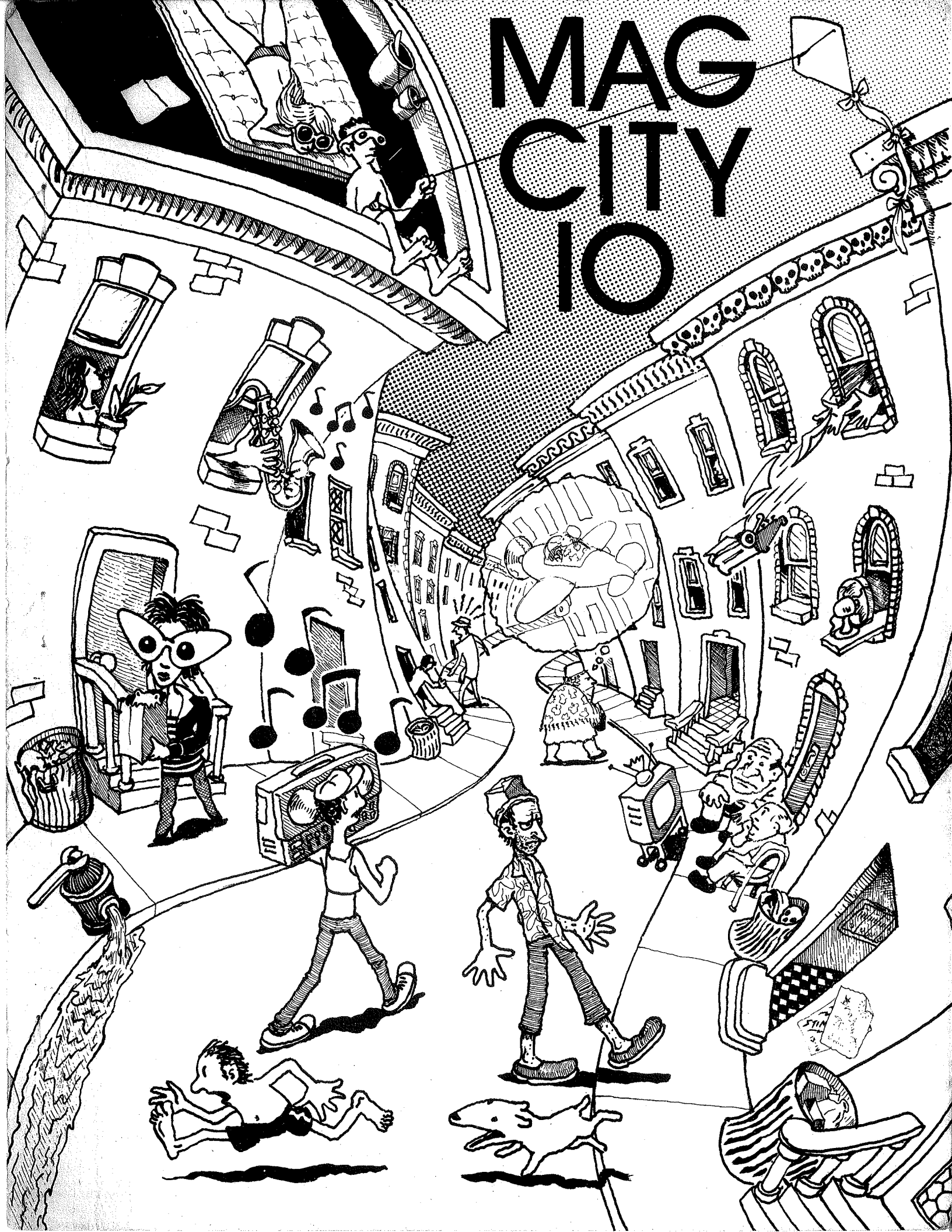
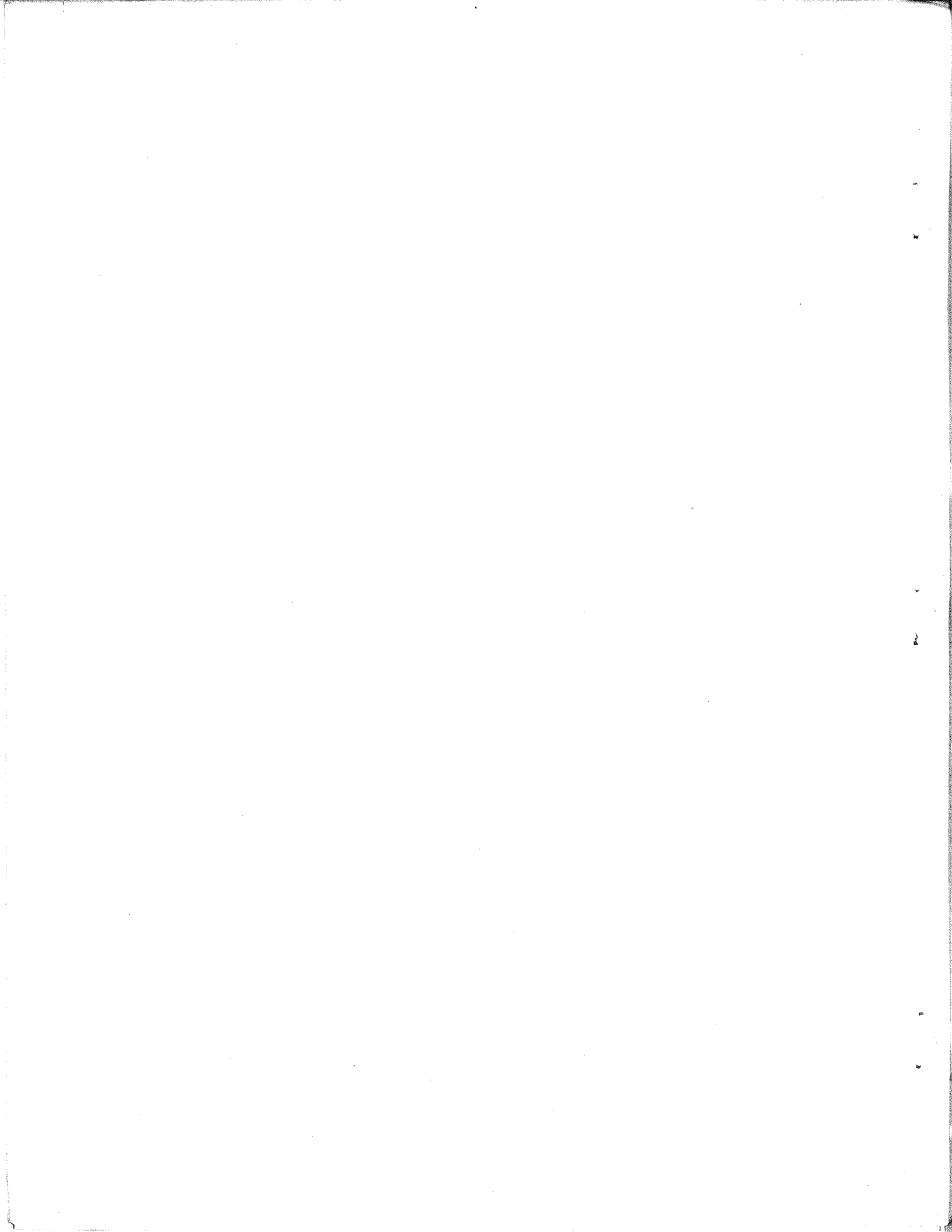


MAG CITY 10





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Editors: Gary Lenhart
Michael Scholnick
Greg Masters

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

Made possible by a grant from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines which it has made through funds received from the National Endowment for the Arts and from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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MICHAEL BROWNSTEIN

SLOW PONY

As the shadow of the bomb
falls across the blacktop
a massive thing, gliding
and, paper cup of coffee in hand,
we stop in our tracks and look up
we each will have our memories
I, for instance, will remember you
the day New York was bombed
you were strolling down St. Mark's Place
in your sheer aqua raincoat and
your tight black patent leather boots
that zip up the inside
when all of a sudden
there you were, writhing on the sidewalk
your spiked heels doing the slow pony
until they got caught in the cracks

Talk

for Ted Berrigan

I haven't felt right since Jean Seberg died
Something changed inside me
It feels like three minutes ago
I locked up at a movie screen
And saw Breathless for the first time
I remember as if three minutes ago
The feeling I had eighteen years ago
While watching Jean Seberg's face
Of my own face bathed in silver
And now Jean Seberg
Forty years old and betrayed
By a succession of awful men
In a Paris desiccated from
The city she landed in twenty years before
But filled with the same prehistoric creatures
One of whom finds her body, six days dead
Stuffed with pills in the back seat of her car
Absolutely drained of light
Because of something somebody said

Nine P.M.

I search in vain for a good FM station
night of blue satin
at the end of April, suddenly
I can't read anymore
of any book. But I do.
Turning from page 56 to 57
I am troubled by braggarts.
Page 65 finds me
rubbing the prints off what's left.
I am howling.
Then I turn a page
and you step across the room
I open my mouth to speak
you turn and your mouth opens too.
I throw the radio onto the floor
and in that moment I hear
your voice everywhere, saying
something like, "You know what?"

The Crack Between The Pages

Heads bent, reading
But actually all staring at the crack between the pages
A roomful of greeting-card people
Their names scrawled on their backs
In late afternoon, which is the favorite time for dreaming
The white light from the windows whispering you go nowhere anyway
While if you stare between the pages
Images in the crack take over for the words
Making a transparency where the words fall away
And you read between the lines to get the picture.

The repeated preference for a long white room
That curls gently upward like a spiral in the night
Any trace you leave taking the shape of a chambered nautilus
As you stand up from your chair and walk toward one end
Following the straight lines as they recede
Along the length of the reading room
Into the woodwork of a vacant smile
Where the teeth and the tongue touch nothing
And angels with bad backs wait in line to get adjusted

The order of primates to which man belongs
Descended about seventy-five million years ago
From an ancestor of the tree shrew which survives today
By the process of natural selection it had to develop keen sight
In order to jump from branch to branch high in the trees
Since any mistake would mean instant death
Initially it used parallel vision (focussing one eye
And then the other), but finally it developed the more efficient
Stereoscopic vision, where two closely related pictures
Obtained from the different eyes are compared

Forest spirits surround a hole
Which once served as the entrance to a great house
Dressed in stocking caps and red flannel pajamas
They join hands and revolve counter-clockwise
Their breath turning to steam as it hits the air
Their faces dark and crumbly as fresh-turned soil
Rich with a foreign substance

The photograph of a face on the table under a good strong lamp
Is covered with a layer of amphetamine face cream
The doctor then swings a bar of radioactive material wrapped in tinfoil
Back and forth over the photograph
After several minutes he stops and wipes the print clean

Its pebble-grain finish has been slightly blistered and enlarged
Although the image itself remains the same
"You see?" he says, turning from his desk in the corner
"I've changed the whole texture of the grain!"

