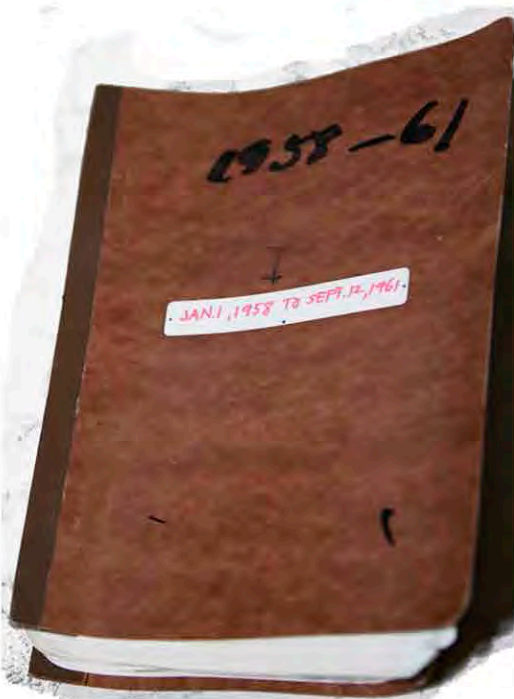


Lorna Livesley

Journals



1958-1961



Volare

Introduction

To N.C.

You meant to give me happiness —
or so you said,
You only gave me age —
instead.

SONNET

By ORMONDE DE KAY, JR.

We did not choose each other, you and I;
Or else we chose each other long ago
Before we met—if that's what flowers do
In slow unfolding to the smiling sky.
If breakers choose the sand bar, fish the sea,
Eagles the air, and fruits the summer sun,
Then we have simply willed our love to be,
Deciding singly, we two, to be one.
But no: dear soul and sole inhabitant
Of my own heart, you know it is not so.
You know it wholly, that this precious plant,
Our love, has waited patient years below,
Interred in time's rich earth, till lo: the seed
Bloomed sweetly in the sun, to meet our need.

"If I had loved you less or played
you slightly
I might have held you for a
Summer more".

E. H. Millay

Lord,

Make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life.

Saint Francis of Assisi

The Science of Psychotherapy

It is to ravel a thread--one truth--
Out of the multi-dyed, rich-woven
 fabric of truth
And follow that thread blind-hopefully
Through the psyche's labyrinth turns.
It is to build a tight corral
For taming a few of the soul's wild
 horses,
Closing one's ears to the herd stampeding
 outside.
It is whatever can and must be defined
To keep the healer's mind sane, his
 heart from breaking
And to allow sometimes, a slip from
 science!
Out-thrust of passion--compassion--
Which pierces and heals his patient.

Hazel Kuno

Neurotic, Defensive

-- Indeed, I am amazed at your virtuosity!
Blindfolded you walk a tight-rope
Swinging your arms for balance.
One false step, you cry,
Would plunge you into a pit of
destruction.
While I, unblindfolded, see
You walk just an inch above solid
ground.
Terror is terror.
I respect your painful balance.
Yet must I think How freely
you might stride to your goal,
How those swinging arms might
embrace life.

Hazel Kuno

The Beginning

The Beginning

January 1, 1958

I moved into Hal Scofield's office. The Republic Press Office force was still operating in the front office. I begin to associate with a large group of people after two years of almost isolation in my former office. There are three women, Norma, Bee and Jeannie in the Republic office. There are several men besides Hal, some of whom I'd known before, some new. I hadn't known Hal previously. He was married and had a family.

I had a rather hard time adjusting to such a social atmosphere. I found it exciting. I soon became curious about N and his role in the office. There seemed to be an odd relationship between him and the others. I observed that he seemed to be very nice, but keeps to himself and the others seem to ignore and patronize him.

In going home from work one night I happen to get on the same bus with him. He nodded to me and I expected him to sit with me as any co-worker would have under similar circumstances. But he hung back, letting other people on first and then sat with someone else. I was hurt, but assumed I looked too maternally and housewifely with all my packages. (~~I had a rather hard time adjusting to such a social atmosphere. I found it exciting. I soon became curious about N and his role in the office. There seemed to be an odd relationship between him and the others. I observed that he seemed to be very nice, but keeps to himself and the others seem to ignore and patronize him.~~)

I approached him the next day and told him I was disappointed he didn't sit with me—a friendly gesture—he seemed so lonely and isolated. He gave me a dark, suspicious look and growled. I felt rebuffed and scared.

I learned that he was going to night classes at Junior College and assume that he is an "elderly" college boy. I found him very interesting to talk to and encourage conversations with him with a feeling of shall we say "kindliness"? as I would to my oldest son's friends. I was also interested in gleaning first-hand information on his native land

and feelings of a foreigner in this country.

One day I came in to find he'd left a high class art magazine of his on my desk for me to read. I ~~was~~ touched and baffled.

As our conversations continued I found we had a lot of mutual interests and opinions. In fact, I soon discovered a merriness, wit, ideals and observational sharpness I had not been able to find in anyone in Yakima except one woman, who moved away. We began to enjoy our conversations with each other and the others gradually dropped out, showing a lack of interest in the subjects of discussion and maintaining N's speech was too hard to understand.

As our talks continued, I discovered suddenly that this was not boy, but a mature man, and seemingly a wiser one than I had ever encountered!

I began to investigate why the others treat him so condescendingly and disinterestedly and why he acts so abject and seclusive. And I uncovered what was to me a most shocking and surprising hot-bed of sheer, unreasoning prejudice. It was something I'd never been so close to in my life before and a very ugly, disillusioning thing.

After recognizing it, I observed more and more manifestations of it and began to see its cruel effect on the innocent victim. This aroused a crusading spirit in me and I was determined to do all in my meager power to lessen the hurt and damage done to one human being by such un-American and inhumane attitudes. I had wrought enough damage unknowingly myself in my life; perhaps what wisdom living had taught me could be put to some good use. (Et cetera, Et cetera.)

The way N seemed to me ~~at first~~:

A nice, agreeable, pleasant, genial guy; polite and gracious; warm and responsive. (But wistful, lonely, sad and bitter.)

Very chatty and talkative. Interesting. Fun, witty, entertaining, humorous, playful. Somewhat charming and personable. (But patronized, rebuffed, rejected, derided by others.)

Intelligent, smart, perceptive and shrewd. Alert, watchful and intent. Industrious, busy, hustling, hard-working. Able, competent, capable. Efficient, skillful and dependable in work. A thorough, orderly, painstaking perfectionist. Indefatigable. (But unappreciated and discriminated against.)

Eager, enthusiastic and animated. Vivacious, volatile and spontaneous. Expressive, emotional and dramatic. Sensitive, artistic, ~~senuous~~; essentially creative. (But ridiculed, scorned.)

Very active, energetic and vigorous. Up and coming. Quick, prompt; loses no time. Brisk and lively. Agile, light-footed and nimble--almost graceful.

Wistfully deferent, self-effacing; "obedient", "conformant" (cleverly). Anxious to please.

Beautiful eyes; VERY mobile, expressive face. Nice smile; nice teeth. Melodious laugh; "musical" voice. "Graceful" movements. Very strong face. Fascinating, clever-looking hands.

Later I was impressed by his

striving, contending and trying against great obstacles; by the progress, advance and improvement he made when encouraged;

By his ambition, determination and single-mindedness. He was so aggressive, assertive, forceful--MASTERFUL. He was stout-hearted, persevering, stoic and so resolutely seized opportunity. He was dignified. He was essentially moral.

Commendable; provident, "wise".

Much later I found him companionable;

warm-hearted; eager to please. He could be tender, sweet; intimate. And he was an ardent, passionate, very adept lover.

February 1

In the meantime, the Republic Press moved out of the building to their old offices across the alley. I found myself somewhat sad at the prospect of losing my fun conversations with N. However, it turned out that he had daily business in our office, so my worries were unjustified.

I began a campaign of spotting friction areas, and worked hard championing N, explaining, leading conversations and trying to get him accepted in the group. I slowly began to see results.

One of the main problems was the ceaseless ridicule of his difficulties with the English language. In order to smooth this over somewhat, I decided to point out to the ones who were scoffing how difficult it is to learn a new language and be forced to use it to communicate. So I had N start teaching me Italian, in which I was sincerely interested. Each time they kidded N about his pronunciation, I tackled them with an Italian word and they soon let up on ~~this particular sport~~.

In trying to bring N out of his shell, reassure him, lessen his violent hurt and hate, I encouraged him to talk, even violently. And, during all this, I discovered he was suffering from unrequited love for the office Belle.

By this time I had a deep, sure feeling that this was the kind of man I had looked for all my life and never expected to find. A certain look I happened to catch in his eye one day struck me to the core. I thought, "This is my man." (Why did he have to be thirteen years younger?) But, after many silent battles with myself, I convinced myself that it could have been my man under different circumstances. And reluctant observations forced me to face the fact that his interests lay elsewhere.

So, for the first time in my life, except with my children, I found a greater happiness in trying to make someone else happy. I started playing match-maker and investigated Norma's reactions to N--only to be confronted with the worst display of hateful prejudice yet, all mixed up with a feminine desire to collect as many hearts as possible without sacrificing anything, et cetera. This was a big shock and further disillusionment. And a great deal of suffering for me leading N to the necessary truth and consequent suffering. Why? Because I figured if he was to be happier, he would have to unfasten his emotions from a hopeless and hurtful goal and free them for more possible goals. Perhaps might even be necessary to fasten on me as a "bridge".

March

During this time, I found myself thinking thoughts that suddenly occurred to me were the thoughts of a person in love! And there it was, too late--already happened, beyond my control, because I had a chance to steel myself. From that moment my relationship with N. became very self-conscious and difficult. I had a feeling he sensed it. Especially when I felt it better to leave him alone for two weeks after the Norma disclosure and let him lick his wounds and try to reassure him that I did not destroy that relationship in order to foster one of my own. (Or did I?)

What was unexpected to me was my utter woe at "losing" him, and his obvious hurt at my "indifference". In fact, I was so utterly miserable that I re-established contact somehow--and he seemed to "return" with eagerness. Anyway, we embarked on a period of mutual enjoyment in each other's company that felt so good, good, good and right in spite of everything.

April

I never in my life had such a feeling of rightness, and being really alive and enjoying life and loving in a real and positive way. Nothing happened except our usual office conversations, most mostly in groups and certainly nothing was ever said or intimated between us. I found plenty of evidence that N still hoped for Norma or someone his own age, but I felt we were good friends, (though he was extremely difficult to understand and mollify sometimes). ~~Yet~~ I knew I was helping him just by listening to him.

May

He began to come almost regularly at noon time for talks in our office. Though neither of us thought we were being other than completely casual the others in the office environment began to seem to take it for granted he was coming to see me.

I even began to think so myself. I even began to sense some rivalry and jealousy among N and a couple other males in the office over me. The funny part of it was to me that I was just beginning to realize the joy of being a middle-aged woman; at the age at last where one knew how to make men like you without flirting--"attention without intention"!

And here, when I no longer wanted it or cared, I was getting what I'd never been able to get from men when I tried! Anyway, it was all very flattering. I began to lose weight--without even trying!--dress up more, find more excuses for staying at work and neglecting my home and kids a little more. I even began to think maybe I was still desirable! And all because of N!

June: Then a shock. I was feeling better than I'd ever felt in my life when the doctor informed me I should have major surgery immediately. Like all people in such a situation, I started "putting my house in order". One problem was to let N know how I felt about him "in case--" and

without "losing face" in case everything was all right. After much debate, I think I left a sealed letter addressed to him among my papers. (This was later destroyed, as well as the notes I had made up to this date in my effort to "study" and help N.)

I was rather hurt and baffled that N showed little reaction to my news. He seemed to think I wanted to borrow money from him, which - didn't, though he generously offered. He seemed to be much more interested and reacted warmly to my declaration of interest and belief in him and his future. He seemed very grateful. I felt justified about my belief in him when I found out he had a very high IQ rating.

Anyway he didn't seem to even respond to a deep "message" look I tried to give him when my suffering was at its worst.

All the time in the hospital I waited for some message from him, perhaps even a visit, maybe some flowers. Maybe he would add his name to the office gift, but nothing. I was deeply hurt and disillusioned.

I went back to work sooner than I expected and was starting to phone the first day when N passed by in the hall. He whipped in and right up to me close and said, "What are you doing here?" in such a glowing way that it almost made up for the recent lack of attention.

For the next few days our unspoken, warm, happy, mutual feeling at being together again was enough in itself.

One day, for the first time, he came in to the office full of people and deliberately plopped himself down unnecessarily close to me. I was suddenly overcome with an over whelming impulse

to simply lay my head on his shoulder. It seemed the most natural thing in the world to do. I caught myself just in time to keep from making a fool of myself in front of all those people.

During that first week back I had an alarmingly hard time really recovering physically from my hospital sojourn. One day I proceeded to collapse and got faint and hysterical. While I was lying down trying to recover, N appeared for his usual noon visit. Actually, I was holding out against going home until I had seen him for the day.

I felt embarrassed at making a scene and tried hard to keep up our usual animated conversation, but suddenly everything went black and I collapsed with a moan, unable to come out of it. N merely got up and left, stopping momentarily in the next office and then down the hall and out without a word. Hal had to assist me to the car, where I waited quite awhile for mother. N showed no further solicitude. I found this all baffling, strange, and rather cruel. It hurt.

Next day, when I apologized for making a scene, he assured me it was all right and nothing more was said. !!

I was reluctant for summer to come, thinking, that, as in the past, the kids home and my home duties would give me little time for the office and personal relationships. However, as things worked out, the kids were more grown-up and didn't seem to require me and I usually stayed in the office until after lunch, giving me time to still have talk sessions with N. I began meeting the same bus N went home on whenever I was that late so we could talk on the bus.

During the first part of the last week of June N was easier, embarrassed and happy and attentive toward me in his visits to our office. Until Wednesday, when lack of work and an offer of a

ride home made it imperative for me to leave the office before seeing N for the day. I was, as usual, very unhappy to have a day go by without seeing him. The next day I was still more unhappy when I waited in at noon for him, as usual, and he didn't come until much later than his usual time. When he did come he acted angry, vindictive, bitter and challenging--almost hurt. However, I mollified him and we both felt happy and warmly intimate, and a later visit from him proved to me everything was "all right" between us.

I was still working on my match-making schemes. I had discussions with N about his dating, marriage and so on problems. I was trying to figure out just what kind of a girl he would need and had just about decided when he excitedly brought in a "very reasonable facsimile" of just the kind of a girl I had in mind into the office for me to help with finding art work. This was on Friday.

At first I was very hurt and balked. He knew I didn't have enough work for myself. I couldn't understand. But it was so obvious that he was very, very excited about this girl (whom he'd met through his family). So I got myself in hand and carried through the project while I bled inside watching their emotional "leap" toward each other and obvious ignoring of me.

I went overboard playing "the good sport". I convinced myself this was the girl in spite of her youth, gave N the "go ahead" signal and then planned a "party" at my house when I found out she was a college friend of Mike's. A party so they could get acquainted and carry on from those "hot" looks they were giving each other. No fun--no fun at all for me; but worth it to see how glad and grateful N was.

I was very surprised that N accepted my invitation, as he never went out socially. He looked questionly at Gloria and a very special look passed between them and they both accepted on the spot--eagerly.

I phoned N at home that evening to tell him when the party would be, et cetera. It was the first time I had ever called him. Since he lived with his sister and her family, it was not a contact either of us cared to overdo. He was so pleased and grateful, exclaiming "Tank you! Tank you very much W that it made it worth all my suffering.

Funny thing was that Gloria didn't seem to play along during the week before the party in the way that her eyes promised. I had quite a time with N that week, watching his excitement, missing him because he was keeping to his office apparently waiting for Gloria's promised visit, and watching him suffer and hope when she never showed up.

Monday N came to our office in the morning in a good humor. I worked late and used my ruse of delivering my drawing to engravers (really an unnecessary procedure) to enable me to stop in at N's office for a minute. For the first time I came right out and said I'd be on the same bus he took home. (Heretofore, we sometimes got the same bus "by chance", nothing being said between us) N was happy durin our talk on the bus and no mention was made of Gloria.

Tuesday N appeared at noon all dressed up and in a good humor. Ralph joined us in our lunch time chat and we had a good talk about the Italian language and so on. I casually mentioned Gloria, saying, "Where is she?" (We had rather expected her to bring work samples in.) N was bitter and non-committal.

Wednesday I had no work and had to accept a ride home. I had hoped to see N, but he was late in coming. I glimpsed him coming toward the office as I left. I was very unhappy about not seeing him all day.

Thursday N did not come in the morning. I waited in at noon, but he did not come until one o'clock. He acted mad and bitter. We talked some. He talked about going back to Palermo. When he left I pursued him down the hall and scolded him. I told him not to be unhappy--that Gloria liked him. He was very mad and flew off down the stairs, muttering some bitter remark. We met at the bus that afternoon "accidentally". During our bus conversation he told me that Gloria had said she'd be back. Anyway, I was nice to him so we ended up happy, for which I was glad as the next day was a holiday and I knew I wouldn't see him.

Saturday I prepared for my party. I was embarrassed and fearful when it turned out I'd have to make the pizza myself. That was not the idea; the idea was that Julie was making pizza anyway. This way it looked too contrived, but I guess no one cared.

Mike was very excited--something I hadn't counted on. And Gloria called and informed me she would not pick N up as she had suggested, but she would take him home. So I phoned N and told him Mike and I would come and get him. He demurred and said he would take the bus. I insisted and he then agreed. In fact, he impulsively suggested that we come early and see his handicraft. He sounded eager and excited and I was thrilled at the chance to visit him at home, though confused as to whether he made the offer thinking Gloria would be with us. I told him she wouldn't and he insisted anyway.

Mike agreed, much to my surprise. So we went early and N excitedly showed us his things he'd made. He even took us into his bedroom. It was the first time I'd seen the inside of the house. We rode back to the house three in the front seat. I was excited about the evening and N seemed eager and nervous.

Back at the house the "boys" were all eager attention to Gloria and my tentative preparations to show some of my art work (Gloria is an artist) were ignored and so was I. I was disappointed that N had declined my offer to serve wine. I had counted on that to ease things somewhat. However, Mike and Gloria accepted beer and became very engrossed in talk about Stanford, which they both attended. N, who up to this time had been excited, nervous, over-eager, bragging and ill-at-ease in his concentration on Gloria seemed to feel eliminated and gravitated toward me--which made me happy. We had one very moving, accidental encounter in a doorway--only a long look, but a very disturbing one. X

When we ate, N shocked me with his rude manners and rude remarks about the pizza. I was baffled a little later by what seemed to be a calculated caress of my finger by N in full view of Mike and Gloria. It seemed "out of character" with his usual elaborate "shyness".

Gloria took N home, much to my worry. Later N reported to me that he simply let her drop him off and went into his house--"he was afraid of what people would think".

I considered the party a "success" --everyone seemed happy about it, though it hadn't turned out as I'd planned.

As for my "match-making"; I found out from Gloria later that N had lent her a book when she'd come to his office, and on a later visit she finally made (which he never told me about at the time) he had told her he'd have come to see her if he'd had X

a car and could drive..

She never came back to see me as she promised. I made a couple of attempts to make contact with her but she disappeared from our orbit until almost the time for the kids to go back to college, when she and Mike got together with some other kids to go to the Stanford picnic. She invited me and my family to her house, but made no more voluntary mention of N. I asked her point-blank if she'd date him if he tried-(trying to instigate something)- she said, though she liked him and felt sorry for him and wished she could find a girl for him, she would not be interested in dating him as he "did not understand American dating procedure."

Funny. Because I was so sure it was going to work out. I made more bold attempts to find N girl friends, but none worked out. In fact, people generally suggested that I should let him find his own. So I finally gave up.

Summer

I am sharing the office with Hal still. His wife, Louise, sometimes comes down to "help" him with his work, though no one wants her, as no one likes her very well. Hal is beginning to annoy me with his attentions, though nothing definite. I suspect that Louise is suspicious, which accounts for her erratic visits.

Earl has left the adjoining office, leaving only Ralph, who is pleasant, but remote in his relationship with us. N is still over at the Republic building across the alley and makes almost daily business trips over to our office, sometimes several times a day. He works in his office with Norma, for whom he feels a frustrated love or lust; Jeannie, with whom he is friendly and Bee, whom he doesn't like.

It is summer vacation and my three kids are home. Mike is working.

I went home with my heart singing. When he did not appear on the next bus, I suspected that he'd run into difficulties and only hoped he'd let me know somehow. My disappointment was not too bad because it had seemed too good to be true, anyway.

When he did arrive half an hour later on the next bus, breathless and asking me if I'd given him up, he explained the boss had asked him "to mail a letter and he's missed the bus". We had a most wonderful hour together. Our first time completely undisturbed. Naturally, we hoped for such a "lucky break" again.

In the meantime, while N was pursuing his driving attempt, we were desperately trying to contrive ways to be together that looked innocent. This was when I made my suggestion about going in to the front office. I was surprised that N accepted my suggestion and for a few days he went willingly, although he wasn't the least bit interested in the Italian lessons that I really and truly was interested in. But then he began to get nervous and ill-at-ease, especially after the landlord snooped around a couple of times and interrupted some hurried, furtive caresses. I wasn't too worried, knowing a thing or two about the landlord, and realizing he was willing to wink off a few things, and besides I was quite willing to really carry out Italian lessons, or just talk, if necessary.

But I saw it bothered N terribly, so we gave that up. Our few opportunities alone in the office were now complicated by the need of physical contact which we had not indulged in before, so that they became, not the exciting opportunities to see each other they were before, but frustrating temptations. We even dared to "hide" in the dark room a couple of times--something we had heretofore scoffed at--but an embarrassing interruption by a "not understanding type of person looking for me about work (Mozelle) made us wary of that.

One thing that was driving us out of the office at noon, increasing our frustrations, was Ralph and Hal's increasing interference. They seemed to be deliberately "teasing" us. All this time Hal was getting "fresher" with me and nastier to N.

When N ceased his driving lessons with the friend at work he attempted to make negotiations with another "friend", who expressed a willingness. (I put "friend" in quotes because N had no real friends as we think of them.) However, he never seemed to be able to contact him and finally gave up.

The next plan was to take the driving lessons at Junior College, a course that would end in January. He would keep on taking one afternoon a week off and go to the Monday night session. I assumed that he was going to take other classes, too, as he had before, since he never informed me to the contrary. He would then get his driving license in January, move into a place of his own and get a car. It was his idea to get along the best we could in the meantime and not to worry and we could look forward to resuming a relationship in January. In the meantime, also, there was a sort of tentative agreement that he would visit me on school nights. So we planned, when we had a chance.

During this time I yearned desperately for a social set-up that would allow N and me our bit of happiness in view of the fact that we both knew our relationship to be short-lived and must end someday. It seemed so cruel that two lonely, "free", middle-aged people could not love because the woman was a decade older than the man, for one thing.

By this time I knew N well enough to realize that he talked a lot of elaborate plans, but didn't necessarily carry them out. I knew, too, that he

would make me apparently sincere dates, promises, suggestions and then be very apt to "forget" all about them without the slightest compunction or explanation. He didn't even seem to feel the need of any explanations! Yet, if I confronted him with any of these things, he seemed sincerely surprised at my doubting him and would start revealing plans and hopes and wants that showed he had been wanting and scheming and thinking as much as I had! And he would scold me and laugh at me for worrying too much.

I knew by now, too, that any clearing up of misunderstandings had to be made by me—that he would just feel hurt and stay away. Or make "test" sorties into my vicinity and I'd have to knock myself out being nice before he dared "return". Also, it was becoming apparent that any slightest appearance of intimacy "in public" completely upset him. I always attributed this to shame on his part about my age. It was not until too late that I learned it might have been differences in the customs of our countries.

I noticed that any contact with any of my adult relatives would make him stay away--no matter how pleasant a contact it seemed. Also he almost always rejected my ideas.

So I was really surprised that he wasn't "through" with me after our summer idyll; that he really did try to learn to drive; that he was willing to go into the front office; that he jumped at my suggestion that we could take the kids to games if he learned to drive; and that he really did try to buy a car and move into a place of his own. Even though his capitulations tended to gravitate toward one goal, I knew he liked me and that we enjoyed each other, and I was flattered and hoped.

However, he built up my hopes about several things that he never followed through on. One was sending for a book we were going to share. He was, ver, very eager and interested--and nothing ever came of it.

or was it mentioned again. He never used his family's car at all, though they were willing. When it would have helped him to work out his plans, he suddenly had compunctions about using some one else's car; then the car "needed repairs". He never managed to learn to drive or get a license by the time Mike left, though his sister offered to help him. He never learned to drive at all. "No one would help him; he had no car to practise in; it got too cold and icy; and he had no transportation to get to the evening classes; the classes were too slow" etc. He later changed his plans to getting his license by the time he moved in January. In the meantime--as recorded later--he quit the classes. He never signed up for the other classes. He told me definitely that he'd come to see me the night he signed up at Junior College as it didn't take long. He never appeared or explained. When asked, he said he "forgot" and told me what a dull evening he'd had. Then he called off a "date" we had for the next noon.

(Since this time I made an attempt to learn to drive and realized, too late, the very real delays and frustrations that come in in such situations. I never learned to drive, either.)

N confused me during this time by his alternating between what seemed almost and adolescent lack of sophistication and his, mute, stubborn persistence in trying to work out his plans for us to get together. I was alternately amazed and encouraged by his revelations of determined activity in our interests and baffled by his panicky refusals to risk even the slightest exposure, even of mere friendly relationship. He did not seem to realize that everyone at work was aware of what was happening between us and viewed it with amused cynicism--at least very little personal interest. And our families regarded it more as an odd sort of friendship. His obsessive insistence on secrecy, deviousness and deceit impressed me as somewhat unnecessary and unrealistic. So what?

I thought. "What if people did suspect we might be having a little 'affair,' they'd think what they wanted to think anyway, and we were both certainly old enough to know what we were doing. His attitude made me suspect the sincerity of his attentions to a woman so much older, and filled me with misgivings. Understand, I was not conscious at the time of what caused these strange ups and downs. I only knew I was all mixed up; confused; happy-unhappy; encouraged-discouraged; torn with doubts and misgivings, but carried along by hope, instinct and undeniable enjoyment. What kept me from certainty that I was not just another gullible middle-aged fool was the knowledge that all N's romances had been carried on in this same, unsatisfactory strange manner, from what he had told me.

One incident in the front office I can't place chronologically; in one of the times when I had doubts as to whether N wished to continue in one of our short-lived routines, I asked him to come into the front office where we could talk more privately and accosted him with my doubt. I remember how he placed his arms on the wall to encircle me and, bringing his face up close, kissed me and kept saying fervently and all aglow, "I like you! I like you! Don't worry so much!"

During all this time, "al was becoming increasingly troublesome. I simply couldn't make him understand I wasn't interested. Even after I broke down one day and cried and practically confessed my feelings about N. Too, his wife was beginning to act strangely.

I had accepted the share-an-office-with-a-strange-man offer fully realizing that it might not work out and I was prepared to have to make a change if necessary and opportunity offered. It was a temporary, emergency measure for me.

It became increasingly obvious that things were not working out well, either in a business sense or personally and I was in quite a quandary

as to what to do. At the time, there was no place else for me to go.

I was trying to help N realize that in order to improve his work opportunities he'd have to leave Yakima eventually. This we were agreed upon. Having learned by this time in life that fate often settled things for us I was coasting along thinking maybe N would leave and that would decide for me, as he was the only reason I wanted to stay on where I was.

Suddenly I had an offer to move to what might be a better situation for me. I found myself unable to leave N so I stalled and stalled until my lack of valid reasons became too apparent. I presented the proposition to N hoping we would be upset and try to talk me out of it or at least express regret. If he was, he didn't show it. He was only silent and told me "it was up to me". This left me with even less excuse to stay and when the new offer brought pressure to bear on me, I capitulated, knowing N and I must part eventually, anyway. But I insisted on remaining two more weeks.

In the meantime I worried for fear N would think I was trying to break with him. I tried to explain to him, even to the resort of confessing my troubles with Hal (which seemed to intrigue and delight him). We were both unhappy about this new development as I soon found out. N was not and unhappy as I, for he kept reassuring me that we would think of something and he seemed confident in his driving, moving and "reunion in January" plans. The three months interval didn't seem to bother him a great deal.

I was more skeptical. I had serious doubts by now of his ability to carry out his always too-general plans. I felt certain, though I hated to admit it that the pattern of communication he insisted on--proximity, chance and "accidental" meetings; no telephone calls, no letters, no notes, no dates, etc. (he didn't actually say he insisted on this, but his actions proved it) would not sus-

tain our relationship for three months of separation. I thought of desperate plans on how we could get together, but he consistently rejected them.

Besides worrying that he would think I was trying to break with him, I wasn't quite sure but what he might take this opportunity to break it off, especially if it got too difficult. But this worry seemed to be only mine; he seemed almost optimistic--and certainly oblivious of his former defaults. I had lived too long to fool myself that such a weak communication system as we had would survive such an extended separation. Chances seemed pretty slim to me for a "reunion in January" and I was very, very sad about it.

Things were at an impasse, anyway. Our home rendezvous waited on Mike's leaving, which was weeks yet; meetings in the office were becoming impossible and unsatisfactory. N was getting self-conscious about my visiting his office and riding on the bus with him. Besides, by now, we wanted more than that, especially N!

So--I was really surprised when N excitedly revealed to me a plan he had for our last two weeks--a very daring plan! He had access to the store room in the basement off our building--so---

We really succeeded in meeting every day for the two weeks except for two days. One, when the elevator didn't work and onew when N broke our date because of nervous emotional troubles the day before. I was really scared that time; I thought sure he was through, but he wasn't and we continued to meet through my last day there.

Only a couple times were we almost caught, but we were very lucky and I really believe we fooled everyone. It was well worth all the play-acting and sneaking. In fact, it was exciting and fun. N often managed to come back to the office after we'd parted and that, too, was fun, thinking how we were fooling everyone. Wonder if we really did?

It doesn't matter.

In order to move I needed male help and asked N, sure he would refuse. But he was eager and willing. However, I got other offers that I could not get out of and I was very disappointed. Also hurt that it evidently didn't occur to N to help me dismantle things--though he did secure me boxes.

Oct. 3--Friday--my last day in N's office. I went down to work very, very sad after a very bad night--all at the thought of losing daily contact with N. It had been ten months that I'd seen him almost every day but week-ends.

Much to my chagrin, mother appeared in the office and sat waiting for a job she wanted me to do. It was one of her very, very few visits to the office--she would pick that day! N made an unusual morning appearance while she was still there. He was all dressed up and very attentive to me. He turned all his charm on mother. I continued working on her sign (with unwanted directions from N) got it finished and she left--as had N by this time.

I had had my plans all made to go to N's office that morning and offer him another chance to end once and for all--a clean break, seeing it was all so hopeless anyway. But mother's visit spoiled those plans, and, while I was annoyed at first, it turned out to be rewarding for me.

After she left I did go over and we had a good talk. He was promising and reasssuring, hopeful and planning.

We had our last noon rendezvous, and it was wonderful, albeit a bit desparate.

I had a very nasty session of fighting off N before I got out of there that night. I really was afraid I'd kill him if he touched me after N's

farewell! I could not ride the bus as I had things to carry, so had to make Hal behave and he gave me an innocent ride home--finally.

- THE ENDING -

N and I had hopes of a very lucky chance to be alone at my house Saturday night; it looked as if both our families would be gone to a school game for the evening. He was to phone me and check.

Everything worked out perfectly on my end. I got all ready for him. No phone call. I waited and waited. Still no phone call. My emotional state became unbearable.

I finally dared to call his house, and when his sister answered, I knew why he hadn't called-- he didn't want her to know, of course, that he was going to see me. I talked to him. He was scared, secretive and rude. He said he "was sick and couldn't come--had been sick all afternoon".

After we hung up I paced and paced the floor in the utmost agitation and couldn't calm myself. Suddenly, almost not realizing what I was doing, I grabbed N's big, heavy art book he was supposed to be coming to get and dashed off into the night. I tried to catch a bus, but was too confused to figure out anything so ended up walking all the way to his house and hoping it would calm me.

His sister came to the door. I put on an act of great indignation, saying, "That brother of yours makes me so mad! He said he'd come and get this book tonight and then he didn't" and so on. She called out in a make-the-best-of-this way, "Nick! You have company!" and led me in.

N was curled up in a ball, unshaven and shoeless, holding a newspaper and watching TV. He didn't look sick. I could tell immediately he did not like my coming. I prattled along about the book etc, but it wasn't going over very well. His

sister and I ~~chatted~~ quite enjoyably while N ignored us and sulked.

Suddenly it occurred to me his sister might not know I wouldn't be seeing him again. So I hastened to explain about moving to a new office. ^{That} made the difference, because she hadn't known. N was suddenly all right, joined in the conversation and started eagerly showing me his work. In fact he sat so close and edged his hand so near mine in full view of his sister that I became embarrassed and moved my hand.

We were so engrossed in conversation it was a shock when the rest of the family walked in and I realized the game was over and my kids must be home and, like Cinderella, I was late! N saw me to the door, protesting pitifully that he would have come for the book. I more or less ignored him, sad because it seemed to him a final gesture on my part I knew and there was n o t time to settle it. I made polite adieus and started walking off up the hill, feeling like a fool and thinking how odd and impolite it was that no one offered to take me home.

I was so full of emotion that I mistakenly stopped at a neighbor's house and told her too much. When I got home the kids were there and very upset wondering where I was and why I'd locked them out? I didn't know I had. I didn't understand what possessed me to lock the doors. In fact, I didn't know what possessed me!

After the move

Monday I had to go to the new office. I had contrived a plan to contact N and had prepared a sweet "farewell" note. The plan, which I proceeded to carry out, was to take the old office ~~key~~ to him to return on the grounds I was too busy to risk a long chat and wanted to avoid Hal. These two reasons were both true. N was only too glad to do it, when I took the ~~key~~ over to him.

Since I had more work than I could handle that day it occurred to me to "farm" part of it out to N.--a common procedure among artists when they are overloaded. When I didn't find him in when I phoned, I left a message for him to call me. He didn't. X

Soon feeling very scared, I took the work over. He was very pleased and glad! During our conversation he admitted that he saw no use in phoning me unless there was a chance for a rendezvous. In spite of my protests, he claimed to see no point in calling just to talk. He said he was deciding to give up his plans to move to his own place in January. He wouldn't look at me when he said this. Feeling was very strained between us.

Later he brought the finished work back to my office and I managed to slip him my "farewell" note before he left.

We met at the bus, but it was not a very satisfying ride. I was tired and the bus seemed suddenly noisy and public.

Using a request for a bill for work as an excuse, I called him at home that evening. He sounded glad and pleased and eager to comply.

He went to driving class that evening, but he made no attempt to contact me and I was hurt. X

Tuesday I made out a bill for the artwork he had done and used it as an excuse to visit him at his office. He was pleased, grateful and generous about his charge. And I was relieved when I found out he'd already been to my office to present his bill and I hadn't been there. As I was about to leave, he said, "Thank you, thank you for what you did!" When I asked him, "what?", he said, "You know." I didn't know what he meant--the work or the note, but assumed it was the note as he would have talked openly about the work.

That night I made another "business" call to him, telling him of the possibility of doing airbrush work for us and asking him to bring some samples to the office. (Actually, this was only a desperate hope on my part—I really had no real business lined up, just an idea I might foster something to keep us in contact.) Again he was very eager, pleased and grateful, and I was relieved at evidences that his sister seemed to fall for the pretense of a friend helping N in his work.

He brought the samples next day at noon. Looking up suddenly, I caught him looking at me with the most tender expression! He was happy and eager and when an allusion was made to the basement of this building, he said, "We'll have to figure out something!" There was much feeling of desperation about our situation between us at this time.

Thursday I had no contact with N or excuses for contact. I was mentally busy contriving ways to bring him in on the work I was doing. In the afternoon I engineered an encounter with his sister in the employee's lunchroom of the Bon, where she worked part time. She practically fawned on me.

Friday offered no chance for contacts. The days when I couldn't see N were beginning to pile up!

Monday I set up some airbrush work for N and sneaked it over to him without consulting Dee, for whom I was doing the work. We had fun working together, and it continued Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday I had an arrend at the Republic where N worked, so I dropped in to see him as an encouragement for him to persist in his mentioned intention to call me Friday night, though I was skeptical that he really would.

Friday we had some good work contacts and he announced he would call me that evening. During our pre-noon "work" visit to his office I told him

N is making noon visits every day, but does not disclose any clues as to his relationship with me. I am baffled. He seems to want to find a girl and I am in the throes of helping him to find one, having "settled" the impossibility of Norma. I do so in a great spirit of self-sacrifice, knowing by now that I wish N wanted me, for I want him. I am nervous about Hal and expecting trouble with him any time.

It was into this setting that N brought Gloria.

The next week after the pizza party N was home alone as his family was off on a week of vacation.

That Monday morning I felt sad, lonely and blue. N. did not come into our office, but he did appear in Ralph's, all dressed up and very excited and happy. He did not seem very interested in talking to me and left shortly. I felt embarrassment with him and was busy with personal affairs and did not see him the rest of the day. (This was the week, I learned later, that he was expecting Gloria at his office, though he never mentioned it.)

That evening I felt desperate, so, knowing he was alone at home, I used the desire to borrow an art book as an excuse to phone him. The conversation was disappointing to me: he sounded "young" and self-pitying.

Tuesday morning I felt calm and resigned. He had left a book with Hal before I came down. As I looked at it I found it contained a letter N had ready to mail. I wondered if he had "planted" it as an excuse to come over later. He did appear earlier than usual "to get the letter". He seemed expansive and frank and we had a good feeling with each other. I had no work, so went home early.

Wednesday I had good office fun with N. We seemed to accept and enjoy each other.

Thursday he started appearing in the morning in time to greet me when I arrived, as well as making noon visits. We had very good contacts on this day and seemed to be silently agreed about meeting each other at the bus.

July 11--Friday

I was in a bad mood--perhaps because I'd had hopes for this week when N was alone. N came in in the morning and it was a good contact. But when he came in at noon he was mad, irritable, upset, restless, and grumbling. (I learned later it was his birthday). He made two trips to our office in the afternoon, which was unusual. They were what I refer to as "good contacts".

I made a desperate attempt to meet the bus and N was there. But he was in a cynical, bitter, upset mood. He mentioned on the bus that Gloria was supposed to have come in to see him this past week but never showed up. I was upset by his mood, so phoned him when I got home to suggest that he phone Gloria and find out what happened. He only laughed, scornfully and bitterly, so I hung up.

That was the end of the N-Gloria episode. Ten months later I still was unable to figure it out. I know that N and Gloria seemed to be very interested in each other at first. I know that Gloria decided not to encourage him, but I do not know the real reason why. I know that Mike's interference was unexpected by N and me, as was Gloria's seeming return of his interest. I know that N did not try very hard to "pursue" Gloria. I know that he ended feeling bitter about her. I know that he never offered any explanation and we never discussed it. I do not know whether he was more interested in me or Gloria or whether he knew himself. Or whether he was using one of us against the other. Or what.

Insert:

Why didn't we make "dates" with each other? Why didn't we just come right out and say, "I'll be at such and such a place at such and such a time and I'll meet you there"?

Because this was an odd and unusual relationship in which the woman was thirteen years older than the man and the mother of three children. And the man was an "eligible" bachelor, not quite socially acceptable because of his foreignness and poverty. (It could have been called a "lame duck" association.)

N and I were both embarrassed and afraid and ashamed to admit we were caught in such an unsavory predicament. We were holding out as long as we could with a pretense of being "just friends".

One of the initial attractions, too, was that we were both artists--both perfectionists. We talked techniques, procedures--"shop" at great length--had many fine arguments.

Week of July 14-18

This week N's family was home, but my two youngest were gone for the week. N and I were both busy with work.

Monday N came in very early. I frankly asked him about the bus (just what I don't remember, but I know he always showed reluctance to be pinned down about it. The reason I asked him was that sometimes his sister would pick him up and take him home, and he never seemed to feel he could refuse her, so that sometimes after contriving desperately to meet his bus, I would find him not there and myself with no reason for having stalled or hurried.) X

N joined Ralph and me at lunch time. Thinking to reassure N about any self-consciousness he might have about his height, I broached the subject of height, inserting a pointed remark about "the height of a man making no damned difference". N. seemed to know to what I was alluding and seemed grateful. I mentioned the Gloria situation at which N said, with a meaningful look at me, "It's better just to let things happen, don't you think?" He was happy and eager and made a tactless joke about my going swimming.

I made a desperate effort to meet the bus and he was there. A neighbor, whom rumor said had disinherited her only daughter because she married a Mexican, got on. I debated about relating the story to N as proof to him that a lot of his troubles might not be so much personal as Takima's unreasonable race prejudice. I did tell him, and, although his reaction was apparently indifferent, I sensed immediately that I should not have told him.

Tuesday N and I were both busy with work to do. I was worried when he did not appear in the morning and more so when he did not come at noon. He came

finally after one o'clock, but went into Ralph's instead of our office. When I went in to try to make amends (I knew he was hurt at my story on the bus) he seemed wary and ill at ease. I was upset and blue and wished I hadn't told him the Brannon story. His reaction did seem to me somewhat unreasonable. Later in the day I made a trip over to his office to prove to him I didn't feel any predjudice. He seemed happy. I said I'd meet him at the bus. He was there and apparently in a good humor. Although he joked in a general way, his manner was a bit cool.

Wednesday he didn't come in the morning. I was sad, depressed and worried and finally gave him up. He did appear at the unusual time of eleven-thirty but went into Ralph's, apparently with a work delivery. I was sorely tempted to go in there, but decided to wait and see if he would come into our office. He did come and stayed. I was tired, and although he interrupted my lunch preparations, I postponed them and asked him to stay. We were alone. We both roamed the room. We talked a little casually until I started to eat and then he left to eat his own lunch, giving no indication of coming back. He acted "childish", frustrated and unhappy.

I returned unhappily to work, giving him up for the rest of the day. However, a little later he came whipping through, ostensibly to show me a card he'd bought for his family. (I was shocked at its lack of artistic taste!) He seemed to want to talk, so I encouraged him and he really opened up.

Since Hal was listening, I suspected that a lot of what he said was for Hal's benefit, which I later confirmed. The gist of his conversation until Hal left was a tirade against the possibility of his ever achieving happiness in

America because of the hopeless prejudice here, and detailed plans for a successful return and establishment in Italy, after making and saving enough money here. *(My heart sank at this)*

After Hal left, he announced to me that American prejudice was hopeless to combat. I assured him the "we" (Mike and I) were his friends. He said he knew that. In fact, he'd been in to see Mike. He then started a long tirade against his brother-in-law, comparing him with the one in Spokane, and revealing plans to try his luck in Spokane, "where things would be better". I suggested he could look for a job in Spokane during his visit at Christmas time. He seemed alarmed, and hurriedly explained "reasons" why he must stay in Yakima at least another year, none of which sounded very valid to me. I went on to agree with him that if he felt as he did he should return to Italy and he seemed pleased, which baffled me. He left for work then.

I felt the conversation unfinished, feeling the need to reassure him more. In fact, our "reunion" seemed the moment to grasp to say a few things. I obeyed my impulse and went openly to his office, making a point of going in the front door and not even trying to conceal the fact that I came to visit N.

He was there, and I proceeded, with some embarrassment, to tell him two things; that it restored my failing faith in human nature to find someone as idealistic as he and that I prayed for him. He flushed and seemed pleased and jumped up and began eagerly to show me his artwork--a reaction that surprised me, but which I was to get familiar with in the future.

The mention of praying brought on a religious discussion, in which we were both agreeing, until he seemed to get highly aroused. Then all of a

sudden he stopped and refused to go on. -- He even left the office abruptly, muttering something explanatory about "our different religions". Thus dismissed, I left, but with a feeling all was well between us.

Thursday things did not look favorable for a noon talk with N and I wasn't expectant. However, circumstances changed at the last minute and I was relieved. The office was full of Hal's customers when N appeared in the company of a very pretty girl and with a sly look on his face. I was momentarily alarmed until it turned out to be a customer of Hal's. N seemed to feel it was a good joke.

We tried to talk in the crowded room, but, when I saw N was uncomfortable and ill at ease, I suggested we go into Ralph's room. Although Ralph was not too happy about it, N and I had good fun. He was relaxed and happy.

Later, I was resigned to not being able to meet the bus that afternoon, as circumstances did not look favorable. However, they changed again and I was happy. N was at the bus, and he was pleased, relaxed and natural--an unusual mood for him.

Friday morning N was in the office when I got there and in a very good mood. He seemed to "hover" and "cling" to me.

(During a work errand that morning I had occasion to discuss N with a person interested in the art course N was taking. It excited me to even talk of him!)

He came very early at noon and stayed till one. and we were alone. However, he seemed wild, upset forgetful and wary. He started to talk about his ceramic partnership in Italy and ended abruptly in great emotional confusion and refused to go on. Then he fussed around with the photos and suddenly left without finishing. I was alarmed and hurt.

In trepidation and embarrassment I made my first phone call to him at his office (the call had to go through the girls) pretending concern and ignorance about the photos. N eagerly offered to come right back and did so, seeming very pleased. We got to chat some more. We were both in a good mood then.

He came in later that afternoon--still in a good mood. There was no one home--no reason for me to go early, so I stalled desperately in order to ride the bus with N. Hal picked this particular time to offer me a ride home--he had long since quit offering. I made some lame excuse in great embarrassment. My "bad luck" continued when I ran into a neighbor on the corner, but I passed her up quickly and then, when she appeared on the bus, I deliberately snubbed her in order to sit with N. While N and I were still waiting for the bus the Scofields drove up and offered us a ride! Of course, neither of wanted to, but N left the initiative up to me, so I consulted him and when he shook his head, I chose to remain with him, telling them to go on, in spite of the embarrassing position it put me in. So I rode home with N on the bus. (These rides were very important to me because it was the only time we got to talk away from interference by insinuating office people.)

Over the week end I acquired family house guests and could and should have stayed home to entertain them, but made excuses to go to the office--just because I wanted to see N. I had asked him to bring me a certain book so I was pretty sure he'd come to our office in the morning.

However, he didn't come with the book. I was hurt and mad so I wrote him a note and slipped it into some papers of his I had at me desk, planning to return them so he'd have no more little excuses to come see me. (I was finally getting tired of

his never doing what he said he'd do.) Hal deliberately came up and investigated the papers and saw the note. I was alarmed at the exposure and very angry. So, in anger, I made plans to go home, first checking my work contacts, and then found I had to wait awhile for the bus. This was unfortunate. I should have just gone on when I was so mad. But, as it was, it gave me time to "create scenes". First I bawled Hal out. Then I went to N's office and created a minor scene about his not bringing the book, during which we were interrupted by Bee. N said he did bring the book from home and went to Hal's office about 8:15 to check for work, but "forgot" to take the book; and he asked me if I was mad? I was because he knew I wasn't in the office that early and he hadn't come in later! (This was really unfair as he probably might have brought it later, not knowing, as I did, that I'd have to leave early.)

He tried to snatch the note. I crumpled it and threw it in the wastebasket. I was still upset at last Friday's embarrassment about the bus so blurted out that I didn't mean to embarrass him by the bus rendezvous. I said it seemed to me as if people in the office were "looking" at me and acting as if I were pursuing him and I only liked to talk to him. He looked alarmed. I declared I intended to keep on if he didn't mind. He looked "thoughtful" and then said he didn't care what people thought--it was up to me. I said it was up to him. I asked him if it was all right to visit him in his office and he made a wary agreement. I left feeling a good feeling between us.

I went back to the office, feeling guilty and so upset that I deliberately created a scene with Louise about their "thinking things about N and me", which she protested in a false manner and with great indignation. I went home. Feeling bad about Louise, I phoned her and tried to make up, but was coldly rebuffed.

no promises of returning, making me unhappy. He returned later while Hal was taking pictures and Hal asked us to "stand in" for him. N and I were happy and clowned outrageously while Hal and Ralph ignored us.

Family complications made it impossible for me to meet the bus, and I was worried about N's reaction. So I took drawings over in order to tell him. I merely said, very quickly, that "I'd see him tomorrow", meaning I wouldn't be on the bus. He hid his face fromme (by ducking it down near his work) and acted very busy and "indifferent".

July 30

N came in excited, gleeful and happy at the unusual time of ten a.m. He seemed just bursting. He announced that Norma was getting married and leaving in a week or so! We discussed it happily for awhile and he left.

I then went over to the Republic on the pretext of congratulating Norma, but really to see N. I was all a-twitter. In talking to Norma and Bee I was at last able to get in a lecture, meant for Norma, about prejudice against foreigners. I made my point, I think. Then I went in to see N.

He seemed on wings and excited and attentive to me. Norma's leaving meant a promotion in prestige for him, but not enough to account for his obvious exuberance. We talked. He suddenly announced very frankly, "I'll come over and talk to you when I'm not busy!" (in the future, he meant.)

In searching for a way to prolong the conversation and (maybe testing its intimacy) I ventured a remark, referring to a former conversation, that he shouldn't be ashamed of so much hair on his arms--that women liked it--meaning me of course! He deliberately leaned toward me and brushed my arm with

the hair on his. We were both very excited. I impulsively "walked" my fingers through the hair on his arm in reply and left. (This was our first intentional physical contact.)

When N came over later we both went into Ra; Ralph's office and were very "coy" with each other, especially N. We rough housed a little and joked and laughed over nothing. We were happy, happy, happy! N was most attentive all day. I had some work, but had to contrive to stretch it until N's bus time, for we felt an unspoken agreement that we would meet at the bus.

I met N at the bus, but we were both very perturbed and disappointed to find Bee there waiting for the same bus. Of all days! When we got on there was another friend of mine who felt chatty. I had to sit with Bee, but N sat down as close as he could, facing me. He kept giving me gleeful, amused, intimate looks and we enjoyed ourselves in spite of our impatience for our friends to get off and leave us alone. By the time they did we had very little time left to talk.

I can honestly say today was the happiest day of my life! I cannot remember ever being so elated -- and to think we had actually said nothing to each other!

The next day I was surprised and puzzled when N did not come over in the morning. I assumed he was busy and was even more puzzled when I learned later he wasn't.

But he did come at noon and stood by my desk and talked a steady stream for about forty-five minutes. Hal kept giving him dirty looks, but he seemed oblivious to them. He was so eager, happy and talkative. But Hal's behavior upset me so I missed the gist of what N was saying, for which I was desperately sorry as for the first time he was really revealing some of his inner self. By

How ARE you?
How do you do?

Come state?

Where are you going?

Love andate?

Good morning,

Buon giorno.

~~Good~~ night

buona notte.

^{leave}
~~leave~~ me alone

lasciarmi in pace,

lasciarmi in

go away!

via.
vai via!

Volate

da

qualche cosa
mangiare

Are you hungry?

Hai fame?

Will you have something
to eat? ^{Volate} qualche cosa
da mangiare

La _____ S.
 Le } Female ϕ
 Lo }
 Il } MALE
 Gli } ϕ

a > FEMALE
 o > MALE

La sedia The chair
 Le sedie The chairs

un who > MALE

una FEMALE

un cane a dog

un'ape CAGNA

a bee

un'ape

Ritorna a me

uno S. 2

uno stupido
 uno zaino

Ritorna a me

How do you do?

Come state?

Where are ^{you} going?

Do ve (state) ^{enclaves} and date?

Italian lessons,
1958

She said, said

She said, said

What will be

What will be

the time I was able to follow him again he seemed to be presenting himself in a pitiful light--was so lonesome, bored, hopeless and so on. So I bravely asked him if he's come to dinner sometime in the next week when his family would be gone on vacation. He seemed pleased, but actually neither agreed or refused. There was much emotion between us. He slipped his shoe off and rubbed my foot with his. And I toyed with one of his gray hairs while he made a feint to my stomach. I had never known that such little gestures could be so moving. He hinted strongly for contact next week--his most venturesome sortie yet!--mentioned the bus rides and that he'd be all alone, etc. He seemed very excited. When he left and Hal came out from the dark room and insisted on knowing what we talked about. This made me very mad.

I left early because we knew Bee would be on the bus again and we agreed we couldn't talk anyway.

THE MIDDLE

The next day was Friday. I had no real work reason for being at the office. Even though N didn't come in the morning or at noon I was unworried. For the first time I felt calm and assured about him. I could tell the Scofields were puzzled and after they ate their lunch, they disappeared rather obviously into the dark room.

N came in about one and, instead of sitting across the room from me, sat down directly opposite and started toying with the toe of my shoe, asking me if they weren't new? I was relieved I got out of answering because I was afraid he'd notice that I had bought very low heels--(so I wouldn't be taller than he.)

I related how Hal had questioned me about our conversation and he said "Hal was jealous!" This was the first time anything of the nature had been openly admitted between us. We both felt much emotion. I skirted talk about the dinner invit-

tation--was afraid Scofield's would hear us. N whispered in my ear that he'd be back and left. I went on working in an emotional daze.

When N came back later, we were dying to discuss arrangements for next week, but Louise Scofield's omnipresence kept us from being able to say anything. N was in an excited confusion and almost fouled things up by blurting out something about showing his sister's movies of her return to Italy. Louise got the impression they were included in the plans to show them. In the general confusion, I managed to tell N I was leaving early and wouldn't be on the bus.

I made an open visit to his office later to leave a note. He was not there. I managed to ~~st~~ stall around talking to Bee until he came back and then I checked on my "date" with him. He seemed pleased to see me and urged me to stay. We laughed like fools together, feeling so happy because we had a date at my house. I spent the rest of the day up in the clouds.

Saturday my mother and daughter and N's family all left on vacations.

Sunday, August 3--I'd told N I'd call him Sunday evening so I resisted my impulses to call sooner and waited till evening. I phoned from mother's apartment so I could have more privacy. I was awfully nervous, but suddenly we were in a typical "lovers' phone call", both reluctant to hang up! We were both saying things we'd wanted to say for a long time. N said he'd wanted to call me before that day, but didn't know what my family would think. He pried at me to find out ~~what~~ what I'd alluded to that ~~had~~ did to me in the office when his wife was gone. He said, when I asked him, that he didn't like Ralph's office because I wasn't there! The conversation ended with N suggesting that he'd walk over to see me--ten blocks uphill! I was completely overcome and agreed most readily.

He came. Sooner than he'd said he would, too. And he was all dressed up in his best suit--cute! Although Mike and Denny didn't seem to care and ~~he~~ left us both alone, we couldn't fully enjoy the evening because we were both ~~sonervoud~~ and self-conscious. Mike grudgingly played the Italian record (the ~~player~~ was an elaborate affair he'd ~~made~~ made that only he could work). N was excited and liked the record. He insisted it was about a girl with blue eyes and acted as if that should mean something to me. (I swear I never then or since have translated anything in the song that referred to blue eyes!) He wanted to hear the other side but Mike suddenly got nasty and wouldn't play it.

After a little longer, N. suddenly decided to leave and left very abruptly.

The next morning Hal brought me a spray of honesuckle--the dope! I didn't particularly expect N in the morning, but was unworried, and he didn't come till noon. The Scofields remained in, but we didn't care, for we had an evening together ahead of us. It was so pleasant to be relaxed and not trying frantically to make the most of a moment!

When N left I followed him into the hall to check about the dinner date. He acted oblivious of the fact that he was expected and even demurred almost to the point of fending me off. I was very puzzled and not a little hurt. But I had already made arrangements, so I insisted and he finally agreed. (I have read since that Italians consider it polite to pretend to refuse at great length--I wonder?)

There was no work for me so I went blithely home to be with Dennis, feeling relaxed, calm and happy in the assurance of seeing N that evening. I made arrangements with my sister for them to bring over the movie projector so we could show N's sister's movies when he brought them.

X I expected N at 5:30--on the first bus from work. He had never let me know what time he'd arrive--typical of him. He didn't arrive until six--had gone home first. Besides being a little piqued about that, I thought he'd at least bring the Italian book I'd asked for, if not a little dinner-guest present. But he came empty-handed. And I was glad enough to have him come to "forgive" him.

He seemed to enjoy the dinner all right--I had very simple food--had made no attempt to be Italian (after his piazza reaction), but he certainly "wolfed" his food. When my sister and her family came we showed the films. Mike was unsocial and caused some friction by refusing to run the projector. Dennis warmed up a little. And I was proud of N. He seemed relaxed and was speaking well, I thought. Though the others said later that they couldn't understand him, it was not apparent at the time. Everything seemed to go well. N was quite upset that the films weren't what he seemed to expect, tho we enjoyed them.

When it came time to go home, he showed either rudeness or ignorance of our social customs in insisting on walking and only accepted a ride when I suggested it. (Or perhaps my family was rude in not offering until I suggested it?)

X Thenext day N did not appear till noon and seemed a bit cool when he came. I was very busy and tired and should not have spared him as much time as I did. We had no chance to really talk. What talk we had was business-like. Besides my busy-ness Hal put on a sit-down, spoil-sport act and N fought back with compulsive chatter. Also, I felt a bit "talked out". He still had not brought the Italian book. We had no fun this day. N made no attempt at intimacies--only gave me a few warm looks.

- I had to rush my work in order to meet the bus and I was tired. N was there, but in a cool mood and had a package of food under his arm for his dinner—as if to say "no more of that eating at your house". It seemed a sort of rejection to me and I felt hurt. I would have liked to have had him every night for dinner, but was not going to force him.

On the bus the conversation turned to Norma, which seemed to arouse much interest in N. I asked him if I should phone him in the evening, but got no encouragement. I certainly couldn't figure what in the world was the matter with him all of a sudden and was feeling very blue. As he got up to leave the bus, he blurted out for me to come with him. At least that made me feel a little better, but he certainly gave me no time to decide or act if I'd been able to! (And I couldn't have, for I had to get home to feed the boys.)

But there was no one home when I got there so I yielded to temptation and phoned N anyway. He sounded pleased but offered not the slightest encouragement about getting together for the evening. In fact we had a tricky conversation about age. I was hurt again. X

Mike brought a guest home for dinner and overnight. It was lucky N hadn't come! They left for awhile and I fought a desire to call N again and finally did. We were both embarrassed. I told him the next call was up to him. (In fact, I couldn't understand why he couldn't call me when he was alone this week). He gave me no direct answer. When I suggested he call me he said he was afraid he'd get one of the kids. (This impressed me as a silly reason, for that's the way I usually got my calls and they were often business calls from men; the kids would have thought nothing of it unless it were grossly overdone!) Anyway he professed "forgetting" that he'd said he wanted to call me. Whatever his real reasons I could see X

there was no hope of his ever calling me voluntarily and ¹ was disappointed.

X We had a long conversation: About Norma-- he was still piqued at her rejection of him; I started to pry about his mother (whom I'd seen in the movies) and he practically told me that was his private business; he apologized for the movies--when I said Palermo was beautiful. We discussed our office conversation difficulties, on which subject he offered no solution. "Then talking about getting ^{this} week, he joked, but offered no suggestions or encouragements. He mentioned that he might go bowling with the men at work, which would have been a very new social venture for him--if he did! He muttered something about "nothing goes right for him". I hung up, feeling very dissatisfied.

Notes are lacking here on what happened during the next day, but sometime during the day, N and I made arrangements for the evening, so what happened during the day didn't matter anyway.

Mike and Denny were both home that evening, but when N came about 7:30, the boys "disappeared" somewhere about the house--to my embarrassment. N and I were eager, nervous and embarrassed. (Our times together were always so short and so public) We talked in the living room awhile until I suggested "it was cooler out in the swing". N followed me willingly out to the back yard.

We made a pretense of his giving me an Italian lesson until it got dark. Meanwhile a great emotional crisis was building up between us as we sat side by side in the swing. I mentioned that he must have quite a scar from his TB operation. He suddenly pulled up his shirt, exposing his bare back and asked me to feel the scar. "That did it!

I suddenly found myself kissing his back and then we were in a hungry, passionate embrace and murmuring confessions to ~~wah~~ other, "I like you!

God,

I want you! Come to my house on Saturday!"
"I can't--I didn't mean to fall in love with you"--
etc. We stayed in the swing awhile. Then N went
home--early, too early!

The next day was only a prelude to the evening.
That evening Mike and N came about the same time,
though N had been alert enough to avoid Mike's bus.
Mike was cool to him and Denny went to his room.
N and I were embarrassed. We went out to the swing,
and then, worrying about Dennis, into Ruth's liv-
ing room, where I learned about Catholics.

Suddenly N was dangerously quiet. I was unable
to draw him out, arousing only confusing, broken
allusions to threats and warnings about himself.
When he decided to leave--about ten--I insisted on
walking part way with him, trying to find out what
was the matter. He was still incoherent. I
gathered that he was warning me of his irrespon-
sibility, though he used different terms. He said
he was "bad", and couldn't be trusted, etc. I
assured him I was quite aware of the impossibilit-
ies of our situation; that I figured on snatching
our bit of happiness this week and then be "just
friends", etc. He broke away from me, only par-
tially mollified, and stated to walk on home,
leaving me in great doubt and perplexity. I
turned back and went home.

Next day during the morning I went to his
office to make sure if he was coming at noon. He
acted real glad to see me and came right out frank-
ly and said he would be over in the evening. Jim
Rayner came by as we were talking and made insin-
uating remarks, but I was in a good "acting" mood
and managed to keep "the light touch", but N and
I were both embarrassed.

Hal and I tried to "out-sit" each other at
noon, but N didn't come in till after one. We
went into Ralph's office where we were really gay
and intimate and happy, happy, happy. I walked
down the stairs with N for a chance at private
remarks.

In the evening I phoned N from Ruth's to settle details about our last evening together. He seemed real pleased. Mike left, but Dennis was home. N came about 8:45, though I'd looked for him sooner. Dennis went to his room. N was affectionate. We went to the swing and then to the apartment. Dennis burst in on us. N was very upset about Dennis. I was irritated by his reaction, since Dennis has witnessed nothing, actually.

Dennis left, but our intimacy was spoiled, so we sat in Ruth's living room and just talked for about an hour or more—until about midnight—the latest N had stayed.

He really opened up. He told me all about his father and his temper and about some childhood experiences; his marriage hopes and dreams; and we discussed his girl troubles and possibilities. There was no reason for him to go and I was enjoying the talk, but I couldn't get him to stay longer.

As he left I said "Goodbye" and meant BOODBYE—I had reconciled myself that this was all we could have. He seemed reluctant and rejecting the idea of a final goodbye. He murmured something about getting a car and taking me for a ride, arousing a glimmer of hope in me and leaving me with very mixed emotions as he left.

Despite the circumstances, and my haunting shame concerning my boys, it was a wonderful, wonderful evening.

The next morning--Saturday--still in a glow, I sneaked over to the apartment before the kids were up and phoned N. We had a long, good, very intimate talk with mutual confessions of intimate feelings. It was very hard to hang up and say goodbye; I almost cried. N said he was glad I had called.

Late that Saturday afternoon, Hal made a short, unnecessary delivery of Julie's picture. Snooping?

That evening I called N against my better judgment. And I shouldn't have. Obviously, an "anti-climax" feeling had begun to set in. X

I returned to the office the next week fully expecting N to be "through" with me. (It is certainly usual for middle-aged bachelors to "have a little fling" and disappear.) Besides, both our families came home over the week-end and our "privacy" was gone.

As it was, our emotions had led us to take great risks--even if we did not risk what we would have liked to have--and now we were faced with worry and fear of exposure--in all the usual ways. This, too, was usual in a socially taboo love affair like ours--as we both knew. Anyway we were both under great strain the next week, both for personal and business reasons.

Monday N came into the office early,--for him. He seemed "intense". I managed to convey to him that if he wanted to stay away I'd understand. He looked Baffled, as if he didn't know what I meant. Then I asked him if he were coming at noon and received no reply, only a "thinking" look on his face.

He did come--very fast and very early. Since the atmosphere in the office was uncomfortable, I suggested we go into the empty front office for our "Italian lesson" and not "bother" the other people in the office. To my surprise, N agreed willingly, so we took the Italian book and went.

He started making playful passes at me-- patting my hips and tickling my armpits. Then he said, "Are you worried?" A pause, and then "It will be all right", giving me a deep, meaningful look that I couldn't understand. And something about "if I get in trouble I'll pay for it." Then he started much bantering and teasing,

threatening to give Italian lessons to other girls and asking "Did I want him to?" And he talked of Norma, with alarmingly intense, un-joking vows to "get even". Then a lot of talk about giving up commercial art and working only for a salary. He seemed deeply upset. By this time we had to get back to work and I have no further notes for that day.

Tuesday morning he was in several times. He seemed o.k., but flushed.

X
When he came in at noon he seemed to be in his "shell" and offered me no encouragement. (I did not know then--as I know now--that this meant he was going into one of his depressions, and was discouraged and unhappy. At the time I was only puzzled and hurt.) He followed me into the front office, but this time he was very nervous and obviously afraid of being seen. His talk was bitter--much dwelling on Norma, and insistence that Gloria was not too young for him, as I had pointed out. Said he couldn't sleep--that he'd "had too much coffee." There was no attempt at caresses, only a furtive glance at my hips.

He left me in such a state of fear, sadness, and embarrassment that I decided not to meet him at the bus. But I thought I'd better tell him, so I went by his office just twenty minutes before bus time to say "goodbye" so he'd know I wouldn't be on the bus. I vaguely sensed, as I did so, that there was something wrong about it, but it wasn't until later that I realized that leaving only twenty minutes sooner and making a point of letting him know was a worse rejection than if I'd just gone. And I knew by now that any slightest rebuff would utterly discourage him. And this was not my intention; I merely meant to avoid him until he was in a better mood.

The next day there was such a bad mood pervading in our office that I fled--going over to the Republic--to chat with N, if possible--or just to get out. But N was not there, which left me in an embarrassing position. Also Mozelle, one of my work contacts came seeking me out over there, further complicating things.

I went back to the office, finding N there. There was a great deal of commotion going on and N was obviously very mad about something. I managed to sneak up behind him and whispered, "I miss you" to him, to which he let out a characteristic noise best described as a "crow". That meant he was pleased, but it was evident something was going on and he was too busy to talk.

He came late at noon, having gone to get a haircut. This was puzzling, since he usually got his hair cut after work. I interpreted it as a "revenge" for my not meeting him at the bus the night before. I acted busy when he came, and he acted baffled. He hinted, "I have to be back at one". And I said I had to go to the Bon soon, (which I did). Then I said, "I'll walk back with you. He agreed. And then, as we started, I realized he was going to walk to the Bon with me--a very unusual thing for him to do, which I didn't understand. However, I explained I meant walking back to the Republic with him, so we went down the alley together.

Hoping to make apologies for the night before, I offered to come into his office and chat with him "if he had anything interesting to show me"---(such as an art book or something for an excuse.). He said, "No" he didn't. And I said, "OK" I wouldn't then. And he, "Good, because I'm still mad about the photos (work)". We were awfully mixed up somehow and since we couldn't stand in a public alley together and settle it, I let him go in alone and I went back to the office.

¹/₂ There I puzzled and worried trying to figure it all out. Then decided, as so often before, that to keep N from reverting to anti-social behavior I'd have to take the initiative, as usual, again.. So I wrote him a note and took it to his office, but he wasn't there. Again I was embarrassed. He was in our office when I got back, and, although I had no way of knowing whether he'd read the note or not, he gave me a look that conveyed a message that everything was all right between us.

X The next morning I was in a very dejected and nervous state. N came in in the morning, but, although we were alone, he acted strictly business-like. I put out some intimate conversation feelers, but he was not encouraging. However, when I said, "You look very dressed and and nice today" I got a warm response. We nervously wandered into the dark room where he began some mixed up allusion about getting in trouble ironing his slacks--his reason for buying the new ones he had on or something. I misinterpreted his meaning and we got very mixed up.

Later in the day Hal made very much of a point of telling me that N and Norma were certainly being chummy and intimate over in their office all day. This was a blow, of course, and I was very worried and unhappy, especially when I started putting two and two together--the new slacks, the "coolness", the concentrated talk about Norma, etc.

The result was that I was so afraid and sad that I went out at noon, not waiting, and leaving a note--only the second time I had "stood N up at noon. Then I tortured myself all afternoon as to whether N had come or not. Until Ralph reported to me that he had been in and I felt so thankful to him.

N was not in all afternoon.

About four he came, though he almost never came at that time. He acted wild, and excited and threatened me about giving Italian lessons to

Norma, but, instead of leaving, he went into the dark room. I said, "Are you trying to make me mad?" And he seemed delighted! He said, "Why should you be mad?" And I replied, "I thought you were nice and wouldn't do a thing like that (referring to his threats about Norma). It was not the answer I wanted to give, but a desperate cover up. At that he flounced out; muttering something about "That's what he warned me--he couldn't trust himself." I had a feeling we misunderstood each other.

