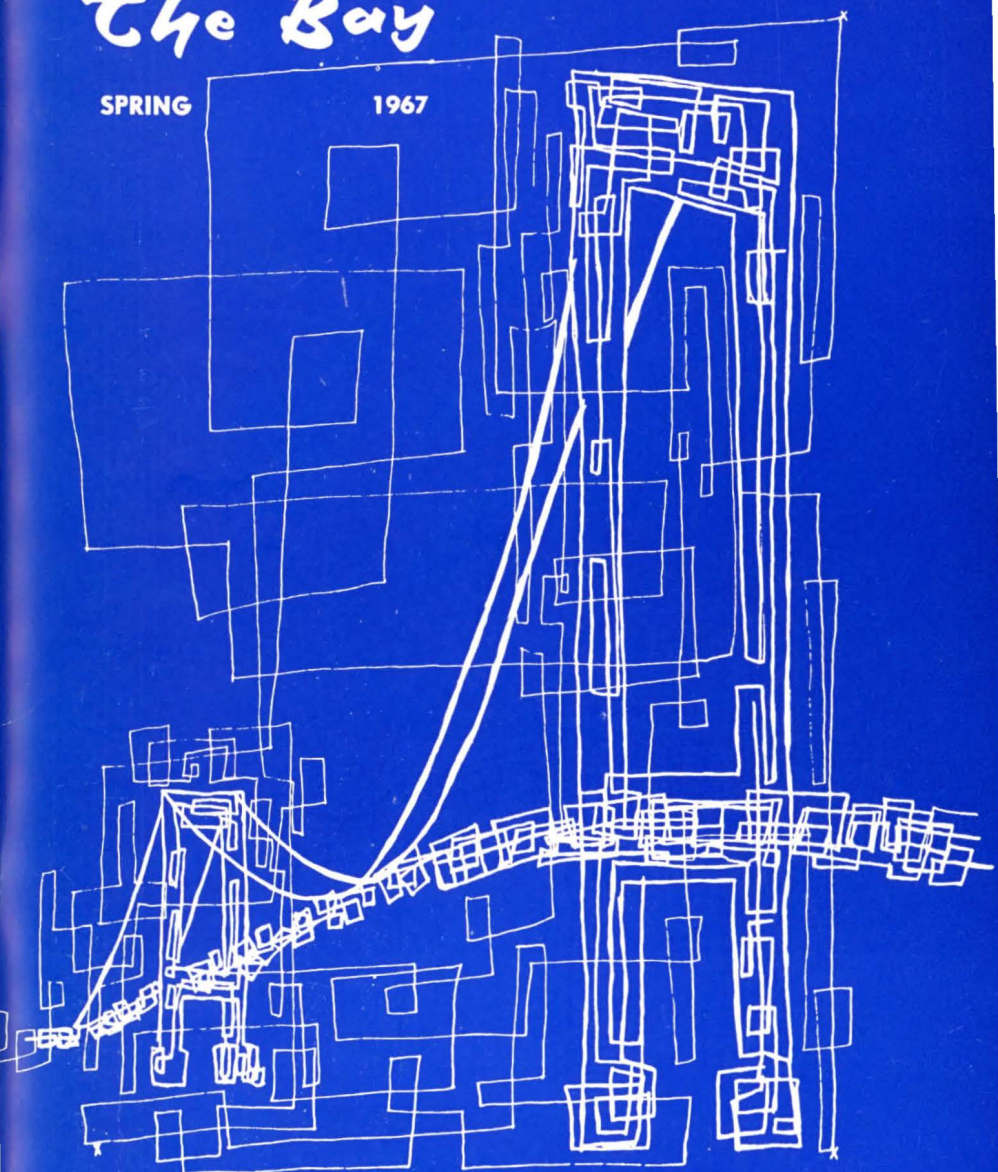


The Bay

SPRING

1967



The Bay

Editor

.....ellen marie bissert

Assistant Editor

vincent curcio.....

Art Editor

.....rick mills

Faculty Advisor

armand schwerner.....

BY THE STUDENTS / OF STATEN ISLAND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Contents

Art

cover.....rick mills
illustrations.....ellen marie bissert
43.....grace mc ewan
52.....ellen marie bissert

Drama

Loneliness Is Like
A Sealed Coffin 39-42.....gerard kirby anderson

Fiction

Pigeons 51-64.....ellen marie bissert

Poetry

and in Zen 6-13.....vincent curcio
Prefabricated Horses 14-15.....
paintings 16-22.....
There in the mouth 23-24.....
Excerpts 25-28.....
Oh Mama 29-32.....
poem for my father 33-38.....
From Death 44-45.....grace mc ewan
poem 1 46.....judi hartley
poem 2 46.....
poem 47.....j. brown
The Shortest Distance 48.....judy duncan
Moments Hanging in on 49.....ellen marie bissert
Spring '67 50.....

Advertisement

collage 2.....bissert & curcio
3-4.....nancy taylor

nancy taylor

An evening crowd emerges from the Bridge Theater, a hip, avant-garde movie house, located in the East Village; it shows underground movies. A street peddler:

HEY HIPPY, are you seeing more underground movies now and getting turned on less?! Do you find Batman and Robin, Andy Warhol, Evie Sedgwick, and Allen Ginsberg just too old hat for words?! Do you feel *The Village Voice*, *The Evergreen Review*, *Fact Magazine*, and *The Realist*, are no longer in league with the devil?! Did you hear Joan Baez sing a flat note in her last album?! Does your beard itch and your long hair get in your eyes and it bugs you?! When on your last LSD trip did you hallucinate and see your mother cooking gefülte fish and fried chicken?!

If any or all of these things are *bringing you down*, let me clue you to the lick! I will now turn you on to the most togetha, heavy, to-tal-ly-abominable, kicky, icky, malevolent, benevolent, or-din-ary, swinging, tastless-thing in this world of mockery and derision, and by that I mean the **READER'S DIGEST**.

Now you might get the evil connotation of squareness when I say **READER'S DIGEST**. Well I ask you what is left that is square?! What is square?! Square was bad, now with a name like Camp taking over where square left off, it is now good! And what is left to be square?!, the Statue of Liberty?!, Ed Sullivan?!, the **READER'S DIGEST**?! No! Nothing! Everything has passed into the together-world of double hippiness. You false with it ones! You bigot of the clean-journalist! You dare to call the RD square?! Well you must see the RD to believe it. This hippy handbook to harlequin happiness and health, is more psychedelic than sniffing Palmolive soap, more macrobiotic than Buddha himself, more hallucinogenic than marijuana soaked in turpentine.

WHY

Do you sweat?

READ!

The Sermon

Behind "The Arabian Nights"

Condensed from *The Elks Magazine*

The mark of excellence

Combatting Early

SNOWED BY

Your sun, the cube

What Every Woman Almost Knows :

(Condensed from *Liberty*)

The World's Most Efficient Pump

Condensed from

The Plumbers of Paris

The Man Who Did Something About It
The Case for Chastity

The Tree as an Invention

87 Varieties

The Middle-Class Smell

Condensed from *The Atlantic Monthly*

Earl Chapin May
Gerald W. Johnson

199
202

old Nicolson

There Must Be Some Mistake

Reader's Digest

How can you call yourself together?, you are not, unless you possess this pure potpourri of sex, sadism, and excerpts from the PTA Gazette.