A herd of elephants on TV
Is being chased in South Africa by a helicopter
The helicopter gives us a great view and tremendous mobility
One of the younger elephants following after its mother is selected
And the Game Warden leans out of the copter seat
Taking careful aim with a tranquilizer dart gun
If all goes well
The baby elephant will be tagged for future reference and released
To rejoin its mother on the open plain

A bomb wrapped in a bouquet of red roses
Is left in the doorway of Wembley's, a posh London restaurant
This must be the work of the provisional arm of the IRA
Obediah Shipley and his estranged wife Margaret
Have a sudden, explosive quarrel in the taxi
On their way to the restaurant to celebrate their reunion
And in tearful voices order the driver to turn back

Coincidence or chance as a factor in life
Is controlled by a bachelor no one likes
He turned fifty in Philadelphia the other day
And was the target of a brief birthday celebration
Thrown in his honor by a dart

Tommy had eleven marbles but Joey had only three
So Joey slapped Tommy's face and stole six of his marbles
Including his tiger-eye shooter
Now Joey has nine and Tommy five
Several days go by in the normal manner
But all the while Tommy is scheming to get his marbles back
And when all the kids ride into Fort Lauderdale on the bus one day
to go to the movies
Tommy comes home early and searches through Joey's drawers
When he can't find the marbles he runs into the bathroom
And, weeping, tosses his five into the commode

A dozen investors apparently are adjusting their portfolios
They sit, shoulder to shoulder, at the long refectory table in the monastery
Tugging at the straps on their cowhide briefcases
The old brown-robed monks serving them silently and swiftly
Plates and water glasses rattle discreetly like small sets of porcelain bones
And by the time the meal is done
The men slump back with shy smiles, wordlessly moving their lips
Not only have they enjoyed their work of pulling strings

But the Big Board shows quite a substantial gain
And a mummified body falls from its roped-up rig in the rafters
Crashing onto the hardwood table with a resounding splat

Up the down staircase is not always the wrong move
Revolving counter-clockwise on a dish of still water
Security equals serenity
Cool and creamy, not as chalky, not as gritty
The main floor of Bloomingdale's on any given day
Soft permanence
Thorazine face cream
The best surprise is no surprise at all

You can see it as clearly as if it were yesterday
A generous cut of sirloin grilled with cubed potatoes
Just a hole in the wall, cold and dusty
The remains of the firemen glowing in the embers
And the circuitry that reveals this to you is always in control
Except during that brief moment between on and off
Between back and forth
When absolutely nothing happens
In such a way
That it is difficult to see where the arrow is pointing
Since more than thirty arrows fly simultaneously along the same line
And scatter in all directions whenever you look at any one of them
And taking refuge in drink leads to madness

In about a million years or fewer human brains doubled in size
It is one of the remarkable developments in evolution
It may be enclosed in a glass tube to eliminate the effects of air currents
It can be made to emit a loud beep when an acupuncture point is found
It is basically a very fine balanced needle suspended by a long silk thread
over a calibrated dial

The original unit was hand adjustable
Later units were automatically tuned for maximum resonance
The sound from the device was fantastic, like sound from another world
The results were spectacular

The back of the girl they call Dusty
The back of her legs
The back of her skull, too
Shadow luncheon
She turns to look at you, golden curls exploding on the pillow
Her beautiful eyes liquid paraphrase
They stare deep into otherness with stereoscopic vision
Late afternoon is the time for loving
The light while it's fading so fine to behold
You don't even want her to speak

Do most people believe that ultimate meaning lies "beyond speech?"
Have they always felt this way?
You investigate history
And you discover
That although people go on talking to each other as never before
They look into the eyes to see what's really going on
Because words cause trouble
Since talk is cheap
And the eyes are the only other windows

You Wanted to Look at What
I Wrote in My Notebook So Here It Is

Went tonight to a nightclub on W37 St. Smokey punk pulse. Michael Parker was ticket taker. He saw us & gave hearty handshakes. Askt him what he's doing with his poetry how come I haven't heard him give readings. He's got a rock band, that's the vehicle of his poetic expression. Ballistic Kisses plays next Friday night-- He used to be a whore, M. I don't think he'd mind my saying so. It's a way of makin a living. He sat on barstools in the theater section of San Francisco, Geary St., under the bright lights and he'd entertain women in town on business. And men. I was gonna say I wonder why a woman would pay for sex when she could easily be picked up. But now it comes clear: She doesn't want to be degraded by playing the seduction scene & objectifying herself. She's in the position of power in hiring for her desires. Money talks. She can pick up who she wants. She has the thrill just like men do who pick up prostitutes on 12th Street, purchasing what you want saying like a little kid for candy-- "I have this money in my hand & I'm going to buy what I want!" Prostitution is definitely a product of a materialistic possessive society.

We walked by the pinball machine. Men in white suits with their hair wet back gave tired expressions of desire to their dates wearing spandex pants & thick lipstick taking postures of chilled defiance. Me & Peter, Peter from S.F., bought buds. We handed the barmaid, a platinum haired woman, cash & she refused it & pointed us around the corner to purchase tickets for \$1.50 & buy the beer bartering with these coupons. I guess it makes things simpler for the workers to have one person handling cash & the bartenders concentrating exclusively on passing out the drinks.

The club was exclusive, sort of. Vinnie led the pack, whispered a name he knew & then the guard opened up the chain & let us enter. It's like there's gold inside & you have to be singled out by the gods up above before these people will give you the opportunity to give them your money. The Panama hat gave our party the good looks to pass & the name "Dinah" was whispered behind Vinnie's hand.

I saw my brother there. He walked up & surprised me with his presence. The sibling link--. We shook hands. He said, "When'd ya get here?" I said, "Two hours ago." He said, "Yeah? Me too!" His girlfriend from Sweden said hello & when Barney went to the bathroom I asked her if he treats her kindly & she said yes & I said that's good 'cause if she says he's treating her mean I'll slap him on the back of his head. She added that he might even be treating her too kind. I don't know what she meant by that--was that some sort of desire-to-be-kicked remark like Sylvia Plath desiring the boot in her face? No!--women are not masochists when they are in love, necessarily--but I do think women get disgusted by being catered to & I go along with them in this respect because being catered to too much puts her on a pedestal, & she's no god & she's no idol, she's human, mortal, equal.

My brother & Carina left the club about 3 to go home to Queens & sleep. I carried on, high on a toot. Feet floating as I walked. The band was African. A man beat a conga drum and cymbals tizzle sounds, & a sax blew deep low notes-- the audience danced, swayed, each person alone. The isolation was intense. The feeling of so many attractive people passing by untouchable. The arrogant disdain in protective peoples' eyes when you tried to look into them. Or the lush seductive look that leads nowhere--an empty swimming valley of alcohol blues. Have mercy on them when they are in pain. Sex groping doesn't satisfy the soul this night but feeling the arms of friends against mine in the crowd, our evolving clan--Peter & Mark leave today for Paris. Me, I'm staying in N.Y. I'm gonna stay put. I've moved a lot. Tonight I was coming up in the elevator & felt my shoulders relaxing, & my whole body sinking into my feet in a non-defensive surrendering type way like all my weight was in one place. Then looking out the bedroom window at a blue Brooklyn Bridge at dawn, no firecrackers going off: I heard the sounds of birds tweeting & a car engine revving up the canyon of 2nd Avenue which seems kind of sexual.

4 July 1980

HELENA HUGHES

Just Now A Frightful Wind

Something stings
you are stung: effort's mistaken passion.
Something gets you in the throat, a flying
squirrel perhaps, or a predatory
bird with beak and mysterious
eyes looking down into the
tulip's stamen on which there
is a flat disque where we can
sit in the shade of the squirrel
flying, circling, overhead.

He said he told me he tried
and was a demon or a god
considering his education complete
he had his best thoughts in cars.

I am tired of developing.
I am abloom, a linden tree
in the city and feel the first
shades of night walking provocatively
through the rain beneath these branches.

Chinese Shadow Box

Sitting on a white seat
supported by the rear legs
of a lion with the forelegs
of a bird I feel
like a dumb man eating
sweets. I cannot describe
the taste of the past
which whispers to me
in coincidence and seems
magical.

The more exquisite the experience
the shorter it must be
with uncomfortable intimacy
the rain falls and its
constancy lids the sky,
so that we only ever
realize this until later
when we catch the smell
of heliotrope again.

We live where best we can
and in the company
of those with whom
we breathe most easily.

I have only just arrived
and by way of resting
I am writing this
to you.

More Old Lancashire Recipes

The Mexican calendar lies
minutely on the table
cloth in detail and
the dead phlox holds
a beauty to herself
lavendar still. The yellow
telephone on the table,
"Desire" on the stereo,
every chair strangely directioned
angled in and out the window
the birds sing. The windows
whispering to one another out
in the park like leaves.

"I alone am Johnny Ray,
know the secrets of my soul."

I put this particular
chair on one side. Why
do you change it? Why
should I prefer the view from
the other side of the table?
Why would I prefer any color
to this yellow flashing light,
twilight "Air Cond." I paint
my toenails and wait. "Isn't
that a pretty church?" Isn't
that a splendid view?

These moments like old women
no longer pray. They have their memories

2 Chapters from Motor Maids across the Continent

Imagine a lovely, green chain. Glistening to the west, like a gem in November, is a beautiful lake, and from the very heart of the valley rises the city, itself. It nestles at the foot of a vast granite temple, which towers above the homes of the citizens.

"Snow-capped mountains and canons and waterfalls are getting to be just everyday affairs," wrote Billie to her father, still in distant Russia.

"It's all very beautiful," observed Miss Campbell. "But there's one thing that makes it more beautiful to me even than the Vale of Cashmere, and that's a hot bath. I'm looking forward to a hot bath, my dears, and a good night's rest on a hair in the best hotel in the city. I trust you feel the same."

The girls laughed, "We do! We do!"

"We look a good deal like a United States geological surveying party, after three months in the wilderness," answered Daniel Moore, looking quizzically at the girls' sunburned faces, and glancing down at his gray flannel shirt, borrowed from Jim Bowles---That Was.

"I do feel as if I had returned to my natural element," said Elinor, "just a handful of dust. I am chewing dust and seeing dust and hearing dust. My hair is dust and my clothes, like in Job."

"After we are scrubbed and shampooed and manicured and fed and rested," here put in Billie, "I shall write a note to your Evelyn, Mr. Moore."

The young man hesitated.

"I've repented my bargain with you, Miss Billie. I'm afraid you might get into some kind of trouble, involved in difficulties."

So the discussion came to an end. What this beautiful city with the mysteries which hung over it had in store for them, perhaps they would never know. Perhaps they would visit its chief points of interest, like tourists, and perhaps they might penetrate far deeper into its secrets. They were certain of one thing, however, that Daniel Moore, for all his self-contained and calm exterior, was consumed by an unquenchable flame of lust. By hook or by crook, he would see Evelyn Stone, and, provided she was willing, would take her away, from Utah.

"And we are likely to be the 'hook or crook,'" observed Billie, as she guided the Comet into a broad, spacious street, lined with beautiful stone houses.

"Where does Evelyn live?" asked Nancy.

