him. maybe I just don't have the energy or will to divorce him, it might be a case of just drifting, a piece of driftwood in a stream, until I find a place to land but in any case I won't leave him. He might leave me but I doubt it.

— Mrs. Carroll, I know that I've no right to say this but I like you and I wish we could be friends, of course that's impossible, but John will be out of my life forever.

— Margery, I know he's hurt you a lot and he's hurt me too, don't say we can't be friends. I bear you no ill will. The fault is mainly John's, not your. If you want to see me or talk to me feel free to come by or call. I'll see you, I'll talk to you. I know that he'll be out of your life for soon anyhow, no affair of his has ever lasted more than six months at the most.

Margery went to the door, suddenly she turned and she wanted to say good-bye, good-bye to the woman whose husband had betrayed both of them, his wife and his mistress but she couldn't. Then the woman spoke to her.

— It's all right Margery, I understand, really I do.

Margery left and went back to work. She was even more confused than before. She liked his wife and she had seemed to like her, to accept her, even though she wanted to take John away from her.

She had confessed to Teresa Carroll. She would go to confession and admit her guilt before God, before His priest. The priest would admonish her and he would be right, right as he had been the first time when she had confessed. She would make her obeisance and humble herself by admitting that she had sinned.

When Saturday came and she confessed and received her penance she felt a feeling of relief that at last the ordeal was over. When she knelt in front of the tabernacle, in front of the red light that signi-

fied Jesus's presence within in the Eucharist, she could feel the black beads passing between her fingers and the solidity of the beads, the comforting presence of God in the tabernacle, and the rhythm of the prayers and of her breath calmed her and soothed her, and she felt a peace pass over her. This was her life, here she was safe and free and content, here in church she could breathe and her prayer was her breath, her breath was her prayer; here she felt peace and contentment, perhaps here she would spend her life. Maybe not as a nun but she could come kneel in front of this tabernacle and here God would speak to her and she would be consoled.

She needed to feel this consolation, this love, John was not available but God was always available, He was here, in the tabernacle and the little red light showed His presence, this would be her consolation and her love. She would come to this Church every morning before work and she would hear Mass, receive communion, and be secure in the knowledge that though she might be forced to live in the world she was not of it and she would remain apart from it.

In the morning she would get up and take the brown scapular that she wore around her neck, she would venerate it and make an offering of herself and her actions for the day to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin. Every day she went to Mass and knelt at the altar rail while the priest placed the host on her tongue. She was careful not to chew the host, the nuns had been emphatic and if nothing else she would not show disrespect by chewing Christ's body, but would let it melt in her mouth and swallow it. She would have breakfast and then go to work.

In the evenings she went to classes at George Washington University, afterwards she would go home to study for a while and then she would take out the rosary and pray before going to bed. As always there was comfort in the silent act of prayer, in the constant repetition and rhythm of the words, the silent monotony of the words and her mind would drift off and when she was finished and had crossed herself she could sleep undisturbed by thoughts of John or of his wife or of the pleasure that he had given her.

This would be her life, she was resolved that nothing would interfere in the relationship that she enjoyed with the luminous being who inhabited the church and whose body and blood, soul and divinity she received every morning and whose mother she sought to emulate in her devotion.

When one of the young men in her office asked her out she wanted to go with him but she refused him and he never asked her again. It was different at night, when she was at school, she didn't feel as uneasy with the other students as she did at work and one night another student, one who had been particularly quiet in class and who struck her as being as shy and withdrawn as she was spoke to her.

— Do you understand this passage here?

— Which one?

— The one beginning *Sicine me patris avectam, perfide, ab aris.*

— Yes, Ariadne, after she helped Theseus discover the secret to the minotaur's cavern was deserted by him and left on the island of Naxos. Here she's cursing him or being faithless and promising to marry her, which he had no intention of doing, and she's saying that all men are faithless, lying creatures.

Yes, Ariadne knew about men and their deceits and was it any comfort to her that she became the bride of a god, that Bacchus took her for his own, but how about her and John, he had deserted her and she was living like a nun, one of the brides of Christ. No, the parallel was too pat and contrived, John had been real and Jesus was real not some myth like Bacchus.

— Is something wrong?

— No, I was just thinking of something else. Would you like some help with that passage?

— Yes, I would. Why don't I buy you a cup of coffee and we can work on it together.

— I have to go to work in the morning but I guess I can manage it.

In the student union they sat and drank their coffee while she looked over his paper.

— You know, I've wanted to talk to you before but this is the first time I've been able to get up the nerve.

— Oh, why?

— You've always seemed so distant, like you were here but you really wanted to be somewhere else. No, that's not quite right, not like you wanted to be somewhere else but more like you belonged somewhere else and that you were only here for a short while.

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And isn't all of life just a short span, our lives are seventy years or eighty for those who are strong, and where should I belong but in my heavenly home.

— No, I belong right here.

— Well, perhaps I didn't put it quite right but what I meant was that you always seemed to be preoccupied with something, never quite here, always with your mind on something else.

— I see. Actually you seem to understand this passage pretty well.

— I really just used this as an excuse to talk to you, like I said I have been wanting to talk to you for the longest time.

— I see. Are you satisfied now that you've talked to me?

— No, I want to see you outside of class. Can I take you out sometime, maybe dinner, a movie?

— No, I don't think so. I really don't want to get involved with somebody right now.

— Why, is there something wrong with me, did I do something to upset you.

— No, it's just that I don't have time for anybody, any man in my life.

— Well I'm not going to be brushed off so easily. I want to see you again and I'll keep on trying.

— I'd rather you didn't try. I don't want to hurt your feelings but I don't want to get involved with anybody.

She got up to leave and he reached out to touch her, to grab her arm but she moved too quickly.

— Look, I'll talk to you after class, I'll help you with the translations, if you really need any help, which I doubt, but I won't go out with you. It's nothing against you, or against men it's just that I'd feel better if I didn't have to be bothered with any of this business.

— I guess I'll have to accept that if you insist.

— I do insist. Look, I'll see you after the next class.

She left and went home, home to the little room with its statues and crucifixes, home to the statue of the infant of Prague that she dressed every day in the different liturgical colors, home, where she undressed and knelt down to say her nightly rosary and give thanks that the temptations of the day had been resisted and to ask for the grace to continue. She dreamed of John frequently, well she could do nothing about that, she hoped that tonight she would not dream about him. When the dreams came they were not about John. That was a relief.

She was eating alone in the cafeteria when a woman spoke to her.

— Margery, Margery Kemp?

— Yes?

— Don't you remember me? Teresa Carroll.

— Oh, yes, I certainly do remember you, how are you?

— Well, I was here to see John, look if I'm embarrassing you or if I'm bringing back bad memories I'll leave.

— No, it's not necessary.

— I told you that I liked you and that I was willing to be your friend.

— Yes, I remember.

— Have you seen John, no I don't mean that way, I think he's stopped running around, for a while at least, I mean here at work.

— No, I don't go out of my way to avoid him but I don't go looking for him either.

— Margery, you seem awfully shy and reticent, am I bothering you, is there something you'd like to talk about.

— Mrs. Carroll, I barely know you, I tried to take your husband away from you and you come over here and try to talk to me like I'm your oldest and dearest friend, why, what do you want from me, what can I do for you?

— Margery, I could hate you if I wanted to, I could hate John for running around and cheating on me, I could use that as an excuse to go out and have an affair myself. I could tie myself up in knots of bitterness and animosity but what would that prove. I could be unforgiving and merciless towards you and John but what would I gain. I told you that you weren't his first conquest and that you probably won't be his last. Am I to be bitter and sick with rage and jealousy, to have fantasies of murder like in some cheap melodrama, to divorce him when I still love him despite his faults. Sure some of it was your fault, I won't pretend that you were completely innocent but you were, you are young and it was easy to take advantage of you. Margery, the choice for me is to be hard and unforgiving or to forgive you and

John and to forget any transgressions you two may have committed. One way is death and the other way is life, it's that simple Margery.

— Mrs Carroll....

— It's Teresa, or even Terry if you prefer Margery.

— Teresa, I don't know what to say.

— Well, you could start by saying I can sit down and join you.

— Yes, of course you can.

— So Margery, what are you doing now?

— Well, aside from working here I'm going to George Washington University and taking classes there. Right now I'm studying Latin.

— I see, why Latin, are you Catholic?

— Yes, I am. I was good in Latin in high school back in Kansas and I enjoy the poets, particularly Catullus and Ovid.

— *Da mi basia mille, deinde centum....* I'm sorry Margery, you shouldn't blush it was the only tag of Latin I could remember aside from some of the Mass responses. Is there anybody special in your life now, are you seeing anybody.

— No, I'm afraid I've more or less sworn off men for good after my experience with John.

— Margery, don't let John discourage you or turn you against men and against love. The world is a beautiful place, it wasn't created to be a desert but to be lived in and loved and used and the same goes for the people in it.

— You know there was a boy only a couple of days ago who asked me out.

— Margery, go out with him. Maybe you won't fall in love with him, maybe you will, but don't cut yourself off from life. You know I once thought of becoming a nun.

— Really?

— Yes. I had been madly in love, when I was about your age and something happened, we just seemed to drift further and further apart and I thought that maybe God was calling me, giving me a sign that the married life wasn't for me. I even went to a convent for about a month but I realized that I liked the creature comforts too much, that I liked sleeping late and not having to get out of bed before dawn to say the office in choir, that I liked eating meat and having an occasional cocktail. The life of withdrawal and penance wasn't for me. I'm afraid I'm too worldly in some respects to be truly holy.

— I've never thought of becoming a nun and yet my mother tells me that some of my distant cousins are nuns and I suppose that my parents would be pleased if one of their children became a religious.

— Margery, I wasn't suggesting that you try the religious life and I certainly can't stop you if you want to try it like I did, I just don't think you should withdraw from the world because of John. Don't shut yourself up and become an uninvolved recluse. You can do that even if you never look at a convent. It's strange but in some ways the nuns who are shut off from the world may be in closer contact with it than we who are out here in the world every day.

— How do you mean?

— Just that it's possible to shut yourself off from all human contact, to lose the feeling of love for people as individuals, to lose sense of their reality as individuals whether you're living here in Washington and going to work for the Treasury department or whether you're shut up in a convent somewhere. Margery, don't let that happen to you.

— I'll try not to. Now I really have to get back to work.

— Margery, can I come by and see you again?

— I suppose so.

— Good, I really do want for us to be friends despite everything that has happened.

Margery left and went back to work, when she arrived home she looked at the statues and the crucifixes and wondered if she had done what Teresa had mentioned, had she shut herself off from human contact because she had been hurt by John or had she really chosen to give herself to God, did the statues and crucifixes have any real meaning for her or were they just objects on the wall. In the morning she got up and venerated the scapular that she had made it a daily practice to wear, she looked at it and wondered if it was really the efficacious instrument she had been taught that it was.

She saw him, Robert, in class that night and later he approached her.

Thomas E. Hart

— I told you that I wouldn't give up on you.

— So I see.

— I still want to take you out, are you sure you won't reconsider and maybe go to a movie with me Friday or Saturday.

— Well.... Okay. But I don't want you to think that it means anything, we're just going to a movie, that's all.

— Let's start with that shall we?

— Okay, why don't I meet you here at seven.

— Don't you want me to come and pick you up?

— No. *Would he understand about the statues, the religious images. He'd think I was some kind of freak.* It would be better if we met here, I'm not allowed to have men visitors where I live and it would be easier to just meet you here.

— I'll see you Saturday at seven then.

— Okay, I'll be looking forward to it.

She looked forward to Saturday, an innocent evening at the movies with someone her age, she could not envision herself as loving Robert with the same passion she had felt for John, that part of her life was over, she was sure of that. At the movies she felt Robert's hand on hers, the pressure of his flesh squeezing against hers, she felt him start to put his hand on her thigh, she gently moved it back to the arm of the chair and held it there. Afterwards they walked down the streets and they paused to look in a store window, he kissed her and she felt his hand through her clothes on her breast. She turned away from him.

— I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you.

— I told you that I would go to the movies with you and that was all.

— I thought you might be friendlier tonight.

— If you mean by friendlier that you thought I would have sex with you you were wrong.

— No, that's not what I meant. I just thought that you might not be so hostile after you got to know me.

— I'm not hostile, it's just that.... *You're not that kind of girl. Yes, you are, you have been that kind of girl before.* Like I said before I don't want to get involved with anybody now. I'm not ready to fall in love or have an affair or something with anyone.

— God, who's talking about an affair?

— Oh, and were you thinking that I'd just be a one night stand, somebody to take to bed and then cast aside.

— No, oh God, can't we start over again and just be friends and forget this ever happened?

— I suppose we can try, just remember that I'm not some little tramp.

— I never thought you were.

— Then I guess we can try to be friends.

— Okay, then. Look, let me walk you home, I know I can't come in but at least let me see you to your door.

— Okay.

Before she went in he kissed her again, gently but firmly, and this time he made no attempt to caress her or fondle her. In her room gave silent thanks that she had not yielded, she had not given in to her desires. Was this what she had been afraid of she wondered, that if she had gone out with Robert, or with anybody that she would want the same ecstasy she had felt with John and that she would give in, surrender herself remorselessly to a succession of lovers. She imagined herself going from man to man, some vamp out of the movies, preying on men. She laughed at herself for dramatizing her feelings like that. She had known that Robert wanted to sleep with her, that was understood, and she had had her own yearnings but she thanked God for giving her the grace to resist them.

She undressed for bed and said her nightly rosary and afterwards she laid in bed and thought of Robert. She thought of the pressure of his lips on hers, of how he had held her when he kissed her, and she drifted off into sleep. She did not dream of John this time. When she awoke she realized that she had been dreaming of Robert, a pleasant, sensual dream, yet she felt ashamed, ashamed that even unconsciously she could be having such thoughts, that her desires were coming out in those erotic images and shapes and forms. After she had broken off with John and had confessed her affair to Teresa

and had confessed to God and His priest she had had occasion to mention the troubling erotic dreams about John in confession and the priest had attempted to reassure her.

— Those dreams, my child, are nothing more than your unconscious mind trying to release the tensions you've built up over your affair with that man. You still desire him but now that you've resolved to have nothing to do with him your unconscious is still trying to release these feelings. You are not responsible for these dreams my child.

She would have preferred it if he had said it was the devil sending her dreams to tempt her. That she could have dealt with and understood, but the modern priests who were studying Freud and Jung and the other Austrian quacks she did not understand. So was she now desirous of Robert, was that what her dreams were telling her? In any case she was resolved not yield to her desires and not to give in to his demands and she felt sure that he would be making more demands on her in the future. Well, she could handle them when the time came.

She went out with Robert again and this time she yielded to his suggestion that he pick her up. He said nothing till afterwards as he was about to take her home.

— What's with all those statues and pictures in your room?

— Why, what's wrong with them?

— Surely you're not some kind of religious fanatic?

— I'm Catholic. I don't know if you consider that as being a religious fanatic.

— Oh come on. You mean you believe in the Pope and worship the Virgin Mary and pray to the saints and all of that stuff.

— I don't know what you mean by believing in the Pope....

— You know, if the Pope says its raining and it isn't that it's spiritually raining only we're too sinful to see it.

— That's not what we believe and you should know that, as for praying to the saints....

— You have to find the right saint for the job isn't that it. It wouldn't do to pray to Saint Francis for help finding something if its Saint Mildred or whoever that you're supposed to pray to.

— No, that's not it. The saints are...

— Are what, your special friends, you really believe that there's something left when you die, that your soul is up there playing harps in the pearly gates.

— No, that's a silly picture of heaven, heaven is union with God.

— How silly you are. Nobody believes in God anymore. All that nonsense, belief in a soul, life after death, God, we've gone past that silly nonsense, nobody believes in that stuff anymore. There's only this world, no other world, and when you're dead you're dead, just food for worms.

— I don't believe that and if you don't share my beliefs that's fine, but if you can't respect my beliefs you don't have to see me.

— Fine, that's okay, I don't think I want to see you anymore anyhow.

She went into her room, lay down on her bed and broke out sobbing. What was wrong with Robert that he couldn't accept her for what she was, couldn't accept her Catholicism, her belief, her piety. Was there something wrong with her that she couldn't relate to the men in her lives, or was it the men she was meeting. When she said her nightly prayers images of Robert storming out of the apartment hallway and of John when he had left her kept repeating themselves. She wanted to talk to somebody, to confide in someone, God was so distant, she prayed and prayed and He never spoke to her, not so that she was sure and that she understood Him. The priests at church seemed so remote and what would they know about her pain, they would nod their heads in sympathetic understanding and make approving or disapproving noises when she told them of her temptations and her yearnings. There was Teresa, she had invited her friendship and yet how could friendship develop between her and the wife of the man she had slept with, wouldn't there always be that barrier between them, the sense that somehow she was a thief who had tried to take what was not hers. She could not imagine being friends with the other woman if it were her husband who had betrayed her. Teresa did, however, seem wise and understanding, she was a woman, a woman who had loved a man, and who might help her understand what she was going through. She did not want to see John, her concern was with his wife, her friendship was with her, not with them. She did not see how she could bear to see Teresa together with John. Well, she would call Teresa from work and ask her to come to her apartment to see her and talk to her.

Teresa came over that Monday.

Thomas E. Hart

— Margery, you sounded so distressed on the phone, what can I do to help you.

— Teresa, you said we could be friends, I still don't see how that's possible after I've hurt you but right now I need a friend.

— Margery, the first day we met I was hurt, I had known that John was having one of his little flings and at first I was hostile but I saw something in you that I liked, I can't quite say what it is but I knew that John was through with you and that here was this scared, vulnerable girl and that she needed not my condemnation but my love and forgiveness. Believe me, Margery, it was as hard for me to offer you my friendship as it is for you to accept it. So now that that's out of the way can we forget about John and be friends.

— Yes.

— Now what did you want to talk to me about.

— I took your advice, I went out with the boy in my Latin class.

— I see, and what happened?

— We went out a couple of times.

— And what happened then.

— Well, he kept pawing me, but I expected that, that's all boys seem to want, cheap, easy sex.

— That's not all they want, but go on.

— Well, at any rate, he came home with me one night and when he saw my room he went wild.

— Why?

— He didn't believe in praying to the saints, didn't like the little statues and pictures, didn't believe in God, said I was silly, old-fashioned.

— And so you stopped seeing him?

— Yes. Teresa, I've always believed, even when I was seeing John I felt guilty because I was sleeping with him and I knew it was a sin and I was afraid of hell but I tried to tell myself that it was only a little sin, only a venial sin and that I believed I was saving him from a loveless marriage to you. I know now that I was wrong and that it was a mortal sin.

— Margery, after you stopped seeing John you also stopped seeing anyone else, isn't that right?

— Yes.

— Don't you think that perhaps you were trying to shut yourself off from the rest of the human race, did you perhaps think that you might live like a nun without being one?

— Something like that, maybe.

— Margery, all of this.... He was right. It is childish. Not believing, that's not childish, but putting your faith and your love in this gimcrackery, that's childish. If something helps you for a while it may or may not be childish, that may be where you are right now, but eventually, Margery, there'll come a time to put away everything and stare at the naked sun and then the darkness will vanish and we'll see clearly. There's really only one reality and these statues and images and scapulars are helps to us but they aren't our reality Margery.

— What do you mean?

— Have you ever looked at the winter sky and seen Orion. In the middle of his belt the star there is not really a star it is a nebula, probably the remnants of a star that exploded eons ago. If our sun explodes, becomes a nova, where are our images and our holy cards, gone, but the one who is behind the nova, He endures. our faith, your faith should be in Him, in that reality, not in this....

— I see.

— But what's really bothering you, is it that he rejected you because of your faith or that he rejected you because you wouldn't sleep with him.

— Teresa.... Terry, do you mind if I call you Terry, Teresa seems so formal. What's bothering me is that I don't know. I thought maybe I had shut myself off from the world like you said and that I would go out with Robert, stop trying to be a little nun and yet still be good and holy and all that. Could it be that he just needed an excuse to break off with me because I wouldn't sleep with him?

— That's certainly possible. He's young and probably romantic, obsessed with the Loyalists in Spain, the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany, but Margery a time is coming when his romanticism and his faith in whatever ideology he holds to will be tested and tested horribly.

— What do you mean, how can you tell?

— Oh, it doesn't take a crystal ball or some fancy interpretation of the book of Daniel to see that inevitably, in a year, two or three at the most, something will occur, some match will be tossed and Europe will be consumed by war for the second time in my generation. And again we will be dragged in whether we want to or not and your young man will have to fight and maybe die whether he wants to or not.

— Don't say that, it can't be true, it won't be true.

— We'll see. But your problem Margery is what to do now. You probably will not see this young man, Robert, again from what you tell me. All I can do is tell you what I told you before, don't shut yourself off from life, don't try to be a little nun, pray yes, but all of this, this is just an aid, this isn't the object of your prayer and your faith. I wish I could say more, Margery, but I'm only a beginner myself and everything is still darkness and mystery to me.

— Terry, do you think I'll ever find somebody who loves me?

— Margery, of course you will, you're young, attractive, who knows when you'll meet somebody. The main thing is to stay open and not to shut yourself up in a closet somewhere where you never see people, never go out, never make friends, or enemies for that matter. Now let me go. I'll see you again shortly. Think about what I said.

— I will.

She got up to leave and Margery got up and threw her arms about her.

— I never believed we could be friends but I'm sure now that we will be.

— We will be Margery, no matter what happens.

Teresa left and Margery looked around. Teresa was right, she had tried to turn her little apartment into a convent, she had tried to be a little nun. The statues and the holy cards they would have to go, into a box with them, she would leave one or two up, her favorites, but as for the rest, away with them. She left up the little statue of the infant of Prague and the statue of the Virgin that she had decorated with flowers, these had been set aside as if in a little shrine.

In the morning the room seemed more cheerful, less like a funeral home or a convent chapel where the light of day was never seen and there was only the dim red sanctuary light. She opened the curtains and looked out onto the street where the cars were moving and children were on their way to school. Yes, here was the real world and she had wanted to cut herself off from it, to cease to be a part of it. Terry had been right, the world was beautiful and had been made to live in. Not some desert waste. Did those people out there, with their hurrying and scurrying, their fighting and bickering, their blather about politics and power, did they know how lucky they were to live in such a beautiful world? She did and she would never betray that beauty and that world again.

III

Teresa had been right. War had come to Europe and she had heard that Robert had been caught in the draft. She saw Teresa frequently now, it seemed strange to her, when she reflected on it, that her best friend was the wife of the man she had first loved, but eventually the bitterness that John had left with her had begun to fade. It was through Teresa that she had met Martin.

Teresa had come to see her one day at work and had brought someone with her.

— Margery, this is Martin Gordon, he used to work her with John, before you came here, and I was telling him about you and he said he wanted to meet you.

— Hello, Margery.

— You told him about me, everything?

— Everything he needs to know.

— Hello, Martin. Why don't you sit down. You used to work her with Terry's husband?

— Yes, that was a few years ago, right after I got out of the Army.

— Oh, how long were you in.

— I was in from '30 till September of '36 then I came to work here for a while.

— I see. I came here in August of '37.

— I'd left by then and gone over to the Department of Justice.

— I see, that explains why we've never met before. You were in the Army for six years?

Thomas E. Hart

— Yes, I was just talking to my draft board and it's not very likely that I'll be taken again even if we do get involved in the war.

— *Is Terry playing matchmaker, is that why she brought him along. Well there may be no harm in seeing what he's like and if anything comes of it. He seems nice enough so far.* So you don't think you'll have to serve, how about volunteering?

— I don't know, right now there seems so little point, perhaps if we were invaded or attacked but right now, I doubt it. Six years seems quite enough right now.

— Maybe you're right.

— Margery, I have to leave now but Martin can stay if he wants.

— Would you like to stay a while Martin?

— Yes, I would Margery.

— Terry, thanks for coming by, I'll talk to you later.

— I'll give you a call later Margery.

— Yes, please do.

When Teresa left Margery resumed her conversation with Martin.

— So you were in the Army for six years but you don't want to go in again?

— No, and I don't think it's entirely cowardice, of course I don't like the idea of getting shot at in Europe for somebody else's quarrel, no what bothers me the most is the life. I had six years of getting up at dawn, taking orders from men I thought were fools, of low pay, bad food, being shifted from post to post.

— I didn't mean to imply that you're a coward.

— Perhaps not and maybe I did join when there were no jobs to be had. It certainly beat starving to death or waiting for a handout from some charity or from the government. It wasn't a series of easy billets, even stateside. It was dirty, hard, demeaning. I had six years of it and it was enough.

— What did Terry tell you about me?

— She told me that you were single, that you weren't involved with anybody and that she thought we might get along.

— Is that all? Did she say anything about...

— About what. All that she said was that she thought I'd like you.

— I'm sorry, I don't mean to be so rude. I seem to start every conversation with strangers badly. Did Terry ever tell you how we met?

— No.

— Perhaps, I will, after we know each other better. How about having some coffee with me.

— Fine.

In the cafeteria they sat together, except for the black cafeteria crew they were alone. She asked him about the war.

— Do you think we'll eventually be fighting over there and that you might have to join up again?

— I don't know, God, I hope not. I suppose that I might join again if we were attacked or if the whole thing really concerned us but somehow it's hard to see what England and Germany are fighting over and how it really concerns me, or you for that matter.

— But don't you think that Hitler has to be stopped before he has designs on us over here.

— I don't know about any of that. I leave strategy to the generals, let them make a mess of things if they want to, I've done my share, six years of dragging my carcass over the southwest from one God-forsaken little post to the other. No thank you.

— I see. I really am getting off on the wrong track with you aren't I. Let's start over. Suppose you tell me about yourself.

— There's not much to tell really but here goes.

Martin, it turned out had been born in a small town in upstate New York, somewhere near Buffalo, he was about six years older than Margery and when he had graduated from high school there had been no jobs available so he had joined the Army to get out and get away from the town where he grew up. He had served six years, mostly in the southwest, before he had an opportunity to transfer to Fort Myer. He had been discharged there and had gone to work in the same department as John and Margery. He had left for a somewhat better job at the Department of Justice and he hoped to eventually get a law degree. Like Margery he was taking night classes at George Washington University.

— I see and what kind of law do you want to practice?

— Well criminal law seems awfully glamorous I know. People always see those kinds of lawyers as Clarence Darrow or somebody defending the rights of the poor little rich kids to kidnap and murder anybody they feel like. But so much of it is just routine, defending prostitutes, burglars, second story men, thieves, its really dull and routine in many respects. I think what I'd like, what I'd really like is anti-trust law. The way the government is growing now in five years, twenty years, we'll have budgets of a hundred billion dollars and a lot of that is going to go to the regulatory agencies. The Supreme Court may have gotten rid of the NRA but there'll be more agencies eventually to keep an eye on business and the corporations that have spent years getting fat on the workers and from gouging the public will need to be cut down to size.

— I see. But don't you think.... No, I don't want to get into an argument about anything right now.

— I really think Teresa was trying a bit of matchmaking by bringing us together so I don't suppose I should disappoint her. What are you doing Saturday night?

— Nothing.

— Fine, why don't I pick you up about seven and we'll go some place.

— Yes, I think I'd like that. *Terry, were you, are you, really trying to set me up with this man. Should I be thankful or should I be mad. Well, we'll see.*

— Why don't you tell me where you live then.

— Oh, yes, okay.

She told him and gave him directions on how to reach her apartment. Then she excused herself and went back to work. This was rather exciting, having a friend fix her up with a man, no one had ever done that for her before. He wasn't all that good-looking perhaps, and she did wonder about his desire to stay out of the war and his choice of law, perhaps it had something to do with his background. He sounded faintly envious when he spoke about the big corporations and wanting to be part of the anti-trust branch of Justice or joining the staff of one of the regulatory agencies. Still, he did appeal to her in some way that she couldn't quite formulate. Perhaps he would be the one to whom she could completely and totally give herself.

When Saturday came she found herself looking forward to seeing Martin with a feeling of expectation that she hadn't felt in years, not since her affair with John. She thought they seemed to be very different and she could not quite formulate what it was that made him seem so interesting to her, but she was determined to see how far it would go.

When he came to see her she rushed to the door.

— Oh, you're here already, come in and sit down while I finish getting ready.

— Thanks, how have you been since I saw you.

— Fine, work has been fairly busy this week.

— Yes, I guess the government can't get along without its pencils for us to push.

— Oh, we do more than that, but you should know that, you worked there for a while.

— Yes, and I was never so happy as when I left. Even the Army was better than that.

— It couldn't have been that bad.

— Well maybe not. Are you ready yet?

— Yes. Was I worth waiting for?

— Yes, you look incredibly beautiful.

— Thank you, sir.

— Well, where would you like to go?

— Anyplace is fine with me.

He took her to the Shoreham for dinner. When they were on the dance floor and he held her she knew that the way she felt in his arms was the way that she had felt when John had held her and she would have done anything for John, now the emotions that she had not felt in years came flooding back and she knew that just as she had been willing to do almost anything for John she would be willing to do anything for this man if he asked her. When he took her home she expected him to make a pass at her, but he kissed her chastely and sweetly and she felt disappointed that he had not been more demanding.

The next time that he saw her he made a confession to her.

— I don't know if Teresa told you this but I've been married before.

Thomas E. Hart

- What. No, she didn't tell me that.
- I wasn't sure if it would make a difference and when she told me about you I wanted to see you so much that I decided to wait and tell you later if things worked out.
- And have they?
- I'm not sure.
- Well why don't you tell me about it from the beginning.
- I told you I joined the army right after I left school.
- Yes.
- Well, there was this girl in my hometown, you know the type, the local slut, or at least the girl that everybody thinks is a slut. She got pregnant and she claimed I was the father. I know this sounds like an old cliché, some B movie melodrama, but such things do happen, at any rate I married her and I wound up dragging her and the kid from post to post. Eventually I caught her sleeping with one of my friends and I divorced her. She married my friend and that's the last I've see of her or the kid since.
- I see.
- Does that change anything, how you feel about me. Teresa told me that you were a very pious, devout Catholic and I know how your church feels about divorce.
- I don't know if it changes how I feel about you, it's too early to tell about feelings right now. As for being pious and devout I don't think you know how Terry and I met do you.
- No.
- She didn't tell you that I once had an affair with her husband.
- Good Lord, no!
- Yes, I went to see her, confront her and tell her that I wanted John and that I could make him happy. She told me what I think I already knew, that John didn't really love me, that he was more in love with the idea of love than he was with me and that eventually he would move on to some other conquest. She didn't hold it against me because I was young and foolish and she put most of the blame on John and she forgave me. It was because of her forgiveness that we were able to become friends.
- And where do the piety and devotion come in.
- I was raised Catholic but you already knew that.
- Yes.
- After I broke up with John I retreated into myself, I practically turned my room into a shrine, a convent chapel, there were statues and pictures of saints everywhere. It was really a form of hysteria I suppose.
- And then what happened.
- Terry was visiting the office and she saw me and she talked to me, offered again to be my friend and urged me to cease retreating from life. I took her advice, got hurt in my first attempt and she helped me get through that crisis in my life. That's how we became friends and why I may seem pious and devout.
- What do you mean by seem?
- I'm really not some plaster saint. I think that's what I wanted to be at first, after I broke up with John, but I yearn for men, or rather a man, I have faults, I'm aware of them, anger, envy, pride, all of the seven deadly. God knows I need His help to get through and to keep from falling into sin again. Do you have any idea how easy it would be for me to go to bed with you right now if you asked me.
- No, how easy.
- Very easy, but I trust you not to ask me, I don't know why.
- And do you think it would be a sin if we did.
- Yes.
- But how about love, or suppose I enlisted again and were being shipped overseas.
- You mean a gift of myself as a going away present.
- Something like that I suppose.
- No, I think that would just be another excuse for doing something I know to be wrong.
- You don't think love would justify it?
- No, I know how people, how I, have used that as an excuse for their sins.
- Well how about marriage?
- Are you asking me, is this a proposal.
-
-

— No, Not yet at any rate. I mean supposing we were able to get married how would you feel about it then.

— Then it wouldn't be a sin now would it.

— So could we get married.

— I don't know, could you live with me, put up with my whims, my piety as you see it.

— I suppose, you do know that I'm not a practicing Catholic.

— Yes, I knew that.

— And the divorce.

— Yes, I forgot about that for a moment, that will be a problem.

— I suppose you would insist on a church wedding.

— Definitely. But I thought you weren't proposing.

— Oh, this is merely a hypothetical, you know how they love hypotheticals in law school.

— I see, so when can I expect the real question.

— That's rather forward of you, don't you think?

— Yes, I suppose it is, and do you dislike forward girls?

— Usually I do, but you I find charming.

— I'm so glad.

— So will you keep on seeing me?

— Yes, of course.

He kissed her firmly, and held her close to him. She felt the desire for him come over her but she steeled herself to resist. She could not, would not yield to him. She was not sure if he was demanding her surrender or if he would be content with holding her.

He finally left and she straightened her hair and looked about the room. She walked around the room, straightening things, putting the cushions back, tidying up. She must talk to somebody, to Terry, to a priest, was there anyway to get around the divorce issue so that she could marry Martin if he asked her.

She went over the next day and spoke to one of the priests about the possibility of marrying Martin.

— You say that he's been married and divorced?

— Yes, father.

— And is he's not Catholic?

— Yes, father, but he's no longer a practicing Catholic

— Do you know if he was married by a priest or a minister or was he married by a justice of the peace?

— No, father, would it make a difference?

— Yes, it would make a great deal of difference. You see the church considers marriage to be a sacrament and if you could show that there was a defect in the form of your young man's first marriage then it would be possible to get an annulment, a ruling that a valid sacramental marriage had never taken place, and you and your young man could get married in the Church.

— Would we be able to have a big wedding in the Church, with a Mass and everything?

— Oh yes, of course. Now if the young man were a non-Catholic and had never been married I'm afraid the Church, at least in this dispensation would not be so tolerant, maybe someday it will be, you would have to be content with a small wedding in the chapel or in the priory.

— I see, and if I married him in a civil ceremony or if a minister performed the ceremony?

— Then the Church would not recognize your marriage as being sacramentally valid and you would be living in sin with the man and be barred from the sacraments.

— I would be excommunicated then?

— In effect, yes, but the modern church does not go through the formal ritual of bell, book, and candle any more. The excommunication would be more of your own choosing than a formal casting out by the Church as an institution. Of course, since the young man is Catholic, even though a non-practicing one that situation does not apply.

— I see, then I had better find out if he was married by a judge or by a minister.

— There is also one other possibility>

— And that is?

— If his wife were to die in the meantime that would, of course, dissolve any existing bond.

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- I see. That would simplify everything.
- My daughter I hope you will pray for me.
- Yes, father, I will.

So, her decision hinged on the nature of Martin's union with his ex-wife. Would the Church recognize it as being sacramentally valid or was it purely a civil ceremony. And if it was a religious ceremony and she could not marry Martin in the Church what would she do then, would she marry him anyhow and defy the Church or would she give up Martin. How could she decide? He had not even asked her, not formally at any rate, there had been the banter of the other night but how serious was it, was it to be the prelude to a serious proposal, or only a species of flirtation. God knew she had done her share of flirting with him, but was he serious or not.

When she saw him again he raised the question himself.

- The other night....
- Yes, what about it?
- I don't know if you thought I was serious or not?
- I'm not sure what I thought.
- Well I know what I think and I think that I'm falling in love with you.
- Are you really?
- Yes, now stop being a little coquette and tell me what you feel.
- I'm not sure. I like you, I find you attractive, though God knows you're not handsome, not like Clark Gable or somebody I might see on the screen.
- If I asked you to marry me what would you say.
- That would depend.
- On what.
- Your first marriage. Your ex-wife is still alive?
- Yes.
- Were you married by a priest or by a judge?
- By a justice of the peace, it was the fastest and easiest way to do it. Why are you interrogating me like this?
- Just one more question. Would you be willing to marry me in the Church.
- Yes, damn you, if you'll just answer my question.
- Yes, I'll marry you but it will have to be in the Church as long as we can get approval.
- Fine, then do whatever you have to do and we'll get married as soon as possible.

When he left she called Teresa.

- Terry, you'll never believe it, Martin just asked me to marry him.
 - Margery, that's wonderful, but are you sure that you really love him?
 - Yes, I am. *Isn't that why you introduced us, so we would fall in love.*
 - Have you set a date?
 - No, but I have to talk to my parish priest and work out the details. You knew Martin was divorced didn't you?
 - Yes, I did but I wasn't sure you would ever go this far. It was a civil ceremony so I don't think there'd be any problem in getting permission to get married.
 - Yes, I know, the priest will have to take that up with the chancery office and everything, but you know even if I couldn't marry him in the Church I might do it before a justice of the peace and to hell with them and their stupid regulations.
 - Would you?
 - Yes, I think I might.
 - I'm not sure that would be such a good idea Margery.
 - Why not?
 - I think you might find it very difficult to live with yourself. You'd feel guilty, that you were living a life of sin.
 - Maybe you're right. At any rate I don't think it will come to that.
 - I hope so, for your sake Margery.
 - Oh, Terry, it's so wonderful, I'm sure I'm going to be happy.
 - You deserve some happiness; I just hope it lasts.
-
-

— It will. It will.

IV

Margery was pregnant. They had been able to get the annulment through the chancery and were married in the church that Margery attended during the week. St Dominic's was one of Margery's favorite places. The stone edifice seemed to be so solid and permanent and when the bells tolled the Angelus at noon she could hear a message in them. It was as if the bells were speaking to her and urging her to be faithful and true. She loved the blue light filtering through the stained glass, it was in the play of the blue and red light falling on the walls of the church that she felt a sense of awe and mystery coming over her. She could trace the progression of the seasons from the way the light shone and the sense of order and progression and mystery overwhelmed her at times. A mystery that she felt to be linked to her marriage, that such an event could give her such joy, a sense of awe that soon she would be sharing her life with this man and that through him she would bring new life into the world. The priest was an old Dominican and when Martin kissed her at the end of the ceremony she blushed at the thought that she would finally give herself to this man who had come into her life through Terry's intercession.

Now she was carrying his child and she thought that in few days the pain, the awful feeling of sickness that she had experienced at first would soon be over. Then she would say, like the woman in the parable, I have brought a man-child into the world.

She was lying in bed with Martin. Suddenly she gave a moan.

— What's wrong?

— I'm not sure, there it happened again, I think the baby's coming.

— Now?

— Yes, damn you, don't just lie there, call the doctor and tell him that I'm starting to have contractions.

— Shouldn't you be timing them, aren't you supposed to wait till they're five minutes apart or something?

— Listen, I'm starting now, will you call him so he can get ready for me?

— Okay, I'll call him but I still think it's too early.

— The bed's wet. Tell him the bag broke already.

— I'm on the phone with him now. She says the bag broke. I don't know, apparently there's water all over the bed now.

— He says get ready and he'll meet us at the hospital.

They packed, swiftly, efficiently. Martin took a book to read, *The Brothers Karamazov*. They rushed through the Saturday traffic and arrived at the small, red brick building that housed the hospital. Martin answered the questions of the receptionist while Margery was prepared for delivery. Then it was time to wait. He tried to read and could not get beyond the first page. He glanced at the hospital's magazines, old copies of *Life*, *Collier's*, *Look*, the war was going badly, they might become involved anyhow and then he would have to decide whether to enlist and leave Margery and the new child or to try and stay and serve in the bureaucracy. Even if war came the business of government would still be going on, people would still be prosecuted by the Justice Department, this time the offenses would be for attempting to defraud the government on contracts rather than running moonshine or bank robbery, but still the wheels of the federal justice system would need him and hundreds like him to process the papers, to do the investigations, to help carry out the prosecutions, to carry out all the minute details that need to be carried out for the government to continue on its way.

He put down the magazines and paced over to the nurse's station. No, they had no idea what was happening, the doctor would tell him if anything was happening. Yes, they were sure everything would be all right. Yes, they hadn't lost a father yet. He laughed appreciatively at the old joke. He drank coffee in the cafeteria and wandered back to the waiting room. No, nothing yet. More coffee. He tried to smoke and could not. Finally the doctor came out.

— Mr. Gordon, I'm afraid I have some very bad news for you.

— What is it, is Margery okay, is it the baby?

— I'm afraid it's the child, it was a boy.

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- It was a boy, why was, what happened?
- In the passage through the birth canal the cord wrapped around the baby's neck and it was strangled before it could even get started.
- And Margery, how is she?
- Upset, of course, I've given her a sedative for now and you'll be able to see her as soon as it wears off. Right now she appears to be resting comfortably.
- I see, and when will that be?
- Probably in another hour or two. Why don't you go out and have another cup of coffee and come back then. In the meantime there's nothing you can do for her.
- Yes, you're probably right.
- When he came back he was allowed to see her right away.
- Margery, honey, how are you?
- Miserable, rotten, what do you expect. After nine months God took my baby away from me. No, that's not right. He couldn't do that, not and be the good, loving God I've been taught He was. Either He's not really there or he hates me for some reason. That must be it. He hates me, He's out to get me because of my sins, my affair. No matter how good I am, how pure I try to be there'll always that moment, that sin weighing on me, dragging me down.
- Margery, calm down, you're hysterical.
- Damn right I'm hysterical. Wouldn't you be too if you had carried a new life for nine months and then seen it snuffed out in a moment, he didn't even get to take his first breath. He was so small, so tiny, defenseless, and what could he do against that malevolent God sitting up there just waiting to punish me.
- Listen why don't I call Terry. Talking to her always cheers you up.
- Maybe. It won't do any good though. You know I think I was wrong.
- Good, that's the Margery I love.
- God, doesn't hate me, he can't and do you know why?
- No, why is that?
- Because He's not there, He doesn't exist.
- Margery, you don't mean that. Let me call Terry and have her talk to you.
- Oh, all right. Call her but it won't do any good.
- When Terry arrived, she was breathless, overcome with excitement.
- Martin, is she okay, has she calmed down at all?
- No, she's still hysterical.
- Let me talk to her.
- Teresa went into Margery's room. She was lying on her side, sobbing into her pillow.
- Are you okay, Margery, honey?
- Oh, Terry, no I'm not. The baby died.
- I know, Martin told me.
- You know I don't think I believe in God anymore?
- Why is that?
- I've made such an effort to be good, devout, pious and He took my child from me before he was even born, how can I believe in a God that can be so cruel and vicious?
- Honey, I know your upset and I wish I had some answers but I don't.
- You don't. I've always thought you had all the answers.
- Margery, honey, there are times when I don't even think I have the right questions.
- Oh God, do you have any idea how I feel.
- I think so. You know I used to think I knew why people suffered and to some extent I think the reason is that people bring it on themselves.
- Do you think it was my fault the baby got strangled in his cord?
- No, of course not, don't be silly. But take Martin and his cigarette habit, do you really think it can be healthy for him to put that stuff into his lungs every day. It's bound to have some effect, if not now then ten or twenty or more years down the road and will it be fair for him to question God and ask how He could do this to him?
- No, probably not.
-
-

— But what good will it do him then or you if I just say that it was his own fault?

— None.

— What I don't understand and what no one really understands is the suffering of the young and innocent. Why did your baby die, why does some child come down with cancer and die before their life is barely begun. I don't know. I can't tell you to love God through the pain and suffering, to praise him anyhow, that would be dishonest, it would be so unfair to you. I can't tell you how suffering makes joy so much more complete. Do you know what I think is the most egotistical statement ever made?

— No, what?

— Milton's that he would justify the way of God towards man, and, I guess, woman. There is no justification.

— No justification?

— No, none. What there is is mystery and darkness. We can live with that darkness. In a way I live with that darkness, I've lived with it for years, John has been a part of that darkness in a way. Our faith, Margery, honey, is a dark faith. We see obscurely now, that is what faith means, belief in things unseen and not understood, but the hope is that we will understand.

— I'm not sure I can live like that, I'm not sure I can believe anymore.

— Margery, even if you think you've lost your faith I don't think you have. I think you'll be tested even more severely but that in the end you'll rediscover what it means to believe.

— I doubt it.

— Margery, even if you think you've lost your faith or that God doesn't love you I love you.

— Do you really?

— Yes. I know that right now you must feel that no one cares about you, that God has tricked you or let you down somehow and that you can't feel that He or anyone loves you. Right now you can't believe in the divine love but you can believe in the human love that Martin and I both feel for you, each in our own way. Be satisfied with that love for now and maybe later you'll understand what I'm talking about.

— Maybe.

— I have to leave now Margery but you'll be thoughts and in my prayers and I know that eventually you'll rediscover what you think you've lost today.

— Margery, Teresa.

— Yes, Martin.

— The news just came over the radio at the nurse's station. The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor. The reporter didn't give any idea of the extent of the casualties, but they attacked and destroyed some battleships and cruisers while they were anchored in the harbor.

— Margery, the time of testing has begun. We'll all be sorely tried and have our faith tested before this is over.

— Oh God, no, I hope not.

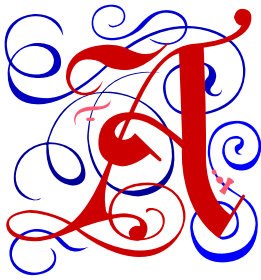
When Teresa and Martin left Margery cried into her pillow. Her child was dead, war was certain, as certain as the fact of death and the icy inevitability of decay and rot, and what would she have to look forward to, an eternity of nothingness. She wished she could believe Terry but somehow, even though she believed that Terry loved her and that Martin loved her that was not enough. It was not enough but she would have to be content with that because that was all there really was, anything else was just gas, random noises.

When she got home from the hospital she looked at her bedroom, at the statues of the Virgin and the Infant of Prague, she picked them up and started to hurl them against the wall. These devotions were so meaningless, rosaries, novenas, prayers, what good did they do, her child dead, her husband liable to go off and enlist at any moment to fight, to die, to become food for worms, what did love, human or divine matter now against the stupidity and cruelty that had brought her here. She stopped, no she would put away these useless empty idols and images and devotions, she would have no more of them, there was no sense in raging against them. Away with them, into a box and forget them and they would be gone forever.

The sun was in Cancer, signifying fidelity; Venus was in Gemini signifying dividedness and inconstant loyalties; Uranus was conjunct Venus signifying revolution and upheaval. In a little town in New Mexico scientists were preparing for an event which would bring them to a knowledge of sin. In Washington debates were carried on about the necessity for invading the home islands of Japan. In a hospital near Pennsylvania Avenue, near George Washington University, Margery lay in labor, not knowing and not caring about the physicists who would know sin or the debates about operation Olympic.

Martin had not been drafted. He had led the peaceful life of a bureaucrat, away from the front, the danger, and the risk. Margery had gone to work for the Department of the Navy. The old piety had gone from Margery, she had stopped going to church, she could no longer look at the images cut in stained glass, could not look at the picture over the altar of Jesus revealing his Sacred Heart and feel the same way as she had before. She was now sure that all of her life up until the time she had carried her first baby had been guided by an illusion. Perhaps Robert had been right, but she could never tell him that, she had heard that he had died in North Africa. So many people that she knew had been caught up in the war and had come back injured or had been killed. John was gone too. Teresa had been upset when she had heard the news but had bounced back eventually. Margery envied her that ability, to absorb tragedy and grief and not to give in to doubt. She had her life with Martin and soon she would have this child and they would absorb her life.

Now, any moment now and the baby would be born. Her life would be complete. She would be a mother, the baby would be healthy, there would be no accidents this time. Yes, there was the head. One more push and it would be out. There. The doctor had it. What was it? A girl. Her name will be Julia.

Hamartia


Ann was beautiful. In her voice Julia could hear the the soft southern winds, when she spoke she could see the magnolias and the dogwood in full flower. She imagined a slow, graceful, peaceful life, people sitting out on the veranda sipping mint juleps, Maggie the cat complaining about the no-neck monsters as she paced about the bedroom in her slip. She imagined that life there must be totally different from life in Washington, a city she had heard described as combining Northern charm and Southern efficiency.

Ann was tall. Her waist was slender, waspish. Her blonde hair cascaded onto her shoulders. Julia thought of the southern sun when she looked at Ann's hair, bodies tanned all year long from the rays of the sun, hair bleached blonde from constant exposure. Her breasts were full, firm, ripe. She reminded Julia of one of the dancing Indian goddesses at the Freer.

The radio was playing and Ann was dancing, swaying gently to its beat. This was the Ann that Julia loved, the tall, sensuous, sunny blonde who reminded her of the South, the South of Faulkner and of Williams. She pictured men struggling against the raging flood of the Mississippi; quadrooms in the French quarter, refined, elegant, discreet ladies; Temple Drake on the corncob bed. Ann suggested raging passions and lust, dark deeds and secret motives.

She wanted to hold her and yet she was half ashamed of her own desires. She wondered if her desire for Ann was just some schoolgirl crush because they were confined here together while the school year lasted, or was it some deeper desire within her. Maybe when the summer came and she was at home with others she would feel for some boy what she now felt for Ann.

Her father, Martin, had died last year. Lung cancer the doctor's had said, the result of too many years of abuse. She had watched him as the disease progressed, each breath had been a triumph, a small victory that meant that the inevitable defeat was postponed a moment longer. Finally there had been no more triumphs and the breath had stopped. He had slipped out of life slowly and then it was over. He had gone from being the strong, muscular man that she remembered standing over her and giving her alcohol baths when she was sick and running a high fever, from the violent, angry man capable of punishing her and spanking her hard, to a sick wasted man whose every word and every breath was a labor, now he was nothing. He simply was not anymore.

Margery had gone back to school after the war was over and had gotten her doctorate in Classics, one of the few women of that era to obtain a doctorate. She now taught Greek drama and Latin at George Washington University.

When Martin had died Margery had gone down into the basement and had gone to the trunk where she stored mementoes of her life, the things that she could not bear to throw away. Julia had followed her down and seen her open the trunk, the first time she had ever seen her do so. She took out some little statues, looked at them sadly and put them back.

- Oh, hi honey, what are you doing?
- I was curious Mom, what do you keep in that trunk?
- Just some curios from the past.
- What kind of curios?
- Religious statues and medals.
- Mom, I never knew you to be religious.
- I'm not now, all of that was a long time ago.
- What happened that you stopped being religious?
- That was a long time ago, honey.
- Well tell me anyway, please.
- Very well then. You know that I married your father back in '41.
- Yes, of course, I knew that.

— I was very religious then, I guess in your typical Catholic way, praying to the saints, novenas, offering up my dental visits for the poor souls in purgatory, all that sort of thing. I was pregnant and the baby was due when the attack on Pearl Harbor happened. The baby was stillborn, the umbilical cord

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became wrapped around its neck and the poor thing died before it was even born. That was when I lost my faith I guess. I stopped believing that God really loved me and cared for me.

— And what do you feel now Mom.

— Honey, it's just so hard to know. I loved your father more than I loved anybody in my life and now he's gone, taken from me by a disease that has no cure, no treatment that works and I still find it hard to believe in that God that I believed in twenty years ago. Terry still believes and she tells me, just like she told me then that we have to keep believing no matter how little we know or understand. That's something I just can't do anymore.

— I see, so what do you believe in now, Mom?

— Now, I believe its time for me to stop crying and to get on with my life and it's time for you to stop asking all these questions about the past.

What did Julia believe in? She believed she loved Ann with all the passion and desire of which she was capable. She did not believe, when she saw the television news, that everybody in the South hated and feared Negroes and that they were all either overtly or covertly racists. She knew that Ann did not feel that way about the Negroes in her hometown and she knew that Ann was warm and loving.

Ann stopped dancing.

— God, I love the way you dance, I wish I could move like that.

— Do you really?

— Yes, would you teach me?

— Sure, come here.

There was a sweet, sensual thrill in Ann's touch when she took Julia and tried to guide her to the beat of the music.

— Do you know that I love you?

— Do you really?

— Would you mind if I kissed you?

There was no answer. Julia kissed her full on the mouth. Ann did not pull away, she was warm, yielding, responsive. Julia lingered and the kiss stopped as she slowly pulled away.

— Julia, I love you too.

II

When the summer came Ann invited her to come home with her and to spend some time with her and her family. Julia accepted gladly.

— Ann, have you told your parents about us, do they have any idea how we feel about each other?

— You mean do they know that we're lovers, no. I doubt if I could ever tell my parents anything like that. They think I'm a good little girl. They've got no idea that their little southern belle is crazy in love.

— Are you really?

— Crazy in love or just crazy?

— In love.

— Yes, with you.

— You don't know how good it makes me feel to hear you say that.

— I think I do know. Listen I want to talk to you about our trip.

— Yes, what about it?

— I know, from what you've told me, that you tend to romanticize things a bit.

— I do not.

— Yes, you do. Now listen to me and don't interrupt please. I know the news is always full of reports about sit-ins and demonstrations in the South and I think you tend to see me as being somewhat exotic. Maybe you think everyone down South lives either on a plantation or in some ignorant, poverty stricken small town out of Faulkner and that our big event is the Saturday night lynching. There are plantations, a lot of them in ruins, some are being restored by historic preservation societies and that sort of thing; there are small towns; there aren't lynchings but yes there is prejudice and we should be allowed to deal with it on our own, without a bunch of sanctimonious, hypocrites interfering. What I

want to say is mostly this: don't be disappointed if everything turns out to be pretty much the same as here or Washington. And remember that I love you.

— Ann, I won't be disappointed, no matter what happens, and I do know that you love me.

— Good. Now give me a kiss. There, now lets finish packing.

Ann's home was a disappointment. Instead of a small rural town her parents lived just outside of Tampa in a small suburban area. The only thing that Julia could see or hear that differentiated it from Arlington or Mclean were the accents, soft, southern drawls, but even here there were, among the older people, those who had come here to retire, a mixture of the sounds of other regions, the Midwest, the frozen North. Ann's nearest neighbors were a couple who had moved down from Boston.

— You're disappointed, aren't you Julia?

— No, why should I be?

— I told you that it was pretty much like Washington didn't I?

— Yes, you did.

— I told you that you tend to romanticize things too much. The time of knights and cavaliers, the *Gone With the Wind* type of society, that never really existed. You know, I wouldn't be surprized if pretty soon most of the country became one long city.

— Why is that?

— Just look at map of the Eastern seaboard. Already a third or more of the population lives here along a line that stretches from Boston down to Richmond. That means that the East will have, as it always had, greater political weight, it will get more money from the government, as it always has, and all of the regional differences will tend to disappear or be absorbed.

— Do you really think so?

— Oh, I suppose that there'll be survivals. Regional cooking, regional architecture, but we all listen to the same news now, either Cronkite or Huntley-Brinkley, we all watch the same television programs. Pretty soon we'll all think the same and believe the same. That'll be a sorry day when it comes. Enough of that, what would you like to do tonight?

— What would I like to do? Well....

— Aside from that. My mother said we could have some friends over and have a party, would you like that?

— Yes, that would be fun.

— I suppose I'll have to invite some boys over too, do you mind?

— As long as I don't have to share you with anyone.

— You might.

— Well, as long as it's not for too long.

— It won't be. I'll come back to you.

Ann invited the next door neighbor's son, Philip, and his friend Tommy to the party. Philip was tall, with jet black hair, skinny; Tommy was shorter, broad shouldered, blonde. Julia thought they were both good looking and when she saw Ann standing next to Philip she wondered if Ann could be interested in him. She danced with Tommy, he was a good dancer, but she kept looking for Ann. When the music stopped Tommy held her a second, she looked at him and knew that he wanted her but she didn't want him. She wanted Ann. Where was she? She left and walked through the house. There was no sight of Ann, there was no sound. She went out to the back yard and saw Ann with Philip. He was holding her close and his head was bent over hers. He was kissing her and she was responding, she enjoyed his attentions. Julia rushed back to the house. There was Tommy, he was dancing with another of Ann's friends. When he stopped dancing she went over to him and grabbed his arm.

— I want you to kiss me.

She sighed and thought of Ann as he held her and pressed her closer to him. She could have killed Ann for betraying her with Philip. If Ann could betray her with Philip perhaps Tommy could be her means of getting even with Ann.

— Tommy, I want you to make love to me.

— Are you sure?

— Yes, I want you now. Come here with me.

She led him into the bedroom. He was not tender, not like Ann; he was rough, brutal almost in his eagerness and he was inexperienced. Afterwards, as they dressed she silently assessed the experience.

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Could she tell Ann what she had done? No, she was ashamed but where was the revenge, only in the silent knowledge that she had betrayed her in turn.

— Tommy, you're nice, inexperienced perhaps, was this your first time?

— Yes.

— It was my first time too, with a man, but Tommy it didn't mean anything.

— Why not?

— I'm in love with Ann.

— Then why, for God's sake, did you ask me to make love to you.

— I saw her with Philip and I guess I wanted some kind of revenge on her for being unfaithful to me.

— Then you used me.

— And don't you think you used me. Didn't you just want a few minutes of pleasure from my body. Did you think you were so attractive that I'd just jump into bed with you or that I was so drunk you could do anything you wanted with me?

— I don't know. I just know that you're beautiful and when you asked me to make love to you I was thrilled.

— Well, it will never happen again, so remember it. I just hope Ann can forgive me.

She left Tommy standing there as she went out to find Ann. Ann and Philip had returned to the house and were in the living room. Julia went up to Ann, who was sitting next to Philip on the sofa and touched her on the arm, the arm she had draped around Philip. Ann put down her drink and looked up at her, it was almost as if Ann thought she had come from another planet to disturb her.

— What is it Julia?

— I have to talk to you. Come with me.

Ann followed her into the bedroom, it still smelled of sweat, the covers had been imperfectly made. Julia wondered if Ann noticed, she wasn't sure she cared anymore, she wasn't sure if Ann would even remember in the morning, but she had to tell her, to let her know that she had been hurt and that she had wanted revenge, that she had made love to Tommy because it was a way of getting back at Ann for leaving her. She had to make her understand that she wanted her and wanted no one else to have her.

— I saw you with Philip.

— Yes, so?

— I saw him kissing you.

— Honey, he's not the first boy I've ever kissed.

— But you seemed to be enjoying it.

— I did, he kisses very well.

— But I thought you loved me.

— I do but Philip is something else. His family moved down here about five years ago and we've been friends for at least that long. He went through part of grade school with me. Of course he kissed me, but it was just a friendly kiss, the way cousins kiss.

— You didn't look like kissing cousins to me.

— Well that's all it was.

— I can't stop now. I have to tell you that when I saw you kissing him....

— He was kissing me.

— That doesn't matter, when I saw the two of you I wanted to kill you but I came back here and I grabbed Tommy and I let him make love to me.

— I see.