I was awfully mixed up. I had never seen him so wild and all those threats and vows of revenge on Norma, Norma, Norma! I began to be really scared for her, knowing tomorrow was her last day. I felt the need of someone else's viewpoint, so sort of told Ralph. Then I impulsively phoned Bee on my way home and warned her to sort of be on guard. She was intrigued and I knew she'd pass a hint along.

N was not at the bus as usual! Somehow I wasn't surprised when he came running and hopped on at the next stop--in fact I felt amused. He looked red and amused himself!

Friday I felt sad and under strain. N came in good humor and joined our talk in Ralph's room, making along stay. Then he followed me into our office. I offered him the Italian book sort of as a gesture of finality. (Besides my time was up on it; he had to sneak it back into his sister's drawer from where he had taken it without asking) I was hoping he'd let me keep it awhile as an excuse for further visits, but, to my alarm, he took it. I had indicated a passage that meant "Life is hard". He seemed to "get" the message. He left with the book.

Then I began to worry about his using the book on Norma.

I had to work Saturday--would be going down about one o'clock-- and would need the things I had given him to airbrush. He promised to deliver them Saturday. Since he worked only till noon, he would leave them at the office and then go about some personal errands he had, he said. I hinted strongly that he could deliver them after I got there. Though he persisted in ignoring my hint, he finally agreed to deliver them after I got there, but repeated that he had errands to do. (We were neither of us sure if the two men in the office would work on Saturday and both were too embarrassed to come right out and say what we meant.)

Saturday N arrived at the office with the drawings as he said. The two men weren't working and we were alone. N lingered instead of going. I continued working with N there until I began to realize I'd be unable to finish it all in the allotted time. I asked N if he'd help me. He was very agreeable and amenable. So we worked together, accomplishing a lot, and meantime, having a good, relaxed, heart-to-heart talk. It was very pleasant.

The phone rang. It was Dee saying he was coming down. I expected N to leave, but he didn't. Presently Dee came sailing in and was taken aback to see N there. We were both embarrassed. (I was especially so later when I discovered my hair was still all awry from the wind on the way in.) N, surprisingly, seemed unperturbed. We had truthfully only worked and talked, whatever it looked like.

Then Dee announced to me that he needed the work even sooner, which would necessitate my staying longer than I had intended. Then he left, obviously embarrassed.

N stayed on. He began to get amorous. I was getting tired and anxious to get home. I decided which bus I'd try for and told N. He seemed to agree, so I did not call mother to come and get me, assuming that N and I would ride the bus home together. I

went on working, fending off N's advances until done.

Then there was not much time left before the bus. I was unfamiliar with Saturday traffic in this office building so was very nervous, especially since my brother-in-law had an office down the hall and often worked Saturdays and they know I was working today. So, when I heard a female footsteps approaching, I feared it might be my sister come to give me a ride home and made N leave me alone. He acted mad.

✓ On our way out N announced He'd decided to stay downtown and get a haircut. It occurred to me that he got his haircut at a place where he could have ridden to on the same bus I took. But I let him go and rode the bus home alone. And I was very mad.

Monday there were good contacts over necessity of getting the work done. It was very, very enjoyable to work with N. I slipped him a note showing a plan I'd devised on how he could come to see me the Monday evenings he went to night school, since he had to walk past our house anyway. And---

He took me up on my suggestion! It looked like Christmas to me when I saw him standing in my kitchen that evening! He was cold from his walk and I warmed him up. While he was there he said, "Why do you have to be so old? I should have come to America ten years ago!" and other nice things. He also started prying about the men in my life before he left. His visit was too short and hurried because he didn't want to arouse suspicion at home, but we were very happy.

Tuesday I had an errand at the Republic and I stopped for about fifteen minutes of work talk with N.

It was the deadline for the work he was doing for me, which made me very sad, for prospects of future contacts looked very slim. He delivered the work at noon and alarmed me by unreasonably attacking Dee's attitude toward him in a manner of great hurt and indignation. In a pet, he insisted on taking his work sample book that I intended to use to find more work for him. He left me bewildered and depressed.

The next day I waited in at noon. I rather expected him to bring me the book I wanted to read. He didn't come and I didn't see him all day. I was hurt and sad. Sad because the inevitable separation I foresaw in my moving was beginning.

The next day he didn't come at noon. I finally contrived an errand to Hal's, and while I was there Hal gave me some pictures he'd taken of me. I managed by a desperate ruse to drop in on N and show him the pictures, thinking maybe he'd want one. He didn't ask for one—just handed them back without a comment. He acted very busy, retreating and unencouraging. I didn't stay. He was not on the bus, tho his sister wasn't working that day, so couldn't have picked him up.

I didn't hear a word from him or see him Friday. I tried hard to catch him at the bus stop and share my ride home with him, but he wasn't there! I was depressed and puzzled by it all.

It did seem so strange that he was obviously always so glad to see me most of the time and yet seldom would go out of his way to do so. His words I made myself take with a grain of salt, but nothing could deny the feeling between us and I assumed he wanted to see me as much as I wanted to see him. Then why didn't he try harder? I couldn't figure it. Except to always come to the same conclusion that he was embarrassed by me, but this he always, always denied.

The next week on Monday, my resignation became excitement when I found proofs of the work we'd done together in our office. I was eager to show them to N, knowing he'd seldom seen his work reproduced. After I made an art delivery I dashed over to see him. He acted glad and nervous. We talked about an hour, even into lunch time. He kept on working while we were talking and gave me the book I'd been wanting. I attempted to leave two or three times, but he seemed anxious to talk, so I stayed.

He said he'd been sick with a cold all week. (He didn't look sick!) so he was not going to night school, but he would go next week. Then he told about troubles he'd had at home: How last Friday he had gone home with a sick headache and when his nephew had sassed him, he had hit him, knocking him down and causing a family "vendetta".

Then he proceeded to blast America, Americans, and American customs; said he couldn't possibly marry an American girl; he's go home and marry there. Then he said no one spoke to him at home; no one had even asked him how he felt.

He was obviously very upset. "He scared me. He impressed me as very, mad, very hurt (and guilty feeling). His tirade sounded ~~unreasonable~~ and unfair to me and he evidently was feeling resentful, revengeful, discouraged, hopeless and self-pitying. But, in spite of a sneaking disappointment in him, I was very anxious to have things all right between us and to make him happy.

So I stuck to my psychology rules and eased him along without saying anything. He began to talk himself out, quiet down and even joke. He even became apologetic. I reassured him and, feeling a great tenderness for him all of a sudden as he became more anxious and sorry, I expressed my great liking for him again. He seemed reassured, and all was well between us again. I left.

That Monday night, since N wasn't going to school and wouldn't be by, I visited Dee's wife and felt her out on their

reaction to N. She said Dee liked N's work. Thinking maybe it would encourage him and cheer him, I phoned him at home, on an impulse. He was pleased and seemed reluctant to end our talk. He reassured me about his mood. Then he said he wasn't going to school that evening. Until then it hadn't occurred to me that it looked like I was checking on him.

October

N's sister was working at the Bon where I had to go almost daily for work. I had to pass by her on my way to the advertising offices. This day, Tuesday, she nodded to me on my way by. I deliberately sought her out in the lunch room because I wanted to talk to her about N. I sensed that N's recent moods were going to cause trouble at home and I felt impelled to head off trouble if I could. So I told her I wanted to warn her that when I left, N might miss (the therapeutic value) of his talks with me and would be apt to revert into his shell and begin to get difficult--and evidently has--or words to that effect. I was embarrassed and didn't know quite what I was saying or why. She said she didn't know he'd told me about his difficulties and didn't know he felt so full of hate as I had told her. Said she didn't understand him at all. Then she told me her version of the difficulties at home, which, of course, were quite different from N's. I tried suggesting that N could make friendly phone calls to me just to chat, but I was suspiciously rebuffed.

I returned to the office. Suddenly N was there. I had forgotten it was his day off! We talked "shop" until Allen left. Our voices were soft and intimate and I was afraid Allen would notice. N seemed in a good mood. He stroked me under the chin in a way he had and gave glances to the closed, empty office next to ours, but I didn't dare. He stayed almost an hour talking and then had to leave for his driving lesson.

I didn't see N in the morning, nor did he come at noon, which made me unhappy, for I always thought maybe he might. He made a sudden afternoon visit with a delivery for Allen. Dee was there, also, and he gave N a sickly smile. I could have killed him! We tried

to talk, but no privacy, so gave up. N did seem sick.

X The next day I dropped in on N during an errand his way. I was full of personal business woes and wanted a sympathetic ear, but found N unreceptive, very busy-acting, belligerent and self-pitying and full of his own troubles.

"I Have a cold!" he announced, when I said I had troubles. "I have troubles, too. Is that all your troubles?" He made smart retorts to everything I said. He announced he was too busy to help me with any work before I even asked him. We were interrupted abruptly and coldly by N's boss, and he abjectly hurried off, so there was nothing for me to do but leave, feeling very rebuffed and unhappy.

I tried to see him later on another errand and tell him there was no work reason for him to come the next noon, as I had intimated, but he wasn't there.

Next day Made an excuse of some work data I'd gathered to go over to see N. He was there. He went on working, but greeted me warmly. I was just about to say that maybe I shouldn't interrupt his work when his boss walked in and assured me it was ALL RIGHT for me to be there--in fact he said he thought I inspired N and I was always very welcome at any time. Well!

X So I settled down and we had a nice, long chat. N talked mostly about his moving dilemma and home troubles. I sidled up to him before I left and tweaked his ear (because he had been so nice). He flushed and glowed (I'd learned what that meant!) and started to press candy bars on me. (I was a little taken aback to find that he kept a hoard for himself alone in his office "where his nephew and niece couldn't get into them" as he explained). I left and felt very good all the rest of the day. Bless Jim Smidl!

Monday. I had to have a job done at the Republic and asked N if he'd bring it back to me later. He was very willing. He said he was coming to see me at noon because I'd asked him to. Even when I explained that the work reason had fallen through, he said he'd come.

He did come, and Allen left and we went into the other room where I ate my lunch. We kept our "office manners" on. N went on at great length about his home troubles. As he left, he announced he was going to see me that evening. It was his school night. Needless to say, I was very happy.

I tried to intercept N with the delivery when it started to rain to see if the rain would change his plans as he had to walk home, but I didn't find him. Then I thought I could ask him on the bus, but he was not on it. Why, I wondered?

In the evening, things didn't look like they were going to workout, but they did, little by little--even the rain stopped in time! I put up my signal--and all of a sudden there he was, the dear!

He was very sweet. He told me he only went to night school as an excuse to get out to see me--that rain, nor even snow would deter him! Then he said if I wasn't so old we could get married! I couldn't believe my ears and was so overcome I could only nod my head. Also, that if he moved close to our house he could see me every night, and that he wanted to make me happy before I was too old. For once he was in no hurry and we had a wonderful time.

Tuesday--next day. I felt so good today--for a change! N brought the delivery he didn't bring yesterday. He acted very short and business-like, but he was all dressed up and happy.

Then he appeared again at 2:30. Again, I'd forgotten his day off! Evidently he wanted to sit around and chat awhile, but both men were there, so he left. I wanted to tell him how lucky we were intimating the night before, so pursued him into the hall. We stood

and talked a longtime. Usually, our hall was always very, very empty, but today everyone happened by! And the time I took out talking made me late with my work, but I didn't care. N seemed so relaxed and glad to be with me. He went on a great deal about his family troubles. I finally asked him why he was never on the bus. He claimed that his boss had made new rulings about their not leaving until the stroke of five which didn't leave him time to catch that bus, so he had to take a different one (one that made him a walk home, while the other let him off at his door!) His answer really didn't satisfy me, as I knew Jim Smidl was not the type to make such petty rulings and besides, N was a favorite of his. However, I knew I wouldn't get a true answer--and was really afraid of it, so didn't press.

Next day I didn't see him, but I mailed him a check for the work he'd done. I knew that would bring him around!

Next day was a bad day for me. Dee took my big job away from me. I wanted to go and unburden myself to "A" but couldn't get away until 3:30. I met him in the alley, but we couldn't really talk as we were interrupted by several friends passing by, including Hal. We talked a little, anyway. N seemed pleased to see me and I felt an overwhelming tenderness at seeing him. When I told him that Dee had actually considered him for help, he seemed pleased.

Friday the check did bring him in. "A" came whisking in at noon, pinned me against my drawing board with his arms and started to "scold" me for paying him so much. "A" made me take back half of it. Then he wasted the rest of those precious moments alone blasting off about his family, plans and America. Made allusions again to "when I go home--", a bad sign, I'd learned.

That week end was Memorial Day holiday and I was very, very unhappy because my aunt came to visit, so I could not have N come on Monday night. I decided it would be best to warn him, so I went over just before noon. He greeted me very warmly at first. Then acted very busy, cross, self-centered,

vindictive, and full of his own troubles. I told him about his not being able to come that night. He didn't quite seem to believe me, but didn't say anything. At least he didn't say that he hadn't planned on coming! Then he started talking about his moving out troubles and said he was going to move out and find himself a girl friend, but he didn't look at me when he said it. It seemed an unpremeditated remark and I didn't know what to think, so didn't dare comment.

Then his talk began to reveal complete discouragement about learning to drive. And now, for the first time, he ventured the observation that his anti-American prejudice might be based on his own unfortunate environment here, and not on Americans in general. He began to apologize for keeping on working while I was there and seemed reluctant to have me go. I tried hard to mollify him as I'd always been able to do, but this time I couldn't succeed.

I stopped by his office on my way to the bus, having made a delivery nearby, and practically told him if he'd hurry a little we could get the same bus and have a good talk.

As I waited for the bus, a different bus drew up and stopped just ahead of mine and N was on it! On a desperate impulse I tapped on the window and motioned, in a joking way, for him to get off and come onto the other bus. He shook his head grimly and burrowed it into his collar, refusing to look at me. Now did he so much as acknowledge me as our busses wove in and out around each other up the avenue.

Next day was supposed to be N's day off, but he didn't come. I wasn't a bit clear as to whether he had discontinued the driving lessons or not. Anyway, I was upset, and in what I suppose was a fit of vindictiveness, I wandered over to the Republic (where N was gone, by the way) and made conversation with the girls in the office, bringing the conversation to a discussion of N and "warning" them that N was having

a bad time at home and would probably be ornery. They said he hadn't mentioned it.

The next day I was so upset I couldn't work, so I went over to see N. He was there. He didn't seem surprised to see me. He acted calm and cool. He seemed subdued and mollified about his family troubles--more sympathetic and tolerant. Said challengingly, "Well, what do you say?" When I broached a warily, tight, impersonal conversation, he answered me in a weary way. Then he picked up a "double-talk" reference I made and we went into a fun double-talk session, getting quite a few points across to each other. Such as--(from me) "There are three kinds of middle-aged bachelors-----" He said he was the third kind--"good because of lack of opportunity". When I mentioned my aunt's visit, he only made a sarcastic rejoinder. I asked about the driving lessons. He showed disgust and mentioned a new, not very good plan, also something about buying a car.

He offered me an art magazine and told me about a new book on the female form, saying he'd have to show me, and made excited allusions to parts of the female anatomy. I got in a dig I'd been wanting to make about his not being able to draw the female form well until after he married. When I started one of our pet jokes he picked it up and elaborated and then we both felt better.

He told me his plan for getting a room with board, and then said if he didn't like that he could get his own apartment and then "could really have lots of fun!" I kept a stunned and hurt silence. He repeated the last sentence and then looked at me challengingly, saying, "Can't I? Can't I?" (If he'd only said "we"!) I tried to leave, but he started a new conversation. He was still working, but not so absorbedly now.

X
When I had first come in, he'd said, "Well, what do you say?" I said (lightly) "Are you mad at me? (He usually would say, "I'm not mad) This time he paused and then said "Why do you say that?" "Oh, I can tell--You didn't stop by yesterday and I just wondered." He started his usual long excuses about errands. I laughed and interrupted, patted him on the shoulder and said, "I just wasn't on your list, was I?"

November 13, and another day I didn't see N at all, though I hoped for him at noon and waited in the office. The closest I got to him was a few minutes chat with his sister about Italian Christmas tree lights.

Next day. Still he did not come at noon, though I never gave up hoping he would. It became evident I would have to work Saturday, which I didn't usually do. I contrived a quick visit to N with the excuse of returning his book. He was there. I put the book down and acted as if I were about to leave. He halted me with some general question. I answered with my planned test remark, "I have to work tomorrow." He said, "I'll be over to see you." I doubted my ears! When I tried to pin him down as to when he'd be over, he got quite cross.

I had prepared a cryptic little note about Monday nights in Italian to leave in his office in case he wasn't there. I decided to show it to him anyway, since he was being nice. So I did, asking him if it was ok, meaning the Italian. He must have thought I meant the message it conveyed for he started into long dissertations on what the weather would be like, etc. but finally agreed he'd come Monday night.

Then I blurted out, "You mustn't get mad at me if things don't work out." "I don't get mad." "I think you do." He smiled that sinister, mysterious smile of his. Then I made a slip about talking to his sister and he proceeded to bawl me out for talking too much. He also mentioned that he rode the other bus the night before. Not knowing why he said this, I didn't say anything. Then I left.

I got a ride home and was thankful I didn't have to wait at the bus and then not have him come. As we drove down the avenue I saw him on the other bus!

Saturday I hurried down to the office very anxious to see N. I had said I'd be there at one and I got there five minutes earlier. Allen was there, but he left.

X My brother-in-law was in his office down the hall and there was a fire nearby in the street and many people and much excitement. I was very upset because I feared all this would scare N off. He wouldn't risk being seen coming if there were so many witnesses about. Nor would he stay downtown long to wait it out. By three o'clock I knew he wasn't coming. I was suffering so I was unable to do any work.

Finally I could stand it no longer and made a fake call to his office. No one answered. I went through more great conflict and suffering. Then, desperate, I called his home, after carefully planning it all out. His brother-in-law answered and called him to the phone. I was sure N wouldn't talk to me with someone around within earshot, so I prepared to be very short.

To my surprise N kept talking--boldly and frankly. I said--and I was madder than I'd ever let myself be with him--"What's the idea? Why didn't you let me know? Did you do it on purpose?" I admitted I was hurt and asked him if he wanted to end our relationship? "Don't! You don't like my riding on the bus with you. You act like you're trying to get rid of me." Etc.

He said, "It was too cold to stand around on the street till one (from twelve) so I went home. You said you were going to work and I didn't want to bother you. Are you mad?"

I said, "I'm hurt. I expected you and I wanted to see you--did you plan not to come?" And he, "I'd meant to come yesterday. You worry too much. I'll call you. I came to see you. I don't want to end--that's silly. I didn't call to explain because I didn't know which number to call in the telephone book (a blooper, because there's only one number for the office in the book!) I'll see you Monday night--I'm going to give up the driving lessons--will never learn this way--no help--too cold." Then, suddenly, "I'll come down on the bus!" And he came!

He came in and sailed right up to me and grabbed my arms and jokingly, happily, frankly kidded me, "Here's someone really mad!" There was a good feeling between us now--frank, glad, fun.

He started acting a bit amorous, but I put him off, knowing I'd have to get him to talk now or he never would. So, finally, after all these weeks, we had an open discussion--about the bus, for instance. He thought it "looked bad when I visit him, he visits me, then we meet every night at the bus." Maybe now and then it would be o.k.". He started making excuses, while I was thinking that I didn't especially agree with him about the bus.

I let him get amorous, then, but I was so nervous about being discovered that it wasn't very successful, so we quit and talked.

He did most of the talking--about how he wanted a place of his own so he could work and not be nagged at--and how he had made himself a seven year plan, during which time he would not marry, but work toward his goal. He absolutely rejected my suggestion that he might fall in love and give up his plans. He scorned the idea, absolutely no girl would fit in. He talked only about himself--he wouldn't listen to me. Said he was going home. Then a long, long detailed account of the many clever plans he had, (none of which included adjustment in America, I noticed.)

Among other things, he placated me with "You worry too much. I'm here, aren't I?" I realized it was all hopeless, so simply gave him my usual build-up talk and left it at that.

I asked him if he was going to ride on the bus with me or wanted to make other arrangements--(I was thinking of the last time!) "He is, he is!" he says. He showed no qualms--was all frank and open, very relaxed and communicative--talked all the way out on the bus, very frank, unconcerned and happy. I had never seen him so much so. On the way to the bus I had told him I did not want to ever interfere with any of his plans--that I just figured we'd have fun while

wecould and while he was waiting. He assented and made a definite statement about getting a place downtown and I could visit him on Saturdays, which I didn't ~~answer~~ His obscure references to Saturdays didn't impress me much at the time as I was suffering too much doubt about whether he'd really move into a place of his own and whether the reason was really me or a chance at other opportunities. His reluctant, reticent, often angry attitude kept his real feelings obscure from me and he never came right out and said. Besides, I couldn't figure how I could get away innocently on Saturdays, having established a long time routine of doing my housework on that day, but I thought I'd cross that bridge when I came to it. In fact, N's references to Saturdays were so obscure that I never realized he had made them till I had read these notes over later many times!

He talked about a car and driving, unconsciously revealing to me what an utter lack of friends he had to help him. Then he started making references to this "Joe" at work which seemed to reveal an intimacy with him that I didn't know he had with anyone. In fact thinking it over that night I began to wonder if "Joe" wasn't responsible for the strange new change in N's attitude?--the newly aware sense of shame about me that I hadn't been able to account for--the desire not to be seen too much with me all of a sudden. Joe was obviously a "bachelor, tom-cat" type of person and N might be recently putting up a show of sheer male pride. I don't know.

In telling me about his talks with Joe, he remarked, "Joe phones girls!" in a tone of deep disgust. When I suggested that he and Joe might live together, he emphatically rejected the idea, claiming that neither he nor Joe would want to, and admitting the reason was they both wanted to entertain women. These allusions and the next remark he unconsciously dropped alarmed me --they implied the mutual confidences of a couple of tom-cats. He went on, "Joe is worse off than I am--HE has a Negress!" He immediately looked astounded at what he'd said, and I certainly was! I couldn't help saying, "Is that a crack at me?" I don't remember that he answered

me directly--he was obviously startled by what he'd said. "hen he started in about how he planned things and they never worked out--what could he do? "hat could he do? At my questioning he said he didn't go out with girls because he might get "in-trouble" and it would spoil all his plans. (I thought to myself how he'd maintained so cockily all along that he was too smart to get "in trouble"!)

"hen he remarked thoughtfully, "I wonder why Joe doesn't marry?" (Joe is about N's age.) "hen I looked at him, amused, he looked startled-again and then laughed. I said, "Yes, that's what people always think about you!" At the ensuing lull in the conversation, I ventured, defensively, "People are always trying to get me to marry--but why should I?--I couldn't marry someone I don't love and I don't know anyone with money"--or words to that effect. He broke off what he was saying and listened to me very intently--something he seldom did. I rather hoped the conversation might take a personal turn, but instead, he disappointed me by saying, "People with children shouldn't marry anyway. It's hard and hard on the children. With small children it's o.k., but big children not like." (The conversation was all very halting and evasive, yet mutually probing.) I felt the need to leave myself an opening, so I said, "Big children grow up and leave--" and, when he showed no sign of responding to that hint, I "face-saved" by laughing "bravely" and saying, "But I don't care! I have plans and work I'm saving! " He had to get off the bus about then, and he left me quite upset. X

Monday I had an emergency repair job to make for the engravers and the most logical place was N's office since he had art supplies there and he was amenable. He even talked to me at great length, explaining how he'd decided he'd have to give up the driving lessons and his plans to get a car. In fact, from his attitude and talk, I surmised he'd reached the same, sad conclusion I had over the week end--that it was all hopeless for us to ever get together. He said he was not going to night school. 1 hen, before I left,

he said that he had to take timeout to go to the dentist and he would come into my office to see me. I was glad for that--it gave me something to look forward to--for that day, at least, but I left with a definite impression that we were at last really through--by mutual despair.

X N hadn't said when around noon he was going to the dentist, and since I didn't want to miss him, I decided to fake an emergency call for him at the dentist--giving the impression it might be his office trying to locate him. This was about 12.30. They said he was expected at one o'clock. When he didn't show up at my office by two, I wondered if he had deliberately lied to me. So I called his office. He was not there, but was expected back at two! Since his unreasonable and cruel standing me up on that Saturday, I no longer trusted him.

I knew by then that he wasn't coming that afternoon. But I couldn't figure out why he'd said he would and then didn't. Was he really trying to break off with me? And, if so, why didn't he tell me as we had agreed, instead of doing it this cruel way? Anyway, I decided to wait awhile for an explanatory phone call, but none came.

By then I was so mad I couldn't even work, so I composed a definite farewell note inserting it in a magazine of his I had, and revised my day's schedule to include a trip to his office.

When I went to his office I found him there. I flung the magazine on his desk, cried, "Addio!" and turned to flounce out. He protested, "What do you mean?" I said angrily, "Goodbye! That's what you want, isn't it?" He said, "Don't be mad! Don't be mad!" and started to plead and explain.

I calmed down and started telling him much of what was in my note--"life so hard--I was hurt--it was all so hopeless---I was so unhappy--" etc.

He pled, "I'll call you--I'll get my own place--I can't help ~~it~~--stopping school has nothing to do with you and me--I want that--"etc. He pled with me to be reasonable and while I couldn't say what I wanted to, we reached a beautiful understanding with our eyes. Then he said, "I'll try to meet the bus." I explained, truthfully, that I might be delayed and left on that understanding. (After all I had wasted a good deal of the afternoon trying to settle what he had started and not finished!) In spite of the fact that I didn't realize I was being over-anxious and somewhat unfair--(he had to wait too long at the dentist's, and he didn't have a private phone at the office he could use--all this damnable need for secrecy all the time, just because of the difference in our ages!) if he had proved by past actions that he would have phoned or contacted me later to explain, I would have waited to hear from him, assuming that something had gone wrong. But he had proved to me that he was capable of breaking a "date" with me without ever explaining, and I know if I were to ever know I'd have to find out myself. X

However, he did meet the bus and he was breathless with hurry. (perhaps he did have to change bus-times as he'd claimed?) We rode the bus together in unusual peace and happiness, while N looked in what ads for rooms and we discussed them. We were very happy then and I was sorry he wouldn't give me back my note before he got off. I was afraid, then, because now everything was all right between us, and the nasty note, with its cruel remark about Joe and his negress etc. would cause more trouble if he read it. But he wouldn't give it to me.

The next day I didn't see him, though I wanted to desperately. I was worried about the effects of the note. But work circumstances took away my chance at plans to leave an explanatory note at his office and, for the first time in ages, I was forced to be late and take a later bus. So I missed him.

The next day, just before noon, I made a special trip over to see N and check on his mood and reaction to the note. He was not there. When I asked one of the

girls in the office she said he's gone to the post-office. Since that was on my return route, I figured I might waylay him, but I stalled awhile, waiting. Just as I was about to leave, he came in. I overheard the girls say he'd have to go back to the post-office, so I waited for him, although he was most unwelcome in his manner to me. I asked if I could walk up the street with him and he agreed reluctantly, there being no alternative, I suppose.

He was cool, wary and unencouraging. "What do you say?" he countered when we got outside. And I knew then he was mad, because that was his usual starter conversation when he was. I said, "What do you say?"

A pause. He was silent. I blurted out, "I wanted to see your reaction to the note." He acted irritated and disgusted, saying, "You imagine things--you think too many things." Since I had expected him to deny the accusations in the note, his answer threw me off guard. I said, "It's true, anyway."

X
N only changed the subject, evading a direct answer. He began a very detailed description of rooms he'd looked at. I was bored and inserted something about I didn't know if I was supposed to come see him in his office anymore. He replied, shortly, "Of course, what's wrong with that?" in a challenging tone. He went on with room problems, explaining among other things that he wouldn't need a phone--he could use a pay phone if he had to. All these remarks seemed not to include me at all and increased my doubts that this move had anything to do with me anymore. Especially the remark about not needing a phone. He had proved to me he wouldn't use a phone, much less go out to use one and how could we keep in touch for assignments without using a phone to settle the necessary last minute changes?

He said board and room would be as bad as living with his family. I asked him, trying desperately to find out his real motives, if there was any chance of his staying on with his family?

"No," he said. He wanted to live alone--so he could have Joe in--and have boy friends in--he hesitated. I added, "And girl friends?" I was still probing, hoping he'd come right out and say me.) He merely agreed, with a gay, quite impersonal look. In fact, he avoided looking at me this time, saying, "Isn't that right?" (He would have made a point of looking at me if he'd meant me, wouldn't he?) I said, "I don't see how this move will help the you and me situation." (I wanted more definite plans that would include me!) He pretended not to hear or understand me. Then, "I'd be freer. You could come to see." "How?" I said. "How would you let me know?" I can stop by the office or something"--he was very vague.

I was exasperated. I had waited day after day for him to stop by the office and night after night for him to phone and he'd already said that after he moved taking the bus to my house would be too much trouble! (It never seemed to occur to him that to leave my three children and mother and housework and come to see him on the bus on Saturday might be too much trouble for me! Surely he was just giving me the "run-around"!)

I said, "Why will it be any different from now? Why would you call me then? Maybe you're fooling yourself." He agreed, but he was mad! He said, "Maybe it's other people. . . or him. Maybe he's hard to get along with--I don't see any point in phoning if we can't get together." (This hurt.)

Then he began a long complaint about Yakima prejudice--and cited an example of an Italian man he'd known who even gave up his girl friend and left Yakima because of it. I said, "I worry about you living alone--you don't make friends easily. You'll be lonely---I want to be a friend." He acted evasive and polite. Then I told him that Yakima was too much for anyone in his position to cope with (agreeing with the stand he'd taken.)

He began to expound new plans of his--would try the new living arrangement for two years, then leave

Yakima--go to Spokane--and/or home.

We were standing on a corner now near the post-office and he was trying to leave me, murmuring something like "I'll see you" and ran out his tongue in an intimate allusion he was prone to. I held him long enough to make a parting decision. I said, "I'll come in sometimes to see you in the office--not very often (since it seemed to embarrass him lately)--and otherwise just wait till I hear from you (knowing ~~he~~ ^{he} wouldn't, but what else could I do?) He nodded his head and left.

It had been a very difficult conversation. N was in a nasty mood and was not going to be nice at all. So that's what the note did?--the unlucky little note that I was willing to cancel! What was in it? I don't remember. It alluded to N's obvious embarrassment and neglect of me recently and blamed it on his shame about my age, I think. Anyway, this conversation with N was a point of no return. I sensed, for the first time that he had put me on the other side of the fence with the "aliens".

Thursday I didn't see him and I was very unhappy about it. We were being parted, as I had predicted--not from free choice, but by circumstances and by strange quirks in our own personalities. The last remark is a later observation. At the time I was desperately baffled. It seemed it was N's strange refusal or inability to "keep in touch" that caused the trouble.

Friday I decided we'd both feel better if I went to visit N. Then it occurred to me that me kids might be gone for the evening and I was afraid then my visit might seem too obvious without an excuse.

However, when I went to the Bon for work, they provided me with a new job I could use as an excuse to consult N--albeit a trumped up one.

He was in his office. When I asked him how he was he confessed he was unable to do anything he felt so badly. Then I fessed up that I, too, was too unhappy to do anything and we had a good, long talk.

Then I told him the kids might be gone in the evening and he said, to my glee, he'd be over that night--for sure--no matter what! He even said he was getting an apartment (instead of a room) so he could see me! At last he'd said it! And if I'd scurry back to the office, he'd come over to see me. So I scurried?

He did come right away. I took my lunch into the other room and ate it while we had a good heart-to-heart talk. We agreed we were both miserable with frustration, that it was too hard to be apart, that we missed each other. I told him I had thought I might get over it when I moved my office away, but it had been harder than I'd thought. N said he was having a hard time and working desperately to find an apartment. And that he'd decided to move earlier. It would be different if I were younger, he said. (Or if you were older, I thought) We agreed that the difference in our ages barred marriage, we agreed that we both knew N must go away, but that it might be easier to part later than now.

I suggested to N I could come to his apartment in our noon hour. He looked gleeful and said exuberantly, "Then we could have our noons together again!" I agreed with him that I worried too much and said I'd been so unhappy I'd been unable to work. He looked glad! I almost used the word "love" here--then told him I didn't want to say I loved him. He said, "What's wrong with that?" And I replied, not knowing quite what I meant, that he'd feel he'd have to be nice to me, then. He questioned me in words implying he wanted to know how many men I'd had in my life. I said (feeling reluctant to admit how few) "I won't tell--and neither would you tell me how many girls you've had." He said, "You liked to me"--implying I'd claimed only my husband--which I never had. I reassured him and he seemed mollified.

I said I was glad I'd found someone like him before I died. And he said, "We're not going to die--We'll have lots of fun. I feel sorry for you. I want to give you some happiness to make up for--I don't want to hurt you--I'm sorry to hurt." We agreed we didn't mean to hurt each other. He asked, "Do you trust me?" I said, "Yes, but I shouldn't! I wouldn't be allowing all this if I didn't!" Soon he had to go, but it was so good, good good to really talk to each other.

Later in the afternoon I enjoyed an accidental contact with N's sister at the Bon. I had to make a sketch in her area and lost my purse and had some wild negotiations over same. Anything to do with N --even encounters with his sister--thrilled me.

N was on the bus that night and he chattered, chattered, chattered.!

In the evening I had a very wild time. Dennis announced that he wasn't going to the Carnival, the dinner got spoiled, many neighbors kept dropping in and there were incessant phone calls. I was pretty sure this time, though, that N. was coming even if we couldn't be alone. I worked very hard making arrangements for Dennis and finally got him to go at the last minute. N came very early, and, because of all the commotion, I was not quite ready--barefooted, in deshabille, and doing the dishes. Even had to get rid of a visiting neighbor after N came, which was very embarrassing.

N had actually just walked out on his family--an unprecedented thing! He'd told them he was going apartment hunting downtown! (He gave up finding a place nearby because of lack of a car.) He was relaxed, too. It was a wonderful evening. Everything worked out in the "nick" of time--we even had a chance for a good talk. (N talks too much.) We looked at art pictures in Life magazine--(N made an obscene gesture on one of the nudes.) He told me he'd decided on an apartment. I was disappointed he'd picked the most centrally located, biggest, most public one, in fact the one where Allen, one of the men where I worked, lived. But N seemed to rather enjoy the idea of being where Allen was. I had misgivings and I

thought how many available women must be in that apartment. He said, lasciviously, there were about ten women to five men and alluded to "getting around to the women". Naturally, I didn't like that remark, so, after a moment, I replied I was sure he could handle several--I was satisfied with my share. That seemed to stop him.

He scolded me, too, saying I was not to worry. He might move the end of the month and he planned to stay here in Yakima. Then he had to go home--too early, as usual.

Monday morning I went by N's office to tell him to hold up on the airbrush job. He said, to my delight, that he was coming at noon.

He came and we were alone. I ate my lunch and we talked in the other room. He kept caressing me, which made me say things I was afraid I'd be sorry for later (almost a year later--I'm not!) He said he had rented an apartment and would move in the first of the month! Another milestone accomplished! But now we had to face the details and I realized how little experience N had had of this kind, I had had quite a bit of apartment living, so I proceeded cautiously to point out some pitfalls of apartments, especially as they would pertain to us. As I feared, I merely seemed to discourage him and he started to retaliate a little.

Then I mentioned something about being "sore", and, being engrossed in his own thoughts and not really listening to me by now, he misunderstood me and thought I said "sorry" and kept insisting that's what I'd said. We got quite mixed up and never did settle it satisfactorily--partly because of language difficulties.

Then he told me--very seriously--that he'd never be happy. (I felt like agreeing with him, but refrained.) I said I wished I could make him happy, but I couldn't. He said, "You've done enough already." and I secretly thanked him in my heart. Then I asked him what he'd really like to do, he was evasive and wouldn't answer.

Both of us said we wanted to make the other happy and both of us said we had. That was nice, but then I asked a blunt question about if he'd ever lived away from his family before. And when he said he hadn't, I said, before I thought, "Why, you big baby!" And he didn't like that!

We had a little more talk about the hopelessness of our situation and our age differences and the inevitability of his having to leave Yakima. Then he left.

Tuesday there was no contact or chance for any. I only had a chance to ^{say hello and goodbye on my way} say hello and goodbye on my way from the engravers'. We sort of had a pact that things would be post-phoned until after he moved, since this was Thanksgiving week-end and the first of the month was not far off.

I was curious about his Thanksgiving plans, toying with the idea of asking him to dinner. Even mother had suggested it, but I was fearful of interfering with his family plans.

On my way to the bus the Wednesday before Thanksgiving I dropped by to feel him out about his plans. Evidently he expected to be with his family at home. For some reason he launched into an explanation why he "couldn't" eat fowl--he hoped they'd fix him something else. Then, apropos of nothing, he related how the war was instrumental in the destruction of their pet pigeons at home.

I was slightly disgusted at such a "spoiled" attitude and lack of insight and realized asking him to an American turkey dinner would not please him any, so I didn't mention my idea. We wished each other a "Happy Thanksgiving" and I left. He made no disclosures at all about his moving plans and, though I was intensely curious, I hesitated to pry.

Thursday, the holiday, I did not see him, of course. Nor Friday. The kids were home from school that day, so I went home from work early, forfeiting any chances of seeing N.

He must have moved sometime that week end. I spent the week end conjecturing when and how, and was very anxious to get back on Monday and find out. It was Dee's Monday out of town, and I hoped N would remember that we could be alone at noon and he'd come to tell me. I was very anxious and excited and waited expectantly all noon. He never came. I didn't see or hear from him all day.

Tuesday morning, in desperation and very mad, I maneuvered to get N's sister in conversation at her work. She was very receptive, chatty and revealing. (She could be very cool to me on occasion)

She told me all about N's moving Sunday. She even asked me if I'd seen him and to give her my reaction to his reaction to his move when I did. She said he was very happy and cheerful (this hurt me) and mentioned that there was another "boy" from the Republic living in the same apartment building (this alarmed me!) Also that N was going to have a phone connected at the end of the week for her convenience in calling him (this, too, hurt me. But he never did get the phone!) and she hoped he'd meet some girl in the building and get acquainted (this alarmed me, too!)

Tuesday noon--(N had moved Sunday and I'd made myself available all day Monday) N came to the office, bringing some of my art board back as an excuse.

He came right up to me happily and kept putting his hands on my shoulders. In spite of my anger with him, I found myself reaching for his hand and he clasped mine in great happiness. We were happy to see each other in spite of everything.

But we began "sparring" to see where we stood with each other. N did not come right out and tell me about moving--he seemed a little uneasy and on the defensive. Whether my manner made him so I don't know. When he found I was not going to act mad, but only quiet and receptive (I did so with great effort) he started drawing a map on how to find his new apartment. I let him finish before the demon broke out

in me. "What's the map for?" I said. He was nettled and we began to spar again. He mentioned that I could come on Saturdays (I'd told him that wasn't convenient for me and he's never asked why or tried to settle it). I suggested noons. He said not enough time--lots of Saturdays. (There weren't. There were only about two till he went to Spokane for Christmas.) I asked him about the phone. He was evasive--said he would phone Saturdays from outside the apartment. (I knew he wouldn't, but he didn't seem to know it.) The subject changed without getting settled.

He said he had moved yesterday (Monday). I said, "Are you sure?" He swung away from me, faced the wall, paced a little and then said, "Well, Sunday night!" (Also a lie. It was Sunday day!—why did he have to lie?) I only laughed and told him I'd talked to his sister and she'd told me all about his move and what he'd done all day. He didn't say anything.

Since he obviously wasn't going to make a definite date, I made attempts to pin him down. Finally, I said I'd be up tomorrow noon and we'd see. He agreed, but not very happily, it seemed to me.

He started moving away from me, keeping his distance, took off his coat, looked at the clock, put it on again. I was waiting hopefully, wishing he'd show some signs of capitulation. But just then Allen came in, so N left very abruptly. However, he seemed happy.

The next day I was going to N's apartment at noon! I was so happy and eager and excited! At last the time we had waited for so long was beginning. Now it should only be a matter of working out details from day to day on how we would manage to meet! I felt wonderful! The time went so terribly slow that morning!

Just exactly at the arranged time I went over to the apartment. I was very scared, excited, and fearful of being seen. When I knocked on the door I was so relieved when N came and opened it!

He was all dressed up in new pants and a white shirt. He looked so nice! He was very nervous, eager, happy and proud. But I didn't particularly like being shushed as I came in--it rubbed that raw place that made me feel N was ashamed of me! And the apartment was gruesome. This I expected--N had admitted as much, but there had been no attempt made to improve its ugliness--which caused me another small, passing twinge of disappointment in N. X

He fixed me a very nice, too big lunch in a fussing, pressing manner of great hospitality. And he made love to me. We were both nervous and embarrassed. There wasn't much time to talk, but I offered to come Saturday, having given the matter some thought in the meantime. So I was rudely shocked when N said he might not be there Saturday--our first Saturday after this long anticipated move, and after all his allusions to Saturdays! He merely said he had other things to do. X

When he explained what they were, I was even more suspicious, because it was something not only very vague and something N knew better than to count on, but it was also something and somebody in which N had never shown any interest in before. In short, he claimed he had a tentative date with Hal, of all people! It sounded too false for anything, and I didn't know what to think! Offering to jeopardize my reputation by trying to come on Saturday was a great sacrifice for me and I was deeply, deeply hurt and suspicious at his sudden change in attitude. Then he went on to say "he'd let me know Friday." This was only a dim consolation for me--just another one of his vague promises--he never let me know about anything!

Our noontime was up and I had to go then. As I went warily, but dazedly, out the front door of the apartment I ran right into one of the more gossipy Republic employees, who rather acted as if he'd seen me come

out and was waiting to waylay me. "Oh no!" I thought to myself,--I'd forgotten that the front door of N's apartment building faced the wide windows of a favorite eating place of Republic employees across the street! "This is not going to work! This is going to be bad!" I tried to be nonchalant, but was too dreamy, and I was not very successful. "This will reverberate," I thought to myself.

7
N had not said anything about my coming the next noon or any other noon. MY idea was to come every noon--maybe have him give me a key and go early and fix our lunbh or something, but nothing was said and I was too unsure of him to suggest it until he mentioned it first.

I had an unavoidable lunch date the next day. I don't remember if I explained that to N or not. I rather think I did, because I was making a point of being frank with him no matter how he treated me. Anyway I didn't go the next day and the problem now was how to create an opportunity for him to ask me again. This was Thursday, and I was supposed to hear from him Friday, which I now knew he'd figure was soon enough to get together, barring anything better. But I also knew by now that if contact was to be kept up I'd have to do it. Also, it seemed from his past actions that he was apt to be mad and revengeful if I didn't see him the next day, even though no definite plans had been made and I had valid reasons.

Besides, at this time I had some very serious physical troubles that worried me terribly. They were of a nature that I preferred not to tell anyone, even N, but carried potential of great disaster--especially for N and me. Anyway, I was beside myself with worry and really in no mood to see N that next day, but I was afraid to change my habit pattern. So I went through the Republic building with my evening delivery as usual. I was too early for the bus, and, for once, was really rather hoping N wouldn't be there, as I felt old, ugly and apathetic with my worry.

He was there, however, and he seemed startled and for some reason, not too happy to see me. In fact his manner was unwelcoming. He acted very busy and nervous, but did stop work when I came in. Did I fancy I saw his hands shake? He said, "What do you say?" in that challenging manner that usually portended that he was mad in some way. I was careful not to say anything provocative in reply. All the time I was there he seemed to have his guard up. He roamed the room, "guarded" the door, stayed poised in the doorway as he talked. He acted very scared and not a bit intimate. He even kept urging me to catch the bus--in fact finally verbally dismissed me sooner than necessary. I left feeling very depressed and puzzled. "What in the world was wrong with him now?"

It seemed that N's moving to an apartment of his own was not working out to be the nice thing it was supposed to at all. In fact, it was not working. It was all going wrong. Everything seemed to be going wrong. The sort of "magical" luck that had been with us so long seemed to have disappeared. Disaster hung imminent, it seemed. We were not getting along. Something was all wrong between us and I could not figure it out or seem to change it.

I kept having misgivings at this time about N's ability to carry through on a project like this apartment procedure. Somehow it seemed too sophisticated, too mature a venture for him. I predicted that he wouldn't be able to cope with it--that it would be "too much" for him--to myself, that is. Anyway, I was very unhappy. We just couldn't seem to "get together" on this apartment thing.

The next day was the Friday N had said he'd "let me know about" Saturday. I was very anxious and waited in at noon, rather expecting him to come. He did not.

I was very busy with work all afternoon, so was unable to go see him. And I was very mad. I kept trying to find time to write him a note to help dissipate my mood so I could work, but didn't even have time to do

that. I wanted to write a real, blasting note and put it under his door if I could manage it.

By the time I finished my work and delivered it, it was late, yet I was obsessed with a desperate compulsion to write this note--a note that would either end or clear up everything.

The only place I could find to write in a hurry was the rest room in the Bon and I tried composing this important message in public with no clock to show me whether I was missing my last bus or not. I had a very hard time--I was too confused, too emotionally upset and too hurried. It seemed a very long and very nasty note to me when I got it finished.

I hurried over to his apartment--almost sure this was the night he went to get a haircut and had just slipped the note under the door when I turned to confront him coming down the hall.

He acted a little hesitant, but I proceeded to show him I was really mad and ready to flounce off to catch my bus. When he acted curiously "quiet" and "lingering", instead of mad, too, I calmed down somewhat and said I'd miss the bus and we'd talk. This time I recaptured my note on my way into the apartment.

I collected my breath (which was bad from too much smoking over my physical worries. N did not smoke and I tried not to smoke around him.) while N paced the floor nervously, waiting for me to blast off at him.

When I asked him, he said he did remember saying he'd let me know Friday, but he claimed he said he'd see me, and I should have known he'd meant he'd come to the office. "Why didn't he?" his was his excuse he launched into ~~the~~ +

When he went to buy his food for lunch, he found he had no money on him and had to take extra time to

get some. Then, by the time he'd eaten his lunch, there wasn't time to come and see me. (I was not happy with the revelation that his lunch was more important to him than me!) Later, there was no way to call me--no private phone in the office he could use--no way to get out to phone. He planned to "go out in the evening and phone". then he inadvertently revealed that he'd planned to spend the evening at his sister's from where he was always afraid to phone me! (So, I thought, letting me "sweat" about why he broke a promise to me was of no consequence at all. Was this love?)

I pointed out his past unreliability in such matters as phoning. He then made remarks to the effect that IF circumstances proved favorable and "luck" was with him, he would carry out a suggested idea to see me--"I shouldn't worry". ! ! !

We were standing very close in the kitchen now. I asked (fearfully) "Why don't you quit?"--offering to release him again. He said nothing for a minute. Then, "Do you want me to?" I said, "No." and put my head on his shoulder; impulsively.--I missed another bus. All the time I was conscious of my bad breath. We talked a few minutes more while he fixed his dinner and then I went to catch the bus.

I waited and waited and finally discovered there was no bus at this time. So I phoned the kids (one can manage to phone when one wants!) and dashed back to tease N for a few minutes.

I was surprised that he seemed quite glad to see me and anxious to chatter, (but I did catch the next bus!) He told me he couldn't see me Saturday as his sister would be working and was coming to lunch with him. So there went our Saturday hopes--if he was going to allow that routine to establish itself' He said he would come at noon Monday and let me know about coming to lunhh at the apartment. I told him that I had a lunch date that day and might miss him. He said he'd leave a note if I wasn't there. (He'd never yet left me a note--I presumed because he was self-conscious about his inability to write English.) It was all very vague and unpromising, but the best I could do, so I left.

Saturday evening I was listening with all my heart to an Italian girl on TV singing "Souvenir d'Italie" and was annoyed to be called to the phone by an old friend who was in town. However, I was overjoyed when I realized it gave me an excuse to go to the hotel across from N's apartment on a Sunday. Then it happily occurred to me I could give N a real nice surprise after our losing our Saturday date--I could go early and see him first! He usually spent Saturdays at his sister's but I understood him to say he spent Sundays at home.

I planned and contrived very, very carefully--how I would take him some dishes he needed for his apartment as an excuse and all.

It all worked out as I planned, too, although I had some scary moments, especially when I saw some friends parked in full view of the entrance just in time to avoid them.

So, on Sunday, all dressed up, I got away from everyone and carefully sneaked up to N's door all excited and my heart pounding. No one answered! I was sick with disappointment! I suspected maybe he was just not answering, so I left my package at the door and left and then went back. The package was still there. Then it occurred to me to check the mail box. Saturday morning's mail was still there! N must have left Saturday morning and didn't have his sister to luncheon at all! I went onto my lunch date.

By this time my physical worries so beset me that I determined I'd have to see a doctor. I was almost beside myself with worry and lack of anyone to confide in and beset with my quandaries about N. I had set Monday, the 8th of December as my deadline, so Monday I phoned a doctor. Of course, I was unable to get an appointment for a couple of weeks yet, so I still had my worries.

Monday was also the day N was supposed to come at noon or leave a note to tell me about coming to lunch at his place. I got involved in things I couldn't help and did not get back to the office until 1.30.

There was no sign of N OR a note. I was very mad. X

That afternoon a chance came up that gave me a feeble excuse to call N and ask him to deliver some drawings to me. I called at his office. He was not there. (And he claimed he could never get out to a phone!) I left a message for him to call back. He did not.

I called again and cancelled it all, so N would know it was not a personal call. This time he was there and they called him to the phone. He claimed no one had told him about the call. He sounded delighted to do the errand for me and said he would bring them at noon tomorrow.

(Added to my other worries was the fact that this week, when I wanted to establish noon-dates with N, this out of town friend monopolized my noon-times. Each day she expected to leave and each day she was still here and I had to have lunch and smoke and drink with her. The smoking and drinking made me self-conscious about seeing N, as he didn't do either and I knew he would smell it on me and be disgusted, even though he didn't exactly disapprove. This went on all week--from day to day--the friend never left till the week end. In one way I was glad, because I didn't feel much like seeing N when I was so worried. I felt old and tired and anxious to dissipate and, since I had such a complex about being older than N anyway, I was just as glad not to see him when I was in the mood and condition I was.)

So--I was afraid I might be busy at noon again, so I asked N when at noon he was coming, not getting a chance to explain about the lunch date. He said he'd come before he ate--at 12. ("hy couldn't he have done that before?) I went on working because I had a great deal of work to do.

In fact, I had so much that I missed my usual 5.10 bus. It was an unusual thing for me to stay so late. I wonder what things would have been like if I hadn't?--for at 5.10, when I ordinarily caught the bus, N

appeared at Allen's door with the delivery he'd told me he'd definitely bring at noon tomorrow! He didn't even try our door!

I didn't know what to think. I wonder how he felt when he saw I was still there? If he felt anything he showed no surprise or reaction at my being there at that unusual time. I was curt and business-like with him because I was very busy and in a hurry. I was surprised that he seemed to linger.

So I told him to wait and I'd walk downstairs with him--I wanted to talk to that boy! Surprisingly, he seemed in a very good mood--I couldn't figure it. (This was the Monday he was supposed to have let me know about coming to lunch maybe the next day or later. I was gone at noon hour, but he didn't leave a note. Now I had called him, giving him an excuse for a trip to the office, which he said he'd do Tuesday noon, before he ate. As yet he did not know that I might have a lunch date. He seemed happy and glad to do the errand. Yet here he appeared at a time when he must have expected me to be gone with the delivery he'd promised to make tomorrow. And he wouldn't leave notes. Yet he seemed complaisant enough--he didn't act a bit guilty!)

I couldn't figure it any more than I could figure what he was trying to do in the way he'd been treating me lately. I was about at the end of my rope. He had gone through all the agony and trouble of moving out away from his family and, for the first time in his life had started to live alone--all because, he said, he wanted to see more of me. And yet, as soon as we were free to see each other, he stalled, lied, made dates and broke them, took up activities with people he'd heretofore scorned, using them as an excuse not to see me. He made no special efforts to contact me, make arrangements to meet, or even try to work out the suggestions I made. In fact, he seemed to go out of his way to avoid me and my visiting him! And the lies, feeble excuses, and lack of attempt to keep in touch with me!

Yet he always seemed so glad to see me and was eager and grateful whenever I contacted him for a meeting and always maintained he'd see me and call me and wanted to keep things going.

He claimed I worried too much--(I should just be quiet and patient, evidently)--he'd come to me when he could--. But the times he could seemed so few and far between and he gave up opportunities for such feeble reasons and he made so little effort--I didn't know what to think. All I could deduce was that for some reason he was giving me what is generally observed as the "run-around". Even if he didn't mean to, he certainly showed all the symptoms and I was on guard--even if he wasn't! He certainly didn't act lately the way a man eagerly in love usually acts--that was for sure!

And, things were coming to a time crisis. He would soon be leaving for Spokane for two weeks Christmas vacation and Mike would be home for a couple of weeks and we would be forced apart for two weeks at least. As things were going, I could not see how we were going to renew contact afterwards to continue with the spring idyll he had promised me for so long now. In fact, I was beset with the haggard suspicion that his actions appeared to be intended as a "gentle" let-down pending his chance to get away at Christmas time and just not renew our relationship.

To me, one of the best aspects of this relationship was our mutual sad agreement that our love was a time-fated thing which we would recognize when the unhappy time came when we would be forced to part--not because we wanted it, but because it had to be--and not because we forced it.

It seemed to me now that N was forcing things--he was not being true to our pact of having what fun we could while we could--and, worst of all, he was not sharing his decision with me. Not only that, but he was using such deceitful ways and means to accomplish his obscure purpose. His all insulted me and hurt me terribly, aside from the fact that, if it were true he no longer loved or wanted me, he was humiliating

me by appearing to jilt me when I had tried so hard to be such an understanding good sport about knowing I was too old for him.

I was aware that I was not as nice company for N as I had been. I was being cross and demanding and pursuing and insistent. I knew I was acting in a way to alienate any man. Besides, between us loomed the usual frustration of sex--if we did, we worried ourselves unhappy, if we didn't we frustrated ourselves unhappy. I knew this was bothering N terribly. He felt a responsibility for our reputations that I didn't quite share. He revealed his youth in his obsessive concern with "what people will think".

But, even if I wasn't as pleasant, it seemed to me N was old enough to understand that we were going through a "trouble-time" and it couldn't last forever--if he would only be patient! The trouble was I wanted to keep in contact and share even our troubles, while N seemed to think we could and should just stay away from each other until happy times just occurred of their own sweet will--or something---oh well--

All these quandaries I wanted to settle with N before he went to Spokane. I wanted to know what I was going to do with my life in the immediate future. I wanted to prepare--if we were going to part I wanted to brace myself and have a last, nice farewell, or, if I was going to spend the spring being a "fallen woman" I wanted to subtly start changing my habits to fit my new role. If N was tiring of me I wanted to save my pride a little and not just be jilted, etc. etc. Whatever happened, I did want a Saturday or something with N before he left.

All in all, time and circumstances were pressing me--perhaps both of us--against the wall. I just had to know where we stood. I wanted to go on. I wanted our idyll before we parted. I wanted to know what N wanted and what he felt he must do and why. It was in this mood I started to walk down the stairs with N that night.

I knew we had to talk. I didn't know how or where we'd get a chance. I hadn't had time to think of that in this last sudden change of circumstance. I had hoped circumstances would offer us an opportunity. I would gladly miss a bus and go to N's place to talk if things seemed to go that way.

So we walked downstairs together. N was saying something about having to pay a dentist bill and I was thinking, "Well, I know he pays in cash, so that means he'll ride the bus at least part way with me and we can talk," (It was not until later that I realized it would not have been my bus he'd take anyway.)

When we got to the street, he announced that he was going home--he was not taking the bus--and I realized he had only been throwing a smoke-screen for Allen's benefit. (At this point, if he had asked me to go to the apartment with him, I would have, but he did not say anything.)

I was not ready to part from him, however, so I asked him to accompany me around to the library, where I had to leave some books. To my surprise, he agreed.

As we walked he launched into an apropos-of-nothing explanation about Sunday. He mentioned the package of dishes, saying, "Why did you do that?" I thought the reason obvious enough, so I evaded the question and explained about the lunch date instead. He went on trying to justify himself. I cut him short with a caustic remark about Saturday's mail being in the box. I gave him credit for quick thinking (or perhaps the truth?) when, with hardly a hesitation, he replied that it was just ads, so he'd left it there.

Then he started explaining that his sister would be coming apt to be coming on week days for lunch as well as Saturdays now--and he couldn't very well tell her he was "busy"----"his was too much! I interrupted angrily and said, "So that's that, isn't it?"

(Why couldn't he tell his own sister he was busy? Couldn't he lead a life of his own at all?) He looked startled. He asked me to repeat. I did so, adding, "First your sister came to lunch on Saturday -- now she's coming on weak days!" He started to protest--"What can I do--?" and I said nastily, "I've broken lots of dates to see you. You could say you're busy--"

We came to the library at this point. I asked him to wait, but didn't expect him to. I figured from the things he'd just done and said that he was obviously trying to provoke a separation, and, since he had, he would no doubt just walk off and leave me. But he didn't. He waited. And I was not quite sure what that meant.

When I joined him again, he had his "holding in" look and started a lot of defensive chatter. I wasn't listening as I knew the time we had to talk was short--until I came to the bus stop--and I was trying to remember the important message that I wanted to get across to him. (It was a strange coincidence also, that we walked up the side street instead of the Avenue where, I found out later, both my mother and my sister were cruising looking for me to give me a ride. It would have been hard to explain why I was with N when I was late. By the way, if it seems inconsistent that I should expect N to break dates for me and yet I was involved in dates all week, I wish to say that, if at any time, N had asked me to his apartment at noon that week, I would have broken my other date quickly and willingly.)

Then I remembered that I had to see N once before he left, no matter what--and it had to be after my doctor appointment. The state of my health might make a great deal of difference to our future. If there was something wrong with me or if I were merely starting the menopause, such a sign of age might well make a great deal of difference in N's attitude toward me!

So I interrupted him to ask him when he was leaving for Spokane. He multiplied my doubts when, instead of giving me a direct answer, he started to hem and haw and evade. I snapped at him to give me a definite answer, but all he would tell me was the general week-end. Then I said I had to see him once more, but it had to be after the 17th. He became very insistent on knowing why it had to be then and, when I finally told him, he wasted two blocks defending himself from any blame in the matter. (Really, my appointment was for the 16th, but I had learned a trick or two from N.)

But it didn't stop me from scolding him about lying and evading and avoiding me. For the first time I really mentioned the matter and told him off. I even played my one, last, desperate ace-in-the-hole. I said, "If you lie to me once more, or try to avoid seeing me this one last time, I'll stoop to blackmail. Since you're so afraid of your sister finding out, I'll tell her all about us." I had never talked to N like this before! He considered what I'd said but remained silent.

By now we were nearing the bus stop and I felt all was lost anyway, so I started unburdening myself. I said I didn't like the way he'd been treating me--like a "streetwalker"--(the only times he wanted to see me was when there was a chance to be alone). He said something about--"that's why we shouldn't have started." I mentally filed this for future mulling over.

By this time we had reached the bus stop and parting was imminent and people were all around us. I sensed a feeling that we both would like to salvage something from this mess. We were right across the street from N's apartment and I wanted so badly for him to ask me to come in awhile and talk and settle things--we needed so badly to talk things out, I felt. I had missed the bus before when I was late and would have again.

But he never mentioned it and pride and anger were crackling between our two sad hearts. We both knew we were ruining everything, but there seemed to be nothing at the moment we could do about it.

So we stood on the public corner and hurled veiled threats at each other (I being thankful that he didn't just leave me standing there.) I said, with martyr overtones, "You are free"--meaning I wasn't going to run after him. To my alarm, he looked "glad." So then I accused him of being relieved--(to be rid of me). He protested he "didn't like the sneaking and so on". I said, "You make too much of it all". He didn't like that--he pulled out his old chant I hadn't heard since I'd first known him--"I am as I am, and WE (Italians) do things differently". A pause and feeling smoldering between us--then, "Maybe I changed my mind--we could stop the other and just be friends." This hurt! These were the words I'd been afraid I was going to hear! His arrow sank right up to the hilt in my biggest worry. (I thought, "This is IT--it's true--he no longer wants me!") Besides one of my biggest peeves lately was that he had rejected and stopped all our mere friendship activities and seemed to be interested only in rendezvous. Now, if he was stopping the rendezvous, there would be nothing left! He had gradually built up a wall of unavailability around himself. I had no way of reaching him any more. I exclaimed, "What's the use of that?" He smiled.

Then I realized I had echoed his very words that I had once laughed at.

All this time people were looking at us and apparently listening, but we were too desperate to care. I assured him again he was free--no matter what. I hoped he would come back with some offer, some show of thank some parting kindness--but all I got was that same musing, "pleased" look on his face had puzzled me so once before when I had told him people said he had a crush on Norma. And incoherent mutterings about no one understanding him--another one of his original stock phrases I hadn't heard in a long time.

I girded my loins and bluntly said, "You'll never be happy until you can forget about Nick." He began protesting, refuting. I decided there was nothing more to be lost, anyway, so I went on, saying things I never dared mention before. I said, "You have no friends, you are forfeiting friendships--and you can't go through life that way--" He replied with much chatter--something about he "should have stayed in New York" (from which he fled because his uncle was trying to instigate his marrying his cousin)--"where he could find friends" (Italian, he meant) and much more chatter about his work goals, his careful plans and his success schemes--I wasn't listening--I had heard it all many times before and I considered it a waste of precious last moments together--the bus was coming--While he was chattering about his GREAT PLAN I was advising him how he could pick up girls on the street--and he wasn't listening to me, either--but a bystander was.

The bus came--and the millenium!--N had stayed with me up to the last moment, but now he turned and left and I boarded the bus--and the future--with a heavy, heavy heart.

All this seemed like it had lasted for hours--a year's emotions were involved and a year's love destroyed--all in less than half an hour--and on a public street corner!

The Ending

I did not intend or expect to see N the next day--or, indeed, until my last "date" with him. It seemed all over. It was too soon--sooner than I'd hoped or planned--and certainly not the way I'd hoped or planned, but at the age of forty-three, who argues with Life?

I mailed him the following letter, which I considered a "bad" letter and knew it had alienating powers, but I no longer had anything to hope for. At this point I was more prompted by revenge, pride and self-pity than I was by the emotions that enabled me to get along with N.

"My poor, dear N, (I wrote)

I did not offer you my friendship again, because you have refused it along with all the others. Only time will tell if it will be worth it to you.

"That hurts if that you did not trust me and tell me when you wanted to stop, as I thought we had agreed to do. But had to use the same sneaky methods to force the woman to break off with you that you must have used on the other women, so that you would be free to do what you want to do, and not have to take the blame. Can't you see that part of the attraction between us was the impossibility of the whole thing? Neither of us wants to marry anyone right now. We both would rather have our work. Again, maybe time will help you understand better about you and me.

Don't strain your clever brain trying to think of ways to avoid seeing me before you leave. I may not. If I do it will only be to tell you something that may be useful to you in the future. Maybe God has a lesson in humility in store for you in certain matters.

I hope I wasn't wrong in thinking there is a fine man behind the bitter, young, Italian opportunist. I do understand what you are trying to do. I admire you for it. I know you will succeed even at the price of personal happiness.

Best of luck,

Lorna"

I do not know where these ideas in this letter sprang from. They were certainly not my true convictions or feelings at all!

Tuesday was a very busy day and, because I got involved in having drinks with my out-of-town friend, Sylvia, an unprecedented thing happened--I had to stay and work that evening! I had no chance to eat dinner and, by the time I met my deadline at the paper, I had forty minutes to kill before the last bus home. I was hungry, tired, cold, and wet, for it was raining. The only place to eat or get off the street was the hotel where Sylvia and her husband were staying and I did NOT want to get involved with them again.

I debated about dropping in on N for food and shelter. But I had liquor on my breath~~er~~, so I'd have to keep my distance, and I was afraid the visit might be interpreted as an abject plea for him to make advances to me, and I was really not in the mood--too tired and unhappy. But it did offer me an opportunity for "revenge" for his "maybe I changed my mind" remark. I would show him I could be "just friends". Then he'd be sorry, because I know ~~he~~ didn't really mean that. I went.

I went to his door and knocked and asked if I could have food and shelter, and explained the circumstances. He seemed pleased. He was very friendly. I had expected him to be surly and unwelcoming. He came to the door wearing his pajama tops with his trousers and seemed embarrassed about it until I chose to ignore it. Evidently I had interrupted him at his art work.

After I got in I needed a kleenex. He said there was some in the bathroom. He seemed alarmed when I went in to get some and found his shorts hanging to dry. I ignored that, too, and he relaxed.

He fixed me much food in his over-fussing way and chattered, chattered, chattered. I kept my distance carefully and offered him no encouragement, though I didn't want to be that way. Because of his remark that day and my liquor breath my pride would not let me do otherwise. He seemed to sense my mood and kept his distance, too.

While I was eating, he said, "When you finish eating, I'll start to work." Now, this could have been his usual double-talk for love-making, but also he was quite capable of rudeness of going on to do his art work while I was there. I was not sure he didn't mean the latter, so I dared not make a mistake, and pretended to ignore the remark.

Later he mentioned he was moving to a different apartment in the same building when he got back from Spokane. He seemed to be "cuing" me somehow, but I couldn't figure out how I was supposed to react. All I could think of was that the new apartment would offer less privacy for rendezvous and he was

offering me no encouragement to come and see it, so I assumed he intended to "hide" from me. And I ignored that remark. Then he baited me about his having girl friends. I also ignored that.

He was being very "formal" and somehow tonight he looked very young and very "woppy" to me. I kept thinking of my breath and the nasty letter coming to him tomorrow and my physical worries and what a foolish spot I'd be in if I capitulated tonight. So I kept my emotions stifled and soon got ready to leave.

As I went toward the door he volunteered reassurances to me that it was "all right" for me to come--not to worry about it". But he was a little late with his reassurances and again I wasn't sure what he meant and so, still afraid of risking a rebuff, I said, "Goodbye" instead of our usual "I'll see you". Then I added "merry Christmas--I won't see you again before then--". He showed no particular reaction, just laughed in a friendly way and shut the door. I left, hurt and unhappy, wishing he had grabbed me in his arms and said everything was all right. As it was I boarded the bus feeling "washed out" and overwhelmed with a dull resignation.

Wednesday I had an errand at the Republic that took me by N's office. He was there and saw me go by. He ducked his head back in his work. I deliberately went on. For the first time in a year I didn't stop by to see him. I hurt, hurt, hurt.

I wanted so badly to make up with N, but I couldn't make the overtures this time. I was assailed with doubts as to why he didn't seem to want to use the opportunities of his apartment for us now that he had it. And his words, "Maybe I changed my mind" made me burn with shame whenever I thought of them. I didn't want to be guilty of running after a man who didn't want me! And his allusions to association with Joe and having girls and so on--I kept thinking maybe he was hoping and making attempts to branch out into younger affairs.

And I had promised not to stand in the way of that which he should do. Evidently the time I predicted had come--when I had to gracefully give up my young lover, but oh, it hurt, hurt, hurt so. I was suffering terribly.

Thursday, Dec. 11. I had to repair a drawing before giving it to the engravers. As I've said I usually did this in N's office. I was excited and hopeful at the excuse. But when N was not there I was disappointed.

I was afraid he'd think I was pursuing him so I had the office girls locate him for me--he was at Hal's--and asked him on the phone for permission to use his office. As he answered the phone his voice sounded happy at first on hearing me, then suddenly fell (and my heart with it) and he merely said yes, it was o.k.

I couldn't find what I needed in N's fanatically neat office, so I called him again as to the supplies I needed. While I did my work I was so nervous I could hardly do it. I was afraid N would come and afraid he wouldn't. When time passed and he didn't I found myself getting madder and madder. I planned to phone him and sarcastically inform him when I left.

I was just preparing to leave when he suddenly appeared. He acted a bit startled when he saw me, as if he hadn't expected me to be still there. Then he was his polite, business-like self until I said, "I was going to call you and tell you when it was 'safe' to come back." He backed off. I kept "twitting" him in double-talk. He didn't respond. Suddenly he muttered some fake excuse and disappeared. (At last he had walked out on me as I had so often feared he would.)

I was afraid, then, and very mad at the failure of my hopes. I had had no intention of leaving a note, but now I felt a compulsion to do so. I wrote nastily,

"Someday I'll learn to quit patting stray dogs. I didn't intend to see you today, but since I have and you were so unfriendly?--unkindly?--there has to be another note. I wish we could have waited till after Christmas to settle this. Christmas is such a bad time to be unhappy--Don't be bitter. There's no hard feeling on my part--maybe we can be friends again--later--". I left.

These notes and letters! I knew I was doing the wrong thing bombarding N with them, but I seemed obsessively compelled to do so--and such strange, unlooked for things came out in them. But somehow I couldn't help myself.

It was true about waiting till after Christmas. That was one of the things I was suffering over--why couldn't N have played along until after Christmas? I had so much family mood to sustain for the holiday season and I did not want to go through it with a broken heart. Part of my anger at N was his thoughtlessness about this.