"Their town house is on this very street," answered Evelyn's lover.

Billie slowed up as they neared the granite man built by Evelyn's father. The front shades were all pulled down over the two enormous eyes. There was not a sign of life about the place.

"It looks more like a prison than a home, like living in the Statue of Liberty," Billie exclaimed. "Does he keep his pretty Evelyn locked up there all winter?"

"I'm afraid that Evelyn cannot bear extremities, inclement weather, difficulties," said Daniel ruefully. "She hasn't had much liberty since she met me, anyhow. He's an infernal old shitass and---"

Daniel broke off in the middle of the sentence, for the front door of the Stone house had opened, and there in the shin stood John James Stone. His penetrating gaze rested for a moment on the passing motor car, and he turned on

his heel and entered the house.

"The old fart is never away, you see," Daniel Moore ejaculated.

But they soon approached an immense, splendid hot bath and clean clothes, sweeter to the weary ladies at that moment than the most idyllic romance ever conceived, Havelock the Dane.

* * * * *

After a month's Gypsying it was good to be civilized for a few days before the thirst for wandering came over them again, and they must push on to California. Motor Maids across the continent.

"My dear children," observed Miss Campbell, "how very pleasant this is."

The Motor Maids fully agreed with her. The lights and the flowers, the music and the well-trained dogs, as well as the delicious dinner, afforded them supreme enjoyment for the moment, since the first ox-drawn emigrant wagon had entered the valley.

"And since that time all this has happened," cried Mary dramatically. For it was she, more than the others, who loved the history of the places they had passed. "They say Brigham Young saw it all in a dream," she continued, "and the moment he set eyes on the valley and the lake, he said: 'This is the place. Drive on.'"

"And forty years later Brigham Young laid down and died. The architecture---," began Billie, but "what's that?"

She raised her eyes questioningly.

Four pairs of eyes were turned toward the entrance of the dining room, where stood a tall, slender, young girl, in a white dress. Her father, the imperturbable James John Stone, was on one side of her, and on the other an

equally imperturbable young man, with a stern, rather hard, square mouth, as enigmatic as the lock on a door.

The head waiter conducted the party to a table in a far-distant corner of the room, where the girls could see them rudely.

"That's Evelyn Stone," said a woman at the table next to them. "She's with her fiance, Ebenezer Stone. Getting married tomorrow. He's her second cousin, you know."

"He's a soul," put in a man in the party.

"Strike it hard enough and sparks will fly," said the woman.

The Motor Maids and Miss Campbell exchanged looks of dismay.

It was nine o'clock.

Goodnight, girls.

"My dear children, you are young and romantic girls, and I am a hardened old bat, I assure you," she added emphatically, as if attempts were being made.

When Miss Campbell once and for all vetoed a question under consideration, the Motor Maids knew that the case was settled. Therefore, when those two intrepid fighters Nancy and Billie had returned to their bedroom, their faces wore the expression of all the electric lights in the room. Then Billie began silently examining a brown freckle near the end of her nose. She sat near the open window in her favorite yoga position, her hands clasping her freckle. The freckle, like the unmovable cloud in the heavens at Tierra del Fuego, was a permanent spot on Nancy's physiognomy. When she examined it most closely she was thinking deeply, not of the freckle. Billie was almost immersed in meditation. Her brow was wrinkled for danger.

"Nancy-Bell, I'll do it," she burst out at last.

"Well, why don't you?" answered Nancy, not unprepared for the declaration.

"Have you guessed what it is?"

Nancy pointed to it.

"You're a mind-reader, Nancy-Bell," exclaimed the other in admiration.

"It isn't much to read your mind," answered her friend, not intending to be uncomplimentary. "Your eyes have been glued to it for the last five minutes."

"Shall I, Nancy dearest?"

Before Nancy could reply, she carefully removed her best frock and laid it away. Then she stretched herself on the bed.

"Well---," she began, the crisp white sheet covering her beautiful body, "Have you forgotten jolly Fontainebleau?"

"The very thing," replied Billie.

"I imagine," continued Nancy reflectively, "that she will go to her room early. She didn't look as if she cared to linger in the company of Ebenezer. Perhaps they will stay down and smoke some of those cigars. If you want to catch her alone, you'd better try now, Billie."

Billie rose slowly toward the ceiling.

"It's against orders," she said at last.

"I know," said Nancy.

"And it may get us into a peck of trouble," went on Billie. "Will you stand by me, Nancy?"

"Did I ever fail you, Billie?"

"Never, Nancy-Bell. And it was an insult to your honor to have asked the question. Well, here goes."

Billie marched to the telephone, and, put the receiver to her ear.

"Miss Evelyn Stone's room," she said. "What's that? Hello," she said often.

Then she turned quite pale, and placing her hand over the mouthpiece, she whispered: "(It's Mount Rushmore. Come quick. You can hear, I can't.)"

Even across the room Nancy caught some of her ear against the telephone.

"A friend of my daughter's, you say? And old school friend, eh? Humph---"

Billie had not said that, she just hadn't said that.

"Campbell the name. Are you aware that my daughter is about to be married?"

"Oh, yes," called Billie. "That's why I wanted to see her. I--er--you know---"

("Oh, Nancy, what shall I do?)

Nancy had a brilliant id.

"The Rousseau," she hissed.

"I do so want to see her Rousseau," Billie repeated.

There was a deep roar of a lion.

"Girls are all alike," he said. "They love art. Evelyn has got the finest Rousseau that money can buy. I suppose you have heard of it. I'll have you connected with her room."

Evidently, Mr. John James Stone had spoken to Wilhelmina from the office. Billie waited at the telephone. The ordeal of conversing with John James Stone had brought wet beads of moisture to her forehead. But she was still not sure that the danger was over. A man like that would be capable of keeping himself connected so as to overhear the conversation. The notion flashed into her mind just as a sweet voice said, "Yes?" and she determined to take no chances.

"Is this Miss Stone?"

"Yes. Who is this?"

"This is Wilhelmina Campbell" --there was a long pause-- "Bill Campbell," she repeated. "Evelyn, have you forgotten that jolly day at Fontainebleau?"

"Come tonight. My room is No. 400, on the fourth floor."

"I'll be there right away," said Billie, and she hung up the receiver.

Instantly the door opened, and Evelyn, beautiful and pale, and very unhappy, stood before her.

"Take this quickly," whispered Billie. "Hide it somewhere. It's from Mr. Moore."

"Danny!" exclaimed Evelyn, hiding the letter under the pillow.

Instinctively Billie felt that the father was standing at the door.

"Good old friends?" she heard him say, in his deep, hollow voice.

"I'm sure his body must be full of black caverns," she thought.

"Father, this is Miss---" but with great presence of mind, Billie interrupted her:

"Oh, your father and I have met," she said. "We were introduced over the telephone. I was afraid you might think I was a...a boy.. when you heard my name was Bill Campbell," she added, turning her face toward that tower of strength.

"Show the young lady your things, Evie," he said, with a certain complaisant pride in his tone. As if to say: "We will dazzle this young person with our magnifying glass."

Evelyn wearily led the way into the next room, which was her bedroom, and evidently had no outlet to its emotions. Billie glanced at the filmy laces and beautiful frocks with lukewarm interest on them. Ebenezer.

Mr. Stone was called into the next room.

"Come with us in the motorcar to San Francisco."

Billy hardly recognized her own words.

"I can't, I can't," whispered Evelyn in an agonized tone.

"I must be getting back now," said Billie, when the conversation was ending.

"Goodnight."

The two girls kissed warmly.

Mr. Stone accompanied Billie around the corridor to her room.

"Good night," she said, holding out her enormous hand. And, as he looked up at her with a quizzical expression, he said:

"You are a friend of Daniel Moore?"

"Yes," she said, ripping off her mask.

Poor Trees

Round and round
And round extolled
The brittle raven atmosphere

Oaken beamers,
Acorn skin, dolorous tastes;
O twin of crushing agonies,

Inlaid snows. I'm

Drunk with her steady kisses.

"I was hoping you wouldn't do that."
"Why?"

I was saying, she better not do that.

The leaves act pure
Example harmony brandishes
Nine-iron scimitars

The regal head enough aside
attends the worm stricken
ideal bed

Crunched, changeless desolation
Streaks cunning 7 a.m.'s utterance

Windmill generates

Underworld

Attraction, contrast

Charnel staggering

Mists

mechanics

out in doorways
extra dumb burlesque
extra poptarts

Open pits, excavations, abandoned mines, industrial property,
empty houses, railroad property, dumps, and junkyards

Coffee prices eased

1,200 tons of coke

Puffed on to Lorraine
After a brief ceremony

The day I was born

I escape a hands' restraint
And reconciled

Muddle, disposition
Nest, a wave between sweaters
In contrast to canals. One's
Grandeur is but a song.
A darkening collage a voice simulated.

The Atlantic's grating pilgrimage sang
Separate the dust blue dirt and the traffic.

Remember toying, Jones Beach convertible hood
Back and forth, a snowflake thing. White

Confiscates temperament
Sabotaged like cards uproarious furlong

When, upon gravel,
I succeeded in showing Stan Musial how to hit,
I pillored the tenement Roy Rogers lists;
I cursed, competed,
With rods' rail electricity.

A Chain of Prayer Across The Ages
Blind Date With Mars
Bury Me Not

California produces
the world's seedless raisins

Ink. Well and threshold.

Portion condensed

I listen to his problems. And sometimes instead money.

Scholnick/22

Hello operator... Hello Darling, Listen Angel.
Can you drop by? He'll escort you. Sam's a gentleman.
He's. Very polite and courteous. Main meals at the
Factory Commissary. Please. Whatever.
I shall re-remind you.

Did you hear me say that? I might have.
He said the exact same thing
I just said. Exactly.

Russian spies, neurological goattangles, gypsy alcoa
Lightning flashes power steering these pages.

Evasive in the book. Injurious. Intrusion.
Precipitated by anxiety.

Cement pink neon

and

heroically, you

Who are everyone

precariously singing monuments:

Sky passes words-
Incidents of

Moment's blue
Shadow's light wedge

What does she do?
What does she do?
She was a schoolgirl last time I saw her.
Handsome. Handsome? Very handsome.
She's a goodlooking girl.
She lived in the courtyard above the archway.

"After seven hours of sleep have gone by, I can tell."

A woman won't allow herself to be a target nowadays.
We were dolls. You went for the highest bidder.
Look close. You'll see.

Let what you are be itself instead of surface.
In my head bombs were going off.

Scholnick/2?

Meeting exact
Unlikely to pour wrote
Response effect to be vigorous
Willing substantial
Accusing neither, most, vanished American
Lamas, by observing the regime practitioners,
Only a puppet added. Amalgam.

Cranes and pulleys
Computer switchboard
Long inside

I stood

A waneful january visited
Lost in theatrics of plush shambles
Court asserting instructions
And what intermissions, programs
Conformed monstrosities, arrayed
Lights' statutory forebodings?

"We're just all in this situation we've never been in before."