— Is that all you can say, I see, is that all you have to say for yourself, I see.

— What do you want me to say. Julia, I love you and I probably always will but what chance do we have. I'll probably marry Philip, or someone enough like him that it won't matter and you'll either get married yourself or maybe you'll live the single life. Maybe you have the strength to live by yourself; maybe you'll fall in love with somebody else, a man, a woman. Will it really make any difference, we'll always remember the time we had together when we were young.

— God, next you'll tell me that we'll always have Paris.

— What? Oh, very funny Julia. Maybe I do sound like a late night movie but it's still true. I love you and a part of me will always love you but just how long do you think our relationship can last?

— As long as we want it too.

— No. There's too much against us. Here we can be lovers and friends, and the same goes for at school but when we graduate and go on to college and work in the outside world everyone will be against us.

— So is that it friends and lovers here and at school and then we'll never see each other again?

— Yes friends and lovers here and at school; no we'll still be able to see each other later, if we run into each other, if we want to see each other. Can you accept that?

— I guess I have to.

— Fine then lets enjoy the sun and the boys and the summer while we can.

When the party ended and Julia laid next to Ann she saw the scene in the back yard again and again she felt that rage that she had not known she could experience. She thought of Ann dead, her body mutilated. Was she just some plaything that Ann could discard her at will and live as if they had never been more than friends, was this what she had meant when she had declared her love for her. She listened to Ann breathe, yes she loved her, but she could not share her with anyone, she could not let anyone else have her. If it had to be though, if they had to part, if Ann did choose a man and marriage, could she give her up? She supposed she would have to learn to live with it. She would rather see her dead and be dead herself but she supposed she could live with it. She would have to learn she supposed.

In the morning Ann seemed cheerful and content. She kissed Julia good morning.

— Hi, did you sleep well.

— No, not really.

— Oh, why not.

— I kept thinking about you and Philip.

— Oh, Julia, honey I thought I'd already explained about that.

— Yes, you had but I'm still upset about it.

— Don't be. Listen Philip and Tommy want to go out fishing out on the Gulf, would you like to come along. We'll take along some beer, sit in the sun while they fish and have a great time. Would you like to do that?

— I don't know the last time I was out in a boat I got violently ill.

— Oh, come on. The water's pretty calm, there's no wind to speak of and it'll be just you, me and the boys and the sun and the beer.

— I suppose I might as well, if it will make you happy.

— It will, you'll love it, the sea air makes everything taste better too.

— Everything?

— Well, I don't know about that but now you sound more like the Julia I know and love.

— Do I? I'm glad.

— Lets get ready then. The boys will be here shortly. We'll need sandwiches, sun tanning lotion, beer, plates, all that stuff.

They worked hurriedly packing lunch and were ready when Philip and Tommy came by to pick them up. They opened up some cans in the car and drank as they drove to the dock. The water was calm as Ann had said it would be, the waves were small, more like wavelets than waves. When they were out of sight of land Philip stopped the engines and asked the girls to help bait the lines. He opened a can full of water and a grey mass of bad smelling bait. He gave Julia and Ann the can and two rods and helped them to bait the lines. Julia thought she would be sick and asked Philip,

— God, what is this stuff?

— Cuttlefish.

— You mean like octopus?

— Exactly. You'd find it right tasty if you were a fish.

— Well I'm not a fish. And what do I do if I catch something?

— If you get a bite you reel it in, Tommy or Ann or I can help you, and then you stow it in the ice chest in the galley till we get home and then you clean it at home. If it feels like your line is going to break you may have snagged some bottom so yell for Tommy or me to come and help you.

Julia sat there and several times she thought she had a bite and tried to reel it in but each time there was no fish, crabs or some bottom dwelling creature had grabbed the line and filched the bait. One time she felt a tremendous tug and she thought the rod would break, Tommy came over and reaching

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around her grasped her hands and held the rod. She was straining and suddenly he motioned to her to relax, she relaxed her grip and he let out more line.

— You don't have a fish, you've grabbed bottom and the way you're struggling the rod will break.

— Oh. I don't feel well anyhow, I think the sun is getting to me, could I lay down somewhere.

— Sure, go below, maybe you'll feel better after you rest awhile. I'll take care of this.

The boat was rocking gently, and Julia tried to lay down but she felt like she was drifting with the boat, she was dizzy from the heat and the beer and the bad odors. Suddenly she knew that she was going to be sick, she went into the head and was violently sick. She went above to talk to Ann and Philip. They were talking and laughing together, now she was too sick to be upset, maybe later she would talk to her about it but now she just wanted to go home. The boat rolled slightly and she felt sick again. She went to the rail and threw up into the ocean. Tommy came over and put his arm around her.

— Are you okay?

— No, do I look okay, I'm sick as a dog and I want to go home.

— Try to hold on a little while longer, I'll tell Philip and he'll take us back.

— Thanks.

The trip back was not much better. Philip and Ann teased her about being a landlubber and insisted that it was all in her mind, that the sea-sickness was all psychological. She wondered if that was supposed to make her feel better. So she had a sick mind that couldn't stand even slight swells, but damn it she was faithful to Ann and she was betraying her again with Philip. That thought did not make her feel any better either.

When they got back home Ann went with her to their room and tried to apologize for the way the day had gone.

— Julia, I'm sorry you got so sick. I had no idea that you were susceptible to sea-sickness.

— I guess I had too much to drink on the way over, or maybe it was just worry over what we did last night.

— Last night?

— You do remember what I told you, what we talked about, or were you too drunk to know what you were doing?

— No, I remember, you were mad, jealous that I had spent time with Philip and you told me that you asked Tommy to make love to you.

— Yes.

— And what does that have to do with today.

— Ann, can't you see that I love you and that it upsets me to see you with someone else?

— And don't you think it upsets me that you let Tommy make love to you?

— You didn't seem upset last night.

— I was, more than you realize.

— I told him about us, told him that I was in love with you and that it was totally meaningless.

— No, it wasn't.

— Yes, it was.

— Julia, it didn't mean that you loved him or even liked him but it had a meaning. For you it meant a way of getting even with me, for him it meant a moment of pleasure. But did you really tell him that you were in love with me?

— Yes.

— Well, he's probably talked it over with Philip by now and they'll tell all their friends, but Julia, you've really only hurt yourself, it's your reputation that will suffer more than mine.

— Why?

— Paul's known me for years, he knows I'm a bitch, he's seen me on good days and bad ones. We've been friends for so long that I doubt if he would do or say anything to hurt me, but you, he barely knows you and he or Tommy, particularly Tommy since you've already slept with him are going to find you more attractive, more challenging.

— But they know, or at least Tommy does, that I'm in love with you.

— And what could be more appealing to a young male than to turn a beautiful young lesbian back to the straight and narrow?

— Do you really think so?

— Julia, honey, you threw down the gauntlet and challenged him when you told him that you were in love with me. Now that I think about it though I doubt if Philip and Tommy will gossip about what happened last night.

— Why not?

— Oh, they'll talk about it between themselves and they would both like to crawl into bed with us but the very thing that challenges them is also a source of humiliation to them, until they succeed in wearing us down.

— You talk like it was a war.

— Honey, whoever said all's fair in love and war had it wrong because they're the same thing. At any rate love is war and like war it's hell.

— Oh God, I hope not.

— It almost always is. Either it's the lovers against the world or it's the lover's against each other, sometime's its the lovers against each other and against the world.

— It won't be that way with us, I know it won't.

— We'll see, maybe by the end of the summer we'll know.

The summer went by slowly, one long golden day after another. Philip and Tommy came by frequently and took the girls out to the beaches to swim. They went out on Paul's boat again, despite Julia's protestations that she would be sick again, this time, however, the trip was not marred by seasickness and Julia managed to land a large grouper, which she made a great fuss over as she cleaned it. Philip and Ann continued to laugh and joke together but Tommy made no more advances towards Julia. At first she had been relieved and then annoyed that he had not attempted to even make a pass at her or kiss her. The last weekend in August Philip came over and invited the girls to a dance that was being held at the Our Lady of the Angels parish center. Julia protested that she wasn't Catholic, wouldn't know anybody there and that besides she was a terrible dancer. Ann reassured her and said that she wasn't Catholic either but that didn't have anything to do with going to a dance; that she would know her and Philip and Tommy and that it was her last chance to meet some new people; and besides she wasn't really such a bad dancer and she could certainly teach her if she wanted. Finally Julia yielded to her and agreed to go.

She danced with Tommy and when he held her she felt safe and secure. She wished she could feel more for him and she was ashamed that she was using him to cover up her love for Ann. Why couldn't people accept her for what she was and let her love whoever she wanted to love. They couldn't and she had to pretend, was Ann right, was that the way all love affairs were, that people were frustrated by things over which they had no control, she had had no choice in falling in love with Ann and now here she was being held by this boy, why, to conceal her love. Tommy was sweet she wished she could love him.

— Tommy, do you like me?

— What, of course I like you, would I be dancing with you, would I have come over to see you practically every day if I didn't like you.

— Even after what I told you about me and Ann?

— That you were in love with her?

— Yes.

— Oh that, that's just a stage you're going through. What can you expect in that snotty girls' school that you're going to. You never see any men do you?

— Some of the teachers are men.

— If they're teachers then they aren't men, they're eunuchs. They've lost their *cojones*.

— Their what?

— Balls. Have you ever known a teacher that's done anything worthwhile, made an invention, written a great book. No, that takes balls and they don't have what it takes to make anything worthwhile so they teach and run down the achievements of others.

— You sound so bitter.

— I am. You really want to know why I haven't tried to make love you again though don't you? Isn't that why you asked if I liked you?

— Yes.

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- I do like you, I do want to sleep with you again.
- Why haven't you tried anything then, you haven't even tried to kiss me.
- I suppose I could say that I respect you but I doubt if you'd buy that. You probably think that all boys, all men are animals, slaving would be rapists.
- Don't be silly, I know that you're not at all like that.
- Don't be too sure. I want to sleep with you again but you haven't given me any sign that you want to sleep with me and I don't want to force myself on you.
- So I have to make the first move, is that it.
- Yes.
- Oh God, I'm so confused. I love Ann or at any rate I think I love her.
- Maybe it's the same thing.
- How.
- Maybe loving and thinking that you love are the same thing, maybe they're different. Who knows and does anybody care?
- I don't know. But I know that I feel something for Ann and that I get upset and angry when I think of her dancing with Philip.
- That's jealousy, possessiveness, not love.
- But I also know that I've grown to like you. I think I'd even like to sleep with you again.
- You could you know.
- But how could I love the two of you?
- Do you think that love is so simple, that you can't love different people for different things, see something lovable in one person and something else that's also lovable in another person.
- Could you share me with someone else, with Ann?
- Yes, I believe I could.
- Even knowing what you know about me?
- Yes.
- Why?
- I can see why you love Ann. She is gorgeous. She's intelligent, perceptive, sensitive.
- Yes.
- But if I love you then your happiness is important to me and so I would prefer your happiness over mine.
- I suppose that's very noble of you. I don't think I could say that.
- It's not noble, it's essential.
- Why?
- Look why don't we go outside and talk there, it's too noisy in here.
- They went outside to the parking lot and there, next to the car were Philip and Ann. He was kissing her again, passionately and this time Julia knew that she would never believe her about just being friendly with Philip, she was sure now that Ann would eventually leave her, if not for Philip then for someone else. She turned towards Tommy and before he could respond she kissed him. He responded and then broke off.
- Are you mad at me?
- What for?
- For taking the initiative, is that unfeminine of me? Is that terribly butch?
- Oh, no. I'm just surprized.
- Would you be surprized if I asked you to make love to me again?
- No, but I think you still feel upset over Ann and Philip.
- And what if I am?
- Julia, I like you too much to want to hurt you and damn it I do want to sleep with you but I want it to be because you want me, not because you want to hurt Ann.
- I do want you.
- I don't believe you, look maybe this isn't such a great idea, lets go back inside.
- Inside they danced together, the band was playing a slow tune and she was able to hold on to him, he felt so strong, she thought she might be secure with him. And what of Ann, could she have both Ann
-
-

and Tommy, was it possible, could she really love them both, or was she wanting to have too much, to have her cake and eat it too.

The band stopped playing and Philip and Ann came over to them. It was time to leave and go home. When they got home Ann and Julia undressed for bed together.

— Julia, you'll never believe it but Philip says he wants to marry me?

— You weren't lying then, you would really marry him?

— Yes.

— Goddamn it, what about me, I thought you loved me?

— Julia, we can still be close. It won't be for a long time yet. We both have to graduate from high school and then there's college, so it'll be a long time yet.

— And what am I some toy that you can play with when he's not around?

— And a pretty little toy you are, dear.

— Goddamn, goddamn you, stop trying to make light of it, stop making fun of me.

— I'm sorry dear. No, I do love you, I also love Philip, at any rate I want to have children someday and I could never have them with you, now could I. Maybe sometime we could live together and be lovers but you know we can't, not now, not the way things are.

— So we're to live a lie then, is that it?

— Don't be silly. We just have to be discreet.

— No, I won't be some silly little bitch that you play games with.

— How about you and Tommy, don't tell me you haven't thought about going back to bed with him.

— Don't change the subject.

— I'm not changing the subject. I haven't been to bed with Philip, not yet, but you have with Tommy and I should have more reason to be angry and upset than you have.

— Because you don't love me.

— Yes, I do. I love you and I want you but I know that I can't possess you.

— I don't want to possess you.

— Yes, you do and I bet you want Tommy too.

— Yes, I do. Oh God, I'm so confused. I want you, I want him, I want you both.

— Julia, be patient, time will help us work this out.

Ann held her and Julia sobbed onto her shoulder. As she stopped crying she became aware of Ann brushing her hair back from her cheek, she felt the gentle pressure of Ann's hand on her cheek and then Ann had pressed her lips to hers and she felt the desire for her well up within her, but mixed with that desire there were images of Tommy, holding her and loving her; she knew then she might love Ann or Tommy or both but that for her love would never be as sweet and simple and pure as it had been when she first loved Ann.

III

The week before labor day Julia returned home to the house in Arlington before going back to school. Margery greeted her, hugged her and asked how her trip had been.

— Oh mom, it was terrible.

— Why was that honey?

— I thought, I guess I'm so silly, that it would be like something out of *Gone With the Wind*.

— You mean the happy black slaves, plantation life and all of that.

— No, I don't know, just a little more romantic, but it seemed so ordinary, so much like right here.

— And what's wrong with here?

— Well nothing I suppose, but isn't there more to life than just going off to work, even if you are teaching and you do like it, and then coming home every day to cook and clean.

— There may be but is that what's really bothering you; what happened down there?

— We went fishing out on the gulf and I got seasick and was miserable.

— And is that all, one day of seasickness isn't enough to ruin two month's of vacation.

— Mom, can't I hide anything from you?

— No, you've never been able to.

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- I love you, but sometimes you can be so infuriating. The truth of it is that I'm in love.
- With whom?
- Do you remember Ann?
- Yes, of course, she's the one you stayed with down in Florida.
- I'm in love with her. Does that shock you mom, that your daughter is in love with another woman.
- I'm surprised. I know these things happen but I never thought it would happen to me that my daughter would be a lesbian.
- Mom, do you have to put a label on me. I'm not anything. I'm a person who loves another person, is that so terrible, is love so terrible that you have to pretend it's an aberration by putting a label on it?
- I don't know, maybe you're right. When I was younger I would have said it was a sin, I don't know if I believe in sin anymore, I stopped believing when I lost my first child so what can I say? But is that really all that's bothering you?
- No, that's not all.
- What else is there, is there something else that is even worse that you're holding back.
- She introduced me to a couple of her friends, Philip and Tommy. She's known Tommy for five years or so and they were carrying on together one night like they were great friends.
- There's nothing wrong with that.
- Except that I wanted her so badly and I wanted to get even with her and I let Tommy make love to me one night, and I'm so confused.
- You let Tommy make love to you to get even with Ann?
- Yes, only once, but now I think I'm in love with him as well.
- So you're in love with both Ann and Tommy?
- Yes but what makes it so bad is that Ann has said that she's going to marry Philip.
- Well, you certainly have a complicated love life.
- So mom what do I do about it all?
- Honey, I don't know what to tell you. Do you want to go back to school, even if it means going to school with Ann?
- Yes, I don't want to run away from her.
- There'd be nothing to be ashamed of by going to another school. It may not be too late to register for classes in the public school system.
- No, I don't want it to end that way, I guess I'll have to work it out on my own.
- Then I'm afraid I don't know what to tell you.
- Oh God, I'm so confused.

IV

When Julia returned to school she found that she had been assigned a different roommate. Mary Schreiber was not as pretty as Ann, in fact she was not pretty at all, she was tall and quiet, reserved, she seemed to be staring off into space most of the time, it was like she inhabited her own little world. She was one of ten children, her father worked for a congressman from one of the mid-western states, one of those horrible, dull states that begin with a vowel and which Julia never wanted to see. She was known around the school for her paintings, not abstract expressionist like Pollock, or violent deformed creatures like de Kooning, but vibrant patches of pure color, the color applied to hard, rectilinear shapes, colors vibrating, pulsing in space; her paintings were almost like music, color shaped by rhythm. Julia had never seen such paintings before, paintings where the color itself was the subject and created the mood of the painting through their own unique identity. Her mother had been partial to medieval art and to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, tastes which Julia shared, and both disliked the vapid portraiture of Gainsborough and the eighteenth century. Mary's paintings were unlike any of these. One of her paintings, called *Freedom* had been a rectangle broken down into a square, along which, running from the bottom left to the upper right were two diagonal bands of contrasting color, while in the upper left the area was broken into a triangle with the hypotenuse not quite

parallel to the diagonal, the rest of the painting was two broad vertical bands of color. Mary's explanation of the painting in the school paper was that the geometry of the painting, based as it was on the golden rectangle, represented constraint but that the area of the triangle, by being not quite parallel, represented freedom and indeterminacy. Julia found this explanation as strange as the painting and as bewildering as any art or music criticism she had ever heard.

When Julia came into her room she heard music playing, not the rock or show tunes that Ann had favored but jazz. No one she knew in the school particularly liked jazz and she was puzzled, as puzzled as she was by the strange rhythms that she heard coming through the door.

— What is that noise?

— That's not noise, that's Brubeck, his *Countdown — Time in Outer Space* album. Can't you hear the great things he's doing with rhythm, just listen to this cut called *Eleven/four*; it's in 11/4 time. Can you hear the way it breaks down into groups of 5 - 3 -3? Oh, by the way, I'm Mary Schreiber, I'll be rooming with you this term.

— I know who you are. What happened to Ann?

— Ann who?

— Ann Sinclair, the girl I roomed with last year.

— Oh her, I don't know. I think the head mistress reassigned her for some reason, I don't know why.

— Do you know where she is now?

— Yeah, sure. She's down the hall now.

— Good, then I'm going to see her now, I'll be back.

— Yeah, sure. Hey, what's the matter you don't like Brubeck?

— No, it has nothing to do with your taste in music.

— Okay, good, well then I'll see you when you come back and we can get better acquainted.

Julia left without replying and walked down the hall till she found Ann's room. Ann was listening to a record and singing along with it when Julia walked in and confronted her.

— Ann, they've given me a different roommate this year.

— Yes, I know, didn't they assign you Mary Schreiber?

— Yes, Do you know why they broke us up?

— No, but did you mention anything about us to anyone aside from Tommy?

— I told my mother, oh God, Ann, I was so upset about you and Philip that I practically had to tell her. I had to talk to someone who would understand, who could tell me what to do.

— Well, your mother may have had something to do with breaking us up. I told you that people would be against us and could not leave us alone to love and to live as we see fit.

— Do you know anything for sure?

— No, but I suspect that your mother may have talked to the head.

— So what do we do now?

— Well, we can be cool, still see each other, maybe be lovers from time to time or we can go our separate ways, whichever you prefer.

— I don't know what I want now.

— Why don't you go back to your room and try to be friendly with Mary, she and you could both stand some friends right about now.

— Are you trying to brush me off?

— Look Julia, I do love you and I do care but I knew that something like this would happen and I think its best if we just cooled it for a while. Go back, try to get along with Mary, after we graduate maybe you can forget about me.

— Never.

She ran back to her room, Mary had changed the record and was listening to some god-awful folksinger who sang through his nose.

— Jesus, you listen to some awful noise.

— That's not noise, that's Dylan, Bob Dylan.

— He can't carry a tune, that's for sure.

— Did you find Ann?

— Yes, I did.

— And.

Thomas E. Hart

- We talked, that's all.
- Look, I'm sorry I asked, I don't mean to pry. I just thought that the two of you were supposed to be such good friends.
- Yes we are, were, I guess we are.
- I heard you spent the summer with her.
- Yes, down in Florida.
- That must be where you got that nice tan. Was it really awful down there, did you see evidence of a lot of prejudice and segregation down there.
- No, as a matter of fact where we were we hardly saw any Negroes at all.
- Where was that?
- It was a little town, almost like a suburb really, around Tampa.
- It was all white then.
- Yes, it was but I don't think they tried to keep Negroes out of it.
- That's because of the nature of that society down there, racism is built into the structure of the social fabric so that Negroes are kept in lower paying positions and can't afford to move into the enclaves of white society.
- Oh God, do we have to have a sociology class. I don't think Ann has a prejudiced bone in her body and as for her family I was never around them long enough to care about their feelings.
- Well you should, that's part of what's so great about someone like Dylan, he cares about the social issues that affect us. Issues like racism and the bomb.
- Look, give it a rest will you. I don't care about issues, I care about people, I care about Ann, as for the rest you can keep it.
- Hey, I'm sorry I don't mean to get off on the wrong foot with you. I always seem to be putting my foot in my mouth. Let's talk about something else.
- I've seen your paintings here.
- Really, do you like them?
- I don't know, they're sort of strange, what are they about?
- They don't really have a subject. No, they do but the subject is the color, they way the paint is applied to the canvas, the smoothness and flatness of the stroke, the hard edge of the shape, the contrast of complementary colours. They're really sort of like a Bach fugue, do you like Bach?
- I'm not sure I've heard enough to really say.
- Here listen to this.
- She put on the first *Brandenburg* concerto and Julia listened. She lay down on the bed, shut her eyes, and let the sound wash over her. She felt almost as if she were witnessing the primal moment of creation, someone had once commented that Bach was like Genesis 1:1, she knew what he meant now, there was order formed out of the chaos, a God who had imposed his features on the shape of the music, but the music wasn't about anything, it was about itself, about sound and the relationships of the instruments. This wasn't music that was about an emotion or a season or that had a specific meaning assigned to it by a composer, there was no program here only the pure music and the meaning was somehow beyond any verbal meaning that she could assign to it.
- Well, what do you think?
- It's beautiful, but it's not about anything.
- No, actually that's not true, it's about itself.
- And your paintings are like that?
- Yes, at least that's what I want them to be I want them to be about themselves, about shape and color, I want the pure color playing against the hard geometry of the surface to convey the emotion.
- What emotion?
- Whatever emotion I want it to convey. You know those awful paintings of the children with the big eyes?
- Yes.
- They convey an emotion, but they do it cheaply, by painting sad-eyed, wistful little children, anybody can paint a picture of a sunset and make you feel happy, or paint a picture of a starving child and make you feel pity, what I want is for my paintings to make you happy or sad or joyous without relating to things at all. To contain the emotion without showing the things that cause the emotion.
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- I see, or I think I do.
 - I don't want to talk about me, tell me about yourself, what do you want to do with your life?
 - I'm not sure, maybe go into teaching after I get out of college.
 - Any particular subject?
 - Probably English literature.
 - Who's your favorite author?
 - I like Faulkner, but I think he's probably colored the way I think about the South. I used to think of it as a bunch of small towns, very romantic, somehow different from the North, the people more gracious. Florida was such a disappointment. So many of the people down there were people who had come from the North or the Mid-west to retire, they were so old. It wasn't anything like Faulkner at all.
 - But doesn't he write about Mississippi?
 - Well yes, but still it wasn't quite what I was expecting.
 - I suppose things very rarely are. So listen, I know that you're disappointed not to be rooming with Ann again this year but lets try to get along for this year, shall we?
 - Yes, I think we can manage that, maybe we can be friends.
 - I certainly hope so.

V

In October it was discovered that the Cubans had given up, for a while at least, baseball and had taken up soccer. Julia's relationship with Ann had changed too. They were no longer lovers. When the President announced the blockade of Cuba Julia and Mary listened to him speak over the radio and when he had finished Julia turned off the radio.

- Do you think we'll go to war with the Russians over Cuba?
 - You mean a nuclear war?
 - Yes.
 - I doubt it, they know we'll both be destroyed if anything like that happens.
 - But isn't a blockade in itself an act of war.
 - I suppose it is, but do you really think countries consider themselves bound by things like international law and morality? No, they act out of their own self-interest and squash anybody or anything that gets in their way.
 - God, I'm scared.
 - Why don't you go see your friend Ann, maybe she can comfort you.
 - Why are you saying that?
 - Weren't you in love with her, isn't that what your temper tantrum when you came back to school and found out that I was your roommate rather than Ann was all about?
 - How could you know that I was in love with Ann?
 - It was perfectly obvious the way you two were always together last year, everyone was beginning to talk about it.
 - Well it's over now. Ann doesn't want to live that kind of life, she wants to get married and conceal what she is and who she loves and pretend to be someone else.
 - And what about you?
 - What about me? I don't know. I think I still love her. When I was down in Florida with her I was so jealous when I saw her with this friend of hers, Philip, I wanted to kill her for a moment.
 - But you didn't, of course.
 - No, but I did take one of her other friends, a boy, to bed with me.
 - And what happened then?
 - Nothing, it didn't mean much to me then, later on I think I started to fall in love with him but now that Ann and I have broken up I doubt if I'll ever go to Florida again and so I'll probably never see him again.
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Thomas E. Hart

— Listen, I'm sorry, I'm being a bitch today. I'm as worried about this whole thing as you are and your love life is no concern of mine. I do want us to be friends though, at least through the end of the school year, maybe beyond.

— Okay, I can accept that.

— I was talking to my father today.

— And what does he have to say for himself.

— The Congressman had a meeting with one of the President's top aides today and he thinks the whole thing will be resolved peaceably, not a single shot will be fired and eventually the Russians will back down.

— God, I hope so.

— Listen I'm going home next weekend would you like to come and meet my family.

— Yes, I think I'd like that. I'd very much like to meet them .

The crisis was resolved; the Russians agreed to withdraw their missiles from Cuba in exchange for the United States dismantling its missiles in Turkey, an order that had been given before the whole crisis had started and which had been ignored by someone in the bureaucracy. Julia and Mary postponed their trip until the crisis had been resolved. Julia was charmed by Mary's family. Her father was slender, with graying hair, he had a slightly professorial air; he was constantly fiddling with a pipe, playing with it, tamping down the tobacco, knocking the ashes out, the living room was filled with the aroma of his pipe, a deep, rich, aroma that Julia rather liked. It signalled comfort and contentment, rather, she imagined, like one of those clubs that British films always portrayed. Mary's mother, like her father, was slender, gray haired but it was the children, Mary's brothers and sisters, mostly brothers, there were seven boys and three girls with Mary being the middle girl, that captivated Julia. The youngest, Timothy was about seven and full of energy and excitement, he was always running around, constantly getting into scrapes with his older brother Michael. Peter was the oldest child, he was tall, broad shouldered, and he was studying political science at Georgetown University. He reminded Julia of her father, like Martin he was quick, sharp witted, muscular and yet he seemed gentle, more gentle perhaps than Martin could ever manage to be.

The house in Arlington was full of the noisy comings and going of the children at all hours of the day and night. When they sat down to dinner that Saturday night Mary's father questioned her.

— Julia, my daughter tells me that you spent some time down South this summer.

— Yes, I did. I went over the summer with Ann Sinclair, another friend of mine at school.

— And what did you think of the situation down there?

— What situation, mostly we went out to beaches, went swimming, a couple of parties, some dances.

— I mean the racial situation.

— Oh that. I didn't see any violence, any demonstrations, if that's what you mean.

— That's exactly what I mean.

— We'll I try not to get involved in that sort of thing. I know you work for a Congressman and all but frankly politics rather bores me.

— My dear, the time is coming when the politics that you find so boring will mean life or death for you and for many more like you.

Later when she was alone with Mary she voiced her concern over the dinner conversation.

— What did your father mean by that last remark, about the time is coming when politics will mean life or death for me.

— I'm not sure maybe he was thinking about the missile crisis or about the arms race. Sometimes I'm not sure what he means, he can be like the Delphic oracle sometimes.

— The Delphic oracle?

— Sure, you know, ambiguous answers and statements so that no matter what happens he can say he was right and be recognized for his prophetic insight.

— And what do you think?

— I think you should take more of an interest in the world around you. Times are changing Julia. These demonstrations and sit-ins now are only the first wave of the changes that will be taking place in this country. Racial and class barriers are breaking down and the people like you that want to sit it out on the fence will be swept away.

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- Maybe you're right. I don't know. Let's talk about something else.
- Did you know that Peter likes you?
- He does?
- Yes, but he's rather shy and he's afraid to ask you out.
- Why, I won't bite him.
- Oh, it's not that, he just thinks you're beautiful, why I don't know, I rather think your breasts are too large but he likes girls that are built like you.
- I didn't know you paid attention to my breasts.
- I don't, well I can't help noticing and maybe I'm a little jealous that I'm not as pretty as you.
- Thank you, but what should I do about Peter.
- Why don't you ask him out instead of waiting for him to ask you.
- I might do just that.

She asked Peter and they went to a movie that night. When he brought her back he sat in the car in the driveway in front of the house and turned off the key of the ignition. He reached over to kiss her and he was very gentle and firm. She shook her head and he could feel the hair caressing him. She took his hands in both of hers and held them.

- Peter, don't be so shy, kiss me again, like this.
- She opened her mouth and her tongue met his. He backed away, startled.
- Am I being too bold for you, Peter, don't you like forward girls?
- No, its not that, you just surprised me.
- Am I too easy for you?
- No.
- Then what, come here and kiss me again.

He leaned forward and kissed her, he could smell her warm scent, the trace of perfume that lingered in her hair.

- Oh Jesus, I want you.
- Me or Jesus?
- You.
- Kiss me again and maybe I'll let you have me.

He bent over her and kissed her, he felt her hair brush against his cheek, the warmth of her breath. He put his hand on her breast, it was warm and firm, heavy, he wished for a moment that he were a baby and that she were suckling him. She was wonderful. He stopped kissing her and took his hand from her breast.

- Peter, why have you stopped?
- I can't. I want you so much but it would be wrong if I made love to you, I can't take responsibility for you, what if you get pregnant or something?
- Let me worry about that.
- No, I can't, even if I could I wouldn't.
- You're not that kind of boy even if I am that kind of girl, is that it?
- What do you mean?
- You're not the kind of boy that takes advantage of a girl even if she finds you attractive and wants you to take advantage of her.
- Something like that I suppose. I wasn't brought up to make love to every girl I see or have a passing fancy for.
- Well I wasn't brought up like that either. I don't make love to every girl I see or have a passing fancy for, or every boy either for that matter.
- Julia, stop making fun of me.
- I wasn't making fun of you.
- Yes, you were.
- Okay, maybe I was. I still want you. I want you to make love to me.
- Julia, I don't want to hurt you, maybe after we know each other better.

She sat silently for a minute then she turned to him.

— Okay, maybe, kiss me good night now, gently, on the lips. There now lets go in and maybe we'll see things differently in the morning.

Thomas E. Hart

They went into the house, quietly so as not to disturb anyone, but Mary's older sister Catherine and her date were sitting up, the record player was turned down low and was playing Dave Brubeck's version of *Someday my Prince Will Come*. Catherine and her date were talking quietly when Julia and Peter came in.

— Does everyone in your family like Brubeck?

— No, only some of us, why do you ask?

— Mary plays that same album, that and her Dylan albums, over and over again.

— Oh, well I'll see you in the morning.

— Yes, good night, sweet dreams.

She went upstairs and silently, so as not to disturb her, got into bed with Mary. In the morning Mary insisted on knowing how the evening had gone.

— He's very sweet, very shy. I don't think he's been with too many girls before. Certainly none like me.

— Why do you say that.

— He thought I was joking when I said that I didn't jump into bed with every girl I see.

— Well you don't do you.

— No, but that isn't the point. I'm afraid I tried to rape your brother and he resisted me.

— And you don't like that.

— I don't know. He is very sweet. Do you think he'll want to see me again.

— Yes, he probably will.

— God, I hope so.

VI

In June the President gave a commencement address at American University calling for a treaty to end the test of nuclear weapons on the surface of the planet and Julia, Mary, and Ann graduated from high school. Peter had come up to see Julia on several weekends and she thought that she was more than half in love with him. He was so shy, sweet, and intense. He was going to spend the summer as a volunteer worker at a church in Washington's inner city. Julia had decided that she wanted to be with him and she volunteered to work at the church too. She thought of the previous summer and somehow it all seemed so trivial, the love affair with Ann, the jealousy and rage over her defection into Paul's arms, now she would do something with her summer that mattered, something where she could make a difference by working with the poor Negro children in the Washington slums. Mary was going to volunteer as well and as for Ann she was going back to Florida, to a lazy life of sun, swimming, sailing and then in the fall she would be going to Vassar. Julia was going to George Washington University, tuition was free because her mother taught there, and Mary would be taking art classes at the Corcoran school of art. So the affair with Ann would definitely be over and there was no likelihood that it would ever be resumed. Perhaps Ann had been right when she had said that their relationship couldn't last, she had been too afraid of what other people would think or say for her to do anything but hide her feelings and Julia had been too confused, too uncertain about her feelings for Ann and her feelings for Tommy. Ann had been right after all and now it was all over.

The Monday after graduation Julia took the bus from Arlington into Washington and transferred to a D.C. Transit bus going up 14th St. She got off at 14th and V and walked west one block to 15th St. The summer program was being held in the parish school of St. Damian's. Washington in the late spring and throughout the summer was a depressing city, it was hot and humid, the air was always full of a perpetual haze, which was without doubt aided and abetted by the oratory from the Capitol, and the lack of air conditioning in the school did not make life any easier. Julia's clothes stuck to her and she was glad to go home and lay naked on her bed and let the cool air blow over her body. Peter was helping the children with reading; Mary was doing art projects with them; Julia was helping the children with arithmetic.

On Friday's Julia would go home, shower, change into fresh clothes and then she would meet Peter and Mary and the three of them would go into Georgetown to drink beer and listen to music and talk to each other. They went to Shadows and heard comedians like Mort Sahl or they went to Amanda's

coffeehouse up on O St just off of Wisconsin Avenue and ate fondue and drank white white and ate pastries, all the while talking and laughing. They would go home and listen to folk music by Joan Baez and Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger. Julia loved Joan Baez's clear, beautiful soprano and on songs like *Banks of the Ohio* or *The Cherry Tree Carol* she found it impossible not to be moved by the purity and clarity of her voice. Dylan she found more difficult to accept, his rough twangy voice did not appeal to her at all.

Peter and Mary shared a fondness not only for jazz and for folk music but also for the poets and writers of the Beat generation. Peter tried, unsuccessfully, to introduce Julia to the work of Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. She was taken by the humour of Gregory Corso, especially his poem *Marriage* but as for the rest she didn't like them and she had no intention of turning away from her favorite reading just to humour Peter and Mary.

One night they were sitting at Amanda's and Peter raised the subject of Julia's commitment to the summer project.

— Julia, you've been working at St. Damian's for what, six weeks.

— Yes, about that.

— So what do you think about what you've seen so far?

— I'm not sure I know what you mean.

— Look, every day you travel up 14th St.

— Not anymore, not since the first day, I take the 16th St bus now.

— That's not important, what I'm trying to say is that here you are working in one of the worst areas of the city, blocks from the White House, you can stand at the top of the hill and see the damn thing, and here these kids are living in area where they're surrounded by dope, prostitution, all sorts of vice and crime. Have you given any thought to what causes it or what can be done to remedy it?

— No, not really, but I suppose you have the solution.

— No, not the solution, only the diagnosis. Can't you see the racism that is built into our society and which is keeping these kids down and forbidding them from becoming something more than what they are?

— No, I can't. Somehow it seems to me that two plus two will always be four whether you're a Negro or a white and that if they can't get anywhere then it's their own fault for not studying and working hard enough.

— Julia, can't you see that you're motivated by that very racism. Here you are the well educated white girl playing at work in the slums.

— He's right Julia, right now what we're doing is nothing more than playing at helping these people. We're pretending that we're the elite stooping down out of our great pity to lift these people up.

— Maybe you're right, maybe you're not, but I don't think I'm playing, I work damn hard with those kids.

— Julia, I love you, you know that.

— Yes, I guess I do.

— But you can be so obtuse sometimes. Can't you see that the thing to do is bring about an end to racism and if necessary to the social system built on it.

— And what do we replace it with?

— A system where people can be rewarded based on their talents and abilities, their contribution to society.

— You mean socialism.

— Yes.

— Julia, Peter's right, this paternalistic, patronizing kind of work that we're doing will not change anything. Change can only come from us, from people like you and me who are willing to work and to give our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honour, to the cause of liberating people, colored and white, from the burdens of our society.

— Okay, maybe you and Peter are right, what can I do, what can one person do.

— You can join Mary and me when the March on Washington happens. Dr. King and some other Negro leaders will be assembling at the Lincoln memorial on August 22nd. That's a start. Then if people, if Congress, refuse to listen to us then the pattern of confrontation will be stepped up, eventually, there's no doubt about it, there will be blood in the streets.

Thomas E. Hart

— Jesus, I thought Dr. King was non-violent, and what about your religious principles, here you two are working in a Catholic church with a monsignor for your boss and you're talking about some kind of civil war.

— Dr. King is non-violent. He makes rather a fetish of it. But non-violence is only a tool, a means of garnering support and sympathy, eventually things will have to change. Besides didn't Jesus say that He came to bring not peace but a sword.

— Well I don't care so much about what Jesus said, I'm not sure He even existed and I don't particularly care one way or the other.

— So what's the problem then?

— I don't know; I'm not sure that I go along with the whole idea of marching and demonstrating.

— Look, if there is going to be any sort of change it has to start with us, with individuals, that's why Peter and I asked you to work with us, that's why you should join us at the march, you have to show that you're willing to make the change. I thought for a long time that I could be uninvolved, uncommitted, that my art was sufficient in itself. Now that I've been working here I realize that it too must be committed, that the place of the artist in an unjust society like ours is to be committed, to be *engagé*.

— Okay, maybe you're right. I'll join you. *If only you wouldn't talk some goddamned French existentialist. What the hell does Sartre know about American society. He probably got all of his ideas about this country from grade B Westerns and Pravda.*

— Good, now lets enjoy the rest of the evening.

— Tell me though how does your father feel about your beliefs, about you're being involved in demonstrations and all of that.

— Oh, he supports civil rights, so does his Congressman, but all they really are is tools, what Lenin called useful dupes.

— Does he know how you feel about him?

— No, I doubt if he does.

— Look, you two, enough talk about politics, do you want some more coffee, Julia, Peter?

— Yes, I'll have some more, and you Peter?

— Yes. We'll talk some more about this another time.

They drank another round of coffee and Peter took Julia home. The next day, Saturday, was bright and clear, unusually clear for a summer day in Washington, Julia got up, showered, and went downstairs for breakfast. She looked out the kitchen window into the yard. The cherry trees had stopped blooming long ago and now were laden with fruit. She remembered when she and Martin and Margery would go out and pick the cherries and then Margery would put some of them up for preserves and make pies from the rest. Those times had gone when Martin had gotten sick and now that he was dead they would never come back. She wondered if Peter and Mary were right, was all of this the product of an unjust society built on the backs of Negro slaves. If it were, if this were truly her heritage would she want any part of it. Margery came down, clad in a dressing gown, God, she was still beautiful despite being, what, forty-five. Julia hoped she would like that good when she was as old as her mother.

— Hi honey, you fixed coffee? It smells good.

— Thanks mom, you look terrific today. Mom, I wanted to ask you something.

— Sure honey, ask away.

— Last year, when I went back to school I didn't have Ann for my roommate.

— Yes, of course, I knew that.

— Did you have anything to do with that, did you arrange things with the headmaster because I told you about Ann and me.

Margery put down her cup of coffee and stared into space for a moment, pausing and remembering how unhappy her daughter had been, how confused and distraught over her conflicting loves.

— Yes, I did. Ann is very nice, very sweet, but Julia, such a relationship isn't normal, it can't last and I thought it would be for the best if I did something to help break up this friendship before things got out of control and you got terribly hurt. You're very young and easily swayed by your emotions, honey, and you were in an unnatural sort of situation at that school, that's my fault, I sent you to that girl's school so I could be alone with my grief after your father died, maybe I was wrong, but I thought that everything I did was the right thing to do at the time.

— I'm not blaming you mom, I don't think it would have worked out with me and Ann anyhow.

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- I'm glad of that.
- Actually, I think things have worked out for the best, I met Mary and Peter because you arranged the switch of roommates.
- Are you in love with Peter?
- I think I am. Mom, do you think our society is unjust, is it built on the exploitation of the poor and disadvantaged?
- Is that what Peter and Mary think?
- Yes, at least that's the line that they talk.
- Honey, when I came to Washington, over twenty years ago, I was a clerk typist in the Treasury department's procurement branch. I started taking courses at GW at night, met your father, who was also taking night courses, he became a lawyer and worked for the Federal Trade Commission right up until he died, while I had you, got my doctorate, and started teaching at GW, which you'll be attending this fall, now who did we push out of the way, who did we knife in the back to get here, I don't recall doing anybody in or using my body to persuade the chairman to hire me. All of this, this house, the car, the fact that you can live in a modicum of comfort is because we, your father and I, worked hard and made sacrifices so that we could enjoy life and so that you could too.
- But how about the slums, the way the poor Negroes live, have you seen the area where I work?
- Yes, I've been by there. I don't know why there are slums and poverty in this country, honey, you would think that in a country as rich as ours, in one that spends as much on defense as we do, that can afford senseless stunts like space shots and sending people around the world in space ships that there would be no poverty and misery, but there is and I don't why there is.
- Peter and Mary think I ought to go the demonstration that's being planned for August, the one to be held at the Lincoln memorial, do you think I ought to go?
- I don't see what harm can come of it. It's supposed to be a peaceful demonstration, isn't it? But I do think that you should be sure about why you're going. is it because you really believe in the cause, or are you going because of Peter. Do you want him to think of you as something you're not or do you really believe in this demonstration. Are Peter's goals your goals or not?
- I don't know. But I think I will go, even if just to see it and to tell my children and grandchildren about it.
- Do you know how the organizers of these demonstrations think about you though?
- No.
- To them you're just another follower, somebody to make the numbers, that they'll claim to have attended, larger, in other words, a zero. Nothing.
- Oh, maybe you're right. I'm still going though.
- Fine. How are things with you and Peter.
- Oh, mom, he's so sweet, I still think he's afraid of me, he hasn't really made a serious move towards me since our first date, but he's so intelligent, well read, although sometimes he does sound a bit too much like some French intellectual.
- Oh, which one?
- Oh mom, well Sartre, sometimes he sounds like he's spouting the latest edict from the *Cafe des Deux Magots*. And he seems to think everyone from the South is a redneck or a bigot.
- And you don't.
- Mom, I still remember Ann and she wasn't a racist or a bigot, not that I could see and I can't believe that someone like Faulkner is a racist, could the person who imagined Luther and Dilsey be a racist or a Klan member.
- But all you know is what you've read and that's colored the way you see things.
- Well, there was the trip I took with Ann last year, but in a way you're right that hardly counts because I don't know if that area is typical of the whole South, we spent more time at the beaches than we did doing any serious sociological investigation.
- Honey, that's what you should have done, spend time at the beach, you're young and you shouldn't worry about these things. No, I don't mean let older and wiser heads do you're thinking for you, I mean try to keep things in balance, try to keep a sense of perspective about you and know what's serious and what's not. As for knowing things only by reading about them what do I know about life in Greece or Rome of the first century, only what I've read and what I can imagine based on what I know
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about myself and others, am I right about what I think, I doubt it, the reality might be quite different, but I have to rely on these things even if I am wrong.

— Mom, let's change the subject. I want to go shopping today, do you want to come with me, let's pretend we're sisters and we'll go try on clothes together, do you want to come?

— I'm afraid I'm too old to dress the way you teenagers do, I'm turning into an old lady.

— You're one heck of a sexy old lady too, you look terrific, nobody would think you're my mother if they didn't know, come on, let's go.

— Okay, but first let's finish the dishes.

The Washington summer droned on through July and August, the Bermuda high crept in and stayed and everyone sweated through the days, Julia became more irritable as the heat got worse and worse. Finally the day of the march came and Julia assembled with Mary and Peter at the steps of the Lincoln memorial to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. proclaim his dream. He was saying that he dreamed of a day of equality, when his children and white children could go to school together. Everyone cheered. Now he was saying something about Mississippi, it sounded like he was condemning the whole state because of racism. Yes, Ross Barnett had attempted to prevent James Meredith from attending the University but was the whole state, the whole region to be condemned because of that, wasn't the compassion of a Faulkner enough, if the state could produce one like him surely there must be others, there must be other good people in that state. Ann had been from the South, from Florida, true, not Mississippi, but she remembered conversations with her when they had seen the demonstrations on television, surely the good will of people like Ann and Faulkner counted for something. If God had been willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of ten just men surely Dr. King could not condemn a whole region for the actions of a few intemperate men and not realize the worth, the redemptive power of those who did not join the Klan, did not torment people at lunch counters and who would, if let alone, welcome Negro children into their schools. The crowd was cheering, Julia cheered too, but it was as if she was betraying a part of herself, as if she were condemning Ann, whom she still loved or rather remembered loving, to a pit in the *Inferno*, in a way it was almost an act of treason to the memory of that love and she shied away from it. She could never condemn Ann, she could have killed her when she saw her with Philip, that was different, that was rage and anger and jealousy, but this was cold-blooded, intellectual. She almost felt ashamed of herself. Maybe Peter and Mary were right but maybe what was really necessary was not to talk about racism and socialism and liberalism and all of the other bloody ideologies, not to worry about what this group did to that group or what her ancestors did to someone else's ancestor but to worry about what she did to one other person and not to see that person as male or female, negro or white, lesbian or heterosexual or bisexual or anysexual, but only as a person who had needs, wants, desires, abilities, talents and whom you could either help or hinder. A line from a poem ran through her mind:

— *He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars*

General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, & flatterer.

So what were the minute particulars through which she could do. She could keep on working at St. Damian's through the end of the summer, she could teach, she could help in that way, and to hell with any feelings of elitism, of Ol' Massa helping his poor, ignorant slaves. Maybe that was what she was supposed to do.

Dr. King finished his speech and the trio started to leave, they worked their way through the crowd and Peter asked Julia what she had thought of his speech. She was non-committal and evasive. She didn't want to lose Peter because of some silly disagreement over ideology, over his commitment to some vague idea of a socialist utopia. She supposed she could keep her reservations to herself and still go along with him in his projects, join with him in his silly causes, even if she privately disagreed with him. Yes, that would be the answer, go along with him and reserve a part of herself to herself so that only she would know her doubts and her disagreements.

VII

In the middle of September Julia started to school. She got a job working at the university library so that she would have pocket money for movies, food, books, records and so on. She was paid minimum wage, one dollar an hour, and told that every semester she could expect a nickel raise but that she was

limited to working no more than twenty hours a week, except during the summer or when classes were not in session. She continued to see Peter and Mary, sometimes she saw Peter by himself, sometimes she saw him with Mary. She frequently went over to the Corcoran gallery where Mary was taking art classes and would wander around the gallery looking at the pictures of early American and contemporary art. She did not understand what some of the artists were trying to convey. What, for instance, did Josef Albers Homage to the Square: Yes mean, did it have any significance and how did it differ, aside from colours, from his other paintings in the same series? Mary assured her that these paintings and sculptures were significant but she couldnt see what Albers or Gene Davis with his striped paintings or Tom Downing were getting at.

She was studying hard in school. She had thought of taking Latin but her mother had discouraged her because she would be teaching the first year course and she did not want to be accused of favoritism, so she was taking Italian for her foreign language, dance for physical education, English composition, anthropology for her social science, psychology, and history of religions. She enjoyed writing the essays for English and the dancing, the rhythmic movements of her body were pleasing, she could watch herself in the mirror in the dance studio and it was wonderful to see herself and the others moving in time to the music, their bodies arched into graceful poses. It was strenuous and made her sweat but she enjoyed the feeling of contentment that came over her. No wonder Ann had enjoyed dancing so much.

In early November she and Peter finally became lovers. She had gone to a doctor and had obtained a prescription for birth control pills. Reassured that he would not be cursed with premature fatherhood he lost all of his inhibitions and proved himself to be a skillful, tender lover. As the month moved towards its end she was looking forward to the Thanksgiving holiday and towards the time she would spend with Peter. During this time the President was also planning a trip to the South, a political trip to mend fences with his vice-Presidents constituents. On November 22nd she was in English class and the instructor had just looked at his watch when she heard sirens wailing and someone came running in shouting that the President had been shot and killed. Someone said,

— Oh God, that means Johnson will be President, hes no good.

That handsome man dead, he was about the same age as Martin, no, he was five years younger and now that Texas cowboy would be President. God, would things ever be the same again, what would he do now? What did this mean for people like Peters father, to people working in the movement, would the civil rights legislation be stalled because of him, what about social programs? What would Peter do, what would she do?

VIII

After the assassination, after the funeral, after the Presidents widow had walked with his coffin to Arlington cemetery, after his son had stood by the bier and been immortalized in the image of the young boy saluting the body on the bier, the new President announced the appointment of a commission to investigate the assassination. Later he proclaimed a war on poverty, a variety of programs to ease social ills and to use government power to create wealth. Peters father and his Congressman were working on some of the legislation that the new President had proposed. Julia continued with her classes at George Washington and in the summer went back to work at St. Damians. In July three civil rights workers disappeared in Mississippi; their bodies were eventually found and the murderers were tried in a Federal court for violating their civil rights. In August some American warships were attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin, a place that Julia had never heard of, and Congress passed a resolution authorizing the President to retaliate against this aggressive action.

Julia and Peter and Mary were sitting out on the lawn of Julias house, under the larger of the two cherry trees, where it was shady and cool, when Julia asked Peter if he had any idea what was going to happen.

— Im not sure, I was talking to my father and hes afraid that this might be a prelude to further buildup of the American presence in Vietnam.

— God, does that mean that you would be drafted and have to go over there to fight.

— Im not sure if Ill be drafted or not. I graduate next year and I was planning on going to law school so that my student deferment should run through 68 or so.

- Surely, the war will be over by then.
- I dont know, if its not I may go to Canada where they dont extradite draft avoiders.
- Surely you dont want to do that, would you want me to come with you or would I have to stay here.
- That would be up to you. You dont have to live with the threat of the draft hanging over your head. You can be secure in knowing that you wont have to go and maybe die to honor the commitments that some old men made without asking for your consent.
- Maybe youre right.
- Julia, do you realize how often you say something like that, arent you tired of never being able to commit yourself.
- Mary, I do have my commitments, I just dont like to parade them in public. I cant help it if I seem so uncertain about things. Maybe I dont feel like arguing all the time, maybe I can see both sides of the question, what difference does it make to you anyhow?
- Ive told you before and I know that Peter has urged you to be more committed, to become engagé, if you want to live in some ivory tower thats your business but the cost of that ivory tower is that youll be alienated from everybody. The only way to overcome that alienation is to become involved, engaged, with other people, particularly those who are oppressed and struggling for social justice.
- Why is though that every time you or Peter talks about social justice you always seem to mean justice for the poor Negroes, for the oppressed colonial peoples, how about justice for those of us that are middle class and who work and study hard and want to do well in our professions, arent we entitled to justice too?
- Of course, we are, what Mary is saying and what I hope you can see is that there really can be no justice, no peace, until everybody is able to achieve their true stature without artificial obstacles being placed in their way. What we want, what Mary and I want and what I hope you want is a society where people are rewarded according to their needs and contribute as much as their abilities will let them.
- Is that really your idea of a just society, is that what you really want?
- Yes.
- And in the meantime?
- In the meantime there will be struggle and sacrifice and if there happen to be some injustices committed along the way, if there is some blood shed, then thats too bad but that is the price of progress.
- Julia was silent. Peter and Mary believed so strongly, or they said they did, and what did she know, she knew that she wanted Peter and if the cost of having him was going along with his silly, romantic, socialist notions she would. She wanted him more than she wanted to argue, more than she cared about his ideology or her lack of ideology, for herself she would be content to be lazy, to stretch out on a beach somewhere and let the sun turn her body a golden brown, to live a life of indolence and pleasure, content to be loved by him. That was not what he wanted, he wanted an activist, well she could accommodate him, he was more important to her than anything else right now.

IX

In September the President started his election campaign against the Republican nominee, the Senator from Arizona. He portrayed the Senator as a reckless lunatic who would involve the world in a nuclear holocaust whereas he, the incumbent, would never involve American troops in a desperate venture on foreign soil. In November he was elected in his own right as President by one of the largest margins of popular and electoral votes ever recorded until then. In February he sent American planes on bombing missions into North Vietnam and the students at George Washington staged a fast for peace. One of the girls that Julia worked with at the library said that she was going to gorge for war but Julia went ahead and fasted anyhow. After two days she was desperately hungry and glad that her ordeal was over. She went over to Bassins at 20th and Pennsylvania and celebrated the end of her fast by eating a large pizza and drinking several glasses of beer. In May Marines were sent into the Dominican Republic and the teach-in movement culminated in a large teach-in at the Sheraton Park hotel with Isaac Deutscher and Arthur Schlesinger in attendance as orators. Schlesinger proclaimed that the

troops should be taken out of Vietnam and sent to the Dominican Republic. Deutscher, the biographer of Trotsky, acknowledged that he could not criticize the government of his native Poland as he could the government of the United States. Julia attended this and other demonstrations, as much out of loyalty to Peter as out of any commitment to the cause. In June Peter graduated from Georgetown and announced that he was going into the army.

— But why, I thought you were going to law school, what have I been protesting about, fasting for, and listening to long, boring harangues for, if not to please you, to show you that I was committed to your ideas of justice and peace.

— I know it seems contradictory but its not really.

— Why the hell isnt it?

— Look, if I dont go, if I dont face the prospect of combat in Vietnam Ill always ask myself if I was really committed to peace. Have I objected to all of this not because I dont want to kill my fellow human beings but because I dont want them to kill me. Ill always be wondering if I were conscientious or if I was a coward.

— So you have to prove your manhood by going off to fight and maybe die in Vietnam?

— I may not even go to Vietnam, a lot of people go into the military and never see a day of combat, just a lot of bloody drills and practice maneuvers.

— And how about the other, about proving your manhood, dont you prove it to yourself when you lay in my arms, when you make love to me, isnt that enough for you?

— I know it should be.

— But youre not sure and you have to go and prove something to yourself. What if you go and get yourself killed, what am I supposed to then?

— Find someone else I suppose.

— Oh Christ, you men are such bloody fools. Do you think that I really believed all that stuff you were spouting. I demonstrated, fasted, went to teach-ins and pray-ins and sit-ins all for you and now you change your mind and tell me it was all for nothing.

— No, its not for nothing, I still believe what I said its just that I have to do this and besides I may be able to work within the military, get soldiers to oppose the war and refuse to go into combat.

— And what if they shoot you, arent you talking about treason?

— No, I think the charge would be creating disaffection and they havent shot anybody in the military for years. Besides what are they going to do, stand whole regiments up against the wall and shoot them to spur on the troops. That sort of thing went out with the Middle Ages.

— I dont know. I just know that Ill worry about you. I dont know how I can live without you.

— Im sure you can manage. Havent you ever loved somebody before me and thought you couldnt live without them and then found that you could after all. Life will go on without me.

Ann. She had never told him about Ann and she didnt know if Mary had told him, if she had it hadnt made any difference. She had joked with him about making passes at girls on their first date and he had dismissed it as a joke and she had never mentioned it again. Did he know and did it make any difference to him if he did? No, it hadnt seemed to matter whether he knew or didnt know, he still loved her and she still felt complete and loved when he held her, when he caressed her and stroked her long, lean back, when he fondled her breasts. Where was Ann now, back in Florida she guessed, she missed her and regretted that she had ever thought that the time spent on her trip to Florida had been wasted, that had been, in some respects at least, the best summer of her life. God, she missed Ann and Philip and Tommy. She had been the complicated one then, Tommy had been simple, he wanted her and he had not tied up his desire with politics and commitment to causes and other nonsense. He had loved her and accepted her, he could even have dealt with her love for Ann. What a relief from the intensity of Peter and Mary he would be right now.

— Yes, I suppose I can cope if something should happen to you.

— Good, thats my girl. I dont want you to mourn for me. Remember what Joe Hill said just before they shot him.

— What?

— Dont mourn for me. Organize.

— Oh God, will you stop all of this romantic, idealistic nonsense and just love me, just hold and be with me and stop worrying about whats going on ten or twelve thousand miles away. Im here, I love

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you, I want to marry you and have your children, isnt that enough for you. Come here, come to me and feel that Im real, feel my hand, my arm, my breast, this, this warm flesh is real, what are your goddamn ideals but illusions, come to me, come home and feel the warmth. Real life is staying here, changing childrens diapers, cooking, cleaning, loving and caring, its not chasing after some dream that you may not even want once you have it. Stay here with me and let me love you.

— I wish I could, but I cant, I have to do this.

— So you can prove your manhood to yourself. I dont doubt it. You prove it to me when you make to love to me.

— Yes, I guess you could say that. I have to prove myself, otherwise Ill be bitter all my life, Ill feel different, estranged from those who went.

— Even if it costs you your life.

— Yes.

— Well I hope you enjoy your time in the army because this is the last time youll ever see me or make love to me.

— Julia, dont say that. I still love you and I always will.

— Oh, maybe I dont mean it. Go ahead and play your little game but if you get yourself killed I wont waste my life morning for you. I wont wear black for you all my life like Queen Victoria.

— I dont want you to. I would want you to find someone else to love if anything should happen to me,

— Oh, dont worry I will.

X

Peter was inducted into the Army and Julia went to visit him several times. Each time he seemed more morose and withdrawn as if he realized that he had made a mistake. Finally, after his basic training and his specialty training were completed his orders came. He was going to Vietnam. Julia went up to see him the weekend before he was to embark and made love to him. All the time she was with him she had a sense of foreboding as if it would be the last time she would see him. She could see his body torn and mangled, bleeding from the wounds caused by some Vietcongs bullets. She went home more depressed than ever. The week after Peter had left Julia was at home when Mary called.