That night I had to work in the evening again. (I thought--as I'd thought before--if N had only been understanding and sharing with me we could have worked out ~~opportunities~~ to see each other somehow--like these increasing number of evenings I had to work while the holiday rush was on--what opportunities they afforded!)

By this time I was so worried and distraught I felt I would do some mad, desperate thing if I couldn't talk to somebody. There was no one I could confide in except N. So I decided I'd go to his apartment once more. I had to talk to him to preserve myself!

He was sure to be there on a Thursday evening. He never went anywhere except to his sister's and that was almost always on week ends. I walked around the building trying to see if there was a light on where his apartment should be. But it was a hidden corner and I was not quite sure. There was a light where

I imagined his apartment might be, but I was nervous and confused and afraid of being seen, so I never really settled it for sure. (I know now I could not have seen his light from the street.)

I went in and knocked. No one answered the door. Remember, I was thinking I'd seen a light "in the bathroom", so when I heard thumping--rhythmic thumping on the wall between his and the next apartment--the wall where his davenport was--my heart turned over. I couldn't imagine where he'd be on a Thursday night (I never did find out)--and what was that thumping?

I suspected he just wasn't answering so I ran down the hall aways and hid. Almost immediately a door opened in the alcove containing N's and another door, there was frantic whispering and a woman fled down the hall and down a nearby stairway that I surmised must lead to the basement and out a side entrance. (I worried over that stairway for months and finally found out it was true.) I just caught a glimpse of a cheap-looking woman in a short, cheap-looking fur jacket--a woman who could easily have been a whore. (Thank God! *She looked cheap!*)

So I sneaked back and knocked on the door again. There was only silence. It was only about nine o'clock--too early for anyone to be in bed--where could N be? Was I imagining things? A little devil reminded me of N's alarm the other night when I found his underwear drying in the bathroom.

I left to go home with a heavy, heavy heart, but mad, mad, mad. In a way I realized this was a blessing in disguise. I needed something to jolt me out of mooning after N.

So the next day I went to N's office about 11.30 to see if he would talk to me. He was there and he was very, very nasty. He was the nastiest I'd ever seen him. In fact, I couldn't believe anyone could be so nasty. I begged him to be a little king and

talk or let me talk, but he was very emphatic. He said, "When I'm through, I'm through!" I finally got him to say he'd meet me at the apartment and we could talk. I doubted him. He said, "When I say I'll do a thing I always mean it!" (I was shocked at such self-delusion.) I left, still doubting he'd meet me.

I planted myself in the restaurant across the street and ordered a cup of coffee so I could watch for him to go into the apartment. He did. So I went over.

It seemed natural to be in the apartment when he let me in and it eased the strain somewhat. N proceeded to get lunch. I noticed he was fixing some for me--a good sign--and I launched right into my story.

It seemed to mollify him, though he offered me no help, no reassurances, no sympathy. He asked me why I hadn't told him before. I said I hadn't wanted to worry him. Then he launched into self-righteous self-defense. He seemed a little alarmed at my doubt and started telling me how he was "different"

I started to question him. "You did like me once, didn't you?" He hesitated. I said, "I don't mean love" (I did, but I saw he wouldn't admit to that.) He nodded, sadly. He assured me, when I asked, that he had had no malicious, premeditated intentions of casting me off. Among other things he went into a silly explanation of the reason he liked Norma--that she reminded him of a girl at home, but she wasn't what he thought--not the same at all.

Then he chattered. About his aims in life, his own ideas of himself, and revealed his almost pride in being "misunderstood" and his distrust of women and marriage. "He claimed his reason for treating me as he did lately was the best way to keep out of trouble and his intention was to gradually ease me into the understanding that that part was over--.

I would have been terribly hurt except I had a feeling that we were being merely defensive and not truthful with each other. Underneath all this chatter I sensed our hearts yearning. In fact, his words impressed me as a lot of bologna (Italian, of course). So I countered with saying I had decided we were all through, too, but was just keeping it going so as not to risk hurting him--a lot of baloney (American!)

I found myself repeating all the nice things I'd ever said about him. He lapped it up like a hungry puppy. (I noticed he was getting fat) I gathered, as a small last bit of comfort, that in his conversation he revealed that he'd simply walked out on a girl when he came to America, too, although his version didn't judge himself that way. At least I wasn't the only one. I left, feeling better, but not much encouraged.

Monday (after a long, unhappy week-end) we stayed away from each other. This was something new and different--to stay away was different from being kept apart. I was very unhappy.

Tuesday, we stayed away. but it was the day I was to go to the doctor's. That morning I started to menstruate, so I couldn't go.

Wednesday was the day of my last visit to N as I had planned. I went to the cafe again for coffee so I could spy on N. I very much suspected he would try to avoid me. I had planned my procedure carefully in case I ran into people--and I did. One of the "girls" from N's office came in and sat with me. I kept an eye on the front door of the apartment. It was getting late for him to appear and he hadn't done so yet.

I decided I'd go over to the apartment and see if there was any mail in his box. As I went in the front door I glimpsed him going into the market. So I dashed upstairs and hid in a nearby hallway until I heard him go into his apartment. Then I knocked.

He opened the door to me. He was cool and nasty. He said, "I just got here." "nd I couldn't resist saying, "I know". He turned his back on me and disappeared into the bathroom, leaving me standing there. I called out to him and asked him if it was all right for me to have come. I got a nasty, "I guess" and a grunt (!?) in reply. He came out.

He was very nervous and ~~challenging~~. He started to fix his lunch, and, this time instead of going ahead and fixing me some, too, he stopped and asked me if I wanted some and when I politely refused, he didn't bother.

Then he asked me what had happened. I told him briefly and truthfully. After a bit we changed the subject. I thanked him for the "consideration" he'd shown me. He was unbelieving, then pleased and mollified. His mood changed, then, and he started to "glow". (I know of no better way to describe that particular mood of his.)

I said I wondered why he seemed to be jilting me lately. Instead of denying that he was trying to jilt me as I had hoped he would, he merely said he really didn't know and again rejected the idea of any malicious intent. I was not happy at his unconscious "admission" that something like that was recognized by him in his actions!

I said maybe I should thank him for being the stronger of the two of us and forcing me to do that which I should do. (I didn't really feel this--I was only trying to be nice.) He glowed, unbelieving.

I started to explain my new-found belief in the possibility of miracles after my experiences with him (N was raised a Catholic, though rejected it now) and he looked at me and listened so intently that I had to ask him to look the other way while I told him about my prayers for him. then he was really

pleased and unbelieving!. Then I said, point-blank, "I love you" and everything⁺ in him leaped into his eyes. So much so that it was hard for me to go on and explain what I intended to say and have to put that light out. I went on I meant "loving-kindness" kind of love, etc. He was completely baffled--obviously he didn't understand what I meant! "e said, "Thank you, but I don't believe anything any more."

I said, "It's free--no strings--if you'll only accept it". At this he turned suddenly and brushed tantalizingly close by me, giving me an affectionate feint to the chin as he went by. I thought for a second he was going to take me in his arms. "hy didn't he?

ut he only ran to show me his drawings for praise, a strange reaction of his that I've mentioned before. Then he started to chatter--back to Italy, and all the usual line I'd heard so many times before. I interrupted, "You just plain don't like Americans, do you?" He admitted it (even though I was an mer-ican?)

Then I told him some of my hate observations, but this was too deep for him--he didn't understand me. He said, instead, "Now you'll learn about people"--meaning hate, as evidenced in himself. I said, "Now you'll learn about people"--meaning kindness, as evidenced in myself. "e was now through with his lunch. We went into the other room.

There was still ten minutes left of what I'd told him would be my last visit to him. But, instead of paying attention to me, he picked up a letter he had gotten from home and started to open it, hinting strongly that I could go--he'd like to read his letter.

It was rude and impolite under any circumstances. I do not think he meant it as a rebuff--he simply was very anxious to read the news from home and I think he assumed that, since I'd been nice to him, all was well between us and I'd probably see him again.

Such was not so with me. I'd had enough suffering. If I had to suffer I might as well get it all over with. So I reluctantly started making my farewells.

I said, "This is IT--this is the end--(he was busy reading his letter and gave me very little attention)--"I won't see you again." He looked up briefly and casually remarked, "Oh, you can come to see me in my office." (I thought, "Oh, no you don't, boy! I'm not coming around to be further humiliated!") I shook my head and said, "No.--It will be a long time--meaning I had to stay away until the hurt was over, though I surprised myself when those words came out

By now, he seemed to sense what I was trying to tell him. He looked at me and nodded his head numbly this time. I impulsively kissed him on the cheek. He started. I had the feeling of another kiss hanging in the air--from where I'm not sure, but sensed, somehow, it wasn't right--so I turned reluctantly toward the door.

N followed me politely, letter in hand. He said, "I'm sorry for what I did to you." I had a feeling he only meant the last few weeks. I said, "It's all right". He said, "Next time I'll be more careful"--whatever that meant. (I've never been able to figure out whether it was an encouragement or a finality.)

Sometime along in here I made him shake my hand. was wary and reluctant, but finally did.

I opened the door, chattering something mixed up about advice on how to treat women. He pricked up his ears at this, but it was time to go--so I left.

I had mailed a laboriously written letter in Italian and some Christmas cards to his mother in Sicily that morning. It was an impulsive thing to do and its reverberations worried me, but I felt it had to be done--that N was only probably complicating his troubles by pretending to be happy to his family

and thereby not getting any backing or encouragement in the moves he was going to have to make for his own good. It was a letter written as a friend of N's, who liked him, but explained his situation and need truthfully. I did not know his mother, of course. (I think the letter did help in spite of the reactions it invoked--I noticed as time went on that his family seemed more amenable to the moves he contemplated.)

The next day I mailed N some cookies and a Christmas card--all very innocently under our family name, in case he opened it in front of his family. I couldn't bear to think of him lonely and unhappy on Christmas! But I didn't see him.

But I did have a funny experience. I was sitting in the office working a day or so after that, having forgotten all about the package, when I had an overwhelming feeling that N was very, very close beside me in the same room. I had a feeling he was coming. I looked at the clock, puzzled. It dawned on me this was just the time he'd be opening the Christmas package! Hope sprang up in me, but then something died and I knew he wasn't coming. He didn't.

I didn't see him Friday--

Or Saturday---

Or Sunday--

when he must have left for Spokane to be gone for two weeks. My heart was broken that I didn't hear from him before he left. He didn't even acknowledge my gift!

Monday--

before I left for work the mailman came with a package and a card from N. My heart melted completely! Even though the card was addressed to the whole family--even though they were some I'd given him in the first place--even though the gift was a silly novel I knew he'd had and didn't want and hadn't even bothered to read.

Tuesday--

Wednesday--

Thursday--

Friday--

Saturday--

Sunday--

Monday--

no Nick.

My heart was breaking. I hadn't been away from him so long and so utterly in a year! Christmas was an agony to get through. Even my family noticed my mood.

The Tuesday after Christmas I saw N's sister at work and she gave me a sisterly version of N's trip and his Christmas, with allusions to his playing with his little niece so much he didn't get much chance to work on the art lessons he had taken with him. It hurt me terribly to think of him "happily playing with a baby".

Wednesday--

Thursday--

Friday-- I went back to work, N would not be back to work till Monday.

And I knew I wouldn't see him. No matter what his private wishes were, I knew he would make no more overtures to me. Any overtures would have to be made by me. N would "prefer" to suffer. Whether he had done it consciously or not he had managed to alienate us by the time we were separated for Christmas. I knew I should consider this the end. Unless I made up with him--and I couldn't do it.

This time I was too sore and hurt to risk even a slight rebuff. My heart needed time to lick its wounds. I was great emotional turmoil and bewilderment, I needed time to think and evaluate. I knew it would be a long, long time before I could be "just friends" again.

The state of affairs on January 1, 1959, the time when N and I were supposed to be renewing our relationship on a better basis because he had a place of his own'--

What N was doing I knew by hearsay or what he had told me of his plans before. He would be coming back Monday and into a different apartment in the same building. He no longer lived with his sister and her family and they had settled their differences as I had predicted they would under less strain, and were having much better relationships with each other.

N's sister was monopolizing all his free time and he meekly let her. She came to eat lunch with him on week days and Saturdays when she worked and Friday nights she ate dinner with him. He spent all of his week-ends and holidays at their house, his sister either picking him up in her car and taking him back, or he took the other bus route from the one I took.

He was still working at the Republic and still making business sorties over to Hal's office, where I used to work. He had buried himself in a "smoke screen" of work, keeping up with his lonely correspondence art course in the evenings and working overtime at the Republic evenings and Saturdays to "catch up from his vacation" as he reported to his sister.

He had no new friends, no girl friends. His social life was nil as far as I knew. And his relationship with Joe seemed to have ended.

He never roamed the streets or shopped, doing only what errands he had to do --the bank, the barber's, the post office and back and forth from the apartment and work which were very near each other.

He had ^{not} made nor now made any attempt to let me know the location of his new apartment or invite me there. He wrote me no notes or letters. He never had and never would. I checked and found he still had no phone.

Nor would he use the pay phone--even his sister complained that he wouldn't. He had no car nor had ever acquired a driver's license and had given up all plans of doing either. He had quit riding the same bus I did. He had long since quit making visits to my office and had been more often nasty and uncomfortable than nice on the trips I had made to his office in the recent past.

So my chances at seeing him were negligible. He seemed to have built a "wall" around himself through which I could not penetrate. He was right back where he started when I first knew him--lonely and isolated and full of hate, bitterness and revenge--quick to blame everyone and everything for his condition and claiming he was "misunderstood" in spite of all his efforts.

I instinctively felt in my heart of hearts that N still cared and wanted me as much as I wanted him and would have liked for us to be happy again, but he knew no other way to settle his personal crises except to quit in anger and defeat and frustration, attacking and blaming everyone and hiding and suffering.

My original intent and all my efforts to help N would be wasted if things ended like this. I had wanted to help him to know how to love better and to dissipate some of his hate. This way he would not have learned anything.

Besides I could not let N go out of my life on this bitter note. We had had too much. We had been too much to each other.

I wanted to create a better ending than this--if it were merely a "friendly" one. All my thoughts and plans were now concentrating on watching for opportunities to re-establish better relations--at least to have a "happy ending".

But to do this I had to keep track of ^N and his activities. I had to be informed if and when he left, if he did, so I could effect an "ending". But I was too confused and hurt to approach him now. I could not bear the thought of humiliating myself for his possible hate, revenge, and rejection.

First I had to figure out things and let time heal my hurt a little, so I would be sure and calm when I did what I had to do--return to at least being friends.

Actually, I still wanted N. I still had quavering hopes for a reconciliation and maybe still a bit of happiness--at the very least a farewell embrace. One of my basic aims, knowing I could not have N for my own, was to create at least a happy memory for both of us--most of all for N, who needed the experience of being really loved. "When all this was accomplished, then I knew I must try to "forget" and face the future somehow.

What had I expected as an ending? When I knew I was falling in love with N I knew it "would have to end in parting. Try as I might I could not escape the grim realities of our position. I will not detail them again--I did it so many, many times--hoping to surmount them. The most inescapable of all was the difference in our ages.

I said to myself in the beginning--I must not let N. marry me. It would not work. I am too old to provide the wifely contributions a young man needs whether he knows it or not. The best I can do is give N a quality of love and understanding that is the utmost I have to give and then--though it kill me--send him on his way--a better, wiser, more mature man, I hope--more able to find and accomplish his real needs that I cannot furnish, and with an uncommonly sweet memory to sustain him.

I knew it would be hard. I knew I had cut out for myself a role that tragic novels are written about. I was aware of the agony I faced and doubted my

ability to go through with it unselfishly. Had I known--had I known--the difference between reading about tragedy and living it!--!

I was overwhelmed and deeply thankful when I discovered N was wise enough to be aware of the situation as I saw it. W

We agreed--we could not marry, but that we would have liked to if circumstances had been otherwise--that circumstances were impossible and we'd have to give each other up eventually--that we wished with all our hearts it might be otherwise--that we wished to postpone the parting as long as possible--that we wished to make each other happy and not to hurt each other--that we had been happy with each other. These things we had spoken of and knew we felt the same about.

There were other things that I knew and felt myself that I assumed N felt, but he never openly admitted. I knew our love was unique^{in its}--that neither of us had experienced just that depth and quality of love before. I knew our ultimate renunciation of each other would be for our own greater good, though it was not what we wanted. I expected to part regretfully, but resigned and peacefully, content and secure in memory, "happy" in whatever "happiness" the future might bring to the other and to always have a deep and understanding friendship between us no matter what happened to either of us in the future. To preserve all this, we sensed an unspoken agreement that we must not allow our love to become a sordid, public thing to be dragged around the market place, but something to keep "innocent" and "our own".

(I sometimes have wondered if that's why we subconsciously could not go through with the apartment thing--it was too sordid for the way we felt about each other. That we perhaps showed a greater respect and depth of feeling for each other by being incapable of it than by going through with it. Who knows?)

All N's allusions, responses and our emotions together led me to believe the forgoing was true for him, too. It was all implied in the looks and stumbling words of our last meeting. That is why it was the real farewell and no more was desired or necessary.

However, that is where we parted, I think. N never admitted these latter things to me, though I did to him. I really don't think he realized them himself. I certainly sensed he did not know what I was talking about half the time. As I told him during one of our last talks together, he had the capacity to understand. What I couldn't and didn't add was that he had not had the years of experience to understand.

That is where my great sadness and hopelessness came in--I sensed that time was against us here, too, as well as in the physical aging of my body. N had not had enough experience yet to appreciate the rarity and quality and uniqueness of our feeling for each other. He still clung to "youthful" illusions and delusions that he could still find that kind of love in a young woman that could give him everything else he wanted, too. He did not yet realize, if he ever would, that it was my age that made me able to love him as no other woman had loved him before. He did not know that it took an older woman to understand and appreciate such a difficult personality as his. He still wanted "to have his cake and eat it, too." He was not ready to commit himself. He was either too young or too shallow to fathom what I was giving him. I knew sadly, sadly that only time itself could bring him the necessary wisdom to enjoy our time together for what it was--without shame--without regrets. (And by the time he reached this knowledge I would be too old, too old to reap any benefits from it with him.)

And so, there was nothing I could do or hope for. His youth had parted us, (though he preferred to call it my age.) We had run the gamut too soon, more quickly than I had expected or wanted. My main regret was that we were not really through--we should have

reached the point where our differences outweighed our need for each other before parting, it seemed to me. But how can you tell a proud, young man that the love you feel for him is going to fade without terribly hurting his feelings?

So it was Time for my great, tragic Act, whether I was ready or not. I had to gird myself for the enacting of it in the very best manner I could bring about, so that I should not have to spend the rest of my life in futile regrets that I had let it all end in bitterness. I knew that "having Nick" would not make me happy forever--it could not be--it could not be.

So, during these unhappy weeks--that turned into months--I started writing up these daily notes I had kept and doing research on Italy, Italians and strange personalities like N's, trying to figure it all out and find a clue as to what really happened and what hope there was for the future and to try to ease the intolerable pain. I spent sleepless nights studying and suffering.

I don't think I've ever been so miserable so long in my life. A "allowed" myself about a month to "wallow" in my misery. Then I knew I must try to "forget" and face the future. It took much longer than that to end it all and reach workable moods and conclusions. I couldn't have faced it if I'd known beforehand what was ahead of me!

For awhile I found myself needing to keep up at least a proxy contact with N. I walked streets where I hoped to encounter him. I talked to people and contrived contacts where I knew I'd hear about him. I "made myself available" at the times and places we used to meet--like the bus. I kept "dressing for N". I dropped hints to mutual acquaintances that I hoped would reach him. I stayed in the office still during lunch hour "just in case"

I hoped and hoped I'd see him or run into him or he'd come to me--or something, but he seemed to have disappeared from the face of the earth.

I even wrote him letters, since he'd made himself so unavailable it was the only way I could reach him. But he never acknowledged or answered them. The letters did not plead for a reconciliation--he had me too scared for that--they tried to explain and solve things in desperate hope of a better ending. But nothing--silence.

I did everything but go to see him. This I could not do yet. I did not trust my emotions in such a public, exposed place as his office and I was afraid to go to the apartment--afraid his sister would be there--afraid he'd be so terribly angry with me it would only make matters worse.

While I was doing research on Italians I came across a book that excited me terribly with its pertinacy to one of N's major problems. I was so excited I wrote a letter to the author, telling about N. Weeks went by and there was no answer and I felt more and more like a fool.

One of the most rewarding contacts I hope to keep up was with N's sister, whom I encountered on rare occasions on the bus or at work. I had tried hard to get acquainted with her and make her like me--because she was so close to N. He seemed to like me and was always pleasant and chatty whenever I approached her, but she never made any advances to me. I did not know how much she knew or suspected or how she really felt about me, and I was always afraid of giving us away when I talked to her. I secretly hoped if I could win her over that she might possibly be a help and champion for me--that she might possibly "understand". Yet I rarely saw her and our contacts were always brief, unpredictable and public.

Now it seemed odd that, although I was making more of an effort to encounter her, that she seemed to suddenly be more often on the bus, or in my daily path. I eagerly--sometimes too eagerly--took every advantage I could of these contacts.

So this was the feeling, mood and situation with which I entered the new year and faced N's unseen, return from Spokane.

Also I had been to the doctor by this time--or about this time and found my physical worries were nothing imminent. I was relieved of that burden, anyway.

During Christmas vacation it so happened that my kids decided to rip up some old Life magazines we had been keeping. Now I had noticed that these contained article about the American invasion of Sicily during the war. I had often debated about showing them to N. I thought it would help him to see that we Americans did not hate his countrymen as much as he seemed to think and that it might work for better understanding. However, heretofore I had been too afraid of alienating him--he was too touchy and bitter about the war. Now I thought I might as well chance it. It didn't matter now whether I alienated him more or not. Besides I needed an "excuse" for a last note to him. So I collected the articles, marked the most pertinent passages--for fear he'd discard them wholesale in a pet of anger--wrote my little note, and kept them for an opportunity to leave them on his desk where he'd find them when he came back. I did not dare try to see him again after his hate-filled attack on me that one day!

As I took the bus to work January 2nd I had a premonition N's sister would be on it. She was. We talked casually. She was pleasant, but slightly cool. I mentioned Mike and Gloria and got a very cool reaction. I mentioned the stopping of Sunday bus service (another difficulty N and I would have run into). She started talking about N's driving lessons--she couldn't understand why he quit the lessons--why he didn't at least get a license--he could have used their car--maybe he would learn again when the weather got better (A faint flicker of hope in me!) I said N was very obstinate when he made up his mind. She agreed with me wholeheartedly. That was all the conversation we had about N.

Chance gave me a minor errand to do at the Republic that morning, which was just the excuse I needed to deliver the article and farewell (again!) note to N's desk before he got back.

The note explained about the article, thanked him for his Christmas gift and card--said it had helped me a lot on an "unfortunate Christmas." It said, "May all the New Years ahead bring you things you want and need that I couldn't give you." He'd find it on Monday morning when he came back, I supposed. So--came the time we had both looked forward to all fall--after Christmas, the first of January, when N would have a place of his own and we would be happy--ha!

As I went back down the alley I was hailed from the old office by Ralph, who asked me to come up and have a cup of coffee. The outcome was I got involved--Hal tried to get me under the mistletoe and then asked me to lunch with him. I was very thankful when "we" convinced the man in the office he should come with us.

Hal probed me at lunch as to whether I was sorry I'd left. I said, "Yes, we'd had fun." (I knew that would fool him!) He asked me to move back. I said, "No, I couldn't move again--I didn't go back once I'd moved"--or something like that. He broached something about N's work. I changed the subject. I didn't want to discuss N at all--not even to glean any chance information.

Monday, when N should have been back, I had two errands at the Republic, but made no attempt to see N, and did not encounter him. All very sad.

Tuesday I thought, "Will this never end?" when N's sister was on the bus again. He acted cool at first, but then she chatted. I had ignored my neighbor to sit with her, desiring to keep up the last thin contact with N until I'd accomplished my ultimate purpose. He was so cool at first that I almost regretted sitting down beside her. The only information I gleaned was that their Spokane sister was coming to stay with them for six weeks.

I kept encountering N's sister--almost twice a day--but only long enough for greetings. Usually I seldom saw her.

About a week later Dee assigned me some work that could have needed airbrushing--an excuse to hire N. I made myself design them to be done without airbrush. Then Dee practically insisted there had to be some. I don't know if he thought he was doing me a favor or what. Anyway, I was in a spot. I was afraid to approach N. What should I tell Dee if he insisted? I decided I'd better make feeler gestures through N's sister--N might do a strictly business job--and he could always say he was too busy. Then I'd know.

I maneuvered an encounter with Janie at the Bon. It went like this--

She greeted me in her usual pleasant way.

I said, "Say, I wanted to see you."

She stopped, looked wary and puzzled, "What about?"

"I wondered if you do a favor for me?"

Her smile disappeared. A hard, set expression took its place.

I tried to ease things--"I want you to act as go-between--"

She impatiently interrupted me with the same expression on her face, "Well, what favor?"

I launched into the airbrush explanation. She showed

relief, easing off. ("What in the world did she think I wanted to ask her?) She said, "I don't see why he wouldn't--I think he did some work for you before--". I said, "I think he's mad at me."

She showed amazement. "Now why should he be mad at you?"

I hesitated. Then, "Oh, I told him some things about himself. I don't think he liked it. (I had mailed N another long letter--rather a nasty one--at least one that would be alienating to someone like him. I don't remember whether it was before this or not--I did not keep such careful notes now.)

She clasped her hand to her brow and exclaimed. I went on, "I thought if you saw him this week-end, you might feel him out.--"

"I'm going to see him today--I usually eat with him these days--(I could have killed her with my bare hands!) I'll tell him and have him call you."

I was getting nervous and jittery. I debated what to do about her assumption he'd phone me when I knew he wouldn't. I said, "Well, I don't think he'd call. I can contact you next week."

"I'll be working tomorrow", she said.

"I don't work Saturdays," I said.

"I don't see why he wouldn't call you-- (I wondered if he had a phone now?) I hesitated again and then said, "Well, I don't trust him. He has said he'd call before about things and he never does." She rolled her eyes heavenward.

"There's no hurry," I went on. "I can contact you next week. There's nothing sure yet--I just have to know so I can make arrangements to have the work done elsewhere."

We walked down the stairs together. I was hurt because she left me abruptly at the foot of the stairs, but later realized I had kept her from getting to her work on time.

N rejected the work offer made through his sister as an intermediary. I interpreted it as a rejection of me and any desire for future contact with me.

A few weeks went by in which I kept up eager contact with N's sister in order to glean news of N through her. She was always pleasant, chatty and responsive, but I had to make all the initial overtures.

Another opportunity came up for N to do work. I decided to test him once more and again approached his sister. She "innocently" wondered why I didn't ask him myself. I sensed she wanted to be left out of it, so I decided to head the lion in his den. I went over.

He received me politely, but firmly refused the work with many lengthy explanations and his usual thin, inconsistent excuses. I had predicted to myself that he would refuse. He did.

Dee's airbrush work materialized. He assigned the job to N. I told him N wouldn't do any more. He tactfully didn't go into the matter, but we just made other arrangements. I was strongly tempted to approach N's sister once more in hopes she'd tell him that Dee expected him to do the work and see if that would make any difference.

Then a great hopelessness seized me and I decided once and for all there would be no more work with N. I stayed away from him for weeks.

I only encountered N once during this time, tho I was conscious of ^{make} meeting him every time I went out. We approached each other on the street and, before we realized it, it was too late to avoid each other. Funny thing was it was in front of the Bon--a usual haunt of mine, but out of N's usual orbit. We were both alarmed and upset, then embarrassed, but pleased. Our conversation was only polite inanities, but lingering and clinging and fraught with suppressed emotion. When I first recognized him my heart nearly leaped out of my breast and I was about an hour recovering afterwards. I could tell he was deeply affected, too.

Things went along their unhappy way from January to about the end of March. (And I thought I'd be all over it by the end of January!)

Suddenly, as things seemed to do in my N experience, everything changed at once.

I heard rumors that the Republic Press was quitting business! We had thought of the possibility of N's seeking or being offered other jobs, but it had never occurred to either of us that he might lose his job out from under him! (If we had gone on we would have been parted in April, anyway, for N planned to find work elsewhere than Yakima when he was through with this job!) My heart bled for him and his new problems. I wanted so badly to go to him and comfort him. I did send him a short note, saying so and that I could not come to see him "because of what people would think".

In the meantime I had gotten a letter from the author, a very nice letter which thrilled me to pieces. It even mentioned that he might be in town "in the spring" and might contact N and me. I had been in a quandary about what to do if he did show up, since I was not "speaking" to either N or his sister. His, however, gave me the excuse and moral support I needed.

Armed with the letter and my solicitude about N's job woes I started out, going first to Ralph's and Hal's office and then over to N's. It was my first visit in "ages".

("here was one other encounter during this "mad" period that I can't quite place. I had "Dropped in on Ralph" pretending a friendly call, but really hoping to run into N. I never did. but this time I heard N's voice talking to Hal behind the closed door of Hal's office. I could hardly wait to break away "innocently" from Ralph so I could "drop in" to Hal's office before N left. I think this was the time Ralph made some jibe about "my old boy friend" as I went toward N's voice. They were both startled to see me when I walked in. N glared at me, turned his back and avoided me and was very surly and nasty.) He brushed by me and out as soon as he could)

This time

He acted surprised to see me and very glad. I asked him about his job. He didn't seem worried about it--seemed to think there would be arrangements made for him to continue on there for awhile. But, after his first niceness, he cooled off and started one of his long, bad-humor mood talks. He flatly rejected my polite offer of help without even thanking me.

And, to my surprise his reaction to the Pellegrini letter was strange. Although he seemed pleased and embarrassed at the attention, I got the impression he was not at all pleased about the whole thing.

This was quite a blow to me--I thought I had done him a great favor.

After, I left him, still excited, I took the letter over to the Bon to show to his sister. She, too acted strangely cool about the whole thing. I felt definitely rebuffed and kept away from N for the next few weeks.

During this time I had developed a rewarding correspondence with Mr. P. and his wife. I learned from him what Italian immigrants could be like and the great difference between them and N.

For awhile it almost substituted and compensated. I lived in daily hope that Mr. P would come to visit and provide an excuse for N and me to get together. (I found it very strange to discover, then, that Mr. P and his wife were friends and neighbors of my brother and sister-in-law in Seattle! They eagerly invited me to come and see them. Through N I had acquired friendship with the kind of people I'd always wanted to know! Something for the future, perhaps!)

I still saw and talked to N's sister on the bus sometimes, though I was beginning to suffer terribly at every reminder of him--so near and yet so far. She told me one day that their sister was here and staying with N in his apartment. That seemed a strange, "wrong" thing for them to do but typical of their family relationships. She asked me nervously why I didn't go to call on her while N was at work--that she was lonesome there. I was surprised --and delighted. Then, about the same time, she told

Mailed Feb. 17, 1959

My dear Mrs. Chambreau,

Forgive me for answering so late so gracious a letter: I am about to go East for a three week.....

.....(depleted here where I cut out part to paste in his book when I gave it to N.).....

most certain to return perhaps in the spring. You are to be commended for your interest in the Sicilian and for your intelligent grasp of his problem. (Your remarks about my books reveal both sensitivity and intelligence.) You may write to ASUW Bookstore, U of Washington, Seattle for a copy of anyone of my books: they have them. AMERICANS BY CHOICE is available in Spanish; there have been no other translations. Has Nicolo met Gasperetti; owner of the restaurant? He is a friend of mine and his companionship may help.

Thanks again for your note and for your interest in matters so close to my heart. I only wish we were within visiting distance....
(depleted here, but an Italian greeting "a Lei e anche Nicolo" and his signature.)

mailed March 19, 1959

from Virginia

Dear Mrs. Chambreau,

It was very dear of you to write to me. For your warm and generous letter and for the impulse that prompted it, I thank you very much. I hope we do meet someday and I see no reason why there should be any embarrassment. In fact, I think we shall be Lorna and Virginia to one another spontaneously.

I would like to have answered your letter immediately but the role of both father and mother for one person, as you must know, is both energy and time consuming. And besides, I have had much else to do as when Pelli is out of town, I tend to lead a "Walter Mitty" sort of a life. He will have been gone two weeks tomorrow and returns Sunday. I shall be very happy to return to the other life though I have enjoyed these past two weeks.

I shall, of course, show him your letter and he will be as pleased as I was. He will chuckle & admire the cartoon even as I and the children did. It merits a place in the family scrapbook along with other significant memorabilia. How I envy you your talent.

I am about ready to start out on another Wednesday of sweet frustration... and Art Class (oils). Painted till 2:00 this morning and in the morning light I can see that all was a waste of time, effort and paint. But it was not really a waste as I was so happy.

Yes, I have known Paula over a period of a few years, not very well as we meet only once a month for our 4 & 20 meeting. I sincerely hope that if ever you should pay the Livesleys a visit that you will include us in the visit.

I, too, enjoyed meeting your mother & was most pleasantly surprised to learn that she WAS your mother as Pelli had given me your letter to read. I hope her little fib does not rest heavily on her conscience. I understand perfectly. My dear mother would have had the same difficulty & would have resolved it in the same way.

Thank you again for your "impulsive" gesture to both my husband and me. We have been the recipients of such kindnesses many times as Pelli's books have made us many friends. We are not so much flattered by these kindnesses as we are moved and made humble. And any act which produces such effects is indeed a good one.

Sincerely,

Virginia Pellegrini

Professor Pellegrini Will Leave Friday To Deliver Lecture Series In Four States

Angelo Pellegrini, noted author and professor of English at the University of Washington, will leave Friday for a series of lectures in California, Oklahoma, Texas and Illinois. Pellegrini, author of the best sellers, "The Unprejudiced Palate," "Immigrant's Return" and "Americans by Choice," will lecture before civic groups, his first to be given in San Francisco Saturday night. He will return March 21.

In addition to being one of the nation's outstanding authorities on food and wine, he gives a dramatic interpretation of what America means to an immigrant. Last year he lectured at the University of Southern California.

He was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1950 and won the Freedom Foundation Award in 1951. His book, "Americans by Choice," has been translated in Spanish and two special editions were published for distribution throughout the free world.

Pellegrini To Speak On Wines

PROF. ANGELO PELLEGRINI of the University of Washington English department will speak on wines and foods at the Fort Lawton Officers' Wives' luncheon meeting Thursday, May 7, at 12:30 p. m. at the Officers' Open Mess.

Professor Pellegrini is the author of "Americans by Choice," "The Unprejudiced Palate" and "The Immigrant's Return."

General chairman of the affair is Mrs. Michael J. Dolan with Mrs. Herbert T. Congdon Jr., in charge of the program.

met that N planned to get a transfer job to California. My heart died within me. It all sounded utterly fantastic and very improbable and I suffered for them at their eager enthusiasm. All this was supposed to happen the last of April--in a week or so..

I thought, now I was "safe" N was leaving anyway and it was my last chance to mend things, so I went to see him again and ask him about the California rumor. (I was glad it was California by himself, instead of Spokane with his sister, if it had to be.)

I had to run the gamut of the front office this time and N was out there. But he seemed pleased to see me and gladly took me back to his room to talk. He acted as if I were bringing him some work. When I told him, no, I wasn't, he seemed to start to get nasty.

It was true about the California deal--not as impossible as I had thought it. I told him I was "glad" etc. We talked business-like, pretending we were glad about the job and not mentioning anything personal.

Until I told him what Janie had said about visiting his sister "Pina" and said I wouldn't think of going without asking (which was a polite lie) first. At this he was furious, and got very nasty. I wanted no more of that, and, though I didn't understand, I simply left.

I had an errand elsewhere in the building and the more I thought about it the madder I got. I decided to go back and settle the Pina business--find out, for once, just what he was so mad about.

All I got out of him was an exclamation that I hadn't even been introduced and an allusion that "they" did not approach strangers in their country! I left, disgusted. It was my last visit to his office for a long time.

Now things were coming to a crisis again--this time that of N's actual, physical leaving. Mr. Pellegrini's trip did not materialize and my hopes along that line faded. My contacts with N's sister became increasingly painful--her mannerisms, looks and speech were too much like his. So I decided I'd have to avoid

such reminders and laboriously composed the following letter and mailed it to her--

Mailed March 20

Dear Janie,

I can't stand to have you think there may be anything personal if I seem to avoid you from now on. I feel the need to explain.

Many times I have gotten the impression from you and Nick that I am acting like a "busybody" and you'd both ~~just as~~ soon I'd mind my own business. So maybe I'd better.

I don't understand just what I've done to Nick to make such an enemy of him. He knew as well as I that we couldn't marry or anything else. (Nick tells you only what he wants you to know, I'm afraid.) I was just as unhappy about it as he was. And just as much a victim of one of life's little "jokes".

The only conclusion I have been able to reach is that no matter how anyone treats Nick, he always manages to feel injured. Anyway, I'm tired of being snarled at and ignored by him.

If Nick is incapable of friendly feelings and actions, there is nothing I can do about it, except to say I'm sorry and I apologize if I have interfered too much in your lives.

Please forgive me. I wished only to ease some unhappiness, but experience has taught me my limitations.

I write this in hope you will understand if I seem to avoid you in the future. It isn't that I don't like you both--it's just that I have to forget about Nick and the only way I can is to break off all contacts that remind me of him. Sorry.

My best wishes, believe me,

LC

The next day, before Janie could have gotten the letter, I ran into her and Pina and their families on the street. By her nervous, overzealous way of introducing me to Pina, I was sure she hadn't gotten the letter yet--(otherwise, I don't think she would have made any introduction at all.) What a coincidence!

Sometime about then I had mailed N another letter, nicer than my last one, a "reconciled" one telling him how to get along with girls in the future and trying to explain what happened with us as I saw it. While I was suffering and wondering what his reaction would be we accidentally met on the corner as I boarded my bus one evening. I know he saw me, but he deliberately turned his back on me. This was the most utter snub I'd ever had from him. How I suffered over it!

In fact I was alarmed at ~~the~~ alacrity with which he and Janie dropped me after my letter to Janie and a couple times of obviously avoiding her. There was absolutely no attempt at getting an explanation or sustaining a ~~f~~friendship--just a complete cessation, though I got one "understanding" smile from Janie.

Now I started a definite campaign of avoiding all reminders and contacts and possible encounters. Somehow, it helped a little. I really had no desire to risk any more meetings.

I planned to see N before he left. I had already made a bold suggestion to people in his office that "we" should get together and give him a present. I didn't get a very cooperative reply--it seemed I was a bit previous--no one knew for sure just when N would be leaving or if he'd get the job. At least I could give him a present as an excuse to see him a last time. But, in the meantime, I had to "keep in touch" so I'd know when he left.

I hoped his physical leaving would accomplish what nothing else had been able to do and enable me to "forget" and cease suffering. But I had almost certain convictions

that he was apt to leave without letting me know or contacting me in any way . As my last, hard-won attempt to finish what I had first intended and make N happy, I finally mailed him the following impulsively written letter, at last yielding again to my heart and not my brain/-

Dear N,

I know. I know. I write too many letters. But it's the only way I have sometimes of telling people things I want to say. Wonder what I would do if I hadn't learned to write?

Besides, I'm afraid of people. I can't stand to go through the embarrassment and trouble of coming to your office just to be snarled at. After all, I'm sensitive, too.

It sounds like you might be leaving Yakima soon in w ich case I'll probably never see or hear of you again. Do I have to go through the rest of my life thinking you left hating me?

"hat difference willit make--if you are leaving, if I tell you this--I won't be over to see you again--what's the use?--but I have tried everything and I can't forget you or hate you. What did you do to me--me that hasbeen noted all my life for not falling in love with any man except one whom I married, and whom I do not love now? Why you? Even now, when I know all about you, I hate to think of spending the rest of my life without any N in it. All other men seem dull and boring to me now.

I would gladly have married you--if I hadn't been so-----old! Or if I hadn't thought it would ruin your life.

I do so hope if I did anything to make you hate me it was because you misunderstood. I really, really didn't mean to. I thought I was doing what you wanted me to do. Don't blame me for what other women may have done to you! Perhaps maybe you have learned aomething about people, too. We aren't all bad!

I t would be nice if you do leave--and hard as it amy be I think it is the best thing for you--if

you could drop in at the office to say "goodbye"--
or give me some sign that things aren't as bad
between us as they seem to be. It was so nice
for awhile!

It might make you feel good to forget about
old Nicolo for once and do a little, tiny
kindness for a lonely "vecchia gallina".

Anyway, here is my heart for the last time.
It and my prayers go with you, no matter what. I,
at least, prefer to keep a little romance in my
heart--there is so little of it in life--

Lorna

April 27, 1959

One of those strange, unaccountable days--like in the "beginning"--whence "chance" took care of me--

Today, unexpectedly, and out of a clear sky, the Bon made me an offer of a permanent job. "hat timing! I would not have wanted a full-time job while N and I were romancing--my free-lance work gave me the freedom I needed to sustain contacts. But now all I wanted was to be so busy I wouldn't have time to think--and to break all old contacts and have all new ones. Now, with Janie quitting her job and N leaving, it would all work out about the same time.

I needed to talk to another free lance artist, though, about the wisdom of giving up free lance work. So, on impulse, I went over to see Ralph, whom I'd been avoiding for a longtime for fear he'd talk about N. He told me that N had gotten his California job and would be leaving. Also that they had consented to the marvelous salary N had had the nerve to ask for.

I couldn't believe my ears! And I felt so justified that all my promotion of N had some basis to it--this was the proof! I was so excited I had to go see N! All the past quibblings were washed away in this new flood of gratitude at the workings of fate!

But I had to think up an excuse to justify my visit. Then I remembered I had committed myself to sharing on a going away present for N. I could pretend to be seeing about that and check on N without having to get involved.

It was another strange coincidence that I had to wait to talk to the office girl--she was very busy. So, while I was waiting, I decided impulsively to go in and see N.

He was there. He gave me the most wonderful reception! He was as he was at our best moments. We were suddenly happy together again--it was like in the beginning! He even said he'd planned to come and see

me!! (He'd evidently gotten my letter, though he said nothing about it. I doubted very much that he really would have come to see me, but it was so good to hear him say he intended to!)

He was very attentive and tender with me. He was even generously solicitous about what I was going to do and my problems and advised me a little in a worried way. (Usually he had no time or interest in me at all.) His eyes were full of love and tenderness for me and we basked in unspoken emotions-- It was all we could do to part, but I had to go.

I had misgivings as to the real reason for his mood-- perhaps he was only in a "manic" phase!--but the important thing was--the ugliness was over--we could part friends at least! How I hoped nothing would happen to spoil this lovely new mood!)

As things were going that day, I was convinced I'd have an encounter with N's sister, too, before the day was over. I expected to see her on the bus or on my first work errand to the Bon and when she wasn't I laughed at myself and my superstitions!

But, strangely, I was delayed in such a way that I did encounter her. I went right up to her with a big grin (we hadn't been "speaking") and she grinned back! I told her how happy I was about N, ^{duhange} ~~duhange~~ had a ~~real~~ heart to heart talk about N, during which she earnestly impressed upon me that he really had a good heart.

Later Mother and her friends waylaid me right at Janie's counter and we had a fun conversation time in that "in-counter".

I carefully avoided N's sister that afternoon and had mixed emotions when she didn't get on the same bus home with me. I rode the bus alone with no friends or neighbors to bother me in my state of tremulous emotion. I rode through the glory of May

remembering last May when I loved N the best and the tears wouldn't stop behind my dark glasses--past N's sister's house--and the car he was going to take me for rides in standing there unused--never used.

And my heart was like breaking when I thought of my one secret hope that Mr. Pellegrini might come to town as he'd said and give me an excuse for a last, nice farewell with N--and how silly such a hope was.

I thought about how the hurt of N's leaving was obscured by the greater hurt of his humiliating me after giving me the most glorious feeling of my life once.

I thought if I went home and had to face my family in the mood I was in I would die! I just wanted to have a good cry all alone.

Oh, day of days! there was no one home! AND--there was another letter from Mr. Pellegrini in the mail box. I couldn't believe it! I was afraid to open it. I'd been beginning to think I'd messed up that contact, too. But it was such a nice letter. It touched off my "good cry" and I wept and wept--at the whole miraculous days turn of events.

May 5, 1959

I had chanced about this time on some very complete articles about Los Angeles. The last time I'd talked to N he had revealed "subconscious" fear about going to Los Angeles. I knew it would be better for him--whether he knew it or not--if he were forewarned about what he was getting into--instead of primed with illusions he'd have to lose.

I determined to take them to him as a "necessary kindness" but I wasn't really in the right mood. I was in a scared, emotional, embarrassed state and I knew that was not good. I was afraid he'd be nasty and spoil the lovely mood of the last visit. I went, anyway.

As I approached his office I saw him disappearing through the door into the news room. Had he heard me coming and left? I called out to him, anyway. He seemed to have not heard me and I was disappointed and hurt.

But then he did turn--with a smile. However, he was "busy", "hurried". He said, "What do you say?" (And I knew I should not have come--Janie had been cool and avoiding me lately--something was a miss.)

He was nervous, embarrassed, evasive, "business-like", chattering. He roamed the room, fidgeted, avoided me, wouldn't look me in the eye. But he was polite. And seemed willing to wait and take "time out" while I was there.

I tried to engage him in conversation, but he evidenced unrest, hurry, defensiveness, belligerency, argumentativeness, evasion and secretiveness. He was very insistent on his determination to leave Yakima and not longer for anything. So--to show I had a purpose in coming I began searching in my briefcase. He evidenced interest, seeming glad of an excuse for something else to talk about. He said, "What have you got?"

I answered with a carefully planned comment. He did accept the magazine and keep it. I had expected him to reject it or throw it away. However, he started a greatly excited verbal attack, arguing and taking exception to facts in the article. He seemed very excited, ill-at-ease, and "afraid".

Last time he had looked so good to me--so handsome and "mine". This time he suddenly looked shorter, thicker, fatter, older, uglier than I remembered him--an "odd ball", a "poor little guy". He made me feel somehow like an adversary. It seemed utterly unencouraging, hopeless--what's-done-was-done, too bad, and so on all at once.

There was still fifteen minutes until N would be free for his lunch hour, but he suddenly seemed to want to get away and get out. He muttered about "work", "hurry", obligation. I had to get out of his way and let him go. It sounded like he said "I'll see you," but I wasn't sure.

I was sorry I'd gone. I left unsatisfied, disappointed and rebuffed.

Tuesday--May 12, 1959

The time of parting--real parting is near. N is supposed to leave this week end, though I strongly suspect he's lying to me.

Strangely, I feel no desire to see him again. I thought I would be desperate. Something is dead in me. I feel only a great pity for N right now. Poor guy, he carries his own curse with him. I do not even care whether he comes to me or not before he goes--(he won't)--. somehow, now, it would only signify mere politeness.

mailed May 11, 1959

My Dear Lorna,

It was so good of you to tell me about Nick's good fortune--and personal success. I was not surprised because I know the accumulation of talent one finds in such young men as Nick. It has been there for centuries, awaiting scope.

When you come to Seattle, don't hesitate to let us know. The cellar will be something to see--and what is there, something to taste. Seattle is now in such glory as is only possible in the Northwest in Mid-May. It is all color and green and life explodes all around one.

My best to you,

Angelo Pellegrini

May 13--Wednesday 1959

I had sent for one of Mr. Pellegrini's books to give to N. I knew he would "reject" it, but he needed it, so I got it on the slim hope he might sometime read it. I had made a great sacrifice and pasted part of one of Mr. P's letters in the front--(I knew it wouldn't be appreciated)-- Also included was an innocuous farewell note. The book was wrapped and waiting at the office for the right moment to present it.

I had about decided the best thing to do was to give the book to N's sister to give him--for circumstantial reasons not necessary to put down here. But, another letter had come from Mr. P. I felt it was one N and his sister should see, so I gave in to my feelings and decided to brave her scorn and ask if I could go over to the apartment with her when she went to lunch and present the book myself and show them the letter in leisure. That way, neither of them could ever accuse me of attempting a last rendezvous. (I was still very much in doubt as to where I stood with them both at this point.)

To my surprise, she acted agreeable, though I got the feeling she didn't like it. She chattered all the way over--innuendos about "appearances" and "gossip" and "greed for publicity". I thought to myself, "She is not really my friend at all."

N did not seem very surprised to see me. Yet I'm sure his sister had not had time to warn him. He seemed flustered, ill at ease--bumbling, but not unpleasantly so--more as if trying to regain his composure and finally doing so.

I felt a good "rapport" with him all during the visit in spite of his sister's clutch at the limelight, foisting herself and her problems to the fore and altogether revealing what I had suspected all the time behind that smiling, charming mask--almost the same bitterness, self-centredness, resentment and hate that were in N. Nor was I surprised when she kept silencing N and he meekly let her.

They were both silent and cold about the letter I'd put so much stock by.

It was a hurried, embarrassed, stilted, unsatisfactory lunchtime. We were only getting warmed up when it was time to leave.

Janie went into the bathroom, checking with me to see if I wanted to go (which I thought a bit tactless). I didn't. I remained alone in the room with N and gave him the book. Emotional things happened between us. N melted, and, for a split second, it felt as if a magnet was drawing us together, but just then Janie came out and politeness took over.

I ignored Janie's return to the store on our way back and continued on up the street with N, inventing an errand at Ralph's. N seemed not averse, but the air was heavy between us and our conversation was only inanities. We parted as if it had only been the most casual daily encounter. (N could have asked me in to talk, I thought. but he didn't.)

I tried to go back to work, but strange, powerful strings seemed to be pulling me back to N's office. I felt weak and powerless and just let my feet take me where they willed. I thought I might say I'd come to settle the Pellegrini business, which worried me. The whole thing was "wrong" somehow. I sensed it. It was not accepted as I had intended at all.

N was in his office. He seemed not very surprised to see me. I voiced my doubts about the P. business. He demurred, but said again, "In our country, we don't write to strangers." (An allusion, at last, about my letter to his mother? but I didn't care.) I was frantic with my inability to reach through to N at this last important moment. Yet he seemed sadly trying--in a way--to reach me.

I said, "You don't understand... here must be better understanding. You have the capacity to understand..." I didn't finish. He said sadly, "I don't know. I'm all mixed up. I'm confused." Silence between us. Then he, "Well, it's odd anyway--I had a best friend named Pellegrini."

He claimed he'd keep the book and read it--that he wouldn't throw it away. I doubted it, but said nothing.

(Incidentally, N had informed his sister and me at the "farewell" luncheon that he wouldn't be leaving when he said--it might be the end of the month before he went. I knew it!)

I knew it was all hopeless to try to talk to him--he just didn't know what I meant. I might as well leave--I did not intend to make a scene---

But N kept me, plying me with unusually sincere inquiries about my plans. Then he suddenly pulled a photo that was part of his work forward and asked me to come close to look at something. I was puzzled because it was something in which I had no interest at all. But I leaned over the drawing board with him. There was a feeling in the air between us--a necessity to say something meaningful--I heard myself saying "goodbye--it was nice"--a look between us--his mute assent--his murmuring "it was very nice" and looking as if he meant it with his whole heart--more of the same--a rush of impulse--my hand around his neck and clasping his head to my breast and then cheek to cheek--an overwhelming and totally unexpected embrace on my part--while he muttered in fear and alarm, but with pleasure, "Take it easy!" A long look--"Goodbye," I said, "It was--nice--very nice-----for awhile-----thank you---I won't see you", and he, "I'll see you"--my shaking my head, "no", as I did before--(shaking my head across thirteen unchangeable years at him)--and our mute understanding of it--(He had murmured "I'll be good" earlier, which I didn't understand)--a wave of emotion--afraid I'd break down--turned my head away--waved goodbye and left--left--left--Help me to stay gone!

I came home and made my notes, but, for once, I did not really feel like it. The news that N was still to be around a few more weeks now that I had made my last "coup de grace" left me numb--and I wanted to stay numb, I was afraid to feel.

May 22-Friday 1969

My last day of freelance work--the day I move to the ^Bon and a full time job with no time to run around visiting people as I please.

And the last day I could hope N would come to say goodbye. He would not come anyplace but the office. I knew, and I had planted enough information about my activities so he'd be sure to know when I was moving. He didn't come.

If he had only gone when he was supposed to have! his dragging anti-climax. Actually, to my surprise, I found myself not wanting a last meeting if it were only to be a casual, polite amenity.

I wanted a last embrace. I wanted N to come to me to prove he had learned something about forgiving and loving. But, much as I hoped, I knew he would do neither. I did not know why he wouldn't, I was just sure he wouldn't. I did not know why I couldn't go to him again now a last time or two, either. I just knew I couldn't. Yet it had to be the nice ending I could effect with two such difficult people as N and his sister. If there could be nothing better, I preferred the endings we'd already had.

something happened that day I went to lunah with them. some stiletto of truth pierced through to me. I was not being met on the plane I was trying to establish--N and his sister seemed meager personalities to me that day.

Interim-- "uring all this time one would think there would have been quite a few accidental meetings by two whose paths were so close. Besides the three encounters I have already mentioned, in six month's time there were only two more when we spoke and two when he didn't see me.

he last two were afte I started to work at the 'on and, too late, appreciated how little time one had for social amenities when one worked a full day.

I was on my way out of the bank one noon when I rounded the corner right into N. It was a beautiful, sunshiny day and he looked very handsome squinting into the sun. Our happiness leaped out of us in spite of everything. He said, "Where are you going?-- What are you doing?" rather frantically (trying to make conversation, I suppose.)

But we only exchanged embarrassed amenities and went on our separate ways. I loitered near a doorway hoping to see him again, but didn't. I had bought some daisies that day and I remember this as "the day of the daisies".

Two other times I saw him, slowly and "laboriously" returning to work from lunch. By his slow movements I knew he was in deep dejection and both times my heart went out to him.

The other time we spoke was just before he left. I was on my way through the alley when he popped out from the entrance to our old office as I had so often hoped he would on my way by and had never done so.

Afterwards my memory would not serve me in verifying a distinct impression I had that he first ducked behind a car when he saw me. Could it be that he had perhaps watched to waylay me--or was it perhaps evidence of a desire to avoid me and not being able to this time. I'll never know.

Anyway, he approached me bravely and said brightly, "Well, look who's here!" I tried desperately to think of something to say and all that popped out was, "Are you still here?" It seemed to me he made quite a point of telling me then that he was leaving about the fifteenth. I filed this in my memory--the 15th.

At first we were casual and polite, but then a deep look passed between us and gave me a pang. He looked so familiar--and good--and mine--and mature.

It momentarily put us both at a loss as to what to say next, but I recovered first with the feeling that the bridges were burned and it was too late to start anything again. So I just made a quick, innocuous change of subject, to which he gave me a vehement, bitter, "joking" answer--and we separated--reluctant and unfinished--because a passing friend came along just then and interrupted us---

That was the last time I saw him.

But I looked for him, and looked for signs of him and what he was doing, and kept tabs on his sister's movements, which, to my surprise, seemed suddenly to cross my path more than usual. She, too informed me that N was leaving the week end of the 15th.

Janie's new omnipresence puzzled and worried me. I couldn't figure whether she was encouraging me or keeping on eye on me to protect N. Since my new insight into her personality on that lunch day, I didn't quite trust her. I suddenly had the feeling she was really not a friend of mine. So, in doubt, I avoided her and she "disappeared".

Thus I lost my best source of information about N. I had given up other sources as I no longer trusted my emotions when talking about N.

I still had to know when N really left and this agony of waiting would be over. But now all I could do was spy secretly. My observations led me to the puzzling conclusion that he was no longer in his usual haunts. His apartment seemed empty--he never appeared going to and from work. Yet it was not the 15th!

Finally I couldn't stand it any longer. I decided I'd have to go to Ralph's and find out. The day I determined to do this I ran into Louise Scofield, whom I hadn't seen in months and months. She seemed to take a sly delight in giving me the information I had been dreading----NICK WAS GONE!

He had left ~~the week~~ before he and Janie had told me he was going! A whole week earlier! He had been gone all this week, when I was so heart-breakingly spying on him!

I was a good thing I didn't have to face people for the next hour or so. I had expected something like this, but not the shock and hurt it gave me! Not this! It was bad enough not to know--to have it drag on so long--to have him not see me or say goodbye in any way--or thank you--or anything--, but to appear to have deliberately plotted against me--that was too much!

I was flooded with hot waves of anger and revenge. And odd emotional experiences of the last week came pouring back to me--strange sensations I had had and couldn't account for at the time:

One day in the lunch room I was caught in such a position as to catch Janie's eye, though at this time we were not "speaking". For days afterwards it possessed me why we gave each other such an infinitely sad "eye-message". Now I realized that was the Friday before N really left and my last opportunity to see him had already passed, but I DIDN'T KNOW THAT AT THE TIME! Janie must have thought I knew N was leaving and was sympathizing with her!

Then Sunday--foolish as this may sound after the fact--I was blithely going about my housework, secure in the knowledge that I had one more week to decide what to do about N--when suddenly I was gripped with an overwhelming feeling that N was "reaching" toward me and he was close, close, close and very, very sad.

For the rest of the day I was unable to shake an unexplainable yearning and sadness for him. I thought at the time, "What in the world has hit me? N. must be having last minute regrets about leaving now that the time is getting close!" This really happened. And Monday we had a sudden, violent storm during which I romantically thought, "This is our hearts" and the unusual quiet rain the next day was "our silent weeping." (Old fool!) And N had left that Sunday afternoon!

I sat that "discovery morning" at my drawing board and battled with myself between revenge and charity. And decided on whether Janie was at work on this that was to be her last day as I understood, whether I did anything or what I did.

She was at work. So I deliberately approached her stifling my revenge impulses and forcing myself into an act of pretense that I'd known of his leaving and was interested in the details. And I planned to "forgive" him his cruel ignoring of me and my expensive gift.

He surprised me by seeming to be anxious to talk to someone about him and being very apprehensive about his capacity to cope with this venture. He also revealed some of his last minute emotions that I was grateful to hear. Louise Scofield had already related how N "blew up" the last day and almost decided not to go. Janie now told me that N seemed full of grief and reluctance at the last few moments. I was so glad to know he was not as gleeful at leaving Yakima as he had professed!

Her face showed a flash of annoyance when I told her N had not made any goodbye gesture to me. All in all I felt better after talking to her. N did not want to go, at least!

Janie was only to work one more day and then my contact with them would all be over.

Afterwards I couldn't help wondering why, why, why N had left so abruptly, of course. It even occurred to me that perhaps he and Janie might have been trying to encourage me and then, typically, N decided on revenge when I stayed away. I don't know. I'll never, never know.

Only time remains. There seems no realistic possibility of my ever having any more contact with the Chianello family. Although I know N was "impossible" and I was lucky not to get involved, something beyond our understanding passed between N and me. "Va con Dio, Nicolo mio, Ti amo."

Mailed to Janie as a last ~~for~~giving gesture.

Dear Janie,

I won't get another chance to tell you, but I don't think you should worry too much about N. After all, he is a gray-haired man and it is time he lived his own life. ^{his} new venture will be very, very hard for him, but it will make a better man of him. Nick is tough. He knows what he wants. It will take a great deal to break him. But, if this venture is too much for him, he will seek out his family again as long as he has nowhere else to turn. That is the one thing I was trying to show him, even if I was misunderstood--that there are people even outside his family to whom he can turn if he needs help, like Mr. Pellegrini and myself. Although, of course, we ~~are~~ not always able to give as much as we'd like. But I found Nick too doubting and proud right now to accept and understand such a gesture. I make it again, through you, for what it is worth in the future.

It is possible that this move will be too much for him and it will break him. ^{that is} what I'd like to know. I hope you will feel free to come up to the advertising office to let me know if anything important happens to Nick. Because I believe in him and I am very anxious to know if he fulfills my expectations of him.

But I really don't think he'll "break" (unless, of course, he has "broken" before in his life.) Los Angeles offers him ~~things~~ he needs to help him. He ~~will~~ have enough money. He will have better work opportunities. ~~The climate should be more to his liking.~~ There will be more Italian contact opportunities. If he gets an apartment and maybe a car, he knows enough and will have chances to find women to love until he is ready to marry. (Does this shock you? If so, you really don't know your brother!) Sometimes in life it is necessary to hurt those we love and stand by while they suffer in order to help them--non è vero?

So, don't worry. We believe in Nick and I think he knows it and our prayers will help him. He is strong and good (even though he thinks he is "bad") All he needs is opportunity and understanding and encouragement and I hope he finds it. I tried to help give them to him when I could.

I am sorry that he gave me no goodbye message, but I expected as much and because I think I understand I am able to "forgive".

That's all,

Most sincerely,

LC

Che sará, sará!

June 15, Monday 1959

And on--and on--

Today was N's sister's last day at work. She is not coming back in the fall as she usually does. Strange, just when I'm starting to work here.

All, all of it is ended--Nick--Janie--Pellegrini--the whole Italian episode. I see no hope for any more contact at all.

Am in such anguish I want to die--Have a feeling N is unhappy---

Tuesday--

Dull despair, muted by a sleeping pill--I wonder if N is just enduring--like I am?

Wednesday--

A revival. Feel that N is happier. He is better off there than here, after all. I sent him off with my love to seek his fortune--may he prosper! He is on his way!

Thursday--

Resignation--almost relief--a revival of interest--amusement--at this silly, sordid, hopeless world. I did my best for N. So be it.

An errand past his dark and empty office today. A pang and then almost relief--relief from the emotional burden of his unhappiness and frustration. He was misfit and unhappy here. Without my help he might still be imprisoned in his vicious circle. I am reading psychology books which amazingly confirm my observations of N and classify such symptoms as abnormal.

June 29--

Am trying to "blow out the torch". My thoughts no longer dwell on N. Reminders of him are now accompanied by twinges of embarrassment and chagrin.

June 30

Found myself praying for some news of N---

July 1

Encountered N's sister while wandering around the Bon in a slack moment. Saw her too late to accost her and found myself afraid to after I did see her. On account of the letter. Have a feeling she saw me, but she acted very busy and preoccupied when I went by. Hope hard she'd come up to advertising and tell me about N as I'd asked her to, but she didn't. I knew she wouldn't. She never will. Seeing her hit right into the sore spot I thought was healed and I spent a very unhappy hour.

July 9

Now we are separated--probably forever and to all appearances I "escaped", apparently "unhurt". What becomes of N actually no longer concerns me for practical purposes. I no longer have any influence in his life.

July 7

Hal Scofield was in the office today and I found myself hoping and praying he wouldn't mention N. And I thought I wanted to know about N! It seems I am not ready yet. I feel as if, if anybody mentioned him or what he is doing, that I would shatter. The experience of seeing Janie was my first intimation that I still had a sore spot. I feel like the poem--"Let no ~~one~~ leaf fall--". Let me hear no mention of N yet--not yet-- Do not reopen my wound--the healing is slight, very slight!

To N

I was a one from whom you could not hide
The hurt behind revealing Latin eyes.
Others were fooled whene'er you tried
To show smooth healings--not the
raw inside.

I could not see the mask when once I'd
viewed

What lay where you'd let none intrude.

You lived with shattered glass inside
you---sore;
Your fierce denial made it bleed the more.
Life fed you glass; disguised as sugar
pills
"To do you good; to ward off future ills"--
And you, brave fool, disgusted, but
afraid,
Swallowed and swallowed. Finally it
stayed.

And I--I thought--(and held you warm)--
It must come up and out to cease to
harm.

And you, not knowing, gentled some,
Forgot to tense, let brackish ferment
come
Into your mouth, into your words, your
eyes;
You stared at me with horror-stricken
eyes.

And struck me, angered, from your arms
and life.

And felled me, spewed with what had been
Within you that I wished without;
And fled, calling me the cause
Of hurt that now had chance to heal!

August 12, 1959

I keep striking out of these notes my comments on my strange feeling I had all during this N experience, because it always sounds so pseudo-spiritualistic. But I find I can't convey a complete impression without it.

It is the feeling of being powerless in something the reason for which I cannot know--a puppet guided by unseen strings--a part of something important that had to be, and, above all, a feeling of being taken care of, guided by a wiser hand than mine, of receiving benefits in ways that I questioned at the time. The best moments were the results of struggles ending in my resigning my own will to blind faith in some compelling force outside me.

Since N and I "broke up", I have struggled against the seeming cruelty of fate, or what have you. Now circumstances are such that I realize it was well and better that it ended when it did.

As things have turned out for me, it could not have gone on, anyway, but would have had to end for reasons that would have been sordid and humiliating compared to the reasons we did end--in short, physical manifestations of my age that, besides, making everything impossible for awhile would have disgusted and finished such a personality as N, probably, and made me ashamed and embarrassed.

While I realize it might have been one of the contributing factors of the whole thing--my physical condition--my need for a "last fling" perhaps--we still have to account for N's coming into the picture at this time. I do not think it would have happened with anyone else--not with anyone I had previously known--that is for sure. So still we have the mystery of why Nick?

And I still have the comfort of my lucky, little late romance that ended because we were separated and not because we willed it so!

September 5, 1959

I am at present recovering from major surgery nad a total collapse from which the doctors tell me I might have died.

How much N had to do with my complications, how much the complications had to do with my feelings for N, or how much my troubles with N had to do with my ultimate nervous and physical breakdown I do not know nor will ~~ever~~ know. This secret I do know--that I had what is commonly know as "a broken heart" and I wanted to die.

Underlying all my troubles this last year, and they have been many and hard--is the great, empty hole N left in me when I had to give him up--the great pervading sadness having to live without him. It still goes on. Surgery has removed a part of me that may or may not dull the suffering a little, but I am more than ever convinced that N and I had an uncommon love for each other.

Lying in the hospital this time was a soul and life searching experience for me. I had a chance to "catch up with myself" so to speak--I had a chance to compare N's and my love with a classic literary example of great love and I found ours not only not wanting, but of a special quality I had heretofore not appreciated.

Time and chance have given me an unexpected opportunity to carry out my compulsion to write all this down--why I do not know.

I find I miss N as much as ~~ever~~. I know now that, if life will not allow me to have N (and life with N would have serious drawbacks I could do without) I am unashamedly going to search for someone as nearly like N--but not so neurbtic--as I can find. He opened my eyes to needs and possibilities I did not know existed. Bless him forever and thank God for my knowing him!

The End

Later Observations Sept. 1959

There is a missing mood to all this that I destroyed when I destroyed my notes of the first six months. It is the beginning of love, the growth of it. It noted what I found in N that pleased me so. I have not conveyed the happiness and joy in our growing, mutual discoveries of each other--the deepening feeling of rightness and positiveness and inevitability that grew with each discovery we made in each other.

I had never before experienced such a feeling of "fitting together" with a man, of fulfilling, of it all being so "right" for me. And I never had one evidently feel the same way about me.

I haven't conveyed the fun we had with each other--one of the first attractions--or the happy, happy feelings. That is one of the things I missed most in losing N--he was fun!

Observations made at the time or later--

The N experience summarized: I did manage to dissipate some of N's friction and hate--to make him attiny bit more accepted--to straighten out a few of his crippling emotional conflicts and to open his eyes a tiny bit so some of his own conflicts and failings, I think.

I did manage to help him start to break the cord that bound him too long to his family and make him begin to attempt to live his own life.

I did encourage him enough in his work to make him stick to it long enough this time to get proficiency, respect and advancement.

I opened up his heart a tiny bit so that some of his native warmth leaked out.

I think I helped set him just a little bit firmer on his path with a little flame of hope and reassurance guttering.

I think this because--

isol

"hen I met him he was bitterly lonely, isolated and rejected. He was suspicious, nasty and belligerent. lying, wary, difficult to get along with, and extremely nervous. He was casting lascivious, predatory glances at every young female in his orbit. He was all fouled up in unproductive, dangerous, explosive f relationships with his family, associates and women contacts. He was vacillating, unsure and incompetent in his work. His manner was abject, fawning, insincere, insincere and "high-schooly",

Now he is only sadly lonely, seclusive more than isolated, superficially accepted. He is a bit more trusting and amiable. He lies and brags less--is more physically relaxed--less fearful and easier for associates to get along with.

He is now able to carry on friendly contacts with women a associates, while accepting the fact that most of them are not for him. He has made the necessary break with his family at last and is on better, easier terms with them because of it. He has become definite, sure, competent and productive in his work. His manner is brisk, assured and dignified. His tastes have improved and his self-indulgent spree minimized.

BUT--he is still immature, loveless, friendless, bigoted, compulsively exacting, caught in deep emotional conflicts about sex, right and wrong, authority, religion, etc.

He is still a greedy "have-not"--a "do good" instead of a "be-good". He is still a prejudiced, foreign outsider-by-choice. These things are deeply ingrained--beyond altering now.

All I can hope is that a mighty, mighty effort on my part produced a small, small bit of improvement in his human relationships and alleviated his unhappiness somewhat. (And that it will last beyond the blow dealt by our parting!)