While I read, florid, virtually
Minimum, tough on hills curving
Now picayune vengeance startled
Brighter, haphazard story.

We may be Physical.
It's the same thing.

Deprivations imposed, of assumptions.
You send a picture.

"Stephan. Stephan. Come here. Don't go in there. There's
A man in there with a big bag and he'll put you in it. Stephan.
Stephan. Did you see the doctor today? Which Dr. did you see?
Did you see Dr. Karl? Did he weigh you? What did he say?
No more Pizza. No Candy. And to eat salad. And toast.
And no McDonald's. Come. Nanny's going shopping."

Clear up minds who have inquired Gov. Edison declared

Biffs swipe shroud
Motorcycles hop flamboyant
Bonds recur, herd enthusiasms' finesse

Repentant encumbrance
A union with the unknown
Polite, appraised
Saccharine behest alive hydrant sagas
Teeming with the familiar undisturbed
Stroll and moon prance

"Now you're Committee Co-chairman."

Mr. Hoover said panacea, wartime excuse, will help
Only to retard victory. I offer each police officer
to pass on to his beat time-proved moral conduct.

Talk to me. I'm a warrior.

The wind

three sounds

Finely checked red & gray redingote
Navy wool,
Hooking unobtrusively as the gown

"Know what? My apartment is empty."

Tinged in black beach bags

My eyes are closed
Manuel Greenberg relative
Queens Boulevard General Hospital
I wanted to be near my mother

Charles Henri Ford Thomas Edison Vic Wertz

Cast up. dispersions.
Provide.

Hatched,
encouraged

"Maybe we'll all go with Anthony to jail."

Look at it. Remember...

Nimrud, Jorum, Inion, Conium

RUDY BURCKHARDT

KARTMA

Conmar the Major Zipper Harrison Industrial Plaza

Hoboken Getty Wallace Chevrolet The Carack Company

For the benefit of the passengers
newly boarded this train: Good Morning

Cotton Belt HydraCushion Engelhard

Southern serves the South Burlington Northern

Southern gives a green light to innovation

Ride Amtrak and soon yourself ye
Will find in Philadelphia

Cross Bros Iron and Steel Hudson Standard Corp

You get a lot with Scott -- sold

North Elizabeth Flips Bar Liquor Bridge Griddle open

Sales Force Management Wyckoff Steel Division Koplins Pontiac

Merck D T & I Buz Loves Donna forever

The Nationwide Boxcar Pool Engineered Air Systems

A Division of the Flexrock Company Metro Park Iselin

Ask God Merit Taste Acclaimed

Stop off at night and pick up a degree

Station Stop New Brunswick please leave the train
where you see a member of the crew stationed
as all doors will not be opened

Health Hut Menthol Mist Carpet Cave Penn Wax

Craig's Collision Center Progress Lighting

Track work will be completed in 1981
in the meantime we regret any
inconvenience this may cause you

America's Finest Porch and Patio Furniture

Wylie and Green Custom Molds A Division of Hale Industries

Old Hickory - Archeologists dig it - Electricians
light into it - Tailors seam to enjoy it --

Trenton makes the World takes Available now subdividing

Steinbach Steinbach Steinbach Steinbach Midstate Oil

Wool the Miracle Fiber Wool has no equal
Wool best by test Wool we invite comparison

The Roofer you can trust City Radiator Super Cushion Service

Peerless Dyeing Star Sprinkler Grand Trunk Western

Kindly check the rack above your head
and the seat next to you for any personal
belongings watch your step getting off the train
and continue to have a good day in front of you

JIM HANSON

THE SINGLE BACKBONE COUNTRY

Outside the targets called cities
Away from the crowds walking shoulder to shoulder
Away from the bastards who breeze through the green light
and leave you with the red
Away from the interstate, the symbol of no restrictions
The freedom you feel driving along, open road ahead
Planet's edge in the distance
Wind from an open window caressing your face

To walk along the interstate is a revelation of destruction
Dead animal comrades, the discarded packaging indicating
the presence of humans' passage
To hitchhike down this road is to be one with the brothers
on the ramps present and absent
It is also to be at the mercy of the cars which pass in
an endless stream
Each guided by a free person
Away from all these things, a river continues downhill
Toward the sea
Which is far

The river centers a valley, a smiling visage, gentle slopes
rolling
It is the cord that binds it together
The streams flow past the woods and into the fields
Joining it all into one
It is the single backbone country
So called by the original people
When they returned from their exile

It is a land of people who depend upon and support each other,
As the body does itself
Or as a house stands, one stone, one beam, which holds it up
Or as the interplay of earth, sky, plants
Original animals and men was
One species supporting another
Food for the tribe

Our buffalo heritage is gone
Along with the virgin stands of forests
The weeds of the prairie

I wouldn't waste any tears on that

But we can inquire within
And know how much we've lost
Without knowing what we've lost

Some of it lives on in the country

The hills are still there
Indigenous birds mingle with those from elsewhere
People blissfully unaware which are which
As the songs blend with the rising of the sun

New trees introduced onto the continent
Give the land a new face
The trees planted in rows along country roads
And the streets of town
A contribution by some long dead farmer or another
Organizing the landscape to suit his own ideas of perfection

And indeed, the trees are perfect
Long colonnades of living wood on either side of the road
Paced evenly, the waving leaves meet directly overhead
The tunnel is alive

The cars pass over bridges and roads
Marks on the land which have changed everything
Curving down hills, black and gummy in the sun
They pretend to be endless stone surfaces

Cemeteries and parks, playgrounds and parking lots in the towns
Replace the old open spaces with new, unalterably changed ones
The country has many nerves now, many bones
Many tissues joining each to each
Yet somehow in the mind's glance it remains single,
straightforward, clean and very new
The single backbone country
As seen long ago

Illimitable as a gentle curve
Sloping away towards the houses
Black angel
Spreads wings and arms
Over the tombstones and evergreens (one, dying, red as rust)
in the graveyard
Peopling the green mounds broken by ancient trees
Her one arm extended outwards in a gesture of mercy
The other raised to the sky
The palm of retribution

Her place is here
She is great, unusual, for this city
Too small or too poor to have statues in public places
Lacking even the usual stone presidents and heroes

So she is a landmark
And people, each to each, relate a tale, that is, a legend

As she marks the grave of a couple
with a Russian name
And since there are no dates carved in the base for the woman
They say
The angel was white

He was rich, he bought it for their grave,
and dying, told his wife
She should not marry, or have a lover
But as she did not obey
The angel turned black

The black angel is massive, and calm, and says not a word
But in the distance, among the houses
Something flaps above the pines
Like hollow bones clacking
Tiny pennants flap moodily
Three on either side of the telephone pole

Isn't it like the river
At low water
To expose the mud flats
With such little drama

Bridge there
Built some time past
Bears
A bronze plaque that is never read
By the few who pass by
In the bright sun and that radiating heat

Eternal witness
Speaks of an early ferry
Pulled across the stream
By human arms
At this spot

Toyota monsters buzz along
In an endless stream
Over the concrete

A clear blue morning
Over the tract of weeds
By the edge of the development

I'll take you down a path
Through rain and saplings

There is a huge stone there
Standing alone
Almost hidden
Covered with moss

Unmoved in years

If a stone
Can be gentle
She is so

The stone stays as she is
Another body, in the country

[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

O strange waywardness of the heart
For love knows where to draw the line
Attaching the heart to the rest
And will be there, soon enough
In body, as always, in heart

That cord and that line
Within a frame that supports the body
Heated from within
Cooled by breezes

One backbone
One of many parts
Padded by discs
Guarding a most central nerve
And feet upon the ground
A most eternal connection

A single backbone country
A land most central
Centralized in the unity of a river

The sky gathers in
 its skirts
Cumulus cluster at the zenith
The wind enlarges as the trees explode in sound
The cottonwood speaks to us
 in big voice
The cottonwood, in the wind, by the stream

Peace to you O strange land
Peace to the land changed
And stripped of what pays
Peace to the people
Who respond to its weather, its texts
Its visage
This world has no corners
The horizon a perfect circle

Nameless shallow pond
On a green lawn
Behind a fence in spring
Peacefully reflecting
All that is blue

I stand in the country

Near heartbone and breastpond
Hog's back rising with its thick woods

Slight calls of birds
And the smell of fresh air

This pond a wide drop
Wider than the eye

To vanish under summer sun
Like all history, lost

When I am so overcome
With sleep as to fall
Hopefully I have stopped and taken notice of
The auspiciousness of the place

Hopefully I have cooked and eaten
Some things from the earth
When I am so overcome
With sleep as to fall

August 1978 - September 1979

POEM

It's sweet to have all this nonsense, noise
 That secret things still could give me joy
 My sons' play warms the corners of my room
 Even tho my hair is grey & days' lights fade
 My daughters are riding white horses, looking
 Up into the sky at three lazy hawks near the top of Flag Rock
 Autos, defaults, twisted gazes, all the stuff of ordinary
 Life swims by in a daze of bright imagery
 Once I was rocked & specific but now am rock & terrific
 And it's just as I expected, the wreckage left no carnage
 And all the deeds done. All of life's spoils life's meadows
 Because several things crowd the grace of plovers' feathers
 It's not in search of stock answers my boat is overturned toward:

AUTUMN AIR

Vacant, a dazzle, a white room
several years before during a blizzard-
it was real comforting

frost in a white room
what was continually interesting

was always a white room
because of a bareness, hopeless,

it had a window- very small-
gave off into wide

views of a street people
seldom walked. It was there
desperation became an occasional friend

where you could sweat with pain
what is the proof of the great substitution
& the sky was, too, a good year

despite the drawn bow everything melted
everyone was women, glad, easy to manage,
so that whether you were dressed or not

it was still a white room. In those
days none of us were morbid, none
arcane, it was altogether fresh

to enter a steel pink room
at dawn & the sky pink

to fling open the windows
revealing outside something real
irregular, safe, yet at the same

time sharp, near up or down,
the kind of day it crudely was
back there. This all reminded

me of the spikey mystery, time,
like an old Egyptian artifact
never quite there as I
walked in autumn air just about yesterday.

10/25/79 Tassajara

GREG MASTERS

My host, in kitchen late prepares to practice
Distracted flute, crickets, first tones
Idiot moths slam screen, books read lie
Scattered, tomorrow start list which'll
Tie the days in and out of house
Screen door slams each time whether
It's to quiet the startlingly loud sheep
With passage to grass or a visit to the rabbit,
Calm, like an older brother should be
Rub his back fur firm & slide up his ears
Or a beer in the old stuffed chair facing the road
At twilight, ignoring insects, trying - wondering
Where the courage is to call out & invite over the jogger
Both ways she passed, so unlike last night's porno

Living in Another World

Something about shrinking in scale in pastel colors & on waking write some totally obscure line in my open notebook lying there ready on the teenager's desk I'm taking over later covered with baseball cards & a computer ball game a mess with my fragile eyeglasses & still open notebook exposed but now it's only a bat on the floor of the hallway starting to clean up the scurried remains of now gone kids some in the yard too I've got a month and something like a car even goes slower kind of sailing through the view of this new window or the way I ran to get the train schedule in my pack upstairs for the voice on the phone & didn't feel rushed or nervous worried such a long call just immediately this isn't New York City it really makes a difference like what's the rush which is such a cliché that maybe it doesn't connect you with my meaning which illustrated is: a bird flies in a new angle towards the window off stage right its wings in fast motion physical calculus & all sorts of tree's leaves waving typically in an obvious breeze but you, voice involved in an office have to get off the phone so can't make you feel the calm or flattened time & can't make you rise to the level of heightened effects every one around you, the office itself white walls & fluorescent lighting - the stuff of headaches - suppressing your ability to feel my description, my view anything more than a textbook so just say come here & continue arranging railroad timetables.