How can you tell your children that their mommies and daddies didn't further their education in the way-out?! READER'S DIGEST is what's happening! READER'S DIGEST is the lick! READER'S DIGEST is not high or low camp, it is the Whole Camp Scene! READER'S DIGEST is clean; even when it's dirty, the RD is immaculate.

Regardez et écoutez: look and listen to the uninformed, as I lay on you a few of the whole camp scene words of wisdom enclosed within:

1. Where there's smoke there's a draft card.
2. Culture is objecting to a beer can by the highway, and paying \$5,000 for a painting of a soup can.

Now hippies wasn't that mediocre?! And that's where you find the beauty: pure, simple, beautiful, sweet, mediocrity.

No more perfection, down with perfection! No more good or better, down with good or better! Now the road to Mandalay is paved with banal blocks, the READER'S DIGEST! And it is here for your reading pleasure! And now and only now you can partake of a grr-oovy offer made by the publishers of this mag!

Eleven (11) months, eleven months of the RD mailed to your home for the low price of one dollar and thirty-nine cents (that's one: I said *One, point Three Nine*).

Unbelievable?! Well hold on to your boots babes, 'cause right now we are giving away, FREE, with every subscription, one (1) "We Shall Overcome" SNCC button, plus one (1) "Bring Peace to Vietnam" button.

Hurry! Soup-lies are limited. Be the first in your pad to partake of this out-of-sight offer. Don't be a square, cube your head to the acid-powder of the READER'S DIGEST!



For a limited time (July 60-59) an order blank*

Enclosed is a check for \$5: that is, f-i-v-e I said FIVE DOLLARS for an introductory contributory subscription. I fully comprehend that my name and address are inconsequential.

Name _____

Telephone _____



richard jensen

I AM MALARIA

vincent curcio

. . . and in ZEN, It's called S a t o r i *

(for Robert Lewis and
whoever came along)

I — attained, and gone

. . . and We sang:

Yes To Live Inside Your Head
Is Like A Casket . . .

and we —

laughing

talking?

laughing spinning whirligigging

howling

madly

with

in

something,

forcing All-Else aside —

or was it

T o g e t h e r —

some

thing, not demanding

definition . . .

It

was

like: Blakey's-blasting

blasting drums

during the boiling-sweat

of the

solo.

(demanded: Bass n' Piano

to join

which, in turn,

demanded

The: Gyro-Adderly/or-was-it-Desmond/-Alto

Sexing the Sax

to the limits of his groin,

demanding

the presence of the

coiling-recoiling-Coltrane (who

at my usual distance, showed signs

of suicide)

blowing his Suprano

from both-ends,

demanding, in turn,

the more sober Getz

on Tenor

who demanded

the depths of the lion's voice

in Dolphe's Bass,

who,

in Its finale,

demanded

The: still-spinning,

floating

A l t o

(but the Stage was set

only for the space of

One,

but they All,

B l i n d

to the dictates

of the Stage,

danced simultaneously)

which, was still
demanding
which, was humped
by Blakey's Drums . . .

(thus, this unleashed

demanding expanding
felt its way,
below, above . . .

thus, in its festive

twirling
infinite
patterns
through, beyond . . .

An Atomic-Sprouting

(for the Potent Mammoth Mushroom)

ascending eternal erection
shaking the habit-guidelines
out of the prefabricated rules

of the Stage)

seeing the Sound
then,

As We Sang:

Yes To Live Inside Your Head
Is Like A Casket . . .

(Part I — cont'd)

All plays—out the same — unless muffed:
All plays out
and
in — less, somehow
blocked . . .

Nothing seemingly too complex.

Perhaps the simplicity of

Norm Solomon's exclamation that: "When you're not breathing in
You're breathing out."

— unless your lungs are attacked
by a band
of wild midget indians (those
Arrows and Tomahawks
can really
limit
you)

But IT did not
end there,

It could not,
end
there,

for We —

Jazz:

those panting Drums

Sexed

by that unleashed

Sun-sucked

by that Alto Sax:

exceeded itself,

along with its accompany-
ment

and demanded

V i o l i n s

which, in turn,

demanded

the groaning shouting junked-up floating

Ray Charles, who demanded Dylan's

amphetamine pizzicato

who did a duet with Ray

while, as they both, journeying Tambourine Man,

demanded Bach's 6th

in A-Major-minor . . .

But Bach exceeded himself

along with his accompany-

ment

and demanded

Shankar's Sitar, Lal's Tabla, Sen's Tamboura . . .

Knowing It then

As We Sang The Vow

We Vowed

As We Sang:

But To Live Outside Your Head

You Must Be

Honest,

Something

swingingly accordingly

:Naturally

As We Sang

The Vow

We Vowed

To Always

agreeeee . . .

(Part I - cont'd)

. . . and Shankar and his boys
demanded a jam-session
with Mozart, who came running
(and came twice when they joined)

. . . and Nina sassied in
carrying Visions of Mississippi,
and crawled pleased, through Porgy
as She demanded the presence
of the Africa which is Makeba
whose smile widened, wrapped
around her head,

while

Blakey was holding up the Works
as He demanded:

All
to Join . . .

and They All

s w u n g
with their demands when they joined
l a u g h e d
with in out while they spun within

simultaneous solos
(and i, in my more
"sane"

moments,

would have
thought them to be
: a family of fools
: limelighting
in a Circus Of Freaks
: shooting gasoline —
like, ya-know,
who's ever heard of:
Gas-Heads?)

(but the Stage never allowed
room

for mounting-multi-solos,
blowing simultaneously
(simultaneously!) creating
simultaneous indefinable
sense,

but there They All stood
swinging, naked, shaking
the definition

out of the rules
of the Stage,

shaking

the rules

out of the rules . . .

F O R

this Thing
was screwing
for New Architecture
: and
Got-It!

(Part I - cont'd)

We .
with .
in —

What else?

but the Euphony of euphonies:

Rode .

were —

The Siamese-Twin-White-Horse

Bare-

feeling then, all

that It said was: O h !

Don't think

about Me! (as We sang)

I Know...

I am

The Moment

of

the moment . . .

It was too (shall we say) G o o d

as the night was B l a s t e d

by

a:

not-believing

— shot-down

like Achilles —

saying

somehow:

That horse

has No legs!

so,

i sipped coffee,

as

you —

believing,

saying

somehow —

Waved

at c e m e t e r i e s . . . !

* (Like, look it up in a good Zen Buddhist dictionary)

Prefabricated Horses

"... read books, re-
peat quotations,
draw conclusions on the wall. . . ."

B. Dylan

the spinning, Watch
 romper-room
 romeos and
 cinderellas
 suck
meteoric daydreams . . .
 never
 diminishing.

b i g g e r Play
 g a m e s
 n o w.
 Turned-on
to, The-Text-book-Freak-out.
 Becoming
 Campus
 Coolies . . .
later, more:
 ascending . . .
up-tempo-steps . . . b i g g e r
 games . . . expanding
 . . . uniform . . .
 clearly-cut-
 order . . .
 Demanding
 more
 S u c k . . .

A I I
plays out
the blind cycle
 Stay-
 tus
 on

They	Keep
Their	World

limelighting stage,

but birds
still fly South knowing
so much more about themselves. . . .

paintings
on a farm in Kingston, N.Y.

(position one: walking in morning)

Here

birds fill eyes
and ears,
fill
the eternal
grass and flowers
pour
into
sense of smell

combined

in the "thing"
called:

fragrance
: fills
the multi-melodious-air
here.