After I had known N only six months I had written--
"Already my feeling for N is not the same. Not the same feeling of thankfulness for finding someone that restored my faith in human nature.

(By--this I meant someone that had a worthwhile goal and worked steadily toward^{it} making sacrifices along the way that others would not make, etc. N's goal at the time seemed to be to become a really good artist. It seemed to be a self-selected goal and he worked and studied and went without, apparently, in a super-human effort to achieve this goal. This I admired and had found it very rare in people I had met in my life.

Later I was disillusioned to find out it was someone else's idea he study art--he merely took advantage of a current opportunity to get a job--and his goal was to show up others--be better than they--to make more money--to go into the most lucrative branch of art, not because he wanted it or liked it, but because it promised the biggest returns and he talked as if he would give it all up without a qualm if events proved it unprofitable. Also, his obsessive studying was a cover-up for not having anything else to do--not getting along socially--not being wanted. Or so it seemed.

Later revelations have tended to prove my intuitions right. The truth lies somewhere between the two--just as it always has with me--the conflict of what one wants and what one has to do, which brings us ^{us} ^{14 me} even closer in a common goal and frustration.)

"--to know there was someone I could love in a positive, unselfish way--someone I could respect and admire and who fitted me. (This was in contrast to my former "Great Love", which I now saw was predominantly negative, selfish and forced. I simply "grew" into loving N, because I enjoyed him, I liked him, we "hit it off"--I wanted to help him--I wasn't thinking of myself at all or expecting any gain.)

"--Someone I could really enjoy and whose happiness I could put ahead of my own. It was something I had given up all hope of ever finding--to know what real love was before I died! To find a man, a real man with attributes I liked in Ed, but a good man.

a man who thinks he's bad and is really good, instead of one who thinks he's good and is really bad!

(This was written, of course, before I knew of N's capacity to hurt. But, he, too knew of it--he even warned me. I think he suffered over it a great deal that is why I say he is essentially good--but he never had a chance...)

"----To think that such a thing would happen to me! And at my age! Every day, even at times when I think there will be no more, I am so thankful for what has been already. It feels like N is the other half of me I never expected to find.

No matter what happens, I know I was whole for awhile--(I now know what it means to feel whole and completely alive--I never did before!) I was happy for awhile as I was never happy before in my life. And to think that a man reciprocated this feeling with me--and we had what we had---! I truly had given up all hope that such a thing would ever happen to me--- I want to send him on his way--and we both know I must--happier than when I found him--that's all. And remain good friends--"

Feb. 1960--I did not. I sent him on his way--or shall we say fate sent him on his way and I tried not to quarrel with it. But he was not happier. Wiser, maybe. The same with me. Is one happier having known something wonderful and then being deprived of it--or never having known it? Richer, perhaps, but not happier.

After N left

October 2, 1959

Yesterday was the anniversary of my moving out of Hal's office--one year!

Today I find out that both Ralph and Hal have left that office and gone elsewhere. I asked Louise if anyone had heard from N. She said Ralph had had one letter right at the first and he said he like it but not much else. She didn't know if he was still there--in Los Angeles.

So, it all would have ended anyway--the daily contact and all. And naturally, N would say he liked it--he had to justify himself, didn't he?

* * * *

A little later another change in circumstances made me check with Ralph--to see what happened to him--and bravely, but reluctantly ask him--and later Isa--what they had heard from N. I did and didn't want to know. This is what I found out:

N did NOT write to Ralph, as Louise had thought (and I had hoped, because it would have shown an ability and desire to keep in contact). Their news was from letters from N's boss, who had merely said N was doing "all right" (not the enthusiastic "he LIKES it" that Louise had relayed to me). They said N was taking color pictures and movies in his spare time--for the firm, I assumed. Ralph said he had taken an apartment. This hurt, but what else could I expect? (No car yet?) Also that just before he left N had said he was planning to send for his parents.

So--the news I dreaded so to ask for was nothing startling--one way or the other--just as to be expected.

I could not look into N's office as I passed it for the first time since-- but I suffered no emotional upheavals then or later in talking to Isa and Ralph about N. Nor can I conjure up a picture of how N looked or sounded any more. There is just dull, hopeless, grim, boring living--with occasional outbursts of hopeless anguish.

Isa had also said that N had TOLD everyone he would NOT write. I felt irritation at him on hearing this. How unfriendly!

* * * *

November----

The bitter taste of N's "mistreatment" of me lingers more than anything else, yet there are moments when the pathos of it all grips me unendurably.....

I have not seen N's sister since the encounter in the store right after he left-- not even the slightest glimpse of her or hers. But tonight I saw her and her family at the football game. I found myself without my former compulsion to make the uttermost of each encounter; I did not care whether we acknowledged each other or not!

The situation was such that it would have been easy for her to ignore me, which is what I rather expected. However, she went out of her way to look

for me on her way out and give me a big, warm smile! And again, outside, she smiled very warmly again. It meant a great deal to me. I had a feeling the rest of the night as of a blessing or benediction.....

* * * *

I am pretending I don't care, and life holds more interesting things in store for me--but every so often the act breaks down and I am very unhappy and lonely....

* * * *

A couple weeks later--

I was riding to work this morning with neighbors and we were discussing another new neighbor from Sicily. June remarked that Janie Esgate is from Sicily and revealed acquaintance with them. In fact they had been dancing with them last Saturday night! (So near, and yet so far, I thought.)

Then there was a little controversy between June and her husband as to whether Jane's younger brother was as good looking as reported. June said he's not so handsome--that she'd met him once. I said I knew him. The husband mentioned that he "guessed he wasn't married yet". I couldn't stand it, so I finally asked, "What do you mean !yet!?" wondering if he knew something. He just said that N had been in the country three years and had not married yet. I said, "That's what I was trying to do--find him a girl

friend". And the husband said very pointedly, and leaning over to look me straight in the eye, "Why didn't you speak for YOURSELF?"

I was at a loss. Then I said firmly, "After ALL, He's only thirty years old!" He looked me right in the eye again and said, "So what?"

All the bitter reasons "why not" came flooding into my memory--none of which I could voice under the circumstances. In my silence he murmured something about "not robbing the cradle, eh?" and then we had to part to go our separate ways. June's silence during all this made me realize that N and I may have been discussed--that maybe it was all common knowledge and gossip after all! This was a startling thought and I found I didn't like it!

I was surprised to find I didn't like "my secret love" out in the open and bandied around, possibly with the chances of fostering our romance. I found I PREFERRED it secret and hopeless! The prospect of openly marrying N rather appalled me when I was brought face to face with it!

* * * *

Later work took me to the Republic and through N's old haunts and past his dark office, which was now being used as a storage room...and something about Sicily in the paper tonight...and the necessity of going by Janie's house for the first time in months...and a sweet "Hi!" from Janie at PTA that night--a "Nick" day--but, oh, how different from what they used to be!

2 weeks later

1960

~~November~~ December 7, 1959

I had rather thought that I would really forget N and intine feel foolish and regretful that I had "ever been such a fool." I find, as time goes on, that it becomes clearer why I DID like N rather than the opposite.

"Open my heart and you will see
Graven upon it Italy."

Browning

A week later

Dec. 14, 1959

Today I sent a Christmas card to N--bought and thought out carefully to be just enough and not too much. I have been waiting for and planning this ever since last spring. So much time and feeling represented by such a little gesture! And I'll never know what reception it got-----!

A week later

Dec. 24, 1959

...and no acknowledgment of my Christmas card from N. -----however-----if we give love only to those who will return it, it is not love, it is selfishness!

A week later

Dec. 30, 1959

An unendurable yearning for N seized me again and I spent a bad day alone after the Christmas festivities were over.

When I read back over my notes I am endlessly impressed at how trivial and trite such a great amount of suffering becomes when written down!

A week later

Jan 5--1960 An "Italian" day---

I prayed last night for help. Today Ralph's wife appeared unexpectedly to ask me to go to lunch with her. I hoped to glean a little Nick news from her. I was a little perturbed to find the conversation lingered on N more than I intended (This happens sometimes and I sometimes wonder if everyone knows?) I found out Nick did send Ralph a card--with his home address on it, but Ralph was the only one who got one. I got myself into such a miserable mood thinking about that card that I ended up praying again. then suddenly had a whim to go on an errand downstairs. (this was at work at the Bon) I chatted with an employee on my

way, left her, finishing my sentence as I went and bumped right into JANIE (who must have heard me coming and ^{must} have had time to duck.)

There was a moment of recovery, indecision and suddenly we were launched into a long talk about N. He seemed as eager and excited as I. It was an emotion-fraught conversation with moments when we challenged each other on things ~~add~~ said and written in the past and came out agreed, it seemed to me.

She told me, voluntarily, that N did not get up to spend Christmas with them--he spent it with the family of a "boy" at work--He will DEFINITELY spend next Christmas with them and New Years--he is going to church again. She seemed very amazed and delighted at that and I was at last able to tell her as I'd so often wanted to that I was almost sure he would again. (This made me feel very good.) He has joined a Catholic club of "boys" and "girls" --she stipulated. (That I didn't really like-- I prefer to think of him pining for me alone, but I was surprised to find my old joy in what was best for N come flooding back.

He bought a TV because he was so lonely--no car--has kept up the art lessons--likes his work--more raises--same kind of work--has own office and two "boys" (?) under him.--doesn't like weather--too hot' (This amazed me.) Mother and father not coming --will wait till family not so scattered.. He wants to come back to the Northwest (A sudden look passed between us at this) had chance to go to Florida (something about boss) but doesn't want to--too far. His office is moving--to a better location, so N may move his apartment. He says he can stay there "forever" on that job if he likes.

I asked her if he was happy. She was hesitant. Then I told her to say "hello" to him and then called out impulsively as I left; "Tell him I miss him!" (Should I have?)

That night there were Italian stories in the news and an Italian program on TV and Lois came and told me she saw in the paper a picture of the Pelligrini's daughter, who was getting married. It was such a relief to hear about N. I hadn't realized how badly I'd wanted to know. It did me much good.

Dec. 23

I knew you could not send
That one, small card.....
I knew that you would find it
Much too hard.

I do not know what wickedness
dwelt in your brain
Or what forever staining
Mark of Cain
Made you ignore my card
With all its love.....

I know but this:
You cannot love
What faith I've had,
Renewed and then wiped out,
Of kindness, love deep
Buried in each heart,
Is once again all gone.....
This time I really part
From you. There is no more
That I can hope for. You
Have made me wise without
The grace of peace.

Each year, at Christmas time,
I shall remember that the carols
Mean but nought, for men like
You dwell on this earth and
Christ dies all alone.....
forever.

January 1960.

Thinking of the possibility of seeing N again, I found myself thinking "what would I DO with him?"--and I felt almost relief! This surprised me!

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A TV show about the Sicilian Mafia has rudely shocked me out of my sentimental daydreaming about N. Watching it, I was suddenly engulfed again in that dark undercurrent of hate, fear and suspicion; revenge and superstition that emanated so from N. Again I experienced that feeling of impotence in trying to break through that wall they have built around themselves. When you think some tiny trickle has at last permeated, you find suddenly that it hasn't made ANY DIFFERENCE at all! How well I remember that feeling--the utter hopelessness of combating centuries of hate and fear!

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events took me over the old route again today--past Janie's house on the bus. Today, after so long, my impression was What a meager thing that bus ride was to get so horribly upset about it all those times! What a lot of suffering just to ride the bus with a funny little alien! Now that's the kind of thought I was afraid I'd be thinking someday!

February, 1960

Today I mailed a Valentine to N as I had long been planning to do. The printed message said, "A Valentine to someone I like remembering". I added merely "Love, L." I put no return name or address on it. This was part of a carefully planned campaign to keep N's morale bolstered up without alarming him.

To my surprise I ~~felt~~ ~~GOOD~~ after mailing it! It felt GOOD to send my love to N!

Feb 13.

"I shall study and get ready. Perhaps my chance will come." A Lincoln

Discovered today three book reviews about Italy. Sicily, I mean.

I sent for one Of them. (Later. Had a great deal of trouble getting it. A very interesting, shocking book about Nick's native city and its slum people.) I shall end up being an expert on Italy and Sicily, at least!

Feb. 22

A week later

The "haunted by N" feeling, the rash of things Italian has again broken out in the last few days, tho not quite "infocus". I always say to myself when these things begin to be apparent, "what IS this--?" All week end I 've had that "haunted" feeling.... After readin an article about th subconscious I decided just for fun I'd "experiment" I decided to "will" N with the first thought that came into my head.

I ~~didn't~~ like the first thought that came into my head--"I must contact Lorna"--it seemed too impossible of fulfillment, but I decided to try it anyway. Then I alughed at myself and thought, "Now, we'll see what happens."

I forgot all about it. That evening my daughter came home singing "Volare!"--"our song"! which hasn't been performed at all for months past. I thought, "Now where did she pick that up?" End of thought.

Soon I became exasperated at the untended TV going on and when I get up to turn it off, there is an Italian program on. It had a little man that looked and acted very much like N. It had the composer of Volare singing one of his songs, and it ended with the singer, a young woman with hair rather like mine singing "arrivederci Roma" into the camera and twirling a flower in her hand--"time for us to part" etc--exactly as I would sing it to N if I could. It GOT me. I thought of N possibly and probably sitting at his TV maybe thinking, reacting, feeling as I was. It broke me up and I cried as I haven't cried since Christmas. And I had an uncanny feeling that N was with me in that moment of anguish. I KNOW He was.

Later after I went to bed I had a sudden , unusual impulse to read in bed--something I seldom do. I picked up the Readers' Digest having a certain article in mind I wanted to read. However it fell open at another page, which caught my interest. I read. It was a true experience that I might have written myself about N and me. It ended by the man saying, "Miracles come in many sizes." It was too apt--I was very moved.

Tonight while I was avidly reading the paper I asked myself why I read the papers so carefully lately-- I never used to. I then answered myself, "Because I hope to find something pertaining to N or Italy, " and right before my eyes at that instant jumped the dateline, "Palermo, Sicily". I am not exaggerating.

Today I thought--there is sometimes beauty even in tragedy--like the sparkle of a tear filled eye....

Feb. 25

Today ⁺ had an errand at the Republic--through the old haunts. Walking in the old steps reminds me of N--the smell--his empty dark office and all. It all seems as if he should be there and I feel a compulsion to talk about him to people when I'm there.

But I have gotten used to not having him there and there is no strong emotion any more.

Today I am contrasting N's treatment of me with the other men's that I come in contact with--and I find it lacking. He was so MEAGER in his show of liking compared to the usual. Most men think nothing of buying me a cup of coffee for instance ~~or~~ getting a little fun out of making things look a little risqué--even if they're married or not serious. N always worked ~~a~~ hard at that tight little pretense that we just happened to run into each other and would be parting imminently and perhaps might meet by chance again--perhaps not--and, in the meantime no one must ever suspect that we rather liked each other!

Feb. 29

Notes from reading about Sicily--"impossible Sicilians"--their worship of the "modella Americana"--the slim, blue-eyed blonde. The shortest, fattest Sicilian thinks he's a Casanova. ⁺ the truth is not in them. Palermo is an ugly city. They have forgotten what a human being is.

~~Feb~~ March 1, 1960

A new man at work who is just N's age. He seems SO VERY YOUNG! N did not seem that young.....

March 2

Found myself "defending" myself today from a bunch of women at work who were heckling me about "finding a man" by intimating that I'd had a man wanting to marry me in the last year. I worded it very carefully so it would be the truth--maybe not the

WHOLE truth/ .! "o it's come to this, Nick.
And what versions are YOU giving our romance? At
least I've gotten so I can refer to it openly with-
out too much emotion.

March 5

This concentration on "finding a man" had made me think. I find all I want is Nick! I want to run into the arms of my merry, funny, sad, THINKING, smart, courageous, artistic, warm, amorous, intelligent, ornery little Sicilian! I STILL haven't found those qualities in quite that combination in any other man yet!

March 11

Reading the book about Sicily. All through my readings runs the same theme--the dishonesty and opportunism of Italians --and Sicilians and the primitive indulgence of passions despite centuries of proven bad consequences.

Happiness is like a butterfly. If you sit quietly and turn your attention to other things, it comes and softly sits on your shoulder. (quoté)

This is exactly what happened about N. It is what makes the whole experience so miraculous to me. For the first time in my life I had managed "to give up"--to quit chasing happiness? and had arrived at a new thing for me--peace of mind--in which I did not care about myself or what happened to me at all. And I had at last managed to ~~create~~ find a deep and vital interest in all people and a wish to help wherever I could. Unexpectedly with that feeling came the knowledge and the ability to do just that--without any of the former fear and ~~embarrassment~~ I had always suffered with people. In fact I found myself easing the ~~same~~ things in others. And so on.

It is this I was absorbed in with Nick--trying to help an unhappy soul a little. Personal reward really and truly never occurred to me. And suddenly there was happiness sitting on my shoulder! Real happiness--like I'd never known before! It is still wonderful when I think of it! In spite of its brevity and the sourness and bitterness that have followed--the cruel wisdom about life and people and their inadequacies and their brutal destruction of happiness when they see it rather than their muchly lauded delusions of pursuing happiness! It was a great shock to me to discover that people do not, will not foster happiness for all their crying about it; rather are they apt to become envious and jealous and go to great lengths to destroy it--they make up "rules" and judgments and greedy "excuses". Et cetera, et cetera.....

We ourselves, ~~we~~^{if} are experiencing happiness, become greedy and demanding and ruin the very thing we wish to foster. It is the shock of happiness I have been recovering from--perhaps?

March 30

I have been planning a trip to Seattle in which I hoped to meet Virginia Pelligrini, but it did not work out. As things are changing it is very doubtful now that we will ever meet. I am very disappointed.

April 1, 1960

Two years now since I first found myself in love with N!

How strange life can be. Circumstances took me into the apartment house where he lived tonight and I spent more than an hour in one of the apartments accompanying a woman who was going through tortures such as I went through when I was there before. Yet now I feel flat and emotionless--unable to fathom the depths of her emotion for all I've been through. Nor could I honestly say that I suffered any particular reactions in entering that place. Most of all it seemed to me a tawdry place and I felt sorry for the tawdry-lived people who had to live there! These are the moments of truth!

April 4, 1960

Another re-reading because I am alone this week. I find myself reluctant to start and stir this all up again. Many new and more realistic impressions this time. I am beginning to "get the picture"--such as I can see now that to N I was A woman--the woman of the moment--not THE woman. Italians don't have such.

April 11, 1960

Today I got ready to launch another missile in my planned campaign to keep N's morale bolstered "in absentia".

I am using traditional card-sending occasions as excuses. First the Christmas card, then a Valentine, and now an Easter card.

What is happening to these things? I never know. N does not answer.

from Virginia

mailed April 1, 1961

Dear Lorna,
You are a darling--"una carina"--mille grazie! Pelle and I are delighted with the ingenious label, the originality of which we, ourselves, would never have dreamed up. Yes, we like it very much and thank you for the idea, but most of all, we thank you for the generous impulse of the heart which inspired it. You certainly acted fast which is touching--especially in view of what you revealed in the short phone conversation.

How sincerely I hope that there is a solution to the problem of which you spoke. If there is any help I can render--use me. I am not the "Dear Abby" type but I AM a good listener and I care very much about people--and some few ideas.

I would like to have responded by return mail, as your generous gesture deserved. But so many things intervened--mostly things revolving around teenagers on vacation.

Pelle joins me in thanking you and in sending you our warm best wishes.

Virginia

A propos of the label. As soon as we have a moment we plan to consult Steve Hohnston, commercial artist and printer friend, husband of Mary, Ryther member, father of....oh, oh where is this leading me!--about making it up for us.

When all is a fait accompli (sp?) I
shall send you a sample and when next
you come to Seattle you will receive a
bottle of wine--a labeled bottle!

April 12, 1960

A "little miracle" day for my birthday! Last night real prayer--first thing on radio this morning was Italian news--taken to coffee by Joan, who was playfully spitting me and we were goofing off as we rounded corner to get on elevator--and ran right into Janie, N's sister! As I have noted--I have given up all hope of seeing her again...

She greeted me cordially enough--seemed a normal greetings under the circumstances, for it was all very confused. She was shopping with her husband--(Joan and I were making a lot of noise as we approached and there they were RIGHT in our path ??) I was glad I was being gay and silly and that I dressed up today, and that I hadn't at the moment told Joan my age as she was trying to get me to do. I caught her husband looking from me to Janie--a rather meaningful look as if he were curious as to what her reaction was to seeing me. This disturbed me somewhat and will be food for thought later.

I was quite perturbed--it was so unexpected and so according to my "little miracles". I went back up to our office regretting I did not have further errands immediately about the store to see if I would run into her again and what would happen if I did.

There was one maneuver I could pull that would take me just outside our office into the housewares section. This I proceeded to carry out--AND THERE WAS JANIE RIGHT OUT THERE--shopping--alone! I didn't have nerve enough to go right up to her, so lingered over my "errand". She didn't go away. So I detoured around by her on my way back and said, "What do you know?"

She was in the midst of a shopping involvement by then with the salesgirl hovering. She seemed rather fussed and "pulling away" to me, saying, "Nothing--just busy decorating the house--" Her accent was very thick.

At this point the salesgirl entered into the conversation giving me the impression she might be a friend. She sort of took over the conversation and Janie acted as if she didn't particularly want to chat--rather cool--started edging away and making a pretense of being absorbed in the merchandise. I definitely got the impression she didn't want to talk--at least at that time, perhaps?

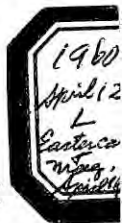
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I noticed her husband joined her and they lingered quite awhile shopping. I gave up. When I sneaked out later to find out what I could from the salesgirl she was evidently gossiping about Janie and stopped when I came out and went on only after I left. This upset me.

So I "took back some merchandise" a little later and got the salesgirl, who often chats with me, to talking. Evidently she wasn't as much of a friend as I thought, and the conversation was insinuating gossip about rumors we'd heard about the whole family (N's sister and her in-laws)--nothing definite--neither of us had really heard anything, just allusions that made the whole family sound odd and difficult. This girl said Janie's husband impressed her as odd--very noisy and boisterous at one of the store parties. I'd always rather entertained the possibility maybe I could talk to him, but I guess not.

Janie told me nothing about N. I don't know if she would have if she'd had a better chance or not. Did her answer "nothing"--she knew I meant news about N--mean that nothing is new with him?

April 12, 1960



Seeing Janie encouraged me by its coincidence. I had the card and the magazine all ready to mail. I decided to look once more in the library for the address and more or less depend on what I found there.

I found a Los Angeles 1959 Classified telephone directory which I swear wasn't there before. Therein was not only the address and telephone number I already had, but also, in the front, mailing suggestions, which solved my problem of how I am going to mail the book in July.

So I mailed the two things. I had to wait for a particular mailman to finish picking up the mail from that particular box. His mail man was one whom the neighbors had suggested as an eligible date for me, at which news I found myself preferring N. !

More than 2 weeks later

April 29, 1960

Nothing since the Janie encounter. I keep gleaning magazines, newspapers etc. for things Italian and Sicilian--have found nothing important lately.... or rather, pertinent.

Until the other day...there is a new novel -- Sicilian...which, I find, ~~hads~~ fair to be a craze.. just as "Volare" was two summers ago..has it been two summers? And something rather exciting about my drawings being hung in the new Seattle library... maybe....and I am doctoring again.....

Now I am writing this because I am very upset. It all started with something at work--a major disillusionment I had to face--and then I was sent over to the Republic on errands that would once have been very wonderful Nick contacts....once....they do longer matter.

While I was there I was upset anyway and the radio was blaring "Que Sera sera!" I could have wept. One of "our songs". Then, as I had to pass Nick's old office, for the first time it was no longer dark and unused. It had been cleaned up and work-maen were working there evidently fixing it for occupancy.....??? Ralph did not seem to know why. Incidentally it is a beautiful, spring day, the first we've had in a long, long time and a day to make one's heart ache for love.

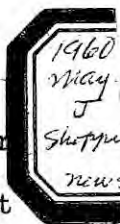
I was tight with emotion I couldn't express to anyone. To top off everything I find the "Franklin" Press celebrating their first year anniversary. It was no celebration for me and I soon got out of there. To me it only meant that there were celebrating the fact that it was one year ago Nick lost his job and had to leave town.

I came back to the office and cried--as much as I dared.

(over)

I would have called this one of my Little m
days not long ago--the way things went. I
had given up ge ting to read the Sicilain book for
maybe a long time to come, when lo! ~~there~~/the
girl in the library handed it to me when I went in
later. Circumstances worked out very neatly, too.
It is an excellent time for me to read it right now.
The setting is in Palermo! ~~also~~
For the first time I found no excitement in "little
m" happenings and coincidences. It has at last be-
come too hopeless to even get a vicarious thrill
out of. It just seems dull and sad and terribly dis-
illust oning.

May 3. 1960



And this is the way it goes....today I think "there is nothing, nothing, nothing--no hope at all" and nothing exciting or stimulating in my life--I just have to go on. And I grit my teeth and try not to rebel. I give up.

A few minutes ago I dashed out into the housewares department on a little errand I'd been summoned on and ran right into Janie again. Again she was right in my path; I did not have to detour or maneuver. This time I was determined to make a good encounter of it and really find out something if I had to probe. It seemed to me she felt the same, because after our first embarrassed exchange of amenities, I had the feeling that she was not only not dismissing me, but lingering, prolonging our encounter. I definitely felt a mutual wish to prolong.

She brought up Nick's name first. I skirted the subject, but then came back to it. We talked first of ourselves, then our families, then Nick, then the "business," the "excuses" that brought us into this particular department and kept us lingering there. She said, anent whether she enjoyed staying home, "Oh yes, she was fixing up the house because she thought her parents would come over this year--they were going to try--at least she and Nick were. They would not stay for good, just for the year they could visit; they did not want to stay longer...talk of babies at home and new one--talk of carrying on family name (brought up by me--a devil whispered to me the talk might turn to "carrying on family names" which is Nick's burden in his family and would find out if marriage plans, etc?) She said, coyly, "that's Nick's problem in our family--if he marries. (This, of course could be a slap at me as that is a very important thing to Italian families and everyone knows I couldn't do it now.)"

Prepared a post-card about book to send to Janie. Feel must share book with some one!

all this time
I found myself very excited. My heart was pounding and I was nervously fingering my beads. Janie's eyes would not meet mine--they slithered and avoided direct looks, but she was sweet and "pleasing"--like a pussy rubbing against one's leg. I caught myself and said to myself, "Now, this will never do. If you want to engineer this thing and get anything out of it, you must get a hold of yourself and not lose all chance by silly confusion." To my surprise I calmed down and was able to look Janie in the eye and frankly and "impersonally" ask her all about Nick, as if he were any mere friend I was interested in. Surprisingly, she responded by calming down and looking me in the eye, too and I got that feeling of "being together"...(but SURELY, she couldn't want to foster relationship with N for me? SURELY she isn't deluded enough to think us just friends?)

Anyway, here's the news of Nick as gleaned from her: Still on the same job--still haven't moved--still rumors of their moving. Making good money, plans to join the union with boss's approval and will make more then. (What union, I wonder? Artists don't belong to unions--there goes my hopes for his artistic aspirations. You are merely being opportunist again, Nick, my boy.) Is taking classes at UCLA in lettering and something else she couldn't remember that would further his chances at his job. One man from Oregon that worked with him is gone--lost job over something (she doesn't know who or what)(They will fire if displeased--N must be behaving himself.) Still plans to take two weeks at Xmas to come up here instead of in summer. She can hardly wait to see him--wishes she could go down there (damn her clannishness!) I ask about friends. She says that's the trouble with him and he answers with excuses can't get around without car--will get car in July--(ha!) (Doesn't sound like things are much different.)--the perennial bachelor!) She told me, in a very fussed way, that I looked very good, very nice--and I think she meant it. So...the salesgirl came and it was too obvious to stall any longer, so we parted.....

I tried to encounter her again--thought I could say I wanted to tell her about Sicilian book, but didn't find her....

24 hours later--

the cold light of reason and reality have dissipated the comfortable warmth of my encounter with Janie, a warmth which stayed with me all the rest of the day.

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I also mailed a post-card to Janie about the book--a wasted effort, I know. She is not that book-minded.....

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Today I found the word for what worries me about my thinking about this affair--
AUTISTIC thinking! For instance:

It SEEMS to me coincidence that the first summer of N's and my love a SICILIAN song should become an international rage; the next year a SICILIAN should win a Nobel prize for poetry; and this year a SICILIAN novel is becoming internationally acclaimed, whereas in my 45 years it seems to me we heard practically nothing about Sicily!

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Today I went to great risk to procure an impressing review of the Sicilian book. I am mailing it to Janie without comment in another attempt to bolster alien eggs.

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Horribly depressed today. Have warnings of major troubles ahead for me both in work and health, and have been listening to many confidences of woe. Am completely disgusted with the human race.

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Glimpsed Janie and her daughter today while waiting for my ride home. They did not see me.

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There was a little Italian salesman in the office today who shocked me with his resemblance to N and set me pondering on the difference between growing to love someone from association and just picking someone out of a crowd.

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My thoughts no longer dwell much on N though there are occasional twinges of emotion.

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Ourt town is having a "Julilee" during which everyone wears costumes. I was having much fun today sketching the costumes in the store when suddenly there was Janie. She was with another woman and was obviously in the store to show off her costume. It was a work of art, as all her costuming is, and she looked very fetching. I was not too surprised as I was sure Janie wouldn't miss this opportunity to show herself off.

Since they passed right by me, I was included in the flustery fuss made over her. But she seemed distracted and inattentive--her mind obviously on the effect she was creating.

She did make a point, though, of graciously thanking me for the information about the book and said she'd tried to get it, but it was out (I had it) and insisted

she wanted to read it. Shook up as I was at seeing her I was thankful I was able to pass this off lightly. But when she started off I was overcome with a desire to detain her, to relish her accent and resemblance to N. I called out to her desperately, "I'll draw your picture for a dollar!". (I really wanted to draw her but couldn't do it on store time.) To prove I was "joking" and to lighten it I winked at the saleswoman standing near me. When Janie only looked very baffled and embarrassed, I was sorry I'd said it. They drew away and went on.

Later, I saw them promenading the street. Something about Janie reminded me of a school girl strutting her stuff.

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I went out with friends for the evening. I had a man kiss me and want more. Neither interested me, but I noted that I am beginning to enjoy something besides day-dreaming over N.

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/Today I had a feeling that everything was "all right" between N and me. I merely put it down for what it's worth.

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I found out Dee (to showse office I moved leaving N) was "no good". I began to wonder if perhaps N had known that when I proposed moving there and if it might have accounted for some things I couldn't understand at the time?

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A change in circumstances led to an abortive attempt to establish rides home with a woman at the store whom I discovered was Janie's sister-in-law. I was very disappointed, thinking it might have led to something.

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N-associated stimuli no longer elicit an emotional response from me. I still think about him, though.

N-association motives took me over to see Ralph today. But it was different from usual. For the first time I did not plot to mention N somehow. I had nothing to say! But Ralph mentioned him for no reason, saying, "I suppose N is in Big Time by now--" His obvious implication was that I was there to talk about N. (He was right!)

And, for the first time, I was not alert for the sound of N's name; in fact I had to ask him who he meant? I found myself snapping bitterly, "I wouldn't know!" thereby shattering all my previous thin pretense that N and I were in communication. Then I made matters worse by going on to say that I bet no one would even see him when he came home for Christmas. Ralph denied this. I left there feeling that somehow I'd destroyed something.

June 21, 1960

I have just come back from a rare and wonderful vacation trip to California. All during the trip I found my interest and attention leaping to dark men and thing Italian. There were many where I went and I as disappointed to find that where there were many, there was less attractiveness. I saw his prototype "en masses" and found them generally vulgar and darker than I'd thought.

When I first expected to be going to California a year ago, I was very excited and thought, of course, I must see N. It seemed easy. I had only to plan HOW. As the trip got nearer, the possibility and intention of seeing him became more remote until, when I at last went, it did not even occur to me.

San Francisco is far, far from Los Angeles---
as far as last year is from this-----

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July, 1960

My N romance fades more and more; becomes dimmer and dimmer. I never see Janie or any signs of her any more. I feel less interest in seeing her all the time. I "haven't time" any more to think and feel about N. I am too busy in everyday matters. Things Italian and Sicilian have begun to regain their former objectiveness.

I gather more evidence all the time on how irrevocably neurotic N must be according to his symptoms--how utterly unable

he is to achieve a happy relationship with ANYONE--how lucky I should consider myself to be free of him--how utterly he has rejected me. I find glimmers of interest in myself about other men and ways of life not including N----

YET--N still means "love" to me. I find myself comparing other men to him and still preferring him; remembering this and that about him--the look in his eyes when we looked at each other; the sound of his voice; the look and feel of him; the thin s he said to me; just him. I still yearn unutterably for him. Certain things still mean "Nick" to me--summer-time---Italy--Sicily--dark men--short men--lonely people---

I find myself determined to visit Sicily and/or Italy before I die; a desire that never bothered me before---

I do not really feel that N and I will ever see each other again. I am positive he will not try to see me at Christmas when he comes--yet in some inexplicable way N and I are woven and bound together--sempre---

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Almost N's birthday...I am going to send him a book I ordered about Palermo and a couple of clippings about Sicily. I can almost hear him saying, "Why did you send me THOSE?"...It is abnormal to keep sending card and messages to someone who never answers!

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As it gets nearer to N's birthday I yearn for some contact with him. There seems to be a sudden increase in N reminders lately. Once I would have taken it as an exciting omen, but it doesn't affect me so strongly now. Things like having to go to the Republic Press where I haven't been in a long time and having Ed Cassidy mention the storage room, of all things! A necessity to return to Dee's old office; which I haven't been near since I left. Two meetings with Hal, whom I haven't seen in ages! A reoccurrence of Italy in the daily news. All that remains is to run into Janie....

I get a thrill when I think of sending N the book---hmmmm----

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Today was the day I had decided to mail N the book. The prospect made the whole day fun and exciting for me! I approached the post office window full of a great dread that the neighbor who knows Janie would be on duty, and perhaps report my deed to Janie. But, great joy!--he wasn't. I had gone to great trouble to ferret out a postal service that would let me know if N received the book, but I had no idea it was going to cost me so much! It necessitated N's accepting the package and, after I mailed it, I got to worrying that perhaps he wouldn't.....

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Next day: All right! I am a foolish woman to find what I call "little miracles"

bringing me N-association when I crave
it! But I am deeply concentrated on N
these days before his birthday--today
my daughter started singing "Volare". I
asked her why. She said, "I don't know--
I just did..." Sicily is so seldom in
the news: look what was in the paper
tonight----

It seems as if I should be running into
Janie in the next few days---we shall wee-

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I am re-reading these notes: it's rather like chewing on a sore tooth! As I read I laughed at myself, for I realized that I'd be SCARED TO DEATH TO MARRY N! I realize, too, that this thing is not necessarily over and done with. I do not know how N feels, but it's obvious that I'd go happily back into the same unfortunate, unhappy, dangerous mess again if I had the opportunity! I have not given N up---or I wouldn't be writing this!

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N's birthday:

Well, there has been no contact with Janie. I tried hard to force something today, but, truthfully, there was nothing. I began to have qualms about having sent the book.

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Yesterday I got the receipt from the post office, which means, I suppose, that N received the package. It didn't get there in time for his birthday, but arrived a day late.

As I said, I felt nothing the day of his birthday... By the next day I had given up. But that day as I was sitting at my work I suddenly felt that N had "melted"--as he did during that last visit I made to him and gave him the Pellegrini book--that he was "dissolved in tears" and enveloping me in great overwhelming warmth. It was not what I'd expected. I'd expected to sense a glad, happy, thankful, "crowing" sort of reaction. I looked at the clock as I felt this dim feeling--and it COULD have been a time when he'd be opening his mail.....

When I got home I found a printed thank-you card from N!!!! It said "Thanks a million", signed Nick--nothing else--not even a return address.

I admit that, instead of being thankful for anything, I was disappointed. It was too banal, too ordinary, too realistic for the way I feel and the effort I have made. BUT---

To most everyone this would seem as nothing; a most ordinary thing. But coming from N it was a most extraordinary thing! For he prided himself on his history of never re-newing a contact--of completely burning his bridges!

I cannot honestly say I was deeply moved at getting the card. For one thing it was necessary to dissemble in front of the gathered family. I do not know what would have happened if I'd been alone...

It did strike me strangely that I had to take a bus around past Janie's house for the first time in months today--and I whiled away the time imagining N getting the book---

Then came home to his note.....

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The card inserted a needed touch of reality into what was becoming a mere daydream on my part. Its triteness and inadequacy jerked me back into the realization that I was dealing with a very real, very odd person. However, like Janie's smile that day, it lingers with me like a benediction.

I keep savoring its massage. What is so especially gratifying is that my secret little therapy worked! He DID respond to a patient campaign of undemanding, freely offered love! And he responded affirmatively, not negatively. It took a year; it elicited only a formal note, but the ice is broken! N HAS BROKEN HIS DANGEROUS PATTERN OF NEVER RE+ESTABLISHING A BROKEN CONTACT!

While this may only be a small, small thing, it IS abeginning and a gratifying proof that these things work--a knowledge and reassurance useful in future relationships. Therein lies the value--to him--to me--and, indirectly--to others.

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A small rash of N-association incidents today.

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N's answering me has brought a reality of him to me and, most of all, a kind of peace. There is a pleasant, comfortable feeling--"Thanks a million--Nick". It is merciful and well timed for it is six long months before I'll have an excuse to contact him again---though I must admit I am already dreaming, scheming, planning that one!

As an obligato to all this is the change in circumstances that makes me ride around past Janie's house all week--and the sudden violent erupting of Mt. Etna in Sicily. (I'm sure it pertains to ME!)

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August, 1960

Sitting working am suddenly overcome with a GREAT LONGING for N, and a feeling he wants me, needs me. Just then my boss turned on a radio and a familiar song blared out. Alerted instantly, I expected it to be "our song", but it wasn't--and I felt like a fool and went on working. Suddenly--"Tell Laura I love her--tell Laura I need her--" came this song that always startles me with its resemblance to my name. I suddenly felt very depressed.

(Later: I found out this was ABOUT the time N planned and intended to come up and see me. Reader, take it from there!)

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Am making very much of even the slightest encounter with anyone even slightly Italian these days!

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Something about N's answering note "finished" things--somehow it does not seem the same any more. But it is a NICE feeling. It was just too impossible unrewarding to have absolutely NO contacts for so long....

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I "feel" N. I don't know how to explain it--probably only wish thinking...

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Quote from some of my (strictly Italian, of course!) reading lately: "The fact is that when they are together, or even when they are far apart and think of each other-- How can I put it? they feel right, they

LIVE IN THE TRUTH--I can't explain it--
I only know that's it-----They marry
marry others---et cetera---"
I put it down because it expressed what
I have tried to say about N and me.

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Thinking about my new unendurable longing
to go to Italy and Sicily, which I have
to placate with reading and pictures, I
chance upon that not-new thought ^{that} travel
is only a shifting of the back drop--the
REAL life that is one's own does not
change. Be it a seascape or an alley;
the INSIDE story remains constant. In
other words--going to Sicily would not
alter my N story!

Like wise, trying to explain my persis-
tent feelings that I KNOW about N even
when he's not around, I keep wondering if
there isn't a truer, simpler life behind,
above and beyond what we call "reality"?
In it there is no "time"; there is no
"matter", but it, too, is a life--a
truer one, a more important one that some
people never seem to participate in.

It is in this respect now that I say "I
KNOW I will be with N again--maybe for
only a very short time.

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The accompanying clipping was in a current
magazine. It summarizes everything that
I have gleaned about Sicily in these
months of "research".....

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It has been two years, but I STILL am
unable to read novels or listen to music.
They arouse too much unbearable emotion.

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In the doldrums--a state of apathy and
depression--not even any excitement about
a chance to visit the Pellegrinis.....

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Life is indeed very odd!

The threads seem to have been gathered
up and a pattern begins to weave again--

I mailed a letter to my sister-in-law
agreeing to her invitation to come over
and meet a Pellegrini. Then Gloria
(the gal N brought in to me) walks back
into my life in such away that I have to
contact Janie to try to get a hold of
her again. At least I used it as an
"excuse" to call Janie in hopes of find-
ing out something about N.

When it came right down to it, I panicked.
I found I was AFRAID to find out about N--
for fear I'd find he was involved in
amorous pursuits!

But I did call Janie and found her at
home and willing to talk. After the
preliminaries, SHE asked about my affairs,
which I interpreted as in invitation to
prolong our chat and give me a chance to
ask HER questions, which could (and did)
lead to inquiries about N.

I must say she sounded very friendly and
talked on at great length--even about N--
until her husband chided her about

"yakking" so much, at which, sounding embarrassed and a little afraid, she signed off.

Among other things she volunteered the information, with great excitement and eagerness, that she was coming back to work at the store when school started. She seemed to want me to know. I was surprised that I felt shocked and a little taken aback, for once I had wished desperately for just such a development. In fact I had to get a hold of myself and force myself to show interest and pleasure. It wasn't until later that I realized that it might spoil all my "plans" for N's Christmas homecoming.

Her reason for going back to work did thrill me, however, for she said she wanted to make extra money because they were going to build a new house in preparation for a year's visit from her parents next fall. They are definitely coming at last! (And the new house would be nearer to us--this excited me with its promise!) If N's folks came--then he'd be sure to come----!)

These are the things she told me about N: First, HE HAS A CAR! He really does! She paused then and there was a little silence. Were we both thinking about how we'd discussed how he needed a car to get girls? I didn't dare ask if there was a girl. At least she didn't say there WAS!

He is finishing up his correspondence art course--and finishing some art course at the "university" with the

purpose of getting "papers" (she called them)--she seemed rather unsure and mixed up about this part--as she always was about things pertaining to N8s work and schooling. I suppose she meant a diploma. Anyway she said it was something he wanted very badly in order to get a job at Boeing in SEATTLE (!!)--he wants to get his citizenship papers before he works there--he hasn't gotten them yet.

He wants to leave Los Angeles and go to Seattle--only wants to stay in LA two years (MORE, did she mean?)--maybe he'll leave there in the spring--or, soon--maybe come back to Yakima while his folks are here next fall (1961)--"her parents will be very proud of him"---etc.....

That was the gist of it. But quite enough to start me on a mad whirl of daydreams, hopes, plans and worries!

So--then I phoned Gloria--and found her news startling (and encouraging) too! She had been "secretly" married and separated and was now living here at home with a five months old BABY--!!!

How wonderful all this news seemed to me!

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I dreamed that night a very personal dream about Gloria and her baby so that when I woke up I felt as if all my telephone conversations the day before were only dreams, too. Except that I felt so different from what I'd felt for a long, long time--light-hearted--my heart was singing and so was I, I found--at odd moments!

I took Gloria to lunch the next day and tried to get her to talk about N, but she was strangely evasive, which caused me worry.

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I cautiously checked on possibilities of Janie's coming back to work at the store, but found little evidence to encourage me.

However, I found myself entirely different now! It was as simple as saying I was unhappy and now I was happy. I hadn't realized how I'd missed my little group to think about!

It was so reassuring to find out that N had stuck to the things that pertained to his relationship with me--whether they really do or not--that he is doing better all the time--and has not relapsed.

And the reassuring paradox that with the POSSIBILITY of N again, I found I cared much less than I have been professing! There is nothing like the details of reality to bring one down to earth!

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These are things I'm wishing would happen:

- . Janie would come back to work while N is still gone, for, besides the contact being fun, I could keep track of him.
- . N would come back and make love to me-- BUT--not stay here! (Why?) Because a N that would be satisfied to stay in a town like Yakima is not a N I could love!
- . That I could meet the Pellegrinis and become friends with them.
- . That Gloria would "stay lost".

(DID these things happen? Read on!)

August 29, 1960

As I said--the disappointing details of reality:

Janie will not be working when school starts--just as I feared. I asked the buyer. He said they are not putting anyone else on right now. Of course, there is the possibility that she might get on later or come in part time, especially around Xmas., but that's when I don't want her--when N may be back! Trouble is if she can't get on here she may try and get ~~something~~ someplace else and not come here at all any more.

At first, when I thought she was coming back I was upset because, as I said it might interfere with my offer to N. Then I got to thinking how little possible that was--he would be here maybe only a week and wouldn't come in anyway. Then I thought it would be fun to have her working here when I do. When I got to thinking of that I wondered why it would be? And decided it was because I could keep in contact with N--have a source of information (if it's not the kind that hurts!) I can't get myself to admit that I want to "show-off"--how nice I am, how well liked etc. Ugh!

Yet, on the other hand, when I got to thinking about it; the complications with Alberta working here, too; the difficulties of being overly friendly with Janie; my conclusions that she'd never really be close friends with me; the strain of pretending only a "motherly" interest and her inevitable interference between N and me, as I discovered before, I am tempted to bow to Fate and try to believe it may, as so often before, be the best way, after all in the long run. That N and I can carry on better without her--even though I am not so well informed, her information is colored and slanted anyway, as I learned before. N does not tell her the truth.

Besides, any relationship with her would be full of this sort of thing: She contacted the buyer about the job on Saturday--when she knows I am not here. (And here I was trying to stay dressed up this week in case she came into our office!) Ordinarily, a friend would be glad of the opportunity to do two things at once--business and a chance to chat with a friend. She evidently did not see it that way. Shyness? If so, after all we've been through, it is hopeless to combat in the short time I have. It looks like evasion and evasion is either fear or dislike. So.

Also, Gloria said she'd contact me and let me know and come to see me and I was to come see her etc. I talked to the man I sent her to and he said he was going to call her that afternoon, and yet I have not heard from her. And I probably shan't.

Paula has made such a point that when I come over to see them ^{first} I must meet Virginia Pellegrini. I am counting very much on it, too, but I bet it won't happen either.

I am counting on N. coming to see me when he comes home Xmas, but I should know by now he won't.

Conclusion: I might as well return to my hopelessness. These people are not interested enough in me to put themselves to any effort; I am incidental in their lives, not important enough. I am expecting too much from them, from circumstances. And obviously, they are all rather undependable, odd.,

So--again, I find myself almost sick with disappointment and discouragement and so on. It was just a little flare and now we return to "Common Sense" again.

I am encouraged to find that the Esgates are building so near to our house--though why I should be encouraged, I don't know.

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I get so frustrated having no one with whom I can discuss my Chianellos. So tonight I was pleased to have the neighbor who knows the Esgates come down. She was quite willing to discuss them.

She told me nothing particularly new about them and I discounted alot of her very favorable comments for she is not a very good judge of people.

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Today I had occasions to discuss N with people, but it did not thrill me as it used to. I sent a Los Angeles bound artist off with N's address, though he showed very little interest. I talked to Ralph, who abandoned the subject of N in mid-sentence, leaving me with the impression that maybe their interest in N is more MY interest in him?

Isa was more gossipy. In fact she brought up the subject of N, and she told me lots of things I'd been wondering about. She makes N's job in LA sound very strange and insecure, which is more like I had conjectured, and confirming my suspicions that N's talk of a move to Janie is apt to be only proud masking of an undesirable necessity.

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Today I turned down and excellent opportunity to go to the Republic Press for the first time. At last the time has come when I didn't even WANT to!

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This evening while writing letters to other people I whipped out my first "unplanned" letter to N, enclosing some travel clippings. Then I imagined him being very indignant and wondering why I'd sent them.

"Dear N,

We get the New York Times at the office.

Janie said your patents are definitely coming over next year. Hurrah! I thought you might be interested in these????

She also says they are building a house??

It is too bad the Bon is trying to save money and wouldn't give her a job when she asked---maybe later---

Do you know that Dee Clement has "gone broke" and owes Franklin Press about \$2800 they will probably never get?

And that Gloria Nason is married and has a five month old baby girl?

Love, Lorna"

Janie reappears

Sept. 9, 1960



Yesterday, as I said, I mailed the letter to N.

My former procedure was to look for "signs" then. This time I did not. (I have given up such foolishness.) (Have I?)

For today I ALMOST TRIPPED OVER JANIE!

...and I had already decided I'd get an Italian grammar book and start learning again...and I had to address letters to LOS ANGELES about 25 times at work... and the man who brought me in contact with Gloria again was in on business... Signs?

So--

Today I HAD to do an errand. I didn't want to do it. It took me into the beauty shop where we seldom have occasion to go. As I picked my way past a row of women under the dryers I realized with a shock that the first one had been Janie--or was it? The women are unrecognizable under those grotesque helmets. It was too late to speak by the time I realized it. Besides it is impossible for a woman in a dryer to hear.

I sensed that Janie saw me. I saw her eyes flutter down and she affected demure interest in her magazine, in her usual sort of frightened, unencouraging way. My impulse was to flick her knee in greeting as I passed--I would have with anyone else--but something kept me from it.

Of course, as usual, I managed to go by that area a couple of times. And I found myself in a very good mood the rest of the day because I had had my "sign" that my sending the letter to N was all right. (My own interpretation, of course.)

I thought "why was she there?" Do I remember someone saying she often has her hair done there? (Bleached hair needs re-touching often!) Is she getting fixed up to come back to work? Was she in to see about a job. Why?

If she is going to work here again, I'm not so sure now I want her to. I have about concluded she is more a barrier in N's and my relationship than a help.

I noticed her skin was blotchy. I consider this a bad sign, for I note that many people break out when upset. She has a tendency to break out. She once blamed it on the orchard blossoms. Well, she's broken out now and the orchards are in FRUIT!

Sept. 12, 1960

My poor mother can't understand my avid interest in the Olympic games. Only I know that it is because they are in ROME, ITALY!

I had a feeling Janie might be at work today, but she isn't. So I guess it was just a hope based on my seeing her in the beauty parlor.

...also I saw her husband's name posted on our appliance buyer's bulletin board??

Sept.13,1960

I am tired and discouraged and depressed again about this N relationship.

Once again I have to remind myself that it is not what N can offer ME, but what I can offer HIM; that I was embarked on a program of administering medicine in the form of demonstrations of undemanding love at intervals. My last letter was to fill the long gap between his birthday in July and Christmas.

Yet it is hard to sustain this with absolutely no encouragement and at such a great distance. It is hard when I am out in the position of imposing myself.

I should forget it all unless some definite NEED should arise--an unlikely thing. If Christmas does not strengthen this tie, it must be given up.

September 14, 1960

1960
Sept. 14
Tatw
re new.

Well! I just don't know WHAT to think!

I thought to myself as I hid my last writing, "Now I suppose that I have given up again, things will begin to pop--it always seems to happen."

TODAY I RAN INTO JANIE WORKING AT THE STORE!

She acted pleased, glad, pleasant. She chatted excitedly and gayly. Then she excused herself for fear of being late to work. (That could be the expalantion for her shortness with me a long time ago, as I suspected at the time.)

She said, "Oh, yes. I've been at work TWO DAYS! Where have you been?" I was right! She WAS back to work! And did that last remark imply that she'd been looking for me, expecting me, wondering?

Where HAD I been these two days? For the first time I regretted my insistence on having an unusual lunch hour. If I ate at noon when Janie would---? No, my fellow-worker would be there spying on us. I would wait and see if Janie cared enough to find out when I ate and join me.

I was thinking fast as to the opportunities of becoming closer friends with Janie if we both worked in the same place. They weren't too promising, I'm sorry to say. Our paths would cross very seldom. And this particular job was only an erratic, short-term fill-in, apt to end or be changed any time. Also she was working with her sister-in-law, whom I suspect she doesn't get along with too well.

It was a coincidence to find Janie at work today, because last night I was debating whether to add more pages to this already too fat book. I couldn't decide if it were worthwhile to note that I had mother drive by where I thought Janie said she was building her new house. I was quite excited when I found it was near friends.

However, today when I asked her, Janie said no. It's a block further. I don't know anyone there. Damn. She said they expect to be in by Christmas! (When N comes?) She told me she still expects her parents to come from Sicily this year and they'll have room for them to stay there. How does her husband feel about this, I wonder?

When Mozelle came back from lunch earlier than usual and interrupted my writing of this I decided to go a little early myself. It didn't occur to me until after I started that if I hurried I might see Janie in the lunch room. So I did, and there she was--as if waiting for me.

It was late for that lunch period and I expected her to leave shortly, but she didn't. She stayed and talked and talked and talked--about her new house, and her folks coming and so on.

I forced magazines about the Olympics on her and she took them willingly, tho I had expected her to brush them off as N used to do. I purposely avoided talk about N--I don't know why--except that my hands were shaking, which I think she noticed, and my heart was pounding. After all this time!

And I was completely oblivious to anyone else in the room. I'm afraid I overdid my concentration on Janie.

I was very anxious to go by where she was working on my way back in after lunch, but I was afraid of being too obvious. I am finding that with Janie in the store I am being too self-conscious to even be natural!

I went by anyway, though I was embarrassed. Luckily it turned out there was something I had to do there legitimately. I caught her watching me, listening, smiling, interested. I deliberately asked her jokingly about Italian lessons and we had a little chat.

Later that afternoon someone came in from N's old place of work--an unusual occurrence--and told me something that could pertain to N. Feeling like a fool I trotted off to Janie with my gossip.

Up to this time she had been her rather shy, sweet, ingratiating self. This time, though, she was very cordial and accommodating and polite. At one point, when I said I was a pest, I caught an amused glint in her eye and she stopped herself in the midst of a graceful, reassuring gesture toward me.

Though her manner is most encouraging, her looks are a bit disappointing. She is wearing her hair in elaborate long ringlets and looks a bit cheap and adolescent--the same tendency I sometimes deplored in N.

Also, I wish to say here that I KNEW it! I knew she would be back to work when there was some material thing

she wanted badly enough! Motherhood--
HA! Her claim that she wanted to be
home because her daughter was getting
to the dangerous age! Her sughter is no
younger!

I found out she works till 5:30, which
pleases me as I may get more chance to
see her. Tonight she pointedly waved
to me from her car as our paths crossed
when she was leaving.

(Sometimes I almost feel that I'm doing
things BECAUSE they will make good read-
ing in these pages, rather than living
and recording!)

Next morning:

I find myself enveloped in a warm, com-
fortable "family" feeling about Janie.
I feel now that she and her family have
become a part of my realities and the
sore void I wasn't conscious of before
has been filled somewhat.

Could it be this new ingratiating manner
of hers may be due to my having proved
I can leave N alone?

Also I noticed a grim, unhappy look on
her face when she said she had non one
to talk Italian to. Maybe she is lonely
and misses N so that talking to some one
like me who shows interest in him is the
next best thing?

Friday, Sept. 12, 1961

Today I found myself EAGER to go to work for a change. Something exciting to look forward to--Janie would be there! Or so I thought. She wasn't.

I fought my disappointment all day. Last night I had hurried to get through with the Italian grammar, so I could give it to her--an excuse to see her.

I decided maybe I had too much a tendency to just dreamily wish and wonder and hope instead of realistically investigating facts? So I deliberately looked at her time card in the rack and watched it to see if it changed to "IN", instead of leaving to chance or undependable gossip to find out. It stayed in "OUT".

I did seize an opportunity later to inquire into her status here and found out as I suspected that she is only an emergency fill-in.

Actually, it is a stroke of luck to have her not working right now. For my nosy, prejudiced sister was scheduled to sell tickets beside Janie's working station and I trembled at the possibilities, since my sister knows but does not "like" Janie. (She is a foreigner.)

In a way, I am rather glad Janie is not a regular employee. When I really face the possibility I realize it would have its drawbacks.

Monday, Sept. 19, 1960

Janie has not been at work any more than those first three days of last week.

I find myself quite sad about it. It was lucky I saw her when I did, I guess, because I find from my investigations, that she will not be working very much.

Mostly I am chagined because I have been dressing for her--carefully wearing things I wanted her to see--like the !"Italian" suit. Damn! Anytime now it will get too cold to wear these particular things.

Also I have the Italian grammar, which I'd like to "use" with her. It will have to go back to the library soon and that excuse will also be gone.

However, as I said, in some ways it is good. Right now we are so busy that I would have little time to be gracious and she might get the wrong impression. Also If she only comes in rarely I can make more of a fuss over her than if she is here every day.

I wrote this a t noon. When I went down to lunch I saw by Janie's time card that she must have come in. So I maneuvered to find her, but couldn't.

I finally found her in a different department but she was busy and I didn't dare approach her. I went back to my desk and fought the same old pull to go see her that I used to feel with N. But this time I thought I'd leave it to chance.

Well!

The usual coffee-break procedure got mixed up today and I had to go down for coffee alone. When I got there, there was Janie sitting alone! This time I showed her the suit (I had it on) and mentioned the grammar book, but something was wrong. I went back to work feeling depressed and hurt.

Later, I went dashing downstairs on an errand and right into Janie, whom I thought was working UPSTAIRS!

This time she was more than cordial--clinging even. I decided maybe she felt as I do--self-conscious around others.

I told her I wanted to hear more about
N when we had more time and SHE said
she'd have a whole hour Wednesday noon
as she'd be working all day!!!

But I don't eat till one and Mozelle will be in the lunch room at noon, even if I changed. Darn!

(Why do I bother about Mozelle or others?

Because N and Janie are Italians and to most of these people--in fact I'll say all of them--that mean WOB--foreigner--undesirable, etc etc.)



Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1960

I AM GOING TO LUNCH WITH JANIE TOMORROW!

Once this would have excited me almost unendurably, but right now I am busy and tired.

After she told me she'd have an hour lunch on Wednesday I got to thinking how complicated, unsatisfactory and downright dangerous to good relationships it would be for me to go to lunch when Mozelle did, then sit, not with her and her friends, but seek out the "little Wop girl" to sit with. Nothing I could imagine would give me much chance to talk about N.

So, on impulse, and without thinking it through I dashed to Janie and asked her if she'd like to go OUT for lunch.

She agreed--definitely. But not very happily. She seemed cross. She had looked cross earlier today when I saw her. Did her sister-in-law's standing there have anything to do with it?

Perhaps it is just as well that I am too busy to suffer over every little look and gesture again.

Wednesday Sept. 21, 1960

(Note that I have found it necessary to put down the days of the week again!)

I prayed hard last night, I needed strength so as not to act embarrassed and fawning with Janie, but rather sincere and helpful, if possible.

And so it was. I was the strong one, the guiding one, the calm one; and SHE was flustered and embarrassed.

She seemed very much more like N to me than the Janie I had constructed. She was self-conscious and shy, agitated. And she exuded that same intense, warm passion that I always felt with N--so different from people I know--and which I find so fascinating.

She had always impressed me as very cool and collected. But today she acted dis-oriented--something I'd never seen in her before. She acted confused. She was very definitely fussed about three times and didn't watch where she was going, stumbling over a footstool in her way, and so on. Just the way I used to act around her!

I can't quite figure this out. I'm sure she was pleased to go with me; she didn't seem to want to part any more than I did. And I had a definite feeling that we both enjoyed ourselves.

She got very embarrassed two or three times when reference was made to N's love interests. She also told me about

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Lunch
with
news

the Italian N met who wanted him to marry his daughter and that N refused to meet her, saying he'd pick his own wife. She got very red and embarrassed when telling me this.

She told me that N was NOT coming up for Christmas, which confused me for she said he spent Christmas ALONE last year. Didn't she tell me before that he spent it with a "boy"?

She reviewed things she has already told me about N; He does have a car--a new one, etc. Evidently he still leads his lone life--eats out twice a week--eats his lunches out--goes to an occasional show. She said he mentioned no social life. She did not mention any girls. We agreed he might not be telling all.

He "doesn't like Los Angeles"--likes four seasons--doesn't like the "smudge"--claims he wants to get into Boeings in Seattle as draughtsman (an idea she doesn't seem to favor)--is studying for his citizenship first for which he is now eligible, at least as to time of residence.

She told me about thier plans for their parents to visit from Sicily: they would spend 3 months with N in L.A., 3 months in Spokane with Pina, and 4 months here with Janie. I was disappointed. I was hoping they'd spend the whole year here with J. and act as a "lure".

One thing she told me did make me feel good: Seems one of N's fellow workers is a Negro and N has defended him and fought for him, turning on the others

who torment him (just as I did for N!)--
declaring that "the color of his skin
makes no difference!" This is, unlike the
N I knew. It is something new. I hope,
perhaps, I might be responsible for this
enlightened attitude in a way! However,
he would not accept the Negro's offer
to spend Christmas with him and his family
---excusing himself, and spending it alone---
thereby spoiling the whole effect, it
seems to me!

Enroute either to or from lunch I told
her about getting my driver's license.

She didn't react like I thought she
would. At first she showed no interest.

Then when I made more a point of it,
she listened carefully, but abtactedly.
Perhaps she didn't realize I didn't drive
before. I wanted her to know so she'd
tell N.

Going back she was confused and missed
the doorway where we usually go in. And
also when we ran into Mozelle and another
woman worker who just "happened" to be
there when we went in and both of whom
seemed very interested. ~~I wonder~~ if
the sister-in-law alerted the whole
third floor?

I am tired tonight, yet I write all this
down. I don't understand this compulsion
of mine!

All in all I feel this lunch with Janie
was the turning point--from strangeness
to familiarity. Here I was, calmly having
lunch with NICK'S SISTER! Calmly dis-
cussing things Italian and N himself and
it didn't seem special and exciting at
all--just usual--and real--perhaps even
a bit tiresome and corny.

I didn't feel fussed up and emotional at all. I was surprisingly comfortable. In fact I felt like "an old shoe", a sort of "senior advisor", "just a good friend". I felt I was playing a role--the "helper", which I've done so much lately that I almost have a formula!

And I could cry!

Thursday Sept. 22, 1960

Janie was not at work today, for which I was glad, because I was very busy, very tired, very discouraged, very lonesome.

I read somewhere that one loses one's motivation and becomes discouraged if a goal is too distant, too hard. That's what's happened to me, I guess, when I found out N wasn't coming back here for Christmas. I was looking forward to that possibility--that slim chance.

Also being around Janie has kindled little sparks of anguish again--the gestures, the look, the resemblances to N yesterday made me want to cry, "Stop! Stop!"

There was a long pause here while I sat remembering the things I said to Janie in that letter. No wonder she was embarrassed! I had forgotten!

Actually, when I think about it, I find I don't have a great interest in Janie, "per se"; it's her connection with N. Her interests are different from mine--just as her interests were different from N's. He used to complain about it--the partying, the materialism---

She revealed in her conversation things that I suspected; they are so ingrown a family; so clannish as Italians so often are. Just as I thought, she has no CONCEPTION of how she has interfered and with N's freedom and independence and how she has monopolized him for her own comfort--nor did he see his chains---

I don't know. I shall go through a Christmas card attempt--and then see---

Sept. 25, 1960

Yesterday (Saturday) I drove by the location of Janie's new house. There I saw her husband and son busily digging around the newly laid foundations. They both looked intently at me as I went by. I wonder if they recognized me?

I can't say I was impressed by the location of the lot. I remark about this because I wish to imply that once again I was disappointed in the family's tastes....

Early in this whatever-it-is I mentioned the "Brannon Story" as an example of race prejudice in Yakima. The end of this story has been very dramatic--the victim lionized and accepted after a tragic crippling!

Passing thought: am thinking how "lucky" not to have N here this fall when I HAVE to attend my son's football games....

My usual week-end discouragement about this "romance" of mine--I am too old to wait so long. And is one who gives so very little worth the trouble?

Friday Sept. 23, 1960

I am so weary that what once seemed like "little miracles" to me seem like hum-drum realities.

Janie was not at work today either. I was busy, but made a special tour to check and see, so I wouldn't chance hurting her feelings if she were.

Today's issue of the New York Times, which I excitedly peruse every week for things pertaining to N, had an article about Balermo on the last page!

Tonight when I left work there were very few people about so I allowed my "social mask" to dissolve while waiting for my ride. I was looking at the sunset and thinking sad, bitter thoughts about N until I thought to myself, "I shouldn't look so sad; someone might be looking at me" and looked up to see Janie's car parked in front of me!

And there was Janie in it giving her hair a surreptitious pat in them-- (on seeing me?) I hesitated a minute for appearances sake and then pretended to have just seen her, since she had as yet made no advances to me. I greeted her just as my ride came up and she returned my greeting with a smile and a wave.

Note that she did not honk at me or greet me first as most people would have. She must have been parked there all the time and had seen me come out and wait right beside her. This characteristic of hers is what used to worry me so-- is it diffidence?

Sept. 25, 1960

It has been a year and three months since N left for Los Angeles.

How lucky that Janie has re-appeared again to give me a report on him so I can evaluate!

I would say that he has succeeded. Not succeeded in the usual sense, but succeeded for HIM. I am glad. I am proud. I am relieved. I am justified.

And I am encouraged PERSONALLY--that is, in MY hopes, because--

He has done the things I wanted him to do. He has imitated me in fighting a battle against prejudice.

He has given no indication that he has any amatory interests there.

He "does not like" L.A.

He doesn't want to stay there.

He doesn't plan to stay there.

He plans to come back to SEATTLE (my preference)

Instead of Spokane with family ties.

He plans to get a job at Boeing's.

(This was his "support-a-family plan.")

He has not turned Janie against me. On the contrary.

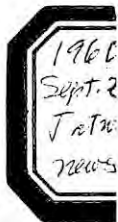
He has learned to drive and gotten a car.

He sent me the card.

He has not indicated that he wants me to stop sending him "missives".

I know that normally these things are nothing; he has done none of the USUAL things to encourage one, but these things are real encouragement from NICK!

He has been consistently POSITIVE and



CONSTRUCTIVE in his actions this past year compared to negative and self-destructive when I first knew him. THIS is success for me! To me this means that maybe my attempts at sustaining love have helped--that they might have been worth the anguish and trouble whether there is any definite reward or not. For this I am glad. I am thankful.

Monday Sept. 26

Janie came in to work about 10:30 today and left about 3. I am watching her time card now!

I found excuses to hang around her and make conversation today. We both seem to be trying hard to please each other. Suddenly I have the same unspoken agreement with her that I had with N. We both know that we are going out of our way to seek encounters with each other. We are friends.

She was at coffee when we went, and, tho we were unable to connect, she, like N, put on a noisy "show".

Summer 1959 Janie reported that N had asked his young nephew to come down and visit him last summer, which he would not have done if he had an "inamorata"! Actually, of course, it would be better if he did, but I don't WANT him to!

I get nowhere with Janie, either in my plea for Italian lessons. Italians can be as self-centered and indifferent as Americans, so there!

Wednesday Sept. 28, 1960

I have been feeling serene and content since Janie came back to fill the void somewhat.

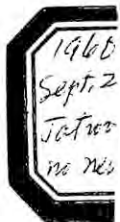
I have been counting so on N's coming home for Christmas, especially after Janie's report of how lonesome he was last year that I am full of doubts and suspicions when she gives me conflicting reports on his plans, and his feeble reasons for not coming. I certainly understood her to say once that he was coming for two weeks!

Right now I am betting he will come as he gets closer and closer to a lonely day.

But if he comes up without seeing me-- I'm afraid I would hate him---and all this would be wasted-----

I have been trying to treat Janie as casually as I would anyone else instead of being so emotional about her, but I can't tell. I sense that others are beginning to wonder about my interest and chumminess with "the Italian girl". They are all chatty and nice to her, but withal I note she seems to "walk alone".

I restrained some of my seeking her out impulses today but found myself encountering her anyway. Today in our conversation she pressed herself against me intimately while reading over my shoulder. I was surprised--and pleased at such warmth.



Wednesday is the only night that Janie has been working as late as I do. Oddly enough my usual ride home fell through tonight. I thought of begging a ride home with Janie, but then thought better of it. However, we were thrown together in such a way that it seemed natural enough to ask her. So I did. She agreed gladly and we made arrangements--(something I could never get her brother to do!) I was quite thrilled at the prospect of riding in that car I'd been watching for two years!

Strangely enough, unusual circumstances forced me to go to lunch early today, too. Luckily there were no "spies". Janie was there, but, to my regret seemed to be through eating. Yet, instead of leaving, she came up to me and made much talk that I couldn't catch, her accent being too thick (a sign they are nervous, I've discovered) Then it dawned on me she was asking to borrow my LIPSTICK, a very personal thing to ask! I was flattered.

Then, instead of leaving, she sat down and stayed a long time, chatting about her house and other trivia, for there was another woman at the table with us.

When I went out of the store later I succumbed to a ridiculous temptation to buy her a cheap lipstick (she had left hers at home) and give it to her on the way back solely for the opportunity to speak some Italian--I would say, "Un regalo per Lei".

So, in great trepidation, I went through my little act. Imagine my embarrassment when she practically ignored me. It was a bad moment. I had interrupted her when she had a customer. Even so, I was terribly flustered, fearing my careful Italian was all wrong.

When I repeated my phrase, she said she didn't know what I said. But then, when she calmed down and listened to me, she said it was right. Whew!