— Julia? I had to call to tell you. The plane that Peter was on. Something happened.

— What? Is Peter alright?

— No, hes not. Apparently the landing gear got stuck when the plane was coming in and the pilot tried to land but when he skidded on the runway one of the fuel tanks exploded and Peter and some of the others in his company were killed.

— Then he never got into combat?

— No, isnt that ironic. He wanted to prove himself, prove that he was a man by facing death and now hes dead and he never had that chance.

— Oh God, what am I going to do now. You know I loved him, I was going to marry him after I graduated and started teaching.

— Yes, I know. What about me, he was my favorite person in the family, he always seemed so sure of himself; he always took time to talk to me and he acted as if I mattered to him and he was always so sweet to me.

— Yes, to me too.

— God, is this what it means to be a woman, to be kept at home while your brothers, husbands, lovers, go off chasing some idiotic dream.

— I dont know. I didnt want him to go. I didnt, still dont see why I fasted and protested and believed what he believed when it all came down to this. He went off and left us, you and me, behind and now all we can do is cry over his burned body.

— I guess we did all of that so that something like this wouldnt happen. God it all seems so senseless now. What was the use of it all? Maybe you were right Julia.

— How, about what?

— About being more uncertain, not being so sure that we always knew what was right and wrong.

— I wish I knew. Is there going to be a service of some kind?

— Yes, Peters body is being shipped back and there'll be a funeral service and burial at Woodpark cemetery. I know you're coming.

— Yes, I'll be there.

— Good, I'll see you then.

Julia hung up the phone and lay down on her bed sobbing. Margery came in and saw her laying on the bed crying.

— What's wrong, honey?

— Oh mom, it's all so terrible. Peter died. He was in some kind of airplane accident and he was dead before he even got on the ground in Vietnam.

— Oh. I know it's bad. I lost someone too.

— You did?

— Yes, before I met your father I went with this boy in school, his name was Robert and he was a starry-eyed idealist too, just like your Peter, and he was always spouting some Marxist, Trotskyite, line, also rather like Peter. We broke up before the second World War started. Do you remember right after your father died and you saw me going through the trunk where I had all of those religious medals and statues?

— Yes.

— Well at the time I was very pious and devout and he told me that no one believed in God anymore and I stopped seeing him. Then I met your father and married him and lost my first baby and I guess then I lost my faith in God. Well at any rate Robert was killed in the war and when I heard about it I remembered how I had rejected him because he scoffed at my religion and now here I was, not practicing, not believing, and Robert dead. I cried when I heard about him, of course I never let your father know, not because I was afraid of his jealousy but because I didn't want to hurt him by letting him think that I had loved or that I still loved Robert. It still hurt, even though I wasn't in love with him then. It hurt even more when your father died. I had lived with him for over twenty years, I knew his moods, his likes, his dislikes, we were as close and as comfortable as any couple you could imagine and he was taken from me.

— So what are you getting at, mom.

— Julia, even though it seems unbearable now life will go on. There'll always be a vacant space in your heart where Peter was, you can live with it though, and as time goes on you'll remember the love that you two shared and any fights or arguments will come to seem silly. When you think about Peter remember what you shared and treasure it and don't regret what might have been but never was.

— And how about you, mom, do you ever regret what might have been but never was?

— Sometimes. Mostly I wish that your father was still alive.

— So do I.

— There, now come on down and have a cup of coffee with me and Terry.

— Mrs. Carroll, is she here?

— Yes. You know she's been my friend through some pretty bad times and she introduced me to Martin.

— Yes, you've told me that.

— So come on down and join us.

— I will, in a minute.

Margery went downstairs and Julia got up, looked at herself in the mirror, splashed water on her face and dried it, and went down to see Teresa Carroll. She was childless and unmarried, Julia knew that she had lost her husband in the war but had never understood why she had never remarried. Julia could not imagine a greater contrast than that between her mother and Mrs. Carroll. They were both very good looking, although Terry was several years older than her mother, but Terry was very deeply religious, not in a sense of ostentatious piety, she did not belong to altar guilds or Holy Name sodalities or any organized church groups, other than her local parish, but she was silent, meditative, almost like a nun, or what Julia imagined a nun to be like. There was a quality of quiet acceptance, not fighting, not struggling, as if she had surrendered herself years ago, but she was not drifting aimlessly, she did not have an air of purposelessness about her. If anything she had taken the ancient Greek to heart and knew herself. Terry could laugh and be bawdy just like anyone else but Julia always felt that there was a part of her that was hidden away from the world and that she would go there and retreat into solitude

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and that it was this flight into the alone that conveyed the impression that here was a woman who truly believed and who had an unshaken faith. Margery, however, was more inclined to tears, to bursts of anger and passion, to deeply held resentments and longings, and as for faith, she seemed not to have any. Julia could not help but wonder at the difference between the two and at how they had ever become friends.

Julia went downstairs. Her mother was in the kitchen fixing lunch and Terry was in the living room looking at one of her mothers books.

— Oh, Julia, how are you. Your mother just told me about your friend Peter dying.

— Im okay now, I guess. Its good to see you again Mrs. Carroll.

— Please, Julia, call me Terry. Im not used to having young people treat me so formally.

— Okay, Terry.

— I know how terrible it can be to lose someone you love.

— Yes, you lost your husband during the war didnt you?

— Yes. The funny thing is that I loved him even though he was unfaithful to me and cheated on me time and again.

— He did. I never knew that.

— Yes. And I forgave him every time.

— Why? I dont think I could. I think that if I ever found out that my husband were cheating on me or planning to leave me for someone else that I would kill him, or her, maybe both of them.

— I dont think you would. You might like to think that you would but I doubt it. Very few people actually go through with murder, mostly its a fantasy, like suicide, who ever pictures themselves as being gone when they commit suicide, they might like to think of other people being sorry when they go but thats because they believe that somehow theyll know about the suffering and hurt theyve caused. Thinking about the pain can be just as effective in helping you get through the night as anything else. Thinking about killing someone can be just as effective as a means of venting your rage as actually killing them.

— But why did you forgive your husband if he cheated on you not just once but constantly over the years.

— At first because I loved him and then after the romantic bloom wore off because it seemed that there would be nothing to be gained by not forgiving him and then finally because of love again.

— You fell in love with him again?

— In a way. Not the romantic, passionate love, not even sexual love, although that was always present, Im not sure I know how to express it, I suppose that a sense of acceptance is the best way to describe it. I realized that I could live with the pain and hurt that he had caused in the past and that I could live with him even if he kept on cheating. I could forgive him no matter how many times he let me down. It always hurt though, but what was I to do, rage and be bitter, divorce him? Eventually he always came back to me and finally he stopped running around and then the war came and he was gone forever.

— How did you feel when he died?

— I was upset, I cried bitter tears. I remembered the good times we had and I thought about our fights and I wanted him to be near me and to hold me and I missed him. I missed hearing him snore beside me in the bed. I missed coming into the living room and seeing him sitting there reading a book or listening to the radio. I still miss him.

— Why didnt you remarry?

— At first because I didnt want to be bothered with going out and dating again and then because I was used to being alone and I came to enjoy my solitude.

— I see and what do you think I should do about Peter.

— You loved him very deeply didnt you?

— Yes, I did.

— Theres nothing you can really do about him or for him, except maybe pray for him, but youre not religious are you?

— No, I understand that mom used to be very religious though.

— Yes, she was, but I think that some of it was more hysteria than real piety.

— Why is that?

— Thats a long story that your mother will have to tell you, if she ever sees fit, but the Catholic church has always had its share of hysterics and some of that hysteria masqueraded as piety when it was really neurasthenia and frigidity. Well probably see some more of it in later years as people react to the Council.

— I wish I could pray for him but I dont know how and Im not sure I even believe in God anyhow.

— Whats really important though is that you understand that you have lost Peter and that you mourn for him, cry and let the tears flow and dont let anyone belittle you or think that he wasnt important to you. Go ahead and grieve for him and each day the grief will grow less and less and there will always be that empty space in your heart reserved for him but dont let your grief become an obsession. Eventually youll want to go out and see someone else, do it. You wont be disloyal to his memory. Julia, whenever youre in doubt choose life, side with the living over the dead.

— Do you really think I can get over his death?

— Yes. Do you remember when your grandfather died. I do. I remember your mother telling me how upset you were when he died because you used to go up and see him and you loved being in his big house and playing with the dogs and the cats. You got over his death. Youll get over Peters death.

— I hope so.

— I told Margery when her first child died that our faith is a dark faith and I dont think she understood me then and she probably wouldnt understand me now.

— How do you mean dark?

— Well in the first place theres faith in the inscrutable goodness of God, belief that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his plan. Thats blind faith if you will. In another sense though theres the belief that faith is so bright, so intense that it blinds you to the things of the intellect and the senses and that it is the prelude to the true dawn. Then I suppose theres also the sense that sometimes even though we cannot understand what the purpose of everything is that it will someday be explained to us.

— And which of those did you mean?

— I think all three but mostly the second. You see faith means that you go on, you continue even though you dont understand, everything you believe may be wrong and you may even doubt, from time to time, whether what you believe is true but you keep on, rather like the two tramps in Godot, even if Godot never comes you keep on believing and waiting and trusting that there is an ultimate purpose and meaning. In another sense it means that we try to love and know God as He is and not as we imagine Him to be or want Him to be and that knowledge of the living reality is dark and obscure and difficult.

— And what was the purpose of Peter dying?

— I dont know.

— Well I wish I knew.

Margery came in and served lunch, sandwiches and coffee.

— Terry, have you and Julia been having a little chat.

— Yes, I was telling her that she should grieve for Peter but not to let it dominate her life.

— Terry, you say I shouldnt dedicate my life to Peter now that hes dead but havent you done the same thing since your husband died.

— Maybe in a way I have but Im happy the way I am and Ive gotten over John a long time ago. Im sure your mother still misses Martin; I know that I still miss John from time to time.

— Yes, I still miss Martin. Its been what, almost four years since he died and I miss most the things that I never thought Id miss, I look in the closet and see his clothes that Ive never been able to throw away and I keep thinking that Ill hear him come through the door and kiss me when he sees me. I miss hearing him worry about some case that is working its way through the commission or seeing him in front of the television. I miss going to the pool and the beach with him. I miss having him splash water over me and fighting in the water with me. God, I really do miss him, but Julia, I think I can say this without being disloyal to him or his memory, every day the hurt gets a little less.

— So what should I do, should I still see his family, do you think that theyll blame me for not trying harder to stop him from going?

— No, I dont think theyll blame you. Peter was an adult and made his own choices. No one can blame you, honey.

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— Margerys right. They cant blame you, not legitimately, go to the funeral service, stay friends with Mary. You need each other right now. Dont let the pain of your loss ruin your life.

— I guess youre right.

— What are your plans for this fall, have you decided on your major yet.

— Yes, Ill be studying English literature and and taking some education courses so that I can get certified when I graduate and teach in Virginia.

— So whos your favorite author?

— Well Ive always liked Faulkner but I guess among the strictly English authors I like Blake, Kingsley Amis, Marlowe, and T. S. Eliot, although he was born here.

— Well thats rather a mixed lot isnt it?

— Yes, Im afraid it is. The one I really cant stand though is Milton.

— Thats funny I dont like him either. Ive always found him rather a pompous bore.

— Yes, he is, he seems so sure of himself, so certain that he and he alone has the truth.

— Didnt you take Italian for your language?

— Yes, I rather liked Dante and Boccaccio.

— All those dirty stories of his, putting the devil in hell, and the dirty tricks his friends played on Calandrino.

— Yes, theyre quite funny some of them. You know at least one of his stories served as a source for Shakespeare, it was the source for Alls Well that Ends Well.

— Oh, yes I remember that one. Didnt one of them also serve as a source for Chaucer?

— Yes, The Knights Tale. He seems to be a good person to steal plots from.

— But do you think therell be much demand for someone to teach both English and Italian?

— Probably not for the Italian but I rather liked it. I like the fact that that period stands on the edge of the Renaissance, they were really looking both at the past and the future werent they?

— Yes, I suppose they were. Margerys always been fond of the Middle Ages, at least in art, havent you Margery?

— Yes, I like the fact that the art is concerned with something beyond itself, that it means something. I may not believe in the meaning but I prefer it to the endless still lifes of the Impressionists and the blobs of paint of Pollack and this new group, the Washington color school.

— Mary is going to the Corcoran school and studying under some of those people.

— Did she ever say what those paintings of hers mean?

— She once told me that she wanted to convey an emotion without linking it to a specific object, to convey pity or sorrow or anger without showing some object to excite it.

— It sounds almost like a form of insanity.

— I suppose it does. Lately though her paintings have been more realistic.

— Yes, Ive seen them, they remind me of that depressing WPA art down in the GSA building where I used to work, back when it was part of the Treasury.

— Yes, that was a depressing era to live through, more than in just the economic sense too, people were crazy in a way, everybody had some socialist or anarchist or communist scheme for running the world and the art and the architecture were so bad. So much ugliness was done then. Sometimes I think I could pardon a murderer easier than I could a bad architect, certainly capital punishment would be more of a deterrent to an architect that it would be to a jealous husband or a Mafia kingpin, it would certainly have prevented some of the monstrosities we see in Washington now.

— You two make it sound almost like now.

— In a way it was. Im sure your mother can remember the veterans marching on Washington and Macarthur turning them away. The crazy leftists and the passion over Spain. It was almost like the passion the young people feel over Vietnam now.

— Yes, those were crazy days. I remember in England the university students said that they would not fight for King and country. A few years later many of those young men were doing just that.

— And do you think that something like that is what happened to Peter, that he had a change of heart and really felt patriotic and went off to fight for his President and his country.

— I dont know, honey, it might be, but lets drop the subject of Peter right now.

— Okay, I suppose there is no use in trying to understand why it happened.

— No, there probably isnt.

Mrs. Carroll left and Julia went back to her room. She was too tired to cry, she had nothing to remember Peter by, there had been no tokens exchanged, no gifts given, she had only her memories, the knowledge of his love, and that was gone, vanished with him in the plane. She looked out at the cherry trees behind the house. She thought about the evening that he had said he might go to Canada, she wished he had, she could have followed him there and lived with him in peace there. She would not have been a fugitive, she could come back and see Margery any time she wanted, she could have visited the places that she loved, seen the sights that she enjoyed, she could have done that, he would not have minded if she had left him to come back for a visit occasionally. She should have encouraged him to go to Canada where he would have been safe. But what if he had died anyhow, he might have been struck down by some drunk driver or robbed and mugged by some thug in Washington, perhaps it had all been inevitable and he would have died then anyhow. That was no consolation. Perhaps there was no consolation to be offered on this earth.

The day of the funeral service Julia went to Parkwood cemetery. Even though Peter had become a non-practicing Catholic they had a Mass for him. She wondered what he would have thought of it. Mary was dressed in black and looked depressed. She sat in the pew and sobbed uncontrollably. The priest was saying how he had given his life in defense of his country. Had he really, was that what the fighting was for, to protect the country from hordes of Vietcong landing on the beaches, or was it to project, as Peter had believed, American imperialism abroad, or was it to prove his manhood to himself, some crazy Hemingway fantasy, as she had told him.

After the Mass Peter was interred and Julia joined the family at the house. The neighbors came over and offered their condolences over his death. When the neighbors had left Julia looked for Mary, she had stopped crying and was sitting by herself. Julia went over to her and hugged her and the two of them cried over their loss.

XI

Mary's paintings became darker, more intense after Peter died. She abandoned the protests and the socialist realist style and returned to the use of pure color. Paintings that would have been brighter and more joyous when Julia first met her now became more somber, the colors a lower value, closer to black, they seemed muddier, lacking in the vibrancy that had been in the earlier pictures.

In January, just before registering for the spring semester at George Washington Julia moved out of the house in Arlington and into an efficiency apartment next door to Crawford Hall, one of the university dormitories. She asked Mary to move in with her and the two girls packed their books and clothes and moved everything in one night.

Winter in Washington is horrible. The city then and even later fancied itself as being a Southern city and there was never enough snow removal equipment, the city fathers seemed to think that the Lord gave the snow and the Lord would take it away. Every few years the city would be hit by a blizzard that would immobilize the government for several days and that would close schools and colleges. Of course, no one in the hinterlands ever noticed when Washington was shut down, despite its proclaimed importance society somehow managed to survive without the bureaucracy for a couple of days and probably could have gone on indefinitely without it. The day that the blizzard of 66 hit was the first day of classes at George Washington and Julia and Mary heard on the radio that the university had closed. They walked up to the Circle theater on 21st and Pennsylvania Avenue where a Marx brothers triple feature was playing. The snow was about five inches deep when they went in and another five or six inches had fallen by the time they came out.

Inside though the theater was warm, it was almost deserted aside from a few students and people that wanted some place cheap and warm where they could sleep and not be disturbed. Mary laughed uncontrollably at the antics of Harpo and Groucho. Julia was relieved to see her friend laugh so much. Since Peter's death she had been morose and withdrawn and it was good to see her laugh again.

When the movies were over they went back out into the snow and the dark and slogged their way back to their apartment. Mary went to the dresser and got out a small plastic bag and some cigarette papers. She filled the paper, licked it and twisted both ends, lit it and offered it to Julia. Mary had been smoking grass since shortly after Peter's death, she said it made her less depressed and helped her to see things more clearly. Julia rather doubted that, she had tried it at Mary's urging and found the effect

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rather relaxing, there was nothing of the killer weed about it, certainly she did not believe that the next step was for her to go out looking for greater kicks and turn to heroin. The smoke was harsh and abrasive, the odor notably sweet, as for mystical insight or dreams well that just wasn't what the drug did for her. She wondered vaguely whether her parents had ever tried the dangerous herb before it was made illegal back in the thirties, probably not. The main effect was to make her more tranquil, less easily upset and she found that she was inclined to fall into a deep sleep after smoking for a while. The drug did nothing for her libido, she did not find Mary more attractive after smoking and their relationship had never been one of sexual attraction anyhow, Mary was not like Ann in that regard.

— You know, I think you might have been right all along.

— About what?

— About the futility of everything, all of the protests, the fasting and the prayers. What did it all come to? Peters dead, the war is still going on, the civil rights movement is being co-opted by the liberals. Maybe the best thing to do is just to turn on, tune in, and drop out like Leary says.

— Maybe. But why worry about it?

— You're right, it isn't worth worrying, I should stop trying to think about things and just live, just drift gently downstream. Merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.

— Maybe it is.

— What, a dream?

— Yes, or a nightmare. Who said something about history being a nightmare?

— Joyce.

— Yes, an Irish Catholic with a dirty mind.

— How about the dirty minds of us American Catholics?

— Americans don't have dirty minds, they're just confused.

— You don't think I have a dirty mind?

— No.

— Why didn't you ever make a pass at me like you did Ann. Is it because I'm not as pretty, don't you love me?

— I love you, but you're a friend, not a lover, besides Ann was just something that happened because we were locked up in school together.

— And I'm not?

— Not what?

— Locked up with you.

— No. Stop crying, will you, here have some more.

— God, I miss Peter so much. You know I worshipped him.

— Yes, I know. I miss him too.

— I think I'll go to sleep now.

— Yes, sleep. You'll feel better in the morning.

Mary crawled into bed and was soon asleep. Julia went over to where Mary had stacked her canvases. She had paintings from her different periods stored in a corner of the room. There were the early pictures, done when they had first met, vibrant, alive with color, they radiated joy in some special way that Julia could not define; then there were the paintings done while she had been dating Peter, paintings done to protest the war, figurative paintings that showed the suffering and pain that they had felt was caused by the American presence in Asia; then there were the paintings done after Peter had died, dark, depressing paintings that were somber shapes and masses of color, values that tended towards black, bleak earth tones, they seemed sad and depressing. They were not about anything, Mary had achieved that much of what she had once wanted, they were stark paintings, the edges no longer hard, the geometry that had dominated the earlier paintings was gone, they were now softer, more like the paintings of Mark Rothko. The paintings were sad without containing any sad scenes. Julia went over to look at their record collection, there was Brubeck's *Time Changes*, Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*, that had been Mary's choice; John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, another one of Mary's albums; Dylan's albums, *The Freewheeling Bob Dylan*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, and *Bringing it all Back Home*. She looked further, finally she found what she was looking for, Beethoven's quartet in C-sharp minor, the 14th, the one that was supposed to prove the existence of God. She put it on, softly so as not to wake Mary, the music was beautiful, maybe that someone could create such beauty, that he could hear without hearing,

hear those harmonies even though he had lost the outer sense, maybe that did prove the existence of God. Maybe it said not that God could be proved but that He could be experienced and that that experience could be shared. She doubted that she would ever have such an experience. If only Mary were awake to share that beauty.

She had not lied to her, she did love her but she had never experienced the sexual attraction that Ann had held for her. She looked at her again. Mary was not ugly, not beautiful, not like Ann or like a model, strangely Julia had always thought of her as more of a neuter, not androgynous, that implied having qualities of both sexes, although hermaphroditic might have been a more precise term for that, but as having no particular sex. It was rather a surprise to find that Mary might have wanted her and then it occurred to her that perhaps she had wanted to have her through Peter, that in some strange sense she had felt that she had possessed her through Peter and that she had shared her with Peter. What a strange way to form a menagé a trois, if that's what it had been.

Beethoven made it all seem so simple. The entire world had been reduced to four string instruments and in that music were contained complex ideas. That an idea could be stated in such a way, without words, with only the sound of the instruments and the rhythms and harmonies that he had heard in his silent world, what a wonderful thing that was. Would he have laughed at her little worries, at her sorrows, or would he have understood and sympathized with her.

She undressed and got into bed beside Mary. She moved closer to her and held her. The poor little girl had been so certain of everything, so knowing, and now it seemed as though everything had been taken from her. Julia could not make love to her despite everything, there was something lacking in either her or Mary, God alone knew which, but she wanted to comfort her, to help take away the pain, sorrow, and depression that afflicted her. She drifted off to sleep and dreamt of Peter and the conversation under the cherry tree and of the times they had watched Mary at work in her studio.

XII

In February SDS, the Students for a Democratic Society, came to campus. Julia dragged Mary to a meeting despite her protests that she was no longer interested in politics, all she wanted to do was to paint. Julia contended that she should go even if it was only to honor Peter's memory because he surely would have wanted her to go.

The students were concerned over the news that the Johnson administration planned to administer tests to college students and that failure of the test, even if you were enrolled as a full time student would mean the loss of your student deferment. They discussed plans to picket the testing sites and to disrupt the activities. They also wondered whether they should themselves take the test. Some asserted that they would and others that they would not. Some of them were taking the line that only non-cooperation with the draft made any sense and that eventually they could bring the system to a halt by clogging its wheels.

Julia could see now why Peter had volunteered. Here were young men from well to do families and all they could think about was, not the loss of life that was taking place in Asia and that might continue to take place no matter who won or who lost, but about their privileged positions in an expensive school. Were they cowards or would they think that they were brave for confronting the administration with its army of police and FBI agents and marshalls and men that would be willing to shoot down unarmed students for exercising their right to dissent. Perhaps Peter had been right to wonder about his reasons for objecting to the war. But she had no reasons to wonder. She knew the pain of loss and the senselessness of the way he had died, she was under no obligation to prove herself. She knew that even if she didn't agree with them on many things that these students were right to oppose the war, not perhaps for the reasons they believed but so that she and others like her would not lose more people that they loved and cherished.

She wasn't sure that she believed in working within the system, or in throwing sand in its wheels either for that matter, what she did want was to be let alone, to be allowed to live and to love and to work in peace. She did not want to fall in love again and have that person killed in a senseless accident or be butchered by some guerrilla who just wanted to be left alone in his own country.

Eventually the students stopped talking about the war and started talking about the university. The classes were too big, too impersonal, there was no relevance to the classes, why should they bother tak-

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ing French or some foreign language when they had no interest in such. One Black student, the word Negro having dropped out of fashion, objected that there was no mention of someone like Phyllis Wheatley in the American literature course, there were a few approving comments on the irrelevancy of the education that they were receiving at the hands of the university faculty and administration. Someone raised the question of the university's cooperation with the government, what projects were they undertaking for the Department of Defense. One student mentioned that at Columbia they had done a profile of the board of trustees to show their involvement in defense contracting and in apartheid in South Africa and similar things. Another brought up the idea of forming a group to research the involvement of the various departments in the war effort.

Eventually they broke up into smaller groups to discuss their ideas. One side of the room was given over to those who were concerned about the university, the content of classes and such. The group that wanted to research the involvement of the university in the war met in another corner and the group that was concerned about the board of trustees met in a third. Julia and Mary went over to the first group.

One of the young men was saying that there was enormous pressure to compete for grades, there were mutters of agreement, and yet what did the grades really measure, that they were largely a measure of skill in test taking. The course work was irrelevant, he had had to endure two years of a foreign language that he would probably never use and had had to study the work of men long dead who had nothing to say to him. These things were irrelevant, what use were Homer and Milton and Vergil to him. They had no knowledge of today's problems, they had nothing to do with war, with life in the ghetto. Their Black brothers were being oppressed throughout the world, the colonialistic, imperialistic impulse was running rampant through the American system and the educational system from kindergarten through college and graduate school was designed not to produce free, independent people but robots, cannon fodder for the military. The testing of students was just one step towards using the draft as a means of channeling young men into approved occupations. It was merely the prelude to the establishment of a slave state. Given all of this, all of this evil that was being done in the name of education it was time to work for change, to bring about more relevancy in the course work, to reform or eliminate things like the composition courses, which every one regarded as a joke, to eliminate or reduce the competition for grades, introduce a pass-fail system. Someone suggested that they take a survey of the students to find out what concerned them the most and then use that as a basis on which to build and strengthen the organization. That idea met with approval. Then someone suggested that they get together later to work out the details of the survey and said they needed to have some place to meet. Julia volunteered the use of her apartment and they accepted. They arranged to meet at Julia's apartment that Saturday.

Saturday came and Mary hid the grass away, smoking grass was considered by some to be counter-revolutionary, it took your mind off of the serious business of life. Others did not mind, it was an illegal act and as such it served to unite the users in opposition to the police state mentality that could put people away for twenty years or more for possession of small amounts of a harmless substance. In any case it was better not to have any controversy. Julia got some wine out of the refrigerator and when the group arrived they sat around and drank the wine and decided on the format of the survey. It consisted of twenty questions covering topics like the tearing up of the trees around campus, the content of classes, and so on. Eventually it broke up and they went home.

Julia and Mary cleaned up, she swept the cigarette butts off the bare floor where Al and Cindy, two of the leaders of the group, had tossed them. They had smoked incessantly through the meeting, she opened the window to let the room air out.

— You really hate the smell of tobacco don't you?

— I saw my father die from lung cancer, he smoked incessantly until just before he died, two packs a day for years. Frankly I'd rather watch someone die from heroin, at least it's quicker.

— But you're just as dead either way.

— Yes there is that.

— Yet you don't mind my smoking grass.

— Well there's no harm in that, it doesn't lead to cancer, and it certainly hasn't led either you or me to graduate to heroin.

— That's true. Do you think that this group will do any good?

Julia went over to the window, looked down at the parking lot below, at the campus, what she could see of it, to the south, sat down on her bed.

— I dont know. It all seems so useless in a way. What difference can we make, what can people like you and me do?

— We can add our bodies to the mass of bodies demonstrating and protesting against the war, against racism.

— Yes, we can do that but what are we. Margery once told me that to the leaders of these protests we were only numbers, just bodies to make the numbers look good. If you and I help make up a demonstration of fifteen or twenty or twenty-five thousand people what are to Dave Dellinger and Tom Hayden or Jerry Rubin but zeroes, just ciphers to add to their body count.

— Maybe youre a zero but I want to be a nine.

— Oh, you are.

— I wish I were beautiful like you or Ann.

— Ive already told you that I love you, youre my friend, the person I feel closest too in the whole world, except maybe Margery. Look, lets not worry about it right now. Where did you hide your stash?

Mary went over to her drawer and rolled a fat joint. Julia went over to the record collection and put on Dylans Highway 61. The girls took turns smoking the joint, passing it back and forth. Dylan was singing Something is happening and you dont know what it is / Do you Mr. Jones. Something was happening with Mary and Julia had no idea what it was. Her friend was becoming possessive, almost obsessed with the idea that she wanted Julia to make love to her. She was still depressed over Peter, now she had almost no good days, there was nothing that she would laugh at anymore, she smoked grass almost daily, some days Julia joined her and other days she did not but for Mary it had become almost an obsession. She did not like what was happening to her friend but there seemed to be nothing that she could do.

One day she went out with a classmate, he was in her class in seventeenth century literature, and he took her to dinner at Triestes restaurant on Pennsylvania avenue between 21st and 22nd and then they went to the Circle theater where there was a double feature, The Treasure of Sierra Madre and The Maltese Falcon. When he took her home she opened the door to the apartment and saw Mary laying in bed. She went over to wake her up and talk to her. Suddenly she realized that she was not asleep, not naturally, she had taken some sleeping pills, she thought of calling the doctor and then realized that he would probably report it to the police, they would find the grass and she would go to jail, Mary would be hospitalized. No, she could not let that happen. she put her finger down Marys throat, got her to vomit on to the floor, she would clean that up later even though the smell made her want to vomit herself. She got some coffee made and forced some down Marys throat and started trying to get her to walk. Slowly Mary regained consciousness. Her speech was still slurred but at least she was alive and conscious.

— Mary, why did you try to do this?

— Because I love you and you dont love me.

— But I do. How many times have I told you that youre my friend?

— You wont make love to me because Im not beautiful, not like Ann.

Was that true, was that why she felt no desire for her. Would Mary feel better if Julia did make love to her.

— But Mary, that was all just because we were locked up in that horrid girls school together, I like boys, I really do, I dont think I was ever really in love with Ann.

— No, you dont love me because Im not pretty. You only want to be with people that are good looking, like you.

— Thats silly. Do you think youd really feel better if I made love to you?

— Yes.

— Then come here.

Mary came to her and Julia kissed her gently, she stroked her hair and put her hand on her breast. Mary trembled slightly, she was crying and Julia could feel the hot tears falling onto her shoulder.

— Is this what you want?

— Yes, oh, I dont know, I miss Peter. I need someone to love me, someone to love me the way you loved Peter.

- That will come Mary. Here stop crying. I do love you.
- But you still wont make love to me.
- No, but Ill always be here to help you, if you want me to.
- Yes, I guess thatll have to do.

Julia kissed her again and went into the bathroom. Poor Mary. She had been the ugly duckling all of her life. If this had been a movie she might have gotten out some lipstick and cosmetics and shown her how to make herself up and then she would be beautiful and fulfilled. Unfortunately this was not a movie. She did love her, but Mary seemed to think that her love should be tied up with sex, it wasnt, at least not in her case.

What was she to do about Mary. She did not want to report her to the police as an attempted suicide, she didnt want to tell a doctor and have her locked up in some snake pit or kept on a steady diet of thorazine. That would be worse than having her die. She knew of one girl who had had a breakdown and had been confined to a hospital. They had given her a series of shock treatments, that doctors could be so barbaric horrified her, supposedly the convulsion had been eliminated but still the senselessness of the operation was appalling. Lisa had had another breakdown after two weeks in school anyhow so what good had that treatment done. No it was better to keep her out of the hands of the quacks and witch doctors, better to have a sick soul than to have it destroyed, to have no soul. Then Julia would have to help her, be her therapist. But she was involved with her, she was her closest friend here, well no matter, objectivity might not be so important as constant love and friendship.

XIII

The survey of the students was completed. The results were pretty much as expected, the majority did not like the trend that the university was going through of tearing down townhouses and uprooting trees and replacing grass with concrete sidewalks. The students did not like the pressure on them to get good grades and they did not like the draft. But the question still remained of what to do with the results after they had been published in the university newspaper. Actually nothing was done as a result of the questionnaire, although the year after Julia graduated from GW the university did adopt a modified pass-fail system, which it abandoned after many students realized that the grades would not be accepted by graduate schools or by other schools that they might transfer to.

Mary seemed to be getting better. She wasnt smoking as much grass now and she was able to laugh again. Julia would take her to the Circle theater and they would watch movies from the thirties and forties and fifties. She loved the classic French and Italian films that the were shown in repertoire and she cried when Giulietta Masina died at the end of *La Strada* and she puzzled over the meaning of Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet*, although she far preferred *Orpheus* or *Beauty and the Beast*. The girls would look forward to the appearance of the Marx brothers, every time that Julia saw Harpo she thought of the poem that said certain deaths were unthinkable, girls on *Vogue* covers, Harpo Marx, her own. But Harpo had died and John Kennedy had died and the world seemed a sadder place without them, as if some of the glory and love and wit and laughter had gone out of it.

In June school was out and Mary proposed that they take a trip, not a vacation but a psychedelic experience. Certain varieties of morning glory seeds, especially the blues and the whites, were rich in a form of lysergic acid. Curiously enough the flowers were given names like *Heavenly Blue*, *Pearly Gates*, *Flying Saucers*, names that hinted at psychedelic delights. Eventually the seed companies would begin coating the seeds with poison but then it was possible to eat them safely. Mary told Julia that she had heard the effect was almost like LSD but that the major drawback was that the seeds themselves were disgusting and that people had one of two reactions to them, they either vomited or they had intense diarrhea. Julia was not crazy about the prospect of either reaction but she saw that Mary was determined to go through with it and so she consented to her plan.

They each ate between four to six packs, that is about two to three hundred seeds, and almost immediately she felt hopelessly sick. God these were disgusting, why would Mary want to go through something like this. She held on for about an hour and finally ran to the bathroom where the seeds passed out. Relieved she went back in. Mary had put some music on. Ravi Shankar playing the sitar. She listened and lay back and closed her eyes. After a while she could see the music forming, it was like bright bars of color dancing before her eyes, this was beautiful. She opened her eyes, and looked outside, the

cars in the street were moving very slowly, the colors of the street lights were bright and intense, they were beautiful. Mary was sitting there, she was smiling.

— Lets go for a walk.

Mary got up and went with her. They walked down to the Pan-American Union. The building was lit with spotlights and the sculptures in the garden were lit with a pale green light. It was eerie and wild. They walked back to their apartment. The cars moved even more slowly and the lights were intense. They listened to Dylans Blonde on Blonde album, Julia looked at the cover, he almost seemed to be in focus, it was like he was moving in and out of focus. He started singing Just Like a Woman.

— You make love just like a woman / But you cry just like a little girl.

Mary was crying. Julia went over to her and cradled her in her arms.

— I love you, Julia.

— I love you too, Mary.

— Ive never had anyone make love to me, will you make love to me?

— Shhh.... Later.... Maybe.... Someone will make love to you.

— I dont want to die an old maid virgin.

— Shhh.... You wont.... Be quiet.... Listen to the music.

Mary quieted down. When would she get over Peter. She needed someone to love her, some boy, she could not bring herself to make love to her, she wanted that part of her life to be over. It was funny, groups were starting to be formed advocating gay rights, now it was almost becoming respectable to come out of the closet and declare your affectional preference for a person of the same sex. She wondered how Ann was, it had been what, three years, since she saw her last. Would Ann come out of the closet and declare her love for another woman and live openly and unashamed or would she still hide and pretend to be respectable? Well that was over anyhow and she doubted if she would ever fall in love with another woman again.

The day was dawning, they had been up almost twenty-four hours. She went over to the drawer where Mary kept the grass and rolled a joint for them, it would help them relax and come down from the trip so that they could get some sleep. They slept soundly until that evening and then went out together. They went to Georgetown and walked past the brightly lit streets. All of the hippies were out in force, there were kids, runaways probably, begging for spare change, brightly clad youths male and female, some of the males had long straggly beards and were totally unappealing.

Was this what Mary wanted, this kind of life, absorbed into the drug culture, obsessed with getting grass, taking trips, listening to rock music, not caring about what went on in the world. They went into Blimpies on Wisconsin Avenue near M St. and ate a couple of hamburgers and shakes.

— Mary, is this really what you want?

— What do you mean?

— Look that trip last night, that was nice for me, but it left you upset, arent you afraid that youll have some kind of breakdown from all of this.

— No, so what if I do, its my body and my mind.

— Mary, I dont want to lose you. Ive already lost Peter and I dont want to see you turn into some kind of zombie. Look at these kids around her. Look at that girl, she cant be more than thirteen and shes probably waiting for some hippie to pick her up and give her drugs. Shell probably sleep with him in return. Is that what you want for yourself, to turn into a whore for drugs. Look at the guy with the fringed jacket, the long dirty hair, the beard, maybe he fancies himself an artist or a musician but what has he produced. Do you think people will still be listening to some of this stuff in twenty years, most of its garbage and you and I know it.

— Yes, thats true.

— Mary, dont waste your talent and your mind by mourning Peter. Let the dead bury the dead. Learn to love someone else.

— I do.

— No, not me, I cant make that kind of commitment to you, not now.

— Why not?

— I dont know, I wish I could explain it to you but I cant.

— I wish that you loved me.

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— Look, lets talk about something else. Have you done any more paintings, I havent seen any that youve brought back lately.

— Well theyre a little big to carry around now. Ive been working on larger canvases. Ive started doing shaped canvases now.

— Can I see them if I come over to the school?

— Sure.

Julia suspected that Mary was lying, that the canvasses were largely imaginary and she thought of going to the Corcoran and looking in at Marys studio but she decided not to.

They decided to walk over to Dupont Circle. There was a large crowd around the fountain, they took off their shoes and dipped their feet in the water. In one part of the circle someone was playing the bongoes, in another a man was playing a guitar and singing a Dylan song, Blowing in the Wind. It was still not completely dark, they walked down Connecticut Avenue and went into the Discount Book and Record Store. Mary bought an album by the Beatles and Julia bought a copy of Aldous Huxleys *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven & Hell*. Poor Huxley, he died on the same day as John Kennedy and nobody remembered that. They walked back to the apartment in silence. Julia wondered if Huxleys books would give her any clue as to what the psychedelic experience had been about. Did this experience have any greater meaning or was it merely a way of going out of your head and escaping responsibility.

When she read them she found that she thought they were mush. Huxley seemed to think that drugs like mescaline were a poor mans entry into mysticism and that the visions corresponded with something real but not perceived by the conscious mind and that the drugs acted as a cleansing agent. She had read other accounts of drug experiences, one author, in *The Evergreen Review* had recounted how under the influence of peyote he had seen images of ancient kings. She read part of *Naked Lunch*, which Burroughs based upon his drug experiences, this was horrible prose, nonsense, the only interesting part was the appendix wherein he recounted his experience of different drugs including cocaine, nutmeg, morning glory seeds, and so on.

One day Mary came in and opened up a piece of paper that contained two little pills.

— What is that?

— Acid. 800 mikes of pure acid. Do you want to take it?

— Okay.

This time there was no nausea, no diarrhea or vomiting, again the feeling of time slowing down, the greater intensity of color and purity. There was a small green bug crawling along the window screen. It was beautiful in the intensity of its color.

— Look at this.

— Its beautiful, dont hurt it.

— I wont.

They went out again and walked up 22nd street to P St. They went to the little park that was popularly called the P St. beach, Rock Creek ran past there and at night it was usually deserted except for a few people who might be hanging out, maybe they were smoking grass or tripping out too but it was usually very peaceful. They were alone and they laid down on the grass. Julia closed her eyes, it was like watching flags, brightly waving shapes and colors, she saw vast hexagonal shapes.

— You know I think the universe is a hexagon.

— Its any shape you want it to be.

— Still its better than a Pentagon.

— Yes, one better.

She opened her eyes and looked up at the sky. Were there clouds in the sky or was she hallucinating? She wasnt sure. The clouds were forming images, she could see brown shapes form, coalescing into what looked like statues. The looked like the images on a poster that showed Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, the Hindu trinity; then they changed, they were pharaohs sitting on their thrones, giant bearded men. She shut her eyes again. Mary. She was beautiful. She deserved to find someone.

— I hope you find someone soon, a beautiful girl like you deserves a beautiful guy.

— Thank you.

They got up and walked down Connecticut Avenue again. They walked by the Pan-American Union. Again the light was a ghostly green and the statues were weird and wonderful. They walked

back to the apartment and Mary got out a record and put on the Beatles latest album. George was playing the sitar on the Norwegian Wood track. She shut her eyes and again she could see the bars of colour promenading past her. Gradually they came down from the trip. Mary had not started crying, she had seemed to enjoy the experience, this had been better than the last time.

The visions, the hallucinations, were they really an entrance into a greater reality or did they merely mean that something was going on in her brain, some chemical imbalance and that all of the experiences that Huxley and others had recounted were of no account, no value, they had no bearing on reality. These saints and mystics could their experiences really be replicated by taking a few molecules of a drug. What did Huxley believe, he did not seem to believe much of anything, there was no definite system of belief, a sort of amalgam, perhaps, that he called the perennial philosophy. She did not think she would try the experience again. It had been pleasant enough and she had no bad feelings about it but it seemed so meaningless.

One day Julia and Mary were sitting by Dupont Circle when they heard someone saying that he was going to celebrate his retirement from show business. Julia thought his voice sounded vaguely familiar and she spoke to him.

— Are you an actor?

— No, I used to be an usher at the Circle theater. Say aren't you Julia Gordon?

— Yes. Tommy, I thought your voice sounded familiar.

— Please, call me Tom, Tommy always sounded so juvenile. Are you still in love with Ann?

— No, I haven't seen her since we graduated from high school. Do you still see her.

— No, I haven't seen her in a long time either.

— So, what are you doing in Washington?

— I'm working as a summer intern on the Hill.

— Is that interesting?

— No, not really. Let me introduce you to my friend. This is Jim Lindner.

— Hi, I don't think you know Mary, Mary Schreiber. She was my roommate the last year in high school and were rooming together now.

— Oh, I see.

— No, it's not like that, not like Ann and me.

— Well, I guess that's good.

— Would you like to go somewhere and get a drink and we could talk.

— Yes, that sounds like a good idea.

They crossed over and started to walk down Connecticut Avenue and went about half a block. They walked down about three or four steps and went into The Old Stein restaurant. They sat at a table and ate cheese and crackers and drank Löwenbrau beer. Jim was tall, muscular, good looking. He was a Marine stationed at Quantico, when he had gone into the Corps he had been convinced that the war was right and then as time went by he said he had become convinced of the wrongness of war and of killing and he was seeking a discharge as a conscientious objector. He and Tom had taken part in demonstrations and protests against the war, he had, of course, been out of uniform at the time and had been careful to avoid getting arrested in the case of any civil disobedience.

Mary was attracted to him, Julia could see that right away, she hoped that this was the beautiful guy that she had wished on her during their trip. They walked back to the girls apartment and Julia offered them a drink. They each had a Scotch and water and then Tom and Jim started to take their leave.

— You know, Julia what I said before still holds.

— What was that?

— That I could love you even if you were involved with someone else.

— Could you now?

— Yes.

— And I suppose I would have to reciprocate?

— Possibly, but I doubt if I would ever become involved with someone else.

— It would be wise if you didn't. I think I'd be inclined to cut her little heart out if you did.

— Mary and Jim seem to be getting along together.

— Yes, it's good for her, she's been incredibly depressed since her brother died.

— But you two....

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— No, we aren't lovers. It's strange, she wants for us to be but for some reason I can't feel that way about her. Maybe Jim can help her come out of her shell.

— I hope so, she seems like a nice girl.

— She is, she's very confused though.

— Does she drink a lot?

— No, she went through a period when she was smoking grass very heavily but that seems to have passed.

— Good. Look, can I see you again?

— Yes, certainly, did you even have to ask?

— Where would you like to go.

— Anywhere, I'm a cheap date.

They left and Julia thought back to the summer that she had spent with Ann. Tom seemed much more sure of himself, more confident than he had that summer. She rather liked the change that had come over him. Now if only Mary could get over her pain everything would be fine.

XIV

The summer passed quickly. On August 3rd Lenny Bruce died, some said of an overdose of police, the police said of an overdose of heroin. On August 6th, Hiroshima day, Luci Baines Johnson wed Patrick Nugent at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. One of the records that all of the protesters were listening to was The Fugs singing Kill for Peace; the current chant of demonstrators was Hey, hey, LBJ / How many kids did you kill today. For his part the President remained resolute in his determination to forge a great society at home and to wage a war overseas. In moments of doubt and pain he had been known to go to St. Dominics, which had been Margery's favorite church, and ask his little monks to pray for him.

Jim came up from Quantico whenever he was able and saw Mary. Eventually she started sleeping with him. Julia was glad that she was sleeping with Jim, it seemed to ease the the memory of Peter and their shared loss; she was no longer pressured to make love to Mary. The quality of Mary's paintings changed again, they moved from the dark, somber colours to something more intense, brighter, not joyous perhaps but not as full of suffering and pain as the other canvases had been, they were less like Rothko's paintings and more like the earlier paintings that Julia had known.

Mary had changed in her personality too, she was more voluble, more talkative, she had never had a ferocious appetite but now she barely ate and when she did she would go on enormous binges.

One day Julia was going through the dresser, rearranging clothes, cleaning the apartment. She found a bag of white powder. Was this what had caused the change in Mary, had Jim been giving her speed, methedrine, crystal. that would account for her mood swings, she had seemed to alternate rapidly between a voluble, talkative personality and a morose, depressed personality. This could account for the changes in Mary.

When she saw Jim again she confronted him while Mary was out of the room.

— Have you been giving Mary speed?

— No, what makes you think that?

— I was cleaning the other day and I found a bag of white powder, what I suspect was speed and I'm wondering if you gave it to her.

— What if I did. she's not depressed anymore is she?

— No, she's not but don't you realize what that stuff can do, the depression that she can go through. Don't you know, goddamn you, that she needs something to come down from that stuff after she takes it. She could die from your care, goddamn you.

— Well she won't and besides what business is it of yours what she does to herself, it's her body and her mind isn't it.

— She's my friend and I love her. I loved her brother and I lost him in a stupid, senseless accident and I don't want to lose her. I want her to stay around for another fifty, sixty years, and you, you goddamn son of a bitch, you're helping her to cut her life short.

— That'll never happen.

— What the hell kind of conscientious objector are you anyhow, you say you object to killing people and yet here you are doing your level best to help my friend kill herself. God, I hope I never see you again.

— Well you may not have to. I got word that my discharge is going through, why I dont know, and Ive decided to move up here and Ive asked Mary to move in with me.

— You better watch yourself. I swear if anything happens to her I wont be held responsible for your fate.

Mary came out of the bathroom.

— Have you two been talking about me?

— Yes, we have. Mary, has he been giving you speed?

— What if he has, Im not sticking needles in my arms and risking abscesses and collapsed veins.

— You mean youre sniffing that stuff.

— Sure, its not nearly as bad if you do it that way.

— Goddamn you two, whether you snort it or shoot it its still poison. Mary, it was one thing to smoke grass and take a trip or two with you but this. This is different. dont you know that you could overdose, what if you decide to shoot up, how do you know it will be pure, you might be taking pure poison and do you think anybody will ever track down your killer. What if you do get abscesses and your veins collapse, how about the danger of a heart attack, you could take so much that your heart would start fibrillating and you would have an attack and die before you even knew what was happening. Is it worth the risk?

— I dont know. I just know that I feel better.

— Mary, your my friend and I love you.

— No, you dont.

— Mary, love has nothing to do with sex, well very little, and I do love you, but if you keep on like this I dont want to see you again.

— Fine, Jim has asked me to move in with him anyhow.

— Then move in with him, live with him and be happy, but dont come and see me again until you decide to give up drugs and become yourself again.

— I am myself.

— Then take your things and move out now. Ive tried to love you, tried to help you, and now youre rejecting my love and my help, leave and dont come back till youve come to your senses.

— God, you sound like a parent.

— Someone has to be a parent to you, who else do you have to take responsibility for you if not me?

— Myself.

— Look, Julia, Marys a big girl and she can take care of herself, she doesnt need you looking after her.

— Get out, get out, both of you.

— Fine, were going, come on Mary.

— Julia, I still love you.

Mary moved to kiss her but Julia moved away from her. They left and Julia shut the door. She laid down on the bed and cried. First she had lost Peter, now she had lost Mary. Was her life going to be one where she lost all of the people that she loved?

She called Tom and told him what had happened. He came over and she cried on his shoulder and he held her and comforted her. They went to bed and he made love to her and she felt better as he laid beside her and stroked her body.

— Julia, you know I think Ive loved you ever since I met you with Ann that night.

— Have you now?

— Yes. You know I dont care if you love me or Mary or Ann, it makes no difference to me.

— Really, even if I fell in love with someone else?

— Yes, I could live with that, I could even live with it if it were another woman.

— I think those days are over for me. Ive gone straight.

— Even if you havent I would still love you. would you marry me, become Mrs. Thomas Driscoll?

— Yes, I think I might.

— Then lets do it after we graduate.

— Yes. We will, yes.

— Kiss me.

She kissed him long and passionately. So this was how it was going to end. Mary would run off with her man and maybe she would either escape from his influence and stop doing drugs or she would die of an overdose, either way she was no longer involved with Mary and now she would marry this strange man who seemed to love her despite all of her faults, despite what he must, at one time, have regarded as her perverse inclinations. What would Mary say when she heard, would she find it strange that this had happened on the night she left.

She kissed him again, long, hard, passionately, she could love this man and she would never betray him, never be unfaithful to him. But what if he were, no he loved her and there could be no doubt, no worry.

XV

She did see Mary again. She would see her when she went for walks down 17th St. and would walk past the Corcoran. She wanted to stop and speak to her but Mary looked so bad, she was worn, tired, haggard that Julia could not bring herself to speak to her. Mary would probably reject her and say she did not want her pity. God, it wasn't pity, that was so condescending, so demeaning. Mary had meant so much to her, it had been through her that she had met Peter and she owed her something for having brought him into her life even if he was dead.

The Washington summer passed and turned into fall. The trees turned their autumn colors and Julia and Tom would go out to see her mother in Arlington. The golden days when Washington is tolerable soon passed and winter started in on the area. Tom moved in with her and was finishing up his classes at George Washington.

On Christmas day Tom was home with her and they were getting ready to go over to see Margery in Arlington. The phone rang and Julia answered it. When she hung up she started crying uncontrollably.

— What is it? What happened?

— Marys dead.

— How, what happened?

— A drug overdose. Jesus, I should have seen it, I should have stopped her.

— How could you have?

— I dont know, maybe if I had loved her more, loved her the way she wanted to be loved.

— Maybe, but maybe that would have been as bad for her.

— My love?

— Not your love. You know what I mean.

— I guess I do. At any rate the funeral will be on Tuesday.

— Are you going?

— I have to, she was my best friend for years.

Christmas dinner at Margerys was a sad time that year. She brooded over the loss of Mary and Peter and she drank a little too much. Tom took her home and put her to bed and she slept soundly.

Julia went by herself to the funeral, there were all of the family, what was left of it. Marys mother came by and spoke to her.

— Julia, it was so good of you to come, you know Mary always thought very highly of you.

— Yes, I know. Im sorry its turned out like this.

— Well perhaps shes better off, shes out of the pain and misery of this life now.

Was she? There was the sad little corpse in the box. She had been so passionate, so concerned about so many things, she had painted pictures that Julia had never quite understood, but she had envied Mary her talent, her passionate concern, and now that was gone, snuffed out and what was she, where was she, she was gone, forever, and there was no help for her in this world or in the next.

Catherine, her older sister, older by one year, came over.

— I think youre responsible for this.

— Me, how, what did I do?

— She loved you and you let her kill herself with drugs, you let her keep company with that Jim Lindner character and he started giving her the speed that killed her.

-
- There was nothing I could do.
- You didnt have to throw her out. You could have helped her, gotten her to see a doctor, gotten her to therapy.
- I didnt think that would do any good. I was afraid that theyd lock her up, give her shock treatments or worse. Shed be turned into some kind of zombie. She wouldnt be my friend anymore, shed be someone else, someone I didnt even know.
- Well now shes your dead friend and Ive lost a sister.
- Im sorry. I loved her and Im going to miss her.
- Dont let me see you around our house again. Jesus, youve cursed our family, everyone whos come into contact with you has died, wholl be next?
- Marys father stopped to talk to her.
- Julia, we seem to see each other only at my childrens funerals.
- Yes, Im afraid we do.
- I see you were just talking to Catherine.
- Yes, Im afraid she blames me for Marys death.
- Yes, well shes distraught. We all are. We all loved Mary very much.
- Yes, she was a very easy person to love, she was so bright and talented.
- I just want you to know that we dont blame you for what happened. You did the best you knew how.
- And it wasnt good enough.
- Is it ever? Maybe if we were God everything would be different but then wed still have nasty, contentious little creatures like ourselves to put up with.
- You make it sound like it must be hell being God.
- Im sure it is. But what I want to say is dont take anything Catherine says too seriously, dont take it to heart. There is only so much we can do and Mary was a free person who made her own choices, her own decisions. After Peter died I think a little part of her died too, they were very close you know, perhaps too close, and I think she deliberately embarked on a course of self-destruction because of that.
- Then maybe there was nothing I could have done, nothing that anyone could have done.
- Very possibly not. Hold on to that thought and try not to trouble yourself with doubts and recriminations.
- I will.
- Good, now Ive got to go. I wanted to reassure you, however, and make sure that you dont take Catherine too seriously and start blaming yourself.

He walked off and spoke to the priest who was conducting the service. The priests sermon was about Mary. He said that he did not condemn her and he was sure that God in his mercy would not condemn her either. What he condemned was the society, the ethic that said everyone should do his own thing as long as he didnt hurt someone else. Mary thought she had a right to do anything she wanted with her body and that taking drugs if it hurt anybody hurt only herself. Now she was gone and her family and friends were faced with an irreparable loss. She had been confused and hurt and many people had tried to help her and had been unable to, now she was gone and she had taken a part of them with her, they would never be the same again. She had thought she was hurting only herself but she had hurt her family, her friends, those who loved her and cherished her. The world had been diminished by her passing, she had been bright and talented and she could have brought so much joy to the world through her work and now that possibility was gone forever. We would never know how much she might have done or what she might have become if she had not subscribed to the vicious ethic that she was responsible only for herself and that she should be allowed to do her own thing. In the end she had killed herself and caused pain and hurt and anger to her family to her friends, to those who had loved and cherished her and to those whom she loved in her turn. This was the final tragedy in her life, to have her ideals and passion and love snuffed out by some poison from the gutter.

The funeral was over and Julia looked at the procession of cars moving through the snow. It had been a day like this when her grandfather was buried. She missed the old man. It had been years since she had thought back to the time of her childhood. Was this all that there was to life, it all seemed so meaningless, all there really seemed to be in this world that was worth holding onto was love and so many of the people that she had loved were either dead or had betrayed her, her grandfather, Ann,

Thomas E. Hart

Peter, Mary. She thought of going back to the house with the Schreibers but she did not want another confrontation with Catherine. She decided to go home to Tom. Julia walked out of the cemetery into the cold and the snow.

XVI

Winter passed slowly, as it always does in Washington. Julia did her student teaching and she and Tom graduated from George Washington in June. On June 1st the Beatles released a new album, Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band. She bought it and thought of Mary and how much she would have enjoyed it. Two weeks later the Monterey Pop festival was held and suddenly Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and other acts were very popular. The summer of love was proclaimed. Tom and Julia celebrated their love by getting married on June 14th.

Tom started working for the Treasury Department and Julia stayed home until September when she started teaching in Fairfax county. In August they moved out of the apartment on H St. Margery gave them enough to make a down payment on a house so they moved out to Reston, so Julia could be near her school. They bought a small townhouse on the southern side of Reston at 1892 Preston White drive. It was small but convenient, there was a Safeway not too far from there, cleaners, and it was close to the school, Julia would not have any trouble getting to school even on the worst days, of course the schools would probably close then anyhow.

In October there was a demonstration at the Pentagon. thousands of demonstrators came from all over the country to protest the war and to make known their opposition to the war. The Pentagon was ringed by soldiers armed with rifles and bayonets. Some of the girls went up to the soldiers and offered them flowers, tried to stick flowers in the barrels of their guns. Abbie Hoffman led a group that was determined to exorcise the Pentagon, the five sided polygon having been determined to be a symbol of evil in some American Indian religions, and they attempted to encircle the building. They chanted Out demons, out in the vain hope that the building would rise and be cleansed.

Julia and Tom had read that there would be need of places for the out of town demonstrators to sleep, to crash, as the current idiom had it, and they offered their house as a crash pad and agreed to provide transportation for them to the Pentagon and to buses to take them home.

The demonstrators were by and large, scruffy, the girls thin, unkempt, dirty. One though was beautiful. she was tall and had the soft southern accent that Julia associated with Ann. Even her name was pretty, a flowers name, Daisy, Daisy Sullivan.

She was unhappy at home and she wanted to stay in Washington, maybe go to school, get a job, get away from her parents and sort things out away from the pressure of her family. Tom and Julia agreed to let her stay on with them.

Daisy was out one night when Tom and Julia had a conversation about her.

— Daisy is beautiful, isnt she?

— Yes, she reminds me of Ann.

— Yes, me too. Are you attracted to her, would you like to make love to her?

— Yes, I would.

— So would I. Strange isnt it that we both should be attracted to her. I thought it would be just us when we got married. Would she reject us?

— I dont know.

— Would you be jealous if I made love to her?

— No, not if we shared her, if we both made love to her.

XVII

Daisy was receptive and the three of them became lovers. It was a strange combination. Daisy was tall, slender, although her breasts were not as large nor her waist as small as Anns had been; soft spoken, blonde, with long straight hair that came down almost to her waist. Julia was shorter, red-haired, her breasts large and firm, her waist narrow. Tom was taller then either of the two girls, broad shouldered, muscular.

The three of them went to demonstrations and protests and concerts together. They were at Constitution hall watching The Who perform when the announcer said that LBJ had decided not to run for President again. They were together in downtown Washington when they heard that Dr. King had been assassinated. A black kid ran by and pinched Daisys rear for some reason, then they heard that Dr. King had been shot and killed in Memphis. They left Washington as quickly as possible, before the riots started. The apostle of non-violence, in his death and in the way he had died, had brought violence to the Capital and the young blacks in their rage at the senseless killing promptly proceeded to loot and burn black owned businesses; bars, liquor stores, appliance stores; were looted and burned, streets turned to cinders because the man of love was dead and his disciples commemorated the event by betraying the principles he had espoused.