Here
where I enjoy being
burned by the fire-air
of Sun-filled mornings.

and
not feel
the function of my
clothes.

paintings

on a farm in Kingston, N.Y.

(position two: to my right)

breeze_____wind
have no steering
wheel
really .
Through the woods
to my right
they
push and pull the trees
: leaves drop,
dead .
the trees live,
swaying .

like
large green bells

waving .
and
the sound that's made
is called
'The echo of the wind.'

and
the birds
stay

and insist

and assist

in the elevated serenade .

paintings

on a farm in Kingston, N.Y.

(position three: distractions)

Oh New York City!

Your popular post card
makes you look too pretty.

You

with your gray skyscrapers
screwing the sky —

you

invade the birds,
don't you know that?!

And your madison-avenue-perfumes

make poor flowers

and aren't strong enough

to blow the sewer of automania
out of your air . . .

OH BIG CITY,

your car-exhaust-industry-chimney
garbage, so-called T.H.I., air

is your most treacherous Freak-Creation

(ask

the Birds?! while they try to sing
in Central Park Washington Square but only make
sense at dawn when cars are temporarily dead
people lay in their twilight under blankets
stores are dark behind locked doors
when City-quiet is finally defined
when there is finally time
for the foreign serenade v i o l i n s

to run wild

on a limited
number of branches,

in

the steel brick battered sky . . .)

but Central Park

'I love you'

but you are —

as all parks

are —

Phoney-Country

in the midst

of limitless

metal and chemical

while being surrounded

by Big-Money-Avenues:

the Great Central Park West
the 5th Avenue of avenues

both

painted by

most expensive cement,

Smack-

Dab-

in-

the-

Middle

You Still Stand

held in sanctuary by the melody of birds and

ducks

and fish . . .

regardless of you

the neon-

jungle

sucks-in

The Millions

twirling starry-eyed

through

the endless labyrinth

of a very systematic

subway system,

of

machine-created-roads

called:

Streets,

and there,
on part of the sidewalk
lay
in array
of display,
"showcases"
showing how trees turn
to furniture
and price-tags —

birds
were born there
once,
where
what has now become
millions
of broken nests . . .

. . . and I sometimes
watch
the pigeons
drop
comments
on the heads
of the City's Significant Statues
while the birds fly to the parks
singing Thoreau Blues
waiting for the Door of Dawn. . . .

paintings

on a farm in Kingston, N.Y.

(position four: The Cop-Out)

As they say
in political
circles
: If your heart
isn't in America
then get your Jackass
Out!

(and I have lived in The Big City all my life)

But New York Citiers! Please!
Consider my,
position,

h e r e ,

swimming
in this

Romper-Room meadow
of natural toys. . . .

paintings

on a farm in Kingston, N.Y.

(position five: did Thoreau get bored)

And the cow
just now

urinated in length
in the weeds,

but even that
seems
to fit,
somehow

as I sit
listening to the grass . . .

. . . but in the seemingly
subsequent
' monotony of things '
c o u l d

T h i s P l a c e

(returned to
frequently enough)

turn
to ice
while
being held
in my warm hands

There . . . in the mouth of necessary creations

Was, too many years.
a mountain was built,
(was: too clearly cold, stood
naked to face
them: naked, unbearably clear
as they hung in frost)
and she,

now:
an impulse for newness
gushing,
out of

warm pockets
of: Valentino, and other types,
out of:

T.V., etc.,
exclaiming: There is that permanent adventure
There is that permanent excitement
experience (The Coming Of)
Prince Valiant,
and other types . . .

and s h e
is now found,
side-saddled
on T.V. Visions — (accepting poor variations.
holding glimpses of original types.)
— certainly,
something, he was unable to produce for her .

But equally:

he, is found floating
hungry on the warm cloud,
out of
warm pockets
of: Madonna lily,
out of
that "other"
World,
held by:
The Phantasmal
King
of Situations . . .
and h e,
There: On
the flower-podium
smiling at white ceilings —
(accepting
poor variations etc.)
— certainly,
something,
she was unable to produce for him . . .

Excerpts
for Vincenzo the Conquered Unfinished

stance # 1 : "You have lost your
Infinite-day, and
(you have decided)
have begun
your Infinite-waiting."

Waiting •

empty
unused
emptyemptyunused
empty
empty
unused

glasses •

The Tap
to be
turned-on •

Now, feeling
almost microscopic,
clinging
to glimpses

we
can breathe
sometimes some
times •

Left

to face

the Rest •

Left,

to face

the Mammoth-Scheme-Of-Things

in

suspended stillness:

seconds

fat

minutes

(someone, broke the watches)

months of days

tasting the same •

— but

"I came to find my own mornings.

I came to define my own evenings.

I'm here to build my own 'Seven Wonders'

with my own seven dictionaries

within the seven named days,

remembering, 'each day

does have

a different name.'

And, by the madness of my own logic

ask: "How many sevens are in a year?"

(hence, more dictionaries)

and

multiply *that*

by

seven (more, more dictionaries)

then

run naked

through 365 Bird-Filled-Forests and

"leap" through the last Forest

to find

another morning,

and while pioneering

write

the same number of poems . . .

f o r

I am The Realm Of Possibilities!"

I let this pour out

of my voice

sometimes •

They

tell me I'm a madman •

Would

the Madestman please stand?!

So,

I'm Standing •

To explain •

I Began, literally, when

jabbing searching sperm

flew in unconditional

warmth

to find the waiting incomplete

egg:

'When They Met'

They embraced

each other:

The Definition

of

Egg-Begun: M e,

at my simplest

most comfortable

utterly uncomplicated

Best,

Plenty.

plenty

of food

warm-watered-blankets,

and all the etc's.

of an absolutely un-hung-up world

and that,

boys and girls,

is known as:

The Wild World of the Wondrous Womb.

So,

that was

Me

at my Best . . .

So, this

is me

at my madness . . .

During the infinite day
of my great beginning,
an explosion occurred.
It threw me twisting
into a cold wind,
and since then
I've been Out-Here.

I have lost the Infinite-day.

And by the madness
of my logic,
I am trying
to build
my "mad" place,
in this very wild wind.

Oh, Mama. Can this really be the end?

I

You're
the,
O L D B L O C K

Simply
saying the words
tells me
you no longer
exist,
s o m e h o w .

And yet
you do —
don't you?

You're
the,
O L D B L O C K

with all the old buildings
and
all the old sun
shining reflecting
off
the windows, and
the shadows you have
are old also . . .

(You have
all the old feelings,
about
all the old things)

F u n n y .

You haven't
changed much
really .

I can't
do,
what I did

then:
for then
was a time
of all
feeling,
with
no time left
to use
my

head .

You
have

then, You
keep

then . . .

I,
am, left with,
now .

II

Back .

skating up and
down
on your street
in the Saturday Sun, and
even in the cloudy-day's drizzle
(if I could make-it Behind Pop)

Yes,

I loved
skating up your street,
but not

falling
on your sidewalks —

I use to
count the hurts weekly,
that's when counting was a Gas
(now
it's a drag

11 scrapes, 14 bruises
and 63 thousand dents in my bones
and alot of screaming

(lecture-ridden
from Pop, sympathetic from Mom)

. . . the lamppost's shadow
leaning atop a car,
. . . that rail always seemed
to hang

on the breeze,
cause
it was always
on a slant (it
stands-up strait now) . . . you've
changed
a little .