I was very alarmed at quitting time when Mozelle asked for a ride home with me (coincidence or not?). However, she got another ride. Whew, again!

Then I was alarmed when Janie ~~was~~ ~~said~~ ~~stated~~ after saying she'd be early. By the time she did come, everyone was aware of the fact that I was waiting for her. Not only that, but as we went out together we ran into Mozelle. Damn.

I was rather at a loss at what we'd talk about going home; but evidently she was, too. We seemed to have an unspoken agreement not to mention N. She chattered constantly all the way home in a heavy accent. This was exactly as N used to do when he was nervous.

She was very agreeable about giving me a ride ANY TIME, she said, and I was sorry I couldn't give her more encouragement. I had to say that I was committed to riding with Kay. Though, secretly, I wished things were such that Janie would work all the time and I could change to riding with her!

She told me how they have MOVED.
They are living in a rented house
and renting their former home until
their new house is built. How queer.
How trouble-borrowing!

It occurs to me sometimes that this
close friendliness with Janie might be
the worst thing I could do to foster
a romance with N. He'd never come to
see me if he thought Janie would find
out! Now, how can I get rid of HER
if I wanted to?
Perhaps I should have kept aloof from her?

Friday Sept. 30,

At lunch today with some women who work
at the store the conversation turned to
"getting a man". Apropos of nothing
that I could see one of the women, who
likes me and works near Janie's sister-
in-law, where Janie is now working, spoke
of a successful marriage she knew of
in which the woman was 13 years older
than the man. Now, what brought THAT
up? It was not a remark that was glanced
over; it HUNG in the air.

Janie was at work, but I was not lucky
in contacting her today. There were
only a couple of brief encounters. During
one I gave her some Reduced-air-rates-to
Europe clippings from the New York Times,
Why, I'm not quite sure--somehow it
pertained to her parents' trip. Any-
way I had rather a hard time making
that one look reasonable----

Oct. 4, 1960

Now the reasons why I was apprehensive about Janie's working in the same place with me become apparent .

For a short time I felt comfortable and friendly and close to her, as we associated more. But now, again I feel restraint and uncomfotableness. It is not because of JANIE this time--I feel now that she is my friend--it is because of the situation.

It has gotten so I cannot approach her or talk to her or single her out without the speculative, inquisitive eyes of a dozen women or so watching---watching. If there were kindness and understanding behind them it would not matter. But there is only curiosity stemming from boredom. And the bitter, bitter lesson I have learned is that if there WERE happiness stemming from this relationship, would they foster it? No. They would set about unconsciously destroying it--although they might claim to foster it--for they would be jealous and envious of any happiness. ~~not their own~~.

Another thing: the hopelessness that has gripped me again at the prospect of N's not coming for Christmas or PRETENDING he is not, or not seeming to WANT to and other depressing associations in my life right now--all have tended to discourage me and my pursuit of my little Italian daydream--and I find I MISS IT! It kept a spot of warmth and

interest in my life that I now find lacking. And I find myself being bitter and cross and hard to get along with. My relationships with other people are beginning to be fraught with disagreements and friction. There isn't any fun--anything to look forward to--anything of real interest.

I notice that unless people's environments and pursuits bring them together they tend not to trouble to seek each other out, even when they care.

Also, with a satisfactory report that N is doing all right and "hewing to the line" I wished for him, I feel he ~~so~~ longer needs me as much. And I note that he and Janie don't seem to correspond as much as I thought. He is gaining independence.

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Oct. 5
Jatun,
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Wednesday Oct. 5, 1960

My prayers answered again? Janie here at work most of the day and I had several good excuses to be near her.

Once, while chatting, she mentioned those big ceramic panels N made. I mentioned that I had seen them. She acted surprised. Just then I had to leave.

Thinking about it later I realized that those big, heavy things could not have been seen except at her house, and evidently N had never told her I'd been there. I felt it necessary to go back and explain, which brought up the "Pizza party", which I then had to justify. This made me look like a matchmaker between N and Gloria.

She seemed troubled at the disclosure, not too pleased. Then she told me how N had asked her if Gloria was still at Stanford because he wanted to contact her and share a ride home for Christmas last year. This roiled up the old festering sore spot in my insides.

(Note that N had planned to come home for Christmas last year!) I was sick with disappointment and I suppose jealousy and hurt again.

It didn't much help when she went on to explain that he was trying to fix up shared rides with several FELLOWS, nor did the thought that he might have used his family's contact with Gloria

Xmas
1959

to promote a contact with Mike and me. However he didn't get along with Mike too well.

I found myself telling Janie what I had decided to refrain from telling her for the time being--that Gloria wanted a divorce and that I had seen her last night. She said, "Oh, she's in town?" It all made me sad again.

Later, when I talked to Janie again, she seemed cheerful once more. We talked about N not liking my pizza and SHE IN*CVITED ME TO HER HOMESOMETIME ON HER DAY OFF and she would make me some Italian dish! And she was embarrassed saying that--her face was red. Yet she was insistent and kept at me until I seemed to agree.

So now I am back to my old conflict--Is it ME or GLORIA they want? Or my matchmaking help?

Onething I'm pretty sure of is that it will alienate N to have me get chummy with Janie. But, again, he will NEVER contact me on his own, so I won't be any the worse off. There is more chance of keeping track of him as a friend of the family than waiting to hear from him!

I think he may have some idea that I or any woman should carry on their life and wait secretly for him until such time as he can work out his plans and purposes and come for them. If this is so, it is doomed to failure because it is unrealistic--and I, for one, do not have time.

Sunday, Oct 4th, 1960

Pellegrini

I went to Seattle on the bus this week end--supposedly to visit my brother's family and see the new baby. (really I went in hopes of seeing the Pellegrinis')

When I talked to Paula about going over, I did not mention the P's because she had tried very hard a couple of times before to arrange meeting with Virginia for me and nothing came of them because I couldn't get over there. In the meantime she has lost contact with V because of the baby and it seemed to be forcing things too much to mention it again. I was hoping she would remember, tho.

I arrived late Friday night and she mentioned nothing all evening about my seeing the P's. By Saturday noon she still had not mentioned it and I was getting desperate. Mention of them popped out of me in spite of my decision not to force the matter.

"Oh!" she said, "I forgot! How awful!" etc. etc. "I'll have to call her" and went towards the phone. I was encouraged until I saw her begin to act diffident and hesitant and I realized she must not really be on such easy terms with Virginia after all and was rather forcing the whole thing as I suspected.

However, she did phone and got rather a formal message that Mrs. P would be gone all day, but would be back in the evening and so she said she would call then. I do not think she left her name.

Again, that evening, Paula seemed to be "stalling" about making the call, so, having had a few drinks and not wanting to call when I'd had more, I felt brave enough to decide to take things into my own hands. So I called. Again, a girl said they were not back then she volunteered the information that they had gone "mushrooming" to Deception Pass and might have "stopped at her cousin's on the way home" I think she then asked me who I was, if I was the one who had called earlier and should she have them call back?

I told her my name but I could see it meant nothing to her. Besides I really did not want to lose control of the situation by leaving it up to them to call me. However, it seemed the only thing to do so I gave her Paula's name, which she recognized. (All this bothered me somewhat because my desire was to meet Mr. P. He was the one whose books I liked and whose ideas etc. seemed so like my own, and who had helped me with N. This way I was being shunted off to "tea and talk with his wife, which I would have liked, but it was not the main issue. Actually I had been a wee bit disappointed in her letter with its hint of sweetness and sentiment and "ladylikeness"--I had hoped for someone a little more robust.)

Anyway I was desperate to be so close and yet so frustrated, so I grasped at a straw and, turning on all my "charm" asked the girl on the phone who she was?

Much to my surprise she responded very WARMLY--she was the daughter Toni--a late call wouldn't bother her parents--they always stayed up very late, she said (!!) She sounded gay and cute and warm--a bit too "mannered", too "trained" perhaps. We chatted a little about why she hadn't gone and then I hung up, resigning myself to the fact that that was all that could be done under the circumstances.

They did not call that night or the next morning. his hurt.

The next morning was a beautiful one and I had nothing to do while everyone else was busy. I had a pretty bad "hang-over" and it occurred to me a walk in that crisp sunshine might help.

The afternoon before Paula had directed me by the Pellegrini's house and pointed it out to me. I could not get a very good look while I was driving but it satisfied my gnawing curiosity somewhat.

My main impressions were that it was smaller, "snugger", less pretentious than I had imagined-- more secluded. Also, its unkempt look surprised me. From Mr. P's book I had expected to see carefully tended garden beds! Yet I did like its relaxed, informal, slightly arty and romantic look. I was surprised, too, at the nondescript, beat-up looking cars parked in front. His book had given me the impression of preparing.

So--the house tempted me. I wanted so badly to go and get a better look. I wanted so badly to meet them--especially him--to see them--what kind of people they are--- Yet it was too early to go calling--perhaps they were churchgoers. But, also I had to leave to catch a bus at noon and time was short.

I took my little niece, Janet, with me, saying we were going for a walk and pretending all the time that I wasn't going to go and knock on their door, when I knew perfectly well I was. I didn't care what kind of situation I got myself into--- I figured with Janet and the bus as excuses I had a way out....

When I knocked, no one answered for a long time-- in spite of the two cars parked in front. I had just about decided to leave when the door was flung open by a not-too-pleased-looking man in his pajamas! I was confused. It did not look like the pictures of Mr. P. It seemed an age to me that we eyed each other while I sought frantically for something to say, finally getting out --"Pellegrini?" He nodded his head, "yes"--waiting.

I said, "I'm Lorna Chambreau." He did not react except for a "busyness" about the eyes. He seemed to be thinking, stalling, waiting. I began to explain--"Paula---sister-in-law---" with vague gestures of my hands. I sensed I was taking the wrong tack, but the fact that my name meant nothing to him was something I needed more time to think about.

Suddenly he said rather peevishly, "But everyone's asleep!". (It was about 10:30) This was a very unexpected answer! "We didn't get to bed till 3 o'clock". I started vehement apologies. Finally he said, "You come back later" and when I demurred (the bus to catch, etc.) he just stood there saying, "Come back later" more insistently. I was firm--said I couldn't this trip--maybe another trip--that I was out walking with Janet and was very curious about the house--if it looked as I thought it would. For the first time he showed interest. He said, "Does it? Does it?" I waved away and answer. "There was no time. I told him to go back to bed--that I was very sorry. At this he ~~finally~~ admitted what was obvious--that he had been up reading the paper (he was rather hiding a pair of glasses in one hand, I noticed)--and he had had breakfast. I could smell coffee and pancakes. I said, "It smells good."

I can't remember whether he asked me in then or not. If he did my impression was that he didn't mean it, so I said, "No, I had to take Janet back--" etc. When I told him this was my niece, Janet, he dissembled and was nice for the first time--he bent down to her tenderly and said, "How are you, honey?"

Then he straightened and just stood there, neither welcoming nor leaving, until I became embarrassed and tried to leave. At this, the formality relaxed a little--I said "it was nice to have met him and seen the house and wished I could have met Virginia--had hoped to--" He just stood there and said, "I'll tell Ginny." I murmured something about the mushrooms (I was still trying to give him time to recognize me) and he said, "We cooked them and ate them up there." I thought this rather an odd answer and didn't know what to say--so confusedly backed away--murmuring about the mushrooms being "interesting." He did not try to keep the conversation going--yet he made no move to go in.

Pellegrini

I was proud of myself that I was acting calm and poised, and I tried to keep my poise and my head high as we left, but I felt like crying on the inside with shame, embarrassment and disappointment.

All in all, I was disappointed. Not only in not getting in to see the house and all, but in his total reaction. He was definitely not interested--he was only being polite. He obviously didn't recognize my name and didn't care when he did. In fact, he was almost cross, rude even. He was more accusative and scolding in tone than welcoming. He did not, at any time, show any pleased "I am glad to see you!" reaction--or "we must get together"--or "I've been wanting to meet you" or anything like that. I did not even feel it in his manner. He just stood. He did not try to send me away or keep me.

I was surprised, and a little disappointed in his looks, too. I had expected a typical endomorph--short, paunchy, balding--jolly, pleasant, aimable, warm and welcoming---a family-type man.

This man was bigger, more impressive looking--better looking in the face than I had expected--good enough looking to perhaps have once been vain. He had too much fuzzy hair--darker than I'd expected--hardly gray at all. But most of all, he was more austere, more "teachery", more SCHIZOID than I'd expected. I came away with a reluctant, faint suspicion of a bit of a "poseur"?

I looked at little signs of things around the property--an ill-kempt look, shabby looking cars. I thought of the staying up late--the sleeping late on a beautiful fall morning--the resentment I'd noticed in his books at any criticism of his wine drinking and his defensive attitude about it--the not returning my call the night before--and I wondered--a little more drinking than admitted perhaps? a writing about oneself as one thinks one is?

And I was disappointed in his voice. Out of this big, strong, heavy set body came, not a deep masculine voice, but a light, high "teachery"--almost querulous voice.

At last, I think the Pelegrini angle is finished. Too bad--I DID like his ideas and humor--I had hoped we might get along----

Note made later--(Yet I cannot deny that I was stirred at that first long look into his eyes. In that short time I remember thinking, these are handsome eyes. these are good eyes. they are intelligent eyes they look at me fearlessly and honestly and do not flinch. These are the kind of eyes and look I have sought all my life--and found so rarely--(in N I found them)-----yet these eyes do not respond to me ..)

Monday Oct. 10, 1960

I have been haunted all day by the hurt and disappointment of the Pelligrini encounter. I have been trying to fight my way out of these emotions; fighting the temptation to justify and bias my thinking to preserve my original concept of Mr. P, but nothing covers up the unpleasant fact that he really didn't show any enthusiasm or interest at seeing me at all.

Pell.

In spite of realizing that, socially, I was in the wrong, I STILL can't reconcile his letters, their effusive invitations to me, his humor and philosophy in his books with that cold, inert, disinterested man at the door. Could there have been some misunderstanding? Has something happened to alienate us of which I am not aware?

Life has again lost a great deal for me with this new disillusionment. How much have I deluded myself again?

Later.

Things are bad again. Janie has not been at work for 2 or 3 days. On investigating I am told that they are training someone new. Janie will only be used in emergencies.

In a way I am relieved because such a public relationship is unsatisfying.

I catted (NOT chatted) with her sister-in-law the other day. She confirmed my doubts about the new house. The rest of the family seems to think it's not a very SMART solution to a housing problem, either.

Still later.

I just can't understand that Pelligrini business! I even got out his and Virginia's letters and re-read them. They are very warm and friendly and INSIST on my coming to visit them.

What did I expect? I thought maybe someone MIGHT be outside. I thought there might be a few minutes of embarrassment, strangeness and difficulty, as is usual in such cases. I realized I was being nervy and a nuisance to call on someone that time of morning without warning. But I counted on them being ~~superficially~~ polite.

Paul
I expected, after all we'd said to each other by letter and through Paula, to hit responsive chords in each other quite soon and with very little trouble--an instant recognition and liking as so often happens. I thought that, even if they resented me, that they would go through the motions of laughing, welcoming, offering a cup of coffee, a tour of the yard, at least.

Why did he stand there like that? neither encouraging me or making the slightest gesture of dismissal? He didn't pull away or try to close the door or act shy or embarrassed.

Actually, he didn't look either puzzled or annoyed when I told him my name. He looked like a man THINKING. He glanced away from me for a moment as one does when trying to concentrate. Yet before

Pellegrini

that, in our first long look at each other, his eyes didn't flinch or waver. He looked me straight in the eye with no particular expression.

He seemed to be WAITING. He didn't at any time act hurried or give me the feeling he wished I'd go; rather I WANTED to get away from there because he was giving me the feeling that he was NOT going to let me in THEN and I was upset about that, knowing it was my last chance.

He definitely gave me the impression he was annoyed at me; "scolding" me; he sounded almost querulous, peevish, accusative.

What bothered me most was his lack of stimulation; his unhumorous, unencouraging uncommunicativeness; his proud, austere, self-contained domination in the doorway.

Then his demanding, insistent way of saying I should come back LATER, but there was no warmth in it, even though he repeated it about 3 times, each time stronger. I did not feel encouraged--only ORDERED. He had a slight frown on his face at that point, I believe, which rather frightened me.

Neither did he press me or express any regrets when I said it couldn't be now--might have to be some other time.

Strange. Very strange.

October 12, 1960

Pellegrini

I am so unhappy at the outcome of the Pellegrini visit that I keep trying to justify it.

It was an unpleasant incident. I knew I was taking that risk, though. I had expected and wanted a pleasant encounter when I met him, because he and his wife represent the kind of people I should like to know and be friends with....the kind I meet so rarely,+.the kind I can't seem to find in Yakima... and whom I am afraid of never having. My apparent inability to get along with them has destroyed my self-confidence in myself and my future relationships.

It makes me wonder what happened. He and his wife were so nice merely on the strength of my letters. They were so gracious and insistent that I visit them when I could. Granted that I did it in a clumsy manner, it still wasn't bad enough for them to change so much. It makes me wonder what kind of a man he really is?

I had vowed to myself that I would not write; I would not bother them again. But I am too tormented. It meant so much to me; I had great pleasure therefrom; I had high hopes, great curiosity. At the risk of only annoying him further, I wrote a letter and mailed it.

After all, I figured, he may have given me something I needed; but I gave him something he needed, too--even if it is only putting on an act--he needs an audience and I am it--part of it!

Pellegrini

October 12, 1960

Letter to Mr. Pellegrini

My apologies.

It was rude and presumtuous of me to disturb you last Sunday.

I had wanted so badly to meet you all, and to see the house you have described; I had waited so long; I get to Seattle so rarely. And I had to leave at noon.

It is bedause your kind attention and the philosophy in your books inspired me to go on once when things looked very black, and you helped me to help a friend that I felt compelled to seek you out as rare marvels.

If I bothered you, I'm sorry. I wanted to tell you one result of the chain reaction you started when you wrote a book: As I said, I gave one of your books to Nick Chianello as one of the best examples of what democracy SHOULD mean. At that time entertained as much prejudice toward negroes as he calimed others felt toward HIM.

I recently learned that, besides enrolling i in classes at UCLA and working on other purposeful pursuits, he made himself a public champion for a persecuted negro who worked with him, making life easier for one grateful negro. I found the story rather significant under the circumstances.

I thought perhaps you might.

Lorna Chambreau

Sunday night--October 16, 1960

In the back of my mind all this time was the unexpressed hope that there was some misunderstanding--that Mr. P would be SORRY--that he'd sit down and write me a heartfelt note of apology. I mentally counted the days and figured if there was no letter Saturday, it wouldn't matter if one came later because it would not be spontaneous. If no letter came at all, I would interpret it as a sign I suffered a delusion. I hardened myself for the blow.

Yet, when I came home Saturday and saw his letter amidst the mail, I felt no surprise. When I read it, I felt part of a MIRACLE: here was THE EXACT LETTER I HAD IMAGINED and certainly never hoped to get! It's very wording was as I myself would have worded it! It said things I'd hoped and wished he'd say, but never dreamed he really would. I felt as if I'd read the letter already once before.

I was so astounded I had to read it over and over the rest of the day until I could believe it. It not only apologized and begged for forgiveness--it explained in long detail the exact thought processes I had deduced he had gone through. At least it was ONE of the solutions I had thought through.

Immediately, words leaped into my mind in reply. I was too busy to answer right then and thought it wiser to wait and maybe tone down and revise. But the temptation was great to say exactly what I felt--so I made notes. Then I decided to chance sending what I felt anyway without revision. I think he would have known and despised me for anything less.

Pellegrini

That is the strange thing about it--I KNOW he would understand what I meant; whereas most people would misconstrue it.

I spent a great deal of time then rationalizing my embarrassing emotion about the Pellegrinis.

I decided that they represent to me the life I THOUGHT I was going to have and that now is impossible and that I am perhaps seeking the vicarious pleasure of sharing a bit of that life. I realize I have illusions about them that would be shattered on closer contact, but that is usual. And this is the exciting time, the stimulating time of getting acquainted with people--the time when their virtues attract and their faults are not yet apparent--the mutual attraction that brought one together (if one can remember to remember them!)

And--strange--I notice I lack the compulsion to write in this situation that I have in the N relationship. Perhaps it is the difference of being able to COMMUNICATE with the person concerned?

Anyway, I am very happy. I felt like someone had replaced the foundation that was suddenly yanked out from under me. It was silly to get so upset about such a little thing. I do not know what it means.

Also. With this new achievement of what I thought an impossible aspiration I find suddenly that N is not GOOD ENOUGH! His silly refusal or inability to communicate is shown up by this. I suppose if I no longer cared, I should be offered what I thought I wanted! My life is full of such things.

Dear Mr. P,

I should like THAT!

Actually, that is about what I decided had happened. I was so puzzled at the cool reception--it just didn't fit---

I had rather thought if I walked by someone might be gardening or outside, and then I couldn't resist knocking---

Paula has been so insistent that I meet Ginny, of whom she is very fond, that I am always torn as to whether to "tea and apint" with Ginny or "book and wine" with you-----

(silly sketch here)

Really, I should like both, but we divorcees have to be careful. Please assure Ginny that my intentions are honorable (I think!) Now, if you have an unattached twin brother-----!!!

It was just one of those mix-ups. Next time I shall dispense with relations and red tape and make my own arrangements--

And thanks so much for your silly letter--it saved me from suicide!

Lorna Chambreau

Incidentally: the house was flatter, more secluded, "piu artistica" than I imagined, the terraces much the same---
I LIKED it!

(I'm keeping a copy of this in case it should turn out that I shouldn't have risked this flirtatious tone. After my N experience, I realize I am susceptible---to Italians?)

October 11, 1960

My dear Lorna,

I am the one to apologize! The fact is I knew not who you were. We did not get Toni's message having got home quite late; and when you appeared at the door and announced yourself I did not get the name clearly--at least it did not click and I thought you were one of the many gals Gin has met through her activities in Ryther and painting classes at Edison, and that you wanted to see HER. your mention of Paula meant nothing to me since she is Gin's particular acquaintance, not mine. I don't remember that I have ever met her. SO: since Gin was in bed, there seemed little for me to do than simply be polite, realizing as I did, that if you had come to see her there wasn't much point in my insisting that you ~~would~~/sit with me and admire my pajamas!

You looked surprised and seemed disappointed--as ~~if~~ if you had expected more than you were getting; and that bothered me; But I didn't know what to do about it. After you had left I read Toni's message--which was really addressed to Gin--and it said a Mrs. Chambrough had called and that Gin must call Paula--well! Again the note confirmed what I had suspected; that your visit and your call did not concern me primarily. It was only when Gin goes up that she sets the matter straight; and then I felt so bad that I decided then and there to write--It was, in fact, on my agenda for the week. And then your gracious note came.

← my answer

So here is my letter. If all these lines
don't mean to you t at on my knees I beg
forgiveness I know not how to express my
feelings. When next I see you I shall
embrace you with UTMOST PASSION.

Angelo Pellegrini

Oct. 17, 1960--Monday

Today I felt happy. I felt good for the first time in ages. I keep savoring the fact that people whom I admire greatly like me, have accepted me! It feels wonderful. I felt assured and peaceful all day. No matter whether I ever see the Pellys or correspond with them again, it is enough to know that the things that make me queer here in Yakima are accepted and praised elsewhere, that I am all right.

Other achievements came through for me today, too--things that do not matter in this saga--little things I have been working on--fighting for.

The things that pertain to N today...I drove the bar to work today and thought sure I saw Janie's car parked among the others, but her card was not punched. I guessed maybe she might be in the beauty parlor having her hair done.. it would be about time again, I suppose. Perhaps that means she is coming to work again..? Little things made me forget to mail the Pellegrini letter and I ended up going out to the mailbox in mid morning. There was Janie's husband waiting in their car right beside the mail box. I was more than ever convinced that she might be having her hair done. He just looked grim as usual--made no attempt to acknowledge me--he never does. I did not see her.

I find that dream has rather lost its flavor all of a sudden. I am so busy thinking about the P. angle which is so much more interesting, more possible and more worth while. ^{He} ~~the~~ other seems strained and thin now in comparison. ^{His} ~~this~~ proves I could not give up N. until I found a substitute?

October 19, Wednesday

Nothing new, really. Just want to comment that I'm wondering if there is any connection between Janie's not being at work any more and our last conversation, in which I let her know that N. once had aspirations toward Gloria (I think). She seemed surprised and I have only seen her once since and that was rather a bantering, challenging encounter.???

I made a point of going by their new house a-building today and was amazed at the progress on it. It looks quite interesting.

Also, last night, too late I found out that it was PTA night and I was disappointed because I figured Janie would be at this one--she might expect to find me there. And now we are friendly enough so we could have talked. It would have been interesting. However, I probably would have been with Lois and that would have spoiled things.

On an impulse tonight I phone Janie to tell her her house was "bellissima" and pry about her work plans, but they have no phone in this house! How odd! (I found this out by calling the old house.) How can she get calls to work under those circumstances?

I was going on to say that this Pellegrini angle seems to have cured me of the Chianello fixation--and then I note how disappointed I was about not going where I could see Janie! But I do find it very hard to re-construct my Nick yearnings. Altho I have received the Christmas cards from the Art Museum and am making my plans to send a fancy card and small gift to Nick with another one of my "Last messages".....

Friday October 21, 1960

N things today:

No Janie.

The little Italian salesman that reminds me so much of N was in today and I had to help him find the person he wanted. I went out of my way doing so, so nostalgic was that look and that twisted English. ONLY nostalgic, though, not as heart-rending as before.

The Store has records that they play over and over and over, being too mercenary to buy ~~ones~~. Today, however, they started a new one. It was "Arrivederci, Roma". How it hurts when they play it. But repetition will dull it until it no longer hurts.

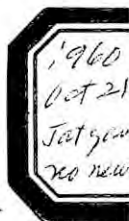
That evening:

One of the women at work today suggested that I go out with the "girls" and have some "fun", meaning bar-hopping on the prowl for men. I had to agree for the time being to be polite.

But I was COMPLETELY SURPRISED at my reaction! I thought I was really "over" N, just ~~amazing~~ myself now for lack of something better. Like a bolt from the blue came this overwhelming repugnance at the idea of looking for other me: I ONLY WANT N!

I spent one of the most unhappy afternoons I've spent in a long, long time. My insides were sick and sore again like they used to be at the thought of REALLY giving N up!

I didn't know I still cared so much! I felt very sad and wished, wished, wished something would happen. If it was only having Janie come back to work. Then I remembered I would probably see her at the football game tonight and I felt much better.



Later:

I went to the game. For an exciting minute I thought the blonde we were going to sit next to was Janie, but it wasn't. Then I forgot about it until I happened to glance up just in time to see her and her husband come in.

They sat up behind us where I couldn't see them, but I saw their son, with his disturbing slight look of N about him running around.

I hoped to encounter them on the way out, but didn't. So I gave up. Except on the way out we passed them, but they were very busy being very gay with some people and evidently didn't see us.

We were almost ready to leave when here came the whole family right up to us. Then I noticed that their car was parked very near ours

Not only did JANIE greet me effusively, but so did her husband! He who is usually so grim. He was, in fact, very laughing and chatty and aimiable. They ALL were! Janie made quite a point of

introducing me to her daughter, saying, "This is LORNA" as if that meant something special. They made quite a fuss over me, in fact, and stayed and talked quite awhile, about the house and Janie's work and the game and all. They were so gay, I wondered if they'd had some drinks.

My sister (who CAN be very charming) acted withdrawing and sour. I was conscious of ignoring her, but she had always maintained she didn't like Janie, so I wasn't risking her interference. (Later she made a nasty allusion to Janie's and her daughter's "woppy" look.) I could have kicked her for her attitude!

So we had to part. But I was encouraged. Why or for what, I don't know.

Sunday October 23, 1960

I did not hear from Mr. P again. NOW I worry and worry for fear I was too bold. I did not EXPECT to hear from him--there was no reason. All I can hope is that everything is "all right".

In the throes of my "new-found" emotions about REALLY giving up N Friday, I wrote him a letter "from the heart" and secreted it (I thought) for further consideration.

Imagine my horror to find it lying exposed in the middle of my bedroom floor where it must have been completely accessible to my roving daughter while I was gone! There was no evidence that it had been read, however.

That evening she was crying her heart out over a "lost love" and she said to me, "Mother, you don't know what it's LIKE to wait all your life for someone and then not be able to go out with them!"

I could have told her things.

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Thoughts about the Pellegrini mischief: Actually, I think I wrote my flirtatious bit ON PURPOSE. Relying on Mr. P's rare honesty to correctly interpret my attempt to clear the atmosphere in the usual divorcee-married triangle.

If they misinterpret it, I am not interested in them, anyway. If they do not understand that I can be attracted

to the husband but would not betray
the wife--for anyone HE could love
is worthy of my best treatment--and
iI would be doubly rich to have them
both as friends!

October 25, 1960

I have nothing at all to write about. Life is indeed devoid of the magic--every bit of it now. It is grim and humdrum and depressing. I went to see a colored movie set in Naples and Capri last night simply because I wanted to see the Italian people at home. I chose my neighbor who knows Janie and her husband to go with--not exactly a free choice, however.

As idealized as the picture was I still found it vulgar and disgusting. The beauty of Capri, etc, looks greatly over-used--the people no better than people anywhere and, en masse, it is all too obvious that these migrated from Africa, which, of course, is nothing against them, but makes them very different-looking from us. I have read that Capri has been turned into regular Coney Island by hordes of greedy, vulgar humanity. What I did not like was the emphasis on the notorious undesirable traits of the Italians--the vulgarity, the sexual mania, the immorality and exhibitionism--hints of which I sometimes pretended not to see in N. I realize, of course, that this was the lesser story--not the good side and it was probably good for me... Yet, what bothered me most was that all that exotic difference that was so very exciting about N. no longer thrills me....

I have been working over and formulating another "last" letter to N--for Xmas. It discourages me terribly again to face how ridiculous and hopeless it is and how sparse my chances are for meeting anyone I could care for in the near future and how time flies and what wasted opportunity I have...
(over)

My life lately seems to be a series of episodes of helping people through a bad time and then "losing" them. Such has happened with my neighbor friend: I have suffered through her divorce with her, thinking how nice it would be in the future to have a "pal" and, since she is attractive, it would probably work out that we might "go out" together--that she'd meet men and ask me or maybe get someone for me--etc...

What happens? She immediately procured herself a man and I never see her now....!

One doesn't get men by sitting around wishing or hoping or being nice, I find. One works at it--to what appears to me to be a disgusting degree! But what insignificant men they snare--these girls and women--I wouldn't have any of them. I prefer to fall for a man from the inside out like I did N--or not at all----

* * * * *

I wish to say the following for what it is worth: I don't trust my interpretations much, tho, after all these writings. It's this: I feel badly about the Pellegrini business now. I feel that I have spoiled it, somehow. I don't feel that I could face them again, now. I'd be embarrassed. I'd feel that Mr. P would feel that I have a crush on him--which I suppose I have--but I wish I'd left it on the you-both-are-my-friends basis. I feel that I have probably alienated Mrs. P and that it's all over now--I couldn't go visit them any under any pretext now.

However, it seemed just exactly right at the time--it was only in fun and meant in fun; maybe I'm getting stuffy working with these stuffy people. I have "proved" before that what I felt proved to be much more right than what I thought. The chances are so remote that I would see the P's again anyway--or have any more excuse to write them that I guess I shan't worry about it....

Friday, October 28, 1960

See Saturday -
Nov 12!

I am embarrassed to report that there were a couple of coincidences yesterday that I wanted to interpret as "signs"....signs that I was going into a "psychic cycle" again and perhaps "things" would happen to fulfill my desires about N.

Actually, there has been nothing to justify this today--and I shall proceed to report just what has happened, which amounts to about nothing.

I got a card from the library saying they were holding the Italian best-seller that I tried to get Janie to read. I had already read it and forgotten all about it, so I called this a "sign" that I was supposed to contact Janie. What I meant, of course, was that it was a chance opportunity if I wished to use it. I did.

I knew from observation that Janie does not really care whether she reads the book or not, or she would have tried harder. She is not a great reader--N told me that and she is not the "type", and it is certainly not the type of book for extroverts. I tried. It did not "go". Yet I decided to force the issue anyway--I am so bored lately...

I phoned again, knowing that they cannot be reached by phone. I thought perhaps I might get the address or happen to find her there. I got neither. Only a vague description that they were in "a house directly across from the Wilson school--up the only little road that goes into an orchard..." I wanted to call Alberta and make a "thing" out of the whole business, but I restrained myself, knowing it was not that important.

-So I waited till this morning and took the card up as an excuse to get her talking about Janie. She was not there. Frustration again. She would not be in till noon.

So I went back later and put on my little act. It all went very well. I gleaned ~~these~~ little facts to piece out the story of this latest move of theirs. Here is the story.

They have been planning to build another bigger better house for years (evidently for the purpose of impressing people--for their other home was quite comfortable and adequate--the real reason I do not know, actually) So, they buy a lot and start building in the fall (with only a month or two of good weather left) The lot, as I have remarked before is in a "good" neighborhood, but unattractively situated in a "hole"--without any view that the surrounding houses have. (an unesthetic choice) In the meantime an opportunity comes to rent their house at \$165 a month. They snatch at the chance even tho it means moving in one day without preparation

In order to afford this house Janie has gone back to work at \$1 an hour parttime on her feet all day in spite of the fact that she quit "because her children needed her constant attention and her legs bothered her so" she said...

They move into a "two room house" (Alberta says) "so that the girl may be near school" Janie says (the boy goes to a different school) in a different direction) without washing facilities, without a phone where she can't be called for part time work. All this Alberta and her husband, who is Harry's half brother, consider "very stupid" -- "It's all because Harry is so tight" says Alberta, very, very disgustedly.

I agree with her that it seems rash, improvident and shallow, but I don't agree that Harry seems "tight". (And she has no reason to be jealous--they are all well off.) To me they seem to have made a steady, consistent climb in true "American dream" style.

Why do I digress like this in this so-called story of N? Because I am trying to figure out what kind of people they are--what they mean to me, because they are part of the N picture, being his relatives by marriage. They seem to be "nice enough--usual enough" people, but they are not my kind. But then, N agreed with me on that--that was his complaint--they weren't his kind, either. This, of course, does not make N and I alike, necessarily. What I am trying to discover is how much is N like Janie with her materialistic, shallow aims in life? He thinks he isn't, but I wonder. Actually, his aims seem to be the same--I find them not really much more altruistic--it's just his methods that differ?

Enough of this. So---then I thought, "instead of giving Janie the card to get the book--why don't I just get the book (it would be very easy on my loneway to the car) and, if I'm out tonight--as I well may be with the kids wanting to go to the game--I can drive by their house and leave it. Wouldn't you know--of all nights I've had the car, this, the last one, was the time when someone wanted a ride home! However, the errand at the library really made things easier--routes and all.

So...I got the book. And...Julie did want transportation. So...I drove out to look for the house, but couldn't find it in the dark and had to give up, though it was a struggle to make myself do it. Actually, it seems much ado about nothing. I'm very sure Janie isn't interested in the book and would wonder at my bothering. Yet, I find myself so self conscious about things that matter--if it were someone I didn't care about I would think nothing of it---!

October 29, 1960

What can I say when I seem to be constantly encouraged in my aberrations?

I almost destroyed what I had written as being too, too foolish after I gave up trying to find Janie last night, deciding to be sensible and skip the whole thing--book and all.

YET--

Today my daughter called me from school--across from where Janie is supposed to live--and asked me to come get her. Going by in daylight I couldnot resist looking for the road--and there it was, with Janie's son riding down it on his bike and Janie's red car parked in front of the house I couldn't see at night!

I simply drove up and told her son to tell her to come out. And she did. She came up to me and said, "I had a letter from N AND he said he'd had a letter from you and to tell you he would write you and if he comes up he would come to see you."!!!!

Then she went on to explain about why he might come up. (I had laughed at myself for thinking that getting the card from the library for the book I wanted her to read was a "sign" I should "go to see Janie"! Now I am not laughing; I am a little SCARED!)

It seems N WON A CAR!!! --And she said he had moved and changed jobs--- (How lucky I ha:n't mailed my love letter to his old business address! How lucky! How lucky!) --He planned to drive the car up here and sell it to his brother-in-law in Spokane.

But then the brother-in-law had decided NOT to buy it, so --- N had sold it down there. He had intended to come on "home" to visit, etc.

She went on something about the jobs-- he has signed a contract for a job down t^{here} for two more years--"because he likes it--(last report he did NOT like it!)--wants to "go to school while he is still young enough to learn"--(or does he mean still young enough to nab a college girl?).

She said she was urging him to come up for a visit NOW, anyway--that he has not yet answered her letter. (I must rush mine off and see if it makes any difference.)

That was all about N for we started to talk about things at the store--her workin and so on. She WANTS to work. And I was right about her and Alberta, her sister-in-law at the store that I sensed she doesn't get along with; she was telling me how they didn't! I gave her a hint about a job opening in the department next to our office--and then could have kicked myself, thinking how it would spoil my plans to have N come to see me there!

Anyway, I was quite happy today, marveling at the strange, strange turn of events.

Sunday, October 30, 1960

Asusual, I had more plans for Sunday than I could possibly carry out. One of them was to try to run out to see Janie and be sure I had the right address for N to send the letter I composed last night. I still had the book as an excuse.

However, as the day wore on it did not look as if I'd have a chance. I finally decided to let other things go, for N things had to be done NOW, but then found myself imprisoned by a pie baking. So I gave up.

Just then my daughter came back unexpectedly, so I dashed off, telling her to tend the pie. As I went I thought of an errand I should have done anyway that would make a very good excuse.

I took the book, fixing a note to leave in case Janie wasn't home. But there was the red car and the daughter flitting about when I got there. I couldn't have timed it better; the husband was gone and they weren't eating dinner yet.

The boy and girl must have flown ahead and warned Janie I was coming, for she did not come to the door herself, but was scurrying frantically around in the kitchen as housewives do when they see an unexpected guest coming. Her puberty-aged children let me in in their strange, mute way--more like shy, wild animals than the kids I know--staring at you with their light brown eyes and then fleeing.

Janie seemed flustered (so was I! I was panicky at what I was doing!)--she stumbled as she did that other day--and I was very,

very tense and ill-at-ease until I called on my lately found formula to be kind, and listen and try to help the other person and it worked and I felt more at ease.

Janie then became cordial and homey. She made me coffee and went on with her dinner preparations. (She was fixing a huge beef HEART, which struck me as apropos, especially when she kept jabbing at it with a knife as she talked!).

She even produced N's letter to let me copy the address, which was certainly more than I had hoped for. She even spread it out to let me read it. I wanted badly to pick it up and read it all, but I didn't dare. It was in Italian and the challenge was almost more than I could bear. I did peruse the part she laid open and, oddly, it didn't seem a bit strange to me to be reading the Italian, though I couldn't read it literally--just got the general sense of what he was saying. It was long and typewritten and it unsettled me to be sitting there doing that which I'd so often imagined and wanted to do--see one of N's letters to his family.

Janie almost forced the address on me and repeated N's message to me very emphatically. She "kept" ~~me~~, poring out more coffee, etc. We had a long talk about how N had won the car; about her working; about her parents coming; about her new house.

At one point, apropos of nothing, it seemed to me, she referred rather disgustedly to N's bull-headedness and then went on about not having heard from

him since this letter. At this she
showed me--for the first time--that
the letter had been written the 3rd
of October!

I left Janie's and went home. No one suspected where I had been, glad that my secret rendezvous with Janie would be over and done with before my mother came back from her trip to pry and suspect. And thinking how glad I was that Janie had said she HAD gone to the library to ask for the book and put her name in for it, so that I felt mor justified in taking it to her.

It is very late now, but I had to stay up and write this down. I keep marveling that N did the very thing I'd hoped he wo would!

Oct. 30, 1960

I spent the night thinking about that letter being dated the THIRD OF OCTOBER!

Why did Janie wait a whole month to give me the message? Did she have the letter by the 5th of October, the last time I saw her?

Why did she not contact me? Afraid? Shy? Did she expect to be called to work and see me there? Or run into me at a PTA meeting? Why didn't she tell me when I saw her at the football game? Too much family about?

I toyed with doubts and suspicions.

And I thought how strange when all this month I have been trying to reach N with my thoughts, and all the time his message was waiting to be given to me! How strange that circumstances suddenly took Janie from my orbit!

When she was bitterly complaining about how he hadn't written since that letter, I thought, "Why, of course! he was waiting to hear my reaction before he made up his mind! It's possible that he has been suffering terribly all month wondering why I didn't answer. Did Janie tell him when she wrote that she hadn't seen me?

I wished I could PUSH my letter to him!

Oct. 30, 1960

Dear N,

I saw Janie yesterday--the first time I'd seen her in a long, long time and she gave me your message. You are sweet, sweet, sweet. And I love you, love you, love you! THANK you for the message from Janie! Even if you DON'T write or come, you have made me very happy just letting me know you thought of me.

I had this letter all written anyway to send you, but I didn't know how or where--Janie gave me this address--I hope it is right--I'd hate to have anyone else get this letter!

I wrote it because people are trying to get me to go out and meet men and I DON'T WANT to go out and meet other men. I like YOU. I TRIED to be sensible; I tried to forget you; I TRIED to leave you alone, but I COULDN'T.

I do not know what Janie thinks. She always talks about your "finding a girl" and it hurts me every time she says it. Yet she is very sweet to me and I like her very much. Even if I did not know YOU, I would like to have HER for a friend. I want you both to know that what will make YOU happy is what I want. If it means giving you up, then I shall do it.

I think it is fantastic about your winning the car--I must hear more about it--I want to hear more about EVERYTHING! If you ever come back, Nick, I can't give you youth or beauty, but I can and will give you all the LOVE that's in me!

Love, Lorna

P.S. If you wrote to me in Italian, I'll bet I could read it--I'd like to try--

LC

Dear N,

I want you to know that in all these two years I have not stopped loving you. I still love you more than any man I have known. I miss you terribly. I want you terribly. And I want only YOU.

BUT--I KNOW I am too old for you-- and every year makes it more impossible. I know that someday you should and probably will love and marry a younger woman. I pretend it will make me happy and it WILL if it means YOU will be happy--but, the day that I hear you have married will be a very sad day for me. I keep hoping you will come back-- maybe for just a little while--a day or a week even.

If you did come back and I knew I would have to let you go again, I would. I know a young man has his pride and does not want to be seen with a woman so much older. I know that we might have to see each other in secret, probably--(and probably in the dark so you could forget my age!). We could have so much fun since my operation!

So I write to tell you this: my door, my heart and my arms are always open to you, Nick, even if you have to go away again-- even if it has to be in secret--even if you plan to marry someone else--for I still love you. There are certain things about you that I like and want that I have never found in one man before.

You taught me what love could be and now I miss it when I never missed it before. I suppose I should go out and try to find someone my own age. But I do not want to

I do not want to meet anyone else. I want only YOU. I would rather have an hour with you than a month of dates with anybody else! If I thought you were ever coming back it would be worth waiting for!

I have learned to drive and gotten a driver's license. I have planned how you could come to see me privately at the store if you should come back here for Christmas--(I am alone in the advertising office from 12 to 1 every day and there is a "secret" stairway right by the office where we could talk unseen and unheard and from which you could easily escape to the side street!)

(I got this far N, and then I saw Janie and wrote the other letter----)

Monday October 31, 1960

The thing that thrilled me so about N's message is that I never at any time asked him to write me or send me a message or come to see me. I wanted to but I deliberately refrained because I knew it was hopeless. His message was unsolicited! Not only that but, as I remember, I told him that Gloria was married--and here I get somewhat the same reaction as when Norma got married! Is it that when his other hopes fail he turns to me? Am I consolation or what? I deliberately refrained from telling him that Gloria's marriage was not happy and that she really is "free". I was ashamed of myself for so doing, but I did. And now I'm rather glad because I got a reaction I hadn't expected. He could not be contacting me in order to find Gloria again, (unless Janie told him what I told her without meaning to. tell her.)

Anyway I had 24 blissful hours. And I tried to enjoy them to the hilt, knowing, as one does at my age, that it wouldn't last. And it didn't. But more of that later. It was the craziest thing--I couldn't sleep last night! This is unusual for me. I was so excited thinking about the possibility of seeing N again, that I was physically excited and had to take a pill about 4. I felt good, good, good, all day. I felt pretty and young and peppy--I felt wanted. I know I looked good, too. I saw many men eying me. Really--I'm not kidding! It's a little thing I've been testing. (If a woman ACTS pretty when she walks down a street--that seems to be all it takes!) I enjoyed happiness to the full until I mailed my idealistic love letter, airmail, to N. I sort of rushed to mail it before common sense crept in--I could feel it creeping

Reality started creeping into me last night when I realized that if N came so would all the old problems--how to see him--where to see him--all the frustrating little this and that of human contact. As I studied my letter I'd written I saw that I was constantly "letting myself out" full of noble sacrifices of every kind but marriage! What if N were foolish enough to want me to marry him? I tried not to think of the troubles and complications

I could stir up associating myself again with the "difficult ones". Last night I felt equal to it. I thought, "to love someone is to TROUBLE oneself about them. It's easy to go alone; it's a constant fight and trouble shooting to love ~~So~~ ~~no~~ ~~one~~--even my kids." I thought how, if anything comes of this, I will have many battles to fight; much patience and wisdom to summon.

And it wasn't an hour after I'd mailed the letter that I almost wished I had it back because things began to happen and I saw what a burden I was taking up again. ...a burden no one asked me to carry.

I did not mention the fleeting suspicion I had that Janie might be using me with her talk and "winning" ways about her working at the store. She seemed to think I have more influence than I do. She was a little TOO interested in whether I spoke to certain people about her etc..

Anyway, this morning I debated about whether I really cared enough to put myself out for her. It was with reluctance and shame that I proceeded to take up her cause, because I might still need HER, and I didn't want to risk alienating her until of IF I hear from N.

I made a fool of myself and got myself thoroughly scorched for running around suggesting to all the right people that Janie Esqate would like to get back to work. At least I smoked out the truth: my sweet and winsome Janie is neither liked nor wanted. If she ever gets work at the store again it will be because they're desperate. Have I answered my question of a year ago? Is Janie as psychotic as N under that sweet mask? Did her husband's look at her mean what it seemed to? Is she using me for her own purposes--getting in on N's "mama Chambreaux"? The verdict they told me was that she is not "arrogant and independent"--she only works when she wants--tries to run things HER way, (I guess) and that she is a TERRIBLE customer--demanding and exacting. Hmmm. There are, of course, two sides to that story and I can see them both. What bothers me now is what to tell Janie

herself if and when I see her. I am "on the spot". Should I seek her out in her very-hard-to reach hidingplace. (This is like N! I cannot phone, write or send a message. She has isolated herself--just like him!)

If I let it go--it looks as bad and ends as badly as if I'd done nothing. She'll think I did not try to help her; or she'll suspect that I found out something I'm with-holding. If I don't tell her--she will worry and try and waste a great deal of time, emotion and effort to no avail--end up being mad and bewildered.

If I tell her I run the risk of her reacting like N--revenge etc. She will blame and seek a scape-goat and it will very likely be me. I'm sure it will brew up a storm that I have neither the time nor the inclination to channel and see through. I think the truth is she just doesn't belong in that store--any more than I do--she and N and I are rebels--but will she see it that way? What have I to gain and what have I to lose? Besides there is the problem of how to contact her and HOW to say it....

I think maybe my best bet is to wait a little--wait a day or so to see if either she or I get any reaction to my letter to N. (I truly expect none to me.)--see if she contacts me--see if maybe the store uses her anyway--(then I wouldn't have to say anything)--see if I run into her again. To seek her out makes it look more authentic and positive than it is.

I think I shall wait the results, if any, of the letter. It was sweet, naive, and "good". If N and/or Janie are out to "use" me they will find a good subject in that letter. I prefer to think Christ's power of love is no operation here, but I prepare myself to find opportunism and materialism; or, more likely--exploitation of "innocence."

Nothing I wish. I wish I could have seen that part of N's letter in which he sent me the message. Not that I don't trust Janie--she would not have spread the letter on the table for my perusal if she had lied (but then she didn't think I could read Italian! Oh well, I'm borrowing trouble here ..) But she seemed to turn to a certain page--it did not have my name on it--and I did not have the nerve to pick the letter up and read it, for fear there were personal parts...

I wish I could have seen it simply because I'd like to have a mental image to savor. His way it's hard for me to believe or savor--Janie's just saying by rote and each time she turned her head and looked away as she said it--she did not watch me to see my reaction--"he said he'd had a letter (a letter, indeed! he had a valentine, an easter card, a birthday card and book, a magazine AND the letter) from me and to tell me that he'd write to me and if he came up he'd come to see me"...She repeated that to me two different times exactly the same.

What is so astounding about this is that he made a point of telling everyone he would NOT write--(of course he won't--I'd be willing to bet!) and he made such a to-do about not letting Janie know that he visited me ever---why the change? Of course, as I say, if I learned anything it's that his words are nothing...if somebody told him today he'd said that he would have "forgotten"....

I doubt you, Nick, I doubt you. I do not doubt your sincerity in saying it; I doubt your ability to sustain your belief in me long enough to carry out your "promises".....we shall see. ...

Tuesday Nov. 1, 1960

I forgot to say that there were other evidences of what I used to refer to as "Little Miracles" yesterday. I hate to say "I knew it" but the evidence is a few pages back!

Yesterday had little unexpected turns of events that took me over to the Republic and into prolonged social gab-fests that once would have thrilled me with the opportunities to see N. In fact events forced me--that is what I mean by "l.m.'s"--they are unexpected opportunities to do what I want and they invariably come "in bunches". They last a day or two and then disappear for awhile. I seem to be able to sense when they are starting; things seem to "fall in place"--one event leads into another and brings me rewards I had not counted on. I do not know if they pertain only to Nick things; I haven't noticed them much before. Each time I feel like a fool referring to them and predicting them. I doubt them. I try to "be sensible". And each time the ensuing days "prove" my point. I do not know if they run in cycles or not--someday I should like to check and see.

Anyway, there was the "book-Janie-message from N" events of the week end. My first reaction was that I'd like to report the latest news about N to all the "Doubting Thomases" who used to know him at the Republic. Then I decided not to bother. Evidently I had no choice in the matter because events "forced" me into a situation Monday morning where it was only natural to report. And there I was loitering in my old haunts near N's still empty office etc. etc. To my annoyance no one seemed the least bit interested in N--some even professed to have forgotten him. Such are people. I had to go again to the Republic that night to make a delivery. This time I went alone in the car and I thought "what an opportunity this would once have been! "

I have this also to say: Whoever is pulling the strings seems to have eliminated Janie from my usual orbit again--just when I was worrying about if I really wanted her in it. But I was also afraid I might lose touch. Now I found my need of Janie has been eliminated along with her. Because, now that N has said he would write me or come to see me--(whether he does nor not--the intention is there)--I have hope of direct communication with him--I am not so obsessed with keeping in touch with her to keep in touch with him. It is a lovely, peaceful feeling.

I have very serious doubts that I shall see or hear from N and I sometimes wonder what I'd do with him or about him if I did. I am not sure what he meant or what his motive is. But I do not care. Something is healed that was very sore and that is enough. Something is good, and right all of a sudden. I don't know what it is--happiness sits like the butterfly on my shoulder and I must be gentle and still and----wait-----

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I have to laugh at myself; today is one of those days when I suspect that I did things IN ORDER to have something to write tonight! I miss this writing now if I don't do it.

I had figured that today was the day N might get my letter, so I kept "tuned in", hoping for some "psychic" message. Truly, I confess I got none.

And, after deciding NOT to go see Janie again, I deliberately went again tonight. It happened thus--or should I say I MADE it happen thus?

I had a couple minor things to tell her pertaining to her working at the store, and not seeing when or how I should be able to tell her in the near future, I created an errand at the store near her house. I drove by once before I had nerve enough to stop.

Her husband answered the door, and, although he was cordial enough, he handed me over to Janie IMMEDIATELY. She was ironing and her husband was helping their son with his homework. The daughter seemed to be gone. I found myself much more at ease with them in this crowded, tiny, unpretentious place they are renting while building. At least, for once I felt quite at ease, and for the first time her husband joined us, even touching my shoulder lightly as he passed me.

It was all very pleasant. They all acted like they liked me. I could see it in their eyes. In fact Harry seemed far less formidable than he had on other occasions.

Tonight he impressed me as "just a funny little guy, who put one over on the boys back home by landing a good-looking foreign girl who put one over on the people at home by hooking a guy to take her to America"!

The whole feeling was warm and neighborly and friendly just as I had striven to make it before when N was here and he had so mysteriously fought against it.

Janie greeted me with the words that I "must see the picture of N!" and ran to get it. I wonder if she knew what she was doing to me? I wasn't sure if I could keep my poise and look at it, but I did--and reacted like I did when she showed me his letter: I wanted to LOOK and LOOK and take it home to HAVE. Thus I probably overdid my casualness. It was a good picture, but it didn't look as I remembered him. He looked HEAVIER. And he didn't look FOREIGN--rather like some good-looking dark American guy. I thought: I should be proud to be seen with him--(I also thought how other women might possibly think the same!)

We chatted awhile and I left, feeling very pleased that things had turned out like this.

Later I wondered where the picture had come from when she had claimed not to have heard from N?

Friday, Nov. 4, 1960

The reaction has set in. Nothing new yesterday to whet my interest and hopes. And discouragement and depression set in again as once again the goal seems remote and impossible. Got around to thinking again "So what if N does come--such a short time--what can we do--and then nothing again. He has signed a contract for two more years down there, Janie says. Two years from now lets me out romantically...." Thought Janie would be in to see Ed yesterday--she said she was going to--and I interpreted her to say she'd see me then--but saw nothing of her. I really thought maybe this time she'd come into the office to see me, but no.

How can I expect any more of N. when she is still so shy in spite of our new, easy relationship? She is so much more socially adjusted than he.

Of course, I WISH I'd get a letter from N at least by this week-end. I can't really figure out the time element on airmail very well. And, like the Pellegrini correspondence, it is a letter that requires an immediate, "heartfelt" reply--or else it would be faked. I can't quite explain what I mean. So, if I don't hear from him this week or by the first of next week at the latest, I must face the fact that his relationship with me is lacking. It will be a good test comparison to see how HE responds compared to Pellegrini's! I told him to write in Italian if necessary. Now I realize I'd never be quite sure of what he said, fearing I might have mistranslated and would be afraid to get help for fear of what it might say. He might realize this, and be stymied by his former inability to communicate freely in English.

There is the possibility that he might again try to send me a message through Janie--or simply tell Janie that he is coming and assume what he said before goes this time, too. It would be typical of

his reasoning on such things. However, he should have learned a lesson if he realizes how late his message was by going through those channels before. (I wonder if he had been waiting to sign that two year contract before hearing from me? And got mad and signed it--would be typical.)

But these things never bothered him before--that was one of the great troubles. And I really can't expect him to change overnight or make any more effort when the rewards are no more promising than before--not much, anyway. So--that is why I do not expect to hear from him.

Normally I would expect an immediate, "heartfelt" letter and an attempt to make a trip up--at least an expressed desire to do so. Best of all would be a trip up and a letter and definite plans to see me. Then when he returned a definite pattern of communication. This would be usual and what I wish. Also a Christmas card and very likely a nice Christmas present.

What I expect ^{will} ~~to~~ happen is something very meager instigated by a great, great emotional effort that I'll never know about. Sometime in the next 5 months I may get another verbal message from Janie IF I happen to see her--or I may get a dull little card signed, "Nick". Or I may hear that he was here and tried to get in touch with me but failed. And, if I ever talked to him about it, he'd say, "Nothing ever goes right for me".....

That is Nick.

I know now that Janie will make no effort to seek me out even if she has a definite message. Why doesn't particularly matter right now. So, if I do not hear from N, I must find reasons to keep in touch with HER, and that will be hard because it doesn't look like she'll be working here again. So, IF she has a message she can tell me.

(Note how I have unconsciously used the Italian spelling in places!)

* * * *

There wasn't no answering letter to me from N today. I was hurt, for there has been plenty of time.

* * * *

Still waiting for a letter that does not come and wondering how anybody could ignore such a letter as I wrote? I thought I was going to give him a big thrill--make him so happy.....

* * * *

Still no letter. I am very despondent. The phone rang at the office today and when I answered it, a woman's voice said, "Tell my daughter there was no letter for her today". It was quite a shock, considering what was on my mind and that the message was not for me!

When I got home and found no letter in the mail again, I desperately "chance-opened" the Bible--anything---ANYTHING! "--and Jonah walked out of the whale"--which was no help that I could see.

Heartsick when I went over to mother's later I was made to feel better after reading an article she had lying open about "men Without Women" which told how and why some men never marry and never would. In fact I ended up being damned mad!

* * * * *

MY daughter had a party tonight and I had to endure the singer-who-sounds-like-N singing "our songs". Yet hearing them dispelled my recent doubts....

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Today I pulled a little trick on mother to get the car and went out to see Janie Before I got my groceries...I was THAT goaded by uncomfortable emotions.

And I was afraid I wouldn't be able to control my emotion in front of her--and I couldn't. Janie noticed my coffee cup shaking and offered me a table--(and got some assurance herself at my discomfiture!)

First I had driven around by the new house and asked her husband if she were home, and when he said she was, I had gone on out. I had a note with me I intended to leave if she weren't there.

I was releived when I saw the red car in front of the house. When I knocked the daughter peeked out through the half-opened door. Asusual she said nothing--just opened the door and ashered me in. Janie was not in evidence, but appeared. Later I realized she must have been primping. She greeted me with profuse apaologies for the house (which showed a desire to please me, I thought). She was sewing on some new curtains and I was delighted at their good taste--no cheap "Wop" taste here!

She went on endlessly skirting the subject of N with trivia. I don't know if it was because her daughter was there or not. But finally I launched into the real reason for

my visit by asking her--^QHAD she said that N had said he'd write to me? He hadn't-- and I just wondered if I'd done anything to offend? // Etc. etc.

I don't think I fooled her a bit. She immediately got defensive and changed her story somewhat--"That isn't what he'd said--He said he'd write IF he didn't COME." (She hadn't said that; I have my written proof pages back. This is one of the reasons I write these things down immediately!) "I wouldn't count on it; I wouldn't wait for it", she went on, "He hasn't written to anyone--not even the family--". Here she launched into a long account of his default in writing. But I had a sneaking suspicion that she wasn't quite truthful.

This is what I gleaned from her long, twisted-English, Nick-like chatter--and I had a hard time concentrating on what she was saying I was so distracted watching those beautiful oriental-slanted brown eyes and noting that her grown-out hair was much darker at the roots than the "blonde" she and N claimed--just as I had suspected!

"The whole family has been terribly upset," she said. "N hadn't written since the third of October. His mother won't eat or recover from her illness she is so worried. For N usually writes them every week." Janie herself, (who is the family "clearing-house" for news--especially bad news, she explained) didn't hear from Oct. 3 to Oct 28th, when He wrote and said he was well;; everything was all tight except work; his boss had NOT made a two-year contract; they are so ~~busy~~ //

inbusy he doubts if the job will last; he wishes he'd never won the car, it's caused him so much trouble; and he was writing his mother, too.....

Janie said she did not know if he had. But the family is still mystified and worried.

She said he assured them that either his boss or his landlady would inform them if anything serious happened--he has very few night classes--no "home-work"....

I tried to tell her that he might be having fun and was too busy and happy to write, but she was positive not--that he had no social life and would be sure to tell the family if he had a girl or got married or anything because that is the one thing they've been wanting to hear.

I suggested that maybe he was just getting independent since this was his first time away from home. This was laughed off.

(Note here: It is interesting to turn back and see what I wrote on Oct. 28th, the first day N finally sat down and wrote his family!)

(Persaonlly, I think it's quite possible N is having and unhappy "affaire!")

We got into a very interesting discussion on N's hyper-sensitiveness when she suddenly changed the subject to politics. I couldn't figure out whether it was because Lilly was listening so avidly, whether I was preparing to leave and she wanted to keep

me or whether she just preferred not to discuss N that personally with me. I was not happy about the switch, but I enjoyed finding that we agreed on politics.

It was getting dark out and I had to go. Janie accompanied me outside to take in her clothes off the line. I tried to pin her down about phoning me, but she was VERY BUSY and said off-handedly that "it was too much trouble" since she didn't have a phone in the house. This made me quite mad since I had been going to a great deal of trouble to contact HER.

However I left feeling much better and glad I had waded right into my problem.

Monday--November 14, 1960

I forgot to record--for future use--my observations on Janie's and N's ways of contacting me--if any.

I see, on reading back, that several times when I sent something to N I would "run into" Janie "shopping" in the store within the next week or so. ^o many times she seemed to be "loitering" near our office; seemed to be glad to be waylaid by me and chat about N--so that I have suspected that this might be her "shy", unsure way of contacting me to let me know about N. I do not know whether it is N-instigated or not.

The only other times I see her is at school functions--games or PTA--where she always seems glad to see me, but we are unable to exchange more than greetings. Perhaps these are attempts on her part to see me. She "makes herself" available".

I am rather confirmed in this view by her recent allusions to "I was in the Store" so many times this past month or so when ^I have been complaining of not seeing her. When I think back I realize that, because she was gone--not working--and I have given up on store friendships, and I was disgusted and blue, I kept to our office and my desk and didn't roam the store as I used to do. ^by so doing I might have missed her when she was looking for me to maybe give me N's message? Just a passing observation--nothing to be done about it now.

The fact still remains that she did not--and probably won't in the future--call me or come to my house to see me. True, she is without a phone. But the whole picture still leaves me in the class of a casual acquaintance--to be greeted as chance dictates, not to be sought out as someone special. This after two years!

My problem is and has been to break down this barrier. Which I am gradually doing, but how long it takes!

Further thoughts.

The good feeling I got from my viist to J. lingered with me till I went to bed last night. But, in the middle of the night I awaoke and found myself back to my original chagrin and doubt and unable to recapture what was good in that other feeling.

Which is the case now.

Let me try to see what bolstered me. When I talked to J I was reassured because it was obvious that, according to the family, N was acting in an unusual manner compared to how he had been acting since he has been away from them down there. He not only was ignoring and hurting me, but all those whom he dearly loved and tended to so carefully. How could I expect anything when even his own mother was being neglected? Obviously he is "decisioning" and has "holed in", as usual, until he has "something to brag about"--I suspect that his job is folding and his braggadocio plans are not working out.

Anyway, coupled with J's remark about he would write if he WASN'T coming, I thought well, maybe there's a chance now he IS coming, so he figured he doesn't need to write or is waiting till he can write something defiinte--till things have jelled so he can tell everyone something. And then I felt as if Janie would be back to work and I could keep in touch. And her parting remark, "I'll let you know if anything important happens" reassured me; That is more than I'd ever had to go on before. Of course her letting me know hinges on whether ~~she~~ her path crosses mine--like working--and she isn't here today--yet.

Any way, this morning all I could think of was my old thought--"A love letter demands an answer if one is interested. One does not risk making the loved one mad and losing them if one cares." And the unalterable fact that it is maladjusted and unwhole-some behavior to worry one's loved ones unnecessarily. So--even if the best happened--anything about N means trouble--not happiness.

* * *

My mood to night is one of apathy and resignation

The renewal of contact with Janie releived me a great deal--like a drink of water when you're thirsty--and I find myself at peace and my energy released at last for other things. I keep remembering the look in Janie's daughter's eyes--someone had evidently told her she liked me!

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Gloria cameto visit me tonight and we had quite a chat. At last I got her to talk frankly about N, though at first she seemed oddly ill at ease again. I suspected that maybe she suspected about N and me and might be playing the good sport for my sake.

However later she was more relaxed and intimate and this time I believed her. She said she hardly remembered N and she certainly hadn't been interested--far from it. And all the time she referred to him as "that poor little guy", "that boy". "In fact," she said, shuddering, "I felt like I wanted to stay on the other side of the table from him!"

Poor Nick! All the girls feel afraid of him. He is a little, black, hairy satyr to them--and that's what I find attractive!

For the first time the whole thing struck me as quite funny and ridiculous! Here I am, an aging woman, lusting after a little middle-aged man who is lusting after the young girls who are lusting after the young men, who seem to be non-evident! And nobody's happy! I wish everyone would turn around and run the other way!

And again, the shock of seeing how N repels people!

I am still looking for Janie and never finding her. Went prowling by her house onenight in the car, but hadn't the nerve to go in. It looked too dark in that mukky, mysterious orchard that time of night.

So I came home and spent a lonely evening crying and crying and crying, which I'd been wanting to do for a long time.

* * * *

I found out today that N's friend, Joe, whom I'd thought was such a bad influence, was considered too shy to date women!

* * * *

I am still prowling around the Esgate's two homes trying to find out something. Today my sorties were rewarded when I saw Harry and his son working on their new house. I stopped, and Harry reluctantly left his work and came within ear shot. I asked him if Janie had gone to work today? To my surprise he retorted that he didn't know and didn't care. That, as far as he was concerned hedidn't care if she ever went back to that place again! And he let me know in no uncertain terms that his wife didn't NEED to work!

Trying to account for this outburst I remembered how I'd tried to cove my embarrassment that night I'd been out there by some silly remarks about t em starving

to death if Janie didn't work. Obviously, I surmised, I'd said the wrong thing. Nor was it encouraging the way the son stood by mutely looking from one to the other of us.

However, it did mention that they might use her after Thanksgiving, which is all I wanted to know.

I left with a new feeling of not wanting to get myself involved in such a fractious family, including N.

* * * *

A Sicilian book I am reading, in describing how Sicilian men like to brag about their conquests, real or imagined, made me think how I've already given N a gift he can have for always--I can always be the "great impossible love" in his life! He has my letter for proof, and, as the years go on, I shall get younger and more desirable and the situation more tragic with each retelling!

This, too, was in the book: "One doesn't argue with Sicilian relatives; one gives in to them."

* * * *

Thanksgiving Day: Nothing. Nothing from either N or Janie. I find I have minor surgery ahead of me, which may incapacitate me anyway when and if N comes up for Christmas--a final blow I had not expected.

This Thanksgiving Day is a dreary, lonesome, raininy, rainy, weeping sort of day--and I was startled by a sudden feeling of N--before I thought of him--if that explains it. I had forgotten how lonely he must be today until something seemed to tap me on the shoulder and remind me!

It is November again and gray and grim and drear--like last year---

At work today I made a compulsive tour of the store searching for Janie. Not finding her, I was talking to one of the girls in her department, when, making a sudden turn I found Janie's blonde head right under my arm!

She was ducked TOO far down, absorbedly making out a sales slip--just "terribly busy"--just "working like mad"--just the way N used to do when he wasmad at me.

My heart leaped a little and, before I thought, I said, gayly, "Well, look who's here! When did YOU get here?"

She never raised her head, but talking right into her sales pad, she said, "yes, I started this morning."

I knew she wasbusy and didn't want to get her in trouble--the boss waswatching--so I left, murmuring, "I'll see you later."

Also, I was anxious to hurry back and finish my work and get back down to that department where I was scheduled to do a sketch and see how she'd act around me later. And I had to hurry, for I had to leave early for a doctor appointment.

Later I detoured by her counter to see if she was busy. She was, but she came to that end of the counter just as I went by. She didn't look at me, however, but appeared to be looking for something in the counter--whether legitimately or just another Chianello "trick" I couldn't tell. The section was really very busy.

However, I hurriedly asked her as casually and lightly as I could, "Did you ever hear from that stupid brother of yours?"

"Oh yes," she said, without looking at me or meeting me eye, then hesitated. I prodded her by asking what the trouble had been. "He said he was too busy to write." And away she went, ostensibly to a customer, but not before I managed to get in, "I was dying to find out, but I didn't dare come to see you again."

I went back to work, my anticipation of the afternoon sketching job and a hope for a long-awaited talk with her completely spoiled. I would not be able to see her again till after the week end and I wasn't sure if she'd even be working Monday. I was obsessed to find out more about N, even though I was afraid to approach her again now. It had been more than two weeks I had suffered waiting for some contact with her to find out what had been the matter with N and if he was coming. I simply couldn't understand what was the matter with her.

Yet there was a possibility she had just really been too busy to chat, so I decided to brave it once more. I no sooner approached the counter than Janie came FLYING out and past me without greeting or acknowledgment. I tried to delay her, but she pushed on, obviously brushing me aside. I hurried along with her, finding myself apologizing and explaining how Harry had been so abrupt with me that day and that I had only been joking about her needing to work. She only smiled nervously,

politely, still pushing on and away from me, and muttering something about "it was all right..."

So I went on, mad and perplexed. On to the doctor's, who told me that sometime before Christmas I'd have to spend 3 or 4 days in the hospital "with a very sore bottom" for a week.

This on top of everything else told me I was "through"---to HELL with it all, I decided. To Hell with all of them!