They were together at the house in Reston when Bobby Kennedy was shot. Julia cried when she remembered how joyous and buoyant Bobby had seemed when his brother had been President, she had heard how he had become more introspective when the President had died, and remembered the stories of him and his dog at the Justice department. The smirking face of the assassin upset her, she could understand how someone like Jack Ruby could have shot and killed Oswald. She was sure that she could kill, not out of principle perhaps, but out of rage and anger. Certainly if an anti-Semite was not a more moral person because he lied as a matter of principle a killer was not a better person because he did it out of principle rather than anger or jealousy.

In August the police rioted in Chicago, at least this the conclusion of a commission that investigated the riots at the Democratic convention, and the Soviet Union acting as a friendly police force sent tanks into Czechoslovakia to preserve Socialist solidarity. The Prague spring quickly turned to winter and Julia could not help but wonder if they had been right or wrong to protest the war. Perhaps the face of communism was not really a face of nationalism and self-determination but was really a brutal face that wanted to crush and stamp out freedom and beauty forever.

In November Richard Milhous Nixon was elected President and Julia decided that she would give up on politics forever. The police who rioted at the Chicago convention were not indicted, rather a group of demonstrators, the Chicago 8, later to become the Chicago 7 after Bobby Seale was excluded from the group and subjected to a separate trial, was indicted.

In the summer of 1969 they went to the Woodstock festival. They smoked grass together, went skinny-dipping together, listened to the music and made love. Sharon Tate was killed by a group of hippies led by Charles Manson and the Students for a Democratic Society broke into a violent faction, called the Weathermen, and a non-violent faction. The Weathermen led a senseless demonstration in Chicago, they ran around smashing windows, overturning trash, and they proclaimed these to be revolutionary acts aimed at smashing the fascist state.

As the summer ended Julia discovered that Tom was going to leave her and take Daisy with him.

Alienata



aisy had the easy grace that Julia associated with Ann. Quiet, soft spoken, gentle and very beautiful, it was almost impossible for Julia not to love her, she was so much like Ann. She had been staying with Julia and Tom for about a week when Julia came home and saw her reading a book, D. T. Suzukis Manual of Zen Buddhism. She was laying prone on the bed, her legs slightly raised, her hair draped over her shoulders and spilling onto the bed. She was wearing a sweater and tight jeans, she was incredibly beautiful. Julia felt the same longing that she had felt before, that she had thought was gone when she and Ann had broken up, but it was still there. It had been easy enough to make a pass at Ann back in high school when the two of them had been together but this was different. She was married now and she was not sure that Tom would really understand despite his avowals of constant love and understanding.

- Daisy, did anyone ever tell you how beautiful you are?
- No, do you really think I am.
- Yes, you remind me of a girl I used to know in high school.
- Really?
- Yes, she was from the South too, from Florida to be exact.
- I see. And what happened to her?
- Oh, we stopped seeing each other because she went to Vassar and I went to GW.
- Were you in love with her?
- Why, what makes you think that I could ever be in love with another woman.
- Well you arent exactly acting like this is just a friendly conversation, its more like youre trying to feel me out, find out how I feel about you.
- And how do you feel about me?
- Oh, youre nice enough, but you neednt be shy with me, you wouldnt be the first woman Ive been with.
- I wouldnt?
- No, Ive had others. After all what is it except a sign of love and cant you love someone of the same sex just as easily as you can love someone of the opposite sex.
- I suppose so. And have you had men too?
- Yes, sure. Love, sex, it all comes down to the same thing, a way that you can face the loneliness of your life, a way of sharing yourself with others. Youre just sharing your feelings with another person and why shouldnt you have feelings for another woman just as easily as for a man.
- And could you love two people just as easily as one.
- Sure. What of it?
- I dont know.
- Well, do you want to make love to me or not?

Julia left the room confused and puzzled. Daisy had seemed to accept so casually what had cost Julia so much pain and anguish. It had seemed to her that she had to choose, it was either Ann or Tom, either Daisy or Tom, not both Daisy and Tom. And this young girl, barely out of her teens, found no difficulty in accepting the idea of sharing herself equally with two people. She wondered if Tom were attracted to Daisy as well. What if he were, would they share her, would she share them?

II

It was several days after Julia had approached Daisy that Tom was at home. Every spring and fall he would react to the pollen in the air and develop sinus infections that left him drained and debilitated. He had the door to the bedroom open and was reading *Stranger in a Strange Land* when he caught a glimpse of Daisy. She was going to the bathroom to take a shower and was clad in only a thin pair of panties. She constantly surprised him. She seemed to have no sense of shame or modesty about her and acted as if she owned the house and they were the guests. He decided to say something to her about

this. He heard the shower running and then after a few minutes it stopped, he waited till he saw her coming back. God, she was beautiful.

— Daisy, Id like to talk to you, if I could, for just a minute.

— Sure, whats the matter?

— Its about the way you act around here.

— Whats wrong with the way I act, dont you like me?

— No, its not that I dont like you, its just that you dont seem to have any idea of decency, youre always parading your body back and forth.

— And you dont like my body?

— No. Yes, I like your body, its just that youre so provocative and the way you display yourself.

— You mean like this?

— Yes, thats it. It upsets me and I think it upsets Julia.

— Does it upset you because you want to make love to me?

— No, yes I do but I couldnt because I dont want to hurt Julia.

— Now isnt that funny, I think she doesnt want to hurt you.

— Doesnt want to hurt me. Why, what do you mean?

— She wants to make love to me too but doesnt know what to do. I think shes afraid of what you might think or do.

— She knows that I love her, Id never do anything to hurt her. I loved her even when she was in love with Ann.

— Was that her friend in high school?

— Yes, did she tell you about that?

— She said that I reminded her of a girl she knew in high school with and I guessed that she was in love with her then.

— You do look a bit like Ann. But how do you feel about that, about being with a woman?

— I told her and Ill tell you that she wouldnt be the first woman Ive been with, or the second either, for that matter, and you wouldnt be the first man either.

— Doesnt it bother you to be like that?

— No, why should it. Theres love and theres sex, sometimes theyre the same thing, sometimes theyre not. Why should it matter whether I love a man or a woman? Didnt you ever have a best friend, someone that you loved and would have given your life for?

— Yes, but I didnt have sex with him.

— Why not, what better way could you have shown your love?

— I dont know but that seems so unnatural.

— And yet you said you accepted the idea of Julia being in love with another woman.

— Yes, I cant explain it. I love Julia and I accept her but I couldnt make love to another guy even if she knew and accepted the idea.

— But do you want to make love to me. Im here, Im ready. Im willing.

— Yes, I do, but I cant. I think you had better get dressed now. We can talk about this later.

She was so aggravating. She had no sense of shame or decency, she paraded herself provocatively and she was so sure that there was nothing wrong in living and loving so promiscuously. She was, what, four, five, years younger than Julia and he, and she seemed to see nothing wrong with loving a man or a woman, it was almost as if it made no difference to her. He wondered what Julia would say if she knew that he had talked to Daisy and she thought that Julia wanted to make love to her. Would Julia want to know if he desired Daisy? Strange, if she could love both of them, be so free with her body, could they both love her, could they share themselves with her?

Daisy had gone out. Some friend of hers who had stayed over from the demonstration came and took her to Constitution hall to see Ravi Shankar playing the sitar. Julia and Tom were left alone and the conversation turned to the subject of Daisy. Yes, they both wanted her. Julia silently wondered if something like this had been behind Marys problem, had she been in love with Peter and frustrated because he was her brother and the only way she could have him was through Julia, had that been the cause of her problems, what if he had not been her brother, would things have been any different, or would she have been so obsessed by jealousy that it would have ruined her friendship with Mary and destroyed her love with Peter. It seemed so similar and yet so different in a way. God, life was confus-

ing, why couldnt it ever be simple? Someone once said that television shows were supposed to be about happy people with happy problems, why couldnt life be like that?

So the three of them would become lovers and they would share each other equally, well they would see how that would work out. She wondered what Margery would say if she ever found out about the three of them. Well times had changed since Margery was a young girl and nobody took those old values too seriously anymore. It was becoming commonplace for young people to live together and the magazines and Sunday supplements were full of stories about sexual liberation, swingers, gay rights, and now people realized that the Biblical injunctions against sex were the products of a repressive society that denigrated sex as a means of free expression of the personality. Oh Jesus, she was starting to sound like Hugh Hefner or Helen Gurley Brown, was that what she was turning into, a Playboy bunny or a Cosmopolitan girl. She prayed that God would deliver her from such a fate.

.c2.III

The New Year came and the three of them joined in the celebrations and festivities. It was strange that they had been able to live together as they had even though they had known each other such a short time. They were together when the Tet offensive broke out and the Viet Cong threatened to overrun the American Embassy.

— God, when will people like Johnson realize that we cant win this war and that we should pull out now.

— I dont know. You know I lost someone very close to me over in Vietnam, Daisy.

— Did you? What happened?

— Before I met Tom I was in love with Marys brother, you remember me telling you about her, dont you?

— Yes, of course.

— Well, I was in love with her brother, Peter, and he was pretty radical for that time, God, it was only a couple of years ago, but he felt he had to prove something to himself and even though he was opposed to the war he volunteered for the army after he graduated and he was sent over there.

— And he was killed in action.

— No, thats the terrible thing, what makes it all so senseless is that the plane crashed, and he, along with most of the men in his company, was killed before he even got a chance to go into combat.

— What Julias not telling you though, Daisy, is that that accident caused her friend Mary to go into a period of depression that led to her taking drugs and eventually dying from an overdose of speed.

— I see and what does that have to do with the Tet offensive.

— Maybe nothing, maybe everything. This war isnt just about killing Vietnamese; its also about values, about the way we feel here at home and its affecting the way we feel about things that may not even appear to be related, things like drugs, sex....

— You mean like us?

— Possibly, maybe its all a symptom of the same thing, weve lost our faith in authority, our belief in right and wrong. Maybe were improvising our morality from day to day.

— But you still think the war is wrong dont you?

— Yes, but there isnt much we can do to stop it, maybe if Johnson lost one of his children or someone he loved over there it would stop, but it wont, it will go on forever.

— I dont believe that and I dont think Johnson will be President forever.

— Not forever, but it will sure seem like it.

In March of that year the American people stopped believing that the war was winnable. The enemy had been repulsed from Saigon and the victories of Tet had been turned into defeats but people stopped believing that they could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Negotiations began in Paris, the most important being over the shape of the table over which they were to negotiate. Lyndon Johnsons popularity, as reflected in the Gallop polls, declined and he decided to devote himself to the cause of peace on a full time basis.

Daisy was triumphant when the announcer at the concert brought the news to them. She jumped up in her seat between Tom and Julia and said,

— I told you he wouldnt be President, forever.

.c2.IV

In April Martin Luther King was shot as he stood on the balcony of his suite in a hotel in Memphis. Julia and Daisy and Tom were in downtown Washington when a young Black kid, maybe ten or twelve years old, ran by and grabbed at Daisy. Then they heard that Dr. King had been shot and left as quickly as they could in the old second-hand Fiat that Tom had bought the year before they graduated.

The next day Tom stayed home rather than going into Washington and watching the city burn as the angry mobs looted the stores and businesses in the ghetto, although sometimes it seemed to him that all of Washington was one large ghetto with enclaves, like Georgetown and the area west of Rock Creek park, where whites were as much in their own ghetto, although a more expensive one, as blacks were.

Daisy was terrified at the thought of the rioting and violence. She had seen the demonstrations and protests that had occurred as lunch counters, schools, public places of all sorts were integrated. She remembered hearing about the Watts riot of 65 and she had never thought when she came to Washington that in a city with a black mayor, that was itself seventy percent black, that such a thing would happen.

As for Julia she remembered having seen Dr. King at the march on Washington and hearing him proclaim his dream. She had not liked the way he had talked about the South, that was somewhat demagogic, but she had been loyal, as loyal as she could be, to Ann and to the memory of what she had meant. God, she had been there with Peter and Mary and now they were dead, now Dr. King was dead too. Was it possible that it had been less than five years ago that they had watched and wrestled with the questions of race and integration, equality, voting rights. John Kennedy, dead; Peter, dead; Mary, dead; Martin Luther King, dead. Where had all of that passion and concern gone, she had worked hard at St. Damians during the summers that she had volunteered there and what had there been to show for it. Nothing. She had made no difference.

It would make no difference if she had bought Bessie Smith records for her aging mother or had gone to jail while helping to integrate a southern diner or had registered voters in Mississippi in the summer of 64. The carelessly tossed brick or match, the angry shot fired in passion, these would not discriminate. It would make no difference to the rioters if she were a good person or a bad person, all that could be seen was the color of her skin.

When they heard the news reports Daisy was visibly upset.

— God, why is all of this happening, what does it have to do with Martin Luther King dying?

— Nothing. These people couldnt care less about Dr. King. This riot was waiting to break out for a long time.

— Toms right, Daisy, if youd worked down at St. Damians like I did back in 63 and 64 you would have seen the resentment and hatred that were festering there. All that was needed was a match to set it off and Kings death was just the last straw.

— Jesus, it seems such a betrayal of everything the man lived for.

— It is. Nobody will be any better off for it. It will be a long time before the riot corridors are rebuilt.

An airborne division was called up and patrolled the streets of the Capital city. Tom took pictures of one on guard duty outside an apartment building and of another on the steps of the treasury.

Eventually the riots died down, Dr. King was buried, with Bobby Kennedy in attendance at the funeral service, and the three of them were able to resume their lives.

.c2.V

June brought the end of school and Julia was looking forward to a long, lazy summer during which she could go to the pool at Lake Anne and swim and read and relax in the sun. Daisy was about to start looking for a job, possibly in a department store, maybe in the government, although that seemed so boring and she wasnt sure that she had any skills the government would want. June also brought the California primary, which Bobby Kennedy won handily, and then as he made his way through the hotel he was shot in the head and lay bleeding on the floor.

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June also brought a confrontation between Tom and Julia. When Daisy was out one Saturday Julia asked him, while he was eating breakfast,

- Do you still love me?
- Yes, of course I do.
- Then what about Daisy?
- What about her?
- Do you love her too?
- Yes, I suppose I do, dont you, after all didnt we agree to share her.
- God, you talk like shes some object, some thing, is that what she is to you, some sex toy that you can play with and then discard, is that what I am to you?
- No, of course not.
- Then what are we?
- Youre my wife and shes my lover and your lover too.
- And suppose I said that I wanted you to give her up, would you?
- I dont know. Could you give her up?
- Yes, very easily. You know sometimes I dont think theres much to her.
- Shes very young and impressionable.
- Is that what you like, her innocence, you know shes had more women and more men than either you or I put together.
- Well I suppose when you put it like that we must appear to be the naifs to her.
- Jesus, cant you just say innocents, you have to use some French word.
- Im sorry if my language offends you. But look I dont think thats the real issue here.
- Oh, what is?
- Here we are, the three of us, in what can hardly be considered a conventional situation.
- Boy, is that ever true.
- Daisy and I are content with things the way they are.
- Of course you are. Youve got your little harem, a blonde and redhead. Isnt that a perfect Playboy fantasy?
- Im still missing the brunette and the Japanese geisha.
- Dont try to be funny.
- I wont. The real problem is you. Are you jealous of Daisy, of me, do you want me? Do you want Daisy? Which one. Do you remember Ann?
- Of course I do.
- Well you were upset when you thought Ann was betraying you with Philip werent you?
- Yes.
- Well, is it any different with Daisy and me, whos betraying whom?
- Oh Jesus, I wish I knew.

She left the dining room in tears. Tom had been right. She was jealous, she was possessive, but of whom, she had no idea. It had seemed at first that she was jealous because Tom was spending more time with Daisy than with her but then it seemed that the same could be said of Daisy. God, it was so complicated, why had she ever consented to this arrangement, because she had been attracted to Daisy, because Tom had been attracted to her and she thought she could hold on to him by consenting to this. Perhaps if they had lied to each other she would have passed out of their lives and things would settle down and become more conventional.

She laid down on her bed and cried. Tom came up and saw her. He got a tissue out of the nightstand and helped her dry her tears, held her against him. She did love him, she would try and stay and see if things would work themselves out.

VI

August came and the Democratic convention met in Chicago. Julia and Daisy and Tom watched the news on television and saw the police battle with demonstrators and the mayor of Chicago heckle and hurl obscenities at those who opposed his candidates. They watched helplessly as Russian tanks rolled into Prague and the Dubček government fled hopelessly, crushed by their friendly socialist neighbor.

Julia remembered Ann saying that they all watched the same news now, and that soon they would all think the same.

— You know I remember Ann once told me that something like this would happen.

— What, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the convention?

— No, Daisy, she once said that we all watched the same news now and that we were all becoming homogenized.

— Oh yes, the global village, McLuhans idea that television and radio will all bring us closer together. I doubt if Daisy has read anything by him.

— Maybe not, Tom, but I think he was wrong. We arent all alike, not yet and I dont think we ever will be.

— Maybe not but it sure seems that there isnt much choice anymore. You know weve lived out here in Reston for only a year and already Im sick of it.

— Why?

— Everybody here is so narrow minded and conformist. We have to paint our doors a certain color, make sure the light fixture is tight so that somebody from the local branch of the SS wont complain, pay dues to the association and all for things I dont use.

— Well, honey, you wanted to move out here and get away from the city.

— I dont know, I think Id like to move even further out, maybe towards Winchester.

— How about you, Daisy, do you want to move if we go or do you want to stay here?

— Are you trying to get rid of me Julia, are you jealous of me and Tom?

— No, whatever gave you that idea?

— Tom told me about your conversation about giving me up.

— He did. And what do you feel?

— I love you both. I dont want to leave either of you.

— And if you had to choose?

— Im not sure, I love both you and Tom so much, I dont think I could choose. But why are you being like this.

— Look, Julia youve upset Daisy, now give it a rest. Weve made our bed, now we have to lie in it.

— Boy is that cliché ever apt.

— Come on now. We knew it wouldnt be easy when we started this arrangement but Im sure we can work things out.

— Maybe we can. Daisy Im sorry, there now, stop crying. We all love you and dont want you to leave.

Daisy stopped crying and Julia was left wondering if she really did love her. Certainly she was desirable and beautiful, she was intelligent in her way too, not well educated perhaps, it all seemed rather haphazard, but still there was something missing from Daisy. Perhaps it was her lack of concern over what she did, she seemed to have no conception of morality, maybe that was what disturbed Julia, the feeling that Daisy had no morals, no concept of right and wrong. Well, did she? She wasnt sure anymore what was right and wrong, certainly her living arrangements would strike most people as immoral, but on what basis, some old-fashioned concept that involved having property rights in women, belief in God, some supreme being. She didnt really believe in that, Margery had been religious once but aside from the time she found her going through the trunk she had never heard her mention God or Jesus, except as swear words, so what basis did she have for saying what was right and what was wrong. Was she simply improvising her morality on the basis of day to day experience. She had once been dragged by a date to see the movie Becket and she remembered Becket saying that as long as he must improvise his honour from day to day the king could be secure but what would happen if he should meet his honour face to face. What would happen if she ever had to confront her morality or lack of it face to face?

.c2.VII

In November the elections were held and Richard Nixon became President. Julia and Daisy and Tom slogged through another Washington winter. The scenes between the three of them became more bitter as Julia became more and more convinced that Daisy would eventually leave with Tom.

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When the summer finally came they went to the Woodstock concert and were part of the mass that listened to Joan Baez, Country Joe and the Fish, and all of the other groups. They went skinny-dipping in the ponds with the hippies, smoked grass, and made love under the stars. That was the last happy time the three of them had together.

When they came back Julia grew more morose, more depressed, more jealous. She was certain that she was losing Tom to Daisy and that eventually they would leave her. She overheard Tom and Daisy talking one night.

— You know, Daisy, Julia is becoming more jealous and possessive every day.

— Is she afraid that you dont love her anymore?

— Im not sure if its that or if shes afraid of losing you.

— Losing me?

— Yes, you know about Ann.

— Of course, the girl that she was in love with in high school.

— Yes, I used to think that she really loved her, now Im inclined to think that she was possessive of her, jealous, and that it was the jealousy as much as anything else that ruined their relationship.

— Well she certainly is becoming more possessive all the time.

— Yes, I dont see how this relationship can keep on.

— So what are you going to do?

— One of us has to leave.

— I see, so when should I start packing?

— I said one of us, I didnt say it had to be you.

— Then it must be you, and you want me to stay with Julia. No, that would never work out, shed hate me for driving you away.

— Then do you want to come with me?

— Yes, I suppose I have to dont I. There doesnt seem to be much choice.

— No, I guess there isnt.

She had heard enough. She left the room, silently, and remembered what she had once said, that if she knew her husband were going to leave her for another woman shed cut her little heart out. Such a fate was too good for Daisy, for her betrayal and the pain that she had caused, but still it would be a start. She knew then that Daisy must die.

Strophe & Antistrophe



ulia sat with her lawyer, Henry Parker, at the defendants table in the courtroom. The jury had been selected and the prosecution and defense had each made their opening statements. The prosecution was going to ask that she be sentenced to death and the defense was contending that she was temporarily insane and that she had been unable to distinguish between right and wrong at the time that she killed Daisy.

What exactly was right and wrong? She wondered. She remembered something that she had once read in a satirical magazine, a psychiatrist was testifying and said that he did not know the difference between right and wrong himself but he did know what was socially acceptable behavior and what was not. So, did she know what was socially acceptable behavior and what was not. Sure, it was not socially acceptable to kill Daisy because she wanted to take her husband away from her but it would be socially acceptable for them to take her and strap her in a chair and send two thousand volts through her body to teach her that it was wrong to kill out of anger and jealousy. It was right to send young men, like Peter, to Vietnam to kill or be killed by other young men. It was right to rain napalm down on Vietnamese villagers and to send their children running naked down the roads. So it boiled down to the notion that the government could do actions that it considered to be morally right but which it condemned as morally wrong when done by a private individual. It was right for the government to take her and lock her in a hell hole of a prison for the rest of her life if it did not succeed in killing her. All of this was unquestionably right and just and fair and she had been wrong and unjust and unfair to kill Daisy. So that was what right and wrong boiled down to, were you backed by the authority of the state or not, if you were then whatever you did or could get away with was right and if you were not then you were thrust into the hands of the jailers and executioners.

She had been taken to Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Virginia for the states mental examination, there she had been tested and observed, she had been given the WAIS, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale; and the Rorschach or inkblot test. She had met with panels of psychiatric students and psychiatrists, talked to psychologists, she had been probed and prodded. She had been taken across the yard to another building for electro-encephalography, she had been handcuffed for just that short walk. She had been issued ill-fitting hospital clothes and stripped of her dignity.

Life in a mental ward is not like it is depicted in books and movies. The snake pit has been replaced by tranquilizers. The raving psychotic is given thorazine and becomes quiet and docile and manageable, at least as long as he takes the magic pills. The depressed person is given a little pill and the low is somehow less low. Mothers little helper the Rolling Stones had called it in a song, and mother could make it through the day. So now when a person is placed under observation the staff watches and observes his behavior, the way he interacts with the other patients and the most interesting thing that happens is when a new person is brought in. Then everybody crowds around him or her and asks what brought him to the hospital. Usually it is some major crime, rape, murder, armed robbery; these are the elite and it is very rare to see someone brought in for a misdemeanor, although it does happen. Usually the person brought in for a misdemeanor charge has had a nervous breakdown and manifested unusual behavior in some public place which has resulted in his arrest. It usually happens that the period of rest and boredom is sufficient for him to recover his sanity.

The patients that are in the criminal ward for observation do not go to occupational therapy and are not subjected to medication or electro-shock. Their usual occupation is to watch television, read, if anything is available to them; talk to each other and wait for visits from their family and friends. Any food brought in is immediately shared with the other patients, this is part of the ethic of the ward. Mostly life in the criminal ward is pretty boring.

The most exciting thing that happened when Julia was in the hospital was that there was a strip search. For some reason the staff suspected that a knife or some kind of weapon had been slipped in and the staff herded all of the patients in her ward into a large room and made them remove all of their garments under the supervision of the matrons. The clothes, outer and under, were passed up to the

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matrons who examined them and then passed them back to the patients. No weapon of any kind was found.

It was in this boring society that Julia had passed over a month. The psychiatrists found that she was sane enough to stand trial and she was transported back to the county jail.

She had seen her own psychiatrists and they were prepared to testify on her behalf and the jurors would have to listen to arguments over who had the most impressive list of degrees, and all of the other boring trivia that the lawyers could drag out. And in the end it would turn on whether the jurors believed that she had acted rationally or irrationally. As if murder were ever a rational subject. All there ever were were rationalizations, not reasons.

The lawyer nudged her. The prosecution had called its first witness, the arresting officer. He was sworn in and identified himself as Sgt. Joseph Lewis of the Fairfax County police.

— Now Sgt. Lewis would you tell us what happened the night of August 29th?

— I was in patrol car going east on Sunrise Valley Drive at 7:52 pm. when I heard a report come over the radio that there had been an accident at 1892 Preston White Drive. I responded that I was within two minutes of that location and took the call.

— And what did you find when you got there.

— I found the defendant, Julia Driscoll, there and she was crying hysterically, she said that her husband had fallen out of a window and that she was afraid that he had died.

— And had he in fact been killed by the fall?

— Yes sir, he had.

— And what else did you find sergeant?

— Well I looked around and I found the remains of a young woman, a Daisy Sullivan, her throat had been cut and she looked like she had been butchered.

— Butchered, how?

— Her chest had been opened and it looked like some of her organs had been removed.

— But you, of course, not being a medical man, were not sure.

— No sir, well at any rate I looked around and I found some sort of stew in a pot. I asked Mrs Driscoll what it was and she said that it had been his favorite dish.

— Did you question her any further?

— Yes sir and she started to tell me about the events of that night. At that point I stopped and read her her Miranda rights.

— Because you thought that she was about to confess to you?

— Yes sir, and then I called for an ambulance and some assistance in dealing with the situation and eventually the boys from the crime lab showed up and I took Mrs Driscoll to the station.

— And while she was there she gave a statement to you?

— Yes sir.

— And on the basis of that statement you arrested her for the murder of Daisy Sullivan?

— Yes sir.

— Your honor, at this time I would like to introduce as Commonwealths exhibit A, a signed statement by Julia Driscoll attesting to the events of the night of August 29th of this year.

— Any objections Mr. Parker.

— None, your honor.

— It is so entered

— Now sergeant, in your own words what was the substance of her statement?

— Substantially sir it was that her husband and the young woman, Daisy Sullivan, had been living with her and that Daisy and her husband, Tom Driscoll, were planning on leaving her. She said upon further questioning that she had been sexually involved with the young woman.

— In other words that she had been having a lesbian relationship with the victim?

— Yes sir, and that when she overheard them making plans to leave her she had decided to cut out the little bitches heart, Im sorry your honor but those were her words.

— Her husband was planning to leave her with her lover?

— Yes sir, apparently he had been involved with the young woman as well.

— So the husband and Daisy Sullivan and the defendant had all been sexually involved together?

— Objection, your honor, calls for a conclusion on the part of the witness.

- Sustained. Mr. Kavanaugh you will confine your questions to the facts.
- Yes, your honor. And did the defendant say anything to indicate the nature of the relationship that the three of them had engaged in?
- Yes sir, she said that they were all lovers and that they had lived together since late October of 1967.
- Now Sgt. You mentioned that you found a stew on the stove, did she say anything to indicate the contents of that utensil?
- Yes sir. The stew in the pot was her heart which she had removed and cut up.
- By her heart you mean, of course, the heart of Daisy Sullivan?
- Yes sir.
- And did she explain the death of her husband?
- Yes sir. She said that she had confronted him at dinner and told him that Daisy was dead and he had gone berserk and tried to kill her and then that he had jumped out of the window. He apparently fell in such a way that struck his head against the privacy fence that separated their townhouse from that of their neighbors.
- So you did not charge her with the murder of Tom Driscoll?
- No sir, I felt that with her statement that there was sufficient evidence to convict her.
- I see and did the coroners office corroborate her story, were the remains in the pot those of the young woman Daisy Sullivan?
- Yes sir, they were.
- No further questions. Your witness.
- Sgt. Lewis you say that you looked around the house and discovered the body of Daisy Sullivan?
- Yes sir.
- Now you did not have a warrant to search the premises.
- No sir, however, Mrs Driscoll had already admitted me to the house and I believed that I had probable cause to suspect that a crime had been committed.
- So you are saying that in effect she gave you permission to search the house?
- Yes sir.
- And that you found the remains of the young woman, Daisy Sullivan.
- Yes sir.
- And how did Mrs. Driscoll appear to you at that time?
- How do you mean?
- Was she upset, distraught, hysterical?
- Objection, your honor, calls for a conclusion on the part of the witness.
- Sustained.
- Let me rephrase that then. Was she crying?
- Yes sir, she was crying.
- Now in your experience Sgt. when a woman is upset, as Mrs. Driscoll apparently was, is she likely to be able to understand when you tell her that she is being arrested for murder, is it likely that she understood her rights under Miranda.
- Objection, your honor, counsel for the defense persists in asking questions that call for a conclusion on the part of the witness.
- Objection sustained. Mr. Parker please confine yourself to the facts of the case.
- Yes, your honor. You have testified that she was crying.
- Yes.
- And did she give any reason for those tears.
- Yes, that her husband had died.
- And later did she give any additional reason.
- Yes, that she had killed the young woman. She said she loved both of them.
- Hardly a rational act then?
- Objection, your honor, counsel has been warned repeatedly about asking questions that call for a conclusion on the part of the witness.
- Sustained. Mr. Parker you have been warned to refrain from this line of questioning.
- Yes, your honor, I have no further questions of this witness.
-

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— You may step down Sgt. Please call the next witness.

The Commonwealths next witness was Michael Fiore, the coroner. He was duly sworn in and note was taken of his credentials

— Now Dr. Fiore you examined both the bodies of Thomas Driscoll and Daisy Sullivan.

— Yes, I did.

— And what were your findings about Mr. Driscolls death.

— He had suffered multiple contusions and lacerations about the neck and face.

— And the cause of death?

— He had broken the first cervical vertebra, death was probably instantaneous.

— And you believe this to be consistent with the explanation that he jumped from the window and struck his head against the fence?

— Yes. There were specks of blood on the fence that matched his blood type, O negative, and lacerations on his neck that were consistent with that type of injury.

— Now as to the young woman, Daisy Sullivan, what were your findings as to the cause of her death.

— She had a large wound on her neck that ran a length of 10.5 centimeters and that originated at the thorax and terminated at the carotid artery. The immediate cause of death was the severing of the carotid artery.

— In other words she had had her throat cut so that she could not scream out for help.

— Objection, your honor, this calls for a conclusion on the part of the witness as to purpose.

— Let me rephrase that question, your honor.

— Proceed.

— In other words her throat was cut and she could not scream for help.

— Correct.

— Now Doctor, how long would it take for a person who has had the carotid artery severed to bleed to death.

— About three to four minutes.

— I see. Now was there anything else about the condition of the body of Daisy Sullivan that was unusual.

— Yes.

— And what was that?

— Her heart had been removed.

— And did you find traces of the heart?

— Yes, it had been cooked and was in a pot that was on the stove.

— So the remains had been butchered then.

— Objection, your honor, the question is deliberately inflammatory, counsel for the Commonwealth is attempting to prejudice and inflame the jury.

— Objection sustained. Mr. Kavanaugh please refrain from editorializing.

— Yes, your honor. No further questions of this witness.

— Mr. Parker, do you wish to cross-examine the witness?

— No questions at this time your honor.

— You may step down then Mr. Fiore. However, should counsel for the defense wish to question you at a later time you are subject to recall.

— Yes, your honor.

The judge looked at the clock in the back of the courtroom

—Mr. Kavanaugh do you expect your examination of the next witness to be lengthy.

— Yes, your honor, it will be quite lengthy, Im afraid.

— Theres nothing to be afraid of. Then due to the lateness of the hour court will adjourn until 10 oclock tomorrow morning.

Julia was led back to her cell. Margery watched as her child was led away. She was crying bitterly at the thought that this young girl, who had been wanted so much and whose birth had caused her so much joy, was on trial for killing another woman. Now the state, the Commonwealth, was determined to snuff out her life. She went up to Julias lawyer.

— Are they going to kill my baby?

— No. A woman hasn't been executed in this state for over ten years and it's not likely that they'll start with Julia.

— Then what's going to happen to her.

— That depends on the jury, either we convince them that she was insane at the time of the killing, in which case she would probably have to spend time in a mental hospital, or they'll bring in a verdict of guilty, in which case she will probably be sentenced to life in prison.

— Then I'll never see her again.

— No, either way she can be out in a few years.

— But what kind of life would she have after she got out of prison?

— That I have no way of saying.

— She could never go back to teaching.

— No, that's not likely. Look, Mrs. Gordon, my job is to give your daughter the best defense I can and to try every trick I can think of to keep her from being convicted and executed. Now this is going to be a tough job, she confessed to the police after being Mirandized, so unless I can show that she was so distraught that she did not fully understand her rights at the time she confessed the court will have no choice but to accept the confession. Even if worst comes to worst and she is sentenced to death there has been a moratorium on executions in this country and there are cases working their way through the court system challenging the death penalty as unconstitutional.

— And what does that mean for Julia.

— Even if she is sentenced to death it is unlikely that she will ever be executed and the Supreme Court will be unlikely to usher in an era of wholesale executions. Right now there are, what, several hundred people on death rows throughout the country. It is very unlikely that the court will want to start a rush to the death chambers.

— God, it would be more merciful if they took her out and killed her right off then to leave her in some hellhole of a prison for the rest of her life.

— You might feel like that now, Mrs. Gordon, but believe me while there is life there is always hope, there is always hope that a person can change. The Commonwealth will be putting on her psychiatrist from the hospital tomorrow so now I have to get ready to cross-examine him.

— I wish I could help.

— The biggest help right now would be your prayers.

Oh Jesus, she hadn't prayed in years. She wasn't sure she could find the words to pray right now.

David Hoffman was the head of the criminal division of the state hospital. He and Julia had seen each other several times at the hospital, for a total of about five hours of conversation. He was called and sworn in and stated his credentials.

— Now Dr. Hoffman you talked with the defendant, Julia Driscoll, on a number of occasions.

— Yes, I would say about five times.

— And each of those times lasted what fifty minutes, an hour.

— Yes, about fifty minutes to an hour.

— And what impression did you form of Julia Driscoll?

— I found Mrs. Driscoll to be a very bright, intelligent woman.

— You say you found her to be bright and intelligent?

— Yes, she has read a great deal, is very knowledgeable about a great variety of subjects.

— And what is your opinion as to her emotional state at the time of the death of Daisy Sullivan and Tom Driscoll.

— Mrs. Driscoll is a highly passionate woman, she is given to outbursts of anger when she feels frustrated and to feelings of rage over the loss or threatened loss of someone she loves very deeply.

— And did she ever have these feelings of rage before?

— Yes, in the past she had been in love with another young woman who later left her.

— This young woman left her, for another woman.

— No, a young man.

— In other words the same situation as existed between her and her husband and Daisy Sullivan.

— Not exactly. In the first case she was in love exclusively with the young woman and felt betrayed when her friend proved unable, due to what her friend perceived to be societal pressures, to continue the relationship. In the second case she and her husband had formed a menage a trois....

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- A what? Would you put that into English for the members of the jury.
- A menage a trois, that is three people living together and engaging in sexual relations with each other.
- In other words she had a lesbian relationship with the victim, Daisy Sullivan?
- Yes, but it was within the overall context of a heterosexual relationship.
- And what can you tell us about such relationships?
- They are inherently unstable since it is always possible for one party to develop a greater attraction to one of the other members and to cause dissension among the members of the group due to jealousy and rivalry for attention.
- And is this what happened in this case?
- Objection, your honor, calls for a conclusion on the part of the witness.
- I withdraw the question, your honor.
- Mr. Kavanaugh, please confine your questions to matters of fact.
- Yes, your honor. Now Dr. Hoffman youve testified that the defendant, Julia Driscoll, was engaged in a menage a trois with the victim and with her husband.
- Yes.
- And that such relationships are inherently unstable.
- Yes, in our present society with its present system of values, yes.
- Now Dr. Hoffman based on your time with Mrs. Driscoll how would you describe her emotional state at the time of the murder.
- She was highly distraught, outraged by the fact that her husband, whom she had loved for over two years, and the young woman Daisy Sullivan, whom she had known almost as long, were going to leave her.
- Now Dr. Hoffman, Mrs. Driscoll did not just kill her victim she cut her heart out, what can you tell us about the nature of that act.
- In Mrs. Driscolls case or in general?
- In general.
- Your honor, I object, the witness is not qualified as an expert in psychological anthropology.
- Will counsel please approach the bench. Mr Kavanaugh, what do you have to say to Mr. Parkers objection?
- Your honor, the witness is qualified as an expert in psychiatry. Suppose he testifies as to the weight of psychiatric opinion as to meaning of these actions and not as regards any anthropological expeditions into uncharted regions.
- Do you mean that he will testify as to the meaning of this in the context of this society and that you wont drag in any nonsense about headhunters in Papua, New Guinea?
- Precisely.
- Well, in that case then Ill withdraw my objection.
- You may proceed Mr. Kavanaugh.
- Now, Dr. Hoffman, have there been other instances of this kind of behavior?
- Yes.
- Would you mind telling us about some of them?
- Well, the most famous in recent times was the Donner party.
- What was the Donner party?
- A group of people who set out to cross the plains. They were caught in a terrible snowstorm and the only way that they could survive was by eating the members of the party as they died off. Only one man out of the group survived.
- But of course that was different from what Mrs. Driscoll is charged with?
- Yes, that was a case of survival cannibalism.
- And are there other instances of cannibalism that you could mention?
- Yes, of course, Western culture is full of them. The Greek myths, Saturn eating his children, Tantalus cutting up Pelops and feeding him to the gods, various tragedies of Seneca, stories from the Renaissance, Christianity is built around the idea of cannibalism, eating the body of the man-God.
- Objection, your honor, the witness is not a theologian, I move that the last part of that answer be stricken from the record as incompetent.
-
-

— Sustained. The witness answer from Renaissance on will be stricken from the record and the jury will disregard that part of the testimony.

— Dr. will you please continue and this time omit any religious references.

— Yes. As I was saying there are numerous references in Classical mythology and in certain Renaissance stories to this kind of thing. There was Gilles de Rais, for example, a French homosexual who reportedly killed some six hundred boys and the Countess Elizabeth de Bathory, a lesbian who slaughtered a similar number of young girls. In both cases the victims were used sexually and then killed, in Elizabeths case the girls were killed to obtain their blood so that the countess could bathe in it.

— I see and closer to home are there any cases more recent than the Renaissance.

— Yes, there was the case of a man named Fish, Im afraid Ive forgotten his first name, he killed a young girl named Grace Budd and parts of her body were found in his house.

— Now Dr. Hoffman, could you tie all of this together, what do all of these cases have in common in your opinion and in terms of the general consensus of psychiatry.

— Well the general consensus is that the person who does something like this has ceased to value the other person as a person, they regard the victim as being less than human and as such fit for this kind of treatment.

— Now Dr. Hoffman, based on your examination and testing of Mrs. Driscoll what are your findings.

— Mrs. Driscoll is a very intelligent young woman, her intelligence as measured on the WAIS, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, is 132. She is sexually confused in that she is oriented neither towards males nor females but is ambivalent and is equally comfortable with both sexes, she is inclined to violent rages in the case of frustration and jealousy, she is, because of her confused sexual orientation, what I would classify as polymorphously perverse, emotionally I would say she is on the infantile level, I would not, however, classify her as psychotic since she does not exhibit the characteristics of the person in the grip of one of the classical psychoses. That is to say that she does not exhibit the flight of ideation and the extreme mood swings typical of the manic depressive nor the withdrawal and flight from reality of the schizophrenic.

— In other words she is not crazy, not suffering from any disabling personality disorder?

— Aside from her infantile sexuality and her inclination to jealous rages, no.

— Then you believe that at the time of her actions she was capable of distinguishing right from wrong.

— Yes.

— No further questions, your witness.

— Dr. Hoffman, you have testified that Mrs. Driscoll does not exhibit the characteristics of the classical psychoses.

— Yes, that is true.

— Then into what psychiatric category would you classify her?

— I would classify her as a psychopathic personality.

— Now would you explain to the jury what a psychopathic personality is, weve heard the term tossed about a lot in movies and popular literature.

— Yes, Im sure we have. The psychopathic personality is basically a deviant personality, that is to say one that is consistently at odds with the social order that he finds around him. He is inclined towards impulsiveness and is essentially goalless. For example, say you or I go out to mail a letter, we might be distracted by events around us but we are still cognizant of the fact that we are going out to mail the letter. The psychopath on the other hand will forget the major goal and let the distractions become his goal. They are unable to understand the basis of the rights of others, whether as individuals or as a group and are essentially the victims of an underdeveloped super-ego, or as it is more popularly known, conscience.

— Now doctor, you say the psychopathic personality is a deviant personality.

— Yes.

— Could you illustrate that.

— Very well, say you are raised in a society of teetotallers and you drink constantly, then you are a psychopath, or if you have been pledged into a society that practices ritual prostitution, such as the priestesses of Astarte, and seek to remain a virgin, then you are a psychopath.

Thomas E. Hart

- Then if you act contrary to societal norms you are considered to be psychopathic.
 - I believe that is what I said, yes.
 - Then Mrs. Driscoll because of her sexual proclivities is what you would classify as a psychopath.
 - Yes, most definitely, they were the sexual pattern common to psychopathic personalities, bisexuality, instant gratification.
 - But doctor, doesnt the definition that you gave of a psychopath presuppose a settled, unchanging society?
 - Well, yes, to some extent it does.
 - Dr. are you familiar with the Kinsey report on the human male and its companion volume on the human female?
 - Yes, I have read them.
 - Are you aware that he found that approximately one sixth of American males have reported homosexual experiences and a similar number of women have had lesbian experiences.
 - Yes.
 - Now are all of these people deviants and psychopaths.
 - Not necessarily....
 - They are not necessarily all psychopaths.
 - Now isnt it true that there are groups, like the Sexual Freedom League out in San Francisco, that make it a regular practice to hold group sex parties, are these people all psychopaths.
 - Possibly, I really could not tell without examining them.
 - I see. Now how about polygamists, are you aware that there are still, despite the official sanctions against them, small enclaves of polygamists in some Western states, including Utah and Arizona?
 - Are there really, that is very interesting.
 - Doctor, Im suppose to be asking the questions here.
 - Im sorry, I was unaware of that.
 - Unaware of the existence of polygamists in the United States?
 - Yes, of course I knew that you were supposed to be asking the questions.
 - It is a societal norm, is it not Doctor, that teenage girls are not suppose to have sex until they are married?
 - Yes, it is.
 - Are you aware that teenage pregnancy and venereal disease has increased dramatically in the past decade?
 - Yes, I am aware of that.
 - So Dr. Hoffman what kind of norms do we have in our society, orgies are becoming commonplace, teenage pregnancy and venereal disease is increasing, and we seem to have become a nation of psychopaths.
 - That is not impossible.
 - Now Dr. Hoffman, suppose the leader of a society is psychopathic.
 - Yes, that has happened in the past.
 - Would you care to name some examples?
 - Well in remote antiquity Caligula and Nero come to mind, in our own day Hitler and Stalin to name but two.
 - Then the norms of society would be shaped by them and the people who dissented from those norms would be psychopathic themselves.
 - No, even in a dictatorial society norms are largely independent of the will of the dictator.
 - Then perhaps they exist in some mystical cloud-cuckoo land.
 - No, not quite, they are the generally expressed attitudes and belief of a settled culture.
 - But our society is not quite settled yet is it? No, dont answer that, Im afraid that was largely rhetorical. Now you say that the psychopath has no clearly defined sense of right and wrong and at the same time is opposed to his society.
 - Yes.
 - Then would someone who in a slave owning society was opposed to slavery be a psychopath.
 - Possibly.
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— Are you aware that Thomas Jefferson, in his original draft of the declaration of Independence called for an abolition to slavery, Jefferson, who was himself a slave owner. Shall I read it to you?

— No.

— No you are not aware or no you dont want me to read it to you.

— No, you dont have to read it to me.

— Your honor, I must object, I dont see where this line of questioning is taking us.

— Mr. Parker, do you have any explanation for the course of your questions?

— Yes, your honor, I believe that the concept of psychopathy, as the doctor here describes it, is rather vague and nebulous and I want to clarify this for the jury.

— Very well then, you may proceed.

— Now more recently there have been demonstrations against segregation, a Rosa Parks some years back was arrested for failing to move to the back of the bus, was she psychopathic or was she not.

— I have no idea.

— You have no idea. Now how about the late Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., he devoted his life to organizing marches and protests against segregation and was arrested frequently, was he a psychopath.

— Again I have no idea.

— And how about the people who marched and protested against the war in Vietnam, a war that our government has approved of, are they all psychopaths.

— I really cant say.

— Now Doctor, lets take the subject of right and wrong. It is wrong to kill people is it not?

— Yes.

— Then it is wrong to kill them if they are Vietnamese or even if they are murderers, is that not true.

— No.

— Its not true. Then it is okay to kill people in certain circumstances?

— Yes, under certain conditions.

— Under conditions which the state approves of.

— Yes.

— Of course the victim is just as dead either way. Now Dr. Hoffman are you saying that certain things are not always wrong. It is not always wrong to kill.

— No.

— If I stole a loaf of bread because I was poor and on the edge of death that would not be wrong.

— No.

— Now if I came and demanded money at gun point to buy bread that would be wrong, especially if I were not starving.

— Yes.

— But if men came to me, armed with guns, and said they were collecting back taxes that I owed the county that would not be wrong.

— No.

— Dr. Hoffman, are you married?

— Objection your honor the witnesss marital status is not an issue at this trial.

— Your honor, we have accepted this witness as an expert and he has just testified that Mrs. Driscoll was able to distinguish between right and wrong, now it would seem to me that since he is an expert witness he must be expert at distinguishing between right and wrong, among his other accomplishments, therefore I should be entitled to explore his personal knowledge of the subject.

— An interesting argument Mr. Parker, Ill let you continue but I hope that you will bring this line to a quick conclusion.

— Yes, your honor. Now Dr. Hoffman are you married?

— Yes, I am, for twenty years.

— Thats very commendable. In that time have you told your wife everything?

— Everything that I felt she needed to know.

— Thats terribly evasive doctor, have you told her, for example, if you were unfaithful?

— Are you accusing me of adultery?

Thomas E. Hart

- Doctor, I ask the questions, remember?
- Yes. No, I would never tell her if I were unfaithful.
- You would never tell her if you were unfaithful, but if you were unfaithful you would be doing something wrong, would you not doctor?
- Yes, I would.
- But you might do it anyhow.
- Yes, I might.
- Can you suggest any reasons why you might do something that you know to be wrong?
- Well, I might not be sexually satisfied with my wife, I might be angry and want revenge, I might be lonely and isolated and need someone to be with, I might fall in love with someone else.
- I see, and in those cases would you be doing something that you knew to be wrong.
- No, I would rationalize them and say that I was doing something right, that I had a right to do that action, whatever it was.
- I see. So what you are saying is that you would always feel that whatever you did was right even if you knew it to be wrong?
- Yes.
- Well Im certainly glad that you know the difference between right and wrong because I sure dont. Perhaps I should be locked up.
- Perhaps you should, we have seen many lawyers as patients.
- The courtroom exploded into laughter until the judge threatened to clear the courtroom.
- So Doctor Hoffman, let me summarize your testimony so far. Mrs Driscoll is a psychopathic personality, which is defined as someone who deviates from societal norms, however, you have also testified that societys norms, at the present time are unsettled and changing. Further that certain actions, including the killing of individuals or committing robbery, are not always wrong, that it largely depends on the sanction of government apparatchiks. You have also testified that the common tendency is not to do actions that are recognized as wrong but to claim that they are right, is that summary of you testimony accurate so far?
- Yes, I would say so.
- I see. Now Dr. Hoffman, have you ever heard the term fugue, not the musical fugue of Bach but the psychiatric term?
- Yes, of course. It refers to a state of dissociation in which the patient acts automatically, without being aware of what he or she is doing.
- Now is it not possible that Mrs. Driscoll was in a fugue state at the time of the tragic death of Daisy Sullivan?
- No, it is not possible. She exhibited none of the symptoms common to the state that we describe by that term.
- I see. And are you aware of the contradictions in your own testimony?
- Your honor, counsel is badgering the witness.
- Mr. Parker, you will discontinue this line of questioning.
- Yes, your honor, I have no further questions of this witness, but I may wish to recall him at some later time.
- Dr. Hoffman, you are excused, but you will hold yourself in readiness should further testimony be required of you. Due to the lateness of the hour court will be recessed until tomorrow at ten oclock.
- The next morning the prosecution announced that it was calling a witness who had been only now become available, an Ann Greeley. Julias lawyer conferred with her and she told him that she had never known Ann Greeley. When the woman came to be sworn in Julia recognized her immediately, it was Ann, she must have married, that must be her married name.
- Your honor, Mrs Greeley is a past acquaintance of the defendants and because of the nature of her association with the defendant we wish to examine her as a hostile witness.
- Mr. Parker, do you have any objection?
- He stopped talking to Julia.
- Your honor, I fail to see the relevancy of this testimony.
- We hope to show, your honor, the character of the defendant and the nature of her relationships with persons of the same sex.
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— Your honor, this kind of questioning is calculated solely to inflame the jury. Is the prosecution trying to railroad my client into the electric chair by bringing forth people to destroy her character. If he should succeed in this then to paraphrase Hamlet which of us should escape frying.

— Your honor, counsel for the defense is himself being inflammatory. The use of such language is totally inappropriate.

— I apologize to the court for my poor choice of language, but really your honor am I suppose to stand by while the Commonwealths attorney drags in irrelevant testimony?

— Gentlemen, suppose that I agree to dismiss the jury and we hear Mrs. Greeleys testimony and I will then rule on its admissibility.

— That is acceptable to the Commonwealth, your honor.

— That is also acceptable to the defense, your honor.

— Good. Then the jury will be dismissed while I hear Mrs. Greeleys testimony.

The jury walked out of the courtroom. Julia was sure that they wanted to stay and hear the juicy details of the relationship that had existed between her and Ann. Well she was damned if she wanted to have a woman that she had once loved dragged through the mud.

Ann was sworn in. She looked at Julia and Julia could feel the mixed emotions that must be going through her former friends mind.

— Mrs. Greeley, you knew the defendant in high school.

— Yes, my name was Ann Sinclair then, Greeley is my married name.

— Yes, of course, now what was the nature of your relationship with the defendant.

— We were roommates at boarding school and we were friends.

— You were close friends?

— Yes, we were very close.

— You were very close friends, in fact you were lovers then, is that not true?

— Yes, it was.

— Would you tell the court something about the nature of your relationship with the defendant?

— Your honor, must I go into the details of my sex life, is this what the prosecution wants?

— Mr. Kavanaugh, Mrs Greeley is not on trial for acts of sexual deviancy, nor is Mrs. Driscoll, would you please rephrase that question so that it is clear what you want?

— Im sorry, your honor. Mrs. Greeley, without going into details about the nature of any sexual activities that you and the defendant performed how would you characterize your relationship with the defendant?

— As I said before we were in love and we were very happy together at school.

— I see, you were very happy together at school.

— Yes.

— And outside of school?

— Thats when things started to fall apart for Julia and me.

— I see, would you tell us what happened to make the relationship fall apart?

— It was during the summer of 1962, Julia and I went to my home in Florida and we gave a party there the first night we were home.

— And what happened at that party.

— Julia saw me with a boy, Philip Greeley, I married him later, and she became very upset and she told me later that she had taken a boy to bed with her because she was upset by my actions.

— Objection, your honor, this is hearsay testimony at its worst.

— Mr. Kavanaugh?

— Your honor, I am seeking to establish that the defendant has a history of extreme responses in reaction to offenses that to others may seem minor and that she has a history of violent behavior.

— Mr. Parker, I am inclined to overrule your objection, Mr. Kavanaugh you may proceed.

— Did she identify the boy she went to bed with?

— Yes, it was Tommy, Tom Driscoll.

— So she had a relationship with him for several years before she married him.

— Objection your honor, the defendant and the witness have not seen each other for several years, she has no way of knowing the nature of the relationship that my client had with her husband during that intervening period.

Thomas E. Hart

- Objection sustained.
 - Now Mrs. Greeley were there any further incidents of this kind?
 - None that I know of.
 - None, didnt you and the defendant go to a dance with the two young men that you just mentioned and didnt you have a violent fight afterwards.
 - We had words, yes.
 - You had words, you mean like you and I are having words right now?
 - No, I would say that Julia was more upset than you are.
 - Is it not fair to characterize the discussion that night as bitter and acrimonious.
 - No, I would say that Julia was upset because I was determined to conceal the nature of my affection for her and she thought that I was using Philip as a screen to conceal my true sexual preferences.
 - And the evening did not end in a violent argument?
 - No, in fact as I recall we kissed and made up.
 - You kissed and made up, how very interesting.
 - Your honor, that is a common cliché and the Commonwealths attorney is trying to make it sound more lurid than it actually is and he is doing it for the sole purpose of humiliating my client.
 - Mr. Kavanaugh, please refrain from that kind of innuendo in the future.
 - Yes, your honor. Now Mrs. Greeley, what happened to end your relationship with the defendant?
 - When we went back to school we were no longer roommates and so our opportunities to see each other were much less. Eventually we went on to different colleges, I went to Vassar and she went to George Washington University.
 - I see.
 - Your honor, I really fail to see the relevancy of this testimony so far, none of this has any bearing on this case so far.
 - Mr. Kavanaugh, do you have anything to say?
 - Your honor, I have been trying to show that the defendant has a history of violent behavior associated with her deviant lifestyle.
 - Really now, this is just trying to inflame passions and prejudice the jury, of course my client became upset when Mrs. Greeley was going out with someone else, surely the Commonwealths attorney remembers when he was a teenager and his best girl went out with someone else, you did have a girlfriend back then didnt you Mr. Kavanaugh, or were you never a teenager?
 - Gentlemen, Mr. Parker restrain yourself. Mr Kavanaugh, Im afraid that I can see no further purpose in this testimony, you have failed to show its relevancy to the case at hand, as the defense says, it is normal for young people, or even for older people, to become upset when they believe someone they love is cheating on them and as far as I can see it doesnt matter whether the person is heterosexual or not. So I am not going to allow the jury to hear the testimony of this witness and it will be stricken from the record.
 - Yes, your honor.
 - Mrs. Greeley, you may step down now.
- Ann came down from the witness stand and walked by Julia, she looked at her and Julia was not sure what was going through her mind, she thought that Ann looked at her as if she wanted to say something, perhaps to wish her well, perhaps to say, what, that she was sorry for everything that had happened, perhaps she wanted to offer her some words of compassion. In any event she walked out of the courtroom and Julia knew that she would never see her again.
- The jury was brought back in and the judge addressed them.
- I have heard Mrs. Greeleys testimony and have decided that because of its nature that it was not to be admitted into evidence. You are not to speculate among yourselves as to the possible content of her testimony. It is sufficient for you to know that I found it to be irrelevant to the issues at hand. Now, Mr. Kavanaugh, do you have any further witnesses?
 - No, your honor, the Commonwealth rests.
 - Very well, Mr. Parker, I presume you will wish to present your case, may I suggest that since it has been a long morning that we recess for lunch and then you may present your side of the case?
 - That will be fine, your honor.
 - Then in that case, unless Mr. Kavanaugh has some objection....
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- None, your honor.
 - Court will stand in recess for one hour.

II

Julia and her lawyer were together in a small room outside of the courtroom, a guard was standing outside the door, and the lawyer was trying to explain to Julia the risk that she would be taking if he put her on the stand.

— Julia, if I put you on the stand Kavanaugh will do his best to discredit you. Hell drag up every time you and Tom had a fight, hell bring up the details of your relationship to Ann Sinclair, hell try to make it seem that youre lying about the breakdown that took place when you heard that Daisy and Tom were going to leave you. He wants to put you in the electric chair.

— I know, but dont you think that the jury will believe me, after all I am telling the truth.

— Truth, ye gods, what is truth, you know that still hasnt been answered to anybodys satisfaction since Pilate asked it. Dont you think that Sacco and Vanzetti were telling the truth when they said they didnt commit the robbery, but they went to the chair just the same, innocent or guilty, liar or not, he wants you dead and he means to see you burn.

— I suppose I do deserve to die for what I did.

— Jesus, who are you to judge yourself, did you give birth to yourself, no. Julia, Ill tell you and Ill tell anyone, hell yes there are bastards that deserve to die, but does that give us the right to kill them, we cant bring them to life again and apologize if were wrong, now can we, and how about all of the people that died that didnt deserve to die, what can we do for them, nothing. Julia, I talked to your mother the other day.

— Yes, what did she have to say.

— Oh nothing really, shes upset of course. I told her and Ill tell you that I believe that theres always hope while you live. People are always capable of growth and change and killing them, however justified that may seem, cuts off that possibility forever.

— I see. So are you going to put me on the stand or not.

— I guess I have to, I have to make the jury see things my way and not Kavanaughs way, see that you acted out of blind, irrational, impulse and that it wasnt a premeditated plot. Ill put you on the stand and Ill do the best I can to keep Kavanaugh from destroying you.

— Then lets go.

They went back in to the courtroom and Julia was called and sworn in.

— Mrs. Driscoll, could you tell the court what happened on the afternoon of August 29th?

— I was at home and I was fixing dinner for the three of us.

— That would be yourself, Daisy Sullivan, and your husband, Thomas Driscoll.

— Yes, thats right. I was fixing beef stroganoff and I was cutting up steak when Daisy came in and told me that she and Tom were leaving me.

— Now had you had any prior conversations to indicate that they might be planning on leaving you?

— No.

— Okay, you may continue.

— I remember that Daisy and I started arguing, she got very loud and threatening.

— You say she got threatening, how, in what way was she threatening.

— She said that my jealousy had driven Tom away from me and that she could love him and give him what I couldnt.

— She could give him what you couldnt, what did she mean by that?

— I dont know. At any rate at that point she grabbed by hand and demanded that I let go of Tom.

— And what happened then.

— I was holding the knife with my other hand and then everything began to seem strange, it was like I was standing outside of myself, watching myself, do something while some other person was doing it. I cant explain it, it was like I was two people, one who was watching and the other who was doing. I remember wanting to get free of Daisys grip and I raised the knife and the next thing I knew she was laying on the kitchen floor. I moved the body to the basement and went on fixing dinner.