Chaffinch Island

Would need 3 or 4 colored pencils to
get the greens of the moss at
low tide, still enough light at
fresh end of dusk gulls
call to shipwrecks or widows or me
obvious on a rock where
no girls are only the abandoned
bikes which turn out to be
2 guys hiding their joint
as I walk by privately

The tide being out the breeze seems
stronger than the dull ocean
lapping waves all the cliches

And look at that horizon inferent
to global property as a bird
flies thru typically
'let's go clamming', it's not only
in novels you get that &
a few stately homes on a peninsula

A dog barking can be a mile away
as the blues each side of
the horizon (powder blue #4 Venus
Paradise Pencils) continue
to merge as this the hour
of my utterance & ponderance
sallies forth

Oh so calm in this common town

2.

It caught me off guard
When my friend Mickey called
Me 'Pa' in some game we
Were playing in the field,
Now some houses, & the spot
Where we'd lie on our backs
And look at the clouds
Making fun of Lester who
I think was supposed to die
When he reached 21 for
Some reason I was always
Too polite to find out
Never since then have I
Settled back so long
To look up as now I am

Or was before needing to
Fill you in on this
Writing it on the bag
Which held my beers
For dusk & shore &
Mammo-cumulus
Not so much concerned with the
Beyond cloud question as when
Me & Mickey did our talking
No, now I have more of a
Marxist perspective on things--
Getting arrested for drinking
In view of tides is a concern

I House Sat

Back in convention city the shoreline is a book
Or on a map with better routes to the out there
A month retreat gone like never
Fulfilled to consultant my country wish
Then ready to move in the Grand Tradish
Once the awesome trees made me polite
Crazy to stay till the tracks are turned to
Where weather doesn't get here
I mean, you don't check the tide charts
To see when to eat when you're censoring grid-lock
Throwing your shoes on for the rescheduled afternoon
Phoning before and after and shvitzing meanwhile
As pedestrian maybe on que at the Apollo
No comfort that Tokyo's probably more so

TRICK OR TREAT

Minerva can't stand Bruce so much it's a pleasure and always had from the first second which she remembers he laid his slimy eyes heavily on her when she was sitting in the Pink Teacup with Neil. Then he was selling Christmas trees on Hudson and Christopher and fruit at Union Square the rest of the year. The trees were a beat. They were small. And the fruit was probably hot but she can't not ever leave his hyperthyroid eyes alone completely not even tonight. Not even after tonight. Probably. They're really big and bulgy and his face is really small. It makes him look like he's fastened onto things, women, you, later it would be Matthew, with them. Now it was the waitress behind the bar. The other waitress works tables. She has blond leather hair. Her name is Annie Wright and even before Bruce's fight with the bartender, Minerva could tell the both waitresses didn't like them, her included, especially since she chose to stay out front with the boys and not go downtown with the musicians, an act which would have given her more class and less action Minerva knew. On his way out V looked at her coldly. She shook the ice in her glass at him.

I haven't finished my drink.

He went for his other drum. She went to the bathroom. When she came out he was gone. She went over to the bar.

He left, Neil said.

The waitress's a honey, Sherwood says.

Yeah, Neil says. She could earn good money.

Ever since Neil started working for Bruce, managing Bruce's whorehouse,

The NY Pets, he walks different and talks about women in a new cold cash way. Minerva turns away and studies the juke box through the drink Neil just bought her. One of his duties is to do the interviewing.

Coffee? Cigarette? Are you comfortable? How old are you? Turn around. Take off your clothes. Turn around. On the stroll? For this Bruce pays him 500 a week at least. Of which Neil must spend 400 on drugs drinks and guitar strings. Neil brings Bruce up to Eric's with him to hear V's band. But when they come through the swinging doors Halloween nite you can tell they're gonna be doing more drinking than listening, that they're already loaded and gonna be buying. Bruce is making goo goo eyes at waitress #2. Neil and Sherwood and Minerva take seats at a table for 2 across the aisle from Matthew, Anthony Junior and Billy but pull their chairs over. The chairs block the aisle. Annie the waitress is of course furious. She glares at Minerva. She has to bend over to get around and what makes it worse, Neil is still sizing and pricing her up and down and Sherwood's still trying to get over. It's like a compulsion.

I bet you just washed your hair he says as she swings it out in front of us. There are icicles in her eyes, though it's only Halloween. She's making no bones about its none of his business. She asks Minerva to move. Minerva slides in next to Matty but can't look at him tonight because she could tell when he said hello that Sherwood told him she said he was cute. She takes a piece of his pecan pie on her fork. He tells her it's his very first piece of pecan pie but she's too uptight, especially in front of Sherwood, to be flirtatious enough to ask him how he likes it. She can't even tell how she likes it and she's had lots. Time to order another drink she tells herself. If only

to cut thru the nuts and sugar in her mouth.

I'll have another vodka, Minerva says to Annie Wright. Sherwood says everyone on the upper east side is geographically displaced but tonight Minerva feels like a hick up at Eric's at 88th and 2nd a bunch of rowdy downtown freaks waitresses hate. Anthony Jr. asks Minerva is she goes out with Sherwood. She laughs. All of a sudden Matty looks past Minerva to Sherwood and says with great urgency,

Your friend Bruce is in trouble.

We all look around. I mean Matty doesn't know Bruce but in a flash of energy, like he's on skates, of loyalty, Matthew is right up there behind Bruce and Sherwood and Neil are right behind Matt. Bruce is waving his arms and screaming ugliness at the bartender, who like we said is nearly 7 foot. Like Sherwood says later, the guy's fucking suspenders are a foot wide. Matthew does the reasoning and Neil and Sherwood the restraining and the bartender cools down and eventually returns to the far end of the bar with waitress #2 tailing him. Neil and Wood aren't afraid to manhandle Bruce as much as he needs it after years of practice. Minerva shudders remembering the time Sherwood gave a Christmas party and Bruce was so out of it that in the middle of the dance floor he tried to get his date who was also over six feet to go down on him but luckily realized he was too messed up to pull off anything but his pants and put them back on. He's like that tonight, sloppy and surly, a wasp on downs but he just can't get over Matty's coming to his rescue so quick. He keeps saying he saved my life. He saved my life. He saved my life only he's saying something like shaved. He's spilling with feeling and though he can hardly sit up wants to buy everyone one last round even though Matty isn't drinking

and Minerva does not really want another drink. She had ordered one vodka from the waitress in the back during the first set. The waitress was not as foxy as either of the waitresses in the front. She wore flat shoes, a skirt, had a big ass and was friendlier to the musicians than the customers. Minerva let Neil buy her another one between sets, bought a third to take back in for the second set herself, was barely into it a quarter inch when another mysteriously appeared on her table. When she asked the waitress who sent it she pointed into the darkness. Minerva leaned forward. Bruce was leaning forward leering without even meaning to. She shuddered. His eyes rolled and popped. Then she raised the drink and took a sip. She ordered a fifth vodka after finishing off Matty's pecan pie. If she has another she'll be dead drunk.

I'll have another vodka Minerva says. But by the time it comes Bruce has Matty by the lapels of his Lacoste shirt and is going outside. After ten minutes they come back in. Bruce veers left for the phone and Matty comes back to the table, like he didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

What happened? Sherwood said.

Matthew started to talk then closed his mouth again and shook his head.

Come on man, Neil said. What did he say to you.

Matty began. Well he kept thanking me for saving his life. Then offered me a job. He offered to pay me 500 a week. Matty said, almost breathless when he mentioned the exact figure.

No shit, Sherwood said. To work in his whorehouse?

What did you say? Neil said.

I told him I had to go back to school in the morning, Matthew said, eyes wider than usual from saving the night, but I'd think it over.

Bruce gets off the phone much soberer. He grabs Neil and they go downtown to kill someone. At 1 Neil goes to work. Bruce comes up with him. Neil asks Bruce about the fight with the bartender up at Eric's and Bruce gives his version.

Me and the waitress were making goo goo eyes at each other. I asked her to give me another Remy. She says that's 2 dollars. I say I don't think I can pay for it to see if she'd buy it. She knows I can pay for it since I bought the first one with a hundred dollar bill but she goes down to get the bartender and complains I won't pay for my drink so I get mad. And all of a sudden I look around and there's this guy -- what's his name?

Matthew, Neil says. He goes to school in New Paltz. He works in Sal Anthony's with Sherwood on holidays. You were crazy to offer him that job, Neil snarls.

He saved my life, Bruce gets up, still unsteady and departs. Graveyard shift in a warehouse on Halloween. Neil gets to play a lot of guitar he says. The phone rings once. That's how NY Pets operates. Bruce puts ads for each of the girls in Screw Magazine then the guy calls up and if he at least checks out over the phone the phone girl gives him the address. Neil lets them in and out. The girls take the money. Because of a legal technicality (a cop can't make an arrest unless he's wearing his badge) money can't change hands unless the guy is undressed. Kissing is extra. At a quarter to two Cassie Wright runs out of her room crying.

What happened Neil says, all heart.

I came, Cassie sobs.

II

Everybody knew Minerva was writing a story about that night up at Eric's. And she knew even as she began to type the first draft that Neil and probably Sherwood were going to get on her case for this story, tho she hoped that putting in Sherwood's funny remarks and playing up Neil's dedication to the guitar would help but it didn't.

--I was not hitting on the waitress, Sherwood said.

She should have mailed one to Matty, maybe, since he was the hero of the night and she went so far as to get his address but at the last minute gave Sherwood copies for Matty and Anthony Jr. and himself. Neil, no longer working for Bruce and living with his mother in Flushing, reading Darwin, naturally smelled out the story lying around up at Sherwood's loft which he visited making the rounds of his friends who lived in Manhattan. He barely had time to be offended that she hadn't give him his personal copy when he saw why and sped downtown which was one reason he was sweating and redfaced on day four of a four dayer.

--You gained weight, he snarled.

--Vs not home.

--Good. I got something I want to talk to you about.

We went upstairs. My heart was already fluttering. He took out his canary yellow application to the Y--he had gained weight living at his mothers. His hands shook. I noticed the sweat at that point. He began to talk about the Y. I could see the white pages of my story underneath.

--How could you write such a piece of shit?

My insides curled up like oysters in stew. He fumbled through the pages.

What do you mean? she said.