* * * *

A few days later I had a very odd day. Janie wasn't at work this day. One of the gayer women in the store asked me to go out on a very fancy date with her that night with some men she knew. I was rather relieved that I had a terrible stomach-ache and a doctor appointment that afternoon, so I could beg out, for I still wasn't sure I wanted any dates before I knew if N were coming for Christmas. (Why spoil any chances after waiting THIS long?)

This all made me so late that I had to stop to phone on my way out and one of the men in that department came up and offered to take me home!

Then, when the car wouldn't start and I had to get a man from the service station he wanted to know if I lived in the neighboring apartment. All this has nothing to do with the N story, I know, except to show that there were still possibilities for me!

When I finally got to the doctor he told me what I feared--that I would have to have me little operation and I would be incapacitated for two weeks at least. O Nick! Nick!, I thought. After all this time, are you coming home THEN?

Full of woe and wondering I drove toward home. Then suddenly I realized it was early yet--I wasn't expected home; I could go by Janie's, pretending to be picking up my son from school, get the address from her for N's long planned Christmas card, atell her my sad news to head N off in the dim possibility his whole trip MIGHT hinge on seeing me, and see what I could find out.

Since I had now definitely had to give up all hope of any Christmas reunion with him, I felt full of calm resignation instead of my usual nervous excitement and therefore carried out my plan as calmly as one who knows at last his death sentence.

I found Janie at home and ironing again, her son stretched out watching TV. My calmness seemed to impart itself to her for we had a good talk, a good visit this time.

She acted really glad to see me (after all my worrying about her strange attitude!). She urged me to stay, she forced coffee on me and chattered away so incessantly that several times I found myself not listening. She made a great point of telling me exactly

when she'd be working and how to find out. (This definiteness was unusual for a Chianello!) Our rapport became so great that we began to discuss things about N I never expected to discuss with her. I found myself telling her private little observations and hopes about N I never intended to tell her.

At one point while I was voicing my observation about N's phobia about eating fowl, she muttered, "Nick doesn't like THIS; he doesn't like THAT; he doesn't like ANYTHING!" (This was different from her usual prejudiced defense of him. I was surprised. I figured she must be currently mad at him.)

Another time she was chattering away so that my attention began to wander and then I was sorry, for I realized she was giving me a long explanation of N's-not-writing-interval. I started listening:

"--must have been lost in the mail. He claimed he wrote every week to his family in Sicily--(the liar! why does she believe him?)--nothing was wrong--he was all right,--etc. etc." Then---

"--come back here to stay by June (!!-- If they don't sign that contract soon he is not interested--they have "books" to finish--should be through by April-- Doesn't want to stay in LA--wants to get away from there--wants to get a job in Spokane--(ye gods! now it's SPOKANE again!--Doesn't know about coming for Christmas--afraid he'd forfeit his job by coming since he's now all alone in the office--(what?--no negro? no "boys"?) Afraid they might get someone else while he was gone--(this seemed odd when He'd just claimed he wanted to get out of there anyway! Yet typical of his arguments:

I had been thinking the other night
t at N's "plans" are merely THREATS
to people. That's why they shift and
change so often.)

"--he claimed he only had a week--wouldn't
be enough time--and not enough money--"
Here Janie began to dispute this--
saying he had TWO weeks coming and
PLENTY of money: that he had \$500 to
contribute to their folks' trip and
\$1000 from the sale of the car he'd
won---

Then she said she'd asked him to come
for Thanksgiving, but he'd said Thanks-
giving didn't mean anything to him--
This brought on the discussion of his
not eating fowl and we digressed.

The impression lingers with me of her
frowning at both my mentions of sending
him a Christmas card. Why? Each time
she looked away and seemed to be think-
ing, looking a little nettled, a little
displeased. I couldn't figure it out.

I was trying to skim over the nature of
my operation, since it tended to make
me seem older, broken down, but Janie
kept prying at me until I had to tell
her in a general way. Will she tell N?
Will it change his plans?

I hoped so; I hoped so, for that evening
I learned of other family involements
that would make it impossible for me
to see him at Christmas anyway--if he
did come. Don't come, N, don't come!
After all this long wait--it's hopeless'

* * * *

Things are pleasant for a change. Janie seems to have been very glad and happy about my visiting her the other night.

She is working all the time now--through Christmas. We have a new warm intimacy

We seek each other out now--like N and I used to do--and regret the pressures of the seasonal rush that sometimes keeps us apart. Often she reminds me so much of N that I want to embrace her!

And I feel relaxed about N now. Somehow I feel he is all right again.

* * *

My new relationship with Janie is beginning to suffer from separation from our divergent activities; Christmas pressures, and my growing preoccupation with my own troubles.

And about N right now I feel a weary sort of truce. I let him know how I feel. Obviously there is to be no answer. I let his source of information (Janie) know about my imminent hospital session. There is nothing more I can do or intend to do after sending him a Christmas card.

* * *

I had lunch with Gloria, but we are beginning to drift apart.

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I was very surprised to have mother tell me she had talked to Janie in the store about N. She claimed Janie told her that N was through with his job, coming back in March and getting a job in Spokane. This I couldn't believe!

Was mother getting things twisted as usual or has Janie been holding out on me again? I got all upset again--just when I thought everything was "settled".

Also I did not like mother's mirking insinuation that she "couldn't seem TOO interested in N" while talking to Janie. I wasn't aware that she was so cognizant of the situation!

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I am now home from the hospital, convalescing this week--all by myself in the house--just like I was before when I wrote my heart out about N--but then it was summer--and green--Now it is cold and icy and barren----

And so am I--two years and two operations away from N have shriveled and aged my body.

So, too, is my heart and hope shriveled and shrunk and barren. I came home too full of immediate pressures and cares. N and Janie seemed remote and unimportant--fruitless and fading.

But I deliberately lay in bed this morning and stirred up the embers, thinking about N until I yearned insatiably for the fell of his hard, black, hairy little body and the undestanding look in those bright, dark eyes....I deliberately destroyed the time healing and opened the wound again. I have no one to blame but myself.

It all started with the arrival of the Christmas card I intend to send him and my facing up to the problem of what to do about N from now on--just one of the problems I am trying to solve this week.

My plan is to send the card, signing only my name, so he can show it off as he wishes (for it is a very expensive card)--and insert a loose paper with a word or two that will assure him of my love. As for Janie--she showed no response whatsoever to my hospital sojourn. I had rather thought she would after I had twitted N in front of her about not sending me a card or anything when I was in before.

I will simply let whatever will be be with N and her from now on--no more letters, cards, visits--no intrigues, no attempts.

I am here. They both know that. There is nothing more I can do. This would well be the end.

Here is a pertinent quotation from my hospital reading:

"It was clear..that the relationship between us was to be a real one, an honest one; that I loved him enough, understood him enough to know him beyond his defenses, into his shell; that I would protect him not only against the outside but against himself. Somehow I also took away from him to some extent the magic that he had created, the terrible power to deceive and to "control" the world. He recognized that I was stronger than he and that I intended to use my power for his welfare so he could become a (man), helpless and weak, yet responsible."

These were the words of a therapist working with a hurt child.

Before Dec. 16, 1960

Letter to N:

A "friendly" letter about how to find work in Spokane--and relayed a job possibility I'd heard about--ending with just a short line mentioning love, and not keeping a copy.

I mailed it before I went to the hospital.

December 16, 1960

Dear N,

I have a Christmas card to send you, but I am afraid by the time I see Janie to find out where to send it, it will be too late for you to get it before Christmas, so I decided to write...

I do not mind if this letter gets lost--I can write another--but the card is a special one I wanted you to see.

I am home from work this week because I had to go to the hospital again--I do not know if Janie told you--THIS time I will be all fixed up--nothing more ewrong--so I may not see her till next week. I will send the card wherever she says you will be at Christmas and hope you get it in time.

Also I did not want to embarrass you by sending my love in the card, in case you wanted to show it to anyone. I hope you will KNOW that my love goes with it, but if you don't, here is this letter to tell you. If the card is signed with only my name, you will know why, I'm sure.

I also sent for a small gift for you, but when it came it was not "right", so I am not sending it. Please know I wanted to anyway.

And please know if you get this letter that I am loving you ALL THE TIME. I am thinking of you all the time and praying to God to help you with the

things I cannot do for you. And I
always will. There will always be
someone in the world caring about you,
N, whether you see me or not--whether
I am able to tell you or not.

The world has been different for me
since you made me happy once--the only
time in my life when I was ever REALLY
happy and enjoyed being alive and
nothing will ever change that.

I hope that things will work out for
you--whatever you are doing--whatever
you want--I am not afraid for you--

And I hope you will never be afraid to
come to me--for any reason---

I would so much like to SEE you again.
I would like so much to EMBRACE you
again. I wonder if I ever will?--

I am sending you my love--believe me--
Lorna

Let me explain this letter. I am under no delusions when I write thus that I am desperately securing N to me because he is such a GREAT CATCH. Far from it. I am quite aware that N would be a trouble and a nuisance in my life at this point--any man would. And I know if I saw N again I would realize again his all too humanness.

Actually I find myself writing these fantastic letters because I feel quite safe. I am fairly certain that N will not answer them or appear in my life again now--certainly not to any great extent--nothing I can't handle.

N needs me and I need him to PRETEND with--to NOT BE LONELY WITH--to amuse ourselves and give us some incentive because neither of us has any real loves or are likely to have. We are "safe"--yet we have and ILLUSION of love.

I mean my letters to him in a THERAPEUTIC sense, not as a lover--though I have not said anything I didn't mean or wouldn't do--but as something to hang onto, to reassure. I say I pray for him--not because I am madly in love with him, but because he NEEDS praying for.

I can't give up my little N game, because each time I try I realize how sorely I should miss it.

Right now I have a strange sense of peace about it. Since it is impossible anyway right now and I have offered all I have to give, it matters not whether N comes to collect it or not; whether he answers

or not--if he basks in love--and it helps him, does it matter what KIND of love?

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Back to work today and I had no idea it would be so hard physically. I was too busy fighting my way through the day to expend much time or effort on N-Janie problems.

But I still had to check with Janie to get the right address to send N the card. So, this time, not feeling well, I phoned down and found she was there. So she was waiting for me when I went down. She seemed very surprised that I was back so soon, which annoyed me, for I had told her carefully. At one point I looked up to catch that same warm, tender, observing of me that I'd so often caught in N's eye. And, after not having seen her for so long I almost jumped with her remembrance of N.

I asked her bluntly where to send the card, since she did not have much time. She answered confidentially and exasperatedly and with great emotion that she didn't KNOW--she hadn't heard from N since the Thanksgiving letter--that she herself was just sending a card because she didn't know where he was going to be or what he was doing or anything.

And she was very unhappy about her Christmas plans, for there new house would not be finished and there was no room for anyone where there were now. (This is just what I'd expected!)--that any guests might have to stay at a motel--(a very exciting possibility I'd already thought of!)

N ha n't written anything--she said. She seemed more mad at him than alarmed this time and said something about "N's LIKE that--" Whereas I was alarmed this time and still am.

She accepted the travel clipping I had for her very graciously this time, and I went back upstairs feeling a warm glow between us.

Back in the office I addressed the card and wrote N a hasty letter to slip in the card. I almsot leaped in astonishment when the stamp I pulled from my purse seemed to be an ITALIAN one. But then I saw it only happened to have Garibaldi--of all people!--on it.

It seemed the thing to do to show Janie the (sealed) card and check the address again, and I was ve y surprised at her very eager reaction to the Garibaldi stamp.

I had asked her the first trip (jokingly) if I should write N and bawl him out. After seeming to think a minute, she shook her head empahatically "no". So I didn't--not exactly, anyway.

I didn't get to see her again that day, which I felt was better as there seems to be some feeling lately against my friendship with her.

I had also mentioned to her as I left that "it was no fun to write to people who don't answer". She agreed.

I felt rather insecure about sending off a letter that hadn't been carefully planned, but I was too sick feeling to go into it anymore and too afraid of the great hurt I expected at Christmas to dwell upon it.

The rest of the day's events had a strange unaccountable little undercurrent feeling that made me feel that everything was all right....

Same day
Wednesday, Dec. 21, 1960

Janie at work today.

I made her one of my cartoon cards for Christmas, based on the impossibility of her having her family for Christmas because her house is too small. I labeled it "No room in the Inn". She seemed very pleased.

We were very friendly today--discussed PTA.

She offered to go with me or pick me up sometime.

Wednesday, December 21, 1960

There!

I GOT A CARD FROM N!

---signed "your friend, Nick".

I got home from work to find his card among the others. My daughter had opened them all, but only N's envelope was torn in two and thrown in the fireplace.

Why, I wonder? I fished it out and kept it.

Comments on getting N's Christmas
card Dec. 21, 1960

A year's work, a year's waiting--(if
I don't count the birthday.)

Alth this agonizing to elicit at least
a Christmas card from him--for, with N,
THAT would be success! It is very hard
to remember and very hard for anyone to
understand that ANY response after more
than a year and a half of stubborn, re-
sistant silence is a victory!

And I do not deny that I am badly hurt
withal. I spent hours of anguished con-
jecture as to why he signed "your friend".
I would have preferred that he sign it
just "Nick".

Also I was disappointed in its lack of
beauty, its matter-of-factness. Again
I regretfully noted the rude, boorish,
lack of social grace.

In foolish desperation last night I
sought out our horoscopes in the paper
last night. Mine was:



Because of it, I almost expected him
to appear at the office today. When
he did not I thought, "Perhaps it means
his card will come today." And then
I forgot it. HIS horoscope said, "If
you plan to be out of town for Christ-
mas, better make your plans now".

Hmmmm.

Today I was impatient to tell Janie about the card. After an enforced wait I felt lucky to find her unbusy.

I said, "Well, it's alive!" First she said, "What?" and then realized what I meant. "Oh, I KNOW it's alive--we got mail, too--!" (This disappointed me.)

In telling me she referred to not having heard from him "for several days" and when I called her on it she corrected it to "since Thanksgiving".

And yet I preferred to believe her for she seemed very sincere, going on talking in a worried, slightly mad look and tone.

All they'd gotten was money for the kids--no letter, which seemed to annoy her. I can't say I blamed her.

I assumed, sadly, from this news that N was trying to hurt us about something and that he was definitely not coming, so changed the subject by giving her some "Buon Natale" recipes I'd found, which, to my surprise seemed to delight her.

Later I tried to make a lunch date with her and was again surprised when she offered to try to change her lunchtime to accommodate me, but we never got together on it.

That night I hoped an opportunity for riding home with Janie tomorrow would materialize for it might well be the last time I'd see her.

And then I got to thinking how it might well be another real goodbye, but I got so broken up I had to quit thinking about it....

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The next day it seemed the best strategy to leave Janie alone, for the feeling about my "befriending an alien" was becoming very strong, but I was lonely for her and tried to make a lunch date with her pretending I thought it was her last day. But it didn't work out--neither did my ride home. And the strange feeling I had about people in the store trying to spoil our relationship made me try to restrain my eagerness somewhat....

As I passed Janie on my way out that night to go home till after Christmas I was sad to note a passing glint in her eye of the old Chianello "black look" when she looked at me----
Janie, Janie, I am tired, tired---
it seems there are so many to love---
and I am so impotent-----!

"Three Christmases Gone " -----

December 27, 1960

There is nothing to write, but I find it a quick way to pass time while I follow doctor's orders to soak in the bathtub an hour each night.

It also helps me to straighten out things in my mind, and I am confused.

There's something wrong again in my relationship with Janie: she is cool again instead of warm; she has had that cold, black look in her eyes the last couple of times I have seen her. I know it well by now--in my Chianellos !

I always assume first that it is because they don't like me and my instinct is to be hurt and go away and stay away.

Yet, it also seems to me that when this happens it is when I have had difficulties keeping up our relationship. For when I then make overtures to them, they are again warm and friendly.

Many times I have thought I have sensed rejection on their part and have tried not to be so persistent and pursuing. Or I get to thinking how ALL the advances are made by me and I decide I'd better restrain myself. Or, like recently, I observe that my overtures to them are building up trouble for them rather than helping them. Or I'm just plain frustrated in my attempts--or deeply involved in affairs of my own. Or I get discouraged..

Yet, when I try not to "bother" them, instead of showing relief, they seem to act insulted. While this could be flattering to me, it could also be a "spoiled" attitude on their part.

Yet they are more used to being condescended to rather than sought out.

I HAVE avoided Janie lately. I have had many errands in her area and I have talked more to others and ignored her, instead of seeking HER out and waiting especially for her, etc. as I have been doing.

But I have done this, partly because she is ALWAYS busy in this holiday rush and I have nothing important enough to say to stand around and wait; and partly because there are too many "coincidences" lately of either my boss and/or Janie's boss always right there watching me. Sometimes lately I could almost swear I am being followed! And there are instances where my excuses to go to the first floor have been consistently foiled! All this pertains to a different story than's this one, but it means that if I show what I like it will be spoiled for me---and then I won't get to see Janie at all.

Anyway, I did not DARE give up my luncheon date with Janie, for fear she might be terribly hurt, though my original reason and feeling for making it is gone now. I had wanted to talk about N to her--to let her let off steam about him--I don't think she has anyone else who likes him to discuss him with--but now I find I don't care. I am tired and very sick of people and the struggle of trying to get along with them.....

Dec. 29, 1960

It is afternoon. I had lunch with Janie.

After all my worrying last night, it is as I said--she was eager and clinging-- when I was on an errand in her vicinity this morning she asked me to make SURE we were going--that we understood each other, etc.

just before Xmas
It was nice to be able to talk so long as we pleased and privately, although we wasted a lot of time avoiding the subject of N. We mentioned him briefly-- she announcing right away--without quite looking at me--(I got the impression she was not telling me ALL he said)--that they'd had a package from N--(of California dried fruit--ugh!)--and she had a LONG letter from him that came BEFORE Christmas--"thank goodness", she said--that he was fine--was "going out to a friend's" for dinner Xmas day, so not to worry about him, but he didn't tell who it was(???) (I am inclined to doubt him. I THINK he was just placating her, though it COULD BE--some one he couldn't tell?--a girl?--the real reason for all this silence? I mean, of course, the kind of girl affair he couldn't tell his family about. Anyway, even if he WAS lying, it showed a kindness and thoughtfulness unusual to him by writing BEFORE xmas. She also said he apologized for worrying her. That, too, was kind--for HIM.

I tried to pull Janie back a couple of times to N talk, but it kept sliding off. I think we both felt embarrassed--the restaurant was too public.

One time I looked up to catch a look of deepest COMPASSION (I guess I would call

it) on her face as she looked at me---
(I think we understand each other!)

It wasn't until it was time to go that she started talking about her home and family and things in Sicily as I intended to make her do--both as a source of information to me and more, as a relief to herself. I touched it off by asking if they had xmas trees at home, I think.

She was BEALLY talking by the time we went down the street--all about her older brother and thier family relationships, etc, etc. So I walked farther with her as she went to put money in the parking meter instead of leaving her and entering the store....the conversaaion was getting too good to miss).

Deleting the un-Nick things I found out this:

Nick was her THIRD choice to bring to America. It was his oldest brother, Janie's pal, that Janie intended to bring and was working on, when he ruined it all by getting married. It seems there are no passports for married men. Piecing this together with what N had told me about him I suspect it was a case of the phil-anderer having to marry one of his girls he got in trouble and I imagine it was quite a blow to everyone in the family.

So Pina was next on the list and Janie said, "We might as well include Nick while we're at it" etc.

I told her how N had said he came be-
csuse he was TOLD to when I'd asked
him WHY he'd come if he hated it so.

So she started to tell me: She said N had had this ceramic job and was making good money....I interrupted to say that he seemed to like it...and then he got sick...(his TB, I suppose)...and his parents made him quit the job, maintaining that the hot ovens and all would be bad for him. Here I related the mystery of why he stopped talking so abruptly that day when he was telling me about his ceramic job.

She went on. He also had a girl and her parents wouldn't let her come to America. N wrote to her after he got here but she never got the letter--her parents intercepted it. (sic! Remember the rumor that N intercepted Heanie's love letters!). So he had to stop writing. She said, "She was a nice girl, too--little, like N, and very dark--a school teacher---" I think that's what's the matter with N---that's probably what will happen--he will marry her sometime----"

Then she told me how there were fifteen Italian men on the same boat they took when they went back to Italy to visit. They were all returning to Italy to find wives in spite of all the marriable Italian girls in America and New York. They all were very confident they could accomplish the job in three months--all the time they were allowed to stay.

I asked her if the girl was married yet. She didn't seem to know. She didn't think so. So at last I told her about N telling me about that girl--(it was true!)--and how he wished he knew if she had ever married. I made very much a point of it, stressing

the point that some one should let him know. (I'm sure the whole family will start to work on the matter now. This will either please N; settle his mind for him; or make him furious! And I agree with Janie. My prediction will probably come true--that N will go back to Sicily for his bride. ^{Whether} he comes back or not will be a question.)

I had mentioned to her at lunch that maybe N wasn't writing to her BECAUSE she was chummy with me, which she denied, as I knew she would. So I ventured to tell her how N seemed pleased to have me know her, but tried to dictate to me how much or how little I should say to her and how I rebelled. I said that he said that I "talked too much", which wasn't QUITE what he meant, of course. She laughed.

I don't remember what else we talked about coming back from the parking lot. Somewhere in the conversation I mentioned Joe and Norma and Jeanie, but Janie didn't seem much interested. As I think of it now, all she was interested in was things INTRA-familia--that Italian clan-nishness!

The next I remember was entering the store and being suddenly and inexplicably surrounded by the Enemy--almost as if they'd been waiting for me!--one of the strange coincidences that have plagued me this last week whenever I try to contact Janie!!!!/????

Of course Janie was unaware of this and was happily and blithely and obliviously chattering away while I was trying to steer her out of earshot of the congregated gossip clique,

I was so busy saving her from their future possible destructive operations that I almost missed the import of what she was saying to me. She was making a definite date for me to come to her new house on "my day off", after she got settled and she'd show me "the pictures"--(whatever they are. Did she mean the movies N showed us before?)

She was so eager and happy she hardly seemed to know what she was doing. (After all my worrying!) I assured her I'd love that, but had to tell her again--(she's as bad as N!)--that I do not have a day off--only Saturdays. She seemed disappointed, but slowly, reluctantly decided maybe Saturday was all right. I think what she wants is for us to be alone--without her family--and I'd like that very much, too---but---another frustration---

I was touched to think she must have been planning last night for future contacts just as I was--and as I wished her brother had!

So we parted--back to work. I saw her again at coffee, but we couldn't acknowledge each other under the circumstances.

I had prepared an escape for myself when I got back as I knew I'd want time to consolidate and think. It was a good thing, too, as I found myself quite flustered and confused. (Why should Janie and I be so flustered with each other if our contacts don't mean a great deal to us--she couldn't possibly want what I want!) Anyway, I managed to cut my finger on a piece of paper and it bled profusely---symbolic?

Because, in spite of my pride at my "savoir-faire" during this encounter-- even talking about N's marriage prospect-- I suddenly felt more miserable than I've felt since N left and found myself crying and wishing I could be alone to have a good cry. I felt as if I'd sent a son to war.

And I started thinking how this news was THE MISSING LINK. This was the closing of the circle. This explained the mysterious other hold on N's affections? The thing he could not release himself from. Maybe the thing that kept him from me was this other girl all the time--the "girl he left behind him". Was that the thing that that he was fighting, running to, fearing? It explains it all. It falls into place: the moods, the reluctances, the changes of mind, the guilt, the far-awayness, the self-hate--the "your friend answers.

Perhaps now the family wheels will start rolling, Nick, and the story will end as I knew it must--someday, somewhere you will marry young flesh to live with, breed with, fight with, tire of and cheat on, and I will be---only a memory, a dream, an inspiring symbol of love--I hope--but never the real thing.

Later: I walked into mother's apartment (tonight after yearning unutterable for N just as they began to show films from the Invasion of Sicily.

Oh---Nick!

Jan. 1, 1961

An unusual chain of events last Friday ended in my going to the lunch-room at work earlier than usual. There was Janie eating with the usual bunch of women! The possibilities of an earlier lunch hadn't even occurred to me till that moment!

But this was not the same Janie I left yesterday! That was a warm, sweet, winsome, confiding Janie, blonde and pretty and feminine. This was a heavy, swarthy, harsh-voiced woman declaiming loudly and belligerently about something. At first I interpreted it as an indignation meeting about insurance--that seemed to be what they were talking about--but, on inquiry, it turned out to be SEWING, and I was non-plussed. It did not seem a subject to warrant such a reaction.

Nor did Janie change when I sat down with them. She gave me a cursory up-and-down glance, seeming to note my misshapen sandwich with disgust. I suppose her harshness had nothing to do with me, but it bothered me. She seemed cross and unhappy, and, since I myself, had spent such a bad day yesterday afternoon thinking of her disclosures to me, I was afraid my disclosure to her had alienated us.

It didn't help matters much when I stopped upstairs on my way out to kid her and one of the other girls and maybe dispel the mood.

Janie turned on me crossly, as if irritated at the interruption, and coldly and thoroughly scanned my face--I could FEEL her noting every little symptom of age. The look was so prolonged and intent that I wondered if she had read my letter to N which mentioned my being too old etc. I finally made some joke about her perusal and then I deliberately kidded them about their unhappy mood. Janie murmured something about being tired. I went on.

I was on my way to the furniture warehouse, a remote, out of the way place. While I was there who should come in, walk through to a door at the back and then back out again, but Janie's husband--a cement man! What he was doing there, I don't know.

I wasn't sure if he recognized me, but he finally did say, "Hello, how are you?" I replied, saying, "I just saw your wife at lunch today." He said, "OH?" and that was the end of that. He went out and got in his car and drove off.

It was such a strange coincidence that I made a detour when I got back to tell Janie, though I was really afraid to approach her. However, this time, even though I interrupted her, she was quite pleasant and much more interested than I thought she would be. I then had quite a pleasant chat with her and the girls, which made me feel much better before I went home for the Holiday.

Saturday at home.

I was suddenly left alone for the first time in a long time today and, all of a sudden, I found myself crying.

And I couldn't stop. I had to stop what I was doing and I CRIED and I CRIED. I realized that's what I'd been wanting to do for a long time.

I cried, thinking about how it probably was the end of my seeing Janie, and about N's saying "my FRIEND", and, most of all, because I DID NOT WANT TO GIVE UP NICK! I cried at the bleakness of life ahead WITHOUT ANY NICK IN IT!

I wanted him so! I wanted him so! I cried my heart out and could only make myself stop by asking myself if I would give up my children and my country to go with him if necessary-- and realized I probably couldn't.

All I have to look forward to now is to call on Janie in her new house--- and I suppose I'll send N a Valentine-- though I swore I wouldn't----

WHY?WHY?WHY?

Jan. 4, 1961

I am "renouncing" Nick. I am trying to "un-think" him--tend to my own affairs; "forget" about him and Janie until my after-she-moves-in visit. So---

I was surprised today to go outside the office and see JANIE SHOPPING about ten minutes before my lunch time. I was already committed to an errand and I didn't know what to do. I wanted to give it up and go back for fear of missing her, but it was too late to change, so I kept on, hurrying as fast as I could to get back in time before she left.

But she was still there when I got back! I "intruded" on her shopping, but she, (like N!) was very, very absorbed, very busy until I felt ignored and almost insulted (sic!). So I finally left and went about some other errands--making sure they were all near Janie. She kept "busy".

Finally, since she made no effort to acknowledge me, I decided to give up and go to lunch, anyway. Lunch? Maybe that's what she wanted?!? Should I risk asking her to have a cup of coffee with me?

I did. To my amazement, she immediately abandoned her projects, accepting with alacrity. It seemed almost as if she'd been waiting for just that.

Ensued a great deal of confusion as to whether I was asking her to go OUT of the store or downstairs to the lunch room, the most logical thing under the circumstances. However, I didn't want to do that because of its lack of privacy and perhaps she felt the same for we seemed to be going out.

We went nearby for a cup of coffee until Janie's parking meter ran out, not a very long time. Our conversation was unsatisfactory--stilted, hurried, formal--all about her decorating problems. It was more a rather desperate attempt to keep in touch than a real meeting. I walked with her as far as her car and we parted, she to go on home. She, like N, made elaborate explanations of how she happened to be downtown that day----

I did my errands and went back and had my lunch AFTERWARDS--un unprecedented thing for me to do! It shows how important our meeting was to me!

There was an odd mood to the whole thing. We ENJOYED being together; we WANTED to be together, yet we were both EMBARRASSED. I could swear that Janie planned it the way it went, but why were we so embarrassed all through the whole encounter? Why did we both avoid mentioning N? My reasons for cultivating Janie are obvious, but I can't believe they are the same things she wants of ME!

Sometimes I feel "inferior" when I'm with Janie; she sometimes seems very beautiful, veeey glamorous, vey sure of herself, very male-attracting. Other times, like today, I feel "superior". Today she seemed "high-schooly", "peasanty", "heavy", "immigrantish". Am I her "Dream of America" as she is my "Dream of Italy"?

I cannot believe she is fostering a match between me and N. She is too smart a girl. There are too many obstacles. Yet, if she were aware of a "dalliance", shall we say?, it doesn't seem as if she'd work so hard at it---????

To other conjectures:

I am almost convinced now that her "loitering" to date have been planned. Now, in fact, I can see its resemblance to N's behavior--the "being accidentally in the vicinity"--the preoccupation, the "business", the "excuse", the escape if necessary. The unsureness; the timidity; the hoping---and then the heartfelt capitulation and nervous "tail-wagging" when "discovered" and encouraged. Like wild animals !

She even "protests too much" like N; too many reasons and explanations for her presence there.

I do not know her reasons or motives. I suspect I represent something to her as h she does to me. I do know she is being very encouraging. We were both attempting to cinch the new house meeting. But she told me to wait--she'd call me, claiming that she wanted to be sure they'd be there. In the old days I would have considered this a brush-off. But I think she was sincere--she just wants to have it her way. However, it is with regret that I note here that I'll bet she never calls me.

It is strange how people's looks differ in different lights etc. Sometimes today Janie looked very pretty. Yet we were in a very harsh light at coffee (what must it have done to ME?) and she looked old, blemished, with a strange lack-of-eyelashes look---not at all like N, who "swims" in eyelashes!

Note1

If I were still doing so, I might have called this a Little M or "Italian" day. Because last night there was a gorgeous Italian color spread in the magazine I looked at; today an ~~and~~ Italian news story on the front page, and tonight when I picked the face of a scientist I liked best out of a group of 15 (in spite of his French name) I found, on reading further about him, that he was Italian!

January 7, 1961

I make myself so mad! I guess I am committed to this N thing more than I realize. After all my good intentions--to leave them alone--N, and J---!!

I got to thinking along the old lines and realized that J's insistence that SHE'D call ME could mean the old brush-off I used to worry about her and N giving me. They always SAID they'd contact me; make definite dates --like J saying she wanted to show me the "pictures"--and then, that would be the last I'd hear of them. Anyway, I got to thinking: I really don't care. I don't really care much about J'S house, except for a passing curiosity. I WOULD like to see the pictures--if they are old snapshots taken in Sicily-- But--when I fore-imagined it, I found it wouldn't be so great a loss to me--that one visit to her. If it meant a continuation of my N contact--that I would be interested in. But it won't. That will be all there will be to it. On trying to find out why I felt this way I discovered that I feel that I have "used" Janie for what I wanted--to find out about N. There is nothing more she will tell me until he does ~~something~~ something definite, which may not be for a month or two.

She obviously is not "talking" unless I probe and I have ~~no~~ legitimate reason to probe right now. I WISH she would get friendly--become a "confidante" friend, but I think that would take a long, long time and more circumstantial contact than she and I have. I WISH she would have me over to meet her parents when they come-- but I guess that's too much to expect-- I have not cleaved the family "wall".....

I find I feel that my relationship with N has gone as far as it can go for the time being. This was the "~~Christmas~~ *Christmas* renewal"--and
I expected

now it is over. I have told him all. He knows how I feel. He knows where I am. I can do no more. The rest is up to chance or him. It is time to stand by again--and that is what I intended to do....

BUT---

While waiting at the doctor's yesterday-- (I am all cured again--what a relief!-- I pick up a magazine; I find an article (planted by Chance for me? says she, with "ideas of reference"?) about mental illness therapy. This time about the "Silent Ones" (my name)--those who do not respond for months, years on end... About the significance of even one sentence from them --out of their prolonged silence. This is what I mean about N's cards, of course. And other things, which I won't go into here.

Anyway, while reading and realizing that what the article was talking about is what I have been and am doing intuitively, (shall we say) with N--it gave me a couple of hints about my present "therapy", the outcome of which are the following letters: →

One thing has dawned on me: All this has made me better acquainted with myself. And I think what I really intend now is, not to "leave them alone", but to "play it by ear"-- "forget" about it except when opportunity arises and then grasp the opportunity. Which brings me right back to the point Nick used to argue: "Quit worrying", keep busy, let time pass, grab the moments when they come, "forget" about it all in the meantime---!!

In toto: ~~Accept~~ ~~Regard~~ this N. relationship as a casual relationship: Stop trying to make it part of the warp & woof of your life!

Jan. 7, 1969

Dear N,

I got a long Christmas letter from some friends who used to have an advertising agency in Yakima. I worked for them when I first came back here. They are now in Spokane and Mr. Neltner is working ~~for~~ in ~~an~~ advertising there.

I was thinking this would be another good contact for you if you go to Spokane to look for a job. He is a real NICE guy-- (not like Dee!)--and a really GOOD man (too good to be interesting I always thought)--you needn't be one bit afraid of him.

His name is Ed Neltner and he lives at North // //. Be sure to look him up, Nick, if you go to Spokane. I know he would help you finding work if he can--

This other letter may sound good to some one else, eventhough you and I know I am not THAT important!

Thank you so much for your Christmas card! I hope maybe I will get an Easter card or a birthday card for my birthday (ugh!) on April 22th???

Buon Capo d'Anno! In bocca al lupo! e
Love,
Lorna

(Note: This last I inserted because of reading the article on mental illness cures in the doctor's office that advocated recognition and encouragement when a "silent one" responded at last and the encouraging of making THEM respond again in the UNEMOTIONAL AREA in which they showed interest. N's work?)

Jan. 7

Dear Ed,

This is to introduce Nick Chianello (pronounced Kyan-ell-lo) and recommend him and his work to anyone needing a good, hard-working, conscientious and talented, well-trained advertising artist. He is a careful, meticulous worker--has done a lot of really fine work with photo layout, air-brushing, retouching, etc. Since he worked here in Yakima he has had some really super Los Angeles training in other branches, which he can probably tell about.

He's a real smart guy and showed great promise, I thought.

Any leads you can give him to jobs will be appreciated for "auld lang syne".

Thanks a lot---

Lorna Chambreau

Hello to Ursula

To whom it may concern:

Jan. 7

This introduces Nick Chianello.

It is also a sincere recommendation of his ability and dependability in commercial art.

I have worked with Mr. Chianello and had occasion to observe his work over a period of time and found him unusually painstaking and conscientious; quick to learn and persevering in self improvement..

He shows great promise, especially in design and layout and has absorbed a great amount of high-grade commercial art training in a surprisingly short time.

(over)

I can truthfully recommend his ability, effort, versatility and capacity to render a high-grade job for anyone who employs him.

Lorna Chambreau
Advertising Artist
The Bon marche
Yakima, Washington

(N. must have my "job-change" letters by now)

January 13, 1961

It is Friday, the 13th. Shall we say that accounts for my frustrations today?

Mainly, my inability to contact Janie when I had a chance and my inability to play the Italian records I bought a few days ago because I couldn't find the phonograph needle?

It seems along, long time ago that I saw Janie.

In the meantime there is a new lack-of-interest in me about J and ~~N~~ that I can't explain.

Tonight, when I found myself on an errand near Janie's house, I convinced myself it would be merely friendly and casual to drop in and see how things were. I did not like it when I found the house dark and a strange car parked in front.

Assuming they might already have moved I found the new house all alight and their car in the carport. This I did not like, either, for, somehow, it seemed like betrayal on Janie's part.

Now all I can do is wait and wonder if Janie will ever invite me over. I am very, very sure that she never will. And I cannot call on her because she was too insistent that she would call me, which makes me hesitate for fear it might have been a ruse to get rid of me.

Somehow I don't much care!
And this I can't explain.

I also entered a silly contest which
promises the chance to win a round trip
to Rome, Italy. In imagining the poss-
ibilities I was surprised to find that
IF I had a chance to have N go with me--
I wouldn't want him--he'd spoil it!

It is such a laborious relationship with
N and J. It is such hard work! It takes
so long, and we are forever proving,
proving, proving our relationship instead
of enjoying it!

I dont know. I do not know.

January 14, 1961

NOW I remember why my feelings have changed! It was Janie's verification of N's story of "the girl he left behind him". That, and her elaboration on the theme--her saying, somewhat resignedly, "That's the way it will probably end--N will go bak and marry her"--No hint that he might do differently--that they all wished he'd do differently....

Heretofore, I have been thinking that N was lamenting over ME (Janie just didn't know) and that his moodiness and uncommunicativeness was neurotic--the same under all circumstances and now aggravated by the problems and frustrations of our love.

Her disclosure shocked me into seeing that her version was more plausible; that what was the matter with N was the wrench of parting with this girl. I can see now that his guilt, his "pulling away", his conflict might have been caused by his feeling of betrayal to her. That I was the passing affair, not she, as I had heretofore taken for granted. Couldn't it well be that the cause of N's not seeming to try very hard with me was that he still had hopes of this girl?

In the new view of things this gave me, I simply gave up, thinking what a fool I had been! So, at last, I told Janie about N's wondering if she had ever married; his wishing that he knew--I knew the whole family would take it from there--thereby "giving my blessing" and conceding defeat.

This is why I no longer care. I always knew I only had N until a younger woman appeared.

On the other hand, I realize it's possible that N doesn't care so much for this girl, etc., but I have no way of knowing, so why torment myself when there is so little to gain now? If N were hoping and grieving over this girl he should have told me so a longtime ago--he should have explained and let us straighten out our relationship.

How like him not to! His biggest failure! His biggest source of trouble again--that inability to communicate; explain, share his feelings which leaves others in mystery and bafflement and himself in "trouble"!

Thoughts

Try as I might to find something encouraging in N's and Janie's actions toward me I cannot. Their actions give me no hope that our relationship will ever be more intimate.

They make me feel that they are not sufficiently motivated by desire to improve that relationship for they don't seem to care enough to try to surmount the obstacles.

In three years, I have to admit there had been no effort ever to contact me of their own accord; to seek me out; to keep up communications with me; to pass on the news.

These are the things people often do: call on the phone; stop by when driving around in the car; drop in for a chat at the office; invite one out to lunch or to coffee; invite one to their home or offer one an opportunity to meet or mingle with their family; carry out a contact to impart some news that I might be interested in; pass on a message; write letters; send cards or gifts; express condolences at trouble; or just plain show interest, curiosity or a wish to see. These things they never, never do.

These people either do not want me in their lives or they are sick, sick, sick.

And yet----

I have been thinking about my last talk with Janie and how much more relaxed, sure and understanding she is about N. How things have smoothed out; how the whole family seems to accept, understand and believe in him more. They show more patience with him--

as during this last "mood"--more hope, better attempts to cooperate and give him his head. Of course, a lot of this is his new-found "riches"--he has "proved" himself--but, then, I helped him to do that in a way, didn't I? What I am trying to say is--haven't I helped some--after all? Aren't things better than they might have been without me to intercede, placate and explain? Haven't I helped avert the obviously imminent family row and rupture? Have I helped N to "hold" and be patient until he achieved his current goal, instead of "blowing up" again and spoiling it all? Haven't I made Janie see--and through her, the family?*- that N is ALL RIGHT, on the right road for him; that what THEY wanted for him was "wrong"--too hard for him, etc.?

Which all brings me AGAIN full circle to my original intention--my "prayer of St. Francis". AGAIN I must remind myself that I imposed treatment where none was solicited; mine was a "charity" case--no reward or payment expected--the reward being to see the patient walk on his own two feet AWAY from the physician and the medicine; AWAY from the clutches and the helping hand--TOWARD his OWN loved ones and his OWN people and goals. My reward should be to see N walk up that CATHOLIC aisle with just such a fitting companion as "the girl he left behind him"--not to have him come running back to my sterile old arms!

My success should be exactly the degree that N is able to go ahead WITHOUT me BUT--it must be a successful going--not acrippled one; not a bleeding one; not a half-well one! Have we reached this time of parting? My only excuse to keep in touch is to follow the progress of my "patient"!

January 19, 1961

NOTHING. Nothing has happened since I had coffee with Janie that day.

Expect, by spying, I know they are moved in.

And I don't expect anything.

I might run into ^{her} on the street within the next month or so, and, if convenient, we would "chat". I would make a point to say "I thought you were going to call me to come see your new house"? And then I would watch her answer and reaction very carefully. I'd expect her to be fussed and vague and full of baseless excuses, which, of course I should interpret as verifying my suspicions of an intended brush-off.

Janie told me she expected to be in "by the 15th". I could expect a call from her any day from now on IF she were going to. I must stay aware of the fact that they might not have their phone in (this I could check on) (and Julie is forever on our phone)--she might have tried.

She might have been waiting till she worked inventory: she said she expected to--Saturday--(day after tomorrow.) The girls in her department say she is not coming. In her Nick-like confusion, I don't think she remembered that I wouldn't be here Saturday or realized that I work Inventory Sunday, not Saturday. Anyway, if she expected to contact me then, there is now no hope for that.

OR, she might use her ruse of pretending to shop near our office--or in the store--hoping to run into me. She is more apt to do this than to call me, I figure.

This she might also do anytime from now on.

Again, if she is like N--(and their "methods" seem to be the same)--she may not even be aware that she insisted on calling ME and may be waiting for me to call on her, in the meantime, being hurt and planning to cut me off because I haven't. This I can do nothing about. I AM NOT GOING TO HER NEW HOUSE WITHOUT AN INVITATION. That is too much, even for me.

And, besides, I find another reason why I do not particularly care any more: I am not interested in a Nick that could come back to Spokane:

Because this means that he can't go it alone--without his family; he reverts to them. It means he can't adjust to a new life by himself, make new friends and cut those detrimental ties. It means he is not wise enough to stay out of his sisters' lives. It means that, at 33, he is still a big baby. And I'm not interested.

It also means that his ambition and interest in his work is only secondary to his need to be under his family's wing, for going to Spokane from Los Angeles is a step down and backward as far as his work goes. If he was really the artist I claim him to be he would stay where he knows it would do him the most good career-wise. And I lose interest. A man that will work at anything anywhere for money when he doesn't have to is not for me.

And I am not interested in Spokane at all. It simply is not in my life plans--not the kind of place or location I want to live at all.

His moving there will do me no "good" anyway. It is still too far. His visits to Yakima would necessarily be fleeting and rare and terribly family-bound.

If such a fantastic thing should be that N is actually motivated to move to Spokane as the only chance of being nearer to ME, then he will appear sometime this spring anyway. So---

up north

If he doesn't move back ~~to Spokane~~, then he is just as remote as ever and, since he will never communicate, and Janie and I do not move in the same orbits, there is no sense in straining myself to keep contact with a man who doesn't want to be nearer to me!

What DO I want? I would like him to move to Seattle--that would mean nearer, good work opportunities, the place where I'D like to end up (or SF) and away from his family. Besides if he moved there and still wanted me he would appear, too.

I am sure he will come back in this area before fall when Janie will have his mother and father here. But that is not to see ME.

All in all, this is the way I figure now: Either N is coming back to Spokane--or he isn't. If he comes it won't be till about March anyway. And if he isn't coming to see me, my keeping up contact with Janie will not help matters any--in fact might even hinder--since he'd be "afraid" of exposure.

So, nothing I can do now will alter the fact that N may or may not walk in on me someday after March first---or---he won't.

*Note: I inquired & found that the
Esgates had a phone put on just
"a day or so ago". ???*

January 20, 1961

Strange.

I would revert to my old "little M" interpretation, except that it embarrasses me now. Shall I admit that I have prayed HARD like I used to? "please help N-- Your way--whatever you want--just help him--and I get the same "answer" I used to claim? Specifically that I am brought into orbit¹ again by the most unexpected opportunities?

That I have given up again. I can't help it if it sounds silly. There is a certain pattern, a certain combination of feelings that precede one of these things....

But on to it! Time's awasting--interruptions are imminent and it is late and I am tired.

I almost didn't write down these last two pages, but I'm glad now I did because they lead up to this--no Janie for inventory--no call from her to see her house--my determination not to go see her--my "decision" to forget about N until spring--it's all there as I wrote it before this happened tonight--

Tonight my daughter wants me to take her and her friends to the game: We pick up the girl who lives ~~next~~^{near} to Janie's new house last. The ^{the} car won't start.

Not to go into mechanical reasons, suffice it to say that I had to roll the car down the hill to the service station at the foot of the hill (the girls collaborated me in this action as being the only thing to do at the moment) There we had to stop, it being impossible to go further.

The man in the station could not figure out what was wrong--it was a very strange thing--the car just wouldn't start--none of the usual symptoms. So, to shorten the telling, the girls found a ride and went on, leaving me stranded.

Suddenly and strangely the station that had been isolated when we came in was swamped with emergency cases--even the attendant remarked at the coincidence--so he couldn't get around to fixing the car for me.

It was cold. There was no phone except a pay one, costing ten cents and I had very little money with me. I couldn't decide which calls I should make that would do me the most good under the circumstances. Actually, there was no one I could contact this particular evening who could do me any good and besides it was fruitless to call until I knew what the trouble was etc.

When the man finally worked on the problem, he told me it would be a half an hour.

All this time I was fighting the impulse to go "use" the Esgates to "help" me, having seen their light on and the car there when we went by.

I tried hard to make myself think of and use a more "logical" solution, but found that dropping in at the nearest friend's to use the phone and pass a half hour out of the cold didn't seem like a very illogical solution. If they weren't there, I could go on up to Moore's whom I knew even less.

I was tempted to phone Janie, but decided it would look better if I pretended I didn't know if they had a phone yet.

Anyway, I don'th think I need to say that that'swhat I did. I walked up and rang the doorbell. (I cou d hear Janie crossly yellingaround inside.) Harry answered the door. I asked him if they had a phone yet after JOKINGLY (ha ha) saying, "You can't get rid of me !" He said "Yes" and invited me in, hurriedly calling on Janie (who answered crossly) and foisted me off on her quickly --as he's always done before.

She was not cross when she saw me. She was her usual(?) winsome self and stayed that way all thetime I was there! She was busy seeing her daughter off to a dance-- the boys just entering and all--it was a bit confusing, but she was cordial, urging me to take off my coat and have coffee etc. But I was anxious to "justify" my visit, so I got busy on the phone and was quite busy and quite justified when I could contact no one.

In themeantime Harry and Janie made a great fuss over the kids, being very loud and "funny"--rather in a showing off way it seemed to me. Then the kids left, I asked to see the house and, when Janie started to take me on a tour, Harry, instead of wanting to show off, too, as I rather expected him to do, settled down in a rather rude way to read. Why do I say rude when I was an intruder? I guess I mean he never excused himself or anything.

Janie showed me the house, and I was hard put to enthuse as much as I'd have liked, because, frankly, I was shocked and very disappointed in her cheap andgaudy tastes. The modern, clean look of the house and the beauty of the drapes I saw her making and had admired before was all spoiled by wrong colors, and gim-cracky ornaments.

Here was the cheap ¹¹Italian¹² tastes I have been trying not to see in her and N. Coupled with my recent observations, it helped me to "give up" and "forget" and be calm and unconcerned during the conversation that followed. For the first time I never even thought of asking about N for a long time and then, when I thought of it, I decided not to.

As if she'd read my mind, Janie started to tell me her latest news from him. I found myself casual and unperturbed--able to ask questions and talk without any feeling of embarrassment at all in spite of some more of those searching, compassionate looks of Janie's.

before
Jan 26

Her news: She claimed to have had only one letter from N since his pre-xmas one-- (I think that's what she said)--television makes conversation so difficult these days!) The news was not reassuring to me personally, but it was reassuring in a therapeutic sense. N claimed to have had a wonderful time at xmas and New Year's parties with this "family", whose identity he would not disclose, getting many presents and really enjoying himself.

(This is "good", of course--the socializing et al. But, knowing him, I strongly suspect that there's a girl involved to make him enjoy himself that much. Is anyone lying? If so, it could not be a relationship he can brag about or he certainly would!)

He also "confessed" that he was very sick that time he didn't write--tonsils and flu. He refuses to have his tonsils out! (Baby!) That lets out my romantic theories about yearning for a letter from me... Anybody lying this time?

No citizenship--claims he never wanted to--

---a lie!--no mention of change of jobs. At least that's what Janie said when I asked her. It seemed odd to me, considering their passionate interest in getting together again that neither of them would mention it---but, if she didn't want to tell me there was nothing I could do about it. Of course, Harry was sitting right there; she would not have lied in front of him unless she collaborated with him against me or lied to him, too.----She said N drives to work every day---and other details of not much import.----

Janie sounded weary and hopeless. There was no spark to our talk about N like there used to be. Of course, with Harry listening in I was consciously playing down my interest and knowledge, since I feel he is the "enemy" as far as N is concerned, so I probably damened things somewhat myself by my attitude. Janie rubbed her face several times as people do when they are very weary--but then, I remember, I was rubbing mine, too--and people in conversation often imitate each other, I notice.

When Harry asked me if I was to call the service station and Janie hinted that she was waiting to see something on TV I decided it was time to leave--and no one pressed me to stay, although Harry asked me to come again and sounded like he meant it. (He should have: I sacrificed Janie to placate him this evening!)

Janie accompanied ^{me} outside into the cold to see me off, seeming a bit perturbed.

Was it a ruse to say something? If so it didn't work, as neither of us made any promises or invitations to each other. There was simply no "excuse" to see each other again.....

At no time during the evening did she mention anything about calling me or not calling me, either; even when they admitted they'd been in the house for two weeks.

One of my reluctances about calling on them this evening or phoning them ahead of time was the fear that they might bother too much about me--offer to come and get me or take me back or something as so many of my friends would. I needn't have worried! It never seemed to occur to either one of them! I don't think that it has anything to do with not liking me; it's just their way--thoughtless,---uncultured..."cheap"..... Which I have avoided admitting all this time. I think I can learn to live without N now. I fear they are what I feared.

I went home, not nearly 'so shaken as I usually have been after such an encounter. At home I found ~~at~~ the long-sought time alone to play the Italian records I had bought on sale--and to write this up. The records made me weep. But, this time I went for love over, not for N.

I forgot to mention what struck me at the time as another strange thing. While I was phoning Janie appeared with the \$9 cake plate that N had bought her once for a gift. It was broken. She said, it was so ODD; she just opened the cupboard and there it was---broken!---for no reason. At the time it struck me as a very strange coincidence, happening tonight and all. (Now it occurs to me that she might have brought it out because I was there and maybe the kids broke it and put it back---another example of her hidden-from-me ability to be very nasty?) *their fear of her?*

Another thing I forgot to mention:
I couldn't understand why she kept saying
in a glad, happy sort of way that they
had been out buying furniture for the play
room and they had just come back--that's
why they weren't there. I got the impression
that she thought I had called before and
found them not at home. Did all my elaborate
"proof" of accidental coincidence
pass her by? She mentioned it a couple
of times, apropos of nothing, as if it
were "a very lucky thing" that they had
come back wasn't it?"

I noticed that Harry treats her with
almost brutal ~~dondensation~~ation--as if she
were stupid, almost--which she is NOT.

Well, well, that's the story for now.
I can't possible think of anything that
could happen now for me to write about.
So I shall be interested in seeing how
long this will go now without entry.....

What made me think of asking about N
at last was a sudden line by someone on
the TV about "loving him"...It was odd
that, altho I kept silent, Janie started
to tell me about N at that moment...?????

Jan 1961

Notes from "Ten Pains of Death" by Maxwell

"Who first comes to know Sicilians at all well often thinks them obsessed with sex (the poor man's pleasure).....

...the sullen violence of the oppressed--bitterly conscious of their underprivilege....

Jealousy is deep-rooted in the Sicilian character.....

Courting: "He must make his love known to the girl. It's a story that goes on month after month--often for a year--until he's found a safe hand to carry a letter--probably not written by him...The reply comes after she's consulted everyone...goes on for years... every now and then they may exchange letters, but always from a distance--for there are long years to pass before he may approach his girl.....then they are secretly engaged. Neither dares to say anything, even to their own families--even tho everyone knows all about it. The years pass. Then the official engagement, which may last 3-5 years.

Sicilians are an intensely secretive people. At the end of my third year I was, to most of my acquaintances a stranger to be trusted with only a little about the truth, either about themselves or about anyone else....

When a Sicilian's reticence does go, it goes completely, more especially on those subjects of which he has been taught to believe that Northerners disapprove--sex.

Every Sicilian is utterly convinced that his sexual urges and necessities are many times stronger than others. There is nothing

to support this--A Sicilian doctor was shaken to his foundations at the Kinsey report.....

When his reserve has thawed, A Sicilian likes to talk about sex. The vocabulary of Sicilian sexual slang is voluminous and the English equivalents unequivocally offensive.....

In the S. family it is unusual for there not to be at least 3 sons....The lot of the priest falls to the youngest son--so that he may remain celibate and keep his mother company in her old age....

Boys generally welcome their parents' suggestions (about education) because a University student will escape a little the rigorous discipline of a Sicilian home...

A boy of 18 may not so much as leave the house without asking his parent's permission, so he is constantly tax~~ing~~g his powers of invention to find new and plausible excuses.

At 18 he receives a partial emancipation but remains much under the parental thumb until 21--by comparison, University life seems absolute freedom/...

In Sicily a youth is absolutely under the thumb of his family until age 21.....

January 31, 1961

I have had a thrill of the old emotions today; the usual pattern--(I am embarrassed to say it again)--in fact I can't quite remember how it went this time for I have given up keeping track of every little thing.

A sudden appearance of many little Italian things--Italian dresses to draw; Italian hairdos talked about; a couple of Italian books in the library that I never expected to see there--(have read one on Sicily)--

Last night the REAL prayer for N again--usually just a routine "one"--today things happen in such a way that I am in the Republic Press building again where I haven't been for months and months--and Isa comes up to me and asks me about Nick! She tells me that a man was in to see them, wanting some brochure work done because he'd tried to get it done in LA at the place N works and they are shut down on that work--not doing it any more! And she wanted to know about it--said they really went broke, etc. (Shall I look back to my predictions?) !!

She was really probing me. I had the feeling that she not only was interested in what I had to tell her but in my reactions to conversation about N. So I found myself putting on a good act for her. I SAID that I got my information from N's sister, but I IMPLIED that that was just a cover-up--and I think she believed the lie I was enacting! I implied that I heard from N myself and was pretending it was his sister that I got my information from! Lorna! Lorna! How desperate can one be?

Anyway from her questions I got the impression that she was interested in feeling out whether N might be coming back to Yakima or to the Northwest, but she wasn't going to commit herself. She said the man wanted ~~xxx~~ them to do some brochure work for him and it occurred to me that maybe they'd thought of hiring N to help do it!!
???

I gave her the impression (I think) that N would probably come back where his family is--Spokane or Seattle, but he wouldn't come back to Yakima, because he couldn't get the pay he'd gotten used to.....????

~~Then~~^{Also}; the beauty parlor operator insisted on foisting more of those Trip-to-Rome entries on me. Since a great calamity has happened to me in this interim--(I am only to work in the mornings--my afternoons "free")--I could not afford the trip to Rome if I got it--so I really didn't want them.
"Well," I thought, "I'll have to give them to Janie," but this is not excuse enough to make another unasked for sortie in her direction...

Then this N business came up. Undoubtedly, she has more accurate information about N and his job than that crumb I could give her, and yet, worked right...????

So those two things and a couple of other minor Janie details built me up a good enough excuse to call her and give her a chance to renew her invitation to come over on my day off "and see the pictures"...

As the day wore on, I found myself getting terribly excited over the recent turns of events---and so anxious to call Janie that I could hardly wait to get home, and more excited when circumstances turned out that I was alone when I got home--it seemed

like a "sigg" that I should call. But all I got was the busy signal and my son walked in just as I mentioned the name Es gate and wanted to know why I was calling them--so I wasn't so "lucky". Then EVERY* THING happened to frustrate me: got involved with a neighbor who has been "avoiding me--tonight I couldn't get rid of her--she said she was coming down to visit (Janie, do you feel like that about me?). In the meantime Mother came; a friend of Dennis' got on the phone for a long, long time; and all the time I kept trying to call Janie and only got the busy signal. I tried to call downstairs and that phone wouldn't work! The busy signal kept on for two hours till I was sure something was wrong.

I was beginning to believe it was a "sign" I shouldn't call, but I was as obsessed as I used to be. When I finally did get Janie I was so nervous for fear the neighbor would come in any moment that I "forced" Janie to let me come to her house after work tomorrow so I could finish what I had to tell her. It all sounded foolish, when it turned out the neighbor never came and I could have transacted my business on the phone--Janie couldn't seem to understand why I didn't--and I don't blame her!

-We had a terrible time getting started on our conversation. I had expected Janie to be GLAD when she heard from me and eager for me to come when she found out I had time off. She was neither. My impression was that she never expected to hear from me again and couldn't imagine why I was calling her, now. She didn't jump to my bait one bit--in fact tried to get out of it by asking me to tell her on the phone. Yet, when I demurred after her "cooiness," she insisted I'd come--she'd even give me

lunch. I deliberately let the conversation hang and hang in the air to give her a chance to think up an excuse, but she only laughed at me for pausing so long "thinking". Her husband asked her to whom she was talking and she told him. He then left "on an errand" she said. She SEEMED more at ease after he'd gone and even launched into one of the long winded Chianello discourses --telling me how she'd decided to have her parents come in March instead of October and had written to N, expecting a letter back by Saturday etc. etc. She didn't mention anything about N other wise at all. Our conversation eased off then and we had a long chat about nothingnesses and joked. I was beginning to feel like a fool and had a hard time holding up my end of the conversation--especially when she mentioned calling two of her friends and telling them she was in her new house today (she didn't call ME!) --However, she did say that she hadn't contacted any one at all like she should...

I groped for more substantial reasons for my calling her and tried asking her about the "pictures" she'd mentioned. She didn't know what in the world I was talking about! And never did remember--how like her brother! I was embarrassed and starting trying to end the conversation, which I did, perhaps too abruptly for she seemed a little put out. Anyway, I ended up being flustered like I used to be. I will go tomorrow because it would be too, too to change it now, but I wished I'd let it alone--especially when I don't feel any of the old interest in what N does at all...In fact I get panicky at the thought of seeing him again--IF I did. If I feel panicky--what must HE feel? He'd NEVER contact me again--under the circumstances.

Well, I shall report tomorrow

February 1, 1961

I am just back from Janie's.

It all went "very well." The only thing that bothered me was a repairman working within earshot in the house. (But it didn't seem to bother Janie.)

Today was the first time in a long, long time that I felt elated, excited about something that was going to happen. I was torn between wanting it to happen and not wanting it to happen, because I didn't want it to be over with. On the other hand, now that something actual was imminent, somehow it lost its value--like contemplating beauty--"This is good, I enjoy it"----so what? It is soon over; there is no way to keep it; ~~it~~ it is only another human contact--incomplete, passing, what can one do? (Except fly home and be thankful for these moments of solitude to write it down to savor later--over and over!)

Because I discovered that I was wrong about the busses and Janie might have to wait and wait for me, as I waited for my neighbor-guest who never showed up last night, I decided it was only kind to call her and tell her I'd be later. ~~She~~ She was cordial and insisted she'd wait for me and that she had lunch all ready.

Time passed too slowly. I found myself waiting for the bus too early. Then I discovered I'd looked at the wrong schedule and I was going to be later than ever! I finally ended up taking another earlier bus and walking several blocks. (Janie didn't seem to notice that I was between busses.)

She had the stage all set perfectly. The house was immaculate; she was dressed in a dress and high heels; the lunch was lavish and daintily served--she even had the stereo set to play soft music throughout our lunch! It was all very luxurious and perfect. I was flattered.

(Incidentally, her new furniture and drapes showed good taste and planning--beautifully done; the "corny" tastes I mentioned before seem to be in little things.)

We ate and talked; the talk being stilted and a bit formal. I, for one, was playing for time, hoping the repairman would "get lost" or we could finish lunch and move out of earshot. But Janie finally asked me what it was I wanted to tell her and there was nothing to do but launch into what now seemed a very minor, insignificant bit of news.

The whirl of my thoughts last night kept me from sleeping soundly: I was imagining all kinds of possibilities from my bit of news--even to the "good idea" of N working for Franklin (Republic) Press for a little while while his parents were visiting here! I thought this ramification would interest Janie more than the bit about Wolfer Co. quitting the brochure business.

However, I was wrong. It was just the opposite. The Yakima bit interested her not at all--she brushed it off with the emphatic declaration that N would not come back here under any circumstances--there were no possibilities for him here at all. (Flattering to me!) But the bit about the business seemed to alarm her more than I thought it warranted.

She would not even ~~entertain~~ my suggestion that maybe N had been through for some time and was staying on there without telling her; she was positive that he would come "home" immediately (where did she mean--here in Yakima, Spokane or what?) [She seems so SURE about him--and to me he has proved himself such a liar!]

She went on at great length about how a friend (someone my sister knew by the way) assured her of N's chances of getting on at Boeing's in Seattle. I was surprised that I felt no thrill at the disclosure that ~~what~~ I said I wished would happen might very well come true. (I have found that, when dreams become realities, there crops up a myriad new number of detail obstacles!) I saw now that N's being in Seattle brings him no closer to me. (Somewhere along the line here the romantic angle has been lost and I seem to be now that "good friend"; well-intentioned, but somewhat a bother.) Anyway, she seemed very sure of this, too. And I must say I was a bit disgusted at the complacent way in which she arranged the life of a 32 year old man!

The conversation went on, centering around Janie--her plans to bring her parents over immediately and the details thereof. She talked about N, playing down the Spokane angle and stressing the Seattle one, for it seems that Pina (the Spokane sister) may move to Seattle anyway--they all prefer Seattle to Spokane etc. All through her conversation ran the thread of assumption that N would always be with the family--nowhere else! (And so he will be, I'll bet!)

Three times I tried to insert my plans for the future. When I finally asserted myself and finished what I had to say, she mentally "sat that one out"; she wasn't the least interested; she didn't even listen, but went right on with her own conversation when I stopped.

This turned to the story of some more of her hopes and dreams and a long, rationalized version of her history of meeting Harry and their first years together. As I have suspected since reading so many things about Italy--it could very well have been one of "those" war-time marriages, for the daughter was born in Italy before they even came here. She dwelt on the reasons why she "didn't marry sooner" and the "length of their engagement"--as if I cared. If I hadn't read all those books I would have been more apt to believe her. Now I know that a long engagement and courtship is important to Sicilians etc.etc. Who cares? It's Nick I'm interested in!

Anyway in the meantime the rain came down suddenly, explosively--a smashing downpour! This time she did offer to take me home and did. It was too wet to negotiate any further meetings, but she was making noises about it-- I told her to call me or come and see me in the office, patting her on the arm and saying, "You never contact ME--you make me feel foolish, call me or come and see me at the office..."

She murmured something about she had to be in the store in a day or two (I was right about the loitering?)(But I'm supposed to be a mind-reader and know when she's out in the store?) I said, "Well, come on in to the office--it's all right--or words to that effect. But she won't. I don't quite know why. I just know she won't. Yet she told me today she had 16 people for dinner

the other night: it isn't as if she's socially inept or shy like her brother! That's what makes me feel slighted. (I must keep reminding myself that as a lone, older woman none of my social life is at all! It's not only Janie!)

Well, anyway, I was glad the rain wept for me. It's all over now--the rain. It was like a storm of weeping. Weeping for what is not. I must say I am positive that, if Janie ever had suspicions about N and me, she is over them now. It SEEMS like this has happened since my telling her about the "girl back home". Since then I have definitely felt like I am "only a friend". I feel too that she has "lost interest" in me; that she is only being passingly "kind". This makes me suspect that maybe N has said something to her?

However, this doesn't bother me too much. In a way it is good. I am really only interested in Nanie because of N. If ever needed, she has been "thrown off the scent" anyway. Being too chummy with Janie is not going to foster anything but an above-board friendship with N anyway. Sooo, this part does not worry me.

Too, I feel that the "foolishness" is over. Time and absence have at last dulled the emotion to the point where my eyes can see the things I did not want to see before. I feel now that I don't much care--one way or the other. If N wants a part-time relationship, the kind I offered him--well and good. If not, it is probably better so. I have reached the point at last where I can live without him if I have to.

He, too, has undoubtedly reached that point. And he, since he has more to look forward to than I have, will probably not care to renew it. This I don't know. Only time will tell.

I have purchased an "inocuous" Valentine to send him. I do not know whether to sign it "love" or not. I figure this is the "last gasp" before he comes back up this way--for whatever reason. Not knowing what he meant by signing that xmas card, "your friend", I do not want to hurt his feelings by withdrawing my love now--on what may well be our last contact. Neither do I want to scare off at least a friend by appearing to remain the still-grasping cast-off lover.

I suppose, since all I can hope for from a friendship is simply to see how the story ends, and since everything seemsto be "under control" (namely--Janie's!) that I lose nothing by offering love one last time----

Feb. 2, 1961

I still savor pleasantly the "picture" Janie painted for me yesterday--the "American Dream Come True". I know this is only one side of Janie, but I appreciate it for what it is--

This writing is only to record that which I keep forgetting--(because I WANT to forget it?) I quit smoking about a year and a half ago by utilizing superstition: I made a "vow" that if I so much as took a puff of a cigarette that something horrible would happen to Nick! Silly I know, but it worked! It stopped me several times!

What I want to record here is that during this last bout of mental anguish (my daughter and job problems) I smoked two of a neighbor's cigarettes while "crying on her shoulder".

I record this to prove that I DO care less about N--or I never could have done that!

This is the day after my visit to Janie. I SAW HER GO BY IN THE CAR THIS MORNING. (The capitalization is not for emphasis, but for a guide in re-reading). She was evidently taking her kids to school.

Ordinarily I would have been waiting on the corner for a bus and she would have passed me. She has never gone by before when I waited there.

I had mentioned waiting for the bus in our conversation yesterday. I wouldn't doubt but what she might have planned to go by and pick me up--maybe she was on her way to the Bon to have her hair done.

However, something unusual had happened this morning--a neighbor had called me

over so I was not on the corner as usual.
So I'll never know if she would have picked
me up or not....

Feb. 3, 1961

I saw Janie again today and she waved tome

As far as I knw she did not come downtown today or yesterday. I did not see her.

It may be ap arent by now that all three places Janie has lived since I have known her have been near the school where my two youngest go. So it is not out of the way at all to go by Janie's house when I have errands at school, though I do have to go a LITTLE bit out of the way.

Today I did so--just in time to see her "unloading" from a carful of women. She was "dressed to the teeth", including a very fetching beret. I honked, tho I was not sure it was she. But I guess it was, for she waved gaily.

I couldn't imagine what sort of an event she had attended. Somehow I can't fit her in our usual social scene, but it could be she went to the large Women's party at the Museum that mother went to today--not that it matters----

Feb. 4, 1961

I just had a horrible thought!

A thought to help destroy any hopes I had of a renewal of relations with N.

It is the thought of N's reaction to my blooming , luscious bit of a 16-year old daughter, if he came back! She was not mature when he was here before. With his sexuality, it simply wouldn't work. He wouldn't be able to keep his eyes or his mind off that pet little figure--would he keep his HANDS off?

All she would do would point up how faded I am and I would continually suffer from feelings of rivalry with my own daughter! How disgusting. I know of a few such cases already.

This thought is really destructive to my hopes for it seems important to me. It keeps me from encouraging N by adding "love" to my Valentine when nothing else would.

There is nothing to it but to give up. I might as well face it. Life again assumes the same grim, terrible hopelessness for me that it had before N came into it. It is again just a chore and a duty to be gotten through somehow--and how I wish I didn't have to do it!

Would that N were a more mature man!

Feb. 9, 1961

What is HAPPENING? For the first time I FORGOT to write down a N incident!

Because today I mailed the Valentine. Another "last contact". (Perhaps one of these will be the last---!) It was a very sugary, sweet, Italiany looking Valentine--"Thinking of you--hope you know I do", etc.--a long verse to that effect, nothing very incriminating (for I don't want to be exposed is he's no longer there). For the same reason I signed it "As always, Lorna" instead of "Love, Lorna", trusting N would understand. It is a risk either way.

Then I wrote "Are you still there?" (As a hint why I was more reticent this time.) and "I have been laid-off!" I only work from 8:30 a.m. till 12:30--1 p.m. now." No lament-type thing. Rather a happy hint that "if he came back----!! I" And the hours are to show that my afternoons are free and lonely and I'm still there in the office alone at noon as I hinted before. You're a smart boy, Nick--I hope you can read between the lines---!