Thomas E. Hart

- And you dont remember removing her heart or any of your subsequent actions.
- No.
- And yet your statement to the police says that you told your husband about killing Daisy and that he went berserk and in the process that he killed himself, would you explain that.
- I dont think I really came to until after he had fallen from the window. Like I said it was as if someone else was doing everything and I was just sort of standing around watching.
- I see, now have you ever had this feeling before or anything even remotely similar.
- Yes, I took LSD several years back and on one occasion I had the feeling of being in two places at the same time, but that passed after a short time. Also from time to time Ive had feelings that everything is totally unreal, that Im not really here.
- I see, have you had those feelings recently?
- Constantly, ever since this trial started. I keep hoping that Ill wake up and see Daisy and Tom and find out that it was all just a bad dream.
- Im sure we all wish that too Mrs. Driscoll. Is there anything else that you wish to tell the court?
- Only that I wish that I could bring Daisy and Tom back to life, Id give anything to be able to see them again, I dont think that I would feel the same way, even if they did leave me.
- Your honor, I have no further questions for this witness.
- Mr. Kavanaugh, do you wish to cross-examine?
- I most certainly do, your honor. Mrs. Driscoll, you say that everything seemed unreal to you and that you cut the victims, Daisy Sullivans, throat when she grabbed your hand.
- Yes, thats what I said.
- Yet isnt it true that you had prior knowledge of the plans that your husband and Daisy Sullivan had made to leave you.
- No, its not true.
- Didnt you have previous conversations with Tom and Daisy about your jealousy and your resentment towards Tom because he was spending more time with Daisy than you?
- Yes, of course, we had disagreements, every married couple does.
- But you werent just a couple were you?
- No.
- And yet your statement says that you overheard them having a conversation about leaving you?
- Yes, but I didnt confront them about it, I didnt talk to them about it.
- So you brooded about it?
- Yes, but I didnt plan to kill Daisy.
- You didnt plan to kill her, you just waited until a convenient moment presented itself.
- No, thats not it at all.
- You said that Daisy had grabbed your hand?
- Yes, she had taken hold of it very abruptly.
- Why didnt you simply remove Daisys hand from yours?
- I dont know, when she did that everything changed, I wasnt me anymore, it was like I was someone else and that I was watching everything.
- You have had previous relationships that ended unhappily?
- Yes.
- Were they with men or with women?
- Both.
- Both men and women. Would you care to tell us about them?
- Your honor, I must object here, the prosecution is dragging in irrelevancies.
- Your honor, I am trying to establish a pattern of behavior on the part of the witness, a pattern that I believe will show that she is attempting to deceive the jury with regards to her alleged insanity.
- Very well then, you may proceed Mr. Kavanaugh.
- Well when I was in high school I was in love with a girl, my roommate, Ann Sinclair.
- And what happened to your relationship with Ann Sinclair?
- We broke up.
- Why, was it because she wanted to have a normal sexual life, a life that you resented and wanted to deny her?
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— No, she started going out with a boy during our summer vacation and when we went back to school we were no longer roommates so we just drifted apart.

— I see and after you and Miss Sinclair broke up.

— I was in love with a boy but he died in Vietnam.

— And did this boy have a name?

— Yes, he was Peter Schreiber.

— And didnt you have a relationship with his sister as well.

— She was my roommate my senior year in high school and we roomed together for a while in college.

— This sister, what was her name?

— Mary.

— And was Mary in love with you?

— She thought she was.

— She thought she was, and what did you think about her.

— I liked her, she was my friend, I loved her but I never had sexual relations with her.

— Your honor, where is all of this taking us, the prosecution is going on a fishing expedition, by bringing up all of these past experiences he is seeking solely to inflame the jury and prejudice it against my client.

— Mr. Kavanaugh, is there some point to your questioning?

— Your honor, I have said repeatedly that I am trying to bring out that the defendant has a history of violent reaction when confronted with a situation where she feels that she will be deprived of the object of her sexual attraction.

— Your honor, why cant he just say that shes subject to jealous rages instead of being so obscure?

— Mr. Kavanaugh, I agree on that point, periphrasis can make for nice rhetorical touches but it is out of place right now,

— Yes, your honor.

— Now as to the other point I agree with the defense that this line of questioning is inflammatory and you will drop it at once. The defendant is not on trial for her sexual acts but for one specific act, killing Daisy Sullivan. The jury will disregard the testimony from I was watching everything and it will be stricken from the record.

— Yes, your honor. Now Mrs. Driscoll, you have testified that you felt as if you were another person and that you were watching yourself as you killed Daisy Sullivan, what exactly did you see yourself doing as you watched?

— I saw the knife in my hand. Then I was leaning forward. The knife went into her throat.

— And all this time you were somewhere else watching?

— Yes, it was me and it wasnt me all at the same time.

— And then what happened?

— Her blood spurted all over me, all over the kitchen. I dragged her body down to the basement.

— And it was there that you cut her heart out?

— I suppose, it all seems so vague now. And then I remember that I went upstairs, I changed my clothes and I cleaned the kitchen.

— Then you fixed your husbands dinner.

— Yes.

— And he walked in and you told him that you had killed Daisy Sullivan.

— Yes.

— And all of this time you were not aware of what you were doing?

— Yes, I was totally unaware.

— Do you really expect the jury to believe that?

— Objection, your honor, the prosecution is badgering my client again.

— Sustained.

— Mrs. Driscoll, do you believe that it is wrong to take another persons life.

— Yes, Ive marched and protested against the war in Vietnam. Ive never had anything like this happen to me before.

Thomas E. Hart

— Of course not, otherwise you would have been tried for murder before now. Do you believe that adultery is wrong?

— How do you mean?

— Do you believe that it is or was morally wrong for a man, such as your husband, to make love to another woman behind your back.

— Yes, I suppose so. But we didnt make love behind each others back, we all knew what was going on.

— I see, well I wont ask you to go into any details of your sexual adventures, Im sure the jurors can imagine those for themselves, but without going down the list can you tell us if you believe that it is wrong to violate the Decalogue?

— Im sorry, the what?

— The Decalogue, the ten commandments, I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not steal, and so on.

— Oh, I dont believe in God so I cant say anything about some of them.

— Well the ones that dont deal with God then. Lets take the one about honoring your mother and father first.

— Yes, I respect my mother, my father died some time ago.

— You believe its wrong to kill, weve established that, that its wrong to commit adultery if it means sneaking around but that its okay if you do it in public.

— No, thats not what I meant at all. Daisy and Tom and I had a special relationship.

— Special, how?

— We loved each other and it was something that when it happened seemed perfectly natural and joyous. There wasnt any question of adultery involved.

— Okay, moving on, is it wrong to steal?

— Yes.

— Is it wrong to lie?

— That depends.

— On what?

— On what the lie is about. If its about my cooking, saying that something is delicious so as not to hurt my feelings then it is hardly a major lie.

— But its still a lie?

— Yes, I suppose so.

— Would you lie to protect someone, say your mother were on trial here, would you lie to protect her.

— Possibly, I dont know.

— Would you lie to protect yourself, to keep yourself from going to the electric chair?

— No.

— You wouldnt lie to keep yourself from being executed?

— No, Daisy and Tom, Mary and Peter, everybody Ive ever loved is dead, why shouldnt I join them too?

— So perhaps you killed Daisy Sullivan because you wanted to die, publicly, spectacularly.

— No, I loved Daisy. When she told me that she was leaving me I couldnt control myself, suddenly I had killed her and then Tom was home and he died too.

— So Daisy Sullivan and Tom Driscoll died because you loved them?

— Yes, I guess so.

— Getting back to the question of right and wrong, is it necessary to go through the rest of the list, for example covetousness, is it wrong to covet, to want to possess something that rightfully belongs to another.

— Yes, I suppose it is.

— Now, weve established that you accept most of the ten commandments as being valid moral laws so do you still presume to tell the court that at the time of the death of Daisy Sullivan you were insane, that is unable to distinguish between right and wrong.

— Yes. Ive already said that when it happened something came over me and it was like I was two different people, one who knew it was wrong but was standing aside watching and the other who was actually doing it. I dont think that person knew what was right and wrong.

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- Your honor, I have no further questions of this witness.
- You may step down Mrs. Driscoll. Mr. Parker, I presume the examination of your next witness will also be quite lengthy.
- Yes it will be, your honor.
- Then court will stand in recess until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.
- In the morning the psychiatrist for the defense, Dr. Paul Calder, was called and sworn in.
- Dr. Calder, I believe that you spoke to the defendant on a number of occasions?
- Yes, I did.
- How many times did you speak to her?
- I don't remember exactly, I would say five or six times for about an hour each time.
- And what sort of impression did you form of Mrs. Driscoll?
- She is bright, highly articulate, charming, she is capable of great devotion to her friends and lovers, I was very sorry when our sessions ended.
- You were sorry to see the sessions end?
- Yes, it is not often that I have a patient as bright and as pretty as Mrs. Driscoll.
- Well that is certainly an interesting admission Doctor. What did you make of her in terms of personality profile, did you find her to be psychopathic?
- That is rather an old-fashioned term, one that I'm not sure has relevance to us today.
- Would you explain why doctor?
- Well the term psychopath, it frequently conjures up pictures of some mad man wandering around with a head in a hat box.
- You are, of course referring to a cinematic depiction of a psychopath.
- Yes, I've forgotten the name of it, I believe it was written or directed by Emlyn Williams and it has a scene where an old woman in a wheelchair is pushed downstairs.
- The name need not detain us here doctor, but you say that is one popular depiction of the psychopathic personality.
- Yes, then there was the book and the movie *Rebel Without a Cause* although interestingly enough the book and the movie had nothing in common except for the title.
- That's all very interesting doctor, but what does it have to do with the psychopathic personality.
- Well now, it's all very convenient to label people as psychopaths or schizophrenics, it points out the common elements in their illnesses, but in a sense it is bit like labeling me as a Jew. Does that really tell you anything very interesting about me? Not really, because my conception of Jewishness may be totally different from another Jew's conception of Jewishness. Labeling someone psychopathic or schizophrenic conveys a certain amount of information but the really interesting part is that person's response to his illness, his individuality.
- I see, is there anything else you can tell us about the psychopathic personality or the label?
- Well, one important thing to note is that since the psychopath is defined, by someone like Dr. Hoffman, as being in a state of rebellion against society it is important to understand that social progress comes through rebellion and it is possible to define psychopathy in such a way that all constructive rebellion is eliminated or repressed by using psychiatry as an agent for putting away undesirables.
- Could you give us an example Dr. Calder.
- Certainly, suppose that you live in a society where a certain group or class of people are repressed. Such as Blacks are or were in some parts of the South in this country, or as they still are in South Africa and you rebel, you say that men should be treated equally without regards to their race, then you have a positive goal, one which many, if not most of us would embrace, then you are not psychopathic, you are seeking a positive goal.
- Now with regards to sexual lifestyles what can you tell us.
- In our culture sexual fidelity in marriage and virginity outside of marriage have been the publicly declared norms, however, there have been frequent instances where these norms have been flouted, sometimes by the very people that should have been leaders in enforcing these norms.
- Can you give a concrete example?
- Edward, the successor of Queen Victoria, was a notorious profligate. There have been other more recent examples among our own leaders and politicians.
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- I see. And what can you tell us about the norms regarding lesbianism.
- That has consistently been a taboo practice in our culture, however, in recent years the taboo has broken down and many feminists are saying that lesbianism should not be regarded as a deviant practice and many psychiatrists and psychologists are coming to agree with them.
- It is not deviant, but it is not normal, is it?
- In the sense that normal means a practice that is socially sanctioned, no. In the sense that it is practiced by a majority of women, no. In the sense that it is tolerated and not punished by society, yes.
- So the practice of lesbianism is becoming more widely accepted?
- Yes.
- So to many people it would not be a violation of the moral code to be involved in a lesbian relationship?
- No.
- Now what about the menage a trois in which the defendant and her husband and Daisy Sullivan were involved.
- It is uncommon but again such practices while not popular, except as male fantasies, are not being punished by society as they once were, that is to say social ostracism and castigation by members of an outraged society is not as frequent as it might have been even twenty or thirty years ago.
- So it is unfair to label my client as psychopathic based on her sexual activities?
- Yes, I would say so.
- How about in regards to other areas, does she exhibit the characteristics of the psychopath?
- Again I would have to say no. For example, her rebellion concerning Vietnam was carefully focused, a large part of it was the result of the death of a young man that she was deeply in love with. Also she is deeply caring about her friends, she tended to her young mans sister after he died and tried to help her through a period of depression during which the young woman turned to amphetamines. She tried to help the young woman stop using the drugs, that she failed may be due to inexperience or lack of wisdom, although I personally believe that her friend was bent on self-destruction and that nobody could have helped her, but it was not due to any lack of caring on her part.
- Dr. Calder you sound as if youre rather fond of the defendant.
- Yes, as I said before she is a charming, attractive, intelligent young woman, I should be deeply sorry if anything untoward happened to her.
- What is your evaluation of the defendants mental state at the time of the deaths of Daisy Sullivan and Thomas Driscoll.
- I believe that she had undergone a period of dissociation due to the profound stress that she was placed under as a result of what she felt to be a shift in Tom Driscolls attentions from her to the woman Daisy Sullivan and that when Miss Sullivan confronted her with the news that she and her husband were leaving her that she collapsed under the pressure and took the only course that she believed open to her.
- In other words during this period of dissociation it was as if she was two separate people and one of them acted and the other watched?
- Yes, precisely.
- In your opinion was she cognizant of right and wrong at the time of her actions?
- Now you must understand that the legal concept of insanity and the medical concept are different. Under the law in this state a person is sane if he can distinguish right and wrong, well that has no medical meaning. If you mean was she cognizant of her actions and aware that they violated the laws of the state and that they would have consequences that might prove deleterious to her I would have to say no.
- In other words it is your opinion that at the time of the death of Daisy Sullivan and Thomas Driscoll that the defendant was, within the legal meaning of the term, insane?
- Yes.
- Thank you, Dr. Calder. Your witness.
- Dr. Calder you say that the defendant was unable to distinguish right from wrong at the time of the deaths of Daisy Sullivan and Thomas Driscoll?
- Yes.
- Now what kind of tests did you administer to her, or did you simply talk to her?
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— I arranged for a standard battery of psychological tests to be given to her including the WAIS and the Rorschach test.

— And your findings are substantially opposed to that of Dr. Hoffman?

— Yes.

— Why is that Dr. Calder?

— In any kind of psychological testing you can have two different types of evaluations, those that are purely objective, for example if you answer yes to the question I think people are talking about me behind my back there is a high probability that the person answering the question is paranoid, of course it is also possible that he is the subject of gossip, in which case the response to the question must be correlated with the responses to other questions. On the other hand with the Rorschach test there is a subjective element present. For example, say I show you the first card and you say it is a picture of a butterfly, to most people it does look like a butterfly, but suppose you say that it is a moth and that it is pinned to a wall or in a box such as collectors use for displaying their specimens, that may say something about the state of your ego. In short the criteria for evaluating that test are themselves somewhat subjective.

— Then two highly trained psychologists or psychiatrists could disagree as to the interpretations of those test results.

— Yes.

— Is it possible to defeat those tests, to deliberately lie about what you see?

— It may be possible but it is highly unlikely because it would call for familiarity with the cards themselves as well as insight into what responses are appropriate to achieve the desired result.

— I see. Is it possible for your patients to lie to you?

— Yes, but it would be self-defeating if the patient is interested in getting well.

— Suppose the patient is interested in avoiding the electric chair?

— Objection, your honor, calls for a conclusion on the part of the witness.

— Sustained. The jury will disregard that question.

— You have testified that the defendant broke under the strain of hearing that her husband and her lover would leave her.

— Yes, that is correct.

— And that under the pressure of the news she collapsed and in effect became two separate people.

— Yes.

— Now does such a thing happen often in your experience Dr. Calder.

— Yes, it happens everyday, in fact it happens to almost everyone almost everyday, although usually in a much milder form than it happened to the defendant.

— Would you explain that Dr.

— Certainly, when I think about myself, when I ask myself why I did something then I am thinking of myself as both subject and object, the person that asks why is one person and the person to whom the question is addressed is another.

— Now isn't this largely a question of semantics Dr. Calder?

— To a certain extent perhaps and yet it is this phenomenon that makes analysis and therapy possible. In Mrs. Driscoll's case, however, the phenomenon went much deeper than we observe in the ordinary individual and in this case she was actually, for a time at least, two separate people.

— Leaving aside the question of her dissociation Dr. Calder would you address the question of right and wrong and how the psychiatric profession regards this question now.

— Right now I would say that the essential position of the discipline is relativistic.

— And what does that mean in laymans terms.

— What it means is that certain matters of right and wrong are not regarded as being fixed but are instead regarded as being culturally related. In other words polygamy is currently frowned upon in the United States but it is officially approved by the Muslim religion. In other cultures human neo-nates...

— Neo-nates?

— Newborns, infants. They are exposed upon birth if they happen to be female. Abortion is approved and condoned in Sweden but it is currently illegal in most of the United States, I believe it may be legal in Puerto Rico. So it tends to depend on where you live whether certain actions are classed as right or wrong.

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- Now Dr. Calder, something like abortion is a matter of choice, correct?
- Yes.
- So a woman is not under compulsion to have an abortion if she does not wish to?
- No, however, in our country she can be forced to carry a baby to term if she does not want it.
- Objection, your honor, we are trying a murder case, not an abortion.
- Sustained. Mr. Kavanaugh do you have a point to this line of questioning?
- Yes, your honor, I am trying to establish whether the witness believes that there is an absolute morality, an absolute right and wrong.
- Very well then, proceed, however, bring this line to a speedy conclusion.
- Ill try, your honor. Now Dr. Calder how would you define insanity for the jury.
- As Ive said it is not a medical term. It is a legal term and for legal purposes it may be construed to mean that the subject is not aware of the moral meaning of his or her actions within the context of societal norms and is unaware of the consequences of those actions.
- I see and you believe that was the state of mind of Mrs. Driscoll at the time of the incidents of August 29th?
- Yes, I do.
- Have you ever considered the possibility that she lied to you?
- Objection, your honor, what basis does he have for asserting that my client lied?
- Very well then, I withdraw the question. I have no further questions for this witness.
- Dr. Calder, you may step down.
- Mr. Parker, do you have any more witnesses.
- No, your honor, the defense rests.
- Very well then, we will hear closing arguments and I will instruct the jury tomorrow.

III

- Ladies and gentlemen of the jury you have heard the defendant testify that she killed Daisy Sullivan, she has claimed that she suffered a mental collapse at the time of the killing and that she was in effect two different people at the time of the killing and that the one who killed Daisy Sullivan was unaware of what was right and wrong. You have before you the statement that she gave to the police in which she said that she had overheard the victim and her husband planning to leave her. No doubt the defense will contend that her admission that she had thought of killing Daisy Sullivan was a fantasy, not the careful act of premeditation that we know it to be. The defendant in claiming insanity at the time of the killing is trying to conceal her own motivation which is that of a jealous woman who was scorned by her lesbian lover and rejected by her husband. You have heard two psychiatrists testify as to the defendants knowledge of right and wrong at the time of the killing. For the purposes of the law it is not necessary to form an opinion as to the universal or absolute character of our moral code it is sufficient that the defendant recognize that there is a moral code and to recognize that certain things, adultery, theft, murder, are not condoned in our society and that the violation of this moral code carries with it grave penalties, including that of the extreme penalty, which in this state is death by electrocution.
- It is therefore with this in mind that I suggest to you that Julia Driscoll was fully cognizant of the nature of her actions and that I ask you to find her guilty of the murder of Daisy Sullivan.

IV

- Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Julia Driscoll, by her own admission did kill Daisy Sullivan. You have heard the statement that she made to officer Lewis in which she said that she had overheard the victim and her husband planning to leave her and that she thought of killing Daisy Sullivan at the time, however, I ask you to remember that the statement was given by a distraught woman who had just seen her husband of two years die and who had just suffered an extreme collapse that cost her the life of her lover and her husband. I suggest to you that the guilt that she felt over the killing of Daisy Sullivan led her to make that statement and that what had been a fantasy became instead a nightmare. Let me confide to you that there have been many times when I have wished that the prosecutor, Mr.
-
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Kavanaugh, was dead, and I have done nothing to carry out those wishes. Yet suppose I were coming home from a party and it was late at night and Mr. Kavanaugh stepped out in front of my car, I step on the brakes and they fail, I swerve and hit and kill him. Am I guilty of premeditated murder because I killed him. No, because I did not carry through my wish in any concerted way, I did not plan to kill him and his death was accidental. Now Julia Driscoll, under stress and feeling guilty about an act that she knew to be morally reprehensible treated her fantasy as something to be guilty about and the prosecution would have you regard it as a plan. What it was was a fantasy, a horrible fantasy that became a nightmare.

— You have heard the testimony of two psychiatrists, both with conflicting views as to my clients mental state. One, Dr. Hoffman, believes that she knew right from wrong at the time of the death of Daisy Sullivan, he has described her as a psychopathic personality, but by his own admission that description is most applicable to societies that are settled and fundamentally unchanging. In a society such as ours, where everything is in a constant state of flux and in which there is a diversity of traditions, religions, and beliefs that term is so broad as to be meaningless. Dr. Calder on the other hand believes that my client underwent a period of dissociation and was not responsible for her actions nor cognizant of their moral meaning. I suggest to you that this view involves less contradiction than the judicial fiction of knowing right and wrong.

— My client is not on trial for her lifestyle. That she had bisexual relations with Daisy and Tom is irrelevant. she is on trial for murder. A murder that has none of the characteristics of a well thought out plan, one that by its very nature is mad. She did not plan on encountering Daisy in the kitchen, she had done nothing, despite being home all day, to advance any kind of plan for killing Daisy. No, it was when Daisy confronted her in the kitchen that broken by stress and driven by rage she killed her. That is the act of someone under the influence of strong passion not someone acting under the influence of reason.

— Finally, there is the nature of the penalty itself, execution. The Commonwealth is asking that you find my client guilty and that she be sentenced to death. I have told both my client and her mother and I will tell you that I believe that where there is life there is always the hope for growth and change and that the death penalty, by its very nature cuts us off from that possibility. I want to see my client grow old and be re-integrated into society, not cut off in what should be her prime. My client has said that she does not believe in God. I do. And I believe in the mercy and redemptive power of that God and I know that in the words of John Bunyan there is grace abounding even unto the worst of sinners. I ask that you not cut Julia Driscoll off from the hope that the beneficent deity in whom I believe, even though she does not, will grant her His grace. I ask you for the life of my client.

V

The judge read his instructions to the jury. He carefully defined for them the nature of premeditated murder, the various lesser charges of which she might be found guilty and the nature of the rules concerning insanity. He informed them as to the meaning of reasonable doubt and then they were ushered out of the courtroom to begin their deliberations.

The jury was out overnight and in the morning Julia and her lawyer were together when the news came that a verdict had been reached. They entered the courtroom and sat down while they waited for the jury to be ushered in. Julia slumped over the table, she had seen the verdict in the juries eyes. They were going to convict her and she was going to die for killing Daisy.

The judge asked if the jury had reached a verdict, they had, a piece of paper was passed to the judge and he read it and asked if that was their verdict, it was, then the foreman rose and when asked how the found the defendant of the charge of murdering Daisy Sullivan said the single word that sealed her fate.

—Julia Driscoll, the jury has found you guilty of the the murder of Daisy Sullivan, do you have anything to say before I impose sentence?

Silence.

—Julia Driscoll, you have been found guilty of the murder of Daisy Sullivan, this murder was accompanied by her savage dismemberment. The jury has heard evidence that you dismembered the body of this woman, who had been at times your lover and your husbands lover, that having dismem-

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bered her you removed her viscera, heart and lungs and then in a macabre scene unequalled in my memory you set this before your husband as a stew. You told him that this was a dish that he loved. When the truth was revealed him he in turn attempted to kill you but in the process lost his own life. The jury has heard testimony that your husband, Tom Driscoll, intended to leave you for the young woman, Daisy Sullivan, whom you murdered and that you were motivated by your own consuming passion for her.

Was she? She wondered.

— Testimony has been heard about your alleged state of mind at the time of the murder and the jury has decided, by finding you guilty of murder, that you were in possession of your faculties at the the time of the murder, that you were fully cognizant of the meaning of your actions, and that you are and were able to distinguish right from wrong.

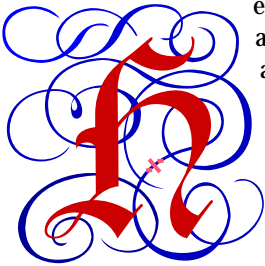
What is right and wrong, did anybody really know that, she doubted it.

— It is therefore my obligation under the laws of this state to sentence you to taken from here to the state penitentiary at Richmond and from thence to a place of execution where you will be put to death in the manner prescribed by law. May God have mercy on your soul.

What kind of just, loving, forgiving God would allow her to be executed. There was no God, that she knew, and her death would be as meaningless as her life.

She turned and walked out of the courtroom under the guidance of the matrons.

Peripateia



Henry Parker was right. Julia spent a little over two years on death row while her appeals dragged through the courts, working their way up and down the state and the federal appeals court. However, in 1972 the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Ferman v. Ga.* that capital punishment as then practiced was cruel and unusual punishment because of the random nature of the victims of the extreme penalty and the fact that Blacks tended to be sentenced more frequently than whites to the penalty and that in order for it to be constitutional it must conform to certain guidelines that the court established.

Confinement in any institution, whether it is an insane asylum, or a prison is essentially the same. That is to say it is boring. Life in the prisons and jails and in the mental wards of hospitals is not the violent thing that television and movies have depicted it to be. That is not to say that they are as quiet as churches and monasteries, there is noise, plenty of it; there are arguments and fights, lots of them; all of this, however, is a backdrop for the process that is supposed to take place and which very rarely does. That is the regeneration of the offender into someone who can be re-integrated into society. Now it is in the best interest of the newly arrived felon to fit in and establish a good reputation with the establishment, in this case the parole board, however, he also has to fit in with the other inmates who may not see things his way. This accounts for much of the tension in prisons, on the one hand, in order to be returned to his family and friends he must appear to be regenerated and redeemed and on the other he must not appear to be a stooge for the warden. So the inmate, with the passing of time, rapidly becomes a con artist and any appearance of conversion or regeneration is looked upon as suspect.

Julia's confinement on death row was not pleasant, that is an understatement perhaps, but the harshness had as much to do with her confinement and lack of freedom as it did with the fact that she lived out her life only a few hundred feet from the instrument that would take her life.

She was allowed visits, on certain occasions, from her family and friends and one time Margery came to see her, just before the decision of the court in *Ferman* was handed down.

- Are you okay, honey?
- Mom, how can I be okay, they want to kill me.
- I know, I know. I was talking to Henry Parker about your case.
- And what does he think?
- He thinks there's a very good chance that the court will rule against capital punishment.
- I know. He told me about the case. He thinks that as the number of inmates on death row increases the justices will become reluctant to start a blood bath and that when they face the prospect of a hundred or a two hundred executions being carried out at once that they'll outlaw capital punishment forever.
- Yes, that seems to be his theory.
- But what if they don't, what if they say it's okay.
- Then your case will have to work its way through the courts until they make a final decision.
- Oh God, this is worse than Kafka, mom, I wish they'd kill me and get it over with.
- Don't say that, honey.
- I can't help it. I feel so awful. God, I'm sorry about Daisy and Tom. You know I loved them both.
- I know. You know I remember when you were born, you were such a pretty baby.
- Was I?
- Yes, you were and after what had happened before, after losing my first child I was so happy to see you. You meant so much to me.
- Don't say I meant so much to you, I'm still here.
- Yes, for a while. Julia, you have so much that's good in you I hate to see that destroyed. You know that Henry and I will both fight for you until you're safe.
- Yes, I know that.
- Terry told me to say hello to you and to tell you that she prays for you constantly.
- I hope her prayers do some good, but I don't think there's anybody listening.

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— I dont know. I used to think that there was and that He loved us and then I decided that He either hated me or He didnt exist. Now, I dont know. Henry once told me to pray for you, maybe I should have, but I couldnt find the words. No, I could have said the words, I couldnt find the heart, the faith, to pray to somebody who may not be there.

— I understand. I wish I could find it in myself to pray. I just wish that this ordeal was over one way or the other. Whats cruel is the waiting, the not knowing, the hope followed by anxiety followed by hope again.

— I know. Im sure everything will work out, theyll never execute you, Julia. I think my time is up now and Ill have to go. Ill be back to see you again. I love you, honey.

— I love you too, mom.

It was two weeks after this that the court delivered the Ferman decision and the death rows around the country were emptied. Julia was sent to the womans prison as part of the general population. She was tested and examined and assigned to the prison library. Her lawyer came to see her after she was transferred. He was shown into a small room with a table and chairs where he and Julia could be alone while a guard kept watch outside.

— Julia, how are you holding up?

— Im better now.

— Good, now that we know that you wont be executed we can resume our attack on the verdict in your case based on the prejudicial pre-trial publicity.

— Henry, Im not sure we should go on with the appeals.

— Why not?

— It must be costing Margery a fortune.

— Its not cheap, but is that the only thing thats bothering you.

— Henry, I am guilty. I did kill Daisy and I probably would have killed Tom if Id been given a chance.

— Yes, but youd been driven out of your mind by jealousy.

— I dont know if thats true or not.

— Look, Julia, let me tell you something. You may have lied to me, to the shrinks, you may have lied to the jury, I dont know and I dont care. My job was to save your life and if possible to get you acquitted. You wont be executed, for that we can all be grateful, but Ill be damned if I want to see you, if I want to see anybody, in one of these hellholes.

— But what about the fact that I killed Daisy?

— Julia, you were broken. Dont you think that the situation you were in was unnatural, I dont mean that like Kavanaugh would mean it, but that it was unusual, it was a very difficult situation to be in and I dont know if it was possible for you to hold up under those circumstances. Do you know what prisons are for?

— I suppose youll tell me.

— Youre damn right I will. Theyre here either to keep you from going out and killing someone again, do you think its likely that youll ever wind up in a similar situation and kill someone out of jealousy again?

— I dont know.

— Its not likely, most often the murderer has the least chance of being a recidivist and is among your best risks for parole. Theyre also here to punish either by confining you and taking away your freedom, but who is really punishing you, which hurts more being here or knowing that youll have to live forever with the knowledge that you killed Daisy?

— They both hurt.

— Of Course they do. They can also punish you by killing you. That possibility has been ruled now, thank God. The other possibility is that they can rehabilitate you, make you a fit member for society. Do you really think that putting you in here with robbers, prostitutes, embezzlers, forgers and so on is really going to help you become a better person.

— I dont know.

— I know it isnt. Julia, prisons are a failure no matter how you look at them. Jesus, what good does it do to put a lawyer in jail for six months on a drunk driving charge, absolutely none, he may need to

go to AA but putting him in jail isnt doing him or his family any good. What good is it going to do to put you in prison for the rest of your life. None, you would be a lot better off outside of this place.

— So you think I stand a chance of getting out of here?

— Yes, Im almost sure of it. There was so much pre-trial publicity over your lifestyle that Im sure we could get a new trial.

— A new trial?

— Yes, and this time the jury would not be inflamed by news reports about your living arrangements.

— I would have to listen to all of that testimony again, relive Daisy and Toms deaths again?

— Im afraid so.

— And how long would I be here if I said no, if I waited to be paroled.

— Anywhere from seven to ten years, maybe more.

— What would I do once I got outside?

— I dont know, get a job, find a man, get married, live a normal life.

— Jesus, a normal life.

— Isnt that better than staying here? Tell me, youve been here two weeks?

— Yes.

— And have you seen anything that would prepare you for a normal life? Here you are surrounded by women, some of whom must be very strong emotionally and physically.

— You mean have I seen a lot of dykes? Yes, I suppose there are quite a few.

— Thats not normal, thats an aberration caused by being confined here, but how are you going to face life on the outside after years in here?

— How am I going to face life on the outside if I walk out today, after two years on death row?

— I dont know, but youll have your freedom. Youll be able to choose your life again and that is something.

— I dont know. Let me think about it.

— Dont take too long. I want you out as soon as possible.

— Henry, you almost sound like Im more to you than another client.

— Dont worry about that. Just worry about getting your freedom back.

— I will.

II

In prison you are confined, often with people that you would never look at on the outside, and you do not relate to people as you would on the outside. The college student, for example, will sit around with his classmates and if he is an English major, as Julia had been, he will discuss the poetry of Ferlinghetti or the novels of Dickens and worry about the grade that he has gotten on his latest paper. In the government or in a corporation the same person will worry about his latest report and will try to curry favor with higher authority. In prison these concerns are there but they are there in a different form. You worry about getting out of prison and being returned to the outside. Instead of having a set of common interests, like college students often do, they have a common goal and a common problem, getting out and being in. They are there because of an offense, a crime of some kind and this is one thing that they have in common. Another thing that is common to behavior in the outside world is that there are the strong and the weak, not physically, physical strength is frequently present and many inmates can be found in crude gyms pumping iron, but emotionally and in terms of character. There are those who are strong and dominant and those who are weak and who can only survive by attaching themselves to one of the strong people. Friendships in prison thus tend to be evanescent and temporary and to work themselves out along the lines of a power struggle. This, along with the deprivation of companionship by members of the opposite sex accounts for the great number of instances of homosexuality in prisons. It goes without saying that homosexual and lesbian relationships are against the rules in prisons, of course that does not mean that it does not happen.

It was into this situation that Julia was thrust when she was removed from death row and sent to the general population.

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The appeals process is lengthy and arduous. If appeals fail in the state courts they may be able, if a Federal issue can be found, to go from the state courts into the Federal courts and ultimately work their way up to the Supreme Court on a writ of certiorari. Overall, depending on the complexity of the case the time spent on appeals can be lengthy and the cost overwhelming.

The break-in at the Watergate complex occurred while Julia was in prison worrying about the outcome of her appeals. Two years later when Richard Nixon resigned she was still in prison and her mothers savings were nearly exhausted by the appeals process.

When she saw her mother she thought Margery looked tired, worn and drawn. She was what, fifty-six now. She was beginning to look her age now. God, it had been tough on her, tougher perhaps than it had been on Julia. She had been such a burden to her. Jesus, she was sorry about the pain that she had caused her.

— Mom, you look terrible.

— Honey, dont worry about me, its you that Im worried about.

— Im okay, mom. Mom, I think you should tell Henry to stop the appeals.

— Why? Hes sure that you can be freed and maybe get a new trial.

— Mom, I dont want a new trial. Im guilty, I killed Daisy because I was jealous of her and Tom.

— Honey, you had a breakdown, you didnt know what you were doing.

— Dont you see mom, it doesnt make any difference, I killed her and I should be punished.

— I dont see it that way.

— I do. Besides I cant afford to pay Henry and I know you cant keep up the drain on your savings indefinitely. Let me stay here, mom, Ill get paroled one of these days and then well be able to see each other again without these bars between us.

— God, I hope so. Listen, are you....

— Am I having relations with anybody? No, Ive been able to keep to myself pretty much. Mom, if I ever get out of her I just want to lead a straight life. I dont want to fight for causes any more, I just want to be left alone.

— I know.

— Do you have any idea how nice it will be to get up when I want to, go to bed when I want to, to have my own television, or watch, or jewelry. It will be a pleasure to go out and buy new underwear, to have my own clothes instead of this damn uniform.

— I guess all of that would seem pretty important.

— You have no idea how much those little things mean, mom.

— Honey, do you really want me to tell Henry to drop the appeals.

— Yes, I do.

— Hes told me that hed be willing to donate his time. I think he really cares about you for some reason.

— It doesnt matter. Tell him not to waste his time. Ill be fine, mom.

— Okay, if thats what you really want.

— Its what I really want.

Margery left and began the long trip back to the house in Arlington. Her baby, she had meant so much to her, she had been a source of so much joy, so bright and pretty. She remembered the times that she and Martin had worried over their little girl when she had been sick, she remembered her confusion when she had come back from Florida, that had been back in 1962. Twelve years, had it really been that long and her baby was in prison now. She would turn thirty next year. Thirty years old and in prison. She might never be able to touch her again. They might keep her locked up until she died. That was the worst part, not being able to touch her, not being able to hold her and hug her. It was not death, that was not the worst that the state could do, it was the uncertainty and the agony of waiting and the disfigurement of the body that was so bad and then if they were not to be executed it was intolerable to be confined, locked up and deprived of the touch and love and warmth that they needed, that Julia needed. You could live on bread, you could survive on water, but to be locked up and separated from everything that made life good and beautiful, not to be allowed to see the sun, to be deprived of the warmth of love and touch, this was evil. It didnt matter what anybody said, she didnt care about any arguments about crime and rehabilitation and punishment, she knew that this was evil in and of itself.

She would have gladly torn down all of the prisons if she could, as it was she could do nothing. She would have to live with her powerlessness and frustration.

III

Margery did talk to Henry Parker and told him that Julia wanted to drop the appeals. He went down to talk to her and was unable to persuade her to change her mind. So the final appeal went up to the court and Henry argued it before the court and when the appeal was rejected he made no further motions. He still went to see Julia from time to time.

It was in 1975 that Julia told her lawyer not to bother with any more appeals. It was also in 1975 that Elizabeth Blake, or Betsy, as everyone called her, became her cellmate.

Betsy was born in 1952 and had left home at fourteen. She had gone out to San Francisco a year later for the summer of love. That summer, which she should have spent at home or at the beach, was spent on Haight street smoking grass and turning tricks to make money for dope. At sixteen she had been turned on to heroin and had been arrested for possession of narcotics. She had gotten out of the juvenile court system when she turned eighteen and had gone to Washington, D.C., where she had worked in a massage parlor in the Districts red light area. This was a one block area filled with bars advertising naked girls, massage parlors, and a nude photo studio, which since it was located on I st., was called The Naked Eye. In 1973 she had gone to work for a massage parlor in Alexandria and when that place was raided and closed down she had done time in the city jail for prostitution. When she got out she met George Miller again. She had known him in San Francisco and he had turned her on to heroin. He was dealing small quantities of marijuana and some cocaine to students at George Washington when his supplier was arrested and his source dried up. He persuaded Betsy to come along and help him by driving the car when he went up to a Seven-Eleven and held it up. The manager, unfortunately for George, had hidden a gun under the counter and as he had turned to leave he had opened fire on him, hitting him in the shoulder and the back. George had died from loss of blood on the way to the hospital and the store manager, who said that he had shouted at George to get his attention before firing, was not charged. He managed to give the police the license number of the car and Betsy was apprehended and charged with grand theft, for driving the stolen car and as an accessory to armed robbery. She was convicted and sent to prison on an indeterminate sentence of five to ten years.

Betsy was small and slender, blonde, she looked more like a little girl than a girl who had been a hooker and a heroin user. Her hair was soft and pale, her manner, when she and Julia first met, shy and diffident, as if she were scared of Julia.

— So, youre my new cellmate?

— Yes, Im Elizabeth, but everybody calls me Betsy.

— What are you in for, Betsy?

— Armed robbery. And you?

— Murder.

— Jesus. Did you do it?

— Yes, my lawyer had me plead insanity but the jury didnt believe me and I wound up here.

— Would you care to tell me about it?

— Its a long story, are you sure you want to hear it?

— Sure, if you can talk about it?

Julia told her about Daisy and Tom and how she had been unable to stand the thought that they would leave her and she had killed Daisy and then Tom had died in an accident. She told her about the time on death row and the courts decision about capital punishment and about her mother coming to see her and about the lawyer who she thought was in love with her. She told her about the pain that she felt and the loss that she had experienced.

— And what about now?

— How do you mean?

— Look, Ive been around, this isnt my first time. Are you...

— No. I want to put all of that behind me. I sometimes I wish I could do without the whole thing.

— Yeah, I know what you mean. Live like a nun.

— Wed make a fine pair of nuns wouldnt we?

- Yeah, a lesbian and a whore.
- Maybe we should start our own order.
- The Order of Fallen Women. What are you going to do when you get out?
- If I get out. I used to teach....
- What?
- English, in a high school up in Fairfax. I miss it. Ill never be able to go back to it though and I miss it. And how about you, what will you do.
- I dont know. Ill be almost thirty by the time I get out. I dont want to go back to hooking or working in massage parlor. Nobody has any use for a middle-aged hooker. I wish now that Id never left home.
- When did you leave?
- When I was fourteen, back in 66. I went to San Francisco for the summer of love in 67.
- That was when Tom and I got married.
- Really. I wish Id stayed at home, finished high school, maybe gone to college.
- I went to college and I wound up here.
- Yeah, but I might not have wound up as a hooker and I sure wouldnt have met George.
- I dont know, maybe its all a question of fate. But you say you want to finish high school?
- Hell, I didnt even start.
- Maybe I could tutor you, maybe the warden would let me help you get prepared for the GED.
- Would you really do that?
- Sure, it would beat anything Im doing now. God, this place is awful. I need to do something to feel worthwhile.
- That would be great if theyd let you do it.
- Ill see what we can work out.

IV

The warden was sympathetic and allowed Julia to begin tutoring Betsy in the high school courses that she would need to pass the GED. Julia found that she had trouble with the mathematics and science, those had always been her weakest subjects. Betsy, however, took to it very rapidly. Soon she was helping Julia with the more difficult portions of algebra. Julia enjoyed the portion of time that she devoted to teaching Betsy English. Re-reading the texts that she had not seen since she had been confined gave her a thrill of pleasure, of rediscovery. Even something as familiar as Shelleys poems became new and strange. When she thought of that blithe spirit, the skylark, she could feel the aspiration and yearning expressed in the ode. She knew that yearning for freedom that the skylark symbolized.

A few other women, both Black and white, heard about what Julia was doing for Betsy and came to her and asked her to tutor them. Soon she had a regular series of classes going.

Unlike a regular high school, in which attendance is compelled by the authorities of the state or local community and the family, attendance at Julias classes was completely voluntary and classes were held throughout the year. There were no absences for Christmas vacations or spring breaks or any of the other occasions that are so popular with students as a means of escaping from the intolerable tedium of education.

Betsy proved to be a bright student. The hooker with a heart of gold is an old story going back to the book of Joshua and beyond and it would be hard to say what Betsys heart was made of, beyond flesh and blood, but she was smart and quick and had a natural way of catching on to some concepts. Certain concepts in mathematics, even in calculus, can be stated in a visual way so that if the student can visualize, for example, the area under a curve, he can see a method of arriving at the area by using progressively smaller squares. It was this ability to visualize abstract concepts that, once she put the effort into developing it, helped Betsy acquire her flair for mathematics. She was also gifted, for some reason that Julia could never understand, with the ability to translate these concepts into words. She had started out as Julias student and soon Julia was asking her for help and Betsy was set to helping the other women with math.

Julia loved the informality and spontaneity of working with Betsy and the other women. It reminded her of why she had wanted to become a teacher in the first place, to do good in minute particulars. She

became wistful when she thought of that, she remembered Peter and Mary and the march on Washington when she had realized that she distrusted all of the politicians and shouters. She had been eighteen then and now she was thirty and in prison and all of the world that had been so bright and full of promise, that had lain open before her, was dim and everything was shut off and closed to her.

Betsy and she spoke about the future one night.

— Julia, do you remember when I came here.

— Yes, of course, what about it.

— You remember we talked about what we would do if or when we ever got out.

— Yes.

— You know I want to be something more than an ex-hooker, more than somebody who did time.

— Thats going to be hard to do, people will never let you forget what you were.

— I know, Jesus, its like I have to wear a label. Maybe I should be like Hester Prynne and wear a big W for whore on my forehead.

— I know what you mean. I remember reading a story once about a man who was condemned to death and they had a machine that wrote the name of his crime all over his body and that was how he was executed.

— Yeah, I can see that now. Its like we have these labels that we have to flash to our family and friends or to anybody that might give us jobs. I did time for robbery, Martha did time for embezzlement, Johnny did time for drugs; and then what are we supposed to do?

— I dont know.

— Jesus, you know what Id like to do?

— What?

— Id like to get out of here and go to school, maybe I could become a doctor or a lawyer.

— Theyd never let you take the bar exam.

— I dont know, with all of the lawyers going to jail now it would be nice to go the other way for a change.

— Yes, thats true.

— At any rate Id like to be able to do something else, have the kind of life where my biggest problem might be too many parking tickets or getting caught by a speed trap.

— That would be nice.

— Where do you want to live?

— I dont know. My parents split up after I ran away and I havent been home since. Id like to go back to Washington.

— Why would you want to go back there?

— You really hated there didnt you?

— God yes. It was such a phony place. Everybody there thought somebody else had power, the whole place was about power and you know the funny thing, they were all really powerless. People could stop things from being done but nobody there ever really started anything.

— What do you mean?

— Nobody there ever wrote a really good novel, well not for at least a hundred years. The architecture is so second rate, I dont remember a single really good building that wasnt an imitation of somebody else. All the women think about is helping their men get ahead. Its such a second-rate town.

— Well, I dont know about that. I had some good moments there and Id like to go back.

— And go to school there?

— Yes.

— Listen, youve met my mother, Margery?

— I met her when she came to visit you over Easter.

— Maybe you could stay with her in Arlington when you get out.

— Hey, that might be a great idea, I could help her with the house and go to school. But how would she like the idea of having someone who was a whore and who did time for armed robbery living with her?

— How do you think she likes the idea of having a daughter who was a bisexual and a murderer. She didnt like it when she found out about my sex life and she didnt like it when I was convicted but she

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accepted my sexuality and shed be glad to have me back. She wont have me back, not for a long time, maybe not ever.

— So you want me to take your place?

— No. I think she can accept you, maybe even give you the love she cant give me.

— And what am I to do?

— I dont know, comfort her, be with her, help her through the dark times when she gets to feeling depressed. How should I know what youd do, thats for the two of you to work out.

— It wont be for a while yet.

— I know. At least you know that youll get out someday. My lawyer, Henry Parker, he might be able to help you find a job and get settled if you go back to Arlington.

— Yeah, everything might work out after all.

Margery came down to see her the following week and Julia was in good spirits.

— Mom, you remember me telling you about my cellmate Betsy?

— Yes, thats the girl youve been tutoring.

— She wants to go to school when she gets out of here.

— Yes, and what does that have to do with me?

— She wants to go back to Washington and go to school and I thought she could stay with you.

— Wasnt she a prostitute and isnt she in for armed robbery?

— Yes, she was a whore and yes, shes doing time for armed robbery, but she was an accessory in that case, mom. She drove the car, she never held a gun on anybody in her life.

— Are you and she....

— Oh God, mom, Ive been a celibate since I came here. I practically live like a nun, except nuns get to drive around in their station wagons.

— Well its just that you hear so much about that sort of thing going on in prisons and you....

— I havent exactly been a model of chastity? Believe me, mom, all I want is to be a good little girl and get out of this hellhole eventually.

— I see.

— So do you think Betsy could stay with you when she gets out?

— When will that be?

— Not for a year or so. Youd have plenty of time to get ready. You could see her here and get to know her before she joins you. Henry could help her too.

— How, does she want him to take her case?

— No, I was hoping that he could help her get a job. Thats what she needs, a job in the straight world where she can make decent money without having to be a whore.

— I dont know, the whole idea of taking a stranger in, especially one with a record like that.

— For Christs sake, mom, youd take me in if they ever released me wouldnt you?

— Of course. But youre my daughter.

— Mom, Betsy has had a hard time....

— Havent you, and how about me, havent I had a hard time.

— Mom, I want you to take her in and give her all the love that youd give me if I were ever released. I may never get to see you except like this and I think youd like Betsy if youd get to know her.

— Ill try.

— Good. Now do you think you could talk Henry into helping her?

— I dont know if I can do anything with Henry but you might be able to.

— Why is that, mom?

— I dont know why it is but I think Henry has lost any objectivity he ever had about you.

— How do you mean?

— The crazy fool is more than half in love with you.

— Henry, in love with me. That is crazy. Id make him a fine wife wouldnt I. A woman convicted of killing her and her husbands girlfriend.

— You know what they say about love being blind, where youre concerned Henrys lost the sight of one eye and the other is failing fast.

— Oh God, if I didnt need him to help Betsy Id say to tell him to forget me.

— I dont think hed do that.

— No, I guess not. Is he coming down to see me soon?

— Yes, he told me that hed be down next week.

— Okay, Ill talk to him then.

— Yes, I think that would be a very good idea. Honey, I have to go now. God, I hate it, I can only see you for such a short time, I wish we could be together longer.

— We will, someday Ill be out and then we can be together, Good-bye, mom.

— Good-bye, honey.

Henry came to see Julia the following week, as Margery had promised and Julia was able to raise the subject of Betsy with him.

— Henry, I dont think Ill ever get out of here.

— You will, youve got yourself a good reputation as a prisoner, one whos not a discipline problem, youre quiet, you keep to yourself but youre not a loner, you have an excellent chance of being paroled.

— About as good as Richard Specks or Charles Mansons.

— Julia, those were, are, mass murderers. Theyre both probably still crazy, if they were ever sane to begin with.

— And how about me? Dont you think therell be a lot of flack if they let out the bisexual murderess?

— Julia, how many people do you think even remember your case, there are a lot more interesting cases out there. Do you remember ever hearing about the Bobby Franks case?

— That was in the twenties wasnt it? Didnt they make a movie about it?

— Compulsion. Orson Welles played a lawyer based on Clarence Darrow. They called it the crime of the century back then because it involved two teenagers, homosexuals, who thought they were beyond the law, supermen they thought they were, and they killed Bobby Franks to prove this theory.

— What does this have to do with me?

— Well one of the killers, Loeb, I think, I can never keep the pair straight, he died in a prison fight a few years into his term, while the other, Leopold, was paroled and I think he did medical research for a few years before he too finally died. Now it took Leopold thirty years or more to get parole for killing Bobby Franks, but he did get it. Frankly I think youre a better risk for parole than Leopold was and I think you can get out a damn sight sooner than he did.

— But what about the nature of the crime? It was pretty grizzly.

— Oh Jesus, do you think theres any real consistency in this whole sorry business. Who do you think are probably the worst criminals of all time?

— I dont know.

— Julia, come on, it has to be the damn Nazis that killed millions in World War II and yet look at what happened, some of them, like Jodl and Ribbentrop were hanged, others like Speer did twenty years and yet they were all in some sense guilty, they all helped kill Jews and Gypsies and communists and homosexuals. It doesnt make any sense, there is no pattern; juries, parole boards, theyre all unpredictable. If a Speer can get out after twenty years, after helping Hitler build his damn war machine, dont you think you can be let go after ten years, twenty years for something that happened when you had a complete breakdown.

— Do you really think theres hope for me?

— Yes, of course I do. Now your mother said you wanted my help for your cellmate?

— Yes. Elizabeth Blake, Betsy. You know Ive been tutoring her and some of the other women.

— The warden was telling me that youve been helping out. He seems to be very impressed.

— Well Betsy will probably be getting out before I do, shell probably be out in a year or two.

— And what do you want me to do?

— Shes going to need help. She wants to lead a straight life and she wants to go to school.

— And you want me to help her get into a school. She wont need my help for that. The community colleges have an open admissions policy.

— No, she doesnt need that kind of help. Shes going to need help finding a job. Nobody is going to hire an ex-prostitute or someone who has done time for armed robbery.

— Hell, I might hire her and put her to work for me if she can type, even if she cant I might be able to put her to work filing papers for me. Good clerical help is hard to find nowadays.

— Good, I think youd like her.

— I suppose I might.

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- But you know it wont be for a long while yet.
- I can wait. You never know what might happen, hell you might even wind up married to me someday.
- Henry, stop joking, thatll never happen. Besides how could you be happy with me knowing what I am.
- Julia when the hell are you going to learn that its only in this fool legal system of ours, no, I take that back, its in our whole damn society, that we judge by appearances. I know you and I know everything about you and I love you. Im afraid I feel about you rather like God felt about David.
- And how is that?
- That you are someone after my own heart. And God felt that way about David despite a pretty poor showing on Davids part with adultery and murder the least of his crimes.
- Really?
- Good God girl, how is it that youve read Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Joyce and never read the Bible. Im going to send you one in the mail when I get back home.
- I doubt if Ill ever get around to reading it.
- I dont care if you ever do. Just keep it and think of me when you look at it on your shelf.
- I will.

V

Henry proved as good as his word. He did send Julia a Bible and she did put it, unread, on a shelf in her cell.

In 1976 James Earl Carter was elected President of the United States, despite having declared in an interview in *Playboy* that he lusted in his heart after women and that God forgave him for it. That was perhaps the most masculine statement that he made during his time in the public eye. 1976 was also the year in which a convicted killer in Utah, by the name of Gary Gilmore, made headlines by demanding that Utah have the courage of its convictions, or more appropriately convicts, and execute him by firing squad. Many supposed that it was a stunt to force the public to admit that it didnt want capital punishment, however, the warden received numerous requests from people who wanted to be on the firing squad. So on January 17th, in the year of our Lord 1977, Gary Gilmore was executed by firing squad. History has recorded as a footnote that he went to the death chamber after drinking a six pack of beer and so was spared the pain of a hangover the following morning.

Lawyers on both sides had been concerned about Gilmores wish to be executed. Many feared that it would lead to wholesale executions as the condemned on death rows, put there by a public concerned about rising crime rates, mounted. However, it would be over ten years before the number of executions reached a total of a hundred in the post-Gilmore era.

The polls showed that public opinion, always a fickle and unreliable guide in matters of principle, had moved towards favoring capital punishment and away from opposition.

None of this really concerned Julia except when Virginia executed its first prisoner, then she was concerned, although Henry reassured her that she was in no danger. It was not danger to herself that she thought of so much as it was the terror of having to face that monstrous killing machine and feeling the pain as the electricity surged through her body. She did not accept the theory that it was painless, certainly none of the victims had ever come back to complain, but they were hardly in any condition to say what they had felt. She remembered having read that when Chessman had been executed by gas back in 60 that he had winked at his lawyer and that the wink was a coded message to tell her that it was painful. Probably the same was true of death by electrocution.

She talked with Betsy about it one night.

- It must be awful to go to the chair, like that guy did today.
 - Yeah, I suppose it must be.
 - What does it feel like having to sit down in something that you know will kill you in a couple of minutes.
 - Jesus, I think Id die of terror. I read where when they executed that guy Spengelink down in Florida they stuffed him full of cotton so he wouldnt mess himself when they turned on the juice.
 - I know, it really is frying. You cook from the inside out.
-
-

-
- What I cant understand is how they could take someone and deliberately and cruelly kill him.
- You know, its funny. I killed Daisy, I know it, the whole bloody world knows it, and when I killed her I hated her. I loved her and hated her all at the same time and yet somehow that seems small potatoes compared with taking someone and putting him the hot seat.
- I wonder if the people outside with the signs saying to ride Old Sparky arent really just as sick and evil as the people theyre killing.
- There really is something sick and evil about it. You know I dont think I could ever kill anybody again. It would have to be something like an accident, something like the brakes on the car failing and having it skid out of control, or maybe to protect someone I love, but I dont think I could ever do again what I did to Daisy. I think Id save the state the expense of trying me and kill myself if I did that.
- I know. I dont think I could go back to my old life. Hey Julia, do you think were born again like Jimmy Carter.
- No. I still dont believe in Jesus and God, do you?
- Im not sure. Like I say I couldnt go back to being a hooker. Could you go back to being a lesbian, having affairs with women?
- I dont know. I dont think so. Ive lost interest and Ive had plenty of opportunity.
- You sure arent lacking for that around here. Did I ever tell you that I did a couple of threesomes when I was a hooker?
- No, did you enjoy them.
- I dont know, it was okay I suppose, but I was stoned out of my mind when I did them.
- I wasnt. But now, I dont know, I want something more, more than just sex or love or anything like that.
- I know, I feel the same way. There has to be something more.
- Birth, and copulation, and death. / Thats all.....
- Whats that?
- Oh, I was just remembering a line from a poem. There has to be more to life than that. Jesus, I wish I knew what it was.
- No, theres probably nothing there, thats all there is.
- Then we might just as well kill ourselves and have done with it.
- Lets not rush into things, what if youre wrong, what are you going to do start all over again from the beginning?
- Youre right. Well keep on like good little tramps.
- Tramps, I guess we are tramps.
- Shhh.... Thats not what I meant.... Lets go to sleep, maybe things will be different in the morning.

VI

Things were not different in the morning. It was the same routine that Julia had gotten used to over the years. Up early, breakfast in the dining room, usually some kind of eggs and scrapple, Julia had never eaten scrapple before going to prison and one of her fondest hopes was that one day she would never have to eat it again, and juice or milk. Then she would work in the prison library and after that was done she would tutor Betsy and any of the other women that wanted her help.

In the fall of 1980 Betsy had appeared before the parole board and her plea had been granted, she was going to be paroled in a matter of days. Margery and Henry had both gotten to know Betsy and the arrangements that Julia had made were about to come to fruition when Lucas Crowley arrived.

Lucas Crowley had been hired as a guard at the prison. Now it is a sad fact that prison guards, for whatever reason, low pay, personality type, any one of a hundred reasons, are frequently cut from the same cloth as the inmates that they guard. Frequently they are of low intelligence, poorly trained, often brutal and sadistic. Modern criminologists, of course, would like for people to believe that the job is important and the staff highly trained and well-motivated. This may happen from time to time.

There is a sense of absolute power that can be gained by having control over groups of people, no matter how unwilling their presence, and one can easily believe that he is a god, or at least a demi-god when he is given almost total authority over other people.

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Lucas Crowley loved his job. It made him feel good to know that these women were dependent on his good will for any privileges that they might receive. They had to cater to his whims.

One night a young black woman in the cell next to the one occupied by Julia and Betsy could be heard sobbing.

— Martha, whats wrong?

— Julia, that you?

— Yes, Ivy, whats wrong with Martha?

— Its that goddamn cracker Lucas Crowley.

— What did he do, did he beat her?

— Worse than that Im afraid. He got her alone and he told her that she was a good-looking nigger bitch.

— Oh Jesus.

— He took her out to that old shed behind the guards office. The one they use for storage. Made her suck him off. Told her she better do a really good job of it or hed beat her black and blue and tell the warden she was a trouble maker.

— So whats she going to do.

— Nothing she can do, leastways not now, Lucas is the man around here.

— I know.

— Shes wishing she could get him alone and put a knife through his damn heart, maybe cut off his damn pecker. Hardly notice on him, teeny little thing Martha says.

— It wont do any good to go to the warden.