--In the first place, it's so sloppy. I mean its just bad writing. Like here. Here it says quote like we said the bartender was seven feet tall. So I go back, thinking I'd missed something to find out where before you said how tall the bartender was and there's nothing.

--Oh that. She relaxed -- This wasnt going to be so bad. That was just careless. I did have something about it earlier then I took it out and forgot to change it and when I noticed it later I decided fuck it, leave it.

You should revise more carefully.

I'm sorry.

And another thing. I would never ask a girl if she wanted coffee during an interview. I never said that. What is that shit?

Oh, that. That whole interview was an interview someone else made up and I just used it.

Why the fuck do that kind of shit?

I'm sorry.

He was by now red, sweating and shaking from pure venom.

And in the third fucking place, the chick wasnt crying. She was pissed.

I gulped. I could have sworn he said she was crying.

No man, she was fucking pissed. He banged his fist on the table.

Wanna beer? I said, getting up.

No.

That was a surprise.

No, motherfucker. Sit down. I'm not through. I wasnt walking funny since I started working for Bruce. I was walking that way because I was limping

because I hurt my knee. Dont you fucking remember. I was using a cane for a month.

I was too miserable to remember anything. Inside my face it felt like mashed potatoes.

And I didn't start talking about women in a cold cash way since I started working for Bruce and I was not sizing and pricing the waitress up and down. I noticed he had the fucking story memorized.

You did say she could earn good money, Neil ... I remember. We were standing by the jukebox with Sherwood. It was right after Vito left.

Yeah. That's another thing. What the fuck did you mean it gave her more class to go downtown with the musicians- he was still quoting from memory. I mean I came all the way there to fucking talk to the man. I didnt come to hear the band. And he runs off the minute he finishes. What kind of class is that? Now he looked down at the story. Actually I liked that part where he left where she shakes her ice at him coldly. I liked that. That's good. The rest is such shit. I hated it. He dropped the pages on the table. Her stomach clutched again and she felt like holding herself. She never should have let Neil see it. She never should have written it. Maybe.

You know V hates Bruce when he gets like that plus he was tired. He had his drums. Sheryl was taking a cab.

You dont think I would have paid for his cab? Neil said. Another thing. Sherwood was not coming on to the waitress.

He was. He said you just washed your hair and all that.

Yeah. He was just doing that for your benefit.

What do you mean?

You know what I mean. And why the fuck did you make it Halloween? It happened in August.

Well it was Halloween when I was writing it. I even changed it to Thanksgiving the next month but then I changed it back to Halloween so I could call it trick or treat.

Thats so motherfuckin give I cant believe it. I entrusted you with that information about the girls and the set up and the place and I expected you to do something with it. This is terrible. This is a piece of shit. He picked up the pages of the story and waved them. And what about those crazy names. Minerva. Cassie Wright. What kind of bullshit name was that.

I explained I'd drawn those names out of a hat in a classroom exercise and since one of the names I got was Neil, I decided to write the story of Bruce's fight with the bartender at Eric's and I made myself Minerva and Cassie Wright the hooker. Almost changing it to Minnie which would have made clearer my identification with Annie, the waitress exhausted from working a holiday late and Cassie the half-fictitious hooker (no wonder the guys hated the story) but it was too close to Minnie Mouse.

Why the fuck didnt you tell me it was an exercise for school. It was like a miracle. All of a sudden Neil relaxed. It was like he had a different nervous system. He was not yet cool but he was almost calm. I began to be. He repeated it.

Why the fuck didnt you say it was an exercise. I wanted to say but it wasnt just an exercise but I wanted him to be calm more. I was beat. I felt he could see it. He was almost happy. I told him he was right about the ending too. It should have been "At a quarter to two Cassie

runs out of her room screaming.

Whats the matter, Neil says, reaching down for his gun.

He did carry a gun as part of his job. In the beginning he was afraid he would have to use it so he kept it in the bathroom waste basket and hid himself in the bathroom. Later he began walking around with the waste basket with the gun in it. Now he's really going to kill me. Forget the part about reaching for his gun. Leave it "at a quarter to two Cassie Wright runs out of her room.

Whats the matter Neil says.

I came, she says. She was pissed.

AMORE

--What is hoochy-coochy? Ernesto, still pretty fresh off the deep South of Italy, asks. Late April/early May, a Friday besides. Nydia is older than Ernesto and the rest except for me, and possibly Marva. Marva's short for Marvelous, of course, looks like she grew up in a good Baptist section of Brooklyn all her life. Actually she's Panamanian. Nydia turns to Ernesto with scorn. Though she has been in New York one year more than he he is usually quicker to pick up on American language

--Hoochy-coochy? She gives it a Latin lilt. --It's the same as lovey-dovey, Ernesto

--What is lovey-dovey Ernesto asks louder

--You know, Ernesto, amore, says Marva. As far as she's concerned it's settled. But I'm not. Sure there's sex at the root, already knowing hooch to mean whiskey in all the Southern books she read-- and why couldn't coochy come from the French come-on voulez-vous coucher avec moi. But no one in this international class had ever heard of either expression so could neither confirm or deny and the argument ended there and everyone went down in the elevator together. But still thirsting, I stepped out into the mild dusk and instead of going home to start the weekend, turned west and made straight for the reference section in what's got to be the sleaziest bookstore south of 42nd Street -- Metropolitan -- and slunk over to peek into their Dictionary of American Slang. Sure enough. It was in there. In the twenties in New Orleans the Hoochy Cooch was a dance like a lot of words down there then meant like to jazz meant to ball. Music. But that's all the dictionary said. And that's

how I left it when I put it in a story like I'm doing now.

On Bastille Day, July 14, I read that story at Ear Inn. Ernesto was there partly to hear me read about him partly because he was looking for an apartment. The Ear Inn is on Spring Street almost at the river. During the week it is a bar for truckers and dockworkers but Saturday afternoon there's a reading there. When I walked in, there was only one person at the bar, much too tough looking and big to be a poet, must never have worked on the docks or unloaded on Saturday or thought about anyone reading aloud what they wrote in public before. Before the reading we were alone at the bar. He came on to me, offered to buy me a drink but I refused. I was sure he would leave when the reading started but after it was over he came over

--You were right, he said, slowly

--Right about what? I was wary from before

--About hoochy-coochy.

I relaxed some

--What about it?

--It's Cajun

--It is?

--It's from hoocher & coocher - Drinkin' and fuckin'.

GARY LENHART

Out the East Pike A Ways

The ball game just come on here
so I thought I bet I catch
you home. The Reds is playing
that team with the big mouth.

Bud & Sis was over what night
was it. Linda comes Wednesdays
to drive me to the stores.
That bunch down Putnam

I ain't seen since after Christmas
or heard from neither.
I don't give a shoot. I got nothing
to say to them anyways.

Glen never did care for their smart-
acting. Big Jim & Little Jim both
never was any worker to speak of.
Oh, I fell against that end table

& put another hole in my head.
If I'm keeping you from your supper,
I should say dinner, you just
go ahead. I'm frying a pork chop

& made some lime jello. Tell the girl
I mailed her one of the pictures
Linda took of me with my new specs.
If she don't want it, just tell her
to feed it to the rats.

Honey

Since we've joined flesh & forces to boot
My desire has known no no

The sky above, the earth below
Shine with congressional testimony

We share the honey, we share the baloney
Only personal failure makes us lonely

A Spray

Neither the Rockies' fragile glacial
meadows nor Big Sur's touted coast
of cliffs perfect for otters
lure me from this green retreat,
20 yards from the Volleyball Championship
of 107th Street, where in air
of noxious fumes I peruse
"To Be So Blue", & flip about.

The desert around Tucson, its abrupt
turns to cottonwood & pool enough
to camp by, complements with dust
this verdant burst 5 minutes stroll
from our apartment over the furniture
store, before that a butcher shop
according to the barber.

Mt. Washington's presiding soup,
so thick it bent my knee to search
for yellow arrows painted the way up,
could not hamper stepping out
in these good times, impair the pair
I'm part of now. When I was
a boy in Ohio my elders had the knack
of sitting on the porch, amused &
I assume at moments musing, beneath
a steady stream of Sputniks.

That knowhow was lost to the drive-in set.
Cursed by constant stardom, they spent
intermission in line for root beer
& potato chips. I try not to be bitter
that things used to be better because
they never were. Ask any teenager.
Skipping over a past that was largely
back lots I came to idleness like
a truckdriver, with quarters to keep
the jukebox hopping. Slowly I learned
to take my turn in tune with earth,
its manicured golfcourses & turning flora.

PAT NOLAN

JUNE

A carpet
of clouds
the thunder
surprising
there I just
saw it lightning
the dogs find it
exciting
and bark
bulldozers pushing
the beach around
go on undaunted

CLEAR AS A BELL

A collect call to New York City after
an unexpected midsummer rain shower feasts
the birds to almost ripe berries and worms
the water puddling the tire tracks left
in the old asphalt and the damp cool rising
before the sun gets a chance to show its face
a trace of cloud across the lightening
blue like spots on a hyena's back
stunned shrubs drip wet a brighter green
because of their sheen tall sunflowers
yellow heads drooped like spray attachments
in vacation shower stalls peek out from
above rows of tall corn on the other side of
the fence reminds me of late yesterday when
on the way home wheels spinning without
any help from me I spot a covey of quail
in the front yard of someone's summer vacation
home and later that night the TV weatherman
dispels any fears of rain for the next few
"clear as a bell" he says and I hear one ring
twice before someone answers 3000 miles away

BREAD AND WATER

A roll from the bakery at sixth street with flecks of garlic on the top and a giant glass of ice cold water. A batch of broken merits which Claudia left on the table in the bar last night. Two knives on the table--one for slicing one for buttering. Ever since Christmas we've had a lot of butter around here. Barbara buys the lightly salted sticks and I like breakstone's sweet whipped butter in the tub. I like the fact that the tubs are waxy. Barbara comes in and we talk about our delirious days. She forgot to ask for the money for the pills last night so she had to pay Elinor twelve dollars for everybody. She had a hot dog for lunch because she saw all these people walking around with briefcases eating hot dogs so she thought that's what I need! She said her hot dog was so good she wants to keep eating them all day. That's what here eyes look like. Jim woke me up and invited me Sunday to Staten Island for dinner. 115 Stuyvesant Place. I put on my jeans and kept lying in my bed laughing about last night-- drinking lots of coffee and smoking cigarettes. I went out on the fire-escape and took pictures of the virgin and the mop and the trees behind the firescape black and then I held out the camera and took a picture of myself. I went to St. Marks Place and tried to get the film processed. That'll be two dollars deposit. Um. Joe she doesn't have two bucks can we forgo it. He looks up and down at me and my coat and goes no. I ask the guy for a little bag so I won't screw up my film. He looks at me like I'm crazy and I stick the little bag in my pocket and go out the door. Even at the xerox place I was told they couldn't do two sided copying. Then he said call back at four. Maybe I can. Barbara goes out and comes in with some campbells tomato soup and marlboros. You can do them both at the same time. I keep thinking in my mind for about a half hour