Trouble is, in his abnormal need for emotional reassurance he's apt to only notice the lack of "love" and be hurt and silent and stay away--(rather like I would!) That is the risk I mean. Yet it would be just as bad if they forwarded a love message to him for Janie to get ahold of.

Then I mailed it in a downpour of rain---(a bad "sign"?)--and thought no more about it--which is unusual.

However, it was sent with a prayer and I report here for what it's worth that yesterday (was it?) I felt N close--I felt a definite thrill of excitement----

This opportunity to type these pages necessitates a review and re-evaluation.

New insights occur to me.

Such as: Now that N has been wrenched loose from his family at last, he will never again be quite as content to be imprisoned again--that is the nature of thin s. He has tasted freedom and independence and he will not take so meekly to Janie's direction again. Not that he will cease being psychologically dependent on his family--he never will, but there will be a difference, and this is good.

Now he has money; he has status; he has confidence in his earning ability; he has participated in American "luck" (winning the car--and even found it bittersweet!) he has proof that some one can love him faithfully (I hope) These things he did not have before.

Another question: Why did Janie come back to work? She has done much justifying about that to me and why it is that particular store; she doesn't want me to think for a minute that she came back because of ME? Does she "protest too much"?

Her reasons are inconsistent and change with circumstances. I do not mean she came back because of me alone, but I think it was a factor. Reading back, it seems to me that she ingratiated herself with me FOR SOME REASON. I know her well enough now to know that the only thing that really motivates her is her Sicilian family interests. Did she cultivate me--in her own way--because she found out that N had confided in me and I had the key to the mystery of Nick? The key to power over N?-----

Friday, Feb. 10, 1961

Today I have been dealt the body blow
that I have feared these three years.
I do not know where to start telling:

I found out because I felt a compulsion
~~500~~ call Janie. The want was there, the
want to know what happened. All I needed
was an excuse and one of my "omens". Of
course I found both, though I don't think
I fool Janie one bit.

It goes like this: On the bus coming home
I think "Shall I call Janie--or not?" I
look up. There is her husband's truck
before my eyes. I pass a church sign;
it says, "Love is the key; use it.!" These
I pretend are GOOD signs. Yet when I pass
their house the truck is there but not
Janie's car, so I know she is not there.

I suffer with my compulsion and conflict
for another hour or so home alone. I
tempt fate. I try out my excuse on another
friend on the phone first. I figure if
nothing happens to keep me from phoning
when I'm through with this, I'll call her.
I do. I do.

Only to have her tell me that she had been
down to the store to have her hair done,
where was I--was it my "day off"? (Do
they EVER remember what you tell them,
these Chianellos?) And she was full of
startling news--new developments---

N is not coming back!
Her folks are not coming!

As she went on I thought that what it
amounted to was just what I predicted the
night before--the situation blew up.

Little brother has rebelled at last!
Neurotics are acting like neurotics!
Janie was using and ordering everyone
to carry out her own desires and needs.
Her primitive-minded parents are afraid
to fly or leave their nest. Nismad and
revengeful at losing his job and being
used (and not hearing from me, maybe?)

It was such a shock to predict something
the night before and next day to be told
it was true! N wants his independence!
He not only likes it, he INSISTS on it.
He is going from one extreme to the other.
He is revenging himself on his family.
He says it's HIS money and he'll use it
as he pleases! He waited along time for
this chance to spend on himself and do
what he wants and he intends to do just
that! He says he has come too far and is
being too successful to come back and be
a "family boy" and start all over again!

In fact he wrote six pages about how he
would not agree to her change in their
plans to have him produce his money and
get his parents over here by the end of
next month instead of next fall as they
had planned. He said he is signing up
for two more years in the illustration
art course at UCLA--that he plans to
stick it out till he gets his degree.

That his present job will be over the
first of March and he has a fabulous job
lined up to start the first of June.
It is with a firm that has 3-4 branches
over the United States--she couldn't
remember the name. (if she were friendly,
she'd bring the letters over when she
gets them and discuss all this!)---He
will be a "top artist" there. And the
only way he would move again was to be

transferred to one of their other branches (my day dream about our meeting in SF someday?). Why should he leave now when so many people were dying for the chance to get into the LA branch? That the building is on a main street in LA-- is beautiful--has marble pillars and color TV in the offices. In fact his own private office has carpeting and his own personal black and white TV. He got the job because he has made "some very good friends". (Oh Nick! Hollywood is so full of promoters! And, for all your sharpness you are blinded by your hopes and your lack of knowledge about our country. Is this true? How I'd like to know!)

Then he said that he would get a business license and free lance from March 1 to June 1. He would like to get in the movie business.

He said he is having fun and has friends. That he is getting acquainted with people at UCLA. That he goes out every week end.

There was much good reasoning about why it would be foolish for his parents to come over anyway. (I agree with him).

He said he is doing wonderfully in his lessons at UCLA. That they kid him ~~not~~ because he doesn't do the lessons the way he is told to but he gets A's anyway. Anyway, he LIKES it all and he's going to stay. He as much as told his family to go to hell!

Janie went on talking and talking, after changing phones for more privacy. I was going to brush her off, but decided I'd let her talk. She switched into a lot of details about the difficulties of ringing her parents over without N's help, but when she left the subject of

N I wasn't much interested. Her voice was sad and listless. She thinks maybe her folks may not get to come now, unless she can get her husband to finance it, in which case they would stay with her and all the family would have to come there. (That would suit me fine!) However, if they don't fly there is no possibility of them coming for at least three months-- etc. etc.

As the conversation got more intimate, I dared to ask her if N cared if she told me all these things about him? She didn't understand my inference, replying that she told him sometimes that she'd seen me, but she never said what we talked about--and implied, laughing, that it was none of his business. Damn her!

When I suggested that N was mad, she denied it, excusing him, saying she could see his reasons, sounding very hopeless and beat.

When I suggested maybe there was a girl involved (that possibility, too, I had meant to record last night when I thought of it... that only an amone could make N change to LIKING a place so suddenly! I had meant to watch out for the possibility that he would suddenly decide to stay--and today I hear it!) she reluctantly agreed, saying that he had started to change way back in October--hadn't really been the same since, and mentioned his mysterious references to "the family" and the gay Xmas and New year's and all the presents ---she didn't need to go on, I was suffering, too, while laughing "gayly" and daring her to ask him!

She then started working herself up into a pitch saying how he spent money lavishly when he had a girl --- (just the opposite of

what he told me and the way he treated ME!) and I could see, as she got more and more worked up that she was beginning to suspect that some woman was getting that money SHE was planning on using!

My daughter came home about that time and I tried to sign off, but she kept me, starting to tell me abt about her new hair-do--- Since I wasn't interested in being HER walling wall, I finally did hang up.

I was obsessed all evening. I felt stunned. But I had family problems and chores and motions to go through. I wanted to do nothing but sit and wrestle with this blow, but I couldn't.

I knew there would have to be some tears--later, when I had "time". Until that time I grasped at all my pet neuroses--ran and got me some beer, hoping it would release the flood gates and started wrting, writing, writing as soon as I could--without thinking---

Outside it rained and rained and rained. It has for days. "Il piove!" (Which Janie pronounced very strangely when I asked her!)

I started writing a letter to N. I wrote and rewrote all night, spending a miserable night. The tears never came. something was holding them back.

I was still re-writing the next morning when I had to go to the dentist and I was thankful I had to wait. I sat there in a waiting room full of people and wrote my anguished letter to N, ending with waht Mr. Pelligrini would call one of my "gracious notes", I suppose. Then I went out into the hall and sent it hurtling down the mail chute with tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat.

I wrote and I wrote. I have pages here where I struggled fighting my way out of this morass. I do not know whether I shall get time to copy them or if I should. I wrote to Janie after getting out my notes for all these years and using them, using them to analyze and predict. But, then, later I decided not to mail it to her. She wouldn't understand, and it would give her power she might wield detrimentally.

That night, Saturday, I spent a fitful night, full of crude dreams. I would awake and take laxing pills and aspirin and write.

The next morning the tears still had not come and I felt better except for a sickening twinge in the pit of my stomach--"but that a dream can die will be a thrust between my ribs forever of hot pain"---

At first it was like a death--but there was some tiny, nagging doubt in the depths of my subconscious that I pursued and hunted until I uncovered it in going back over my notes. It gave me something to fight and struggle with and from that I re-built, acquiring new insights and knowledge in the meantime, re-built and rationalized myself right back into being permeated and imbued with a background of N-- because I don't WANT to live without an illusion of being loved and important to someone--even if it's all in my mind!

Writings--(incoherent)----!

I don't feel like crying. I don't really believe it somehow. I can't quite explain. If my intuitions hadn't proved right before I would doubt myself, but I KNOW there is something odd about all this.

I SENSE that this is one of this threats, challenges, "I don't care" gestures! I don't know if I'VE done anything, but something has made him mad. I can't quite feel the shock I'm supposed to. I feel it is all a kind of game--He wants me to know he is HAPPY, see? he's not coming back, SEE? things are FINE, see? who cares about YOU, see?

Then I write back one of my "sporting" replies--Goodbye! I love you in spite of what a heel you are letters. Who CARES? BE happy! See if I care. I knew it all the time. GOODBYE!

I prayed so hard--and all I got was this major blow. All my former lessons are to no avail. This hurts.

UI don't like the lack of humility, the smarty attitude, the bravado. It's too sudden, it's too wonderful. I even wonder if he hasn't "flipped"! mentally as I predicted might happen. Is he only daydreaming? Yet, I have doubted him before, and been wrong.

But since last October he has changed his routine, his personality, his outlook, his plans, his dreams, his attitude, his job, his pursuits. From a hermit in October we come to THIS in February! It doesn't sound right to me. It's too sudden, too much of a change.

Has success gone to his head? Has someone conned him out of his savings? Has he bought his way into a job? Has some feminine influence been at work on him?

The impression that I get that he is mad rings a bell somewhere in my subconscious. I feel compelled to follow up this clue.

He is acting as I've seen him act before-- what is he doing? What does this mean? I went back through my notes and this is what I found----

The manic-depressive psychopath:

Gets angry and scornful when crossed...

Makes trouble for self and others...

Tries to dominate everyone and push people around....

may furiously attack without apparent reason...

Suddenly nasty, belligerent, challenging....

Unreasonable for no reason....

mMad at nothing...

An intense display...argues, blasts off, indignant, vehement, highly aroused, head-on charge

Squats off, stands against, resentful, disputes, disapproves, objects to, defies, denounces, spurns, refuses, sarcastic, rude

Wild talk, insulting, accusative, blaming, threatenting, scolding, bossy, offends, hurts, wounds, alienates,

Thwarts, hinders, frustrates, sows dissension, spoils

Insistent, demanding, ~~self-righteous~~

Vindictive, revengeful

Bravado, smugness, ^{Boastful} self-righteous, bragging, Claims can do everything better than others. Claims his knowledge is unlimited.

Has numoerous successful ~~s~~chemes (with details seldom worked out) childish, rash

Romancing, story-telling, prevarications, lies, pretending

Misleading, deceiving, contradictory, illogical, dodging

Acts as if wishes were already gratified when has no real reason t act so.

Impossible to detour--lacks control--jeopardizes reputation

Undertakes more than can complete...
Bites off more than can chew..
(N-full time job--new country--new city--
first time away from family--no firends--
no help--no confidante--full time job--
correspondence course--university night
classes--learn to drive--bring folks
over-- -)

Gets side-tracked on poorly thought out
projects
Shows poor judgment in the press of his
activities...

Then becomes domineering and irritable
Trying to show others that he can do
better than others.

Attacks.

Then suddenly gives up and gets depressed
for no apparent reason.

[Starts depression by starting to blame
self, feels guilty.]

After Attack begins to explain that has
"troubles"--may even invent them if
necessary.

Then "won't answer" for a long time--is
"through"

Seems to recuperate and then attacks
~~again~~ seems "normal" and all right--
encouraging and then starts Attack
again etc.

Application to N?

Witness an "all right stage"--before October.

Then the winning of the car. Great Manic excitement, plans, projects, press of activities all poorly thought out. Attacks environment with great gusto--even to telling me he'd come and see me!

Then suddenly starts grumbling about winning car too much trouble etc. etc. Suddenly gives up all plans. Goes into deep depression. Refuses to communicate even with family--says is "sick" (typical of m-d.)

November begins to atone, apologize. Seems all right.

Now he is attacking again?

I predict that the next letters will start complaining--Troubles, everything will be going wrong--"Nothing ever turns out right for him"

Then we will start feeling sorry and blaming himself, lashing himself, try to make it up to Janie and family?

Then long silence--depression--won't see anybody or do anything (will this be the "free lance" period?) Janie will heckle and get only a short, surprising answer.

About June when the new job starts, he will snap out of it and go to it like a house afire!

I wish, I wish I had some means of finding out if they will be true!

Then there is this simpler, more logical explanation.

Little brother, with his dash of independence, has simply revolted. He's got life by the tail. Success has gone to his head. He's drunk with freedom, never having had it before and the pendulum swings way over.

He brooded while living with Janie about money deprivation and in justices from his brother-in-law, etc. He worked hard and saved his money for his folks to come over--had it all planned with all of them for next fall.

Janie doesn't save money. They build house (to put on big show?) Then she suddenly demands that N come through with HIS money to use for HER show. ~~He gets mad and tells her to go to hell.~~ (He's probably gone ahead and paid for UCLA tuition and car and planned to live on that money until job in June will give him a chance to build up again. And sudden request finds him without money, which he is ashamed to admit, for fear it will look selfish etc?)

Who wouldn't be mad? Just lost job, too, that he was so proud of and claimed would last forever.

He's panicking--job gone, no prospects for awhile, family demands, promises broken--had to give up dream of love?

Week end writing Struggles:

This is death.

This is the time of parting I foresaw with dread--when N no longer needs me and I have to let him go and close this book.

This is the time all who may have read this foresaw and perhaps pitied me for in my illusion. It didn't work. There was no romance. Of course there wasn't. There couldn't be. Kindness was paid and collected in sexual expression--not kindness.

At last I must make the REAL effort. I must live life-without-N; like-without N; life-without-; life--; life.

The tears started to come this morning when I feel the empty peace of death, of bereavement. Peace only in the sense it is passive and passive because hopeless. There is nothing to fight against; nothing to act against; nothing but passive endurance, therefore almost relief.

God help me not to be bitter in these days and months and years to come! I prayed to you, God, these last few days. I prayed for N--for what You want for HIM--and you plunged this sword into me, which I have not the courage to withdraw.

I am struggling over another farewell letter to N. Between mad and glad; therapy and truth. If all the guff he said is true, he doesn't need me. But if it is not true, he needs me very much. How am I to know? What am I to do?

I told him "arrivederci" for the time
being--until such time as he can be
gracious to me--that w ll be a long time--
ten years maybe--I know---I have been
through this before.

I imagine that someday--far off--I shall
happen upon a stiff, crude, but well-paid
illustration signed boldly "N. Chianello"
and my heart will suffer a horrible wrendh-
and that will be all----

Someday--far off--I shal run into Janie--
and she will tell me that N. is married and
has**--babies and is doing very well---
and it will all seem remote and dull---

Last night I experienced, for only the
second time in my life, the feeling that I
would ENJOY doing a crime of passion. I
would gladly have killed or maimed N
if he had been in bed with me last night!
I had a glimmer of his feelings of hate--
to HURT the thing you love--to HURT it!
to HURT it!

What a difference a few hours can make!

I admit that I have taken a "relaxing" pill. Still, yesterday seemed like the end of the world. Today I am right back where I was--imbued and permeated with N as much as ever!

iI had a half-conscious intuition early this morning that N loves me as much as ever. In spite of everything, something says to me, "It is all right"--something in me sings. I feel that "oneness-happy" feeling with N, foolish as this sounds. In trying to account for it--it is not the serene "therapy" feeling--it occurred to me that N must have gotten my Valentine-- (no) and he feels gentle and tender toward me today. He is probably full of foolish, bright dreams.

What a blow ~~is~~ is going to be to get my letter! I made a mistake succumbing to the emotion of the moment again. I KNEW I should have waited! My therapy rules tell me so.

And yet, sometimes I seem to reach him better with passion, albeit hot and hurtful, than with cool, unreachable therapy. It is hard to know sometimes. It is hard not to indulge my own temptations.

Surprisingly, the tears will not come.

I find that even if I stop all romantic notions about N, I am still deeply interested in the PSYCHOLOGICAL story.

And the reason I keep in touch with Janie is simply to see if the pattern and my predictions work out. I am just plain curious. And I can never find out anything from the "silent one", N, himself.

Following up my little nagging doubts and digging for the truth behind the passions, I find that I have made the same old mistake of believing N and taking the NORMAL reaction.

I, too, forgot again that he is ABNORMAL.

Actually, the abnormal approach is still flattering to me for it could be that this seeming denial of me ~~is~~ the very proof that he really wants me--but he WON'T admit it; he CAN'T admit it; he doesn't APPROVE. He has REPRESSED it; disguised it? I even sense that he may be revenging himself on the girl-he-left-behind-him through me. "THUS is the way I treat women who 'send me out of their lives, see?'"
(His mother "sent" him away, too!)

I find, after the delving, that I feel serene and secure in the "proved" knowledge of N's therapeutic dependence on me.

The truth is strange. For I have loved him more, loved him better, brought him more enduring happiness this way than if I had gone through the usual customs of courtship and marriage. That way I could not have brought him the benefits I have this way. I would only have brought him

more misery and unhappiness in the long run and under the circumstances. Marriage with me would not have cured his problems, only aggravated them!

The sick, squeamish twist that grasps my innards at moments is for the loss of the fun, the "reward", the pleasure I hoped to have from his visit up North this spring. It hurts to give that up.

Perhaps it hurts him, too.

Feb. 11-1961

Another "farewell" letter!

I always think it will be better if I don't keep copies of what I have written him and then, later, I'm sorry, for it makes a difference sometimes in his reaction, for he may often interpret something I say entirely differently than the way it was meant.

In the mix-up of many papers, I do not have the first page of this last letter. Suffice it to say that it was a "gracious", a QX/ "sporting" farewell. "You are having fun. How wonderful--just what I wanted for you etc etc. To break away from your family, find someone who is interested in you to help you and prove what you can do, etc. For the sake of your future I think you have made a wise choice etc. I don't blame you---

"But, for myself, I am heartbroken. I have been dreaming a dream about you and I haveing the fun we never had. But it isn't going to happen, is it? Knowing you, I can tell there must be a woman or girl to make you suddenly like LA so much. Fine--etc etc.---But I think it is better if I leave you alone for awhile--If its as you say you won't need me for awhile---

When you learn to paint with LOVE, UNDERSTANDING and KINDLINESS that made Norman Rockwell a success, then you will understand why I write you these letters, why I say I love you, and why, until that time, I think it better to say "arrivederci, Nicolo".

Have fun,
All my love,
Lorna

(Note: as N said once, "Here's somebody that's REALLY mad!" And he enjoyed it! Maybe he will this time!)

Reference
to something
game said

Feb 13, 1961

Oh what a mistake I made today! I tried to do something impulsively and trust to my memory and I lost!

I felt sure and serene this morning, to my surprise. It seemed like old times, somehow. I had to do some Nick-type art work which I then had to take over to the old haunts where he used to work through a nice spring day like it used to be when I went before. And I was excited because I thought I might as well talk to the old gossip sources at the Press and tell them about Nick and find out for sure about this brochure business--the truth, not Janie's or N's version.

So I went. And I enjoyed myself. I had the whole force listening to me--they were interested and laughed--(I made a good story of it). BUT I didn't find out what I wanted to know. Only that there is some strained attempt to try to do the brochures there again.

And, telling them the Nick story and getting their reactions made me see it more objectively. I came away realizing that Nick's story to Janie could very well be a lot of his well-known bluff and bluster. As Ralph said, and as had occurred to me, "why does the job not start till June if he's through the first of March?"

They grimaced when I said he'd free lance; they laughed about the marble pillars and the earplugs and the TV sets: they said they bet it was the marble pillars that got him!

True, this very ridicule is the very thing I used to fight against, but there is an element of truth in it. And they noted the same discrepancies that I did in the story.

So, I came away thinking, how, when one subtracted all N's ego and "proving" how good he is, he usually ended up, like the rest of us, doing the little insignificant boring job that was at hand.

He made this job that he is now quitting sound so wonderful, too--to Janie. And it was no more secure or glamorous than what he'd been doing--altho in a bigger, better place, I'll grant.

SO, I got t o thinking that the "free lance" angle and the two months---what did that mean? It's possible that he might just haveto follow along with the brochure work, even if he doesn't want to. Anyway, I decided to let him know that that was in the wind--them starting up again here--just in case he needed to know.

But time being of the essence--he may move--he may make decisions etc. that I and not being able to find his address, I guessed at it so I could mail the letter today instead of bringing it home to find the address and waiting another day. On getting home, I find I had the address wrong!

Oh, I BLUSH! For, of course, I get carried away and wrote more--even a line about loving him. There was a "therapy" slant about him doing what HE wants and what is BEST for him, because I realized this morning that N was doing first, what his parents wanted him to do--come to America; Then he did what Janie wanted him to do, including using his money to try to bring her parents over to witness HER success;

Feb 13
(17)

then he tried to do what I wanted him to do--continue with his art work and study and go career-seeking, idealistically (my own frustrated dream, I realized with horror!) THAT message I wanted him to get. Now I'll never know. Because I put no return address on it (thank goodness! I wouldn't want it coming back here for all to see!)

If I ever find out what he does I'll never know whether it was on the strength of my "~~Goodbye-until-you-understand~~" letter or this "~~Let's-come-down-to-earth-and-be thankful-for-brochure-work~~"! one

Unless the mailman knows by this time!

Ah, Fate!

I saw the Janie's husband truck on my way home again, too, if I must have my little omen.

Well! ^{Speaking} of omens! Tonight, after looking through the Seattle paper Booknotes in hopes of seeing something about Mr. Pelligrini, I find one --about a new book He's writing!

And came across an exciting article about language learning. This is my day!

It does seem very odd that I re-typed up to Mr. P's letter and then got stuck and sidetracked there. I hadn't thought of him for ages--and then this book notice....

(N. ^{might} have gotten my "farewell" letter by now)

February 14, 1961

Valentine's Day!

Obsessed is no word for it! I can't seem to leave this thing alone! But what I want to do is take advantage of this "Italian period" while it lasts. I am convinced there is a pattern to these things. I want to figure it all out, get steeped in it till I'm so sick of the whole thing I will be glad to turn my back on it tomorrow when my "thinking time" opportunity ends. Then I will pick up the threads of my Outside Life, leaving the Chianellos to Fate and themselves, I hope. I intend to go about my business and just wait and see if N comes up--the first of March? by Easter? by the first of June. Never?

I have learned a few tawdry tricks from watching my daughter--one doesn't WAIT for romance--one GOES AFTER IT! So I am making one last open, desperate attempt to attract N. "Last" again!

I suppose I say "last" because I find it ugly, embarrassing, Humiliating(?) to pursue a man--I don't know.

Anyway. Last night I made a cartoon and sent it off to Mr. P. (Wish he'd think of asking me to illustrate his new book. Then another one of my day dreams would come true! What fun that would be!)

This morning the only thing I heard on Julie's radio was the song "My secret love is ^{was} a secret no more" or whatever it is....and Harry's truck again on the way home. THIS time it left his house

as we drove by and he passed the bus almost as I got out at my street. Of course! He goes home to lunch this time of Day!

Well, diagnosis #3 for N's actions was pursued on the premise that my cards, etc. had encouraged him to the point where, when he won the car, he was coming up to "claim" me (probably having built up quite an illusion being away from me so long!) When it all fell through, he went into the October depression, which lasted well into December, when I wrote him to please, please be happy! SO, he "attacks"--goes out, accepts invitations, goes wildly about "proving" what a good time he can have and makes sure Janie knows so she can tell me. Hal to me! he says.

You see, "planning badly", he didn't see that telling Janie to tell me he was coming to see me was running a great risk. He spent the whole month of Oct. wondering why I didn't answer etc?

Did he suspect, as I did, that Janie deliberately didn't tell me and, since, he is showing he is mad at her?

Was my strange, tortured, neurotic love letter I thought was so abandoned misconstrued as hinting that Janie discouraged our romance? Could that account for her black looks sometimes?

Then, did Janie finally tell me, thinking that was the only hope of getting him to come up? Risking a chance? "Chi losa?"

Anyway, on this premise the lapse of time seems deliberately planned for him to be

"free" between March first and June first-
just in case?

Sok I decided to play that one last (again!)
card trick and see what happens, cringing
every time I think what a fool I may be
making of myself. But what have I to lose
except pride? And N. Who is lost to me
zanyway?

I'd rather not write this foolish letter
down, but I want to refer later (I find it
very handy) and see how many of these
hopes work out:

Dear Nick,

Feb. 14

Why am I sending you all these letters
now? Because I am afraid with the changes
in your job and everything that you will
move and no one will let me know and by
the time I find out it will be too late
to let you know what I want to tell you.
This has happened before. Mother and I
~~would~~ have bought your car if we had known
about it in time. KA lie, but used to
emphasize my point.)

I wish you would write and tell me things
that happen to you or Janie would call me
up and tell me things about you, but
neither of you do, so I just have to guess
whether it is all right, or not. (??)

I want you to come up here this spring!
I want you to come very badly! I want to
see you again! I have already told you
how we could "have some fun" now--. be-
cause of my operation there is nothing
to worry about. because we can both drive
andgo places now. because I have my after-

Feb. 14.

noons free when the kids are still in school. because spring is coming and the weather will be nice for "picnics" and things.

Now there are some more things that would help make it easier than it was before. Janie's new house is within easy walking distance of ours. Mike is out of school and working in California and will not come home in the spring. My sister is supposed to drive up from Cal. during the Cal. spring school vacation (I do not know if it is the same as ours) around Easter and mother is going back to Cal. with her for a month or two and her apartment will be vacant. and she will leave me her car to use. Our school spring vacation is from Apr. 1-9. Maybe J and D will go to Seattle that week. Franklin Press MIGHT do brochures again and have some free lance work for you until you start your job in June (This doesn't really matter, I know.)

if I had HOPED your parents would be here visiting too, so you would have an excuse to be here, but it doesn't look like it now-- maybe it could still happen,)

This is only FEB. and all these things may not happen or may change, I know. But Would God have made it turn out like this if He didn't want it? I would LOVE to have you come back even for a little while-- You have all the rest of your life-----

I know this sounds not very nice, Nick. I never, never have suggested these things to any other man, but I never loved any other man like I love you and I do not know what else to do if I can't marry you. I have to go now.

love, Lorna

(comment
My, my)

I made a lip imprint on it
at the last mad moment!

(N had gotten Valentine & letter by now) 3
and my "farewell" letter before it) 1
? Maybe my "do as you please" letter? 2?

Feb. 20, 1961

A couple of minor things to record:

The relationship between Janie and me has not been the same since that day she told me about N's former girl-friend and I told her that N said he couldn't marry an American girl. Something has gone out of it. Something nice. I have a feeling that Janie lost interest in me that day. I don't know why. Whatever it was she was fostering was no longer necessary. Since then I sense that she is only p being polite. (She knew?)

There is only one thing that refutes this--that gave me a tender little glow toward her: One of the Italian ceramic ashtrays we had at the store is missing--they said someone bought it. It is the one I told Janie she should have for her new house because it looked so much like those ceramics of N's! Of course, I do not know at all that it was Janie who bought it. I am rather afraid to find out, for I picture her loitering outside our office that day she went down to have her hair done, fingering the ashtray and hoping I'd come by so she could tell me her latest news. I could be wrong.

My feeling toward her has changed since she demanded N's money to further her own desires after she had so lavishly and unnecessarily spent hers.

It is reflected in my new lack of desire to see her again--to stay away from her. It is apparent in the nasty little trick I played on her yesterday-Sunday.

For I deliberately called her and asked her briefly and VERY casually to go to PTA with me Tuesday night, not really caring whether she goes or not. But I sensed that I should make some gesture toward her--I don't know why. Yet I am so full of my own new, terrible troubles that the thought of listening to her long tirade about the family troubles nauseates me. I just plain don't care. They are going to have to have a long, noisy Italian family vendetta before they iron out the details and all get together for Easter, I'll bet--and there's nothing I can do till it's over.

Anyway, I called her. She answered immediately. I said, "This is Lorna." I must admit she answered warmly and welcomingly, asking me how I was.

Yet she put me off, not accepting my invitation immediately as one might who was anxious to go with me (Yet NO ONE likes to go to PTA) asking me for my phone number, saying she'd check her other engagements, etc. definitely stalling for time and thought.

Perhpas this made me more abrupt than I realized for she did not encourage further conveesation. Rather she

excused herself for not calling me
(as if she ever would!) by saying
"I haven't heard anything. That's
why I haven't called you."

I knew perfectly well what she meant--
but, perhaps the implication that
that's all I cultivate her for--to
keep tabs on N--stung me, for I found
myself saying, "Didn't hear WHAT? I
don't know what you mean." And throw-
ing the poor girl into great embarrass-
ment, trying to pretend she meant she
hadn't heard about the meeting.

This will needle her, and, coupled
with her usual reluctance, I can almost
guarantee she won't call me, or, if
she gets nerve enough to, she will
have an excuse not to go. This is
Monday afternoon and she has not called.
If she were as anxious as she used to
be----

I will not be home this evening, and
I'm almost sure I'll hear no more from
her and I'll never know if she tried
to call tonight--she can always say
she did.

I find I'd really rather she didn't
go. Yet I felt compelled to ask her.
I can't quite figure this out. I
feel AGAINST her and I know she feels
that way about me now. I side with N
and I know he's mad at her.

I am not going to call and check with
her. For this is really a test to
see IF she would ever call me. I
think she knows it. This is the test

that will show up to both of us
whether I cultivate her for N and
she only puts up with me because I
heckle her so.

Tuesday--Feb. 21, 1961

I suppose it is revealing that I always expect the worst. I am quite conscious of it; it's my defense against being hurt.

Anyway, I spent the afternoon on my daughter troubles, but staying near the phone in case Janie should call and noting that this Chianello story provides me with a diversion that helps me to keep my equilibrium.

I must admit I was wrong, for Janie did call me right after dinner saying she'd pick me up about 8. I gave her a chance to change her mind about going, but she still wanted to. She came all dressed up and meticulously groomed, as I knew she would.

It went VERY well. All my excuses about asking her because no one else was going were negated for EVERYONE went tonight, including my sister and her husband, for which I was sorry because I KNEW she would do something destructive. She did (but more of that later.)

Janie and I got there and seated without getting involved with any mutual friends, for which I was thankful. I was afraid she would be restless and bored and pervers when I realized what a boring meeting it was going to be, but quite the contrary!

She was at her best--just AGLOW at being one of that well-dressed, half-male crowd. She was warm and almost affectionately intimate, leaning on me physically. I felt the same warm glow with her that I always felt with N and that I have

never experienced with other people--
a sort of NATURAL expression of enjoyment and happiness. To me it is the sunny warmth attributed to Italians. I may be wrong.

Anyway, to my surprise, she wanted to stay for coffee. (She and her husband always left early whenever they'd come before, I had noticed.) So we joined my sister and her husband (to my trepidation) and many people gathered around--people Janie wanted to impress, I could tell. She opened up like a flower to the sun and began to chatter, chatter, chatter, having a wonderful time.

I could see the interest in my brother-in-law's face--so risked leaving to greet someone I knew only to hear as I left that she was launching into a long account of N--damn! By the time I broke away and got back it was all told--the very thing I wanted to hear. And my sister had thrown her first spear--telling about seeing Janie's movies that time.

It was too late to save the situation. All I could do was to flounder around, saying, "I don't think Janie knows about that--". She didn't. She was pleasant and laughing about it, but how I worried what effect it would have in her own family and to N!

My sister sat there smirking like a Cheshire cat and then proceeded into a conversational topic that exposed me age and the fact that I was older than she, etc. etc. I KNEW IT! But there was nothing I could do but suffer.

I had private business with a teacher, so I grabbed another moment to slip away, feeling by this time that Janie was securely in conversation with Emery and a few attentive men. But I was a little sorry I'd left her when a few minutes later this rather forlorn little figure came searching me out. She didn't feel as secure as she acted.

We went home and I dropped some remarks about the Catholic Church's coming Open House, at which she eagerly made a tentative date to take me--IF her sister didn't come to visit that week-end.

I feel tonight as if I may have helped the ambitions of a little Italian immigrant beauty's climb up what she thinks is the social ladder, but perhaps forfeited my chances with N!

March 3, 1961

I am going to write this without looking at what I wrote before--for areason.

During thisinterim I have been through sheer hell with another HATE experience, one that convinced me, since it was in myo own family, that I would be completely cured of this romantic delusion. In fact, I have thought of writing as much, but ~~didn't~~ even care ~~that much~~. This has been so terrible and so preoccupying that I have lost any desire to have anything at all to do with mixed-up people like N ever again. It is not over yet. During this experience, too, I have had the thought, as I have noted before in my life that when I cease caring, I'll get what I thought I wanted.

But, too, there has been this: The hate experience with N was to prepare me for this more important experience. I could never have gotten through this or worked it out as well as we have, nor understood it so well if it hadn't been for what I have been learning these past three years. Nor would I have been buoyed up and encouraged by the knowledge and hope and feeling that it would work out all right, if I hadn't seen this other work out.

Now, for the first time, I have noticed *the "extra-sensory" pattern beginning again and FOUGHT AGAINST it. Always before I have welcomed it andplayed it for all it was worth. This time I just plain COULDN'T, emotionally and otherwise. Yet

it persists. This is something I have not had a chance to note before, when I always went along with it.

To bring us up to date: I ~~was~~ complete^{ly} incapable of going to the Catholic open house with Janie, mostly because I was in great emotional turmoil and not because I had any legitimate excuse, so I was relieved and glad when she never called me. I assumed her sister-~~she~~ must have come and, for the first time, didn't brood over whether she did it deliberately, etc. etc.

Now, I can't quite remember what the ~~!pattern!~~ started with this time. It seems to me there were two things--(it is significant that I can't remember!). But, I shall go on anyway.

I haven't been pursuing my frantic search of the NY Times for things Italian-Sicilian lately--partly because circumstances have kept me from it and partly because I no longer care much. I really found it rather bothersome when I saw the announcement of a coming special travel section and I thought, Oh dear! I'll have to make an effort and see if there's anything there--will be a little relieved if there isn't--.

But it was quite rich with even Sicilian references. So I put them aside and thought sometime I'll just mail them to J or something very casual, but I don't know her address, etc.

^{people}
I even told^{people} that I was going to give them to her--made no great secret of it. Today I could have made it one of my excuses for a real visit with her, but I actually planned it so I COULDN'T stay if I took them. I planned to just leave them off at the house with no word or anything, not even caring much whether she was there or not.

There is another little job at the store that I could once have made a contact excuse at N's former work place etc. But I have even fought against that. Now it seems that I am going to HAVE to do it.

Also, I have encountered two of N's former associates in the last couple of days....

Anyway, I took the things over to Janie. She was there alone, and begged me to stay and have coffee (and slipped into the bathroom to "freshen up"). I told her I couldn't, which was true, but she wouldn't let me go, keeping me talking and talking and telling me everything even though I pulled away. I didn't really want to know!

AND THIS IS WHAT SHE TOLD ME!

Her folks are coming either the end of this month or in April! Now they WANT to fly, and if they do, they will be here the end of this month, etc. etc.

before
March 3

And N. !!! He is helping to pay for it!
He offered! He was SORRY about the letter he wrote. He apologized!

(the hell he was!)

~~He has BEEN SICK. The ailments were vague and undoctored! He is coming for a week when his parents first arrive; and then for another week just before they leave! In the meantime they plan to have his parents go to LA and stay with him for four weeks, but he isn't too crazy about the idea--would rather be up here, or something, if possible.~~

~~It depends on this new job, which, I guess is legitimate and may start sooner. Also he is still working at his old job, not quitting the first of March as he "threatened"!~~

Then she went on to tell me, without any encouragement from me, even, about his LONE existence and other facts that belied the "having fun" intimations he made in his letter!

In fact, since the best plan is to have the parents arrive in Seattle and be picked up over there, he may fly up and meet them there and come home with them then!

AND--

says, Janie, "I am going to WORK tomorrow. My husband says, why do you do that? I may be working next week!" She was very elated and excited about it. HMMMM. I carefully explained my new hours, which would make it hard for us to get together. I wonder if she will remember?

Well, I must quit now. I find this all very odd. I am not excited. But, looking at Janie, whom I haven't seen for a while, I saw the N resemblance strongly and was pleased feeling--it warmed me. And I found myself singing on the way home--I do not know whether it is because of the lifting somewhat of the other problem or what....

(Note: Janie's work proved short-lived
and never at the times I worked.)

March 31, 1961

I should like to bring this up to date, even though I am toying with the idea of destroying all this.

This interim full of terrible troubles in which I have sought and had counseling has revealed to me the reason heretofore hidden from me of why I get involved with people like N. Since it was probably the problem I was fighting in these pages and undoubtedly apparent to others if not to me, the purpose of these writings seems no longer necessary. Whether they are now of any value I have not decided, but I shall add this anyway.

My troubles gave me no time for this N story. It has been completely erased from my thoughts and activities. Yet it went on. I observed the disintegration of my plans and hopes for a reunion with N this Easter week-end, but there was nothing I could do about it. I assumed that the Chianello family would have their great reunion without me--so to speak.

Last week end, events culminated in an escape trip for me to Seattle. In the back of my mind was the question as to whether I would cross paths and miss the Ch. reunion. Also the thought that it was an opportunity perhaps for another Pellegrini contact. But I didn't care.

I was too exhausted. I neither planned nor counted on it. In fact, I preferred not--I was neither in condition or mood.

But, as I left the scene of my troubles and gained perspective I thought that

I would call Janie when I got back and ask if N was still at the same address and if it would be all right for me to send him an Easter card, not really caring much one way or the other. It now seemed remote and unimportant.

Then, when I got to Seattle, as luck would have it, the beginnings I made on my last trip materialized in spite of me and, to shorten the story, Paula called Virginia P., who insisted, in spite of my protestations that I'd rather just talk on the phone this trip, that we come to call Sunday after church. She wanted to see me "face to face"!

As so often happens, now that I truly didn't care, was even reluctant (I began to be embarrassed at that last coy message) I was forced to do that which no longer held any thrill for me.

Paula and I were supposed to walk over, but as we went out the door it started to pour down rain, so that we had to take the car, which had the effect of precipitating me into the situation even more unprepared than I was.

Virginia answered the door and my immediate reaction was good--and one of relief. She was NOT club-womanish and false, but effusive and "arty". I felt immediately at ease with her. She was shorter than mother had led me to expect, and older than I had imagined--definitely wrinkled and withering--fiftyish. Not particularly pretty--rather a monkeyish face. And, I was glad to note, "buried" looking blue eyes no better than mine!

Mr. P was not in evidence and we had quite a session of "getting acquainted" activities before he appeared silently from a hallway.

I turned to him from the female confusion and, although momentarily startled at what seemed to be a total stranger, said, "Hi!" and approached him with outstretched hand (I think. I don't quite remember.) Anyway, I was suddenly engulfed in a bear hug. I heard him say, "That's my girl!" and was conscious of hugging him back and pressing my cheek to his for an instant and saying; "That's more LIKE it!"

Then I found us standing with arms about each other and Ginny looking very amused and Paula looking aghast. I was suddenly very conscious of my arm about him in full view of Paula and Ginny, and then I felt that arm drop of its own accord and his return to himself.

Anyway, it was FUN and JUST RIGHT. I was so glad he'd done it and sorry at the silly embarrassment Paula injected into the scene.

Ginny proceeded to divest me of my coat in such a hurry that I got all tangled in purse and gloves. Meanwhile Paula was wandering center and scooped up by Mr. P and taken to the window "to see the artichokes".

In the ensuing seating ceremony, I suddenly said, "Oh, I wanted to see the artichokes!" At which Mr. P suggested our going outside, and Ginny jumped up and put one of their jackets around my shoulders--(the rain had stopped.)

He then took me on a long, detailed, explanatory tour of the whole yard, stressing always the great amount of work HE had put into it and talking "down" to me as if I were totally unfamiliar with plants and foodstuffs. It was a stilted thing. I was nervous and distraught (as Ginny so aptly put it later.) I felt as if he were only doing aduty. I felt hurried and full of great tension, still, from my unresolved troubles.

And I was disappointed in the yard. It was so much smaller than the impression I had gotten from his book. And not nearly so "socially" designed as I had expected. The outdoor eating arrangements impressed me as rather uncomfortable. The whole yard, as I noted before, lacked the look of loving care that a true gardener would give it. The brick work he bragged so much about was indeed impressive, though.

There were some good moments when we found mutual interests and one moment when I felt he deliberately moved very close to me and I was aware of a male-female sensation and unobtrusively stepped to one side. It was all right--sort of a mutual agreement thing.

Before we went out I had joked about going barefoot because of my very inappropriate shoes, at which he regarded them with signs of scorn. And, in going in, he preceeded me in barely disguised disgust when I fussed over cleaning my shoes off.

Next thing I remember is being toured through the kitchen, which was "bohemianly decorated with "Peter Hunt" style florals and Italian mottoes that Ginny had done--many objets d'art and framed art mementoes from guests; myriad spices lined on a shelf, etc. (I noticed the spices were

not home-grown as I would have expected, but a well-known gourmet brand I had had myself once.)

Ginny made a big thing of showing us the Italian pasta dinner a friend had given them. I don't think we reacted enough--were curious enough--as she seemed disappointed--and dwelt over them, asking me if I'd had them--if "my Italian friends" had ever served them to me? I was baffled! I had no Italian friends who served me exotic Italian dishes! Where did she get THAT impression? I didn't know what to say and tried to pass it off lightly. It was not a good moment.

I was trying to figure Mr. P. During all this he stood in the background, watching with beady, black eyes--unresponsive--not amused or amusing--uncommunicative even when addressed. He was not AT ALL the genial host he had painted himself in his books!

Then it seemed he was there with a bottle of regular grocery store wine in his hand. (Ginny had said we must come for a glass of wine after church and I was relieved--the gesture of acceptance!) I had visions of a jolly session over home-made wine.) He was explaining that he'd changed his mind: he would serve us a glass of sherry now and give us a bottle of his own wine to take home for our dinner. (Changed his mind? What did he mean? Had they perchance expected one or both of us to stay for dinner--and that "bad moment" was our saying the wrong thing? Hmmm.)

Anyway, everyone seemed at that moment to be appealing to me for an answer. I ~~at~~ didn't know what to say. I was pleased and flattered at the unexpected offer of a gift of his wine (a gesture of approval, I had surmised from his books) but I sensed a rejection in the decision to share only cheap wine "and begone-with-you" effect.

I demurred and fussed and then agreed, lamely saying I had no wine to offer THEM when they came to MY house!

Then, a tour of the basement--the wine cellar tour I had been looking forward to!

We went down ~~the~~ stairs hung with Ginny's very capable paintings. The basement was very small and ordinary and old-fashioned.

But both Paula and I exclaimed over the array of nested bottles on three sides. This seemed to please them both. For the first time, Mr. P acted interested and convivial. He started a dull discourse on the most elementary aspects of wine--as if we were totally unfamiliar with same--even bringing out the familiar, straw-wrapped bottle of Chianti as if it were a museum piece or something, etc.

I was getting a little irritated. He was so stiff and unresponsive; so cross and querulous over nothing; so humorless and withdrawing, while Ginny chattered, chattered and held the floor. I tried a few witticisms, which only Ginny responded to. I tried to ask about the wine casks and no one paid any attention to me.

Perhaps I deliberately tried desperate measures, for I started to wiggle a cask to see if it had anything in it, which Mr. P DID notice and flew crossly to its rescue. I felt real contrite, knowing I had done the wrong thing--to jostle

the sediment.

Then he consulted Paula as to her meat for dinner and made a big thing of selecting just the right wine. He seemed more annoyed than anything at any knowledge I showed about wines--

Then, upstairs to a stilted, across-the-room, if-you-must-have-wine-here-it-is, conversation. Ginny inquired about serving us wine as if we were rank amateurs.

(On re-reading this I get the impression that it sounds as if perhaps I might have put on a know-it-all, keeping-up-with-the-sophisticates-show. I wonder if I did? I wasn't conscious of it; I thought I was sharing mutual experiences and interests, and I was surprised at their rather condescending, "educational" dissertations.)

I felt definitely at a disadvantage in our seating arrangements, because Paula and I were together on one side of the room and faced the Pellegrinis who sat on either side of a big window so that I could not see them against the light.

And the purpose of my visit was to "study" them and talk WITH them. It was an uncomfortable arrangement.

Ginny and Paula monopolized the conversation--though Ginny was very hostessy about drawing me out and Paula "helped" me by getting me to tell of Mike and his "glory"--which seemed to give me some prestige with them. They began to prick up their ears and take more interest and even more so when I revealed my former associations with an artist they were impressing us with.

Mr. P simply withheld from the conversation except for politeness. I could not draw him out. When I tried, Ginny chided me

by saying, "Most people don't have the
TEMERITY to ask him those things."!!!
I was bold?

Actually, as Paula later accused me of
doing, I am "down-grading" the visit.
It was really very pleasant--considering.
I left feeling it a great success.

I am glad the boy came in before we left
and I was disappointed not to see the girl.
(I had a feeling they deliberately dis-
posed of them beforehand.)

Paula and Ginny got off on "genius children"
talk. Mr. P seemed bored. He said across
the room to me, "Those little pen sketches
of yours---they're JUST RIGHT". I knew
what he meant and I was grateful for it.

At one point he asked me to come out to
the kitchen to show me something and seem-
ed more relaxed then. He insisted on my
showing more interest than I showed in one
particular momento, and we were just be-
ginning to get to talking more freely
when I think Ginny and Paula joined us and
we went back out into the living room.
I don't quite remember---

The general talk was interesting and
stimulating--though it kept wandering
from things I was most interested in, like
their association with an Italian
quartet. Afterwards, I remembered Mr. P
came across the room and rummaged through
records and then gave up. I believe he
wanted us to hear a recording of the
quartet. I should have enjoyed that--
but----

Ginny was a hovering, almost over-sollicitous hostess--very charming, very attentive. I liked her immensely and felt very much at ease with her. She and Paula talked incessantly and were chattering away as we prepared to leave! "r. P standing off--just standing.

On an impulse I went up to him, touching him on the arm, (I think) and thanked him, and said for him to "write the book--I needed cheering up." He remained self-contained and unresponsive. Then launched into a long dissertation on some column he hoped to write, acting unnecessarily defensive and argumentative about it--impatient--as if we simply WOULDNT understand. (But it was a confusing story as he was telling it!)

On the whole he reminded me very much of N. and that surprised me. He certainly was not the gentle, amiable soul I had pictured him. He was VERY reserved, very "walled", very withdrawn, in spite of talking a lot when he got started.

He was somewhat ~~st~~otchety and abrupt and showed no sense of humor whatsoever--I was so baffled that I blurted out as we left to Ginny, "Is he always this ("glum" did I say?)--he says such damn fool things in his books!" I'm sorry I said it--I don't know why it popped out!

I was surprised at the way he let Ginny take over; I sensed a protective, hovering, promoting quality in her relationship to him and a resentment~~ent~~, querulous, satiated dependence in his toward her--(very much like N and I would be if married???)

They were both dressed in arty get-ups--turtle neck sweaters, for instance. He was not as good looking as the other impressions I had--quite a tummy and that black, black FOREIGN blackness to his hair: grised hair in his ears and eyebrows, both of which had been clipped; a twisted, mishapen nose, and dark, deep furrows in his face. A strong face, but somewhat ugly, with that pasty, greenish-white tinge that Italians get in the winter. Yet a face that mattered not at all when you knew the man behind it!

And Paula seemed nervous and ill at ease all the time. In fact, she spoiled things.

When we got home to Paula's we opened the wine and it seemed to me the best wine I ever drank--I truly got a different reaction from any other wine I'd ever had! I was a trifle sorry not to have some for my very own.

After a glass, I felt a compulsion to call Ginny then and there, though Paula tried to deter me. I KNEW it was the moment--and it was. It went off very well. I explained mysteriously that I would be involved in troubles when I got home so probably wouldn't write (true) and raved about the wine.

Ginny was obviously pleased and I was glad I called because the "verdict was in" by then and she was most effusive and cordial and insistent that I let them know next time so I could come for DINNER--and to write them about my troubles, etc. etc. I knew then that the visit was a success and I had "passed".

I got on the bus and came home still in a glow from Mr. P's wine--slept all the way-- and woke up feeling refreshed and wonderful for the first time in many weeks. None of the usual head-achy wine feeling-- quite the contrary.

When they presented the wine (to Paula) I remember they mentioned a label. (personally I prefer the naked bottle--it bespeaks "home-made"). Then they mentioned it again later saying, "Every artist that comes here promises to make us a label design and no one ever does." I just laughed, thinking, "how typical!". Then he said, "Of course Ginny could make it now" (I didn't agree--her talents don't seem to me to run to that sort of thing, but it didn't matter.) I thought no more of it until we made our leave-taking and I said, "I'll make no promises--no wine labels or anything like that--" for I interpreted their comments as an effort to head me off on something that had grown into a nuisance.

HOWEVER, as I dozed on the bus, this idea for a label sprang into my mind COMPLETELY FORMED--I was not even searching for it!

And it would not leave me alone, so that I felt absolutely COMPELLED to rid myself of it the next morning at work before I could find peace.

I whipped it out in a great frenzy of artistic inspiration, making it look as impressive-looking and professional as possible (since I seemed to observe a bit of "prestige-climbing" in the P's!)

It seemed like a VERY CLEVER idea at the time, but maybe a bit too whimsical for ~~the~~ P's great egoism, for I mailed it and I have heard nothing from them.

So--that's the Pellegrini story #2.

(Note: Mr. P impressed me as a bitter,
lonely man!)

Mon- April 1-

Now--

the lead-in to the N story:

Part of my label design I based on Monte Pellegrino in Palermo, but I couldn't quite remember the facts, so I used that excuse to call Janie and ask her.

She was glad-sounding, as usual, but explained that she had to fix her husband's lunch after she had answered my question. I could hear him jokingly demanding service in the background. So I jokingly told her to tell him he'd have to wait. She did so. All very gay! I was busy, too--I had meant to be brief, anyway--so we signed off.

Later, I had the car and some time to kill and an errand that way, so, when I saw her car there, I stopped.

She was housecleaning AGAIN! but seemed very glad to see me and assured me she was just wanting a boffee break. It turned into about an hour of good talk, during which time her kids came home with their report cards--all very pleasant and "en famille".

When I'd gone in and was waiting for her I saw a VERY GOOD color picture of N taken at Christmas time propped up in full view. This one looked VERY much like him--he looked pleasant--and so GOOD to me--I just wanted to hug him! I hated to put the picture

down--I wanted to dwell on it and take it home with me!

What I learned from our talk:

~~Parents not coming now until June---~~
~~by boat now. Arrive the day school is~~
~~out. (Wednesday, June 7?) (Damn!)~~

~~N is staying in LA now, she said. (I~~
~~didn't know he'd planned anything else!)~~

~~He had been sick a lot again--tonsils--~~
~~supposed to have them out, but is reluctant.~~
~~He said he'd be up a week while his parents~~
~~are there. Would fly up.~~

~~She had explained her sleeping accomodations~~
~~for all the family and N had suggested~~
~~that he'd stay elsewhere--get a room or~~
~~something (bully for you, N!) but that~~
~~made her VERY mad--she wants them all~~
~~together.~~

~~He is still on the same job--(odd! after~~
~~all that talk about it being over.)~~

That was all she had to say about N.
I was encouraged at the "sickness"; inter-
preting it in the light of past observa-
tions as a cover-up for depression--
(and he hasn't heard from me for along
time!) And by the thought of getting
a room somewhere by himself! Adn relieved
that he won't be coming now when I can't
see him anyway.
(But June won't be any better--with school
out and kids home all the time. Nick!
Nick! time's a-wasting; I'm getting too
old, too old for you!)

Then there was a lot of interesting talk about their life in Palermo--with more grisly details of N's traumatic war experience--and much talk of the details of her parent's trip.

And she'd gotten some Italian language records (I didn't think she really would). I tried to inspire her kids to learn Italian. How I'd love to join their learning sessions!

I noticed again that Janie's accent differs from the records I've had--
Sicilian, perhaps?

She also told me of N's "death-wish" response to total anesthesia, which delighted and amused me--exactly like mine!

So--I left. And came home to fix my Ester card to send him, even though Janie didn't seem to approve, when I "asked" her about sending it. I even wrote him a gay, long, easy letter telling him I'd see him in June--"or he'd be sorry". Hope that and my saying we'd greet "as old friends and then see" won't discourage him, but I wanted to provide him a face-saving "out" in case two year's more aging is too much of a shock to him.

*Ester card
Sent
Mon. April 3*

That's all for now.

Monday--April 3, 1961

A beautiful April day, free time on my hands and the car to use. So I took the opportunity to call on Janie, taking with me the book on Rome I had gotten from the library and hoped to be able to show to Janie before I took it back.

I wanted to have her help me translate some of the Italian, but didn't expect much interest on her part, since she hadn't showed much before.

She was cleaning house AGAIN, and had a time limit, but so did I. But she was her usual cordial self and put on the coffee and we got to talking at great length again.

While I waited for her I noted the picture of N was still propped up on a ledge. I wanted badly to look at it again, but didn't dare.

She surprised me by being quite helpful with the translation, but we got sidetracked--as usual. She began to chatter away about herself and her family, making a very good story of what she was telling. The unconscious prestige-seeking was rather pathetic.

I learned nothing new about N except that he now plans to come the next week end after his folks arrive instead of the middle of the week, when they come. I suppose that way he'd get three week-ends instead of two. That would mean about the 10th of June.

The rest of her chatter was about her family except she told me about a show that had been on Tv the day before--all filmed on the Italian ship they made their trip on. She said she had wanted to call me. I chided her because she didn't. I was SICK that I'd missed it!

For I had actually sought for something to watch on TV that day and couldn't seem to find anything. And that is unusual for me!

It was a pleasant visit. She seemed in no hurry to have me go in spite of her previous committment.

(A gotten Easter card by now.)

Saturday--April 15, 1961

I made an impulse stop at Janie's while on some errands merely to ask her about the ashtray and tell her about the Italian movie. I had no intention of staying and didn't.

For she met me out on the patio in dirt and curlers. She asked me in for coffee, anyway, but, noting her family was all home and being pressed for time, I declined.

She seemed in a cross, self-pitying mood, launching into complaints about having to clean up their rental units.

She said she DIDN'T buy the ash tray, but hoped someone had bought it for her--laughing. When I told her about the movie she didn't seem to recognize my Italian pronunciation, but, for the life of me, I couldn't see how I said it different from what she did!

That is all. Nothing special. Just a friendly stop.

Sunday--April 16, 1962

The thought just came to me that N
sent me neither an Easter card or a
birthday card--as I had suggested he
might!

The thought was a blow, depressing me
again; spoiling all the friendly, warm
anticipation of June and replacing it
with the old doubts, disillusion and dis-
gust.

Damn!

April 25, 1961

Nothing to report in all this time, but I am writing today because it seems such a coincidence.

Also
see
May 1

It's so hard to explain these things without so nding slightly ridiculous, but here goes.

Without anything to instigate it, N has popped into my mind these last couple of days. I have dreamed about him and thought about him. Last night when I went to bed, I had that old feeling and thought that "N needs me!", he wants me, etc. I thought to myself, "I wonder what he wants--if something is the matter? I wonder if he has had histonsils out, and is lonely and depressed?" I wonder if I should contact Janie? But I have no reason at present, so I put the thought away, merely remarking on it and noting it for future reference.

Today, at noon, while I was working, I looked up to see Janie standing in our office! She was all dressed up and she had deliberately come to see me! Something I have predicted she would never do!

She was not flustered or self-conscious, but as natural and poised as anyone would be, even though Mozelle was there and we were working together. I would have thought once that Janie would be embarrassed and flee under such circumstances. But she lingered and, when she saw I was busy, made arrangements with me to meet and have a cup of coffee or something, and readily agreed to drive me home when I hinted to that effect.

It was all casual and natural and friendly, something I never would have dreamed would ever happen.

So I met her when I was through and we shopped around together and then I took her to lunch at the Chinook (because she confessed she had deliberately dressed up and come downtown just to have something to do; and I knew she would enjoy showing herself off to all the men in the hotel. She did.)

Then we did an errand of hers, and then one of mine, and then I waited while she went into the Catholic school on an errand. She asked me if I were going to the band concert tonight, as if she would like to have me go, but I wasn't interested in going with her husband and, besides, I have no connection with the band, so I begged out of that one, but made a tentative date to see her Friday at the mothers' tea--but she has a previous date for that one.

I turned the talk to N and we talked about him rather at length and I was not flustered or shaky at all. I asked her about his tonsils, and her reply made me suspect what I have thought--that that is just N's excuse to her for his depression, etc. He doesn't sound like a person who is doing something specific about a specific ailment--all very vague and inconsistent.

Then I ventured to say what was in my mind--that I wondered if he would even call me IF he came up--that I bet he wouldn't. I can't say that I liked her reception of this remark. It was not encouraging:

She looked rather sly and a bit amused, and said she wouldn't know. Frankly I was disappointed. I had hoped she'd say something about "he certainly should" or "I'll see to it that he does" or something like that. I keep hoping she will make a definite invitation to me to come see N or meet her family, perhaps, but she doesn't. Maybe I have been hoping that N would have told her to tell me he'd see me or would like to or something? This way doesn't leave me much hope. And, if she is not going to encourage it, he'll never have the temerity (thank you, V. Pellegrini, for that word!) to break the silence alone.

So, being taken aback, I went on to ruin what slight chance I had and the vague plans I'd made to maybe call him, even if only the day before he left, by saying I wouldn't call him first--he'd have to call me, etc., which, of course, N being N, won't work at all. I'D have to make the advances!....So.....

She told me a some length about how lonely she suspects he is, and how she doesn't like him being there alone and friendless and away from his family--he needs his family, etc. etc. (So, all his claims to friends and fun and all are not true at all!) She DID say that he had mentioned that he might look for a job in Spokane while he is here--(it's TWO weeks, now!) Oh Nick! Nick! why don't you reach out and take what little I have to offer you?

I have been wondering, too, if I should record what seems to be a change in my feelings about N. Last night, while cleaning out papers, I came across one of my once-poignant mementoes of him-- and I could summon nothing of the old feeling. I find I am, at last, without much emotion in regard to him--it all seems unimportant at last. What good would two furtive weeks be or do?

And now this verdict of J's: N has not changed. Going to LA has not made him more open, more social, any easier to get along with. Janie worries about him associating with the wrong people--as if he were a child! And my new, good relationship with the Pellegrinis has made the relationship less important. Here is the same romantic bit, but of a better grade! A good, open, sincere, easy friendship.

And my recent trials and tribulations with neurotic people has left a bad taste in my mouth: I want no more of it!

Could it be that this relationship is exhausted? Could it be that N might "come back to me" and I would have nothing to give him? Such is life.

Thursday--April 27, 1961

After talking to Janie, I felt an impulse to send N a little reassurance, so I dashed down to the greeting card department and looked for something apropos.

All I could find was a silly card about "hearing you are sick, but one of these days you'll wake up feeling all right". Not what I had in mind, exactly, but all I could find.

I signed it, "Love, Lorna" and sent it off.

Friday--April 28, 1961

I tried to "milk" the Janie contact further by going to the Mothers' Tea because I knew she was going, although I really had no reason to go. I hoped to slip her another NY Times clipping, and perhaps join up with her somehow, but it didn't work at all. I couldn't even find her till we were almost ready to go there was such a crowd. And then circumstances made any contact impossible. It was a wasted effort.

May 1, 1961

N news:

from J's Chinook lunch talk.

She implied great concern that N had gotten in with the "wrong people".

She spoke of this while she was telling me that he was taking his full two weeks ^{before} the first of June. That he had two weeks vacation due him and they are allotting it to him at the close of his job at the Wolfer Co. which will be at the first of June when he is supposed to start on the new job. And she spoke of his mentioning that he might look for a job in Spokane--implying that he might not go back.

What does this mean? More of this later.

What I have done:

I re-read this record clear through this week end.

Because I felt a compulsion to. Perhaps because in this especially lush spring we are having because of twice our normal rainfall even the thoughts of the middle-aged turn to love. And since I have no other, I tried to recapture something from the past.

This time I forced myself to read clear through from beginning to end. This is the first time I have kept at it that long.

It was hard work. It took a lot of time from work and sleep. As a result I am tired and confused. And I got bogged down in it, as usual, more than I intended, making me unable to sleep well and getting me somewhat upset again; making me miss N and want him again.

Last night I didn't sleep very well, so I was comforted this morning when the first thing I heard on the radio was the song "Volare", which I haven't heard for ages!

Now. Conjecture about what Janie said N said.

If she said N is leading such a lonely life, why does she worry about the "wrong people"? To what is she referring? If not his social life, then it must be his work. ~~Yet~~ Yet for two years on the same job there has not been this allusion. Could it pertain to his new job? Could it be what I surmised--that he was being fooled about this too-glamorous sounding, too far-in-the-future, too indefinite, too wonderful job?

Why would he consider giving up such a wonderful thing? to come back to what he himself has said would be a come-down?

To be with his family? But they are only here for six months, and, if this job were what he makes it sound, he would want to keep it to impress them with. He would want the money. And he himself rejected the idea of them visiting him down there. And he said he "did not want to be a !family boy! again". What happened to Janie's sure plans she could get him on at Boeing's in Seattle? What of her saying that the Spokane sister might move to Seattle anyway? What about his "two year sign up at UCLA"? What about his determination to graduate there? What about his ambition--his 7-year plan? Surely he would not give all this up so easily? It is not like him!

Is he only "planning" again? Daydreaming again? Committing himself too soon again? Placating Janie again?

Or has he run into difficulties? Has he LOST the opportunity he spoke of? Was it not true in the first place? Has he been "stalled" again and, getting impatient again, only making his usual idle threats? Was it only one of his threats in the first place? Or has he blown up--refused to adjust again--and spoiled it all?

Will my next news be an entirely different set of plans as has been happening all these months? Surely things are too far committed by now for him to be able to change very much from now till June?

I strongly suspect that the glamor job is no more. He has over-shot himself again.

I do not ignore the evidence that he seems to have rejected the Northwest when I reject him, and plan to come when I provide a "lure"; but the evidence also shows that I alone am not enough to motivate him!

Time will tell.

(It did!)

I forgot to say that the last time I talked to Janie she said she wasn't coming back to work any more. (She has said that before.) But this time she told them "her husband wouldn't let her work" and they probably took her name off the list. Her reasons were, beside that, that she didn't want to be called while her family was there and besides she has a job lined up in Sept taking care of a new baby for a few hours a day. She seemed quite set up about it.

MY suspicions are that she wants to play "the lady" now in her new house and all. She is working very hard at that, I notice. And I suspect she wants her family to see her as very prosperous, very American--not to have them know that all this was hard won by being a shop girl and cleaning woman for rentals!

Also I can't help a teeny weeny wonder but what her job might have been a means of keepin contact with me? And now that our friendship is established other ways, it no longer serves a purpose?

Besides, from my observations over a few years, I don't really believe it. She will work again, if circumstances warrant it!

Oct. episode - Coming to see me. I didn't hear. Gives up trip. (?)
Kmas - Coming up. I go to hospital. Gives up trip. (?)

A summary of N's and my relationship
from Christmas, 1960 to May, 1961:

I kept in touch with him through his sister Janie, who told me what N wrote to her and what was going on in their family. Around Christmas she was available for information because she worked at the same place I do, and we got friendly enough so that we started seeing each other outside the store, and making dates with each other. I called on her at home several times, and, although she never has deliberately called on me, she has loitered where I could meet her. Except this last time when she actually came into the office to see me!

I kept writing to N and sending him cards even though he has never written to me--only sent me a Christmas card. But I have a strong feeling that he uses Janie as an intermediary, and she is aware of it.

Janie was very angry and upset and worried about him at Christmas time because he had not written for so long and seemed upset and apt to lose his job. It was after I wrote to him that he sent them a Christmas package and a long letter saying that he was fine and apologized for worrying her. And not to worry about him at Christmas for he was going out to dinner with friends. But he did not tell who the friends were or anything about them. (1)

Sometime between then and January 20 he wrote her only one more letter, saying that he had a WONDERFUL time at Christmas--that he got MANY presents and

really enjoyed himself. And that he'd been to a New Year's party wt this same family's and also had a very good time.

He still gave no details about it. As for Janie's worries about his long silen in October, he now explained that he'd been sick, but he was very vague about it.

Mentioned that he had tonsil trouble--an old compaint--and flu and spent a week alone in his apartment very sick and assured her he'd never do that again.

He said he had not gotten his citizen-ship papers and claimed he never wanted any. He made no mention of a change of jobs, although he had said before that things looked bad.

In the meantime, because there had been some talk earlier of his trying to find work in Spokane and because I felt that his signing his Christmas card as "a friend" was a rebuff to a passionate letter I had written him before Christmas, but still wanting to stand by him in his new troubles, I wrote him business-like letters of references in Spokane as friend to friend only.

During this time he and Janie were working on plans to have their parents come to the United States for a visit. They had hoped to have them come for Christmas or soon after, but Janie and her husband had decided to build a new house first and it wasn't ready, and other difficulties arose so, that, by the last of January plans were to have them come the next fall, after air-rates went down again.

N had saved the necessary money and it was understood by him and Janie that he would finance their trip.

But Janie got impatient and decided they should come BEFORE the rates went ~~down~~ up again--by the 15th of March. She excitedly wrote to N and suggested the change in plans and eagerly awaited an immediate answer from him.

Ten days elapsed during which she got increasingly irate, as she reported to me when I made a point of keeping in touch to see what was going to happen.

Then she got a six-page letter from him which she told me about when I contacted her. In it N completely blasted her hopes. He not only refused to send the money, but completely and utterly severed himself from his family, mainaining that he'd found a wonderful new life full of everything he'd ever wanted and intended to stay in Los Angeles for at least two years and longer and live his own life! After five years of concentrating on getting his parents over here he even asserted he thought it foolish for them to come!

I was so broken up at the loss of all prospects of ever seeing him again that I wrote him several passionate pleas, including a Valentine I had intended to send anyway.

This was in the middle of February and Janie heard nothing more from him until about the first of March, when I contacted her again, she was full of excitement!

N had written and apologized and offered his money and stated he'd come up when they were here and completely changed his tune. He was even still working at the job he'd kept saying would end.

So now the plan was to try to get the parents to come before the summer rates started, in which case they'd have to fly.

Otherwise, if they came by boat, it would have to be a month or so later. So I was anxious to see if they would fly and get here by the end of March because it meant N would come up about Easter and at that time it would have fitted beautifully into my own plans to have N here then, IF he came to see me.

I wrote him so, putting my heart on my sleeve and begging him to come even for a little while.

But--the parents would not fly; they preferred the boat, Janie informed me the next time I saw her.

In the meantime, she reported, N was leading a very lonely existence and having much sickness, he claimed, which he seemed to be doing little about. He was still on the job "that wasn't to last".

Now the parents would not arrive till June, after school is out. I sent N an Easter card and a more cautious letter that left him an escape if he weren't really planning on seeing me.

After which he wrote Janie that he would come up, but planned to stay in Los Angeles, and perhaps he should get a room of his own instead of staying with them.

Now, this first week of May, all I know is that which Janie told me at our last meeting--assuming that the parents are still arriving the day school is out--about June 7--N is

still planning to come the week end of June tenth and stay for two weeks. I assume that he still has this wonderful job to go back to in Los Angeles, but I understood it was to start June 1st!? Janie mentioned that he might look for a job in Spokane and implied that he might not go back. I do not know whether that is what N said or whether it is family pressure.

She said he is very, very lonely and expressed worry about his "bad associations". I do not know if this is family pressure or not either.

And I most certainly do not know where I fit into this picture! I know for sure that none of them have openly included me in any of their plans. Whether N does secretly or not I have no way of knowing except by intuition. I do know that as of this writing it would be extremely difficult for me to have any chances of seeing him, and I know from past experience that only "an act of God" will bring him to me!

Right now I have an overwhelming urge to DO SOMETHING about something--see Janie, write N or something, but know by now that I cannot change what happens. All I know is that there is still more than a month and many, many things can happen in that time!

What will, I wonder?

May 3, 1961

So--

This month of May will be hard for me emotionally, for I shall be hoping against hope to see N again. And living in dread of having my hopes blasted. I WILL have the glow of anticipation; that will be something. Perhaps it will be all I will have, so I will try to appreciate that alone.