. . . and we bombarded your backyards — in
the Action-days — with our Commando-raids,
and

your
Backyard-people and
first-floor-window-
people
tried to fight and prevent
by shouts and threats
of calling the Gigantic
City
Police
Force — *They*,
were
The Enemy, so were
The People,
funny . we waited
for those shouts and threats-if
they didn't come-we
wouldn't be *Real-Commandoes*
would we? we
wouldn't even try
to raid those beautiful backyards,
I think. . . .

poem for my father

I

Like it's only, 20 minutes, but
it usually managed,
to smash
the Monotony of Mornings . . .
(from: "Whuda-Boat! It's a Trip!"
notes never written, V.C.1963-66)

I

If Soc. and Plato can do it, so can my Head:
Battle On The Hudson

Act 1 - Scene 93

"Ferry knifing
the mucking
water
. . . water?"

"But, from Whose eyes
come, the real dictionaries
. . . mucking?"

"NO! It is
of course,
of obvious,
of simple-look-see!"
"Those birds!

sit,
in *IT*,
unbugged!"

"I'm, bugged
about being
bugged,
about It . . ."
"Those Birds!
. . ."

(the argument continued
for years)

II
On: The Distinction Between
Birds and Bird

Those Seagulls
are waiting . . .
. . . calmly . . .

Cloudy Sh lousy day
The mug's gonna
hang on the sweat
's gonna hang
on the: me .

G o n n a
hang—on
the whole,
wide,
D A Y . . .

weird, how
the Seagulls,
following, swaying,
glide behind Knowing,
fly wide-eyed
hunting . . .

And we're all — that
is: the mug, the sweat,
the me, the day —
gonna
hang-
on

each other . .

Those Birds!
All is done,
by: necessity .
In Finale,
mimicking
dive-bombing
prick by
beaking
for
their gold . . .

000000000000
S 0000000000
this is what it feels
like to be (this
is what it is
to feel like
to be this,
is this like
to be what it is?
like it feels?
like this?
is what
it feels like
to be this, this,
like it feels like
this is what
it feels like
to be, s o . . .
Y e s, this is,
what it feels like,
to be)
m u g g e d
. . .

Rebel! Rebel!
Swim!
Within!
That Old Eastern
Proverb:
"When A MAN Is Caught
Within The Hell-Fire-Sands
Of Summer-Sun,
He Should Exert
All Efforts
In Fantasizing
Freezing-Rocks
— Off:
in Winter-Rain"

Dig the kid: He's
Turned-On:
"Daddy!
Look-At-The-Birds!"

Whuda-Drag:

Daddy's ears
are: dead
(He only looked .
Surely, confirmed
the presence
of the fact
of the words
that described
the existence
of birds:
that there
are, surely,
birds to look at
obviously) .

I wonder
if the Kid felt
the Freak-Roles:
Turned-On
Crawling Diapers
sucked into
the Game of games,
which begins: "Now,
look here son, let
me explain, how
it works . . ."
ends: "Now,
you show me, what
I showed you — know it
repeat it, feel it
eat it love it . . ."
And how bugged
was Wordsworth
when he blew (still
blows)
everybody's mind
by simply observing:
The Child
Is The Father
of the Man . . .

weird, how
the Ferry People
dive
into
Newspapers . . .

And the Birds
bound busy
in their Work . . .

III

... and, everything does
have an ending

The Ferry:
Dead

Seagulls'
Wings:
Dead

Lashed

Held

to the dock . . .

to the body . . .

B o t h,

are waiting . . .

gerard kirby anderson

Loneliness Is Like A Sealed Coffin

ACT I

FADE IN . . .

. . . Two casually but cleanly dressed young negroes are seated on a park bench in Central Park on a warm but comfortable night. They are sharing their one remaining marijuana cigarette. It is about eleven o'clock P.M.

One: "Did you ever stop to think about what it would be like to be in Hell. I mean, you know, if there really is a Hell."

Other: "I don't know, I suppose so."

One: "But you know, you can just imagine, moral decadence in it's purest form."

Other: "Yeah, like vice in the abstract."

One: "It would be like a summer in St. Tropez."

Other: "Just think, lying on the hot sand in all that heat digging your toes into that scorched earth and digging all those beautiful warm chicks."

One: "All the swinging people will be there."

Other: "Like, we could party for days."

One: "Years."

Other: "Centuries."

One: "And if Dante was right, we could choose our own circles."

Other: "I'd choose sex and drugs."

One: "It's a pity we couldn't organize all the finest chicks, and the hippist cats and all meet at the same circle."

Other: "Yeah that is a drag."

One: "I'll be glad when we hurry up and go."

Other: "Why?"

One: "Because, well, you know, somebody's always trying to save me."

Other: "Really, you too?"

One: "Yeah I always run into these weird cats who try to convert me. They have a project a year, you know, to save some soulful cat

from the devil. I think they get to move up a seat in church every time they save somebody."

Other: "Yeah, well, that way you get closer to the preacher."

One: "Yeah, and he's the cat that needs to be saved."

Other: "Somebody's always trying to save me from myself. Like, I ran into this chick who looked like she had nothing to be saved from and she kept bugging me and saying that if God knocked on my door I should let him in. Well you know, like I told her, like the cat is always welcome to visit in my pad, but I just don't want "Him" to move his bags in."

One: "I've been thinking man, like one of these days I'm going to put on my hippist vine, you know, really get pressed and then I'm going to get high and eat a bag full of pills and just drift away. Like I'm gonna be high when I hit that circle, man, I'm gonna be clean as acid."

Other: "Yeah man, all those chicks man, gray chicks and black chicks and. . ."

One: "Everybody else's chicks. . ."

Other: "All up for grabs. I'm gonna sit and stay high and drink wine and nibble on breasts for the rest of my 'life'."

One: "Listen man, I hate to interrupt you, but what did you do with the roach?"

Curtain

ACT II

. . . Same place. . . A very attractive girl walks by. She is an acquaintance of the two. She is dressed in shorts, sandals, has a large bag, and has a beautiful body. She is of the contemporary school, very intelligent, worldly and real.

One: "Hey! You fine evil black girl, what's happening?"

Other: "Hi babel!"

Girl: "Hi! I didn't see you there. How are you?"

One: "Groovey. And you?"

Girl: "Oh, I've been pretty sick lately."

Other: "I was wondering what happened to you, like I haven't seen you for months."

One: "I thought you went away and left me. I've been suffering from a broken heart since the last time I saw you."

Girl: "What heart? Anyway, why don't you give up?"

One: "How can I when I'm passionately in love with you?"

Girl: "Oh save it for the squirrels."

Other: "What was wrong with you?"

Girl: "Well I can see that you two don't read the newspapers. I'll have you know that I'm a national celebrity."

One: "How so?"

Girl: "Well I died!"

Both fellows automatically stare at each other in silence with a secret, yet questioning gaze.

Girl: "What's the matter with you two?"

Both speak in unison.

One: "What do you mean you died?"

Other: "What did you say?"

Girl: *repeating herself*, "I said I died."

One: "Explain."

Other: "Yes, dissertation please."

Girl: "Well, ever since I was a child I had a bad heart, and a couple of months ago I went to this wild party, well I forgot about my heart and I got high and started dancing, and you know how strenuous these dances are nowadays, well I guess I overtaxed myself because I had a heart attack and I was pronounced dead on the way to the hospital. Anyway with all these new medical discoveries and things the doctors massaged my heart for hours and brought me back to life. So here I am, you know, it's as simple as that."

Both fellows now look at her excitedly, opened mouthed and speechless. They are spellbound by her story.