Merchard, Merchard. Finally I call her that. We lick each other navels, I smell her crotch and smell blood. She tells me she's got a crammer in herself. That's what the girls in Libertyville high school called tampons. I call the xerox place and he tells me he just did it. Barbara I don't want to go out at all. Do you want to come walk around with me. My mind does but my body doesn't. Staple stuff go to the post office--is she a lesbian--she says she'll put the stuff in their PO box. She says don't make such a big deal out of it with her eyes when I thank you too hard. It's cold I'm walking over there. He's painting the place and she's in Brooklyn but has a workshop tonight. I say Eileen was here and the guy painting the kitchen looks curious. A relative I think. Cutting into the village MacDougal street no Sullivan. Missed kettle of fish maybe googies no Village Corner on the way home. Dark beck's ale. I guess I am too tired to do any thing now. But cigarettes will go and thirst will come and I'm hungry could go to workshop and ask Barbara for money but she always loans me money. Easy. So I hate to be legal but. We decide to move to California and become Froggi and Carrot-Face. Wimminsong--some lesbian culture identity who knows. I live in a commune in San Diego and my name is Froggi Wimminsong. Nah. Stuck dried tomato soup in an old bowl and I'm hungry. A glass piggy sitting on the desk and totally empty. Eileen Froggi Wimminsong. Look it's twenty five past seven. This night. I want a teevee and a pizza. A six-pack. Everyone's sitting down at their seats at the workshop now. Mostly people I know. Me and merchard have stayed home because we are weary and merchard is reading seth material in a pink and black ski sweater and an afghan surrounds her. It is gold rust and plastic turquoise. On the wall is a funny polka-dot umbrella hat. I want a rich visitor. Please me. I do a little fart and merchard seems to like it. It's one of these nights where we've got to be strange and gross rather than pizza and television. I've already laid on top of

merchard for a while but then she couldn't cough. Across first avenue a red burning liquor sign cuts through the blackness of my black window and the wavering trees. Merchard clears her throat. Heats coming up in the building a big bang goes outside and sets off a dog barking which sets off something I can't hear. For extrinsic reasons I should've gone to this reading--to get six dollars to give Bob a book. Last night I went to a reading and gave Barbara twelve forks and Barbara four pills and Michael gave me a magazine and Kate who I missed gave Barbara books for both of us. If these things aren't moving around I hardly see the point in going anywhere. I called Kate at two AM to tell her how I liked her book but she was asleep and not ready to re-adjust. Merchard is still clearing her throat. Though the heats coming up it feels that my upper legs are getting cold. I need some paper anyway so walking into the kitchen I decide to move. I start heating up some coffee and eye the brownulated sugar to put that in too. Hurry hurry I'm hungry and cold. The thing wrong with the night if you stay in is all you have is sounds and changing temperatures--for instance I just put a reddish orange plaid flannel shirt on which I stole from Jimmy Schuyler because it was getting chilly out by the window and now I'm hearing a police car wheeeoo wheeeoo but that's all you get at night if you stay in. Puff a fresh hiss of heat is coming in the room, footsteps over my head voices coughing--now that's not much. Or I could mention Merchard softly turning her pages.

Thing is I want to go neither outside or inside tonight. Talk about how I feel or from all that. Today I was thinking that though I felt pretty fried last night and making everyone who saw me suspicious I still felt good--in my body and frisky, I liked my ideas--I was watching things as they go. I thought it would keep being that way but here it is night and everything's different. I just started doing this thing between remembering and imagining. Last night I'm taking what happened and

unspooling each look into a conversation or really playing each conversation as they really were. I saw him chugging down something that looked like pills and I had already downed two but wanted more so I came over. He only had one lousy one he said but I said I'll take that. He didn't like giving it to me either it was out of shortage of pills or how he was feeling towards me that I think. But I'm going on to a more genial conversation with him now where he's saying Eileen who could ever say no to you. Yeah, that's how i feel--smiling. I never say no to anybody--Susan told me in the bar last week that that was a fault. Directionless. I tried to tell her that I just never care and once in a while I do and then I change places and start saying yes to everything over there. That's all it's like. But I plan to get him something so I can keep asking him for stuff. It's like people who want to "get" sex. Is that possible. In periods of normally perverse and abundant sexuality I never think of getting sex. It's nice too since nobody knows where your strings are. I don't actually think money is a string. You just want it need it.

Please. Cats do not walk on the pink table. After I've cleaned it. I can eat my hot dogs on a dirty table but once it's clean no cat shall walk upon it. A mug of cold water a steaming yellow mug of dark brown coffee a smoking cigarette. I'd like to talk about the hot dog. There were two. This is the third day I've started off with a couple of dogs in a roll. Tuesday a gigantic roll, mustard and onions. And Merchard was here of course eating her own two. Wednesday I sliced mine and put them in a roll along with mayonnaise, onions tomatoes and tabasco sauce. Delicious. And Merchard was here eating her own two and quite disgusted by mine. Yesterday we left the bag of rolls out on the table all afternoon and in early evening I place them in the fridge. This morning I ate my hot dogs simple: sliced in a round stale roll with

simply mustard. Merchard is out applying for a job and anyway there were only two dogs left in the pack. A stale roll is terrible. I ate it dutifully mostly in spite of the milky and painful state I'm in. Got roaring drunk last night. Maybe roaring is too loud. I was quietly stinking--was somewhat making out I think with a guy and a woman in the bar and was otherwise pretty silent. With my mouth drooping. Merchard told me of it. It's funny--my evening began after the meeting. Alice and I had a couple of quick bourbons in the bar and she told me about bisexual personal ads she read in the voice while looking for an apartment. As she left the bar she told me she was drunk. I think I went on to take those as clues as to how my evening should go. Now I'm kind of torn--should I go on the wagon or something? I rub my hand across my face and it feels slimy and bumpy. But I've been through revulsion before. I should clean this place but I haven't the energy. Coffee grinds and cat litter on the floor. Plaster from the ceiling white falling on this table. I think what money there is left is with Merchard. In the pocket of the jacket she's wearing now I wore last night. I've got this new teal blue maine jacket with grey knit cuffs and collar which Merchard wore last night. I tell her she doesn't look that great in it. I think she knows it's not out of possessiveness I say that but really how I see things. Susan loaned me the jacket for four months. I had always admired it on her. I went over to her new apartment one evening and we drank cranberry juice and vodka and she showed me her clothes and I told her which ones I liked. Somehow she was determined that I should come away with a jacket. Her mother wore the jacket in her youth. Really it's the kind of jacket you wear in photographs building a snowman in your backyard with your brother in about 1954. And even then it was a handmedown. I tend to wear a lot of clothes like that. Also clothes I see my father wearing in photographs from the forties. Or even the thirties. Chinos white teeshirts. It's funny last night I had nightmares about

my dad. Haven't had those for years. I think I will go on the wagon for a while. At least till Tuesday when we have dinner with Michael. Now I wonder if the mailman came. Bringing me money from a poor artist fund. Started by a rich artist. The joke is I'm not an artist but you can't get money without a category. Merchard puts the blue jacket on and asks me how it looks and I say not for those people. Wear the suede. I meant not for any people. She looks too much like she's building a snowman. Merchard either looks very classic or very young. Hasn't the mail come yet? She looks great in black shirts and she wears lipstick easily and looks dramatic. I love Merchard and think she's beautiful. It's funny the night before last she got quite bombed. We take turns. For months Merchard did not get her period. I got two. Now I'm late as hell but Merchard keeps perfect time. Yesterday we put ten dollars down on a teevee. A massive black RCA from the fifties. Another old family photograph. One night last week we sat in bed and I showed her every one. She liked the one with some Alan Shepard rocket blasting off on an old fashioned teevee with a glazed madonna planter on top. It was such a serious picture when it was taken--historical and all but now it looks funny and quaint. Camp's aunt. Merchard comes in. She got the job. It's on Pearl Street. The mailman did come and nothing in our box. Perhaps they know I'm not an artist. Merchard has to wear black pants white shirt and a black bow tie. She was introduced to one of the waiters there--Barbara this is peter pan. They're going to be friends. What if they know I'm not an artist. Shit. Yesterday at the meeting the voting was neck and neck--I hold this final vote in my hand--we drew our breath--and he won. Groan I did out loud. I may not be an artist but I am a poor sport. I want to see us win. I mean I like him too but she should win. Oh well. I liked drinking bourbon in the bar with Alice. I asked her for a pill and she gave me one of those speckled oblongs. Later on I was taking two thousand milligrams of vitamin C and I noticed how similar the pills were. C is white but

equally oblong. And I get to take two and get to take them whenever I want saying that I do have some or I do have some money. Usually I steal vitamins. I tuck them inside my suede jacket or I slip them in the pocket of my dirty white jacket. Once I had a bag of grapes and stood there munching them in the drugstore and dropped in a jar of Es when the woman at the cosmetics counter turned. Thievery is a split second art and that's why I love it. It's like being a comedian to be a thief. And also it's being able to turn any situation to advantage. I had a lousy time at George Plimpton's party so I stole a brown hat and a green and yellow preppy scarf. I jumped in a cab and headed down to the duchess to meet Rose. I know I made a great entrance in that get up and the brown hat went up on Rose's head. I think she's lost it. Months later I learned from Rae that the hat belonged to Michael Braziller. It was pretty expensive and he was quite pissed. Luckily he knows neither me or Rose and probably never will unless we become South American or Yugoslavian male poets. It always comes around but nobody knows about it. Last night we left the bar and went across the street to get a pizza. The place was packed and we turned to leave and as she stepped out the door Barb said grab the ten. Right off a check. I did and we got our pizza take out and brought it to a bar. Barb said a couple of guys were making weird lustful remarks about our pizza. How they wanted some. Now I call that pretty fucking strange. I just asked Merchard if she'd like to split that beer in the fridge. She said no go ahead you have it. But I can't. It would make me an alcoholic. You've got to fight fire with fire. That's why I will never really go on the wagon. Then I'd be an alcoholic. Or an ex-alcoholic. Ugly Ugly Ugly. I would like to be an ex-smoker. They just look cleaner and their skin's so nice and they seem so happy. So what if they can't think anymore. I can't talk when I stop smoking. My sentences come out screwed up and gasping and I'm always breathing heavy and spitting. What a beast.