— Honey child, how long you been in here? Eight years, doing life, two years before that, right. You ought to know by now that the warden, he dont want no trouble, he dont want to hear no complaints. Hes running a model prison, yes sir, thats what the warden wants.

— So what do we do?

— Nothing we can do, cept hope and pray he gets himself in trouble with the warden and gets himself fired.

— Oh Jesus, I hope so.

— Jesus is the only hope we got, honey child.

The Sunday before Betsy was to be released was a warm day. Virginia in the fall can be very warm with temperatures going into the 70s even in late October and early November and it is possible to walk around in a shirt and light jacket. Later on in the year, particularly in the winter months, it can turn frigid and snows of ten or twelve inches or more are possible. This Sunday in October was warm and Julia and Betsy were alone and were talking about Betsys plans when she got out and started working for Henry Parker when Lucas Crowley accosted them.

— I been watching you two dykes now for some time now. Tell me how long you two been licking each other?

— We dont. Were not dykes.

— Oh come on now, what else you two got to do. Hey, howd you like a real man between your legs?

— Are there any around here?

— Shut up you goddamn bitch, I was talking to this pretty little whore here. I hear you going to be released soon.

— Tomorrow.

— Yeah, well I wanted to get me a taste of your sweet thing before you left us. I wonder if Ill like it as much as your girlfriend here does?

— Damn you, cant you leave us alone. Shes getting out tomorrow. Find someone else to play your games with.

Crowley turned around and slugged Julia in the stomach, she doubled over with pain; he hit her on the jaw and knocked her unconscious.

— Come on now, sweet cheeks, you and me are going to have us some fun.

Betsy went with him and Julia lay unconscious on the yard. She started to regain consciousness, she was dizzy at first, gradually she remembered what had happened and she remembered what Ivy had said about Martha being taken to the storage shed behind the guards office. She made her way over

there and she could hear Betsy sobbing and Crowley threatening her. He was holding her by her blouse and pushing her against the wall with one hand while he was slapping her face with the other.

— Jesus, even when I was a whore I didnt do that.

— Whats the matter bitch, they didnt pay you enough money? Well youre going to do it whether you like or not. Now get down there.

— I sucked you off, isnt that enough?

— No, goddamn you whore, it isnt. Now get down there.

Oh God, he was going to sodomize her. His pants were down and Julia could see that Martha had been right. He was small, underdeveloped. She had to help Betsy. She was sure that the other guards would turn their heads if she tried to get them to help. She needed to stop Crowley from hurting Betsy any further. She saw Crowley slap Betsy, her head rocked against the wall and she slumped to the floor unconscious. Crowley was still determined to proceed. She needed a weapon, anything to stop from hurting her friend anymore. There was a Philips head screwdriver lying on the floor. She picked it up and yelled at him.

— Goddamn you Crowley, you son of a bitch.

VII

Henry Parker came to see Julia. She had been put into solitary confinement, for her own protection, of course.

— Jesus Christ, Julia, cant you ever give me an easy case to defend?

— Im sorry, Henry. Hows Betsy doing?

— Shes going to be okay. Shell be out once they release her from the hospital. Now how about telling me what happened, what provoked you into killing Crowley?

— Crowley was a sadistic creep.

— That may be but I cant defend you based on Crowleys personality profile.

— Then how can you defend me?

— You admit that you killed Crowley?

— Yes, of course. He was trying to rape Betsy, hed already forced her to suck him off and he was going to sodomize her next.

— You know that the state is going to claim that Betsy was a willing participant and that shes lying to protect you. Theyre going to try to paint you as a jealous woman who has already killed once before and who is willing to kill any time she feels threatened.

— Are they going to ask for the death penalty?

— Im afraid so, Julia.

— Oh Jesus, its so unfair. I should have died for killing Daisy, but to die for killing that scum.

— The jury has to be convinced that you and Betsy were not lovers, that you didnt act out of jealousy, and that you came to the defense of someone who was being threatened by someone acting outside of the law.

— Did I tell you that he raped another woman in my cellblock?

— No, can you give me some details about it?

— It was right after he came here. One night in September.

— When exactly, can you remember?

— I think it was the 16th; Im not sure.

— Okay, go on.

— I heard Martha, the black woman in the cell next to me crying.

— Whats Marthas full name?

— Josephson, Martha Josephson. She was crying and I asked what was wrong and Ivy, Ivy Masters, told me what had happened.

— And that was?

— Crowley had told Martha that she was a good-looking nigger bitch.

— He said that?

— According to Ivy. And he took her out to the shed behind the guards office.

— That would be where he was found when you stabbed him with the screwdriver.

Thomas E. Hart

- Yes. And he forced her to fellate him.
- Julia, dont use the foreign words when you tell this in court. You mean she was forced to have oral sex with him.
- Yes. And apparently he slapped her around some.
- Okay, thats good. Now I have to get Martha and Ivy to testify to this. This will help give credence to your testimony and to Betsys.
- Henry, I dont think it will do any good.
- Why not?
- Dont you think that theyll try to make an example of me. Imagine what would happen if inmates got the message that it was okay to kill a guard. Henry, I think theyre going to do everything they can to see that I die.
- Do you think the warden and the rest of the staff are going to go for intimidating witnesses and suborning perjury?
- Henry, Im sure of it. My chances of living to see forty are about as slim as the chance youd have of crossing the Atlantic in a rowboat.
- Julia, maybe youve forgotten but its been done.
- What?
- Crossing the Atlantic in a rowboat, Robert Manry back in 67.
- God, you are an optimist.
- Thats right and Im going to move heaven and earth to see that you dont die for this and when Betsy gets out shes going to help with me this case.
- Henry, I dont think we can afford a long trial.
- Good God, woman, do you think Ive been coming down here for all these years out of some selfless dedication to your cause, my motives are purely, completely, utterly selfish. I love you and I want to see you out of here. I lost any objectivity I ever had during your first trial. I think thats when I fell in love with you, despite any faults you may have, including jealousy, and Im going to tell you right now that therell be no place in our lives for jealousy when you get out.
- I dont think you have to worry about that, Henry.
- You mean youre cured of jealousy?
- No, well never have a life together.
- Dont count on it. Stronger than death is love.
- What?
- Im sorry, its from the Bible, didnt you ever read the one I sent you?
- No.
- Well you should, even if its just for the stories and the poetry. Getting back to your case though, what happened that Sunday, what made you kill Crowley, did you have any previous run-ins with him?
- No. That was the first time that we ever had any trouble with him. Betsy and I were walking in the yard. We were near the shed where he was killed. He stopped us and told us that we were good-looking dykes.
- Oh God, this was the kind of man they sent to guard prisoners, a man whos a redneck and a sexist pig.
- Betsy and I may be cellmates but we arent dykes. Shes my friend, I like her, I suppose I even love her but I havent had sex with her. Hell, I havent had sex with anybody since Daisy died and believe me Ive wanted to but Ive been as chaste as a nun.
- Okay, so he accosted you and Betsy.
- Thats right. Then he started using foul language about Betsy and me, he said he wanted a taste of her sweet thing before she left. I told him to leave us alone and he punched me in the stomach and then he knocked me unconscious.
- Okay that would be consistent with your injuries. Then what happened.
- I came to and I remembered Ivy saying that Martha had been taken to the shed and raped there.
- So you went there?
- Right. And he had his pants down and he wanted her to get down on all fours so he could sodomize her.
- He wanted to have anal sex with her?
-
-

— Right. she said that even when she had been a prostitute she hadnt done that.

— And that was when you looked around and found the screwdriver lying on the ground.

— Yes. I yelled at him and cursed him and I drove that screwdriver into his throat.

— Okay, now he was armed?

— Of course, he was in uniform and he was carrying his pistol.

— Was he holding it on her or using it to threaten her in anyway?

— No, he didnt have to. Betsys what, a little over five feet tall and weighs about a hundred pounds. He was over six feet and weighed between 230 and 250. He was strong too, he was holding her by the shoulders and trying to force her down and she was resisting as hard as she could.

— Did you have reason to believe that her life was in danger or that she was threatened?

— Hell yes, he had just hit me and knocked me unconscious and she was struggling trying to get away from him. I didnt know what he was going to do.

— So you feared for Betsys life?

— Yes, he was crazy, there was no telling what he might do to her or to me.

— So you yelled at him, he turned, and the screwdriver went into his throat?

— Yes.

— Okay, then that has to be our defense, that you were protecting the life of someone else and that Crowley was attempting to rape Elizabeth Blake.

— Do you think you can do it?

— Honey, Im going to do my damndest. Itll be hard to persuade a jury that Betsy was a rape victim. There is a lot of prejudice and nonsense that says that a prostitute cant be raped. The fact that Betsy had been willing in the past to have sex for money is not going to go in her favor if the prosecution tries to say that she was giving Crowley her favors to obtain something from him, something like greater yard privileges or some kind of favor for you.

— She wasnt. Im telling you the truth.

— I believe you, Julia. Its the jury youll have to convince. Now what about the two women you told me about Martha Josephson and Ivy Masters?

— I suppose theyll testify on my behalf. I tutored Martha and I know she liked me.

— Good, then Im going to get to work on your case right now. They wont bring you to trial till after the New Year but Ill be back before Christmas. Now try and hold up.

— Henry, they might kill me eventually but I can hold up under anything.

— Good, by the way I saw your mothers friend, Terry Carroll and she says to tell you that shes praying for you and she gave me some things to give to you.

— Oh what?

— Books and things. Here, the guards already checked my packages, let me give them to you.

He handed her the books. There was a copy of *The Tempest* on which Terry had written a quotation about idleness, a bilingual edition of *La Commedia*, in four volumes; and a copy of *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

— Well Ill certainly have enough to read.

— Theres not much else to do while youre in jail is there?

— Certainly not when its like this.

— She thought youd like the Dante because you studied Italian in college, I dont why she chose the Shakespeare or the Merton.

— Well Ill read them and see what I think.

— Ill see you about Christmas time then. And I know that in the end well be together.

— I hope so.

Henry left and Julia was taken back to her cell. She tossed the books down on her bunk, sat down and thought about what Henry had said. He was right, it would be a difficult fight and she wasnt sure if she and Margery could hold out for the years the court fight would take. It might be better if she just gave up like Gilmore had and let them kill her. She laid down on the bunk and flipped through the books that Terry had sent her. She picked up the Merton book and looked at it. Hell she might as well read that as anything else.

Thomas E. Hart

Henry came to see her just before Christmas, as he had promised. He looked dejected, worn. Strangely, Julia was in good spirits when he came in.

— Henry, whats the matter?

— Ive been talking to your friends Martha and Ivy.

— They were never friends, like I said I tutored Martha and I thought she liked me.

— She may like you but I think she likes herself more.

— Whatd she have to say, Henry?

— She refuses to testify on your behalf. She wont say that Lucas Crowley raped her, that he forced her to have oral sex with him.

— She wont. How about Ivy, what does she say?

— Shes not talking either. Theyre both saying that nothing like that ever happened. I think the prison administration is putting pressure on them, maybe promising them early release if they dont talk. I cant be sure.

— Then it comes down to Betsy and me then.

— Im afraid so and like I said its going to be hard to convince a jury that Betsy wasnt providing Crowley with her favors on a regular basis. The prosecutor is going to try to make her look like a whore.

— Which she was.

— Which she was and hes going to try to bring up the death of Daisy and make it seem that youve already killed once and that you beat the chair only because of the bad luck of the court ruling favorably on Ferman. Hes going to be out for blood and the prison administration will back him one hundred percent even if it means suppressing evidence and suborning perjury.

— I was right then.

— Yes, you were right but it doesnt give me any satisfaction and I trust it doesnt give you any.

— No, it doesnt. Henry, can I change the subject for a minute?

— Sure, honey, we have to discuss the case some more though.

— Okay. You remember the books that Terry sent me?

— Sure, The Tempest, the Dante and another book, I cant remember the name. Why, did she put a file in between the pages?

— No, nothing like that. It was the other book, by Thomas Merton.

— Oh yes, The Seven Storey Mountain, I remember reading that in high school.

— I dont know if you can find anybody but Id like to talk to a priest about it.

— Julia, are you thinking of becoming Catholic?

— I dont know. It seems like Merton found something and I think Ive been looking for something like what he found for a long time.

— Ill see what I can do about finding a sympathetic priest for you to talk to. Listen though, a neighbor of mine, he has a daughter who is a nun.

— Henry, I dont know if I have much in common with a nun.

— You have more than you know. His daughter ran away from home when she was in high school, I think she was in her senior year then. At any rate she ran away to New York with this boy that she thought she was in love with and she wound up working in a massage parlor in Times Square.

— She sounds rather like Betsy.

— Yes, she does, theyre both resilient young ladies. At any rate she and the young man broke up and then one night she was asked to identify his body and she met the daughter of this policeman. I dont know what happened but something snapped in her right then and she went back home to her parents. When she got there she found that her mother had committed suicide and her father was going through a very tough time emotionally. The funny thing is that they helped each other come through this time, they were both wounded birds then. She went back to school, again like your friend Betsy, made a marriage to a man who got drunk and beat her. He finally died in a car accident and she withdrew into herself. When she finally came out of her retreat she had decided to become a nun.

— Thats quite a story.

— Yes, it is pretty melodramatic isn't it. Is it any worse than the soap operas on TV. Real life can be pretty melodramatic sometimes. God, do you think the public would hold still for a saga like the Kennedy family's story if it were a work of fiction.

— I see what you mean, that story has everything doesn't it.

— It sure does. Now do you want me to see this nun for you, I don't know if she can come visit you, she might be pretty strictly cloistered, but she can write to you.

— Sure, have her write. What's her name?

— Samantha. Samantha Morris.

— And do I call her Sister Samantha?

— No, just Samantha will be okay and I'll try to find a priest for you.

— I'd like that. I'd really appreciate it, Henry.

— Now getting back to your case. We're going to have to put Betsy on the stand.

— Okay, I understand that.

— Now I was able to prevent them from revoking her parole after the incident so they won't be able to put the same kind of pressure on her that I think they're putting on Martha and Ivy but they will try to discredit her on the stand.

— Betsy is a lot tougher than she might seem.

— I think so too. I don't think she'll break down under cross-examination but what worries me is what the jury will believe. Jesus, I wish that we could find some other way to show that Crowley was a sick, sadistic bastard.

— You mean try Crowley rather than me?

— Precisely, use that to create a reasonable doubt in the jury's mind.

— But the prosecution won't let you do that.

— God, Julia I swear that if I lose before a jury I'll try every appeal I can think of in both the Federal and the state courts and you will see your fortieth birthday if I have anything to say about it.

— I hope so.

— Good, then I have to go get ready for the trial. We still don't have a date set yet but once we do I'll be working my tail off for you, hell, I already am, I've lost twenty pounds since this started.

— You look fine.

— Yeah, I know, I needed to lose some weight. I wish it had been from something else though.

— See about the priest for me, and have your friend's daughter write to me.

— I will.

IX

Father John, or as he was almost universally known to his parishioners, Father Jack, Adams was not remotely like his Presidential namesake. The elder Adams had been a stern, unremitting Calvinist, rather humorless and dull perhaps. The younger Adams, who had no connection to the famous family, was short, somewhat pudgy, not inclined to serious athletics, even though jogging and aerobics were popular among his congregation and the books of Kenneth Cooper occupied the spots formerly given to family Bibles, he was inclined to frequent puns from the pulpit. He was intelligent, kind, pious, not in the way that Margery had been in her youth but in a way that was calmer, less hysterical than Margery's piety had been. He was in the habit of making regular retreats at a Trappist monastery about two hours outside of Washington.

Julia was brought in to see him and he rose from the table and greeted her.

— Julia, Henry Parker told me that you wanted to talk to a priest.

— Yes, a friend gave me some books to read while I'm here waiting to be tried and I wanted to talk to someone about one of them.

— I see, tell me are you worried about your trial?

— Yes, of course, but I'm not thinking of asking for mercy because I've been born again or anything like that. I accept responsibility for what I did and I can take anything they want to hand me.

— Even if it means death?

— Even if it means death. My friend, actually she's my mother's friend, her name is Terry Carroll, she gave me a copy of this book by Thomas Merton.

Thomas E. Hart

- Would it be The Seven Storey Mountain?
- Yes, it was, how did you know?
- Its one of his most popular, it had a lot of influence on me when I was younger.
- I see.
- You know I go to Holy Cross abbey, thats up in Berryville, about once a year. I like the peace and quiet and the mountains up there. Its funny though Ive never been to Gethsemane where Merton was. But what did you want to ask me about the book.
- Well he seems to have a found a kind of peace and fulfillment there and I wanted to know just what it was that he found, maybe I could find something like that before I die.
- So you want to make your peace with God is that it?
- No, not in the sense that they mean it in old movies. I suppose Ive sinned, certainly my life before I came here wasnt conventional, but I want something more than harangues about what a great sinner I was.
- You wont get that from me.
- Good. You know my mother tells me that she used to be very pious. When I was a teenager, right after my father died, I found her going through a trunk where she kept a lot of old things, and she kept a bunch of statues and religious medals in there. She didnt believe but she still couldnt bring herself to throw them away.
- What happened that she stopped believing?
- She lost her first child, he was stillborn and she decided that either God hated her or he didnt exist.
- I see. You know, Julia a lot of your mothers generation was raised on a sort of hysterical piety, there was a lot of nonsense about the Church in those days.
- Terry once said it was neurasthenia and frigidity.
- I dont know if Id go that far but a lot of people then forgot what the Church should be about. Even now a lot of people get it confused and think that the Church is about the poor, or about freedom fighters, or about equality for women. Its not. What it is about is us. you and me, right now you and I are the Church. I know youre not a Catholic but still you and I are Church, right now, thats all there is. The Church isnt about groups of people, its about individuals, men and women are saved one soul at a time.
- He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars.
- Precisely. As long as you and I are together we are the Church and Christ is here. Julia, do you want to take instructions from me?
- Yes, I dont know if Ill be able to go through with it, if Ill be able to convert, but I do want to learn more about it.
- Good, then Ill make arrangements to begin your instruction and Ill be coming here on a regular basis.
- You know its funny, my mother and Merton and I all rather like the middle ages. I remember when I used to go to the National Gallery with my mother she would linger the longest in the section where they had the medieval paintings. Maybe it was the remembrance of the faith that she had lost that she liked.
- That may be, Julia, and it may be that shell regain her faith somehow.
- Even if it takes my death to bring her back?
- Im not going to say anything to that Julia, I dont know what Gods purposes are and every time I think I do I always find out that Im wrong. I just stumble along blindly and try to discern His purposes as best I can. Will you join me in a prayer?
- Im not sure if I can, if I know how.
- Then just say the words for now and later you can worry about knowing how to pray and where your heart is and all of that. Just join me in saying the Our Father.
- Julia cried softly as she said the words. Father Jack left and she wondered if this was what her life had been about. She had wanted love and peace and she had looked for it in the arms of men and women, was she now about to find it in the arms of Jesus while she was on death row. Good Lord, she might wind up sounding like one of the people on the television, going around telling people what Jesus meant to her. Shed heard about the people that put the bumper stickers on their cars, stickers advising
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people to honk if they love Jesus. She didnt think she could ever do that, even if she were out of prison. Well she was prepared to die if she had to, she could accept the guilt and the responsibility and she would not go out like Rocky, cringing and crying but would go out bravely.

X

Samantha in her cell thought and prayed over what to write to Julia. Finally she reached into her desk, took out a sheet of paper, picked up a ballpoint pen and began to write.

Dear Julia,

Henry Parker asked me to write to you. I am afraid that Ive never been a very good letter writer. I tend to be lazy and slothful even in such simple things as writing thank you notes for gifts that I have received. I gather that he told you some of my story and he felt that it would be good for the two of us to write to each other and that I could help you in some way.

I am afraid that there is not much I can do in the way of financial support, which, I gather from Henry, that you dont need. I can only pray for you and hope that God will be merciful to you. Henry is convinced that you acted to protect the young woman Betsy and even though I do not know you I believe you because he does. He also said that he thought you might be interested in taking instruction and becoming Catholic. I hope that you have a good, sympathetic priest for this and can only tell you that when I was finally baptized it was as if I had died and been reborn and that despite all of my sinful inclinations, my laziness and sloth, my life has not been the same since.

I know this may seem strange but it occurs to me that you and I are both in similar situations. We are both confined, although in my case it is voluntary; we are both denied many of the pleasures that we were formerly used to, although again in my case it is voluntary; and we both have periods of time when we may seem idle to others. During the great silence in my house, which is the time of morning that we are to devote to mental prayer, I sit, apparently idle and attempt to pray. All during that time, however, I find that my mind is drifting off and I must gently push it back to prayer. I am sure that during your times of idleness you will find the time to pray.

I am afraid this letter must appear to be rather stilted. Frankly I am at a loss for words, I really have no idea what to say to you, what words of comfort or hope to offer you. I wish that you could talk to my friend Juliet, she is in one of our sister houses in New York and she was the one who helped me turn around. She has always seemed to me to be wiser and better than me but still I will do the best I can for you even though I am full of faults.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would write to me and tell me more about yourself and about your case. At any rate you will have my constant prayers for you and your case.

Yours in Christ,

Samantha Morris

After Christmas Julia wrote back to Samantha.

Dear Samantha,

I received your letter and I understand how you feel. Ive never been a very good letter writer either and I have never carried on a correspondence with a nun before either. My first reaction when Henry told me that his neighbor had a daughter who was a nun was that some pious little thing who was on her knees all day would have nothing to say to me. When Henry told me about you, however, I thought that you sounded a lot like Betsy, my

cellmate, the one who was raped just before she was due to be released and whose attacker I killed.

Betsy is a strange sort of girl, she is both tough and tender at once. When I say tough I don't mean that she is hard or vicious, it seems to me that there is an inner core in her that is as strong as steel and that she has the resilience to bounce back from anything that is handed to her and to recover. When you have been confined as long as I have it's necessary to develop that toughness or be broken by the system. That might be a good thing, to be broken by the system, except that it seems to be based on running people down and controlling them.

As to my story I don't know what to tell you. I am thirty-five years old. I was born on the 16th of July, the day of the first atomic bomb explosion and also, as I have since learned, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. All of my life seems to be divided by the time before I came to prison and the time after and it is like those are two different people as well as two different times.

Before I came here I was a teacher. I loved English and Italian literature, the paintings of the middle ages. My friends were college students and artists. I had two very serious love affairs, one with a girl in my high school and the other with the brother of the girl who was my roommate in my senior year in high school. The girl's brother died in a freak accident in Vietnam and she stayed with me for a time when I was in college. She and I both experimented with drugs but I never became involved with them to the extent that she did. I tried and failed to help her and she eventually died of an overdose of speed, or methedrine. I think I regret failing her, although everybody assures me that I did what I could, as much as anything else in my life. After she died I married my husband, Tom Driscoll, and we became involved with another woman, Daisy Sullivan. I was intensely jealous of them both and when I heard that they were going to leave together I killed Daisy.

When I look back to that time I am not sure if I was really out of my mind for a while or not. Certainly I thought about killing Daisy and I suppose I made elaborate plans in my mind but the way things turned out were so different that I doubt whether anyone outside of God knows the truth about whether or not I was insane at the time.

At any rate I was convicted and spent a little over two years on death row before the Supreme Court threw out the death penalty as it was then administered. Then I was transferred to the women's prison where I worked in the library and tutored inmates, starting with Betsy, before this happened.

My case will come to trial after the first of the year, maybe in February or later. In the meantime I see Father Jack, I suppose I should be more formal and call him Father John or Father Adams, but everyone uses Jack when they speak to him, at least once a week.

Samantha, I do not want anyone except you to read these letters, certainly not the snoops in the warden's office. So I am going to give these to Henry to give to you and I would like for you to give him your letters for me. That way we can let our hair down in the mail without worrying about offending the prison and jail officials.

Sincerely,
Julia Driscoll

XI

Henry Parker and Betsy came to see Julia before the trial began. Julia was still in good spirits despite the isolation and confinement. Henry had rarely seen her so happy, certainly not while she was in jail and prison.

— Julia, you seem in remarkably high spirits, especially when you consider that the trial will be starting next week.

— I know, I cant explain it. I dont think Im cracking up Henry. You dont have to worry that Im going into a manic phase or something. I just feel that even if the trial goes against us that eventually Ill be vindicated.

— Julia, that can take a long time.

— I know, I may die in prison, I may even be executed but I know that Ill win out in the end, even if it takes years. I may wind up like Sacco and Vanzetti but I know that everything will be alright.

— Im glad youre so confident, I wish I were. Betsy came down with me and shes waiting outside to see you.

— How is she, is she working out okay in your office?

— Yes, shes very competent and the other girls in the office like her.

— Good, then shes being helpful and youre getting along with her?

— Yes, shes not like some Washington secretaries who look good but cant even answer the phone.

— So what do you want to talk to me about?

— Ive told you that the Commonwealths attorney is going to try for the death penalty.

— Yes, I already knew that.

— Hes going to claim that Betsy was trying to secure favors for you because you and she were lovers.

— Which we werent.

— And that when you saw him and Betsy having sex that you were enraged.

— The jealous lover again.

— Precisely. And that you were enraged and struck out against Crowley using the only weapon you had available.

— And how is he going to explain Betsys injuries.

— That you inflicted them yourself. Betsy is lying because shes still in love with you and that you inflicted the injuries yourself to make it appear that she had been threatened and that she went along with you because shes in love with you and you dominate her physically and emotionally.

— Oh, Jesus Christ.... Im sorry, Ive been trying to give up cursing, is that the best he can do? Does he really expect a jury to buy that garbage, thats not even a theory, thats the biggest load of horse droppings Ive seen since the truck came by to fertilize the wardens tomatos.

— Im afraid so. Im also afraid that the jury will be so prejudiced against you that theyll swallow it hook, line, and sinker. There is the possibility that the Commonwealths attorney will go for a guilty plea to a lesser charge, possibly manslaughter. Do you want me to talk to him about letting you plead guilty to manslaughter and see if I can get him to go for a light sentence. You have been a model prisoner up till now and they might be agreeable to a moderate sentence.

— Henry, I am not guilty. I may be responsible for his death but Crowley was scum and Im glad hes dead and I think the other women are glad hes dead. I know thats uncharitable but its true. No, never, I killed Crowley to protect Betsy and if I have to go to the chair then Ill go but Ill be damned if Ill ever say Im guilty of his murder.

— I was afraid that youd say that. Then well have no choice but to fight this thing through.

— Youre damned right we will. Now tell me did you bring me a letter from Samantha?

— Yes, I did. She told me that she was very moved by your letter.

— I think I might like her very much if I could ever meet her.

— I might be able to arrange that some time. Listen though, I understand that you and Father Jack are getting along quite well.

— Yes, hes been giving me instructions in Catholicism.

— And do you think youll convert?

— I think so. You know Ive been reading the Bible that you gave me.

— And how are you getting along with it?

— Oh, I just read bits and pieces at random. Some of it is quite puzzling and some of it is quite funny.

— Funny, I never thought any of it was funny.

— Oh Henry, dont be so earnest. Look at the story of Jonah, that poor little man sitting under the tree and complaining to God that he didnt destroy Nineveh and then complaining because his shade

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tree died. Thats very funny, Henry. Or look at the book of Tobit, cant you just hear the guy speaking with a Yiddish accent as he tells Tobias not to marry his daughter.

— Jesus....

— Henry, come on, dont talk like that.

— Here you are about to go on trial for murder, facing possible execution, lecturing me for taking the name of God in vain, and telling me about the funny parts of the Bible. Are you sure I shouldnt call in a shrink for you Julia?

— Im sure. How are Betsy and Margery and Terry holding up.

— Betsys fine, youll see her in a little while, shes started going to a prayer group over in St. Matthews on her lunch hour and shes been trying to get Margery to go with her.

— I never thought Betsy would become religious.

— I dont know if she has, I know shes been going there and praying for you.

— Have you ever been to one of those meetings Henry, is it like in the movies with people falling down and speaking in tongues and getting all hysterical?

— Yes, Ive been and no, its not like it is in the movies.

— How is it then?

— Well they start off with a lot of singing, everybody claps their hands a lot.

— Thats one thing that bothers me about turning Catholic, Ive got no sense of rhythm.... How will I ever practice birth control.

— Julia, that was beneath you.

— Im sorry, I stole it from Father Jack and I think he stole a similar line from Dick Gregory

— Dont add the theft of bad puns to your other offenses.

— Im sorry, Ill be good. Tell me more about Betsys prayer meetings

— Well theres frequently a prophecy, sometimes its given in a strange language and then they wait for an interpretation, usually its in English though and then theres a teaching by one of the leaders of the group and then a few minutes of sharing. At the end theres more singing and then theyll pray over someone who has a special need and intercede on his or her behalf. Betsy and I have both been prayed over for you.

— Why, Henry, you sound almost as if you were ashamed of it.

— Well, it is hardly dignified for someone like me to be hanging out with a bunch of Yahoo Holy Rollers.

— Oh come on now, Henry, if you can accept me you can accept them.

— Oh God, suddenly Im surrounded by crazy women. A secretary whos turning into a revivalist, a client whos on trial for murder and spends her time making bad puns and telling me about the humor of the Bible. Ive always believed in God, Ive been good and Ive tried my best to do a good job for my clients whether I thought they were innocent or guilty, why is He doing this to me?

— To test you.

— He cant send me a written exam?

— To see if you can still love me even if I change.

— Maybe, who knows. Yes, Ill still love you even if you do change.

— Good. Now come on Henry give me more news.

— Well Terrys been sick, they thought shed have to go to the hospital but shes recovered and is back to normal.

— And how is Margery holding up?

— Shes pretty upset. She cries a lot and gets upset pretty easily but Terry goes to see her frequently and I think that helps her quite a bit.

— Good, Ive always liked Terry, she and mother have been friends since before the war.

— That long.

— Yes, mother never told me how they met but I think it had something to do with Terrys husband John.

— Maybe it did. At any rate theyve been friends for quite a while

— Yes, over forty years and even though they disagree about many things.

— Here, before I forget, heres Samanthas letter. You know I dont feel comfortable smuggling this in.

— Henry, its just to avoid the prison censors, Im not plotting to escape or to overthrow the government, I want to be able to say things to her and know that some bureaucrat isnt prying into my private thoughts.

— Well okay, but eventually it will have to stop.

— I understand.

— Good, Im glad you do. Do you want to see Betsy now?

— Yes, very much.

— Then Ill ask the guard to let her come in.

Henry went to speak to the guard and when he returned he brought Betsy with him. Her face had healed and she looked very pretty. Her hair was longer than it had been in prison and her dress while not severe was plain and simple. She wore plain gold earrings, a luxury that had been denied her before.

— Betsy, you look wonderful.

— Thank you, Margery and Henry have been a big help in adjusting to life on the outside. You know I really like Margery and her friend Terry. Theyve taken me shopping and helped me get settled in and started at school.

— How do you like school and your new job?

— Im learning the routine at Henrys office pretty fast and hes been very patient with me.

— Betsys really very smart, Julia, shes been a big help around the office.

— Thank you, Henry. Hes really very sweet, Julia. I think youd be jealous of him though, he flirts with all the girls in the office.

— Thats just my way of making them feel good, every woman likes to feel admired.

— Henry, I thought I was the only woman in your life.

— You will be, once we get you out of here.

— Betsy, Henry tells me youve been going to prayer meetings and that youve dragged him along on a couple of occasions.

— Yes, over at St. Matthews, its close to Henrys office and I can go over there on my lunch hour.

— And have you started in speaking in tongues yet?

— No, I havent done that but one time when I was being prayed over for you I had the impression that there would be a lot of strife and sorrow. Apparently there will be a lot of suffering connected with your case. Like I said I had the impression of great violence and near disaster. I also heard a phrase, or sentence.

— Which was?

— A damned close-run thing -- the closest-run thing you ever saw in your life.

— Well thats certainly an encouraging way to start a murder trial.

— Julia, honey, I know everything will work out.

— I certainly hope so Betsy. So tell me have you been born-again?

— I suppose so. It certainly wasnt any great emotional experience.

— So tell me more about it.

— Well one of the other girls in Henrys office, she got involved in the charismatic renewal a few years ago.

— Whats the charismatic renewal?

— Its a pentecostal movement in the Catholic church, it got started at Notre Dame back in 69, but thats not important. What happened is she suggested I go to this prayer meeting, she said they had a pipeline straight to God, and that I should go and pray for you. And that I should ask for prayers for you.

— So you went and what happened then?

— Well there was a lot of singing and clapping of hands.

— Henrys already told me about that.

— And then somebody said that there was a person who was deeply troubled on account of a friend. That the friend had tried to help them and in the process had gotten into very serious trouble. Then they said that despite all of my sins and all of the trouble Id seen that Jesus loved me and wanted to bless me.

— So did you go forward like they do in the Billy Graham shows.

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— No, I went up afterwards and asked for prayers for you and I sat in a chair and they prayed over me. Some of them prayed in tongues while I was sitting there. Julia, for the first time in years, maybe in my life, I felt loved, and I started to cry.

— And is that when you became born again?

— No, what happened is that I went home, I went to Margerys house and I thought about you and about everything weve been through and I was crying and suddenly I felt a warm presence about me, I could almost feel a hand on my shoulder and a soft, warm, loving presence telling me that I was loved. And I said that I wanted to love more, it was not just enough to be loved, I needed to love back. And I felt this presence staying near me. I think thats when I decided to become a Christian.

— I see.

— Henry tells me that youre taking instructions, that youre going to be baptized as a Catholic.

— Yes, I think so. Do you remember when we were talking about being born again a few years back, right after Jimmy Carter became President.

— Yes, I do. We both wanted something more out of life than we had.

— I wonder if weve found it?

— Will you two girls stop talking religion, Ive got to defend you against a murder charge and it wont be easy to save your life, Julia.

— Why Henry, you used to quote the Bible to me all the time Stronger than death is love you told me. Whats come over you?

— Nothing, I just want to get on with the case.

— Henry, I think youre upset because you cant be my religious mentor anymore, is that it?

— No, yes, I dont know, maybe it is. Can we get on with discussing your case?

— Henry, theres really not that much more to discuss is there? We go to trial next week and you try to make the jury see that I was acting to defend Betsy who was being raped by Crowley, then we all go home to a good dinner.

— Jesus....Oh God, dont you two look at me like that. Im sorry.... I wish it were as simple as you make it sound.

— Isnt it?

— No. Oh well, theres no use in talking to you anymore. Read Samanthas letter and when I see you next week you can give me your reply.

— I will.

— Come on Betsy, lets go.

— Good-bye, Julia, I know everything will work out for the best.

— I hope so.

Betsy and Henry were escorted out and went to Henrys car where he fussed and fumed much of the way home. Julia went back to her cell and read Samanthas letter.

Dear Julia,

I dont know if you were out of your mind or not when you killed Daisy. I do know that there are times when we are under some kind of stress and it is like something snapping inside of us. These can be times of our greatest grace or times of our greatest sinfulness. Let me tell you something that father once told me.

Just before my mother died they had had a fight. I was living in New York then and working in a massage parlor. My father liked to think that he had been born again and that he had put all of his sinful behavior behind him. Well he hadnt. He went to massage parlor in D.C. and had sex with one of the hostesses there. He was so wracked with guilt afterwards that he stayed home and spent hours praying and meditating over his sins and then when he went to work the next day he went to St. Dominics to go to confession and he was kneeling before the Eucharist praying when I walked in and asked if I could come home.

You already know my story, of course. Now what all of this means is that frequently we are going along and everything seems normal but we are still under emotional and spiritual

stress and then something breaks and we give in either to sin or we rise to the offerings of grace.

In my fathers case he sinned because something happened inside of him, a need for revenge on my mother that was greater than any other restraining force but his guilt and his need for repentance were signs of Gods grace for him and he met them.

In my own case, when my young man, who was also named Tommy, like your husband, died and I had to identify him something snapped inside of me and Juliet, by offering me her love, offered me the grace to change my life.

My father, who fancies himself an intellectual, likes to explain this in terms of a mathematical model and will devote hours to explaining the topology of moral and spiritual collapses. As for myself I prefer to see the hand of God moving in our lives and to remember what Paul said about grace, though sin abounds grace has far surpassed it.

I suppose this all sounds very silly to you and indeed it may to many people and yet think of the people whose lives have been changed by small things, by reading a book for instance. There is a Jewish woman who died at Auschwitz by the name of Edith Stein. She was a philosopher, a student of Husserl, and an atheist. One day she read the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila and became a Catholic and a Carmelite nun. Your own case, of being inspired by Merton, is not unusual, other people have been inspired by him or by others to change their lives.

What all of this is about really is the opening of God into our lives and our response to the grace that he sends us in any of an infinite number of forms. There are many times and places and people in our lives that bring us these grace filled moments and they can be things as silly as a Marx brothers movie or as profound as someone seeing into you and opening your soul up for you to see.

In the old days the fathers considered everything to be grace and isnt that true? You are suffering, I dont doubt that, I know that you live in fear of the outcome of your trial and I know that if the outcome is bad you will have many dark and fearful moments until everything is finally resolved but now that youve started along the journey havent you found that you look at things differently and that people and the world seem to be gifts to you.

Actually this feeling will pass eventually and there will be times when everything seems dull and impossible but the important thing is to keep on going.

Im sure this all sounds very pretentious but I know from experience that eventually the honeymoon, even with God, seems to pass and you keep hoping to recapture the original feeling. You will have moments when it seems to return. In the meantime, however, try to hold on to those moments of grace that you remember.

There is not much else that I can tell you right now. I suppose I could send you pages and pages of good spiritual advice but I think you dont need to hear it, not all at one time. In the meantime I am

Yours in Christ and love,

Samantha Morris

Julia wrote back to Samantha.

Dear Samantha,

The trial starts next week and frankly I expect things to go poorly. I think the prosecutor and the prison administration will do everything they can to send me to the electric chair.

And yet the funny thing is that I am not afraid even if the judge should sentence me to death. I dont know if it is because I dont really believe that Ill be executed or because I have found faith that there is something beyond this life.

I understand completely what you mean by saying that life is full of moments of grace. Someone once said that he spent his life going from one piece of holy ground to another and I think thats what he meant.

Father Jack has begun teaching me about the sacraments and I have asked him to teach me how to say the Divine Office. Here there is so little to do except to wait for visitors or watch television and the idea of being able to consecrate the moments of each day by formal prayer is appealing.

I told you that he has begun teaching me about the sacraments and I like his approach very much. He believes that the sacraments are the intrusion of God into our everyday life and that they are His way of sanctifying the activities of our daily life. He says that in the Eucharist, for example, God has sanctified the daily meal, it is surrounded by ritual, of course, but what is important is that God has broken bread with us and invited us to share His life with Him. I look forward to the moment when I am finally baptized, it will be like I have died and been reborn.

I just looked at that and thought Oh my God, am I talking about being born-again. I always thought that was such a phony experience and now here I am talking like one of the people I used to scorn. Oh well, I suppose it is another instance of grace, the ways in which we continually surprise ourselves.

Can you write and tell me something about your life in the convent. Your first letter said that we were both confined and that is true. I would like to know more about what you do, do you just sit around and pray all day or do you have work to do, what kind, do you ever have moments of recreation, do you get to do any light reading like mysteries or science fiction. Tell me more about yourself.

Love,
Julia

XII

In January of 1981 Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President and the Americans who had been held hostage in Iran came home. As the hostages were being released, the day after the inauguration, Julia went on trial in one of Virginias southernmost counties for the murder of Lucas Crowley.

Julias trial had promised to be a local sensation. The residents came to see the woman who had been tried and convicted of killing her husbands lover, sentenced to death and then reprieved by the by the bleeding heart liberals on the Supreme Court, and who had then gone on to kill a prison guard when her cellmate-lover had made advances towards him.

The day that the trial was to start a woman came to see Henry Parker before he went to the Court-house. Henry was talking to Betsy when she came in without waiting to be announced.

- Mr. Parker? Are you the lawyer thats defending Julia Driscoll?
 - Yes, I am and youre....
 - Marcia Crowley, Lucas Crowleys wife...widow, I guess now.
 - I see, Betsy would you excuse us, I think Mrs. Crowley would like to talk to me in private.
 - Sure, Ill be outside if you need me.
 - Now what did you want to talk about Mrs. Crowley?
 - I dont know if itll help any but Im glad Lucas is dead.
 - And why is that?
-

— That man was never any good. You know I hear women complaining about their husbands, onell say that hes a pig and never picks up after himself and anotherll say that he snores and keeps her awake all night; I wish those were my problems. Lucas was mean and he deserved what he got.

— He was mean, how, in what way?

— Well, like right before he was killed, now you wont go and tell anybody this will you?

— That depends, if its something that will save Julias life I might have no choice but to use it, or ask you to tell it in court.

— Well, Id sure hate to see her die for killing a mean son-of-a-bitch like Lucas Crowley, especially when he probably did try to do what she said to her friend. Was that the girl he was supposed to have tried to mess with that just left?

— Yes, Betsy. Now what do you want to tell me about Lucas, Mrs Crowley?

— Well he was always mean tempered, sober or drunk, but when he was drunk he got downright vicious. He would get drunk sometimes and hed start pawing at me and wanting me to do things, things that werent right, they werent natural Mr. Parker.

— Things like what?

— Well hed want for me to take his thing and put it in my mouth and suck on it. Thats just not right Mr. Parker, or hed want for me to get down on all fours and hed stick it....

— I see, in other words he forced you to have oral and anal intercourse with him?

— Im not sure I know what that means, I just know that it wasnt natural, and Lord, when he did it, not me sucking but the other, it hurt.

— Did he hit you or punish you in any way?

— He knew I didnt like it and if I put up too much of a fight hed take his belt off and whip me on my bottom and once he punched me real hard in the stomach.

— And did you ever report him to the police?

— I tried but they said it was between him and me and they werent going to get involved in any domestic squabbles. Thats what they called them, domestic squabbles, hell, Mr. Parker those werent any domestic squabbles. That time that Lucas hit me in the stomach....

— Yes, did he hurt you badly?

— He didnt hurt me bad at all, but I was pregnant and the baby I was carrying....

— He hit you and you miscarried?

— Yes, I went to the hospital and they wanted me to report him but I was afraid. theyd just let him out on bail and then hed come back and beat me again.

— So why didnt you leave him?

— Hell, Mr. Parker, I loved him when I married him and then after I was married to him and found out how mean he was I was afraid of him. Besides, my people, my church, we dont believe in divorce, when youre married its for life and you better work things out.

— I see and is there anything else you can tell me?

— No, thats all I can think of Mr. Parker. If I can think of anything though, Ill be sure to give you a call.

— Would you be willing to take the stand and testify to what you just told me?

— Well I wouldnt want folks around here to start thinking badly about me.

— I can assure you Mrs. Crowley that they wont think badly of you. Youre the victim, if anything theyll think badly of Lucas. It might help save my clients life.

— Well if you put it like that....

— I do.

— Ill be a witness for you.

— Good, then Ill see what we can do.

When Betsy saw her leave she came in and asked Henry what she had wanted.

— She was telling me that Crowley used to beat her on a pretty regular basis.

— So it wasnt just the inmates he abused?

— No, Im sure that if we look into his past well find that he was pretty sick and that he made a habit of abusing women.

— But will you be able to get that into court?

— I dont know. I can certainly try.

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— And in the meantime what do I do?

— Well you could see if your pipeline to God is open and if He can give me some bright ideas on how to get Julia acquitted.

— Henry, I thought you were a believer, why are you being so sarcastic?

— I am, Im sorry. Im so desperate to get Julia acquitted and I just feel that this case is so hopeless. No, dont tell me to pray to St. Jude.

— Henry, you know me better than that.

— I guess I do. God, Im so tired of this, I want this case to be over and Julia to be acquitted.

— Shed just go back to prison.

— Yes, thats whats so terrible, no matter what I do it all seems so futile. Courts about ready to open, lets go.

The Commonwealths attorney opened his case by portraying Julia as a vengeful woman who out had already been incarcerated once before for killing out of jealousy and anger. She had claimed then that she had been temporarily insane and she was claiming now that she had acted to defend Elizabeth Blake from the improper advances of Lucas Crowley. In the first case she had been sentenced to die and had been spared only because the Supreme Court had outlawed capital punishment, now capital punishment had been reinstated and she had deliberately and wantonly killed again and this time to prevent any further incidents and to ensure that she would not kill again he was going to ask that she be sentenced to die and thus face the punishment that should justly have been hers back in 1969 when she was first sentenced.

Elizabeth Blake was a prostitute and heroin addict who had become involved with a man who had died while committing a robbery, she had been his accomplice and had driven the car in which he had hoped to make his getaway. While in prison she had fallen under the spell of Julia Driscoll, who had been her cellmate up until the time she killed Lucas Crowley, and they had become lovers. In an attempt to secure special privileges for Julia she had made sexual advances to Crowley and he had met her in the storage shed. Julia had followed them and there had been a violent fight in which all three had suffered injuries but which had cost Crowley his life.

Julia Driscoll had followed Elizabeth Blake and Lucas Crowley because she was jealous of Elizabeth Blake and she had intended to kill Lucas Crowley, who was taking the object of her depraved desires from her, just as earlier she had killed a young woman who had threatened to take her husband from her.

Therefore he was going to ask for the supreme penalty so that this madwoman could be prevented from killing again.

Henry painted a far different picture. Elizabeth Blake and Julia Driscoll had been cellmates, that much he would grant, but they had never been lovers. He did not deny that homosexuality was rampant in both mens and womens prisons, it was strictly forbidden, of course, but everyone knew that it happened and as long as society insisted on confining people of the same sex together a certain amount of it was to be expected. What was at issue here was not the question of sexual lifestyle or fidelity but whether or not Julia Driscoll had acted justifiably and had in fact come to the aid of Elizabeth Blake who was being sexually assaulted by Lucas Crowley.

It has always been a principle of law that one may use force, up to and including deadly force, to repel a threat to oneself or to another. Such force, however, may not be excessive, thus the person who sets up a shotgun to blast a person who breaks into his house is guilty of using excessive force and as such is liable to civil and criminal penalties. Julia acted reasonably and prudently to defend Elizabeth Blake who was being threatened and brutally molested by Lucas Crowley.

Lucas Crowley himself was not one of natures noblemen, he was vicious and he derived pleasure from the fact that he had enormous power and control over the women that he was supposed to guard. He would produce evidence that would show that Lucas Crowley had a history of violent behavior.

Traditionally rape had been supposed to be a crime of sexual passion. the current theory, at least the one held by many feminists, was that rape was a crime of violence in which the rapist wanted to assert his power over the victim.

That Elizabeth Blake had been a prostitute was irrelevant. She was not a prostitute now and she was in prison as the result of an attempted robbery, however, she had been an accomplice to the robbery in

that she had driven the car, she had not held a gun on the store manager so she was not necessarily a person of a violent nature.

In short Julia Driscoll was not guilty of murder because she acted in defense of another and therefore the jury should find that she was not guilty or find that her action was justifiable.

The Commonwealths attorney for the county, Francis Cameron, then called his first witness, the guard who had found the threesome in the shed.

Albert Beagle, or as he was sometimes known, Snoopy, was middle-aged, pot-bellied, a man who liked to relax with a cigarette and a glass of beer while watching the television programs that lulled him to sleep on a regular basis. He was not particularly harsh or brutal, like Crowley had been, in fact it must be admitted that Crowley was an exception, but prison guard is not an occupation for men that are overwhelmingly gentle. St Francis of Assisi would not have made a good guard, some of his followers who took part in the Inquisition would have been and were the prototypes of todays guardians.

— Now Mr. Beagle, would you tell the court what happened the afternoon of October 12th of last year.

— Yes sir. It was about two in the afternoon and everything was pretty quiet and I was in the office catching up on some paper work....

— You are in a supervisory position then?

— Yes sir. I was taking care of T & As, time and attendance records, when all of a sudden I heard this commotion coming from the shed behind my office.

— What is kept in this shed?

— Tools, screwdrivers, hammers, things that you need for doing repairs.

— Continue.

— Well, at any rate, like I said I heard this commotion. Now bear in mind that this was Sunday and the women, well they werent working or anything and a couple of my regular guards had called in sick so we were a little short handed that day.

— I see, now if youll please just tell us what happened that day.

— Well I ran out to see what was happening and I found Julia Driscoll, the defendant there, standing over Lucas Crowley, who had a screwdriver stuck through his throat, and she was holding on to this other woman, her cellmate, Elizabeth Blake, and she said that Crowley had raped Miss Blake.

— I see and what did Miss Blake say?

— Well she was hysterical.

— Objection. Your honor when Mr. Beagle characterizes her as being hysterical are we to understand that he is speaking as a medical man and is giving a diagnosis of her mental condition, if so he has not qualified as an expert in psychiatry.

— Mr. Beagle, would you rephrase your answer.

— Sure, your honor. She was upset and crying and she was looking at the defendant like she wanted to know what to say.

— Objection, your honor. The witness is making inferences about the behavior of the women for which he has no basis in fact.

— Sustained. Please confine your answers to just what was said and done in your presence.

— Yes, your honor. Well she, Miss Blake that is, just nodded in agreement, she was crying and I could tell that she had been treated pretty rough, her face was red and she looked like she had been hit.

— And did anybody say how she had been hit?

— Mrs. Driscoll said that Lucas Crowley hit her, that is Miss Blake, and forced her to have sex with him.

— And she, Miss Blake, was unable to defend herself.

— Yes sir, we dont allow prisoners to have weapons.

— Thats very commendable Im sure.

The judge pounded on the bench and demanded that the raucous laughter cease. When things quieted down Cameron resumed his questioning.

— Now you say that Mrs. Driscoll claimed that Lucas Crowley forced her cellmate, Elizabeth Blake, to have sex with him.

— Yes sir.

— Now do you have any reason to believe otherwise?

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— Yes sir.

— Would you mind telling the court what it is?

— No sir. Well it happened that the Friday before all this happened....

— That would be the 10th of October?

— Yes sir. That Friday me and Crowley, Crowley and I....

— Please, dont worry about the grammar.

— Well, it was lunch time and we were talking and he said how good-looking Mrs. Driscoll and Miss Blake were and Miss Blake she was getting out soon and she had been coming on to him. Said she wanted him to take it easy on Mrs. Driscoll. Theyd become real good friends.

— Did he give any indication as to the nature of that friendship?

— Well he said that they were more than friends, if you take my meaning.

— In other words he claimed that they had a lesbian relationship?

— Your honor, this is pure hearsay. Lucas Crowley is dead and cannot testify as to the nature of any conversation he may have had with Miss Blake.

— Your honor, as Mr. Parker points out, Lucas Crowley is dead and cannot testify, however, it is important that a motive for Julia Driscolls killing of Lucas Crowley be established. Since there were no actual witnesses to the killing, aside from the defendant and Miss Blake, who because of her special relationship with the defendant, we believe to be mis-representing the facts, we must be allowed the widest possible latitude in presenting evidence.

— I agree, because of the unusual nature of this case I am going to allow this line of questioning to proceed.

— Then, your honor, I wish my exception to be noted in the record.

— It is so noted. Mr. Cameron, you will proceed.

— Very well. Now Mr. Beagle, you say that the two women Elizabeth Blake and Julia Driscoll maintained a lesbian relationship?

— Yes sir, it was common knowledge. I mean, hell, I beg your pardon, your honor, what do you expect when you lock women up together. I mean I know that if I were locked up for years without any women I might get turned on to some good-looking kid, I know Id sure get might tired of having no dates except Miss Mary.

— Miss Mary?

— You know what I mean.... Miss Mary.

— You mean masturbation?

— I dont know what that fancy word means, I just call it Miss Mary, or pulling my....

— I think we understand what you mean.

The courtroom broke out into nervous laughter and the Commonwealths attorney could be seen to blush visibly. The judge again threatened to clear the courtroom.

— You were saying, Mr. Beagle.

— I was saying that it was common knowledge that those two....

— Those two meaning Miss Blake and Mrs. Driscoll?

— Yes. That those two were dykes. Mrs. Driscoll she was the masculine one of the two. Sometimes at night you could hear the two of them going at it and shed be moaning and groaning.

— Your honor, this is a tissue of lies, a fabrication concocted by the Commonwealths attorney, does he have any evidence to support this? Even if he does, what relevance does it have to the case at hand. My client is not on trial because of her sexual preferences or actions, she is on trial for murder. I object most strongly to this line of questioning, by bringing up my clients sexual history the Commonwealths attorney is attempting to prejudice the jury. Your honor, if this case were being tried in a big Northern city, such as New York or Boston, the sexual details would not be nearly so titillating. This is a small, rural, Southern town, that does not mean that it is inferior to New York or Boston, just different, and behavior that is more easily tolerated elsewhere is looked at differently here. You and I both know this. I am asking that the Commonwealths attorney try the case at hand and not indulge in conduct that is prejudicial to my client.

— Your honor, I will agree to have the response to the last question stricken from the record if that will please Mr. Parker.

— It will be a start.

— However, I must be allowed to establish the nature of the relationship between Miss Blake and Mrs. Driscoll.

— The witness response from dykes on will be stricken from the record and the jury will disregard that portion of the witness testimony in their deliberations.

— Your honor, I still object to this line of questioning.

— Your objection has been overruled once before, Mr. Parker.

— I want my exception to this noted.

— It has been so noted. Now resume your questioning, Mr. Cameron.

— Mr. Beagle, you said that the two women were well known lesbians.

— Yes sir.

— And that this was common knowledge in the prison?

— Yes sir.

— Were there other lesbian relationships in the prison that you were aware of?

— Yes sir, there were....

— Objection your honor, this testimony is irrelevant.

— I agree, Mr. Cameron, we are not investigating our penal system, we are trying a case of murder, you will please confine your questions to areas that are germane to the case.

— Yes, your honor. Let me summarize your testimony and see if you agree. You say that Lucas Crowley claimed that Elizabeth Blake made advances towards Lucas Crowley and that he claimed that she wanted to obtain special favors and privileges for Julia Driscoll after she, Elizabeth Blake, was released from prison. Further that Mrs. Driscoll denied this and claimed that she had acted to protect Miss Blake. However, you have testified that they not only shared the same cell but also physical affection, that in short they were lovers. Is that an accurate statement of your testimony so far?

— Yes, it is.

— No further questions, your witness.

— Mr. Beagle, do you have a nickname by which you are known in the prison?

— Well, I have one that Ive had since I was a kid.

— And what is that?

— Snoopy.

— I see and is that because you have a reputation for being nosy and interfering with the inmates under your care?

— No sir, like I said Ive had it since I was a kid.

— And how did you come by that nickname.

— It was right after that comic strip, Peanuts, came out, because the little round headed kids dog was a beagle named Snoopy.

— I see.

— Your honor, this line of questioning is not germane, will counsel for the defense please get to the point.

— Mr. Parker, the objection is well taken, will you please stick to the material covered under direct examination.

— Yes, your honor. Now Mr. Beagle you said that Miss Blake and Mrs. Driscoll were well known as, I believe your term was dykes.

— Yes sir.

— Now did you ever see them engage in any sexual activity together?

— Well, no, but hell that doesnt mean they didnt do it.

— Please just answer yes or no. Now you say you never saw them engage in sexual activity.

— Thats right, I never saw them.

— Then on what basis do you say that they were dykes or that they engaged in a lesbian relationship.

— I didnt have to actually see them do anything, I mean hell, begging the courts pardon, I dont have to see you and your wife actually doing anything to know what you do when you go home at night.

— Im not married. So even though you never saw them perform any sexual acts you say that they gave the same kind of cues that a married couple gives and that this indicated the nature of their relationship.

Thomas E. Hart

- Im sorry, I dont know what you mean by cues.
- I mean the same kind of looks, embraces, what is sometimes called body language.
- Oh yes, body language, they both had plenty of body language.
- Would you describe the nature of that body language?
- Well you could tell just by the way that they looked at each other that they liked each other.
- And how was that.
- Like they was lovers.
- And how do lovers look at each other.
- Like they really like each other, like they just had a lot of fun in the sack.
- I really dont know what that looks like, could you give us a demonstration perhaps, no, on second thought I think Id rather not see that, I might never be able to look at a woman again. Your honor, the witness response to my questions has been evasive at best would you please direct him to be more responsive to my questions.
- Shucks, how am I supposed to answer you, first you say you want just yes or no answers then you want me to describe the way they looked at each other. What do you want me to do write an essay. Who do you think I am Shakespeare, hell, I havent read Shakespeare since high school and never want to again either.
- The witness has a point counsel, there is a point at which words fail us, for some that comes sooner than for others. I suggest you approach this matter from a different angle.
- Yes, your honor. Now Mr. Beagle you have said that the two women Miss Blake and Mrs. Driscoll maintained a lesbian relationship but that you never saw them engage in any sexual activities, is that right?
- Yes, but....
- Just answer the question. Now did either of them ever volunteer to you, in conversation or otherwise that they had engaged in lesbian relations?
- No, but....
- Fine, so all that you have is your supposition based on what you say is their body language, they way they looked at each other and so on, is that right?
- Yes, I guess so.
- Now was anybody else present when Lucas Crowley told you that Elizabeth Blake was making advances towards him.
- No.
- And, of course, Lucas Crowley is dead so we just have your word that this conversation ever took place?
- Im not lying.
- I never said you were, but are there any other witnesses to this conversation?
- No.
- Very well then. I have no further questions for this witness.
- The Commonwealth called Dr. Michael Cagney, the doctor who had examined and treated both Julia and Betsy, to the stand.
- Dr. Cagney, you have worked with the prison for some time isnt that correct?
- Yes, since I came her back in 73.
- And in that time you have treated many of the women inmates.
- Yes, I have.
- And have you treated either Elizabeth Blake or Julia Driscoll.
- Yes, I have.
- And when have you most recently treated either of the women.
- That was on Sunday, October 12th of last year.
- And what was that for?
- They had been involved in an altercation in the prison. Miss Blake had suffered multiple lacerations about the face and neck and Mrs. Driscoll had suffered a mild concussion.
- And did they have anything to say about what had happened.
- Yes.
- And that was?
-
-

— In essence they both claimed that Mr. Crowley had assaulted and sexually molested Miss Blake, that she had been forced to fellate him.

— Fellate? Im not sure the jury is familiar with that term, could you explain it to them, please.

— Fellate, from fellatio, to perform an act of oral sex upon the male member, also sometimes known as sucking....

— Im sure we get the picture now. So she said that she had been forced to perform an act of oral sex.

— Yes and that he was about to force her to indulge in anal intercourse when Mrs. Driscoll intervened and prevented him from carrying out his intentions.