One: Breathlessly breaking into the conversation, "What happened when you died? I mean do you remember anything? Did you see or hear anything? I mean like where did you go? Where were you?"

Other: Also excited, eagerly awaiting his turn to speak, "What's it like to die and to be dead? What did it feel like?"

She suddenly becomes very nervous and pale and begins fumbling to light a cigarette. There is silence.

One: "Come on man tell us!"

Girl: With a chilling shrug, whispers sickly, "It was a nightmare!"

Curtain

ACT III

Both men are seen walking dejectedly along the avenue with heads bowed. They are silent. Finally the silence is broken.

Other: "You really think she's telling the truth?"

One: "I don't know, you know how chicks lie these days."

Other: "But she sounded so for real."

One: "Yeah she did, sort of."

Other: "But the bit about being a cold dead fish, man, feeling yourself rotting away into nothingness. You know, that's sickening."

One: "Yeah, like she said there was nobody there. Like everybody was alone, all alone forever."

Other: "I couldn't stand to spend the rest of my life alone. Man, like I think I'd flip."

One: "Maybe she's just putting us on."

Other: "But you know she's not phony."

One: Nods uncommittingly and says nothing.

Other: "I believe her, I don't think we should try to get our friends hung up on this circle thing. Like they'd hate us if what she says were really true."

One: "I don't know man, I really don't know. I don't even feel like talking about it anymore. It depresses me. Anyway I gotta split, I got things to do. I'll catch you tomorrow."

Other: "Yeah I gotta split too, I'll see you later."

They both separate and start to walk in different directions. One stops, turns, and calls to the other.

Other: "Hey! What are you doing tomorrow?"

One: "I'm not sure. I may just sit around and read or something. You know, just relax."

Other: "Oh, O.K."

They continue going their separate ways when one stops, turns, and again calls.

Other: "Hey man!"

One: "Yeah."

Other: "Do you really think that chick was telling the truth. I mean seriously."

One: "I'd rather not believe her." His eyes riveted on the ground, slowly raises his head, stares for a moment, speaks. He turns, walks into the darkness, out of sight. The other watches him disappear then turns also to disappear into the darkness. The stage is left barren with cool lights leaving the impression of symbolic emptiness and loneliness. . . .

Final Curtain



grace mcewan

From Death

What is mind's love? dear love.
Coming to me through darkness,
That darkness from which all were born of.
Being beginning wanted Light.
Being in darkness was searching,
The darkness of that Being searched through
Darkness after
Darkness after
Darkness.

Being of Darkness cornered around the
corner of darkness.
Blocked by a film of black
Blacked by the face of night.
Night staring through the Being
beginning in darkness,
Darkness blocking the Being
from beginning

Till the Being
spurred blood
while searching
Light!
Light of Love existing
alone

But the Light was fully Love
Standing before all darkness
In the Black Sea,
As the only

pearl of life.

Being beginning in Darkness
Formed by time and exhausted
by Search.

The Dark Being walked
step by step toward

Light.

Being which was beginning.(-)
in Darkness,

Began Being.

1234567891234567891234567891234567891234567891234
 1234567891234567891234567891234567891234567891234

judi hartley

1.

The grasses held their convention
 today on the slope outside of
 Borough Hall. They judged me
 while I sat, a Giant in the Land
 of Lilliputians. The tired, beaten
 blades I pinched at and beheaded.
 The autumn calm of day reminded
 me of the inevitable annual death
 soon to claim my warm grass-chair.
 And I heard the bouncing geraniums
 laugh at me as I stood and turned
 to leave.

2.

I mean that
 which I meant
 to say, but
 only implied
 in a self-
 conscious burst
 of wordless
 words, a hang-
 ing phrase
 that yesterdays
 and tomorrows
 raze from
 constancy, and
 all I say is
 only half of
 what I meant
 to say
 today

Eyelids up in the morning
 meeting endless rows

of num
 bers in order
 out of order when
 not taken right
 correct except for human
 failings
 numbers on the cereal box
 on the apartment
 door

on the bathroom scale
 on your auto mo bile
 streets have numbers buses on the numbered
 streets

are
 numbered

neurotics get numbers in numbered hospitals
 licenses get numbers
 razor blades are counted twice
 sit around and count your lice
 on lazy summer afternoons that have
 numbered dates

in order. Ten toes
 ten fingers
 one heart
 a spleen
 one body
 two feet
 one mind
 two eyes
 one nose
 one life
 two arms
 you missed my number

judy duncan

The Shortest Distance

i walked around the circumference of
the Circle with the
huge
diameter at
which point did
i hear a cry?
when did i topple
and
fall inside?
i walk around
the silent Circle
my voice shrinks
within me
my thoughts shattered and
now wobble
around like pieces of
broken plaster
in
my
skull
i step cautiously
now for
fear of f
a
l
l
i
n
g
lost
and being lost
the circumference erodes
as i walk and
soon
i may find
myself
walking inside and outside together.

ellen marie bisser

Moments hanging in on

In the wind, the rope between the strings
between the poles has snapped
Bless me, Father, between the words, within the darkness
I have sinned
I hide, Mother, in penitence
in your shadow, I climb your beads
reaching for bread passing through the lips, the mouth waters
darkness holds hands
pulls strings
tangling the body
really, there is no bread
only
in the pit of you
I am knotted in the chords
you, I can somehow now somehow yes, I can now somehow admit
hanging
I desire gaps of you
between the chords
spreading my lids
twisting me open
there is no piano
the wind plays strings
the mind composes gaps of sound.

Spring '67

walking my head naked
 through every alley,
 through every subway
 mind remembering every
 crevice, every line
 between cement it finds
 all cracks

yes, birds fly in the morning
 out into the afternoon
 no, they do not fly at night
 — Sleeping
 in the first spring rain,
 the earth releases its worms
 and sometimes flowers

(Am I somewhere behind my eyelids?)

In the gutter, you can fall into the sewer.

I have been evicted

I am always waiting, late

I am locked in a telephone booth
 with only pennies
 there is no '0': defaced

in the darkness of subways,
 I wait for flocks of flowers
 for the bloom of birds

BEWARE OF MOVING PLATFORMS AS TRAINS ENTER AND LEAVE THIS STATION

ellen marie bissert

Excerpts from Pigeons, a work the author hopes to progress

didn't know exactly what she was doing had done it
 so many times not that there was any prescribed ritual—didn't want
 to be scarred by the claws of rigidity—but a plan had its advantages

that's why most of the time, like during the past month or so,
 uncurled her hair first, emptied her bladder second, washed herself
 third, threw in the pan a small steak with onion rings and garlic salt
 fourth, then hurried to make her bed fifth, dressed sixth, and seventh
 ate: this was the most efficient method, the one she had been using
 and the one used this morning when there was no real reason to be
 efficient with this plan you finished washing, cleaning, and dressing
 in exactly 30 minutes leaving approximately 15 minutes in which to
 do nothing but drink coffee

and today there was all day to drink
 coffee and eat and read and read and drink coffee in between still
 it was the most efficient breakfast plan of rushing to fix her room and
 then dashing to drink some water, then some juice, take a vitamin
 pill, then an iron pill, find the wheat germ, then the chocolate, then
 some nuts all of which were poured into some yogurt before the top
 of the meat got bloody and started to smoke then she would turn
 the hot plate a little lower, flip the meat and watch it cook to a slight
 to medium char depending, of course, on the cut