The mailman came today while we were asleep. Yesterday we sat around with the door a crack open and he never arrived. The day before Philip gave me a pink slip that he found in his mailbox. A new mailman and a real fuckup. It said I should go to Cooper Square Station to pick it up. No box was checked on the slip to say what it was. I knew what it was and it would solve Merchard & I's financial crisis immediately. No one could find anything addressed to "Eileen Myles." at the enquiry window. I understood. Undoubtedly it was what I was waiting for. Merchard got dressed early this morning, around noon, and trotted down to our box. Thousands of things but not what we needed. We lay in bed weeping and mock weeping groaning and then harmonizing our groans. We get very funny on the verge of I don't know what. The other evening outside the post office Merchard suggested we cash in our chips. I agreed. We proceeded to El Centro. We had a dollar thirty five and four cigarettes. We sat in a booth in the back where there was no possibility of anyone offering us a friendly drink. Three guys lay sleeping in their own booths. The short fat tough bartender said things to them like fungoo hell will freeze over the day you've spent ten bucks in here and they snarled at her and got up reeling towards the front. We had our two little watery drafts had tipped her the rest of our money except for a nickel. We would quit everything after this beer. Become glowing entities Merchard suggested. We sipped and discussed Sanpaku. Merchard's brother had told her about it years ago in Illinois. He spent a week drawing down his eyes and saying what do you think Barb? Do you think I look Sanpaku? I think I'm pretty Sanpaku? Then we walked slow as hell to 27th Street. Rose and Andy were eating things out of bowls and swallowing pills to help them digest. Andy went out and bought a six of becks and Barb and I drank and smoked Barbara's kents all throughout the meeting. A fruitful one. Chassler

drove us home and I told him I liked his haircut when I got out. We slept deeply once we realized there was no one who would give us credit or loan us money.

Yesterday was the day we waited and waited and the mailman never came. I guess they know I'm not an artist. The phone company called and said we'd be turned off Monday. I put on a grey hooded smock and pencilled some whiskers and a moustache on my face and curled up on the bed. Every time Merchard spoke and elicited a response I felt pained. The sound of my own voice broke my haze each time. The phone rang and a woman told me to come take a test Monday morning for a job. I looked at myself in the mirror and washed my face and started thinking. Merchard and I threw ourselves down on the bed and raised our arms in the air harmonizing our animal sounds directing them to the goddess's ears. I realized I could get back our ten dollar deposit on the giant black rca we really wanted. We bombed down to St. Marks Place and I showed the guy my slip and asked for our ten dollars back. He tried to throw us out of the store--five people have tried to buy that teevee but I was saving it for you so you can't get your money back--Get out of here! I pleaded, tried to reason called him a bastard and he awkwardly called me a bastard back. Somehow only males are called bastards. He was a large black guy who was really getting fed up. Get out of my store, now. No. I want my money back. I jumped in anger in this weird characteristic way I have since a child. I look like an angry frog. You can jump your ass off but you're not going to get your money back. You've got to give it to me. We're hungry. We won't have any dinner tonight. Nothing. You've got this store with all these teevees. You don't need my ten dollars. You're just doing it for spite. I didn't do it on purpose to you. I'd rather have that teevee. I love that teevee. But tonight I'm so broke I can't even eat. Every time he said get out I said no. I've never used this tactic before. Finally he peeled a wrinkly ten off a small wad

of bills--Here, now get out. I was so worked up as we headed down St. Marks Place. Merchard was patting me on the back and we turned into the deli on first ave and sixth street and bought two six packs of tuborg gold in bottles and a pack of marlboros. We felt so much better drinking and smoking and seeing a future and then the buzzer rang and it was Tim and we gave him a beer and the three of us looked at the cameras and the film and the way this apartment is layed out and wondered what kind of movie we were going to make.

By nine o'clock we had finished filming and Barbara had blood all over her shirt and thousands of beer bottles sat on the table and cigarette butts and wires and lights were looping in and out of everything. The scene with the hand going towards the phone and then the cleaver and the squirt of blood was great. Or when I fell back from being stabbed I think and really hit Tims nose so both of us looked pretty pained and Merchard thought it shot well. We were gleaming and pleased but no cigarettes were left so we went out in the rain and bought some and headed to the St. Marks Bar and Grille to show Tim what a great place it was but it was a drag. I called Tom and Richard to borrow some money but they weren't home. We thought it over for a while. Barbara came back from the bathroom excited that it was a quarter of eleven and Alice's workshop would be out and all drinking at El Centro. Tim was looking for pills and Barb and I just wanted someone to buy us drinks. The place was empty. So was the Ukrainian place. Actually it was packed but with wrong people. We wound up standing inside the 5th Street Deli trying to think of someone to call. Or we had one idea but none of us had the nerve to call her. I asked Tim for a dollar and went to the deli on second ave and bought marlboros and a butterfinger for merchard. The three of us split it. Tim gave us another dollar. He headed home. We stopped back in the deli and bought a box of lorna doones. They made us sick

and we decided to spend the rest of the weekend starving not smoking or drinking and taking advantage of our situation by cleaning out. She fell asleep pretty quickly--I started to but as I was falling heard her voice go Eileen are you in there? It scared the shit out of me. I was either out of my body or Barbara was talking to me from inside her dream. I touched her to reassure us and she barely woke and I told her I had a nightmare and she put her arm around me and fell back to sleep. I felt safer now so I could explore the situation. Every time I closed my eyes lights started flashing colors were reeling and I could almost make pictures out of them. One window was too bright and the closed one was full of ominous shadows. I felt I was flipping out. Then I remembered about a year ago when Joe and Tom were making a movie here and the place felt spooked afterwards. Like movies leave ghosts or spirits plus the sensation of watching or being watched doesn't stop when the film runs out.

First I shut the door across the window. It's cold. I'm shivering. But then I open it. I don't like to lose the light. The windows are so dirty and spotted. Outside looks like an old-fashioned painting. I don't like paintings but this one. The christmas interview is sitting on the table. Carter Calls To Arms. To Russia With Hate. He asked me if I'd be home at one so I called him collect at twenty past. Said we'd meet at 5th and second ave. Walked into the vicious bodega. Two women from there beat Barbara up. Two months I'd walk in there drunk buy some marlboros say you hate women. You do. Once the ugly one raised a baseball bat from behind the counter. Go ahead. All these guys were standing around. We stared at each other for a moment. Then I left.

We walked into the bodega last night at one thirty and he went for the freezer pulled

out two red and white sixes of bud in cans. I love men. If we're going to drink, we're going to drink. Big solid hand going for two sixes putting them down on the counter picking up the bag and going out the door. Stayed up till about five. We've got Susan's teevee for a week. Talking watching Joe Franklin move termite celebrities around seats asking asshole questions never even wondering what the answer might be. Still a dream of mine to be on a talk show. Couldn't you just be on because you always wanted to be a guest. Still I'd need an agent to do my explaining. So nice to see them yesterday. Big floppy house all their paintings like messy Gertrude Stein. Smoking his chesterfields drinking her beers we go out & get more of everything. A conversation always unfinished. The Truman Capote piece I was telling you about is in this red and green interview. I feel glad to like a Truman Capote piece so much. It stops the shaking. I like this here. Not that thing I've never gotten. We were watching teevee some old movie we didn't see but kept flickering while we talked. How everything's equal since I've been fucked over worse by women than by men or almost more because it hurts more. A woman uses you because you let her in so naturally never expected it's just chess. I've learned so much. Men per se. Women per se. Everything feels equal. Trust per se. You walk away thinking what a great man what a great woman. How really nice they are. In or by itself; intrinsically. No such thing. You make a hole in the weave if you expect anything to be something through and through. There. I've gotten to explain it. You look at people...they look at you. But as far as who you like to hug. Lesbian per se. Sure. It's like have you been a catholic. But then...here's my gripe. Someone wants you to be a machine or else they think it's just a passing phase. So for their security I should be a mannekin--no, I never think of fucking men--they're never cute, I think they smell etc. And then you don't talk to them and it gets worse and worse like nobody's real anymore. Like I am a lesbian per se but unless I squelch all my ambiguities--

I think he's really hot--then I'm not a dyke per se so I mustn't be one at all--how does that work? Be like a guy ^{who} won't admit another man is cute or he'd be a faggot-- Oh, no. Well I don't care. I just intend to carry on. I'm not going to worry about everyone's intentions or my persuasions or how real anybody is--Listen, I know just how real I am. Honestly. Money in the bank.

The phone's half off, the power's going off tomorrow. I am unemployed. So is Merchard. I owe the woman in the bakery 45¢. I'll have to be flirty when I come back. I owe Mario across the street 3.59. I owe Vince upstairs two bucks. I owe Bruce next door \$10. Philip downstairs 5. Greg 5. Rose 25. Andy 5. Richard 5. Ted Greenwald 5. Vicki 15. Helene 100. Gertie \$150. Susan 110. Didi a dollar. Lots of dollars, so many dollars I can't remember. So many dentists (2) and of course the Harvard Coop--thirty dollars. I woke up with no tampax--blood streaming through my jeans so I took them off and I'm walking around like a giant thirty year old baby woman with an olive green towel between my legs. Fell back to sleep that way with my diaper on. Merchard goes down and gets the mail. A rebate check from the Harvard Coop for 2.41. Breakfast! Tampax! I pack my jeans with toilet paper and the two of us stroll to the check cashing place. The guy shakes his head at my teeny endowment. Deducts his and I get 2.01. I shake my head. Merchard suggests we go to the 'Certified' on second avenue where we can get everything and probably steal. It turns out to be the 'Associated' but what the fuck's the difference so I don't point it out. Cram tampax down my jeans. Buy some eggs. Merchard's got a taste for ham she says so we try schachts. Too dear. Spanish place on sixth and first has cheap ham. Two rolls at the bakery. Forty cents. We've got sixteen cents left. Heat up the rest of the coffee. I do the eggs, she does the ham. Everything's great, sun streaming onto our roaring breakfast, butter salt pepper everything being

wolfed down by two lesbians per se while the cat countlessly assaults the trash bag and Merchard hurls her across the room. Once or twice. We let the cat--Little Andy--lick our dishes on the floor. The coffee's all gone. We'd love another pot. And also I suggest a big tall glass of good orange juice. She agrees. Would you like a glass of ice water. OK, I'm washing the glasses, setting them up. Dropping cubes into the tall iced tea glass and the shorter broader beer mug. I set them out. We're sitting in the sun, drinking our water, I'm smoking, Merchard's talking about really quitting today. I should too I proffer since I have no idea where the next pack is coming from. But I love to smoke. She'll probably quit--at least for a while. Ulla hasn't called yet. Merchard's going to do it today since I'm gushing blood and want to stay home and be cozy and warm. If Ulla hasn't called by now--it's quarter to three. So we lose \$15. We start planning the other afternoon. She goes to the refrigerator and pulls out a couple of beers. A six wound up left from last night. Our future. The phone rings. Merchard's chugging her beer--I'm going to be late, I'm going to be late. Do you think I should have another beer. Maybe she should bring a couple--Ulla'd like one. Would that be cool? No, don't do it. So I go to get one right now. There. Pop. That's all times falling into each other. Merchard's still putting on her brown leather gloves, I mean Barbara, and she's looking English French American lesbian, not dyke, there's a difference, at least right now. I'm looking at her standing there, looking at her in her orange construction boots and everything else dark. I'm really adoring her as she's leaving and by the second she's getting more and more beautiful look at her eyes all green and golden brown and gigantic and these unreal lashes. Two are caught between her nose and her eyes are just sitting there and you know how people who really love you or who you irritate are always coming over picking something off you. Well I can't even tell her I like those two lashes just where they are. Her entirety goes out the door. Eileen's

entirety is lying on the couch watching teevee, waiting for them to turn us off.