— Intervened by jamming a screwdriver down his throat. Now Dr. Cagney did you see any evidence to substantiate Miss Blakes claim that she had been sexually assaulted and abused?

— There were traces of sperm on her face.

— But there was no evidence that the sexual act had not been willingly performed.

— There were the bruises on her face and body.

— But those could have been inflicted, unwittingly, by the defendant and Lucas Crowley as they struggled, especially if Miss Blake got in the way?

— I suppose.

— No further questions, your witness.

— Dr. Cagney, you say there was no evidence that the sexual act had not been willingly performed.

— I did not.

— I beg your pardon then, what did you say?

— I said that there were bruises about Miss Blakes face and body.

— I see, and could you determine who inflicted them.

— No, I could not.

— I see then the marks on Miss Blakes face could have been caused by Lucas Crowley as he attempted to rape her.

— Yes.

— Now as to the sexual act itself was there any indication, any medical indication to show whether or not it had been willingly performed.

— Well partly because of the nature of the act itself. When a women is raped vaginally or anally, because of the brutality of the attack there may be damage to the muscles, tearing of the vaginal wall, that sort of thing.

— So she could have been forced to perform oral sex but there would be no trace of violence, i.e., torn tissues and so on.

— Yes.

— In other words then your testimony is that there is no way to form a conclusion as to whether or not Miss Blake was being forced to perform an act of oral intercourse upon Lucas Crowley.

— That is correct.

— Thank you, no further questions.

— Gentlemen, it is getting quite late now and if nobody has any objection I think it is about time that we all went home for dinner. Mr. Cameron, Mr. Parker, any objection? Good, then court is adjourned till ten oclock tomorrow morning. The jurors are cautioned not to discuss this case among themselves or to form any opinions until they have heard all the evidence in the case.

The Commonwealth resumed its case the the next day with the testimony of Dr. William Cummings. He testified that Lucas Crowley had been killed by a screwdriver, which was introduced into evidence, and that weapon had been forced into the thorax causing Crowley to die gasping for breath. Crowley had recently discharged sperm, a common event when a man dies, and the traces of sperm on Miss Blakes face and clothing were the same blood type as Lucas Crowleys. No, he could not tell if the sexual act had been forced or if it were voluntary. The state rested and Henry placed Betsy on the stand.

— Miss Blake, what is your current occupation?

— Im a secretary, in fact Im your secretary.

— And how did you come to be my secretary?

— Julia Driscoll, she was my cellmate and your client, she suggested that I talk to you and see if you could help me get a job when I got released from prison.

Thomas E. Hart

— Obviously, I did. Now do you have any idea as to why she suggested that you talk to me about helping you find a job?

— Well we were cellmates and we became friends.

— Just friends, not lovers.

— No. We were never lovers, certainly not in the physical sense.

— In what sense then?

— We were more like sisters. She was like my big sister to me, she tutored me.

— She tutored you, why was that?

— I dropped out of school when I was fourteen, I ran away from home and drifted around for a time. Julia used to teach high school and she agreed to tutor me so I could pass the GED and maybe go to college.

— And are you going to college?

— Yes, Julias mother, Margery Gordon, Im living with her now, she helped me get into George Washington University, or GW as we call it, and Im in my freshman year now part-time.

— But before you came to work for me and before you lived with Mrs. Gordon, Julia Driscolls mother you and Julia Driscoll were cellmates in the state penitentiary for women.

— Yes, thats right.

— Now before you were released did anything unusual happen?

— Yes, I was raped by one of the guards, Lucas Crowley.

— Suppose you tell us what happened then.

— It was Sunday, October 12th of last year, I was to be released the following day. It was fairly warm, or at least Julia and I thought so, and we were walking by ourselves, just talking and suddenly we saw Lucas Crowley. He told us that we were two good-looking dykes and wanted to know how long we had been licking each other. Julia told him that we werent dykes and he said it was about time that we had a real man between our legs, or words to that effect. Julia asked him to leave us alone, he punched her in the stomach and then hit her in the head knocking her unconscious. Then he dragged me into the storage shed behind the guards office and forced me to perform oral sex on him. Then he wanted me to get down on all fours and he was going to force me to have anal sex with him. I told him Id never done that when suddenly Julia appeared, she picked up a screwdriver that had been lying on the ground, screamed and rushed at him. He turned to see who it was and before anybody could do anything the screwdriver had gone through his throat and he was dead.

— Now was he armed at the time?

— Yes, he was wearing his gun.

— But was he actually holding it on you?

— No, but I make it a firm rule to never argue with a man who has a gun, even in a holster.

— Then you felt that there was a definite possibility that he might use the gun on you?

— Yes.

— Plus he had been hitting you.

— Yes, when Julia came in he slapped me and I hit my head against the wall and was knocked unconscious.

— So you heard Julia scream at him but you didnt see her attack him with the screwdriver, is that right?

— Yes.

— So Lucas Crowley assaulted you sexually, after he had knocked Mrs. Driscoll unconscious, and when she came to she saw you being assaulted, forced to engage in sexual acts that you did not desire, and she rushed upon Crowley while coming to your defense. Is that your testimony so far?

— Yes, it is.

— I have no further questions, your witness.

— Miss Blake, you were in prison with Mrs. Driscoll.

— Yes.

— What were you in for?

— Your honor, I object, this is not germane to the matter at hand.

— Your honor, the jury has a right to know for what offense Miss Blake was confined.

— I agree. You may proceed.

-
- I was in for armed robbery, but I...
- You were in for armed robbery and prior to that you said that you had drifted around?
- Yes.
- And what did you do while you were drifting around, were you a house-painter, a carpenter, what did you do during your period of drifting?
- Your honor, this is scarcely relevant.
- Your honor, I want to establish the witness credibility or lack of it, in order to do that it is essential that the jury form an impression as to what kind of person she is. The counsel for the defense has already opened the door during direct examination when the witness testified that she had drifted around for a while.
- I agree, the witness will answer the question.
- I was a prostitute.
- You were a prostitute. And did you ever work for a massage parlor called Paradiso in Alexandria.
- Yes, I did.
- And while you were there did you ever have sex with another woman.
- On some occasions, when the customer....
- Just yes or no, please.
- Yes, I did.
- So you had been a prostitute, you had no objection to engaging in sex with another woman, and you were in prison for armed robbery, is that correct, just yes or no.
- Yes, but....
- Thank you, now as I was saying you admit that you have had, on occasion, sex with other women and you have been previously convicted of armed robbery?
- Yes, but....
- Just answer the question please. Now you and Mrs. Driscoll were cellmates, is that correct?
- Yes.
- And you were very fond of her?
- Yes, I was and I still am.
- Now was she also fond of you, did she ever say in so many words that she liked you.
- Yes, I suppose she did.
- Your honor, the Commonwealths attorney is trying to twist a perfectly innocent friendship into something perverted and dirty. Many people of the same sex maintain friendships without going to bed with each other. I ask the court to bear in mind that in prison people are put together on a more or less random basis and that cellmates had better be able to get along or their time inside is going to be pure hell. That the two women had a relationship based on propinquity, their mutual residence in the same cell, is a fact, that it may have matured into a very real liking for each other I am perfectly willing to stipulate. I will not, however, stand still while he attempts to paint the witness and my client in a dirty, perverted light. He is attempting to prejudice the jury against my client by inflaming them with lurid pictures of lesbians behind bars. These lurid, pornographic imaginings more properly belong in the lurid bookstalls of Times Square in New York than in a courtroom in Virginia.
- Your honor, the Commonwealth contends that the details of the nature of this relationship, however lurid and titillating they may be, are essential to this case. If this was a purely innocent friendship it might be overlooked, however, this is a relationship between two female prisoners, one of whom is already in prison for a previous killing. It is a regrettable fact but, despite the rules against it, homosexuality is a widely practiced part of prison life and it may be presumed that it is also widely practiced in the womens prisons.
- I agree with the Commonwealths attorney. In this case the nature of the relationship between the two women is important and he is entitled to establish the nature of that relationship. Objection overruled.
- Now Miss Blake do you find Mrs. Driscoll attractive?
- In what way?
- Is she pretty, would you say she is beautiful?
- Are you blind? Shes a knockout.
- Thats a rather quaint expression but I take it that the answer is yes.
-

Thomas E. Hart

- Yes, the answer is yes.
- Now if you were still working at the Paradiso and a customer asked to watch you have sex with Mrs. Driscoll, would you object?
- She may not object, your honor, but I do. This has nothing to do with the case at all, he is merely asking questions to titillate the jury and cause a sensation.
- I agree with you about this question, Mr. Parker, objection sustained. Mr. Cameron, you will not proceed with these hypothetical questions.
- Yes, your honor, I withdraw the question. Now you say Mrs. Driscoll is beautiful, in your opinion?
- Yes.
- Do you find her desirable, would you like to sleep with her now?
- No, she snores too loudly.
- Quiet or Ill order the courtroom cleared. Mr. Cameron try to put your question again without using that euphemism, but please remember the decorum and put it delicately.
- Ill try your honor. Now Miss Blake without being indelicate do you now desire to have sexual relations with Mrs. Driscoll?
- No.
- And why is that, you have testified that you think she is beautiful and apparently desirable, is there any reason why you would reject her as a prospective lover?
- I love Julia but that doesnt mean I want to have sex with her. I also like her mother and I have no desire to have sex with her. There are many people who are attractive that I have no desire to have sex with. For example, you arent too bad looking but I think Id turn you down even if I were still a hooker.
- I see and is there any reason for that?
- Mr. Cameron, I think you may be getting into trouble if you ask that question, perhaps you should consider withdrawing it.
- I see what you mean, your honor, please dont answer the question Miss Blake, I dont think my ego could take an honest answer and I certainly wouldnt want you to lie to spare my feelings.
- Oh, I have no problem with hurting your feelings.
- Miss Blake getting back to the subject of your feelings for Mrs. Driscoll would you tell the court why, if you and she were not lovers she asked her attorney to help you find a job and why she apparently asked her mother to provide you with housing?
- Julia and I were in prison together, thats true, and you have to make an effort to get along with the other prisoners, otherwise youre going to be spending a lot of time in solitary and youll be denied commissary privileges and things like that. So we more or less had to be friends once I was assigned to her cell. A lot of times you never see the people you did time with when youre on the outside, I suppose its a lot like the Army, do you ever see the guys you went through basic training with?
- We were talking about your relationship with the defendant, Miss Blake.
- Well a lot of the relationships in prison are like going through basic, you have to have buddies or friends, people werent meant to live alone, but when you get outside your interests change. Julia was my friend and my teacher, she helped me do high school work and to pass the GED so I could get out and be something more than a hooker. I made more as a hooker, I made more than Henry and you combined Mr. Cameron, but I wasnt happy, all my money went for dope or was wasted in some other way. I may be just a secretary now but I know that I can do more and I thank God for giving me the grace through Julia to know that there was more in this world than birth, and copulation, and death.
- Im sorry, I dont quite understand what you mean by that last phrase.
- Its a quote, from T. S. Eliot, and what it means, at least to me, is the emptiness of life as I was leading it then.
- And now your life is not empty?
- No, it is not. I have work that I really enjoy, I have my friends, including Julias mother; my boss, Henry Parker; and Julia herself. I have my church and I have a life that does not include prostitution or drugs and Julia helped me to see the good in myself and that is why I love her and I do love her, Mr. Cameron, and sex has nothing to do with it and never did. She could very easily have been killed by Lucas Crowley when she came to my defense.
- But she wasnt, instead Lucas Crowley is dead and your friend is on trial for his murder.
-
-

— Yes, damn it, when he should be the one on trial for rape, for raping me and possibly for raping other women.

— Miss Blake how strongly do you feel about Mrs. Driscoll?

— Ive already said I love her and I told you how I meant that.

— Would you protect her if her life were in danger?

— Yes, I would do the same thing for her that she did for me.

— So you would kill to protect her?

— Yes.

— Would you also lie to protect her?

— No.

— No, and why is it that you would kill to protect her but that you wouldnt lie to protect her?

— It might be necessary to kill somebody who is threatening somebody else but what youre trying to do is trick me into saying that I might be lying here, in court, and Im not. Julia killed Lucas Crowley to protect me and that is all there is to it.

— So you think Im trying to trick and discredit you?

— If this were a cowboy movie youd be wearing the black hat. Yes, I think youre trying to trick me and discredit me.

— So you think that Im the villain rather than Mrs. Driscoll who brutally killed a guard who was charged with responsibility for her and the other inmates and who had succumbed to your temptations?

— Yes, I already told you that he raped me and that he was forcing me to have sex with him.

— And yet is it not true that during the time that you were a prostitute you found nothing repugnant about having sex with men.

— Yes, but....

— And that you had no objection to performing oral sex with men?

— Yes.

— And that you participated in sex with other women for your customers?

— Yes.

— And you did all of this for money?

— Yes.

— Now isnt it reasonable to believe that if you were willing to do all of this for money on the outside that you would continue to use your body to secure privileges while inside prison?

— No, it most certainly is not.

— I think it is and I think the jury will agree with me. I have no further questions, you are excused.

Betsy stepped down from the stand and walked past the defendants table. Julia turned and grabbed her hand and whispered to her. Betsy smiled and walked to the back of the courtroom and took her seat. Henry and Julia whispered together until the judge rapped on the bench and asked if he was going to produce any more witnesses.

— Your honor, may I ask the courts indulgence while I confer with my client?

— Do you expect to be long?

— Just a few minutes, your honor.

— Very well then, court will recess for ten minutes.

The courtroom emptied of the spectators and Betsy came forward to speak to Henry and Julia.

— You did very well Betsy, you made Cameron look like a fool.

— Thanks, Henry, I just hope the jury believes me. Damn it, it is the truth.

— I know.

— So what are we going to do now?

— I was just talking about that with Julia. I can try and put Marcia Crowley on the stand and shell testify to what kind of man Crowley was, that he beat her and that he forced her to do things she didnt like, the same things he tried to do to you. But Cameron is going to object that Crowleys not here to defend himself and that hes not on trial.

— Then I have to take the stand and Cameron will drag all of my dirty linen out and wave it in front of the jury?

Thomas E. Hart

— Yes, if you call a previous murder conviction dirty linen and hell drag up all of your past history, it will be worse than at your first trial.

— But I really have no choice, do I, and the jury will have to choose whether to believe a convicted murderess and an ex-prostitute over the word of a prison guard and a couple of doctors who weren't even there?

— Yes, I'm afraid so.

— Well I'm ready to testify and if they convict me and sentence me to die, I'm ready for that too.

— Okay, then let's go.

— Julia, I'm praying for you, I know it will all come right.

— I hope so, thanks Betsy.

The judge came back in and the spectators and Julia was called and sworn in.

— Now Mrs. Driscoll would you tell us in your own words what happened the afternoon of October 12th of last year when Lucas Crowley died?

— Betsy, that's Elizabeth Blake, and I were walking by ourselves in the prison yard. It was fairly deserted then because the fall was coming but Betsy and I both thought it was warm enough to be outside and besides I rather like it when it is cool and I can see the trees starting to shed their leaves. At any rate Betsy and I were outside when Lucas Crowley approached us and told us that he had been watching us two dykes.

— He called you and Miss Blake dykes?

— Yes. Then he asked us how long we had been licking each other.

— And you told him what?

— That we weren't dykes. Then he asked how Betsy would like to have a real man between her legs and I asked if there were any around.

— I suppose that made him mad.

— Yes, it did, he told me to shut up that he was talking to the pretty little whore, meaning Betsy, and that he heard she was to be released soon. She told him she was getting out the next day and then he said he wanted a taste of her sweet thing before she left.

— Her sweet thing?

— Her sex. He said he wondered if he would like it as much as I did.

— And how did you respond to that. I told him to leave us alone and to play his sick games with someone else. He responded by hitting me in the stomach and then when I doubled over he hit me in the jaw and knocked me out.

— Eventually you regained consciousness.

— Yes, and when I came to I went looking for them, I found them in the storage shed behind the guards office. Crowley was holding Betsy down and trying to force her to go down on all fours, she was protesting and said she had already sucked him off and that she had never done that, apparently meaning what he was trying to force her to do, even when she had been a prostitute.

— And what did you take that to mean?

— Anal sex. So Crowley was trying to force her to have sex against her will. I looked for something to use as a weapon, I knew that he could hurt me with his bare hands so I needed something to defend myself with and something to use to persuade him to stop molesting Betsy.

— And, of course, inmates aren't allowed to use guns.

— Of course not. So there was a screwdriver, a Philips head, lying on the ground where it had been dropped, I picked it up and yelled at Crowley, he turned to face me and before I knew it the screwdriver had penetrated his throat.

— Now what are the nature of your relations with Elizabeth Blake.

— Well she's on the outside now and I'm inside, but we're still friends. She comes down to see me on a fairly regular basis. Back then we were cellmates and when she first came in I got she told me that she had been out on the streets since she was fourteen and she wanted to do something more than be a hooker all of her life. So I went to the warden and got permission to tutor her and eventually I tutored some other women too and I really enjoyed myself and Betsy was such an apt pupil, especially in math that she was soon tutoring me in certain subjects.

— And how would you describe your feelings for Miss Blake?

— I love her, she was my student, she is my friend, and I love her.

-
- But you have not slept with her.
- I slept with her every night in prison and she snores worse than I do.
- You have not had sex with her?
- No, I never have.
- And you and Miss Blake did not conspire to make it appear that she had been raped while in reality she was using her body to bargain with.
- No, never.
- Very good. Your witness.
- Mrs. Driscoll you are currently in the Virginia State Penitentiary for women is that not so?
- Yes, it is.
- Would you please tell the jury the nature of the offense for which you are confined?
- Your honor, I object the nature of the offense for which Mrs. Driscoll is confined is irrelevant, she is not being tried over for that offense, she is being tried for the murder of Lucas Crowley and not for any offense that happened in the distant past.
- Your honor, the death of Lucas Crowley took place in a womens prison, the jury has the right to know why the defendant was there in the first place. Further, the earlier case may shed some light on motivation in this case.
- I agree with the prosecution in this instance, objection overruled.
- Now what offense brought you to prison originally.
- Murder.
- And describe the nature of the crime with which you were charged.
- My husband and I were living with this girl and they decided to leave me.
- So you killed the girl?
- Yes.
- And were you upset because your husband was leaving you?
- No.
- Because the girl was leaving you?
- No.
- Why were you upset?
- Because they were both leaving me. I was in love with them both.
- I see and was this your first lesbian relationship?
- No, Id had one other, with a girl in high school.
- I see, and when you came to prison.
- None, I have had no sexual relations since 1969. I live like a nun.
- Of course a nun can walk out of her convent at any time.
- Yes.
- You say you love Miss Blake.
- Yes.
- And you would do anything for her?
- Yes.
- Even kill for her?
- I already have, I killed Crowley to protect her.
- You dont want to see her go back to prison?
- No, I dont want to see anybody in prison, not Crowley, not you.
- Where would you like to see me?
- I dont think youd really like to know.
- No, probably not. Is Miss Blake attractive in your eyes?
- Yes, very.
- Do you think other people, say men would find her desirable?
- Yes, definitely.
- And yet you love her and you dont find her desirable, this despite your admitted inclination towards other women?
- I dont know what I can tell you except what she already told you, love and sex are not the same, I can love someone and not have sex with them, I love my mother and I think shes still very attractive
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despite being in her early sixties but I dont want to have sex with her. I love my country too but I dont want to have sex with all of the two hundred million people in this country. Some people excite you sexually and others dont and that doesnt mean you dont love them. I cant explain why I dont want to have sex with Betsy, maybe its because love and sex need freedom and in prison there isnt any. I love Betsy and I think shes probably an incredibly sexy girl but I have never had any desire for her. Now Henry Parker, my attorney, on the other hand, he doesnt look like much but Ive known him for years and if I ever got out of prison he might not have to ply me with too much liquor to take me home.

— Well Ive learned my lesson from Miss Blake so I wont ask how you feel about me. Now you contend that you have been celibate, that is doing without sex since you were first imprisoned?

— Yes.

— Then what could possibly motivate you to kill Lucas Crowley?

— Good grief, are you so far gone that you have to ask that. I killed to protect my friend, just like if you saw a little girl being raped you would try to stop her assailant. The only way I could stop Crowley was to kill him. What if I had just gone for his arm, he might have been able to use his gun on Betsy or me and then come up with some phony story so that he wouldnt get blamed for hurting or killing us. No, in order to stop him it was necessary to kill him.

— But other women have been raped and lived to testify against their assailants?

— And were their assailants prison guards? Crowley was angry, he was upset, he had already hurt me and he was hurting Betsy. When I came in he hit her and her head rocked against the wall, she was unconscious and I had no way of knowing how much more damage he might do before he was satisfied. Ive lain awake many nights since he died and asked myself if there was anything else I could have done and I honestly dont think there was.

— So you do not admit that you were jealous of the attention that Miss Blake was showing Lucas Crowley?

— No, I do not admit. I was not jealous of Betsy. I hope she finds a man who can live with her past and that she can be happy someday.

— Mrs. Driscoll, I put it to you that you and Miss Blake, in order to protect you from going to the electric chair, have fabricated this whole story and that the injuries that you claim were inflicted on her by Lucas Crowley were in fact inflicted on her by yourself, whether inadvertently in the fight or deliberately afterwards, in order to cover up the actual nature of your attack, is that not so?

— No, it is not.

— You really expect the jury that you, even though you admit that you killed one person out of jealousy before, did not kill Lucas Crowley because your cellmate, your friend, whom by your own admission you love, made advances towards him and that you killed him out of an inflamed and unnatural desire for the person of Elizabeth Blake?

— Yes, I expect the jury to believe that he was raping my friend and that I killed him to protect her.

— Well I for one find that incredible and Im sure the jury does too. No further questions.

— Gentlemen, if there are no objection we will adjourn until tomorrow morning and then we will hear closing arguments.

There were no objections and court was adjourned. Julia turned to Henry and spoke to him.

— Henry, how do you think it will go?

— I dont know. You and Betsy both handled yourselves very well, but frankly I think this jury is prejudiced and that it is very likely to go against us.

— Henry, this time we wont give up on the appeals but I want you to do one thing before tomorrow.

— Sure, if I can.

— Get Father Adams in to baptize me. I may die in prison but I want the old me to die today.

— Ill get him here, do you need anybody to be your sponsors, do they still have godfathers or is that only in the movies?

— Well my godfather wont have to kill anybody for me. Do you and Betsy want to be there?

— You bet, honey, try and keep us away. Id drag Henry with me even if he didnt want to come.

— Okay, you two, Ill see what I can work out.

Henry talked to the sheriff and got permission for Father Adams to come in and administer the sacraments to Julia. She was baptized, received her first Eucharist and was confirmed into the Catholic Church while armed guards kept watch outside the door. When it was over she sat down in a chair in

the conference room where she had received the sacraments and she cried. Henry went over to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

— No, Im fine. Its just that. I dont know. Henry, I think all my life Ive wanted something like this, wanted to feel loved so intensely. Henry, I think God really loves me and I feel it so intensely right now, maybe its just a sort of spiritual honeymoon, but now I know how that love feels and that even if I die in the agony of the electric chair it wont be the Julia that killed Daisy thats dying, she was washed away in the water just now, it will be someone else, a new person. Could I say a new woman or does that sound too feminist?

— No, not at all. Julia, I was talking to your friend Terry.

— Yes, how is she, is she well?

— Yes, she is well and I was talking to her and she said something interesting. She said that all human love is an image of divine love whether that love exists between two people of the opposite sex or even two people of the same sex. I dont think she was approving lesbianism or homosexuality, I know she loves your mother.

— Henry, there has always been a distinction between types of love and sex is not a part of all of them, Julia and Betsy and Mrs. Carroll know that on an instinctive level even if they havent or cant articulate it. Thats why Julia was never promiscuous, she knew that some love can best be expressed through sex and some cant, some loves are inextricably linked with sex and others arent. Thats what Cameron doesnt understand. I believe in Julia and in her innocence, I know that she acted to defend Betsy and Ill be praying for her every day while the trial is on and after if it goes against us.

— Thank you, Father. I wish the jury understood that as well as we do.

— So do I, it would make my task as a parish priest a lot easier in some ways.

— You know, Henry, I think Terry was right. Maybe in loving Ann and Peter and Daisy and Tom I was loving what was best, what was most divine in them, their goodness and beauty, their joy and their love.

— And what about in loving me?

— Betsy, you have been my friend and my student and my teacher, how can I help but love you. Oh God, here I am surrounded by the people, outside of my family, that I love the most, I know the jury will decide against me, and yet I feel so happy. Im like a child that just got a new toy.

— It will pass Julia, right now its time to go back and I have to prepare my closing argument.

Julia went back to her cell and slept soundly, dreamlessly, till the morning. She went into the courtroom and she knew that despite all of Henrys rhetorical skills and despite the fact that neither she nor Betsy had broken down on the stand that the jury would convict her and that the judge would sentence her to death.

The Commonwealths attorney made the point that Crowley had been killed by an inmate who had already been convicted of one murder. She had acted previously out of jealousy and that she had acted out of the same motive again. She had been involved in lesbian relationships before and despite her denials and the denial of her friend it was reasonable to believe that she had been again. She had acted violently, maliciously, against a man whose job it was to act as her custodian and that therefore he was going to ask for the death penalty.

Henry pointed out that the prosecutions theory of the case rested on the unsupported testimony of one guard and that both women had given substantially the same version of the story, that Betsy had been attacked and raped by Lucas Crowley before she was to be released and that Julia had acted to defend her. The law recognized that it was reasonable to use force to defend oneself or another and that therefore she was entitled to acquittal on the grounds of justifiable homicide.

Julia looked at the jury and she saw nothing in their faces to change her presentiment. She knew that when they had received their instructions they would have no trouble in convicting her. She knew that she was about to receive a verdict of guilty.

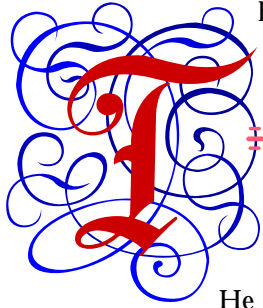
The judge instructed the jury and they retired for their deliberations. The jury was out all night and most of the next afternoon. Finally they sent word that they had reached a verdict. The courtroom filled up rapidly as the jury was led back in. The judge asked if they had reached a verdict, they had, the slip of paper was passed up to the judge, he looked at it, asked if that was their verdict and the foreman said it was. Julia stood and faced the jury and again when the foreman was asked for the verdict she

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heard a single word. Henry looked crestfallen, he slumped down on the desk and started to cry, Julia put her hand on his shoulder.

— Its okay, Henry. Have faith. All things work together for good.

Reconciliatio



he Catholic charismatic movement started in the theology department of Notre Dame university in 1969. It was also called the charismatic renewal because many of the people involved felt that it was the response of the Holy Spirit to Pope John XXIII's prayer that there be a new Pentecost and that the Church be renewed. Many, if not most, of the people outside of the movement felt that the people involved were emotional basket cases that were prone to hysteria and Dionysiac frenzies and that the glossolalia or speaking in tongues was either a phenomenon associated with psychological disturbance or sheer fakery. It was frequently asked why the Holy Spirit had to speak in tongues, surely He could manage just as well in English. The people inside the movement, of course, believed that they were blessed by God and were seized with the idea that everyone should be charismatic or else they were missing something in their spiritual life.

The group that met at St. Matthews Cathedral in Washington and that Betsy attended had been started by men and women who were active in the Catholic charismatic movement and some of whom had since left the Church to join non-denominational churches that frequently combined Biblical literalism, charismatic practices, and political conservatism. These people did not consider themselves fundamentalists because that particular religious persuasion did not believe that it was necessary or desirable for the Holy Spirit to again manifest Himself as he did during the age of the Apostles.

It was to this group that Betsy took Margery one day after Julia's second conviction and after she had again been sentenced to death. Margery protested strongly.

- I haven't been inside a church in over forty years.
- Well, don't you think it's about time that you started back?
- I won't even know what to do, what to say.
- Well, you could start by asking God to forgive you.
- For what? If anything I should forgive God for what He's done to me. He took my baby that I carried for nine months, He took my husband and now He's about to take my only child, my daughter.
- Maybe if you hadn't given up on Him so easily the first time this wouldn't be happening now.
- How could you be so cruel as to say something like that, Betsy?
- I'm not trying to be cruel. Maybe I'm wrong, but I wonder if people like Julia and me, Julia and I, if we got any real values from our parents or from society. I don't think we did. I think we went through a period where we all had to create our own values and that we did a pretty lousy job of it because those values weren't based on anything real. Do you remember Peter Schreiber, the boy that Julia was in love with who died in Vietnam?
- Yes, of course, it was almost fifteen years ago that he died.
- Julia told me about him and about his sister Mary.
- I know, it was very sad what happened to those two.
- I think, from what Julia told me, that he went to Vietnam because he had to prove something to himself, he was acting out of a need to show that he was macho. If he had really been secure about himself, if he had had real values then he could have opposed the war and not doubted himself, as it was he had to prove that he wasn't a coward.
- And what are you getting at.
- Look, Julia and me, we grew up without any real values. We had to create them out of what we had to work with. And what was that? Our own desires, we said that because we wanted to do something it was good and our highest moral saying was to do what you want as long as you don't hurt anybody. But we did hurt people, we hurt ourselves, we hurt our families, we hurt people we didn't know. People like Julia and Peter and Mary and myself said to pull out of Vietnam and Southeast Asia and we did and the result was that in two years the Communists took over. We said there would be no blood-bath if the Viet Cong and the Khmer Rouge took over and within another couple of years we had the boat people and one third of the population of Cambodia killed by Pol Pot.
- That wasn't your fault, Betsy, dear.
- Look, do you remember that passage in Donne about no man is an island?

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— Yes, of course, I do.

— If any mans death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind arent there some important things to be drawn from that.

— Like what?

— Like the idea that I am also responsible for those who die wrongfully because of something I have done or failed to do.

— I suppose so.

— Margery, you know that I love you and Julia and Im not saying any of this to hurt you and I suppose it sounds strange considering my past but I really think some of this might be due to your loss of faith.

— I dont know. It would be so nice to believe that God will hear my prayer but Im not sure whether I could even get up the strength to kneel before Him and ask Him.

— Then dont kneel, do it standing up, laying down, do you think He cares about posture?

— No, I guess not.

— Good, then youll come to the prayer meeting with me?

— Yes, I guess I will.

Margery and Betsy went to the prayer meeting on the following Thursday and even though it was held not in the Cathedral proper but in one of the meeting rooms adjacent to the church Margery had to struggle not to look for the holy water and not to cross herself upon entering. The old training and reflexes were still there. She thought she was almost like one of Pavlovs dogs, the old reflexes were still there even though she hadnt been near a church since Pearl Harbor. She wanted to kneel down but again there were no kneelers, no pews, only the folding chairs arranged in a semi-circle. She smiled, she was like a child who is trying out something new but who is confused because it is so similar to something that he once did and yet completely unlike it.

There was a man sitting in a chair at the center of the semi-circle and next to him was a young woman with drab brown hair. The woman was playing the guitar and tuning it. People started coming in while the woman was tuning her guitar. They were a mixed lot Margery thought, she saw well-dressed black men and women, poor looking whites, some middle class types, a couple of young kids that looked like they belonged in the movie Easy Rider, They greeted each other by hugging each other and Margery was surprised to see men hugging men and women hugging women as well as men and women hugging each other. She was not used to these open displays of affection, even when she and Julia had been together before Julia went to prison she had not been able to hug her and hold her. This open display of affection made her wonder whether it was genuine or was it just a custom, one of the tribal rites that these people indulged in.

The woman finished tuning her guitar and started playing a song and the people started singing along and clapping their hands in time with the music. They were singing I rejoiced when I heard them say / Let us go up unto the house of the Lord. They were clapping and swaying with the rhythm of the music. Some of the people were raising their hands over their heads. Margery thought they looked rather foolish and sat still, she kept her hands together and looked over at Betsy. Betsy was clapping and swaying and looked quite happy. The woman segued into another song and then another and after about fifteen minutes everybody quieted down and there was a brief period of silence. Then somebody spoke.

— There are some among you that are troubled by the problems of friends and children and that are carrying a burden for them. Remember that you are loved and that because of the death of Jesus Christ we may cast all of our burdens upon Him and that he will bring healing by His stripes, by the wounds that he suffered on the way to Calvary and on His cross. We may cast all of our cares upon Him for He cares for us. Some of you are burdened by fear and doubt, remember that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His plan. The way may seem dark and the light faint and uncertain but there is light and joy even though the way may take us through the paths of death.

There was a chorus of amens and thank you, Jesus from the congregation and then the man who was the leader said that Brother Carl would give a teaching. Margery, to whom people called Brother this or that were usually clerics, expected to see a man in a cassock step forward, instead it was a Black man dressed in a business suit who started speaking.

— Brothers and sisters in Jesus I want you to turn to John 3:16. we read here that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. What does this mean? What is the nature of this love that God has for us. If you look at Isaiah you find that he says it is like the love of a mother for a child, that even if a mother should forget her child His love will not fail. It is not something that condemns us; when it says that God loved the world what is the world, is it the planet or is it the people in it. It is the people that need salvation, He came to save all of us Black and white, male and female, as Paul says in Christ there is no longer distinction between male and female, Greek and Hebrew, but all are united in Christ. It is the one thing that we all have in common no matter how rich or how poor we are that we all are in need of salvation and that it is only through Christ that we can be saved. Buddha cant save us, Mohammed cant save us, only through the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ can we be saved. We say that those that believe in Jesus are not condemned, what does that mean, we know that people died for Jesus, Stephen died, Peter died, Paul died, and Rome thought that she had condemned them but what is the condemnation spoken of. It is the condemnation of hell, the hell that is for the unbelievers. When you come to Jesus it does not matter what you are or were; it does not matter what your sins were; when you come to Jesus even though your sins were as scarlet they will be taken away and you will be as pure as snow, as pure as fresh linen. Were you a prostitute or an adulterer, it doesnt matter; were you a heroin user or a pot smoker, it doesnt matter; were you a murderer or an apostate, one who believed and then renounced your belief, it doesnt matter; you can come to Jesus and your sins will be taken away and you will be a new man or a new woman. Brothers and sisters Jesus came and died for us not to condemn us but to save us and all we have to do is turn to Him, give Him our cares and our worries and He shall wipe away every tear and we shall be reconciled to Him.

There was a chorus of amens and hallelujahs and then the teaching was over. The leader, a short man with black hair and glasses thanked Brother Carl for his teaching and then asked any newcomers to stand up and be recognized. Betsy nudged Margery and she stood up and looked around. The congregation greeted her with warm applause and then she sat down somewhat awkwardly. She felt like a fool for having stood up in front of all of those people, that surprised her somewhat, she was used to standing in front of groups of people but this was completely different from teaching her classes. The leader said that if anyone needed special prayers they would meet in the back area of the room after the meeting ended and pray over them, then he nodded towards the woman who was playing the guitar and she started playing a tune to which they sang another one of the Psalms. Everybody clapped and raised hands again and swayed to the music and Betsy nudged Margery again and took her arm and started to lead her to the back of the room. The leader of the prayer meeting, Brother Carl and an enormous Black woman and some other people were standing around. Betsy went up to the leader of the meeting.

— Vince, this is Margery, shes the mother of my friend Julia.

— Oh yes, how is your daughter.

— Shes holding up pretty well, I guess you know that she was convicted.

— Yes, Betsys told us all about what happened and weve been praying for her everyday.

— It doesnt seem to have done much good. Shes been sentenced to death.

— I know. Do you want us to join you in prayer for her. I dont know what God intends for your daughter, maybe He has some purpose in mind that we cant see yet. would you like to sit down and well pray over you for her?

Betsy gave her a quick nudge and she sat down, closed her eyes, and Vince began speaking in English.

— Lord God, Jesus Christ, Margerys daughter Julia has been tried and convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Lord God, we know that you are just and merciful and we ask that you show us

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your mercy in regards to this young woman that we believe has been unfairly judged. We ask this in the name of our Lord, your Son, Jesus Christ.

There was a chorus of amens and mumbles of thank you, Jesus. Vince began speaking in some strange language that Margery could not understand. She felt hands on her shoulders and somebody was rubbing her back. She felt strange, there was a warm feeling that she had never experienced before, she wanted to cry but she was ashamed to let these strangers see her tears. Finally she felt the hands lifted from her body and then Vince spoke to her.

— I dont have a word of knowledge for you Margery but I get the feeling that there will be a period of great strife and struggle and then there will be some kind of final resolution. I dont know what it all means but Im sure that if you can bring yourself to pray for Julia that things will somehow work out. I dont know if it will be a happy ending as the world thinks of happy endings but I have a feeling that there will be great joy at the end.

— Thank you. Ill try. You know its been forty years since Ive been to church.

— That long?

— Yes, I used to be a good Catholic and then things happened and I lost my faith.

— Maybe it wasnt your faith that was lost but you.

— Maybe. I dont know. I wish that I could be sure that God loves me, after everything thats happened it seems so difficult.

— Why dont you go home and pray about whats happened. Maybe God will give you some sign of His love.

— Ill try. I dont know if I have it in me to pray any more.

— Then ask him to give you the words and let the spirit within you pray for you.

— I could do that I suppose.

— Margery, its about time that I got back to Henrys office.

— Im coming Betsy.

Vince hugged her and she stood there startled, afraid to hug this strange man who spoke in tongues.

Betsy went back to the office and Margery went back to her office and to her classes. In the evening she was alone in her room and she knelt down in front of her bed.

— Oh God, I dont know if youre there, if youre listening to me. You took my first child and my husband from me, my daughter has been in prison for eleven years and now shes been sentenced to death for defending Betsy. Lord, you know her innocence and her guilt and you know that I used to be devoted to you. I dont know if you can hear me or not, I dont know if youre real or not, if you are and you really love me give me some sign, let me know.

She cried and let her tears fall on to the bed. She undressed for bed and went to sleep. In the morning she woke up and tried to remember the dreams that she had had. She could not, but something was different, the world was different. Perhaps in her dreams she had received some message. She did not know and she did not care. She fixed breakfast for herself and looked out the kitchen window. The cherry trees that Mary and Peter and Julia had sat under on numerous occasions were still there. Some buds were already showing. Soon they would burst into bloom and the yard would be full of their pink and white glory. Was that the sign she had asked for? The world was beautiful. Terry had said something like that years ago. It was time that she made her peace with God. She would go back to St. Dominics, that had been her favorite church when she came to Washington, she would go there and she would confess and be reconciled.

II

Samanthas letter arrived after the trial and came to Julia when she was transferred to the penitentiary in Richmond to await her execution.

Dear Julia,

I know that I must seem a terrible correspondent for not having written to you sooner, but I was sick for three days with the flu and was unable to even get out of bed or sit at the desk

to write. I know that it seems funny to think of a nun coming down with the flu and yet we are all human and subject to the same illnesses and ailments as the rest of mankind.

You asked about how I lived in the convent. The daily routine in most convents is pretty much the same. We rise early, usually before six in the morning and say the office in common, this is what used to be called matins and is now called the office of readings in your breviary. There is a period of silent meditation that lasts for one hour, this is called the great silence and then we have morning prayer, or lauds, usually with Mass. After Mass we have breakfast and then we go about our daily work. This may involve things like sewing vestments, baking eucharistic hosts, cleaning the house so that it is spic and span, taking care of the sick in the infirmary and so on. About noon we break for lunch and then at about two we meet for midday prayer. The evening brings evening prayer, or vespers and then dinner. About 8:30 we say compline and then we go to bed. Meals are usually taken in silence and then we have a reading from some devotional work, possibly the lives of the saints or some work on prayer or a similar topic.

Recreation, as you might suspect, does not involve going out for a fast game of b-ball or doing laps around the track. I must admit that I was very fond of swimming when I was in high school and I competed on the high school swim team before I ran away and the fact that I am unable to swim, because we lack a pool, is one of my regrets about the religious life. Frankly I cant see me going to the pool or to the beach and changing out of my habit and into a swimsuit, Im sure it would scandalize people to see a nun step out of her habit and get into a bikini. Our recreation is basically a period of time when we are free to talk and to do light work together, it is not exhausting in the way that say aerobics or calisthenics is, it is simply a period of mental refreshment.

When I was in college I was very fond of science fiction, particularly Robert A. Heinlein and the space trilogy of C. S. Lewis. I also enjoyed mysteries and the hard-boiled detective stories of Dashiell Hammet and Raymond Chandler. I know it seems bloodthirsty in a nun but my favorite Hammet was Red Harvest which has seventeen killings in it before the book is half through. I have not had much opportunity for light reading since I came into the convent although we are allowed to read secular books.

I know that since I wrote to you last that you have been convicted and sentenced and I know that this must be a blow to you, although Henry tells me that you are strangely euphoric and that you have just been baptized in the Church. I can only congratulate you on entering into the community of the faithful and say that I think I recognize the symptoms of your euphoria. This is a spiritual honeymoon, I think I mentioned it before, and eventually it will fade away and you will wonder if it was all really real and begin to feel that God has deserted you and that you are all alone.

I told you about my fathers problems. One day, after I came home, he sat down and wrote a story. You know that when Jesus was on the cross one of His seven last words was My God, my God, why have you forsaken me. This is the opening of the 22nd Psalm and yet it is not a poem of despair, it ends very hopefully. My father asked himself what was the progression of the psalm and how did it reflect the agony of Christ on the cross and he wrote a story that portrayed, as far as he was able, Christs movement from despair to hope. He summarized that hope by paraphrasing Jesuss commending his spirit into his fathers hands in the words I spoke to him when I saw him in the church Daddy, I want to come home.

I suppose this sounds somewhat incoherent but what I am trying to saying is that through the darkness and despair that may come there is hope and that that psalm shows the way to move from despair to hope.

I am confident of Gods justice and mercy and I know that even if all fails that you will be blessed.

Please write again soon. As Audrey Hepburn says in Sabrina,, one of my favorite movies, write me sheets and sheets.

Thomas E. Hart

With love and in Christ,

Samantha Morris

Julia responded in a long letter to Samantha.

Dear Samantha,

I know the verdict came as a blow to everyone. Strangely I was expecting it. I dont know if the state will go through with executing me. These cases can spend years on appeal and I might die of boredom before I have to walk that last mile.

You have much more freedom in your schedule than I have. Meals are served to me on a regular basis and of course I am not allowed to work in any of the prison facilities. I am allowed an hour of exercise under the supervision of the guard, usually I end up walking by myself.

The prison is not the most comfortable place in the world. My cell is maybe six feet by eight feet. Right now I am the only woman in this section of the prison but I expect that as time goes on there will be more who will be sentenced to death. I am allowed to receive mail and to read books, all mail, however, is subject to the prison censors and all packages are checked by the guards to make sure that there are no weapons, drugs, or other contra-band items in them.

My world is even more tightly constricted than your monastery. Unless my appeals are accepted or unless the Supreme Court says once and for all that capital punishment is cruel and unusual punishment I doubt if I will ever leave this place until I am finally executed. In the meantime I can read and pray.

When Father Adams comes to see me he will sometimes leave the consecrated host in a pyx with me while he pays pastoral visits to the other inmates. I kneel before the pyx and try to meditate on the presence of our Lord in the sacred bread. It is a moment of great joy to me when Father Adams comes back and I receive the Eucharist.

I have accepted that I am guilty of killing Daisy and I suppose that I deserve to die for that alone. I also know that the person that will die in Virginias electric chair is not the same one that killed Daisy or that killed to defend Betsy from Lucas Crowley. I think that person really died when I was baptized and I think that there was much that was good in her and much that was evil.

At my first trial the psychiatrist that testified for the defense said that I was passionately devoted to my friends. I think that was true and I think that was one of the good things about the other Julia and one that I think is still true. I dont know if Henry has told you about my relationship with Peter and Mary Schreiber, if he hasnt get him to tell you the story, it is too painful for me to repeat. I think that Marys death is one of the saddest things that ever happened to me and I regret that I wasnt able to help her.

Mary once told me that she wanted her paintings, she was a very gifted painter who worked in the style of the Washington Color School, to portray an emotion or to cause an emotion without portraying anything to elicit that emotion. She wanted her paintings to be pure emotion without using any objects except light and color and shade to convey that emotion. I now wonder if that wasnt itself an insane statement. I dont think insane is quite the right word here. What I mean is that she divorced emotion from anything to cause it and so she was left with squads of undisciplined feelings and that this showed up in her work and in her life.

She was in love with me or thought she was and I loved her but I never felt any desire for her. She was plain, not ugly, and she probably would have been pretty if she had dressed attractively. I could never explain to her why I felt no desire for her and yet was crazy about Ann, my first love in high school and felt so jealous and possessive of her.

Now that part of my life is over. I dont think that I can say that my nature has changed and that I no longer have those inclinations. I know, for example, that Betsy is beautiful and desirable and yet I dont have any desire for her, I dont know if its because I only like Southern girls, both Ann and Daisy were from the South, for that sort of thing or if because I have somehow grown out of it. I cant say that its just because of my conversion because I stopped when I came to prison eleven years ago. Maybe it was because I began a long period of depression in which sex had no part. At any rate I now accept the idea that even if all of this were in some sense natural or genetic and not the result of some Freudian trauma I am still responsible for what I have done and that I have an obligation not to just follow my own natural inclinations.

Betsy wrote to me and told me that she dragged my mother, Margery, to a charismatic prayer meeting. She told me that she gave her a lecture about how we, meaning people of our generation, had to form our own values and we did it out of our own desires and we justified everything by saying that we werent hurting anybody else. I wonder if Betsy will end up denouncing Dr. Spock for permissiveness, advocating prayer in the public schools (are there really atheists during final exams?) and denouncing secular humanists? I think she may have been right.

Apparently the meeting caused quite a change in my mother. Betsy told me that she has started going to church again, apparently though she finds the new Church quite different from the one she left forty years ago. I gather from what Betsy say that she finds it quite awkward to shake hands with total strangers during the rite of peace and when she goes to the charismatic prayer meetings and people hug her she sort of stands there and acts like she doesnt know what to do.

Mother was always a very traditional person and I know that she misses the Latin Mass. As for myself I grew up outside of the Church and although Margery is a Latin teacher and I grew up watching her correct papers and everything and like her I share an affection for Latin literature (although not Cicero who got what he deserved, the pompous bore) I really dont miss the Latin Mass. I suppose to some of the older Catholics the present Mass is not as schmaltzy as the Latin Mass was and seems more like a Protestant service.

Betsy tells me that at some of the services the congregation as an exit hymn has sung the Battle Hymn of the Republic, I dont think I would like that. Ive always hated that song. To me it represents one part of our country kicking the other part and justifying it by putting all the blame on God.

I was saying how Ive changed since my baptism and how some of the old Julia was good. I hope that part can be preserved and transformed and that the parts that I dont like, the jealousy, the anger, the ambiguous sexuality, will all be transformed and transfigured.

I appreciate what you said about the spiritual honeymoon, I suppose that there is a sort of curve and that it will seem like a roller coaster at times. I was very interested in what you said about your fathers story, did he ever get it published? I read the 22nd psalm again yesterday and I think I can see what you mean about it ending on a note of hope. Could it be that the psalmist was anticipating the pain of the crucifixion and the joy and hope of the resurrection?

At any rate I am still on my honeymoon and I suppose that after my first appeal is rejected, or after one of the subsequent appeals is rejected and that as death begins to seem more imminent it will be tempting to despair and wonder where God is. When that happens I will try to remember what you have said.

Yours in love and in Christ,

Julia Driscoll

III

Margery and Betsy took Teresa Carroll to the prayer meeting at St. Matthews. Terry had turned seventy and her hair, which had been red in her youth, was now white. She was still active and still vibrant, still full of hope and faith.

After the meeting she lingered with Margery and Betsy and Vince came over and hugged first Betsy, who responded warmly and hugged him back, then Margery, who acted as Julia had said, she stood there nonplussed, looking embarrassed, arms at her sides; and then he hugged Terry, who responded somewhat diffidently.

— So, Mrs. Carroll what did you think of our little meeting?

— Please, call me Terry, everybody called me that when I was young and now that Im older than everybody else around me I havent gotten used to having younger people treat me respectfully. It was very interesting. I must admit I had always thought of this as being something like Elmer Gantry or one of those shouting and hollering preachers on TV.

— You dont like that.

— No, I dont. I like to take my religion the same way I take my whisky, neat. I dont like the shout and holler school of preaching. I dont need to be whipped into a phony emotional response.

— You sound almost hostile.

— Im sorry. I think youre very sincere and maybe this is fine for Betsy and Margery but its not for me.

— You dont believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

— Yes, and in His fruits as well but I dont feel the need for this.

— Well maybe you will someday. Youll always be welcome here.

— Thank you, I appreciate that.

Vince left and the three women walked outside. Margery turned to Terry and reprimanded her for being rude to Vince.

— Im sorry, dear, I am getting old and Im less inclined to put up with nonsense than I was. I think youll find, if you stick with this, that it isnt your cup of tea.

— Why do you think that?

— These people think theyve just invented spirituality. You know they remind of young people back in the twenties when I was growing up and later in the sixties. Young people then thought they had invented sex. My God, how did they think they got here? Everybody knew about sex between men and women and about homosexuality and orgies and all of that. They just didnt talk about it. Folks like your friend Vince think theyve invented spirituality. dont they know that there is a valid spiritual tradition in the West that goes back to the Apostles and beyond. A monk once told me that he had been charismatic for fifteen hundred years and thats true.

— Terry, I think youre being a little hard on Margery. Vince has been a big help to us in getting over the pain of the verdict.

— Betsy, Im not trying to be mean. I just think that both you and Margery want something more than youre going to get from Vince and his group.

— What do you think Betsy and I want?

— I think what you want or what you should want is not these things, not tongues and prophecy and healing and all of that, all of the things of God, but God.

— I dont think I understand what you mean.

— Okay, look, you can pray for material goods. Some of these preachers go around saying that God wants to bless his people and he will give them Cadillacs and Mercedes and houses with swimming pools. He will give worldly success. Is that what you want?

— Ive already got the house and the car. Its always nice to have more but its not driving me crazy.

— How about you, Betsy, what do you want from all of this?

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- I want for Julia to live.
- Yes, I want my daughter to come back to me.
- But suppose she were executed, however unfairly, would you stop believing again?
- I dont know.
- I dont know either, Terry, she helped me so much and I would miss her. I dont know if I would turn against God or not.
- Okay, both of you want Julia back, so do I and Ill be very sorry if shes executed. But I wont stop loving God. What I want from Him is not anything except a share in His life, in His being. I have everything I want in a material way and I could get by with less.
- So what are you getting at?
- If youre going to church, to these prayer meetings just because of Julia, because you want something in this world you may be following a wrong path, one that leads to bad results spiritually and morally. But these charismatics are following another path and that ones wrong too.
- How is it wrong, what are they doing wrong, they seem very devout and pious to me.
- Oh, Im sure they are. But theyve got the ends and means confused. They think the speaking in tongues and the prophecy and all of that is the end and they pray that theyll have these gifts. But what are these gifts? Nothing. Tell me, if God came down to you and said that He would give you all of the gifts, prophecy, healing, tongues and all of that, or you could burn with love and desire for him and have a share in His interior life, that you would be able for a little bit to perceive him as He is without any preconceptions or doctrines getting in your way, which would you choose, the gifts of God, or God?
- God.
- Yes, me too.
- Then you cant confuse these things. He is not going to be found in material things and He is not to be found in spiritual things. There is only the way He is in Himself. Margery, do you remember when I told you about the darkness?
- Yes, when I lost my baby.
- What I was trying to get at then is that everything is dark and obscure. One of the saints says that faith is darkness to the soul and to the senses and hes right. We dont understand everything. I dont understand why Julia was convicted so unfairly of killing Crowley when she was trying to protect Betsy. I dont know why Betsy led the kind of life she did and I certainly dont understand why I like her, because she is so different from me, but I do like her and I told you long ago that I love you. Now I can live with that darkness, with not knowing these things but I also believe that eventually the darkness will pass and there will be a period of illumination when that faith is fulfilled.
- So you think Betsy and I should drop the prayer meetings?
- No, not if it makes you happy or if you think it helps you. I just think you should understand that it is not the ultimate religious experience and that there is always something more.
- Ill try to remember that.
- Terry, what should Margery and I do then?
- Oh no, Im sorry I said anything now. I should have known that youd ask me something like that. I suppose that for now you should go on as you are, it wont do you or Julia any harm and it might do some good. If you ever feel that you really want more than you think you might be getting out of this, I wont be your spiritual director but I will tell you some people to talk to. Right now, lets forget I said anything. Margery, how are your cherry trees doing, do you think you and Betsy might pick some cherries and make some fresh pies for me.
- Theyre in full bloom right now and I expect theyll be bearing fruit soon. If Betsy wants to help I suppose I can pick some cherries and bake pies.
- Those trees are so beautiful, I wish Id had some back home when I was growing up. Id love to help pick them and help with the baking.
- You know right after Pearl Harbor some of the ornamental trees around the Tidal Basin were damaged by vandals, that was such a shame, do you remember when that happened, Margery.
- Very vaguely.
- You know thats one of the things that Ive always liked about Washington. There is so much here that is beautiful, things like the cherry trees or looking out my window and seeing a cardinal. No not
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Cardinal Baum, the bird. It always reminds me that God created the world to be lived in and that He speaks to us not in some desert waste but in the world and in its beauty.

— You said something like that to me once before.

— Yes, I think it was when I first met you, when you were depressed about Robert.

— That was back when 37, 38?

— Sometime like that.

— Have we really known each other that long?

— Yes, and Ive loved you that long, you and your family. You know what I said was from the Bible, its somewhere in Isaiah, in, I think, the forty-second chapter.

— Ill look for it at home.

— Hey, you two, stop reminiscing about old times, Ive got to get back to Henry or hell be mad. Margery, Ill see you later at home.

Betsy kissed the older women and left. The two women continued walking in the early April afternoon. They walked past the stores and boutiques, past the subway stop at Connecticut and L Sts and Margery thought about the past about the night that she had followed her lover and seen him go into the bar, about the strange fact that she had confronted his wife and she had forgiven her before she even asked for it and was now her best friend. It was strange, John had dropped out of her life and she had never missed him. It was almost like he had never existed. She looked at Terry. She had always thought that Terry was wise and knew and understood so much more than she did, maybe she was right, how would she ever know. Vince and his group made it all sound so easy. People were always standing up to testify and praise the Lord for the way he was working in their lives. There was hardly a week when somebody did not get up and tell how the Lord had helped them land a fantastic new job, or their children were doing so well in school, no matter what happened the Lord was showering blessings on His people. What did that have to do with her? Her daughter was in prison, unfairly convicted because she had killed the man who was raping her friend. She had been in prison for over eleven years for another murder and it was unlikely that she would ever get out alive. That was what she wanted most in this world. To have her daughter back. Would she be bitter all over again if Julia died? Perhaps. What saint had Terry been talking about when she mentioned faith being darkness to the senses and to the soul. She would have to find out what she meant. Vince and his group made it all sound so easy, just give everything to the Lord, well it wasnt easy, it was hard to surrender, to give up everything. What did she want? The gifts, Julia? No, she didnt care about the gifts and she did want Julia back. But if she couldnt have her? What? Love. She wanted that first love that she had felt as a child, she wanted it back. Her father, big and strong, just come in from the fields, picking her up and tossing her in the air. She wanted to be the little girl in the white dress and the communion veil. She had been innocent then, well as innocent as a child could be. She wanted sanity and health. Terry was probably the sanest person she knew, was Vince sane in the same way that Terry was?

— Terry, maybe you were right. Im pretty confused about things right now.

— Julias case is still on appeal, right?

— Yes, I dont expect that there'll be a decision before late July or early August. You know this case will probably drag on for years in the courts.

— I know, then you have time to go to this place. I think you'd get a lot out of it if you took a little time and spent say a week on retreat. I know the perfect place too, Holy Cross Abbey in Berryville, Virginia. Its about an hour west of Reston on Route 7. The Trappist monks run the place and its in the middle of the Shenandoah Valley and its very beautiful. About once a month they have a week for women. Would you like to go, it might give you a chance to get your feelings sorted out?

— Yes. I think Id like that very much.

Terry gave Margery a hug and kissed her quickly on the cheek, then she turned and walked up the avenue to the house where she still lived.

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Vince was upset when Margery told him that she was going to a Trappist monastery. Even though the meetings were held in the cathedral buildings they were a non-denominational group that welcomed all regardless of their faith. Vince, like many of the others, had been a Catholic but had left and

had joined one of the charismatic churches that were springing up in the area. Margery had gone back to the Catholic Church not only because she had grown up in it and was comfortable with it but also because she felt that having rebelled by leaving it the only way that she could truly return was by submitting to the authority she had known and accepted in childhood. Vince would occasionally reprove her for returning to the Church and it had become a subject of banter between them. Frequently he told her that he knew the Lord would lead her out of the Catholic Church and show her how it had been corrupted and that its teachings were no longer the teachings of the Apostles or of Christ. This always struck Margery as hypocritical, that he accepted the hospitality of a group that he detested while trying to tell her that it was a false church. Vince had even gone so far as to give her a pamphlet that supposedly was written by an ex-priest and which denounced the Church as containing pagan elements. Margery looked at it and laughed, even if it were all true, it didnt matter to her because although she liked Vince and respected him and had even been to his church a few times she did not believe that it was in possession of all the truth or even most of it.

— So, Margery, are you going to become a monk?

— No, of course not. Monks are men.

— Then why are you going?

— Vince, ever since Ive come back to the Church and started going to your prayer meetings Ive felt confused, uncertain. Ive got you saying one thing, my friends saying another, and frankly I dont know what to do or to believe anymore. I just have to have some time to myself.

— Margery, none of this stuff, monks and nuns and all of that, is in the Bible. Havent I been able to show you yet that all of this is just a survival from the Pagan world.

— And what if it is, what do I care. It sure doesnt seem pagan to me. Julia is corresponding with a nun and she seems to me to be very devout and loving and caring from what Julia tells me about her. In fact, from what I know, it seems like shes grasped more of what the gospel is about than some of the people here.

— That may be. Im sure that there are good people in the Catholic Church, but that doesnt change the fact that there is no mention in the Bible of most of their practices, things like prayer to the saints, indulgences, the Pope, monks and nuns.

— And is there any mention in it of rayon, automobiles, airplanes and atomic energy? So what? The world is two thousand years old and time has moved on. Vince, sometimes I think you and I are both necromancers.

— How can you say that? You know thats a form of witchcraft and you know the teachings about witchcraft and the occult.