and always she finished her yogurt with enough time to heat some water for some instant coffee and munch some raisins in between while she finished her meat before two cups of water started to boil

the method was most especially taste too good so why in the world did she use it today?
 efficient but coffee after meat with onion rings and garlic salt didn't
 well, anyway, there was 15 minute coffee

staring at the ceiling, felt her mother's I-old-you-so slap and sting had to admit the white plaster-board ceiling was getting dingy from the way she cooked but just loved meat slightly charred on the outside and rare to raw on the inside, and you just got dingy white ceilings to get it that way

another

thing



Christina didn't like ready-made yogurt only liked the kind she made that way knew exactly what was in it

and besides it was very simple to take a quart of skim milk, not quite boil it, then stir in one cup of powdered milk with three tablespoons of ready-made yogurt and pour the mixture (probably a compound) into a thermos and let it stand overnight

but really it wasn't that simple, because if it was too cold at night or too hot in the pan the bacteria in the milk would die and you wouldn't get it and then sometimes the milk was very skimmed and needed more than just one cup of powdered milk and then sometimes it was just too much but you couldn't know anything until you tried to do and did or didn't make it

anyway, this was the only type of yogurt she would eat

and she ate in triangle

eating the most in the morning, the least in the evening, with nothing after 5:30 this way, you would be sure to be weak and tired enough to be asleep by 11 and this way, you wouldn't be inviting any dreams, at least dreams you could remember

and ever since she had moved into the basement, didn't like to dream not even after being frozen out of the basement into the attic, did she dare to remember dreams didn't even like lying in bed any longer than 3 minutes, because always started seeing and hearing queer things that's why didn't like doing too much Yoga—it made you hallucinate or something

well, anyway, did some ballet exercises awhile, took a roast of a shower, swallowed an aspirin and hoped fervently for instant sleep but usually, like this past month or so, didn't have time to be doing ballet exercises, and so it was two aspirins sometimes though it got to be three still sometimes, too many times, remembered rats tails dancing around her head black floating bodies like clouds above her head stringing themselves hanging from their curled, uncurling tails their eyes beating hers while their mouths opened to red, bound by the sharp white gnawing of pointed teeth

always running, trying to run into the cave below the mountain never made it just so tired and so weak going to collapse going to fall

everything stopped
except the red

sometimes waiting
all morning for the sun to warm the red underneath her eyelids that
way it was always a dream

but this morning, it was safe there was
nothing just a waking from darkness to a bright dryness even with the
pot of water on the window, it was a desert she wished her par-
ents would get a humidifier it always felt like you were being
gagged

felt sinking something like the Elinor Wylie poem couldn't
remember on the regents and couldn't even remember now all that
could be remembered was the feeling of the poem on the page with
a wave near the window in the question that couldn't be answered
with some words they said somewhere in the introduction she was
mad, but in her picture, she was very beautiful and only very sad,
not mad like they said in the introduction her picture was much bet-
ter than what their words said it might be her words would always
be much better than theirs

on the same shelf holding the book with the
picture of her eyes, T—Thompson, Francis Thompson just before the
W too bad nobody could be found who had ever written anything
how something like hopefully everything was wrong with "The Hound
of Heaven" too bad it wasn't so bad that it didn't have to go around
being said, trying to have it memorized but she did "Fled Him down
the nights and down the days . . . And in a mist of tears (or was it
viel?)/I fled from Him . . . All things betray thee who betrayst Me."¹
it seemed to her a terrible poem but more than half the class
said they liked it and somehow they always knew

"Christ—Tin—Na.
Christ—Tin—Na is my sweater up there? Did you-ou see my sweater—
dark green with three brown buttons coming down the neck." no answer
"Tell me if you see it."

it seemed to her she had better leave had it
and didn't intend to give it back besides it wasn't dark green but
green darkly medium, the same color as her jacket, the same color as
the rose stems growing to her window in February when Mary didn't
know there were rose bushes Mary didn't think anything was living
unless she saw a flower no, Mary just couldn't have such a green
sweater she should have one the color of sand where nothing grows
and besides Mary would like that much better she didn't look too
good in green anyway

had to exit now before Mary found her in the
sweater just about out of the house and French—damn it—like a
hangnail always burning and stinging when you start feeling good,
and now again that blasted subject was screaming "remember me?
I've caught you" it just about laughed, "Ha! Ha!" like a ghoul

hated
French it wasn't anything in particular, but just adverse conditioning
French just always was the ultimate in tedium and boredom eternity
passed before you could understand what was going on in those
words, and what was going on in them didn't seem too important
anyway French is, was and always had been one big waste but
you had to know a language or at least people, that is the right
people, had to think you knew it but she couldn't know it French
idiocy fed the mind and pumped the hate in indirect ratio: hatred
increasing with the decreasing mark

after French I, Christina noticed that
in no French class she had ever been in, was any book in such a
state as hers not at first, of course, but just wait six weeks when the
will smarted, and the hatred rose, then at least once a week, the
book would take flight across the room the first few times, it just
missed her big mirror, and the thought of breaking it excited her ter-
ribly but now after long practice her shot acquired an accurate,
brutal force, it was the thought that the book might fall to pieces that
entertained her and after the book had been thrown, its smashed face
almost inflicted a stab of remorse, but with the sight of the print the
hatred rekindled and brutally it would be marked sometimes with a
sadistic underlining, other times with an obscene interjection but on
the whole, just couldn't decide if the inside should be revolting or
beautiful, attractive or unpleasant, sublime or repulsive and so there
resulted in between many pages of peculiar motleys if this was done
at home when there was no time, it would be done in color basic
colors from the larger ink bottles and various hues from the smaller
ones the red-brown hue was especially effective it looked like a bloody
spider web outlining the crumples inflicted on the page but all that
ended

after graduation washed the old army cot, padded it with a
blanket, took the books, records, magazines, prints, phonograph and
typewriter down to the basement when her parents got back from
the store, she told them it was too hot and the family too noisy, and
the basement was the best place it was cooler and quieter, because

sound waves traveled up, thus, the attic, although drier and probably cleaner was out of the question—much too noisy—sound waves always going up really didn't know if that was true, but distinctly remembered reading or hearing it somewhere maybe heard it as the right answer or maybe the wrong answer on some science test well, anyway, told them that sound waves traveled up but by November, knew it was a mistake or maybe they traveled down in colder weather, for you could always hear where everyone was and what approximately they were doing in October maybe the sound waves got re-routed? anyway, moved into the attic not that it was especially great in the attic, but it was just better than freezing and getting arthritis in the basement and in a way, it was more private—nobody kept coming to look for his bike or wash his clothes up there and then too you had your own clothes line and you didn't have to bother anybody for hardly anything

still in the basement, there was a wonderful bathtub where she could read the week after she moved her father brought it home on his plumbing truck when her mother wasn't home and couldn't know—she wouldn't like somebody else's bathtub in her house even if it was only in the basement but after her father spent all day connecting it, her mother didn't say anything it really was great for reading, because with your legs resting on the edge of the tub, a semi-inverted position could be achieved—the blood rushing to the head, reviving you like a regular shoulder stand only being more efficient, because you could read or study at the same time but couldn't speed read—got fantastic headaches actually couldn't even read slowly in this position or in a sitting one or standing one too long that's why wore sunglasses mostly all the time like when there was sun and when there wasn't when there was rain and snow and clouds and subways and night and fog and when there wasn't wore sunglasses mostly all the time, except in the basement and now in the attic, but always with the others in the house, because they were always making fun when they saw it, even when they couldn't see it, they made fun of the sunglasses, but if they couldn't see it, it wasn't the same thing, for you could always say it wasn't so, and how do you know when you can't see it and that was much better besides could taunt them that they could have that same unlucky gene, and their children could have that same crossed eye Mary who was engaged always started yelling about how God knew Christina would cross Him and so He crossed her before she could Him, and now everything she ever could, would or did see was distorted that's why

she couldn't live with her family like everyone else

yes, Mary the Blessed

Virgin in the back seat

from the attic, you could see the Philips' black room Barabra Philips said that her parents would never vote for a Catholic, especially a man like J.F.K. he was a communist, a nigger-lover, and a puppet of the Pope and her parents didn't want the Pope running *this* country like he ran everything in Europe that's why there were so many wars and if J.F.K. got in, there would be sure to be a war he was a democrat and democrats always made wars like the Pope her parents said that if Kennedy was elected, the priests and niggers would take over the country

after the election, the Philips wore a long face for months wanted to know how they liked the Pope's dictatorship, but didn't want to make anymore trouble

really it was rotten luck that they had moved next door to Masons actually couldn't understand why they had to move anyway so what if a few Puerto Ricans moved on the block, it seemed no reason to evacuate besides it was better to live next to Puerto Ricans than to a Mason at least they were Catholics and didn't want to know how much you made and how much everything cost and who your relatives were and what they did, where you went and where you were going and why the Philips were so blastedly nosey and so goddamn strange they wouldn't even tell you what a Mason was except that a Mason couldn't tell you exactly what, but that he belonged to a big secret society which was divided into a lot of little societies which had secrets of their own and every so often, Mrs. Philips would wear a dress, in fact a gown, to go out with other women, and Mr. Philips got all dressed up in a tuxedo to go out with a bunch of men, but they never went out together, at least, never dressed up but Barabra sometimes dressed up, especially when she was being a Mason still none of them could tell you where exactly they were going or what they were going to do when they got there—it was a big secret, and if they told you, they wouldn't be a Mason anymore they said it was a type of religion or something but they hardly ever went to church not even on Christmas or Easter and didn't even keep a Sabbath, and yet the Philips said they were God-fearing people who obeith the Lord

when they found out her family was Russian Orthodox, they told the Roes that her family might be commies and had them checked

two men came snooping around asking her mother for papers she couldn't find and didn't know she had but after that she didn't talk to anybody anymore

then the bull-dozers came the trees left and Peg moved and always there had been trees in the woods a few blocks away when she was younger, in the morning, she and Peg would take their dolls for a ride and later cook berries and wild onions in the old kettle they had discovered while they ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with chocolate milk pretending that's what they had cooked

once they borrowed some matches from her kitchen, and they ran across Hylan Boulevard holding hands, so they wouldn't get hit by the cars near the beach and on the shore, they gathered berries, wild onions, apples, flowers, clams, muscles, seaweed and covered all with salt water and made sea stew after a while, it looked revolting and smelt worse—the clams, they guessed—but the fire was magnificently beautiful, and they just loved fires, especially on the beach really you didn't need the matches, because somebody left their fire still burning and flying its smokey smell all over the beach still they went through the fire ceremony of rubbing all the sticks together and throwing the matches into the fire as a sacrifice to the gods they were Indians heating war sticks until they glowed red hot dancing around the fire with feathers in their hair Christina was Tonto who had killed Lone Ranger, and Peg was Chingachgook who had killed Hawkeye they were the last of the Clever Indians on the warpath scalping clams

when the fire died and the sticks cooled, they were prima donas on the moaning dock she and Peg had found a record, "The Nutcracker Suite," and had memorized the hum of the music and had made up their own dance but they never remembered the same hum or the same dance she was almost positive Peg sometimes made mistakes but she didn't want to tell her, because she might be hurt she was always hurt if you told her she had done something wrong anyway, Christina was Nut and Peg was Cracker the Peg was Nut and she was Cracker

sometimes when you jumped the wind started blowing your way it was almost like flying but you always had to worry that the dock would break, because it had the penalty of no trespassing and was always moaning in high tide with the waves that's why you had to worry when you jumped you might fall fall right through but you never thought of that when you were

jumping the wind would never come still you had to watch that the men didn't start coming for their boat or that some boys came to go fishing but they had their swords

"hey there you old pirate," Peg roared "Touché" Peg darted she at Peg then they retreated Peg flung forward, she forward Peg laughing Christina smacked her on the rear

"why you old goat," Peg grinned

—"you ain't such a young one yerself matey"

then Peg stabbed her in the rib she flapped her sleeves in the wind but the men were coming, and they had to fly

smiling to herself walking down the street but too bad Peg moved there was no one to play with the other kids were a bunch of dullards they would never play anything without a bunch of toys, and she didn't have and didn't want that many toys—she didn't need them, and it didn't matter, because she didn't want to play with them anyway, they were a bunch of dullards and were always calling her names

"damn those ugly, dirty rodents!" a squirrel ran down the side of the tree she was about to pass it ran to the sidewalk and stood staring its eyes to beat hers she ran across the street "damn those ugly, dirty rodents, their tails are getting so skinny they now look like rats"

"Girls, soak their skin in alcohol and lice, ticks, gnats and different insects will crawl out they are related to the rats, you know girls, I know they are around the school property but don't go near them; you may have to get rabies shots—twenty shots in your stomach really, you never know what they're carrying you never know what you can get from dirt remember squirrels are rodents like rats"

hated rats once a boy threw a dead one in her lap when she was wearing shorts legs were bare to the clawed feet pricking the skin its crushed eyes staring its

black swollen body its dried brown blood flying up her nose, piercing water from her eyes sometimes, she just couldn't stop remembering

but he was gone

she had moved away

rats were gone now there were only squirrels and no Peg

it was a windy day when your hair flies up and circles your head, then comes down to tickle your face and they had very long hair when she and Peg went to the Park of the Mountain overlooking the bay they were the horses of the Spanish explorers climbing from the bottom of the hill to the top where the wind rippled your mane and you galloped down in a cloud of dust when the ground was dry

once on her birthday, they spent all day galloping down the mountain until they were so tired that they just rolled down they got pretty dirty and very dizzy so that the whole world seemed to be spinning in a great, big blurr when they stopped rolling, she felt like a leaf sailing down on the wind, falling into an ocean with stormy waves knew leaves hardly ever fell in oceans, but some of the ones in the Park of the Mountains did, and that's what it felt like after rolling down the hill with your eyes closed and really you didn't get that dirty, at least, you didn't feel that way, because the dirt was very clean on account of the ocean wind that kept washing everything like seagulls and sand and the dirt on the mountain

and that wind, when you were going home, seemed to push you right up the mountain and then wing your feet, flying you down the other side

they were seagulls with long, very long white sails riding against the sky, soaring into the sea

but really it was a lie to pretend you were a seagull, because whiteness only looks good by itself and by the water and now on the land and the dirt, there was no ocean wind, no water to keep the sails clean and white

it was terrible

when you came down from the mountain, you felt very dirty and sticky with salt, feeling like one of those black, dirty pigeons flying their germs all over the city didn't know they had germs at the time but felt kind or dirty and dark like one of them though they were flying

didn't like them now didn't like them flying over her head didn't like them dirty-ing up the sky they were so goddamn ugly couldn't understand how anybody could want them, keep them in a coupe, want them as a pet bringing rats, bringing germs felt sick with them flying above her head goddamn, Mr. Pelling letting his pigeons fly out of their coupe, fly above your head god, they seemed to zoom right past