— Calm down. I just meant that we both want to return to, or to resurrect, things that have died and vanished. I miss the Church of my childhood and youre nostalgic for the church of the apostles, a church which probably never existed, and if it did started changing as soon as it began. Will you pray for me while Im on retreat?

— Yes, I can do that.

— Good, now give me a hug.

Vince hugged her and for the first time Margery hugged him back.

V

Holy Cross Abbey is just outside of Berryville, Virginia in Clark county. It is about seventy miles west of Washington and the property lies next to the Shenandoah river. The monastery is on twelve hundred acres of land which was purchased by the order in 1950 or thereabouts. The Blue Ridge mountains are plainly visible wherever you stand on the monastery grounds and the only noise that you are likely to hear at night is the lowing of the cattle that are kept on the grounds. The monks do not work the land themselves, it is rented out and the monastery derives some of its income from that and some, if not most, from the bakery which produces loaves of white and whole wheat bread which are sold through supermarkets. In the fall and winter the monastery produces fruitcakes for the Christmas season.

The retreat house, at the time that Margery first went there, was a converted farmhouse with a large kitchen, a dining room and a parlor, or living room, and a downstairs bathroom and an office for the

retreat master. The retreat master himself stayed in a little cottage or hermitage out behind the guest house. The guests or retreatants stayed upstairs in small rooms that contained a bed, a desk, a lamp, and a chair. Each room had a Bible. There was one full bathroom on the floor and on the opposite side there was a shower stall and sink. The building was not air conditioned.

When Margery arrived at the guest house she was greeted by Nora, the housekeeper, and shown the bedrooms upstairs. Margery was the first to arrive that Monday and so she had her pick of the rooms. She chose the smallest one, the one that lay under the attic eaves and so had a ceiling that sloped down, it seemed to her the most uncomfortable and therefore the most monastic room in the house. She put her bag down on the chair and hung her dresses, skirts, and blouses on the hangers in the closet. Then she went out to look around.

There was a book alcove on that floor. She looked at the selection and saw books by Newman, books on the second Vatican council, books on Mariology, Vince would love that she thought to herself, there were different versions of the Bible and there were books on the saints and on devotion. She picked up one of the books by Newman and started to leaf through it and decided that she would read it. She took it and walked down to the parlor and looked at the selection over the couch in the parlor. It was pretty much the same sort of thing except she wondered what the Bhagavad-Gita was doing there and Kazantzakis certainly seemed out of place even if the book was entitled *Spiritual Exercises*. There was a portable recorder on an end table by the couch and a collection of tapes. She looked through the tapes and found some by a priest that she had heard talked about by some of the people in Vince's group. She looked around to see if there was anybody she could ask about borrowing the tapes, there wasn't, so she took the recorder, the tapes by the priest, and the book and went back to her room.

The retreat house did not offer directed retreats. Priests were available for private confessions and for conferences and one could sign up for those if they wished and there was no scheduled time for breakfast although lunch and dinner were scheduled for noon and six in the evening respectively. One could follow, if one wished, the monastic schedule which consisted rising at 3:00 for matins, followed by two hours of meditation and lauds and Mass at 5:45, the monks would then go off to work in the bakery or go about their other assigned tasks until noon, then there would be daytime prayer at about 2:00 in the afternoon, evening prayer or vespers at 5:30, and compline, the final prayer of the day at 7:30. The monks would go to bed at 8:00, however, the retreatants, who were a half mile distant from the monastery and the chapel were free to stay up as late as they wished; they were, however, to observe silence after compline. They were also to help with the dishes and cleaning although Nora had charge of the actual preparation of the food.

Margery looked over the sheet that explained the schedule of services and shuddered, how could anyone subject themselves to getting up at that ungodly hour. She enjoyed sleeping late too much to take this as a regular life, she might be able to stand it for one day. Maybe she would try it tomorrow and see how things went.

She browsed through the book by Newman, he acknowledged that many of the elements in the Catholic Church came from paganism, but that was a sign of strength, it showed that it could take and assimilate things from foreign or alien cultures and take out the pagan meaning and put in a Christian meaning. That was interesting; she wondered what Vince would make of that.

Father William showed up for dinner and ate his meal with Margery and the other retreatants. He had a separate vegetarian dinner which consisted mostly of fruit, including a banana. He sliced the banana with a knife and fork and put each slice into his mouth and chewed it with such relish that Margery, who enjoyed eating meat and could never conceive of the idea of becoming a vegetarian, wanted to put away her Swiss steak and grab Father Williams plate and devour it.

Father William was explaining to someone the concept of becoming aware of the present moment.

— Don't you see, it's only in the present moment that we can find God. He is not in the past or in the future, but in the present. When you concentrate on the past you're full of regrets aren't you?

There were nods of agreement around the table.

— And when you think about the future there are all kinds of worry. But what is God's real gift to us. It is here and now, each moment is a gift from God to us and it is in the present moment that we find God or He finds us.

Was that true and did it mean that she shouldn't pray and worry about Julia? She asked him if it was wrong to pray about things that might or might not happen in the future.

— No, Im just saying that you must always be aware of the present moment. I know a lot of people that are always going on about their pasts, dont you know people like that, and people that are worried about the future, what does that gain them? Either you have enough money to pay your bills or you dont. If you dont then worrying hasnt done you any good and if you do then what were you worried about in the first place? Its the same with almost anything. If you can trust in God and His loving care then all of your worries are dissolved. Say something happens to someone you love, it may be that that thing, whatever it is, in some sense changes that person so that they turn to God and seek Him. Some people will never turn to God, they can always refuse His grace, but others, they need for something to happen to them and then they snap. We never know completely or fully what His intentions are in our lives and the lives of other people.

Margery helped with the dishes and then she and the other women went to compline and when they came back she went to her room and thought about what Father William had said. Perhaps she was focused too much on having Julia home. She might die and she had no way of knowing what purpose, if any, her death would serve. She could either rebel and go back to the way she had been, indifferent, unbelieving, or she could trust and go on blindly even though she did not understand. Was this part of the darkness that Terry talked about?

She went to sleep and got up at three in the morning to make the office of readings or matins. She had breakfast and read the book by Newman, then she walked back up to the chapel for lauds and Mass. She put a host in the ciborium, since she intended to receive and sat down and thought about Vince and Julia and Terry. After Mass was over she stayed in the chapel and looked at the tabernacle and the little red light that glowed beside it. She remembered the times that she had spent in front of the tabernacle at St. Dominics over forty years ago. My God, had it truly been that long. It was hard to believe. She was so much older now. She missed that young girl and her passions and loves and angers. Now, she thought, she was just another old woman, one that had been deprived of so many things that she had loved.

She walked back to the guest house and went to her room. She listened to one of the tapes. The priest told how he had spent months in a hermitage in Spain and one day while he had prayed he had had not a vision exactly but an awareness of Gods love for him and that He had died on the cross for him. He had cried out Jesus, are you crazy when he had experienced this. Did she really believe that, she wondered.

When evening came she was happy to go to bed after compline, she understood why the monks went to bed so early, particularly after getting up at that ungodly hour. She spent Wednesday listening to the tapes and reading Newman. Finally on Thursday she spoke to Father William and she told him about Julia and about Terry and Vince.

— Im sorry about your daughter, Ill pray for her, of course. But your friend is right about these prayer groups. I tell people that Ive been charismatic for fifteen hundred years. Do you ever watch some of these television evangelists, the PTL Club with Jim and Tammy Bakker?

Margery nodded, she had watched and had even sent money to the ministry.

— What does that kind of spirituality have to do with someone like your daughter? God wants to bless His people. Yes, thats true. But what does that have to do with your daughter, is showering her with new Cadillacs going to make her happy? Suppose she is executed, you tell me that shes converted while in prison and is developing a relationship with a nun and has become friendly with the priest who baptized her, could it be that her death will be more meaningful, will be a means of bringing grace, whether to her or to others, more than her life was. I dont know. From what you tell me she is ready to accept whatever happens. I can tell you that people that swallow the idea that Gods blessings mean only material well-being, people like the Bakkers, are following a false path. Your friend Vince and his group, Im sure they mean well, but they want you to follow another false path. They think theyve just discovered spirituality but weve had a spiritual tradition that goes back to the time of Christ and beyond and that tradition tells us to pick up our cross and to follow him. Do you get the impression from them that life is going to be a bed of roses once you follow Jesus?

She nodded again.

— What people dont tell you is that the roses contain thorns. Tell me would you be willing to be thought a fool for Christ, to give up your teaching position if the administration said that you were unsuitable due to your religious beliefs, would you be willing to lose everything if it did not turn out to

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be as easy as the charismatics like to say it is? What if everything were suddenly to be pitched into darkness and obscurity?

— I dont know. Terry keeps talking about darkness and I dont understand what shes talking about sometimes.

— Maybe what your friend is trying to tell you is that faith is darkness to everything you ever thought you knew. You cant rely on your senses or on your mind, your memory, your imagination. Tell me how do you picture God, is he kind, loving, a father; is he stern, unbending, a lawgiver, a harsh judge; is He perhaps a She, a mother. What is your image of God?

— Im not sure. I suppose I think of Him as being like that picture by Blake, an old man with a flowing beard bending down over the universe with a compass laying out the world.

— Thats one possible image of God. Its one that a lot of people have and its true. But I would have said that of almost any image. Dont you see that whatever you say, whatever you picture is bound to contain an element of truth because all of these images are ways of revealing the truth but they are not the truth which is God as He is in Himself and when you say God is just and all you talk about is His justice you miss the point that He is also merciful and that the justice and the mercy are united so that even though when we talk about them they seem to cancel each other out they are not because in reality they are one. One of the saints put it well when he said that God reveals himself in human images that cancel one another out. When people talk about the liberation theology in South America they have one part of the gospel, one part of God, but they miss all of the other meanings, the spiritual meanings and so they deceive themselves and others. What I think you want is to grasp the whole of the gospel.

— And how do I do that?

— Keep on for a while with your prayer group, they may do you some good for a while, but keep in mind that their prophecies, healings, words of knowledge, and so on are worthless unless they bear fruit in their lives. Watch them and learn to value them properly and when you are ready to move on then you should seek out a sympathetic priest or religious, or even a devout layperson to lead and direct you.

— Thank you, Father, Ill try and remember that.

Margery went to Mass the next day and afterwards stayed in the little chapel and knelt and stared at the tabernacle. She had heard some of the younger people talking about how places had good vibrations, good vibes, and she asked herself whether she felt good vibes here. She smiled at the slang; yes, she felt better here than she had at many other places. She could hear the cattle mooing, and the birds singing. Here she was still and quiet, there was none of the noise and the busyness that she knew back in the city. She was still and she looked at the tabernacle, be still and know that I am God. Was all of the clapping and singing and noise making a way of covering up the emptiness in their hearts, in her heart. If she were to be still and to look into her heart what would she find there, was she afraid to look. She was aware of a feeling of warmth and gentleness, peace and love. The light was coming through the windows in narrow shafts and the chapel seemed so perfect, so warm. She felt that she had had a moment of contact with.... what she wasnt sure but she was aware of that peace.

She left the chapel, blessed herself with Holy Water on the way out, and stepped on to the porch. It had rained while she was at Mass and the sun was breaking through the clouds. Everything was so much more intense, the colors more vibrant, the grass a deeper green, the trees fuller. She walked down the set of steps that led off to her right. A small, brown rabbit had stopped outside and stood with its nose twitching, it saw her and scampered off. She walked to her left, back to the guest house. A cardinal flew by, she loved the pure red of that bird, she knew very few species but cardinals she had always liked as much because of their cocky attitudes as because they were so instantly recognizable.

She was sure of it. Vince thought that he had all of the answers but he didnt. There was more to be found in the stillness than he had thought possible. She still wanted Julia spared, that would never change, but she could live with the results whatever happened. There was love and that would never change. But it was a love that had nothing to do with sex, although there was an element of fierceness in its intensity; it was not a mothers love, although there was gentleness in it; it was not a fathers love, although there was sternness and justice in it; it was none of these things and it was all of them.

She could live with not understanding, not knowing. She could get along without, as Vince would put it, putting a fleece before the Lord and asking for a sign about Julia. She would go on now and she

would continue believing. Perhaps that was what Terry had meant when she had first talked about the darkness. She could go on and not give in to despair and doubt although she did not understand. Then she would begin her journey in darkness and through darkness.

VI

Julia wrote to Samantha after her first appeal was rejected by the state appellate court.

Dear Samantha,

I suppose that you know that the appellate court for the state has rejected my appeal. Henry is not very happy with the prospect that I'll be the first client that he has lost to the electric chair. I must admit that the cruelty of the method does not appeal to me either. I would far prefer a quiet death in a comfortable bed surrounded by children and grandchildren rather than being strapped into a chair in front of strangers, blindfolded and then having a jolt of electricity throw me into unconsciousness while the blood literally boils within me. This seems to me to be far crueller than anything I ever did.

Margery and Betsy were up to see me and they tell me that theyve stopped going to the prayer meetings at the Cathedral in Washington. Apparently there was some dissension in the group over the gifts of the spirit and love. Some such as the leader of their group, a man named Vince, apparently felt that you had to ask for the gifts, things such as tongues, prophecy, healings and all of that sort of thing and others felt that it was sufficient to love God and to want His love.

Margery told me that she had been to a Trappist monastery for a week long retreat and that the priest there had told her that all of these things were so much frippery. She asked herself, she said, if she would keep on believing no matter what happened, if I were to be executed, and she decided that yes she would. She also said that she had been looking for the fruits of the Spirit in the group and she had found none but that she had found peace at the monastery. Apparently she and Betsy and Terry are looking for someone to undertake their spiritual direction.

As for me and my spiritual direction I see Father Adams on a regular basis and he has been guiding me through a series of meditations based on the Spiritual Exercises. So my day, at present, consists of breakfast, recitation of the office by myself, meditation, as much as possible under the circumstances (it is not always quiet here); exercise, under the supervision of the guards; lunch, reading and writing letters to you and to my family, another period of meditation and then dinner. I try to shut out the noise and commotion of the prison as much as possible and to retreat into the little closet of my self and find Jesus in there.

Father Adams, like I said, comes about once a week and brings me Eucharist. I cannot tell you what a great blessing this has been to me.

I know that no matter what happens to me that I am loved and I can feel this love surrounding me no matter what happens.

When I meditate I try to place myself in the scene of the meditation and converse with the people but I sometimes find this difficult to do. Sometimes I get so lost in imagining the scene that I find it hard to actually begin the meditation.

Terry sent me a booklet by Father William at the monastery at Berryville, the one that Margery went to for her retreat, that describes a series of meditations based on the rosary where each bead is given a specific meaning. If I have time I shall try this sometime.

I dont know what else to tell you about life in here or about what I do with my time.

You know it is funny though, I seem to be making an effort at sanctification, an effort that I dont think I would have made if it had not been for my confinement. Wouldnt it be funny if I actually wound up becoming quite holy, would I be able to stand myself. Probably, because

Thomas E. Hart

I think true holiness is probably attractive and not self-righteous and puffed up and repellent (certainly there is an enormous visible difference between what I see in film clips of Mother Teresa and clips of Brezhnev, one is palpably good and the other equally perceptibly evil). I don't suppose I would be the first person in the Church to have holiness thrust upon them. I daresay that even some of the saints and martyrs became saints and martyrs almost in spite of themselves.

I read bits and pieces of the Bible and chew them over in my mind from time to time. The interesting thing is that some of the people are starting to come alive for me. People like Peter, such a poor, dear slob, when the angel rescues him from prison it takes him forever to realize that he's free. What a pitiful dear he is. Paul is another good example, he was so passionate, so devoted, he must have been full of love for God to write that beautiful passage and yet he could be stern and angry too. I think my favorite though is Mary Magdalene. She and I have so much in common. We're both sinners and we've both come to repentance late in our lives.

Jesus I find very hard to visualize or conceptualize because he seems to embody so many different and contradictory principles and emotions and yet He is the one about whom I am supposed to meditate and to whom I am supposed to pray.

Forgive me for rambling on so much. Actually the most exciting things are happening to me right now and yet there is nothing going on except for the appeals. Outwardly my life is pretty boring. As if waiting to be fried is ever exciting, do you think the chicken tingles with anticipation at the thought that it will wind up in the Colonel's bucket of Kentucky (or in this case) Virginia fried chicken? Did Thomas More really want to lose his head over Anne Boleyn? What is most important though is what is happening in my soul and it is here that I think the most wonderful things are happening. I don't know how to put this, I do not see visions or go into trances or anything but I feel that in some way, some sense that I can't describe I am being asked to give up all of my old joys and pleasures and that somehow all of the dross is being purified and turned into gold. At least I hope that is happening.

I hope that whatever happens God gives me the grace not to take myself too seriously. I know that my death is a serious matter and I do not look forward to it. I accept it though and I will never ask for mercy on the grounds that I have converted and changed and repented. Part of my sentence I think is not to seek to evade death by claiming that I am now a different person. It is true, I think, that I have put on the new man, or new woman but I will not scrape and bow to escape an unjust sentence or avoid a ferocious punishment. Let the state show mercy because mercy is the right thing, the good, Christian thing to do or because I was unjustly convicted. My greatest desire, after that for God, is that it be recognized that I was innocent of the charge brought against me. If I die I should die for Daisy and not for killing Lucas Crowley who was raping Betsy.

I said that was my second greatest desire but I think I am willing to let that go too. It doesn't matter to me anymore what people think about me, in two trials, separated by eleven years, all of my dirty linen has been aired in public and if anyone cares he can read all about my escapades in the back issues of the papers and after I am dead and gone what will I care.

I suppose that in a way I am already dead to the world. I have been thrust into a situation that few people will ever live to tell about and am as isolated as you are in your convent.

I don't want this letter to sound too depressing. I think in some aspects the spiritual honeymoon that you mentioned is over and the real process of finding myself in relation to God is about to begin.

I will try not to despair and to keep a sense of...what, humor, I suppose that sounds ridiculous coming from this place, well a sense of proportion that realizes what I am, what other people are and what Jesus and God are to me.

I am sorry to ramble on like this but there is so much I want to say to you and it is so hard to focus on what is really important in my life.

Please do not show my letters to anyone, unless it is someone like you superior, I do not want to beg for my life on any terms and I will trust completely in Gods love, at least as far as I am able.

Yours in love and Christ,

Julia Driscoll

Samantha wrote to Julia and Henry brought the letter on his next visit.

Dear Julia,

I think I understand and share your concerns. I know that when I came back home and went to a few charismatic prayer meetings they greeted me with opened arms when I told them about my life as a prostitute in New York. There is a kind of prurience about repentance and the more emotional aspects of accepting salvation. I remember watching an old movie on TV with Rex Harrison as a professor of Greek, at least I think it was Greek, who was in love with a Salvation Army major, a woman, of course. One of the characters used to confess regularly to beating his mother, the truth of it was that she beat him. Another character had to confess her sins in private, obviously they were sins of the flesh, to use a popular euphemism. At any rate the characters confessed to these sins, even if they werent true, so that they could get a free meal from the Army.

A couple I knew would give regular and frequent testimony about how God had rescued them from adultery and alcohol and other horrors. I always felt uncomfortable during these testimonies, frankly they were down right embarrassing to me and I suspect to them. Later I came to realize that there is a form of spiritual pride here, People like to think that they were the worst of sinners and beat their breasts and proclaim what great sinners they were and how God had to reach down out of His heaven and hand them a special grace so that they could be saved and yet what are their adulteries and fornications and lies but mere peccadilloes beside the truly great crimes of a Hitler, a Lenin, a Stalin, a Mao Tse-Tung, or a Pol Pot and yet even to these God offered His grace and love right up until the final moments of their lives and for all I know even beyond.

I think that true humility requires us to realize that we are not all evil, terrible people, you should not take pride in what a great sinner you were but to realize that you and everyone like you has many good qualities and many defects. Of course, in the presence of true goodness and holiness, which is to say God, we should be abashed and ashamed of our imperfections, but that is really another matter.

You are right about the necessity for keeping a sense of humor, even when facing death it should be possible to face it gayly, bravely and not be afraid. I remember reading that after his death it was reported by the Protestant faction that Mores final jest was unseemly. Maybe it was but at least he managed to go out with dignity and did not shift with the wind like Cranmer. I am sorry to go on like that I have just been reading a history of the Church in England and frankly feel a little contempt for Cranmer who changed his position with every monarch and couldnt change fast enough to suit Mary. He certainly did not deserve to perish in the flames though.

Getting back to humor though, it helps to remember that life, even the religious life, is in a sense a comedy. It may become a divine comedy or not depending on the response we make to things but in the ultimate perspective of heaven and hell all of our worries probably seem pretty trivial. If you take yourself too seriously you are apt to become puffed up and conceited. I am glad to see that you were able to crack a couple of jokes at your own expense in

your letter. It shows that you are capable of laughing at yourself and you have not become conceited because of your spirituality.

Like you I too am dead to the world and this is what I want. I do not want to be praised for my holiness or have the world think well of because I have renounced it and appear to be living in great poverty. The convent is actually quite comfortable as far as material things go. I have nothing of my own, although I might call a pen or pencil or notebook or room mine for the sake of convenience (it is so much easier to ask someone to come to my room then to use some circumlocution) . But what I principally want is a life of hidden holiness, let it be revealed after my death what I was, for now I am content to be naught.

Write to me and tell me more about your meditations and the progress that you are making, remember sheets and sheets.

Love,

Samantha

VII

Margery and Betsy came to see Julia one Saturday. Betsy waited outside while Margery and Julia saw each other. When they faced each other in the room, called the contact room, where, under the auspices of the guards, prisoners and their families were allowed to touch one another, Margery threw her arms around Julia and hugged her fiercely. Julia hugged her back just as fiercely.

— Mom, you look well.

— I am, how are you holding up, honey?

— Im fine, mom. Henry is still hoping that the appeals will work out and that hell be able to get a new trial. I dont know if I want to go through with that again. Id rather they have them kill me and be done with it than have to go through the agony of waiting for appeal after appeal. Do you remember that movie with Susan Hayward, the one where she played the woman convicted of murder?

— Yes, I Want to Live. She got an Oscar for it.

— Did she? I dont remember that. It always seemed to me that what was so cruel in the movie wasnt that they killed her but the way she kept getting stays and then losing and then getting another stay. That was cruel, it was like the way a cat plays with a mouse and then finally kills it. They might kill me mom and Im ready for it but they shouldnt play with me and be cruel to me.

— I know, my poor baby. Im so sorry about what has happened to you. Maybe if ... I dont know maybe if Id been better, if I hadnt given in to despair and apathy after I lost my first child, maybe I could have given you something to hold on to and you wouldnt have wound up here.

— Mom, dont blame yourself, you could have been a saint and Ive still wound up here. I made my own choices, and a lot of them were wrong. Listen, I hear you and Betsy and Teresa are making great progress, youre seeing a nun whos giving you spiritual direction?

— Yes, she holds meetings in St. Dominics. Shes not like some of these nuns and priests that see the world as being the rich against the poor and is always talking about liberation theology or some other fad. Shes very solid, she doesnt think politics is the be all and end all of human existence. She says that if you want to do good it has to be done to individuals, not to faceless masses.

— The minute particulars.

— What?

— Its a line from Blake, he says that if you want to do good you must do it in minute particulars and that the general good is the cry of the hypocrite, liar, and flatterer, which I guess describes most politicians.

— Yes, I think it does. At any rate the three of us are spending a lot of time together now, maybe we should start our own order.

— Betsy and I once joked about that, the Order of Fallen Women.

— I dont know if Terry is a fallen woman, I suppose I am, and I suppose Betsy was. But I think weve all become new women someway through this.

— I understand what you mean. So tell me more about what is happening in your life.

— Well theres not too much to tell. I try to pray and meditate everyday. Lately I havent been getting too much out of my meditations, usually I find that it is getting more and more difficult to focus on images or imagine scenes but I do find that I am conscious of gentleness and peace and love.

— I know that feeling too. I think Im most aware of it when Father Adams brings me Communion, for those few minutes I can forget that Im in prison and just concentrate on Jesus becoming present to me in a special way. You know I want out and Im glad that Henry is fighting for me but I can accept whatever happens. I can trust completely in God now, I think, and leave everything in His hands.

— Yes, I know that feeling. You know in a way I feel like Ive stepped inside a Greek tragedy, something like Oedipus or the Agamemnon.

— Why is that, mom?

— Its like a curse is being worked out, one that I brought on by my own sins when I left the Church and neglected you. That was my sin and then when you fell in love with Ann and later with Tom and Daisy, that was your tragic flaw that you finally realized when you killed Daisy and now were in the final pages where the chorus will deliver its mournful chorus and then youll be taken out and killed.

— Mom, dont be ridiculous. Everything thats happened to me is my own fault. Its not the working out of a curse on our family and Im certainly not a tragic heroine. My God, I have doubts and fears just like everybody else and Im certainly not a noble character like Oedipus.

— I wonder.

— Oh come on, mom. Maybe it will all turn out to be a comedy and well all live happily ever after.

— I doubt it. But maybe youre right and Im just being silly.

— You know one thing Ive learned from all of this is that I have moments when I doubt, maybe not doubt exactly, but wonder if everything I now believe is true and moments when I almost despair and its in those moments when everything seems so dark and difficult that I can feel the greatest peace and the greatest love. I keep on even though I dont understand.

— I know, I think its like the darkness that Terry likes to talk about.

— Youve felt it too?

— Yes, now that my life is almost over Im beginning to see things more clearly. Do you remember right after your father died and you found me going through the trunk and looking at the statues and religious medals that I used to be so devoted to?

— Yes, that was almost twenty years ago but Ive never forgotten it.

— I think the reason that I kept them and could never bring myself to throw them away is not because they were particularly precious, they werent and arent, most of them are just plaster statues and theyve got no great artistic merit, but because of the reality behind them, they were symbols for something that I wanted and I could not bring myself to part with them because of that reality which I spent years denying. I dont need them now but I still keep them locked up in that trunk because of that reality.

— I think I understand now.

— Julia, I dont know but I think Im finally reconciled to God and to you and to everything thats happened.

— Yes, I know, I can accept anything now. But Im not just drifting aimlessly, its like Ive been trying to go upstream, fighting against the current all my life and suddenly Ive realized that my goal is wrong, Ive been going in the wrong direction and now I know that Ill make better progress if I swim with the current so that I can go faster than if I just floated along. Im not really sure what my final goal is and I suppose that Ill be a pretty little fish in a big ocean but it seems a lot better than the way I was going before.

— Listen, Betsy is outside and wants to see you before we go. She has something special to tell you.

Betsy was brought in to see Julia and the guards prevented them from touching but it was plain that Betsy wanted to hug her and that Julia wanted to just as much.

— Julia, Ive got some great news.

— Thats what Margery was telling me.

— Ive met a guy at school, his name is Dan, Daniel Lewis, and hes asked me to marry him.

Thomas E. Hart

- And does he know about your prison record?
- Yes, and he says it doesnt bother him.
- Betsy, I hope it doesnt and I hope youre very happy together but I dont know if it will work out. What if you two have a fight some time or you do something and he brings up your past and calls you a slut?
- Then I suppose well have a fight and if were smart we wont stay mad at each other too long and then well forgive each other.
- Maybe it will work. I hope so for your sake, Betsy, you know that I love you and want the best for you.
- I love you too, Julia and Henry and Terry and Margery and I are all going to keep working to get you free.
- Betsy, I appreciate that, but Im content to leave it all in Gods hands.
- Were going to be the instruments in His hands, the pens that produce the writ that gets you out.
- That may be. I hope so but I dont count on it.
- Well I do.

VIII

Julias appeals dragged up and down the appellate courts for years, as she had expected. Henry kept looking for grounds on which to base an appeal and when he failed in the state courts tried to get into the federal system on grounds that the panel from which the jury had been selected had systematically excluded women. That appeal having been rejected he looked for other grounds on which to appeal. Finally the appeals were exhausted and a date for Julias execution was set. August 22, 1987.

Julia in her time in prison had had her moments of despair and doubt but always there had been that loving presence by her and when she felt the doubt and the pain she would turn to the presence and feel it next to her. There came a time when she wasnt sure if it was really there, that love and that warmth and she remembered what Samantha had written to her and she read what David had written. Yes, she felt that feeling of deprivation. This went on for some time, when Father Adams came to give her Communion she no longer felt the thrill, even when she received the Eucharist, and she knelt in front of her bunk and cried.

The feeling did not return for some time and when it did she was more intensely aware of the love and gentleness and care that had always been there.

As the date for her execution neared she knew that Henry despaired of being able to save her and she wrote what she knew would be her final letter to Samantha.

Dear Samantha,

I know that Ill never be able to write to you again since the state plans on executing me on the 22nd of this month but I want to tell you what your love and your letters have meant to me. They have helped me through times of despair and pain and doubt and I have saved and treasured every one. I know that we will never meet in the flesh, and I wish that I had been able to touch you, to hold your hand and hear your voice, but I know that will never happen.

I have been wondering what my life would have been like if I had not killed Daisy. I dont know, maybe some other means would have been chosen for bringing me to salvation or maybe I would have gone in the same way and been doomed to perdition, I dont know. I once read some letters that Vanzetti wrote before he and Sacco were executed and I think of the one that goes If it had not been for this thing and I ask myself what I would say.

If it had not been for this thing I would have been a poor teacher trying to educate unwilling students. As it is what am I? A sinner who has realized that God loved her even in the midst of her sin. And what is my death, my agony? Nothing, certainly nothing compared to the agony and death of my God. I believe and trust that though I do not see the purpose

behind all of this that I will go to a greater glory and that the few moments of pain will kill not the Julia who killed Daisy and Lucas Crowley or even the Julia that loved Ann and Peter and Tom and Betsy and you but someone totally new. But that is the way of the world and of our sins, they catch up with us regardless of our repentance and I accept that.

It is strange, I was born on the day that the first atomic bomb was exploded and it was also the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and I shall die on the feast of her coronation as Queen of Heaven. I suppose there is some irony in this. At any rate I have written a poem about this called Coronation Day and it is the first poem I have ever written.

Too late Ancient Beauty...
 Twenty years and more have past
 and the dreams of youth faded in daily practicalities
 and I have not loved what I should
 and have loved wrongly
 now I turn to thee, broken, unloving.
 The time beyond redeeming to be redeemed in you
 the past made present in a still moment,
 all time concealed in a heartbeat.
 Yet you are love, a flame of love,
 that you would burn within me,
 if I could wish that...
 Too late Ancient Beauty...
 too late the sorrow, the repentance,
 time unredeemed, love ungiven.

I'm afraid that as far as I've been able to get and I doubt if I'll live to finish it, maybe it sounds too despairing and I would like for it to end on a hopeful note but right now I can't find the words to use.

Within a day or two after you receive this letter I shall be dead and the Commonwealth of Virginia will be satisfied that I have paid the price for my sins and I guess the preachers who are keeping a deathwatch and who are asking for my life will be satisfied and happy that I have gone and the people who gather outside prisons with signs telling the victims of the states justice to ride old sparky or old lightning or urging them to take deep breaths in the gas chambers will be happy. As for me I do not believe in that God of vengeance and hate. The God that I have known has many facets but I think the main one is love. And His love is not sloppy and sentimental but hard and ruthless and unyielding because He wants nothing more or less than our total transformation in Him. I don't know if He has achieved this in me but because I believe in this I can face my death and my pain without fear.

Samantha, I love you and I trust that you will tell those that survive me that I love them.

Yours always,

Julia

IX

On August 21, preparations were made for Julia's execution, the chair was tested and she met with Father Adams and made her final confession. He promised to be present and to say the funeral mass for her.

Henry was in his office in Washington and Betsy was busy answering the phones when a black lady walked into Henry's office and asked if she could talk to him about a case.

Thomas E. Hart

— No, Im afraid not, hes busy with another case right now. Hes trying to get some last minute appeals ready.

— Betsy, dont you recognize me?

— No, Im sorry I dont should I?

— Good Lord, I hope I havent changed that much. You were in the cell next to mine.

— Martha, Martha Josephson?

— Good, you finally recognized me. Now hows about telling your boss that I want to talk to him about Julia? Isnt that the case hes working on?

— Yes, it is.

— Well you tell him that I have something real important to tell him that might help save Miss Julias life.

— I will.

Henry came out and Martha sat down and made herself comfortable.

— I dont mind if Betsy stays, she should hear what Ive got to say too. Mr. Parker, Julia helped me a lot by tutoring me and I repaid her mighty poorly. I said Lucas Crowley didnt rape me, well he did. What happened is that when old Lucas got killed and Julia said that he was trying to, hell I guess he had, rape Betsy here I went to the warden and told him about what had happened with me. He told me that if I didnt keep quiet he would see that I lost my good time and that I served my full sentence. Well Mr. Parker, I guess you know that prison aint no fun and I wanted to see my children again and I didnt want to see them in that hellhole of a prison so I kept quiet. I never thought theyd execute her though, and then this Sunday I was in church and the preacher was talking about lies and how they hurt people and I got to thinking about Miss Julia locked up and how they was going to kill her for something I think they should reward her for. That Lucas Crowley was one mean son of a bitch.

— So Ive heard, but I dont think this will do us any good, Wed just be accused of trying to defame Crowley.

— I dont know what that means but I think this will help.

She reached into her purse and produced a small black book, a pocket diary.

— And what is that?

— You remember Dr. Cummings?

— Yes, the coroner that testified at Julias trial.

— Well Ive been working for him as a maid and Wednesday night he had a party at his house and he got drunk and he went up to his room. He didnt come down for quite a while and I went upstairs to see if he was okay. Hed written in this and then he tried to take a whole bottle of sleeping pills. I looked at this and when I saw what it was I knew I couldnt give it to the police so I thought Id better give it to you and so here it is.

Henry took the book and read it, then he put it down.

— Oh my God, Jesus Christ, do you realize what youve just handed me?

— Yes sir, I think I do.

— This is Julias life. He says that when he examined Crowley he found skin under his fingernails, skin that could only have come from Betsy and the Commonwealths attorney told him to prepare a different autopsy report. Apparently Cummings had been fooling around with a seventeen year old girl and the Commonwealths attorney got wind of this and threatened to put him away on statutory if he didnt agree to doctor the autopsy report. That substantiates your story and Julias story that you were being raped, the skin under the fingernails. That means that the goddamn commonwealths attorney suppressed evidence that he knew would clear Julia and the whole damn trial is tainted. Martha is the doctor still alive?

— Yes sir, hes in the hospital right now.

— Betsy get on the phone, get whatever justice it is thats on the circuit for Virginia, tell him that we want a stay because we have evidence that the state acted improperly and denied her her rights under the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments and then get on the phone to Richmond and tell the governor to cancel his golf game or whatever hes got lined up because were going to be taking him to the hospital.

— Yes sir, boss.

Areopagos

In 1985 the contest for Governor had been hotly contested and had produced a strange anomaly, the winner was a Black Republican who traced his ancestry back to Thomas Jeffersons love affair with Sally Hemings, though whether or not that was really true only Jefferson and Sally knew for sure. Matthew Jefferson, however, was light skinned and very good looking. He was, as most Virginia governors have tended to be, a fiscal conservative. Socially, he was an enigma, he had not made a plea for election based on his association with Martin Luther King but he had taken part in the civil rights movement, and had been arrested and jailed for his part in demonstrations. He had been opposed to the war in Vietnam but now he was trying to secure more bases in Virginia and to open up the ports to Japanese car manufacturers, he had made several trips and had talked about putting in a two hundred acre facility in Portsmouth to handle the influx of Japanese cars. He had been a prosecuting attorney and he had been in private practice and handled general law. He had known Henry for several years and had been familiar with Julias case for some time.

When Henry came to see him, he shook his hand and greeted him warmly.

— Henry, Ive been following this case pretty closely and before you even ask Ive something to tell you. Mrs. Driscoll will not be executed. Ive had visits from Father Adams and letters from this nun that shes been writing to and frankly I dont see what good will be served by executing her. It seems to me that if I had been on the jury that I would have had a reasonable doubt and so Ive already told the warden that she will not be executed, not now, not ever. She may have to do life but she will be alive.

— Well thats a relief but I think you may want to go further than that. Mrs Josephson here....

— Miss Josephson, I never married.

— Okay, Miss Josephson here has a diary that Dr. Cummings, the coroner who testified at Julias trial kept. When Cummings tried to commit suicide, I guess out of remorse, she found the diary and since she didnt trust the police or the Commonwealths attorney she turned it over to me as an officer of the court and since you are now the chief executive officer of the state I am turning it over to you. As you can see it says that Cummings was pressured by the Commonwealths attorney into suppressing evidence that would have cleared Mrs. Driscoll. Further, Miss Josephson here is prepared to testify that prior to his death Crowley forced her to perform an act of oral intercourse upon him and that she did not tell the authorities until after he was did because she feared his retaliation and that later, when he had been killed, she came forward and these same authorities threatened her and coerced her into being silent. Do you want to come with us and confront Cummings in his hospital bed?

— No, that wont be necessary. If what you say is true then Ill go further than a simple reprieve and give her a full pardon in the Crowley matter.

— But shell still behind bars for killing Daisy Sullivan?

— Henry, isnt your clients mother a professor?

— Yes, she teaches Latin and Greek Drama at George Washington University.

— Did you ever read the Agamemnon plays by Aeschylus?

— No, not lately.

— Well if you remember Orestes flees to Athens, pursued by the Furies, after he kills his mother and her lover and he asks for mercy. The jury meets on the hill of Ares, the Areopagus, and is evenly divided. Athena casts the deciding vote in Orestes favor, I forget why except that it was on some flimsy pretext. Well, Henry, right now this is the hill of Ares and I am Athena. I told you Ive been visited by Father Adams and had volumes of letters from that nun?

— Yes.

— Well Ive also talked to the warden and to some of the guards and the feeling is that she is not faking, I dont know how or why but they feel that she has changed drastically since she has been in prison. Frankly I dont think prison does anyone any good and I wish we didnt have to build any but it is a fact that we have them and we do have to put people behind bars. Jesus, Henry, why did you and I become lawyers. Wasnt it because we saw ourselves as Clarence Darrow, defending the poor and downtrodden, outspoken advocates of freedom, wasnt it because of that, because it seemed romantic and glamorous.

— Maybe, but you were saying about Julia.

Thomas E. Hart

— Oh yes, Ive talked with people that know her and Im convinced that her regeneration is real. So Im going to play Athena and say that Im willing to commute her sentence in the other matter to time served.

— Oh good Lord, thank you Jesus. You finally came through and just in the nick of time.

— So, Henry, do you have any plans for your client now that shes going to be free?

— Yes, shes going to a fate worse than death. Shes going to marry me.

— Marriage to a lawyer, that is worse than death. Poor girl, I feel sorry for her already.

II

Julia had received Communion and was talking to Father Adams in her cell when the warden came in. She stood up and was trembling at the thought that she would soon be dead. She looked at Father Adams and managed a wan smile and then the warden spoke.

— Well, Julia, as someone once said on another occasion it was a damned close-run thing — the closest-run thing you ever saw in your life but youve been spared. Were not going to execute you.

That was Betsys prophecy. Julia fainted.

When she revived the warden asked her what had happened and she told him about Betsy and her prophecy and that she had heard those very words in connection with her trial. The warden just smiled and shook his head.

— Im sorry, I read that somewhere in a book about D-Day. Im afraid Im a bit of a World War II buff and the quote struck me as particularly apt in your case. Apparently the governor discovered that evidence that would have cleared you was suppressed at your trial and so hes decided to give you a full pardon for that and people, including myself, Im afraid, have been going behind your back and conducting quite a campaign to convince him that youre a new person so hes commuted the sentence in the other to time served. Youll be a free woman in a couple of days, as soon as we complete the paperwork. In the meantime your lawyer wants to see you.

She was taken into the room and the guard stood outside while Henry talked to her.

— So, Julia, youll be free again after eighteen years behind bars. How do you think it will be?

— Oh Henry, I dont know. I cant believe it. You know I stopped praying for this a long time ago. I thought Id finally extinguished all desires and was well on my way to becoming a little Buddha before I died but now its like everything that I could ever want has been given to me.

— To come to possess all desire the possession of nothing.

— Henry, shame on you, youve been reading the Spanish mystics and not telling me.

— Do you think youre the only one in the family thats devout. You may be a new woman and all of that but I still love you and I have since that first trial and I dont know why but I do know that youll marry me or Ill tell them to lock you up again and throw away the key.

— Henry, I know you wouldnt do that.

— Youre right, so tell me that youll marry me.

— Only after my hair grows back.

— Buy a wig.

— No, I want to be married with my own hair, allow me that one little vanity.

— Okay, just that one.

— Then Ill marry you. And Henry, one other thing.

— Sure, what is it?

— Instead of the wedding march could you have the Dave Brubeck version of Someday My Prince Will Come played?

— No problem. If you want Ill try and get him to come himself.

— No, just the record will be fine. I think Mary would like it if she were around.

— Yes, she probably would. Are you sure you really want to go through with it. You know marriage to a lawyer is hell.

— With you itll be heaven. This is hell.

III

When Julia was freed her mother and Betsy came and took her home to the house in Arlington. They sat out under the cherry trees in the yard and talked and Julia and Margery both remembered the times when Peter and Mary had been there. Betsy proposed that she take Julia shopping and the three of them drove out to Tysons Corner shopping mall on Route 7. Betsy insisted that Julia visit Bloomingdale's and buy some lingerie.

— Betsy, for Petes sake, Im forty-two years old and Ive been in prison for almost eighteen of those years, what do I need with lingerie.

— Youre a woman arent you?

— Yes, but....

— And youre going to marry Henry and hes a man isnt he?

— Yes, but....

— Listen, take it from me, the whole art of being a woman is knowing when to be a lady and when to be a whore. Some women never get it right, theyre either ladies all the time or whores all the time or else they get things reversed and are ladies when they should be whores and vice versa. Thats one reason there are so many bad marriages and so many whores like I was to service all those unhappy husbands.

— But Betsy some of this stuff is too extreme. I mean what would I look like in a bustier, I mean Im not Madonna or Vanity or one of those rock stars.

— Poo. I think you look better than Madonna and I think youd be a real turn on in a bustier and wearing silk stockings.

— I dont know. Oh my God, look at these panties.

— I know, theyre practically not even there, arent they pretty. Come on, Henry will love taking these off of you on your wedding night.

— I dont know, Betsy.

— What were you planning to wear to bed on your wedding night, blue jeans and combat boots.

— I dont know, probably nothing.

— Julia, taking it off is half the fun, give him something to excite him before he gets down to the nitty gritty.

— I dont know, it all seems so indecent.

— Oh good grief, Julia, dont be so puritanical, God certainly wasnt when He created our sex organs, give Him the gift of believing that your yearning for Henry is like your yearning for Him. Let Henry possess you completely and unreservedly, tease him and play with him, hell love you for it and God will know that youre doing nothing wrong. What would really be indecent would be to be a bad lover for Henry, not after hes waited all these years for you, so be naughty with him, get down and dirty, give him children if you can. You wont be any less pure or holy for it.

— Thats not what Im worried about. Its just that, here I am forty-two years old and Im afraid hell think I look ridiculous.

— No, he wont. Hell love you. Besides it will do you good to feel like a woman again. Here look at this teddy, and the camisole over there, arent they beautiful. Youll be gorgeous. Didnt I once say that you were a knockout?

— Yes.

— You still are, now lets pick out some nice stuff for you.

— I guess I should know when Im licked.

— Yes, you should, now what about this white outfit. I think youd look as cool as a dish of vanilla ice cream in that and Im sure Henry wont be able to stop wanting to lick you.

— Betsy, youre terrible.

— I know, but Im fun arent I?

— Yes, you are.

IV

Julia and Henry were married on November 9th. Instead of a wedding march they did play the Brubeck rendition of Prince and Julia smiled to herself over how appropriate it was because Henry had in the end proved himself a prince who had rescued her from a horrible death and she thought of Mary and how she would have liked to see the ceremony. Father Adams said Mass and performed the wedding ceremony. Samantha was able to get permission from her superior and attended the wedding and she hugged and embraced Julia warmly both before and after the ceremony. Terry and Margery, of course, were there. Henry had even gone so far as to invite the Governor, who declined but sent a gift anyhow.

Father Adams gave a brief sermon.

— Brothers and sisters, or perhaps I should say out of deference to our Sister Samantha, laities and gentlenuns, I am so glad to be here for this occasion. I had a perfectly splendid sermon prepared for another occasion and I am thankful that the good Lord in His Wisdom and Mercy has seen fit to deprive me of the opportunity of delivering that sermon. We are celebrating the union of Henry and Julia and I am sure that all of you know what was necessary to reach this moment. Henry has been devoted to Julia for eighteen long years, much as Jacob served for Rachel for fourteen years. He has been as much her servant and her slave as Jacob was for Rachel and finally he has seen the moment that he has yearned for come close. All love, all human love is an image of Gods love for us. It is stronger than death and will dare the gates of hell as we know from the ancient myths. It will serve passionately and devotedly as a slave for us for years as we know from Jacob and Rachel and from Henry and Julia. It is tender and loving, like a mothers love for her child. It can be stern and demanding like a father as he punishes his child for wrongdoing. It can be the love of friendship as is the love of Julia and Betsy or Terry and Margery for each other. All of these are images of the divine love. Tonight though we celebrate that divine love under another aspect, that of sexual love. Believe me God knew what He was about when he created the sexes. The very act is or should be an image of the way God treats us, gently wooing us and bringing us towards Him so that our desire for Him is all the greater. Penetrating us in body and soul so that we are completely merged into Him. The saints, particularly the Spanish mystics, speak of the mystical marriage in which they have completely yielded to the divine and are united as far as possible in this life with God. They use the image of the marriage of two lovers united in a passionate embrace. In this they resemble the Song of Songs or Song of Solomon which is so beautiful and so moving and which is a marriage poem that celebrates not only the union of Christ and His Church but also the union of man and woman in frankness and sensual detail. It is this aspect of Gods love that we celebrate today. The love which is as frank and sensual and jealous as that of any lover. God woos us and lures us on and we follow thinking that we are seeking one thing when suddenly he throws us a curve and we have something completely different. We can only laugh and smile with delight at these manifestations of His love. Let us always hope and pray that when they rest in each others arms tonight and every night to come our two lovers will always be mindful that their love is an image of the love God has for us. He sought out these two and united them to each other and, I hope, to Him and it is their participation in the divine mystery of Gods love that we celebrate. So let us smile and wish them luck and love and laughter and joy and pray that they will always be sacraments and instruments of Gods grace to each other.

After the wedding and after the reception Henry and Julia went home, to her new home with him. He went into one of the bathrooms to shower and change. Julia unpacked and got out the black bustier and silk stockings that Betsy had made her buy. She was afraid that Henry would think she looked ridiculous but she put them on anyhow.

He came out and looked at her and whistled.

— You look absolutely gorgeous. You are a knockout.

— You dont think Im too old for this.

— Never, now dont worry about a thing.

He kissed her passionately and put his hand on her breast. Oh that felt so good, it was so nice to be touched in that way again. She put his hand on his body. He was firm, hard and muscular. She let her fingers caress the hair on his chest and then she felt him moving his hand on her thigh, lingering on the silk stockings. He was exploring her now. She stood up and slowly removed her garments, now she was

naked and he could see all of her flaws, he didnt care. He kept on and she wanted him so much, he caressed her breast with his hand, then sucked on it. He moved down and kissed her belly then he was going further down, kissing her and caressing her, he was licking her and she grasped him and took him into her mouth then he stopped and he penetrated her and she felt him inside her and he was so good and it was so good to be loved and to be touched and she felt him withdraw and lay beside her and she turned and put her hand on his chest and kissed him again. This was so good, she loved him.

She laid back and she thought of what Father Adams had said. Yes, God and Henry had both loved her and had both wooed her and they had strangely both won her. Henrys love and Gods love were in some sense the same and she would have both and she laid back and thought of Dante. He had been one of her favorite poets, perhaps he had felt something like this when he wrote the final lines of the Paradiso

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa
ma già volgeva il mio disio e l velle,
si come rota chigualmente è mossa,
lamor che il sole e l'altre stelle.

or

Here power failed the lofty phantasy, but already my desire and my will were revolved like a wheel that is evenly moved, by the Love which moves the sun and the other stars.

Authors Comments

Why Comment?

It is not the fashion at present to attach any sort of explanatory apparatus to a novel, or to offer an extended explanation as to what the novel means. Presumably critics and scholars, if the book proves to be both popular and academically rewarding, will pick it apart and offer up lessons as to its true meaning and significance. However, in order to avoid the kind of scandal that has attended the publication and attaches to the novels of say Father Andrew Greeley, and because I have chosen a somewhat sensational situation for my characters it seems to me that it would be wise to explain the genesis of the story and to explain certain terms that are used in the book, particularly the chapter titles since they refer to certain peculiar concepts of mine regarding Greek tragedy.

Genesis

From 1981 till 1985 it was the authors habit to make a week long retreat at the Trappist, or Cistercian, Monastery at Berryville, Virginia. In 1983 or thereabouts he came across a book entitled *God Goes to Murderers Row* which told the story of the life, conversion and death in Kentuckys electric chair of Tom Penney. Tom Penneys conversion was apparently real and complete, this was before it became popular for everybody to talk about being born again since it was written in the 1940s. I began to wonder what would happen if someone were to be placed in the situation of being sentenced to death not once but twice and the first time they were reprieved and continued along the same path but the second time under the pressure imposed by their impending death began a process of genuine conversion.

It seemed to me that since the American public has historically been reluctant to execute women that a female character would be most sympathetic. So the choice was made to write about a woman and to write, as far as possible, from her point of view. The next ingredient was quite frankly some incident that would be shocking and that would put her in danger of death from execution and yet which would be reversed so that she would continue along the same pattern of unbelief. The grisly nature of the murder was suggested by, in fact stolen from, the Decameron, fourth day, ninth tale. The sexes of the original story were changed, however, in the original it is the husband who kills the wifes lover and cuts out the heart and serves it up to her in a dish. In order to bring the situation up to date I made it a *menage a trois*.

Having gotten my heroine into this situation I therefore had to imagine how she got into it and therefore I decided that she must have had bisexual experiences before becoming involved with Daisy and Tom and from that evolved the sections describing her first love affairs.

Chapter Titles

The various chapter titles derive largely from the critical vocabulary used in discussing epic and tragedy, as such they are all Latin or Greek terms or names. However, my conception of the tragic or Greek tragedy derives not from *Oedipus Tyrannos*, which Aristotle took as his paradigm, but from the *Oresteia*. Now Aristotle is one of the three philosophers that it doesnt pay to argue with since they have a disconcerting way of turning out to be right about many issues (the other two are Thomas Aquinas and Nietzsche) but still I might as well take my critical life in my hands and offer my own explanation of Greek tragedy and its movement and explain where I have introduced my own concepts into the discussion.

The Orestes plays of Aeschylus, the only surviving Greek tragic trilogy to come down to us, served as my model for what the tragic is. In this series of plays we see the effects of sin upon a household. These effects culminate when Orestes kills his mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus and is pursued by the Furies or Eumenides to Athens where the situation is resolved by Athena at the court of the Areopagus.

So the situation as I see it is one of sin begetting more sin and leading to alienation or madness until a final reconciliation can be brought about.

So the chapter titles have the following meanings, at least to the author:

In Media Res - In the middle of things, this is the proper opening for an epic;

Ab Ovo - to the egg, the very beginning, an epic is not supposed to go here, in this case it is somewhat analogous to the Agamemnon, the original sin in this case is Margerys loss of faith;

Hamartia - the tragic flaw, Julias bisexuality and jealousy;

Alienata - the descent into madness and alienation;

Strophe and Antistrophe - refers to the alternation of metrical forms used in choral odes, in this case it refers to the thesis and antithesis of prosecution and defense and the alternation of sides, it also refers to the fact that the chapter is largely dialogue;

Peripateia - the turning point, in this case the beginning of Julias conversion, it should be noted that Julias best quality, her loyalty and love of her friends almost proves her undoing here;

Reconciliatio - reconciliation, God and sinners are reconciled, Julia and Margery and I think Betsy begin a journey in faith that takes them into the beginning of the dark night;

Areopagos - the site on which the fate of Orestes was decided, this is intended as a satyr piece hence the low comedy in Bloomingdales lingerie department and the more or less explicit sexual description at the end.

The Darkness

There is much made of darkness in this story and the reader may well wonder what the hell the people are talking about. Specifically they are talking about the dark night of the soul and they are talking about it not as a synonym for massive depression but in a fairly precise way. A novel is not, to my mind, an appropriate place to launch into a detailed discussion of mystical theology so the people must talk about the dark night and experience it without sounding like a bunch of seminarians sitting around and having a bull session about John of the Cross. So certain things have necessarily been left unsaid. The interested reader should go out and buy the works of St. John of the Cross and read them and chew them over and they will find that to be of more benefit than anything I can possibly say.

However, let me clarify a few points. Terry Carroll, who is not the author despite similarity of names, but who does speak for the author, along with Samantha, says that our faith is a dark faith. She means that we proceed, we believe, despite all of the difficulties, both as to the objects of our faith (the doctrines etc.) and as to the emotional responses to supposedly unanswered prayers and so forth. In other words she echoes John of the Cross who maintains that faith is darkness to the intellect and to the understanding and this is the primary way in which darkness is used as a metaphor in this story. This is to a certain extent echoed by Julia when she refers to herself and Betsy as tramps, she has in mind the tramps Vladimir and Estragon who are waiting for Godot, in a certain sense they keep on waiting because of faith, although there is also a profound sense of inertia about them.

Both the charismatic school and the Jim Bakker / Robert Schuller school, that God wants to bless his people and give them material gifts are rejected as being false paths up the mount. These are false paths because they do not lead to union with God and the only true path is one of denial and negation and humility, hence the rejection of Vince and his group by the characters in the story and their search for a spiritual director.

I have brought the characters up to the beginning of the dark night in the penultimate chapter and presumably they have passed through it by the time the story ends or are at least well placed upon the illuminative way but I have not shown them in the dark night because it would be an invasion of their privacy and because it would place me in the position of describing that which I may not be qualified to discuss. Further I think it can safely be said that everybodys response to the encounter with darkness is different and to present my own experience or to fragment it among the different characters would create a false impression. I have no wish to pose as a spiritual master to anyone, in point of fact I would have to say that I still regard myself as inhabiting the first mansion of St. Teresas Interior Castle.

A Few Final Words

In the original conception of the story Julia was to be executed, however, in the process of writing the story I quite frankly fell in love with her and could not bear to end with her execution. I then thought of having the satyr piece and modeling it on the ending of *The White Hotel*, however, that idea too was rejected because it seemed slightly blasphemous and so I was stuck with a heroine that I liked too much to kill, a plot that seemed to demand her death and no way to resolve the conflict. Eventually, however, I realized that I was not merely rewriting Tom Penneys story, which ended with his execution, but a story of my own, and that my model was the Oresteia which has a more or less happy ending so I saw a way to save my heroine and to have the mild priapism with which the story concludes. This accounts for the somewhat melodramatic ending and resolution of the story's main conflict.

There is one conscious anachronism in the story and that is the setting for the death of Daisy. The address given is an actual address, however, it is that of a Fortune 500 corporation's Reston office. The address was chosen as a bit of psychic revenge for mistreatment by some of the employees of that firm. The area of Reston that is described or mentioned in the story was not actually developed until the mid 1970s and the offices and shopping center mentioned did not appear until the mid 1980s. There may also be an anachronism in the opening when the song *The Class of 57 Had Its Dreams* is referred to. As far as possible songs and books referred to were checked to see that their appearance actually coincided with the time frame depicted in the story. Any other anachronisms are strictly unintentional but have been and will continue to stand because I am not concerned with where people in 1938 went dancing but with portraying an emotional and spiritual reality.

One point which is never contradicted in the story and which is not, in my view, open to debate and one in which Julia speaks for me is the doctrine of minute particulars. It is extremely easy to say that contemplative prayer must yield fruits in action and to a large extent I agree with that statement. By action, however, must be understood action that is appropriate and that is geared to individuals. It is very easy to jabber about the Gospels and the preferential option for the poor and liberation theology. It is very hard, however, to love a difficult child or a spouse who has expectations that you cannot live up to. This is really the hardest thing we can do, loving our enemies, is relatively easy, especially if we can keep them at a distance, loving our family and friends can be very hard because we are in constant contact with them. The doctrine of minute particulars also implies that we treat people not as Blacks or Southerners or rednecks or WASPs but as individuals who are in constant need of charity and love. I have no hesitation in confessing that I often fail to live up to this ideal.

About mechanics. I dislike the use of the double quote and the he said, she said style of writing so I have substituted the double dash to mark off dialogue and where more than two people are speaking have tried to use direct address to make clear who is speaking and to whom the remark is addressed. The one exception where the dialogue is deliberately ambiguous is the dialogue about sharing Daisy. I have left it to the reader to infer how the dialogue is to be said, it should be obvious though that Julia is a bit of a flirt and a tease and that some of what she says to Peter or to Henry is flirtatious.

Finally, there are parts of the author in all of the characters and some of them are related to but different from real people. Mary, for instance, starts off from the author's best friend in high school but is completely different from that person who had no homosexual or lesbian inclinations, did not have a brother who died in Vietnam, did not have a drug problem, and who is still alive though the author has not, despite living in the same area for over twenty years, seen this person recently. Other people and some incidents correspond with events in the author's life but the story is obviously a work of fiction and it should not be taken as a portrayal of actual events at George Washington University, or in the Virginia prison system, or in any of the actual institutions named in the story. St. Dominics church, St. Matthews cathedral, and Holy Cross Abbey are real churches and monasteries; the nun who acts as spiritual director for Terry, Betsy, and Margery is not real, although she should be; St. Damians is not real though its location is and the parish on which it is modeled did sponsor a summer program. Some places, such as the Circle theater, have, sadly, been demolished but for the most part when an institution is referred to it is or was real at the time referred to.

I should take this opportunity to thank all of the people that have had an influence on the author. Foremost among them would be the late Milton Crane who was the author's mentor and adviser during the period in which I attended George Washington University as both an undergraduate and a gradu-

ate student. Also prominent should be the late Father Stephen Usinowicz of Holy Cross Abbey who wrote an extended series of rosary meditations that are largely responsible for helping me overcome a period of lethargy and spiritual inertia that had lasted for a number of years. He is not to be confused with Father William who is mentioned in the story, their personalities are completely different. Finally I suppose I should follow the example of Walter Miller and mention the spiritual help that I received from Sts. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Last and most important would be my spouse who supported me both literally and emotionally during this time.

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