like the bus

she was always missing but it seemed just like one of many missings, loosings somehow it didn't matter anymore

she crossed the boulevard to the bus stop felt like sitting on the curb but in her sister's straight skirt and couldn't make it down that far and *definitely* it was not the thing to do in a short, straight skirt but wanted to do, wanted to do it very much but the skirt was Mary's and so was the sweater, and after missing the bus, didn't feel lucky enough to try it

swinging around the street pole, you could see the boat yard where the seagulls were flying around like crazy, screaming all over the bay it was low tide and they were probably hungry and screaming it out all over the place or maybe they were so happy that they were eating they were trying to sing? wondered what happened to them when the bay froze over like it did in January when a few of them were pecking on the ice but really it couldn't be too bad if you could zip around the sky like that, yelling and singing that much some of them were soaring right into a cloud when the bus came and she got on

still watching them from her seat where she wrote

outside the window birds shoot themselves

up to, into clouds

climbing on, hanging from

the sky

lit blue

by yellow sun

again the birds shoot themselves

fall down to trees

and sing

well, this seemed like it more or less really, you couldn't tell precisely, because the words looked like those written on a washing machine while it was washing, and you couldn't really be sure of what was on the paper, but just that it came easily for once, not the usual over and over a hundred times to feed the waste paper basket or shove in the drawer well really, most of everything got stuffed in the drawer—it was safer that way, because everything had to be hidden if someone in the house found anything, it would be the end

and with Miranda

it was ended she was away at Smith, gone ever since that day if it

wasn't for Miranda, her paints, her pictures, her records, her books . . . Miranda was so smart, so beautiful she was more beautiful and smart than any of the other kids Miranda with her long black hair and emerald green eyes, she was so small and skinny—delicate like her father's ivory statue it was a good, beautiful statue even though it was naked she didn't care what Sister Augustine said—it was a good statue and not a sin Miranda could draw better than anybody, except her parents, was better in Latin, Algebra, History, English, Religion, Science than anybody Miranda was just better, smarter, prettier than everybody, and Miranda liked her

one Friday after school, went home with her to meet Miranda's parents in the kitchen, a man covered with a rainbow of colors was washing apples her father would never do that—"woman's work" he called it Miranda laughed, "this is my father, Ralph Fielder, the great American painter" very embarrassing, didn't know what to do meeting a painter then too her mother was "the great American painter," who had two names Claudia Heatherton and Claudia Heatherton Fielder but was she or wasn't she Mrs. Fielder? she blushed why was she always so stupid? but Miranda's mother was Mrs. Fielder, Mrs. Fielder told her she was very nice

but it was over Miranda was away now at Smith they never wrote they had never even spoken after that it was Christina's idea sometimes even now, felt it was all her fault but they were only being like other people saying goodbye why didn't it work out simply like that simply

Sister Augustine said that even if you hold hands or even if you look at each other, you could be damned to hell but she couldn't believe that she, that they were damned no, not yet, because she could tell Miranda that they shouldn't talk to each other anymore she was sparing them both from the fires of hell would be so lonely there would be nobody to talk to about anything that mattered they were all a bunch of dullards but Miranda was a painter and her parents were painters, and she liked their houses even though sometimes it was messy her house was very neat and very clean but there were no pictures, few records, and no books her mother didn't like books—"dust collectors" she called them her mother didn't even like to see her with a book her mother said she was being corrupted she said those artistic people were corrupting her but still Christina liked them—Miranda, her parents, her books, her house, her pictures and Miranda had lots of records at first, didn't like her music, but

then she did later believed even liked it better than Miranda loved Chopin—his music was so beautiful liked it best when Miranda would leave, and you could listen alone sometimes on Sundays, Miranda's father would play some of Chopin's *Etudes* wished her father could do something like that Miranda's parents were just too smart her parents were only very clean just loved Miranda, her parents, their house with the roof that dove into the sky but she didn't want to go to hell, and she didn't want Miranda to go to hell either

felt like crying when Miranda was talking to some dumb girl about some dumber boy, the dumbest clothes, and the absolutely stupid Brenda Starr just sat behind a bush watering her eyes why did she do this to her between the branches?

but one thing was sure she didn't want to go to confession and tell that sin how could you explain it made her blush all over to think of it but confess it?

hated priests if you're good, they don't believe you, and make you want to tell them something bad if you're bad, they yell at you and call you a sinner and she just about felt that she had never committed a mortal sin in her life but didn't want to think about it too long, because you'd find one, or it would find you soon enough but Sister Francis said if you could forget, it probably wasn't a mortal sin anyway, and since nothing had ever really bothered her, she figured that she hadn't committed any mortal sins

still it was horrid going to confession as soon as you saw the box, you start feeling guilty sitting, waiting, you start getting sweaty standing, waiting, you were sweaty kneeling in the dark, you were swimming in the sweaty sea of guilt then after you feel so guilty you can't receive communion next morning and then going to Mass, you could get hit by a car or maybe the world would end, and you would remember the mortal sin you forgot on purpose and would die going to hell

now didn't even believe in hell, didn't even believe in God but suppose you were wrong there's always that one big enormous possibility that a certain wrong thought can send you to that certain damned place, and Sister Francis Xavier was always saying how she won't want to be wrong like a communist, or atheist going, finding a hell when he dies she told you just imagine how it would feel when you found out

in the catechism it said it was a mortal sin to be that

person who had the faith and lost it, but made the nine first Fridays seven times, the five first Saturdays five times, sent hundreds of souls to Purgatory, made good confessions, went to Holy Communion, prayed before the crucifix, made novenas, went to church six days a week sometimes even seven but had not joined the Sodality just couldn't stand being told about anymore sins—there were already enough to keep you sinning—mortal sins, venial sin, occasions of sins, places of sin, smells of sin, looks of sin, thoughts of sin, sights of sin, words of sin

"Girls, you must be careful of what you read you never can tell exactly what type of influence certain books and their ideas will have on your mind, on your faith until it is too late that's why Holy Mother the Church in her great wisdom created an *Index* to protect the faithful from ideas harmful to their faith."

is that why she? Marquis de Sade said somewhere in his words that one could never really know what seeds flowered in the mind and what was now blooming in hers? how was she now knowing what she knew?

"Never was it know that anyone who fled." "Fled Him down the nights . . . / "All things betray thee who betrayst Me¹." "Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that never was it known that anyone . . ." "The Unicorn reams the forest of all true lover's minds.

—every married man carries in his head
the beloved and sacred image
of a virgin

whom he's whored . . .²

a word again, five letters:w-h-o-r-e. none for making one, just for being one, perhaps unlucky type of female below the nature of a perhaps lucky male who is perhaps above he together with a small world staring in the window, turning its eye in the keyhole, opening the body to a four letter response—bad word

"they no gonna get me; they no gonna get my money" waving her stick, an old woman boards the bus and yells to the bus-driver "see, I gotta stick they no gonna get me" waving her stickball bat "they no gonna get my money I gonna beat'm good"

had seen this old woman many times before with her white faded dress, with white faded shoes, with the yellowed white slip, with that yellowed white hair could she be like white—the color of brides's dresses could she be that white? "yesterday we fight they hit me but today I'm gonna beat'm good"

1. From Francis Thompson—"The Hound of Heaven."
2. From William Carlos Williams—*Paterson: Book V.*