All I can do now is tend my fires as whole-heartedly as I am able, meanwhile on the alert for opportunities to promote what I desire and what I think N desires and to ward off anything that will frustrate those desires. I shall do my very best so that I shall always have the comfort of making the best of things and the blessing of having been inspired, if nothing else!

The rest is in the hands of God, who so far has already blessed me in ways beyond my understanding!

May 5, 1961

The "happy" period of recent weeks seems to be over. Things seem to be rather faouled up now. So, when that last impulse I mentioned led me to phoning Janie that afternoon and warning her (this time) that I might drop in on her the next day, I didn't expect much. And I didn't get much.

She seemed happy enough about it, said she'd be home--sewing to do--and then asked me if I'd like to go to the Music Festival (a school fundtion) with her, explaining that her husband wasn't going. I didn't, besides feeling that my duty lay at home, but I knew she NEEDED someone to go with, since her daughter is in it, and so I more or less agreed--more for the daughter's sake than anything.

I had things to do and so didn't arrive at Janie's until about 2:30, hoping against hope that she had heard me say it would be after two.

Havin warned her, I expected her to be fussed up for me, ahas happened before, so I was surprised to startle her in one of the worst messes I'd seen this house in, and to see her VERY undone, in old cbthes.

She made the usual pot of coffee and produced a beautiful chocolate cake and sat down to chat, leaving her sewing, and turning off the televeision, thank goodness!

We talked until her kids came home and for about half an hour after that until I sensed that they had things they wanted to do, so I left, making arrangements for going with hertonight.

She seemed to be in not too good a mood. I was the one to keep the conversation going this time. I had to probe to get her to talk and she didn't seem to have much to offer.

I wa the one to bring the conversation to N--she seemed reluctant to talk about him. But, for once, I was was adamant in keeping him the subject and brought it back when she digressed because I wasn't through with what I was saying. I disclosed most of my conjectures and puzzlement at his words and actions since Chrsitmas, much as I have done in this writing, trying to get her to figure out with me just what really was happening. ut she was not interested. Ieven asked her point-blank whether she'd found out about N old girl friend. I was in amood to get things settled in my mind, but didn't get much help.

(No! she hasn't. Waiting to ask family)

It's quite possible, being a Chianello, that she didn't notice my saying I'd be late and was "mad" at me; I've been through that enough!

SAs I feared, the news about N, according him through Janie, was discouraging. He hadn't heard from me since the Easter card and letter--he wouldn't have gotten my "cheer-up" card before this news of J's. I figure the "2-weeks-job-in-Spokane-might-not-go-back" letter was the reaction, if any, to that letter. But it did have the controversial "you'll-be-sorry/we'll-see" angle for him to brood on. Then the lapse of a month not hearing)

So--

Now we hear this: It's very indefinite IF and WHEN he'll come. He won't be here at all when his folks arrive; he MAY come for two weeks around the first of July. He MAY finance a plane trip to LA for his parents to visit him 2 weeks down there and fly back with them for the last week and the leave-taking. He doesn't know.

BECAUSE (he says) he has to go to the hospital to have his tonsils out. He implies that this would be the week they come. That he would go to the hospital on the "week-end" for 3 days and then have to be home, out of work, for three days of the following week. Then back to work. Evidently there was no mention of his job, his work, his school, his social life. But complaints about his health and vendetta with Janie about money--yes, HE would finance the trip to LA, but he CANNOT help out with the expense of the whole trip now--he needs the money for his trip up and for his tonsilectomy. That he might be able to pay so much a month on it in the future....

Now, on the strength of past observations my interpretation is this: N's mad; he's discouraged. This is pure threat. He's not committing himself, in case he changes his mind. Either he's got his own plans he's trying to force others into; or he's revenging himself about something to someone; or just doesn't like the way things are going and is stalling in hopes of better opportunities.

The reasons I think these are not factual reasons, but only excuses, threat, stalling is 1. Because Janie is obviously mad and disgusted at him. She didn't want to talk about him. Her look was hard-eyed, defiant, "I don't care" when talking of him. She admitted that "He's just TRYING to be independent. I KNOW that's what he's TRYING to do." She said what I have observed that N's decisions are based purely on MOOD, not fact.

2. His changes of plan are not backed up by factual evidence. In fact, there are too many discrepancies according to his last explanation of the future. For instance: How does he KNOW he'll have to go to the hospital that week-end unless he deliberately planned it that way? Because it is a whole month away and they have waited YEARS for this family event. (Yet it COULD be--with an infection. It COULD be indefinite: witness my Xmas episode. (Thought: Is N pulling this hospital deal on me on the eve of an imminent visit as he might have thought I "pulled" it on him?!?!?))

What happened to the job "that starts the first of June"? No one gets vacations the first year on a new job; no one gets 2 weeks vacation AFTER leaving an old job! If he couldn't leave the old job after being there 2 years for a trip, what makes him think he'd leave a new one for a week? How come he's so SURE about going "back to work" and money and everything when this new job is so indefinite? Ha!

So I say I think this is pure Nick.

About this "new job". I tried to get Janie to conjecture with me, but she wouldn't. What I want to know is what N did with that \$1000 he had saved. Last fall he had plenty to finance his folks trip and then some. When J called for it, he blew his stack and now he doesn't seem to have it?? What were those fabulous friends? And that fabulous job? What are Janie's worries "about the wrong people" based on? Why did she renege on that question yesterday? Why all this lingering on in the same old job? Why no mention of the new one any more if it is so exciting? Why plans made to do other things at the time the job was supposed to start? Ha!

So--

I am inclined to think N needs encouragement AGAIN--how much it takes for him! So I wrote ANOTHER letter----sic!

Written May 4. Mailed May 5. Should be received at least by May 10. Effect could be judged by any communications from N after May 10:

Dear N,
What is all this about your tonsils? It worries me that they are so bad and you are so sick! Janie says you are goin to the hospital and have them out. You poor dear! and nobddy to hold your hand! May I come down and hold your hand?

It seems that your parents are REALLY going to come after all these years of trying.

I think that is very exciting and wonderful! If you HAVE to HAVE your tonsils out, can't you get it over with BEFORE, so you can get in on all the fun? Think how much better you will feel with all that poison out of you! Oh Nick, I don't want you to be sick and unhappy!

Isn't there anything I can do to help make you happy?--like you made ME happy once? Why don't you come back and let me try?--if only for a little while? Come back to see me and let us find a way to be alone and make each other happy again and not have anything toworry abo t----

You work so hard and try so hard all the time, why don't you plan a little fun for yourself? I'm sure you'd never be sorry.

You said you'd never be happy--OF COURSE you're going to be happy--anyone as nice as you, who works as hard as you will find someday that--there you are--happy!

Surely you know by now that I would never intentionally do anything to hurt you--that I love you with my whole heart, N. I'm not afraid of all your crossness and threats, SO THERE! Because I know how sweet you really are. What more can I say?

You just get those old tonsils out and get wellquick and get t ings straightened out and take some time out to have some fun--And then you can work all the harder and get things you want all the sooner--- and be as wonderful as I think you are---

Someone who loves you
called

Lorna

NOW: I let this letter "write itself". I TRIED to be "therapeutic" and ignore the sordid facts, but I also tried to be TRUTHFUL and not commit myself to anything I am not willing to see through.

I base it on the SEEMING observation that N has responded to this tone in times past; whereas he SEEMS to respond with anger, threats adn/or uncommunicativeness to neglect or coolness on my part.

I certainly do not send it without misgivings, but based on the observation that he has not SEEMED to discourage these overtures on my part. I send it as a test.

I am quite aware of the possibility that I may be "scaring him out"--that his procrastination about coming up these last two years could be fear of involvement with me. But, the truth being that it

is up to him (there is nothing I can do if he doesn't come to ME)--leaves andy committment on my part rather in the realm of a safe risk. Because I am quite sure, much as I hate to admit it, that he will NOT contact me. I would be most unr alistic not to see that he does not treat me as he has and would a woman he is seriously courting. (I.E.He has spent much moneyon, corresponded with, written notes to, bought gifts for and attempted committments with women he desires inthe past. He has consistently NOT done these things with me!) My role is something different and I know that, in fact my circumstances make the other treatment undesirable.

So---

I mostly want to see what his reacti~~nn~~n will be: If he changes his plans again to coopeperate with the family plans and plans to come up (mo matter what actually happens)--tha~~t~~ measn his reaction was good; I helped. And it shows that he responds to encouragement, and is not hopeless.

If he persists in vacillation; evasions; threats, "lies" and procrastination--then something is bothering him. Either a family involement I cannot contend with, a conflict about me, or a downright rejection of my offers.

If he should go so far as to plan to STAY uphere, I should be encouraged! For it would show he is really seeking a tender relationship and not fighting it as he seems to ~~be~~; itdoes~~n~~'t matter whether it's ME or not. If he obviously "pretends" he is not coming at all (he WILL--to see his family) I will know that he does not

want to risk me in the picture and I
shall make another attempt to ease out.

So, go, go, go, little letter, and
wreak havoc or happiness!

Saturday--May 6, 1961

Last night I went to the school Music Festival with Janie. She called, as she had said she would and, because I wasn't home, just left a message as to when she would pick me up.

I had picked some flowers from the yard--lilies-of-the-valley--having other reasons at the time; then I thought I'd give them to Janie as a gesture of I-don't-quite-know-what. She has no yard in yet, so that was a good excuse. I meant to be very casual about it, so was embarrassed when I spilled the water all over the car. But, to my surprise, she seemed pleased.

She looked quite fetching, as usual, so I was glad to "show her off" by introducing her to N's former boss, whom we ran into just as we got in. (This was the man who has called N "that ornery little wop!" and it rather pleased me to show him what a glamorous gal N's sister is!)

I was a little disappointed when we joined up with an acquaintance of Janie's--I guess I didn't want to share my vicarious thrill, but the woman turned out rather dull and, with growing boredom Janie and I got more relaxed and ended up being very chummy and "en famille". We were leaning on each other and whispering and joking before it was over--a very nice rapport.

We waited for her daughter, whose participation in the Festival was our reason for going, and met some of her acquaintances, and then she let me off at home. The mood was so good I should have liked to

have prolonged it over coffee or something, but the situation was not propitious .

As we got out Janie asked where her flowers were and thanked me. (I had forgotten all about them.) The daughter, whom they call Lilly" seemed very, very thrilled with the flowers. In fact I was certainly surprised at their pleased reaction about them and was glad I'd done it.

Today--Saturday--there was still such a warm glow left that I called Janie and asked her to go out to see my cousin's horse race. She was the only person I could think of to go^{to} use the extra pass ~~whom~~ that I felt would really enjoy it as I wanted to enjoy it. I felt she'd like an excuse to be out in a crowd and show herself off--she seems to enjoy that sort of thing. It was too short notice, as I feared and she couldn't go, but she sounded very regretful and lingered on the phone, telling me again about the flowers and how they enjoyed them. I think she would have liked to talk longer, but I was in a hurry and had to go.

I parted with her with regret Friday night because, again, I can think of no future excuse to contact her again, before her folks come. But that episode and my sending the letter to N left me feeling that if I don't contact either of them again before "The Great ARRival" I had done all I could in the nicest way possible and, if necessary, I can just relax and wait and see what happens. Right now I feel that I can accept it whether N comes to me or not, for in some ways it would be better if he didn't. I hope I can keep this peaceful feeling.

Friday, May 12, 1961

Well, it's been happening again!

The last couple of days things have been "dove-tailing" in the same old way. Every-way I turn something says Sicily, Sicily, Sicily at me. I ha the same old thought-- here we go again, but I sincerely tried to repress it this t me. Such foolishness

Well, willy-nilly, today's quite unforeseen events led me to Janie's. Things just plain worked out in such a way that it was easy for me to take her the clippings on Sicily I had found the last couple of days.

I stopped at her house on an errand in the car and she encouraged me to loiter. We spent most of the time outside watching the men build the swimming pool and talking while Janie watered their new lawn. Both of her kids were home and Lilly hung around me like she has been doing lately.

Janie, a la Chianello, dwelt mostly on herself conversationally, and on her daughter, whom, I am learning is her especial pet.

She spoke of feeling sick lately--vague symptoms which I mentally diagnosed as ne vous tension about the imminence of her long-awaited guests' arrival.

I was waiting for some mention of N to see what action he would be taking after receiving my encouragement to have his tonsils out soon and come up and get in on all the fun. I finally asked her

point blank about N's tonsils. Even so I had a hard time keeping her on the subject. She didn't seem to care much about talking about him.

All she said was that he is having them out the "end of the month (May, that is-- BEFORE June, That was enough. That's all I wanted to know. That is good.) ..under a local...he would let her know more definitely when, where, etc. That was all.

I have been spending quite a bit of time "working over" this N record, until, as before, I am getting quite sick of it. In fact, I have been postphoning things I should do and it is high time I get busy.

I want to give myself a chance to "forget" before N might arrive, in case he doesn't contact me--for, this way, I am too immersed, too expectant.

I don't expect to have much more to record from now on. This is another one of those "ending times" when I see very little hope in the future.

May 16, 1961

I mailed N an encouragement package today.

In it I put an explanatory note in a cheerful tone, saying I had looked for a book to send him to read while he is sick (I wonder if he really is having this tonsil trouble? Anyw ay, I'm sure calling his bluff!) (I didn't look for a book, realizing I'd find nothing he'd like that I could afford). I said since I couldn't find anything I wrote my own. Then I made a short summary of the history of our love, putting in only nice things and skimming over the rest. (It was a compulsion sort of thing that "did" itself and I am suffering great qualms about the wisdom of sending it to him!) Then I enclosed a clipping about someone he used to work for, a silly card about tonsilectomies, and said I wasn't sending his former boss's article about Palermo as I thought Janie intended to send it. (That series of articles on Sicily fits in with my LM period I'm claiming!) and hoped he'd get well soon, etc. No mention of his plans or the family plans, because I don't know at this time what he intends to do. I am "just waiting".

And yesterday I called Janie. To ask her about her verdict on the Palermo article. I don't feel so compelled to write down every little contact with her now, because we are getting so chummy that I feel sure and there is too much detail.

In fact, yesterday I began to wonder if, as I've discovered when I try to be real nice to people, it isn't getting a bit burdensome?!!!

For she kept asking me if I was going to PTA again. And since it is one I don't particularly have any personal reasons for going to, I didn't jump at the chance as I have heretofore, but eased out when she said her husband was going. She seemed a little put out, though she didn't actually invite me to go with her.

She was very chatty and lingering, telling me much about Palermo and Sicily, and her family's trip, and nothing new nor much interest about N.

She expressed again great regret at not being able to go to the races with me. I didn't tell her it wasn't as glamorous an expedition as she seems to think!

Then she practically invited herself to walk over to see me some afternoon, which I tried to encourage. In fact, I am forfeiting things today to be available, but I guess she isn't coming. Hope I didn't hurt her feelings by insisting she call first--so I wouldn't be working or gone. I never warn her !

What did please me was her tiny intimation that there was no rush for me to see the swimming pool as I would undoubtedly see it later--maybe quite a bit! But no definite invitation while her parents or N are there. Perhaps she just meant in the future.

Sunday, May 20, 1961

Nothing to report.

Only that Janie never came to call last week as she said she might.

There were two particular days when I tried to WILL her to come, but it didn't work.

I am hurt and depressed and discouraged.

Monday, May 21, 1961

A beautiful May afternoon and nothing to do and nobody home and I just want to gravitate to Janie on a day like this....

So I phoned her....

.....no answer...
even though my spying from the bus led me to conclude she was home.

Later I made another attempt, expecting nothing, so I was very surprised when she answered immediately. She sounded so GLAD.

She said, "I was just going to call you. But I was waiting till 2. I wasn't sure when you got home." (Of course I've told her at least four times!)

I said, trying hard to be casual, " I

thought you were coming to see me last week..."

And she, excitedly, "I was! I WAS! And do you know what HAPPENED? I got a COLD!" But she felt fine, now, she said, and regretted she couldn't come up right then (I hadn't asked her), but she had some scrubbing to do. I said, "Anytime. Preferably this week before school is out.." And she stared making definite plans to come tomorrow. (I really didn't care WHICH day..)

Then we chatted about trivia for quite awhile. Then she started thinking of things she had to do tomorrow, but assured me, embarrassedly, that anytime I wanted to come see HER....

She had nothing to say about N except she alluded to things she was saving "till he got there"....

I hung up feeling rebuffed and Rejected. Not that she didn't sound glad and eager to come; only that, like N, she always manages to be "sick" or "busy". I rather feel she won't come tomorrow.

Tuesday, May 23, 1961

I was right.

Janie "couldn't" come.

I got all ready for her, regretting that the day was nasty and cold, and that I felt nervous and ill at ease and that mother was home, apt to horn in on us.

The telephone rang--and I knew. "She couldn't make it". A whole lot of new excuses: her husband home, too much trouble to get cleaned up, etc. etc.--easier if I called on her, but she did have things to do---maybe tomorrow... She sounded very embarrassed.

I was surprised at how disappointed, hurt and mad I was. I felt very blue the rest of the day and spent the evening mentally renouncing the whole Chianello tribe and planning not to be home tomorrow.

Then I got to worrying what that might do to all my careful maneuvering and how it MIGHT be possible that she herself might realize how she ties herself down being "too busy" all the time, so I ended up readjusting my plans to give her two more days to show up.

May 24, 1961

Well! I was wrong again!

Janie came to my house today--at last!

I came home feeling very very blue, as I wrote yesterday. It was a lovely, bright day and I knew I had the afternoon to myself, not like yesterday when the weather was bad and Mother was home--but the kind of day I'd wanted Janie to come on---- and she wasn't coming.

So, I decided, in spite of all my resolutions, to use this last chance before school is out to work over my "book" some more. I also wanted to write N a last letter--before I am cut off by the family get-together--and urge him to come again.

So I got out all my stuff, and, while doing so, came across my Italian records. I haven't been playing them because they upset me so, but today I thought I would.

So I played them all and got to crying, and wrote my letter to N, when suddenly the phone rang. It was Janie! She was coming over!

Actually, I thought, it was better than if she had come yesterday, for I was taken unexpectedly--and therefore more at ease.

I scurried around making coffee, regretting I had no goodies to feed her today, getting out the Sicilian articles and planting the records where they could make conversation, and then she came--in the car. (Her "excuse": She had an errand to do!) anyway.)

She pleased me by wanting to go sit in the sun--which I enjoy, and can never get anyone to do--and by being on a fast and not wanting goodies anyway.

We sunbathed and talked ahl by ourselves for a couple of hours. It was very pleasant. I got my drawing things and we drew a visualization of their swimming pool completed, finding a place for N's ceramics, which I had very much wanted to help with.

Her conversation was mostly about things I'd heard over and over before, but I let her ramble on, on the theory that it seems to do people good.

She deliberately started talking about N during a pause and talked a great deal--mostly about his health, which I gathered, has always been quite a problem: pleurisy, two bouts of pneumonia, TB, and since he's been here, a testicle hernia! (N would kill her for telling me that!) She told me all about it completely without embarrassment and looking me straight in the eye. (Another thing I like about my Italians--they are so matter-of-fact about such things! None of this false modesty!)

She spoke of his being here two weeks, though probably not until July, since his tonsilectomy has had to wait on a TB culture test which takes six weeks. The time should be up this week end. She said his health was under control so far, but made it sound as if he weren't feeling well at all, although he's still working. ??

Then she said he must be going to a WOMAN doctor, for he kept calling the doctor "she" and "her" all the time!!! Then went on to explain that this doctor had told him to treat the testicle such and so, which somewhat allayed my mounting suspicions.

Evidently she hasn't heard from him since the last, but Pina has and she is very worried about him.

Janie wants very much for him to stay up here, either in Spokane or Seattle, "where she can take care of him". They will probably work on him about that-- (and undoubtedly make him defiant!) —/ Otherwise she knew nothing new.

Just as she had to go the phone rang and it was a job for me to do that evening.

It couldn't have been better timed! All last week and this I feared I might have to work on a free lance job and spoil any visit with Janie--this worked out perfectly! She waited till I got through and then I rode up as far as the store with her.

It was all very pleasant and just right. I felt good all the rest of the day.

The testicle bit made me feel real good for it put N in an aging, incapacitated category with me! It was reassuring.

* * * *

Later, when mother came back, she made me very mad by prying at me as to how I'd spent the afternoon. I by-passed it once, but she kept at me till I had to tell her. Just as she made me mad yesterday by

insisting on knowing to whom I was talking
when she walked in on my telephone con-
versation with Janie. Just as she made
me VERY mad the day before when I mentioned
that Janie might come over and a mocking
smile appeared on her face. No wonder
I keep this all a secret!

I had to postpone my writing to N until
I got my work done and had to sit up late
to get it done in time for him to get it
Monday as I planned.

In the meantime the new magazine I perused
had three items so apropos that I couldn't
resist fixing them and sending them on to
N.

There were two poems and an article.

All in all, a very nice day. Odd how
they happen after a particularly bad
blue spell of doubt.

Note: Janie appeared with the announce-
ment that she just decided she should
make an effort to get out--so she did!
It works! It works! This technique of
letting someone listen to themselves!

May 25, 1961

Today--with the usual doubt---I mailed
N the letter and clippings.

The letter started out:

"Here is some more silliness to entertain
you in case you are still sick--
(Then poem #1) which spoke of waking in
the night feeling upset about a loved one and
ending--"Are you well?"

Then a report of seeing Ralph and his wonder-
ing if N were mad at him since he never
answered his letter.

Then a paragraph asking about his health--
assuring him that "everything would be ALL
RIGHT; that I was praying for him and
loving him--if that helped".

Then a paragraph telling of my vacation
dates.

Then poem #2 which started out saying,
"They say young love is best, but I dis-
agree---(older) love has depths the young
don't fathom".

Closing with "How do you like all this
junk in your mailbox? Much love--

believe me, Lorna

Spero di riverla presto.----?

(I hope to see you soon---?)

Then the article in rather a facetious tone
about bachelor life through which I under-
lined pertinent parts.

The letter was hard to write. I had no emotional base for it. I planned it as one of my carefully timed "therapeutic" missiles, and doubt if I'd have had the courage to send it if said magazine hadn't been full of admonitions that love is GIVING, not GETTING. (Heavens! if I were only interested in GETTING I would long since have given up on N!)

I timed it for him to get Monday because I figured if he were going to be an invalid he'd choose the time over the holiday. Besides he'd told Janie he'd have the operation "near the end of the month" and she said his test would be in by then. He would choose this particular week end because he would save himself a loss in pay by using the holiday and he'd save his pride by being "busy" over what might well be a very lonely holiday.

Besides it wouldn't surprise me if he left. *See diary*
~~The letter was intended to do these things:~~

- Encourage him again to come and see me (for it is going to take an exceptional amount of encouraging to get him to! A "last chance" for this I figure, for I expect to lose contact with Janie after her company comes.)
- Reassure him if he's sick and bolster him up to prevent one of his dangerous depressions.
- The Ralph bit to try to foster a little more outgoing effort on his part--a bit of reassurance that he's thought of--and establishment of an "excuse" to get out while he's home.
- The vacation dates were a tricky bit

I wasn't too sure if I should put in. It was meant to keep him from coming on those dates because it would be easier for me to make rendezvous if I have a work excuse to get me out.

But I risk his interpreting it just the opposite, thinking I would rather have him come when I am "free"..

I risk the possibility of his possible desire to AVOID me (WHY does he consistently procrastinate on coming back up?) and deliberately coming on those dates when I might be gone.

Or "unconsciously" choosing those dates because of his neurotic self-destructiveness...

or because, as I have observed with him and Janie, he'll "forget" because of an emotional barrier~~d~~ that kept him from absorbing the information correctly.

. the sickness reassurance is necessary at this time--whether true or not (I sometimes think it a mask: why didn't he get treatment way back in October when he claimed to be so sick?)--because I have to "go along with the act". I aimed at a tone of loving reassurance to combat what I suspect is a barrage of nagging bossiness from his sisters.

. the bachelor article~~d~~, altho risky in its tone of cynicism and loneliness and implicatins of you-should-get-married--is intended to show him that he is not alone, nor abnormal, nor missing anything.

Thursday, May 25, 1961

Nothing to report from a couple of telephone chats with Janie--just her usual trivia--nothing about N.

I called her both times. The first time I MADE an aerrand take me by her house, and, being a little drunk from some wine I'd had, called her to ask about something new I'd seen in the yard.

She was very receptive and chatty, and thanked me for calling, so I was glad I had, instead of embarrassed. But established nothing for the future.

The second time I called about a tragic drwning across the street from them. Again she was talkative and riendly. But again, nothing to go on. In fact my hopes of a couple little imminent contacts in the near future were destroyed. Nothing important.

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In fact, this is one of the times when only coincidence, or "luck", will bring us together again. Our paths part again, and I can only hope and wonder--it may be until next fall.

I spent some time imagining exactly what I wished would happen and exactly what probably will happen, and, although cold facts sobered me up somewhat and even made me feel somewhat indifferent, it also took all the joy out of my life.

In my preview I realized that I wanted:
N to write to me--in Italian--and let me
know his plans and reassure me--

and say he wasn't going back--
him to come to me immediately and take
me in his arms and tell me how he's missed
me---

and see me every day he's here under the
most favorable circumstances--
and maybe even want me to meet his family
and have it work out all right--

and get a job in Seattle and see me
enough to satisfy us so that we'd gradually
grow apart and into new friends and
interests--all easy and comfortable and
forever friendly!

In short, I want another happy summer
love.

But--

I realized these things could not possibly
be; that I would be lucky if he appeared
at all, if he sustained a visit or two;
that he would most assuredly be scared,
nervous, hurried, embarrassed, secretive,
undependable, clumsy and exasperating.
That he would hurt me a great deal whether
he saw me or not.

So--
It was a comfort when chance brought a
book to me that I could have written
myself, from which I took these pertinent notes:

Notes from book:

Anyone who is lonely may come to me. Old or young. Good or bad. Anyone, good or bad.....I'll pay for it. I don't mind paying. He can still come to see me if he's lonely. I'll give him my time. He can have it.

I look up into those eyes--and stay in them for once.....Eyes obliterate trivialities like age.

Here is no grand soul, grand enough to leap the age barrier. As the age barrier can be leapt, since there is no age to the spirit.

Secretly and poetically I count one more pure moment of fulfillment to my store.

I collect all the courage I can to say something. Something that could well turn his inclination towards me away from me forever----"I want--to be your home"--you will not even know what I have said for about two years--I want you to come to me in thought. I want you, whenever the occasion arises, to know that there is one person who understands you; to whom you may speak at any time in any circumstances"--And though I am old and cold and tired, I repeat, "At any time and in any circumstances."
--Silence, full of thinking.---"I am a hostess. And until you yourself choose to go, even though every bone in my body breaks separately,---I remain so."

...and feel just about everything around me all the time whether I want to or not. So I blindly and hurriedly and without

counting the cost run over-----with the result that we both cheer up.

HE CAN BEAR TO DIE: HE WHO HAS ONCE BEEN HAPPY.

---I waited, my cheek against the floor.

--And whatever the past has or has not taught me I am satisfied that communication on any level---is the most life can be.

---the idea that happiness hangs on one thin veto; all positive joy on one negative.

Balzac said there was nothing so beautiful as the first love of a man with the last love of a woman. (Balzac was 20, his mistress 45 and they remained devoted for 15 years.)

June 1961

Today I made another impulsive call on Janie pretending to myself that I was curious about the progress of the swimming pool.

In spite of the cleaning job she was doing she looked very well groomed and I realized that my long maneuvering to park must have warned her. It also might have accounted for her seeming lack of surprise.

She seemed pleased and was very insistent that I stay. Right away she launched into a long speculative complaint about not hearing from N even during these crucial family happenings. When the mail came she lamented again that there was still no letter from him. We chatted about an hour and I left.

She claimed no one had heard from him since his mention of the imminent tonsillectomy and there was a great deal of worry about him. She insisted that he'd let them know if he had the operation and that he wouldn't plan to surprise them. I could think of nothing but very depressing reasons including his just plain lying, so I only laughed and said, "You'll probably get a letter Wednesday". She looked at me strangely. But, somehow, I think she WILL!

I came home and wrote N a letter to "let him off the hook" suddenly realizing that perhaps I was scaring him off instead of luring him. But then I realized there wasn't time to risk sending it if he did come, so I didn't send it. And I ended up being very suspicious and mad at him.

There were only a few days left until Janie's parents were to arrive and I was desperately trying to keep in contact, so in a few days I phoned her and invited her to lunch with me the day before they were to come when I knew she'd be in the store having her hair done.

She refused, giving me a list of minor last-minute chores as her reason. I was hurt and disappointed at the loss of my last chance.

When she mentioned, not very eagerly, that "I should come and meet her parents" I invited her to bring them to my house sometime, which she rejected, saying they would be much too busy--lots of parties, etc.

Hurt again, I said something about not seeing her till after their departure, at which she said, "Of course I'd see her--six months!--I'd see her before THEN--she'd be in the store shopping or something!" At this subtle brush-off I murmured something about coming into the office if she were ever down, which I know she wouldn't do. Then I said I'd be scared to come and meet her parents--that N would be mad. She said that was "silly--it was none of his business--she could do as she pleased with HER friends--I could come when N was not there if I was scared.."

Alarmed, I said I wanted to see N, but wouldn't phone--HOPED he'd come to see me but he won't--" She said, larely,

that maybe she would suggest it and I said even more lamely, "Well--we'll see---". Silence. Then she told me about the newspaper calling ~~and~~ wanting an article about her parents' arrival. I mentioned that I had mentioned same at the paper when I was over there, not telling her ALL I'd said to them. But she said they'd been alerted through the Travel Bureau. I made a mental note to watch for the article.

And, she said, she'd had a letter from N-- (at last!)--saying he'd come ~~While~~ his parents were there, but he couldn't make it by the time of their arrival--and then she launched into the long list of his "reasons" and explanations of his silence:

He has been sick a lot and feeling so bad he had to stay home from work off and on. He had an ear infection and a burst ear drum which will have to be operated on after his tonsilectomy has healed. He still has not heard from his TB test, which takes six weeks, and it has now been nine weeks and he is very worried. He had had a complete physical and will know the results in a few days. When he has his tonsils out, they will also fix up anything else that is wrong. He should have his tonsils out in about three weeks--by a specialist at a hospital. So ~~he~~ is waiting for the results of the TB test, the physical, and the report as to when to go to the hospital.

All this, he explained, will be a great financial drain on him beside the cost of his trip and his share of the parent's trip

He is very lonesome and despondent. He has a gun--a "shotgun", Janie said, and when I questioned it, she said, "maybe a pistol"--which he had bought from Hal Eland when he bought his TV set and he goes out target shooting sometimes. (This impressed me as very out of character!)

Yes, he is still at the Wolfey Co. He is now working with a crew putting out a monthly magazine. They are always busiest around the first of the month so he can't come now. He is afraid he'd lose his job if he took two weeks. Besides he needs one week for his tonsilectomy. (When I asked about his unused and accumulated vacations and sick leave, Janie said he'd probably used them being sick.)

He still has that "wonderful job" awaiting him. They are still building the building--will probably be through in July--or August--or September. He has given up the idea of free lancing because Wolff Co. is so busy they have promised him extra work after he gets the new job, so, with two jobs and the apartment to keep clean, he won't have time. Nor is he studying or going to school now.

He will probably come for one week around July 11 (his birthday)--leaving probably on a Friday, Janie said. He said he'd be here to see his nephew before he went to camp on the 20th. He will drive his car to the airport--35 miles from his apartment--and leave it there with some friends (??) and fly up on the plane and the family can meet him here at the airport.

At my "joking" suggestion that he might be married Janie said he COULDN'T be, for he would have had help cleaning up the

apartment and help when he was sick. Besides, he wouldn't be blue if he had a girl friend. I agreed.

After I hung up I ran and wrote all this down from the notes I had taken while she talked so I would have it exactly. Janie's report was much more incoherent and mixed up than this. I had a hard time straightening it all out.

I spent the whole evening doing this and checking back through my notes and figuring and became more and more confused and angry as I found all the discrepancies that I had suspected as she talked to me.

As the realization dawned on me how inconsistently N was forever procrastinating, how little encouragement either he or Janie were giving me I became more and more distraught and angry.

It was no use! No use at all--all my endless waiting and preparation! If he wouldn't come even to see his parents--! My time was getting short--I was already over my age limit! This was IT! This was the end! O, how I hated them both! I vowed I would never have anything more to do with either of them!

I was crazy with mixed up emotions. I brooded on how everything else was going wrong, too. While I was fighting this terrible mood, mother came in bringing me a newspaper clipping. "Here's the story about your in-laws," she said with her usual cruel "humor". How I hated her!

I called Janie about the picture, thinking it would be expected of me. She was very dull.

Outside a storm was breaking. And a storm was in my heart. I hated. I was bitter, bitter. The rain started. The wind blew. It stormed.

I got some beer and got myself drunk while I wrote and wrote. Because I had heard of two suicides recently and because N is psychotic to the point of suicide and because Janie had told me about his having a gun and because I was getting drunk, I became convinced that N was about to commit suicide. I was more than convinced; I was POSITIVE-- I had a "feeling".

Then an uncontrollable fit of weeping seized me, but I had no privacy to weep.

Then came another uncontrollable urge to tell it ALL to someone--all that damned up three years secret--now that I had nothing more to lose--nothing to look forward to.

I called a confidante friend, but she was busy. By the time I saw her, the mood had passed--yet being already committed to some confidence I told her only parts and bits--making it a silly little tale--and leaving me still burdened with my great secret--

O Nick! Nick! Nick! This time I shall not say I renounce you--for now I have no choice.

June 6

About People -- And Places

Mr. and Mrs. Giuseppe Chianello of Palermo, Sicily, will arrive early Thursday for a visit with their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Esgate, 4111 W. Chestnut, and grandchildren, Lillian, 15, and Denty, 13. The Chianellos arrived in New York in late May, will visit a daughter in Spokane and a son in Los Angeles during their six-month stay in the United States—the first trip for Mrs. Chianello, second for her husband. The couple will celebrate their 41st wedding anniversary in Yakima, June 20, and the Esgates already are planning for the occasion.

June 6, 1961

Next morning.

I feel terrible. I spent a very bad night, ending up making sincere vows to end all further association with N, Janie and their family.

Yet, later this morning, here I am-- again involved in Chianello services; scurrying hither and yon clipping articles about Sicily, collecting copies of Janie's publicity for her, mailing the news ~~pic-
ture~~ ^{clipping} to N without comment. For I hoped seeing it would make him want to come up.

I even planned to use my influence at the newspaper to get them to do another story with a picture. When I acted on this I found they were already planning on doing so! This excited me with its possibilities for another contact by taking tearsheets to them later.

Then I remembered in a vague way that Janie had asked me to come swim in their pool when I'd talked to her--had she? THAT I don't want to do! I don't want HER to see my aging body! My chances are slim enough already! (And I am not!)

The next day I started out the door to take the papers to Janie just as one of our recent sudden downpours started. And I approached the house a dump truck blocked the driveway so I was forced to return to my original intention to go formally to the front door this time.

Guess what Janie was doing! Wshing the floor again! (How house proud is this little immigrant girl!)

She acted really glad to see me and ruined all my good intentions about not staying long by empahtically insisting that I had time for acup of coffee--to which I gave in--as usual. She staid she'd almost called me this morning--(well?)--I think she said to ask me to get the papers for her--so--I felt justified.

When she disappeared for a moment I took a quick, heart-redding look at N's picture on the chimney. It hurt to see him.

We began to discuss the newspaper picture-taking plans and then she told me local Italians she doesn't even know had called to ask if they could come talk to her parents. In spite of her deprecatory gestures I could see she was pleased. How I wished I could enter into those experiences!

I felt compelled to say, ins spite of its false note, that I wished that had happened while N was here, so he could have met families who might have girls, etc. etc. During this conversation she said that "the girls they knew were too old for N"--(she always seems to think of him as a mere lad!)--that

Italian men like YOUNG women; they don't like OLDER ones! (What a foolish statement I thought; Italian men like WOMEN, period!)- --that her mother is TEN YEARS younger than her father. (This was the type of remark that so often disillusioned me about my Chianellos! For I happen to know that her father married Janie's mother as a convenient replacement for his first wife, who was her older sister! I thought this a very cruel--or very revealing--remark. Janie! Janie! how could you?)

She was using me as a sounding board again--rattling on without giving me a chance to say anything--and I had to break away and get to an appointment.

There was no future commitment made, I noticed, though I urged her to come into the office to see me if she were down as I dashed through the rain to the car---

June 7, 1961

This is THE day---for Janie!

For me--it is D day--as we used to say during the war.

My prayers last night do not sustain me this morning. I feel unutterably woe-begone. Why? I ask myself. Because, I remember, N must be sad today, too? How hard it must be for him way down there on this day of days for his family!

Janie's cutting comment yesterday pervades me, in spite of my knowledge that she had done this to me before--that HER twisted viewpoint on N's romantic life has nothing to do with the facts--or with N and me.

And N's "reflection" of me pervades me--the impossibility of it all and of him. Also in spite of my knowledge of his power to hurt, his desire to hurt; his inconsistency in his "planning" and what he claims he is going to do.

* * * * *

This day started out with circumstances that depressed me in their lack of chances of contact with Janie on this "exciting" day. But this forenoon, everything has changed--little things. Such as--I have been postphoning having my haircut. Why not do it today while I am alone in the office; why not "hppen" to be in the beauty parlor while Janie is there? (But I flubbed it, I missed it by half an hour.)

And an incident about someone going through the glass door. Janie has a glass door at her house that the kids broke. I resisted the temptation to bring that into the conversation. The girl cutting my hair declares she has to have her tonsils out and much conversation about same.

Again, I resist the opportunity to bring Janie and N into the conversation for fear Janie might be somewhere in a nearby booth, but am finally "forced" to mention it....silly little things...

* * * * *

I am obsessed with a desire to watch the family reunion at the train. Why I don't know. But, of course I can't "happen" to be at the train at 3 o'clock in the morning!

Afternoon--

I was kept overtime at work and, for once, was glad because I am so miserable at home these days. Janie never showed up.

I came home to roam the house disconsolately--unable to settle to do anything. I was just about to go on an errand in the car when the phone rang. Expecting it to be my daughter, who was already late, I answered rather coldly.

It was only when this strangely familiar voice chattering away said, "This is Janie" that I realized. Somehow, then, it seemed very right; somehow I seemed to have expected it.

She launched into an apology about not coming to see me at the store. This was so utterly unprecedented and I was so surprised that for a minute I couldn't think. Then I hastily reassured her, trying to make my voice as pleasant and warm as possible to make up for my curt beginning.

She then said, "I wonder if you'd do me a favor?" And, hardly pausing long enough for me to say as eagerly as I could to encourage this fantastic new thing that "I'd be glad to!" she started asking me if I'd phone "my friend" at the newspaper and ask her if she'd change the time for the picture taking. I agreed, pleased to have her ask me and to get in on things and know definitely about the picture taking time.

Then we chatted about the pool and she told me how Harry had rejected the idea of using N's ceramic in the design--a pet project of hers and mine--and substituted one of his own. I was very disappointed--and so was she. I KNEW that's what would happen!

Promising to call her back about the picture I then called Velma. Getting it settled I tried to call Janie back, but she was gone.

I proceeded then on my errand coming back by way of Janie's to see if her car were back yet. It wasn't, but Harry was conversing with some man within speaking distance of me, so I leaned out and kidded him and he invited me into to see the fish design he had used to replace N's, acting very proud.

During our chat I told him about the accident to our glass door at the store, because they also have glass doors in the new house. I was just about to leave when Janie returned and I had to move the car to let her in. This gave me a chance to talk to her from the car, which I preferred, as it eliminated Harry from the conversation, and Janie would be apt to be more confidential. However, Lilly came and chatted with us, so I kept the talk to another relating of the glass door story, and we had a fun conversation, though I was surprised at how fussed and nervous I got telling her about the picture arrangement.

I expected Janie to be in a great rush, but she didn't seem to be, and when she suddenly decided to "go see the fish" I had a feeling she expected me to come, too.

Just before she left I felt a strong, strong feeling between us of not wanting to part--a tragic feeling. I felt as if she were silently saying to me, "Don't go away--stay here with me". I felt very much as if she didn't WANT me to go. Yet she said nothing, so, with a wrench, I tore myself away.

As I drove off, I glanced back to see her disappearing up the driveway and I thought, "arrivederci---arrivederci---" for I knew not when I'd see them again-----

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That night Italy and Sicily, even, were in the paper, and a new magazine was lying on the table as I came in. Perusing it as I am wont to do these days to find some references to the only thing that interests me--Italy--I found nothing. Disappointed and despondent, I closed the magazine, idly staring at the cover. As if someone had changed slides in a viewer I saw beneath my hand that the cover was a painting of a piazza in Venice. I hadn't noticed before.

That night--

I leap out of bed to record a most startling thought I just had---!

Maybe that strange, tragic feeling I had with Janie this afternoon was because she'd heard from N and knew he was coming to be at the Great Event--and he'd told her not to tell me....!!!!

Well.....at least I'd know when the picture came out in the paper----

* * * *

Next day--

(The Chianellos arrived last night.)

And I had a strange experience:

I was thinking of N when I started to lose consciousness and go to sleep. Suddenly I was jolted awake by a complete picture of a man seated on something. He leaned over and laid his head on his hand, his elbow on the arm of the seat, bringing his feet up on the seat at the same time. His eyes were closed and there was an expression of pain fleeting across his face. He was fully dressed in a dark blue sport coat and gray slacks. The picture flashed off as suddenly as it came.

But it was accompanied by a violent sensation like a door slamming inside me-- or like a strong electric shock. Though I've "seen pictures" before I go to sleep before, THIS has never happened! It jolted me completely awake with a very

clear impression of the whole thing.
Like this:

As the picture flashed before me I looked at it--as at a movie, and thought, that is a small, dark man--he looks foreign. Then, in a sensation of need of great haste, I recognized it as N and called out to him in frantic, urgent desperation, trying to attract his attention before he disappeared, "Nick! Nick!" But he was gone.

That was all. It left me badly shaken, and greatly puzzled.

Trying to account for it, I felt, rather than thought, that means I have SEEN him at this instant--he is on a plane, coming up here--but he feels sick--No, not a plane--that is not a PLANE seat--a bus?--no, not a bus seat, either--a train?--Yes, it was like a train seat--but, no--I KNEW when I saw it it was a DAVENPORT--a brown one--near a window--and he was alone--the clothes were not quite the type of thing N would wear--yet I KNEW it was N--(and I drew a picture of it all--it was that clear--)

This morning I realized that the seat he was on was like the one in his apartment the last time I was there--and that my boss was dressed as that figure was dressed today!)

It stays with me--it haunts me today--that "electric" vision--It was a shocking experience.

(And it was even more shocking later to have Janie tell me that N had had his tonsils out and had come home that day!)

I willed myself--just for fun--to wake up when the Chianello's train came in--and I did----

The next day---

It seems strange to me that all this should end so neatly on June seventh, the second anniversary of the day N left here, saying he'd stay in Los Angeles two years.

Today ends one episode and begins another-- one of frustration and disappointment, for, among other things, the bus route changes today and will no longer go by Janie's house. This ~~was~~ spoils my hopes of spying on them this summer to see if I could see any signs of N being there. And other possibilities I had counted on have fallen through, too. And so, N, if you want to hide from me, you have a very good chance!

So I took my last bus ride around the loop today with a great wrench of my insides. I tried desperately to see all I could, gain all the clues I could to last me. It seemed a lucky little twist to me that the bus stopped at the two best vantage points today, something it did not usually do.

But I could see nothing but a new, very puzzling arrangement of cars around the house. This cost me many moments of worry later in the day. And I saw that the swimming pool wall is now up cutting off all view of the patio and any activity there. My walled-in Chianellos are literally walled in now!

And so again I find myself wanting to stay at work instead of coming home, just as I did after N's leaving when it hurt so to be home and free to think.

June 12

I faced this day with the anticipation of seeing the Chianello picture in the paper tonight. Then I'd know if N had come!

Having seen the parents in N's movies he showed us I had formed a mental picture of what I expected to see, based on Janie's remarks:

It would show father, small and dark, gray at the temples, holding his ship model with a glowing, happy smile, proud and eager. Mother would be dumpy, dark, rather frowsy, but jolly and Pina, as I remembered her from one encounter, shy, small, plain. Janie glamorous, beautiful, glowing.

So. I happened to be at mother's when she got the paper and started to read it. I peeked over her shoulder and--sure enough!--there it was! Then, taking a longer look, I was horribly disappointed. (See picture) No Pina. No ship. (And no N!) Father OLD, beat, grim and mean-looking; mother all shallow frippery, tho nice-looking; Janie surprisingly matronly looking. Here were just some ordinary, dull, real people. I can't account for the depression it gave me.

I returned to my chores, no longer excited about my intention to get copies and take to them tomorrow.

Then, feeling I'd established a precedent, I felt I'd better call Janie. But I had to force myself to do it. I phrased my words ahead of time, hoping I could sound interested, because I wasn't.

When Janie came to the phone she sounded tense and dull--she didn't recognize me at first. They hadn't seen the picture--she had them run and get it--there was a chattering of Italian and cross, mixed-up conversations. Gradually she seemed to get more relaxed and eagerly hoped I'd get the copies and urged me to bring them--come anytime--whenever I felt like it, she said. She was accomodating and anxious to please.

We chatted about her parent's trip and she said she wanted me to see her father's handiwork. Then she said, "OH, I got news from that brother of mine!" I pretended not to have heard and asked her to repeat to give myself time to collect myself for whatever was coming.

"He had his operation!--Tuesday--in the hospital--local anesthesia--home Thursday--going to come up as soon as he ~~felt~~ like it. Yes, his physical showed everything fine, just fine--" (It WAS psychosomatic!)

I expressed my joy and relief and she explained her routine tomorrow, putting me off till after 3:30--then deciding maybe I'd better call first. I tried not to feel hurt.

Anyway, by the time I got through talking I felt excited again--a scared little thrill at the prospects of tomorrow. (And weariness at the thought of the work and diplomacy I'd have to use to get the photos.)

Mother now showed great interest in my "foreign friends" whereas she'd always ridiculed them before. But now they

were "somebody", they were in the SOCIETY column--"They looked like nice people--was I going to get to meet them?" she asked. I told her all that Janie had said (excluding the N bit) and it was such a relief to discuss my vicarious little thrills openly!

On the phone Janie had expressed chagrin at N's "backtracking"--as she called it--and I began to think maybe the responsibility of when he comes does rest on my reactions one way or another--good or bad. And I supposed I'd have to write him again, though this time the whole idea began to impress me as somewhat burdensome.

I had a hard time finding the time and privacy to get it done. However, I got out the following letter, enclosed the picture and figured that even if he should come next week end he'd still get it if I sent it tomorrow airmail.

And I began to think how hard it was going to be to work in my offer to him in what promised to be a very hectic summer and began to feel some compensation of relief if he didn't take me up on it.

Also I found myself overjoyed at the news of the tonsil operation, thinking that perhaps my trick of making him homesick by sending the clipping had worked.

+ he'd made decision,

Incidentally, Janie said Pina had had to leave before the picture taking.



REUNION IN YAKIMA—Mr. and Mrs. Giuseppe Chianello, left, of Palermo, Sicily, are visiting their daughter, Mrs. Harry Esgate, 3409 W. Walnut. Their granddaughter, Lillian, is holding a doll she received from her grandparents when she visited them six years ago. She has replaced the doll's original Italian style dress with American type clothes.

June 12, 1961

Dear N,

I write this hoping you will still be there to get it for I don't know what you are going to do--

But I HAD to tell you how happy I am , how relieved I am--(etc.)--about your operation and health--(etc.)---

Now--

In spite of my private hopes and dreams I sometimes wonder if your indecision about coming up may be MY fault--so I think maybe I'd better explain, so you will know what to expect of me.

I don't intend to "chase" you if you come up. I won't call you at Janie's--(etc.)--It is your family and I don't want to embarrass you or make trouble or anything. I will stay home and "mind my own business" and leave it up to YOU--So, if you don't want to see me--(etc.)---then you can have your visit--(etc.)--and it would mean to me that you'd rather I'd leave you alone--and so I probably wouldn't bother you anymore. I don't deny this would hurt me a great deal--but it wouldn't make me hate you--I'd always be interested in what happened to you---

On the other hand I hope so much as I've told you all this time that you DO want to see me--that what I offer you--all my love in the best way I can give it to you--no matter what happens or has to be--will interest you enough for you to try to let me know you're here, try to see me--or, if EVERYTHING goes wrong--leave me a message somehow that you WANTED to anyway.

Just how we could work this out I don't know right now. Things change from day to day and I can't tell yet.

(Many suggestions for ways of seeing me here.)

There is only one other possibility: I have established myself, I think, as a "family friend"--someone who worked with you and with Janie, etc.--visit each other in presence of families, etc. This I wouldn't like so much as seeing you alone, but it would be better than nothing--etc.--and, if you want it that way--then that's the way it shall be.

I enclose pictures, etc....

And so--I can't very well write again--because I don't know if you'll be there. Perhaps I shouldn't have written THIS?

But, whatever you do or whatever happens, Nick, I shall never forget--you are a nice part of my life---

For the last time---

Will you come? please?

Love you always,

Lorna

June 13,

Today was a wonderful day! I was HAPPY!

It was the day I was to get the newspaper picture and take it to Janie and MEET HER FOLKS. I was thinking last night at the strange ways of fate--how two years ago I wrote "la lettera" to N's parents in Palermo and how I suffered and worried and imagined how I would never dare meet them after that--how fantastic it would ever be if I ever did!--how "la lettera" would hang over us--come between us. Now, today, I was to MEET THEM and it seemed inconsequential and quite normal. A dream come true, for Heaven's sakes!

I prepared most carefully--silly little things like cutting down on my smoking so I'd be calm--and for the same reason taking just a PIECE of a tranquilizing pill--not too much, not too little; preparing one of my "man-catcher" outfits to wear for the father (and it worked! I could tell)--carefully figuring my timing in order to mail the letter to N (secretly); order the tear sheets (unobtrusively); get the picture (casually); arrive home late so I wouldn't have too much time to work myself into a state waiting to go to Janie's after 3:30, and so on.

And it all worked out beautifully--in fact, better than I could have planned. My sortie to the newspaper turned out to be a very rewarding, exciting renewal of former contacts, wThey all made me feel very good and t ey all reacted to my Chianello cont ct in very satisfying ways.

One reporter was even jealous that SHE hadn't gotten the story and wants to do a follow-up on it. The photographer spoke glowingly of the Chianellos, abating my fears somewhat.

Things worked out well when I got home, tho I had a bad half hour when I couldn't get Janie--first she was gone and then the line was busy. Also I inadvertently spilled coffee on the hard-won photo I was so carefully guarding, staining and curling it.

However, as it got to be after four o'clock, I began to fear it would be too late, so I took my things and left anyway.

I was glad and releived to see the car in the driveway.

Janie had to come out and move hers to let me park, for which I was thankful, as it postphoned the meeting with her father whom I could see setting on the patio. For, by t is time, I had such a bad case of stage fright I was almost sick; almost ready to flee and forget the whole thing. But I was sustained by the success of the morning's contacts and by the outcome of past experiences.

Janie looked unkempt, frantic and beset and admitted as much. The place was a mess with many familial activities going on at once--swimming, ironing, etc.

She took me right to her father and it was all over before I knew hwat had happened. He came at me like a homing pigeon and we clasped hands heartily.

I heard myself saying, "How do you do?" in spite of all my hasty perusal of Italian before I came. And Janie saying to him "Come sta?" and I repeating, laughing, "Come sta?"

My fears of a cold, overbearing sort of person like Mr. Pellegrini, were allayed, for her was startlingly little and shriveled and old and white-haired and toothless,, but withal wiry and vital, with snapping black eyes set in rather an oriental way and reminiscent of N's in a lesser, rheumier way.

The mother was not to be seen and I was alarmed for fear I wouldn't get to see her. It was all confusion and nervousness and chaos. Immediately, father's handiwork was brought to my attention and a confusing ineptness of communication began.

Janie suddenly drew her mother out of an adjoining room (I think) and, after a hasty, embarrassed introduction, mother fled to the ironing board and busied herself unobtrusively while Janie and father took the limelight (and I!). I reverted to my original conception in spite of the picture. Here was a meek, retiring soul, gentle and wistful, dressed unstylishly in some sort of housedress, with her hair in curlers covered with bandana. The eyes were the outstanding feature--gentle, round and wide with an oddly unclear, opaque cafe-au-lait color.

Gradually the confusion settled somewhat and Janie ceased her endless fussing over lemonade no one wanted.

I then launched into my report of the glowing compliments I had collected about them that morning. The mother came and sat cosily beside, me, the father hovering restlessly somewhere behind me. I tried to get used to the strange, new experience of talking via interpreter.

Conversation was difficult, as I imagine is usual--It stayed on superficial amenities until I instigated my preconceived plan to win over papa--a difficult soul from reports--and began to ask about his handiwork. This brought on a great display. He came forward then, and, acting like N used to, brought all his treasures to me, ran and got his templates (I was temporarily alarmed when he dashed out of the room like N used to, thinking I'd alienated him). sat himself down close beside me and, our arms brushing, showed me this and that and the other detail, while I overworked my "bellissima" and "bellissimo"s--and producing an amused smile when I said "e carina" about the miniature furniture.

He was so much like N showing off to me that I began to feel quite at ease with him and sure of how to handle him, even quietly sustaining him when the women began to ignore him in Boredom as he went on muttering to himself.

The work was really exquisitely done, though with that same puzzling mixture of really good and really bad art that I've noticed in Italian art before.

The women began to talk of family resemblances, stressing the blonde strain in their family, and father dropped out.

Then I was free to note that mother looked at me in that same warm, animal-like (dare I say it?) adoration that I've seen in Janie's daughter's eyes so often when looking at me. (Why? What have I done? Surely my ulterior motives are only too obvious?) Anyway, I definitely felt I was a success. No one seemed to want me to go. In fact they urged me to draw up to the kitchen counter and stay when Janie started to get dinner. The mother pressed a chair and peanuts on me; the father arrayed himself on the other side of me where I felt him watching me.

Mother and I began to get through to each other with jerky mixtures of Italian and English words. Father kept me busy admiring his mustache when I noticed it and suddenly (like N!) produced a handsome, dark picture of himself for me to admire.

It was all great, great fun until Harry appeared home from work and the atmosphere changed. Here was the man of the house to demand his dinner; here was Father, scolding the kids; here was the son-in-law sparring with his father-in-law; here was a fellow American disgusted at my "Italainating"!

I announced I had to leave and they gathered round (Harry was busy with a visitor) I sensed the reluctant "che sara, sara" of parting with them. I did not want to go, and at no time did I sense any pressure on me to go.

They escorted me out, father walking with me, and I found myself saying, "Arrivederla" to him and he delightedly, glow-

ingly answering me " Arrivederla!"
(I was surprised at myself!)

Then I turned to make my adieus (addios?) to the mother, saw myself lay my hand on her round, little shoulder (a habit I have lately noticed in myself) and spoke to her without realizing that I spoke in English, while Janie spoke the Italian along with me. Somehow by that time it didn't seem necessary--we seemed to understand each other.

Janie and mother retired into the house, but father stood on, watching me back out. Not sure, I waved--and he waved back.

I came home drunk with enjoyment. What a wonderful day I'd had!

Now it is late and I am tired, but I have a few more things to get down.

At one point Janie told me--though I'd rather not have known--that N doesn't think he wants to come up--that his folks should come down there--(Damn him!)--but she "wasn't going to stand for that." In disgust, she said he said he'd "come up when he feels better" and went on to say that what would probably happen is that he'd fly up for a few days here and then they'd all go to Spokane and N would leave from there--(Damn! Damn! Damn!)--no inclusion of me--no recognition of how much I want to see N--and evidently no hint from him that he'd like to see me! N is being so difficult that I'm almost ready to leave him out, for I enjoy his family almost as much--

They certainly treat me a lot better!
I felt definitely accepted, liked,
wanted today. I don't know what there
is about Italians that attracts me so--
they seem so RECEPTIVE--a look a gesture,
and we understand each other--I am not
conscious of that with my own people.
Perhaps I do not seek it--look for it.

Anyway, Janie's parting words were full
of genuine affection; mother LIKED me, I
could tell; and, if I may say so, I made
a big hit with father. He hovered, he at-
tended, he boasted, he sought my approval,
he joked with me. I even noticed once
his pants were very full--but surely THAT
could not be!

At one point, he offered me one of his
cigarettes. I refused. He pressed me,
challengingly, with a twinkle in his eye.
I thought, "Oh, no, boy! In spite of all
your charm, you do not approve. I know.
I've heard. You're testing me". So I
said, shaking my head, "No, I try not to
smoke" (mostly true). Janie translated--
correctly, I hope. All I caught was
"fumare". (How embarrassed I was after I
got home and discovered my hands were
covered with nicotine stains!)

Just before we left Janie said that they
could stay a whole year and may do so. I
told her to ask her mother if she wanted
to and, at this, her mother made quite a
long speech to me which Janie translated
as saying that "Yes, she would like to
stay--After all, this was IT. When she
got home, there would BE NO MORE..."
Signora, I agree. I agree.

Next day:

What IS this? For that last remark was another farewell to the Chianello family. Each episode seems to me to be the last; there seems to be no link to the future and I resign myself to giving them up, especially as my personal life is fraught with terrible, terrible difficulties right now.

After an exhausting emotional evening at home last night I was unable to summon my usual excitement at being assigned a very clever group of Italian miniatures to draw today. I should have liked to share them with Janie; they would have been useful in my ego-bolstering campaign, but I was unable to under the circumstances.

So I want on to the next assignment. Here I ran into difficulties; I needed a model for a miniature drawing of a patio and swimming pool. Well!--why not JANIE'S?

By the time I finished it I was alone in the office and the temptation and the coincidence were too much for me. I called her to tell her--just for fun. We had a jolly chat. She said she was coming in to the store to shop this week, intimating that she'd see me then and then urged me to come swimming in her pool. How I hoped she wouldn't press the matter, for it would be even worse to expose myself before her family! But she did--she was very insistent--and I was very tempted, for I loved to swim. When I demurred, joking that it would have to be in the dark without an audience I sensed that she was hurt. I decided to myself that when I was sure N wasn't coming or had come and gone, then I would succumb, for then it wouldn't matter.

So ended our conversation.

Then I went over to the newspaper, for I had planned to talk to Isobel about the follow-up story. I was hoping not to get as involved as I did yesterday, for I didn't feel up to it today. But I didn't. Luckily no one was there, except the photographer whom I ran into on my way out. Again he lauded the Chianellos. That was all.

I got home to find Isobel had tried to call me twice so I didn't feel that I was just high-pressuring her into it. However, when I called her, she said oh yes, she was interested---in a MONTH---

After dinner I tried to call Janie, but couldn't get through till quite late. She sounded tired, but chatted a great deal--nothing special--about parties she planned and so on.

I wonder if N got my letter today?

Next day:

Today was terrible. I was so obsessed at making the most of my new Chianello relationship and in keeping a desperate liason going so that N should not escape me that I gave in to overwhelming impulses against my better judgment.

A newly discovered wealth of Italian material made me want to share it with Janie and herparents, even to forfeiting my precious Italian-English book to them to help them learn English.

I edited all my material very carefully, having specific reasons for presenting each thing, but nevertheless dubious about their reception, suspecting, as I do, that the Chianellos are not as "intellectuale" as I like to think them.

I dressed just as carefully, also having specific reasons for each effect. I planned exactly each action and its timing and then I set out, full of a vague uneasiness, for none of my reasons were very valid.

And it was hot. It was TOO hot. Only "mad dogs" and LORNA would be out for a "stroll" in that kind of weather. It was too FAR. My excuse of an "errand" at the store was ridiculous since the store was BETWEEN us. I was ahsamed at my plotting and consequently ill at ease. I had been giving them too MUCH attention.

And I intruded, the unexpected, uninvited guest at a bad time--the end of a hot day, dinner preparation time, and so on.

I walked what I hoped was a short-cut. It wasn't. I saw Janie emerging from the pool. I whistled. She ignored me.

Committed, I persisted. She saw me. She "did not like". She "recovered". She was polite. Papa was on the patio. N-like, he ditched his handiwork and disappeared. (I was hurt.) Mama appeared. Sat. (I was encouraged.) Janie relented and chatted, but she and papa had hard, calculating looks in their eyes. I was afraid--afraid they KNEW--afraid they'd been discussing me. Lilly hovered. I was too nervous to pay her the attention she craved.

The patio was nude, hot, unpleasant. There was something in the air. Janie was apathetic, disgusted. Papa had sneaked out again and gone unobtrusively to work again on his project.

I sneaked over, facetiously, to "kibitz". He ignored me. (N-like) Janie was deprecatory about his project. It was all lame, embarrassed, wrong. (But mama was pleased with the language book!)

I finally scurried away--ignored, embarrassed, sorry, but hopeful that the one bright, black-eyed look that papa gave me showing knowledge, embarrassment meant that I'd perhaps walked in on some family friction.

Janie had mentioned swimming again--desultorily. And I got in something about no suit and shame of my veined legs. The three women had made me feel self-conscious with their perusal of my carefully planned costume. I don't know about pa. He avoided me and my direct glance--like N. But, like N--he "stayed around".

What bothered me most of all was the loss of my Italian book. Now I want to stay away, but am afraid of hurting their feelings!

Next day:

Well, guess what! Janie called ME again this evening! It was just a friendly chat--nothing particulr.

I ha been out in the swing trying to read the Italiian magazine she had lent me yesterday when my daughter called me to the phone--"some woman with an acdent", she said. I didn't dare believe what I hoped.

But it WAS Janie. She just wanted to say they'd see my sketch of their patio in the paper, and so on. We chatted awhile about our days and our plans--just like a couple of friendly neighbors--(at LAST!)

Neither of us mentioned N at all. Janie had told me the day I met her parents not to metnion N in fron t of them--why, I don't know.

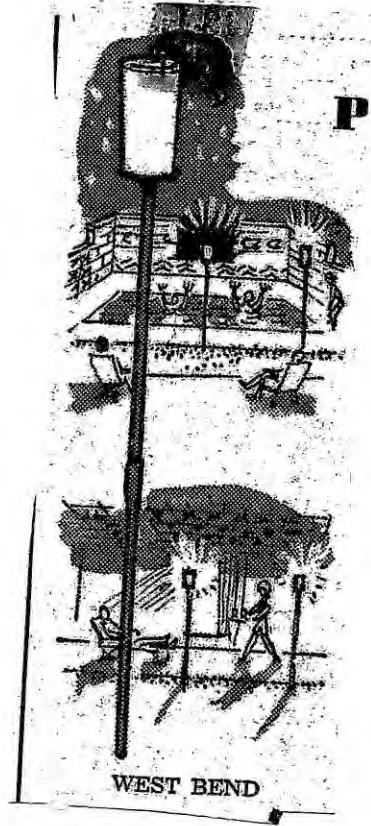
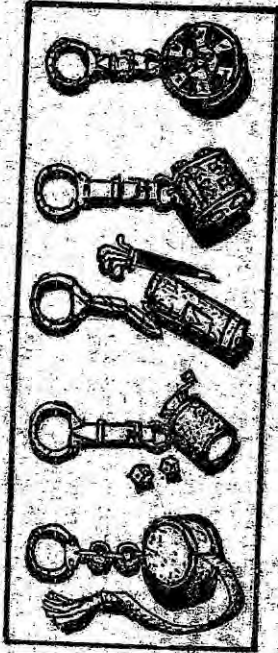
So--I am STILL awaiting some reaction from N to my letter, or some news about him.

June 16

Novelty Key

Leather novelties made in Italy. Keys are perpetual calendar, perpetual file; one is a roulette wheel, other is a tape measure.

THE BON MARCHE.



June 18

Sunday, June 18. 1961

Nothing about N to report.

Nothing very interesting about Janie. No contact except my phone call just now about a trivial matter.

But a hopeful change in family affairs yesterday. Hopeful for me, that is.

The realities, first.

I called Janie about a dove-tailing development in the Chianello publicity I seem to be involved in. Janie's father's "pièce de resistance" in his handiwork was a bird-cage. No bird. I thought of my boss's brother's hand-carved birds--how cute one would be in that strange, fantastic, rococo cage. When I asked him about them I found the price impossible for me. So I rejected that bit of fun.

I have mentioned our newspaperwoman's interest in doing an article about the Chianellos and papa's handicraft. Lo! in today's paper she had one about the boss's brother's birds! Being at a loss for contact excuses to maintain my relationship with Janie, I called her to point this out as to what to expect and to inquire, to ease my conscience, if she was in any hurry for her magazine (which I would like to keep awhile in lieu of my poverty of Italian material since my generous (?) gesture of forfeiting my Italian language book. Also as an excuse, 'ala N, for further contact, if need be!)

Setting: She answered blithely, interrupting herself in a torrent of Italian (which is beginning to sound quite natural to me). There were sounds of merriment in the back-

ground. She said she'd just come from church, hadn't read the paper yet, was just chatting with her mother, while Harry, papa and kids were out planting new seeding--(in the midday heat!) That papa had the ground all fixed when Harry appeared with a new load of dirt, so papa got mad and quit. (I mention this as a character hint about papa.)

After my reason for calling was taken care of, instead of signing off, she asked me "what I knew." Since I knew from past experience that she really wasn't as interested in what I knew as what she had to tell me, I led her on. She said they really had fun last night--were in swimming till 11 p.m. with a couple they knew; then danced. (Oh N! You won't fit into THAT picture!--nor would I?)

Then, (though I didn't realize it till afterwards,) when I interrupted her to give my son permission to go swimming, and then explained to her, she stipulated that I was free to bring the kids to swim, but it must be during the week--week-ends were saved for the grown-ups swimming parties. (Guess that puts me in my place!) I assured her I wasn't hinting, at which she demurred at any suspicions of same. End of phone call.

Comment:

Tuesday will be the anniversary party for ma and pa. I was sure N would wish to be here for that, and perhaps even make an attempt, but I guess not--or no one's telling me. I am rather expecting him to come next week-end, all in all put together. I rather predict they might

June 18

get a letter from him tomorrow saying so. How will I ever know? I get the impression that he would work clear through a work week, which would mean work till Friday night, then take a plane up. Would he do that in the evening or wait till the next morning? Either way he would arrive by about Saturday noon. If my best dreams materialized I doubt if I should hear from him before Sunday afternoon. By that time my vacation would be over--which really doe n't make much difference to me, anyway. (I can't see N coming into this frantic "Grand Hotel" (the name of J'S Italian magazine!) of activity. There would be more opportunity perhaps if I were OUT in the world. Well, it won't matter, any way.)

I really find that reality has dulled my longing for him. I catch myself even wishing he'd hurry and come and leave so I could get on with my interesting, rewarding relationship with Janie and her parents as MY-SELF, a middle-aged, motherly friend. It's so much more comfortable than that strained role of secret, one-shot fading, amour (Probably just what N's thinking!) And the family could tell me what I want to know about him. The secret hopes and dreams I had hoped to hear about I can pretty well size up for myself now--better, at least more truly, than N could tell me.

ANYWAY: the family change I spoke of is a letter yesterday that my sister will have her operation the 26th of June--a week from tomorrow. There is a chance that mother may go down to SF--leaving her car and her

apartment free. She will fight it with everything she's got, because, tho she doesn't know it, she doesn't WANT me to have her car and her apartment when she suspects that N might be coming sometime; she doesn't WANT me to be happy--though she doesn't know this about herself. (I won't go into that.)

If N came next week end and only stayed a week, there wouldn't be much chance--only a day or so at the best, so ~~the~~ chance is pretty slim.

But, IF mother went, she would be sure to stay at least a month. That would be good--if N came around the first of July like he intimated. However, I am not counting on anything. More and more I realize how little there is in it for me. More and more I realize that, if N cannot write to me, cannot openly accept the sophisticated offer I made him, my helping job is better done with him if he goes on in his own way alone, no longer dependent on me, emancipated at last from his family. That is the most I can expect. While it leaves me personally unrewarded, there is some comfort ~~kn~~ knowing that it is a little better than it would have been without my little tiny boost toward independence and maturity. So be it.

June 18

Sunday, June 18, 1961

Just a comment.

Have had a couple talk sessions with a woman whom I could call my best friend right now, actually the wife of Dee, with whom I shared an

office after THE MOVE. Anyway, they were in on the last part of the N episode a little.

I try not to mention or show my interest in the Chianellos to anyone, for I get depressing reactions. But this woman prides herself on her empathy and understanding of people, her kind heartedness etc. So, once in a while when I feel calm and sure of myself

I try to unburden some of my pent up enjoyment to her. I did so tonight.

I am always sorry afterwards, and I was sorry tonight.

She reacted again with disapproving silence. Of all people I feel that she would understand my "little Lame Duck", but no. She, too, in spite of her claims, is full of cold, hateful prejudice and misunderstanding. I only told her about Janie and her folks, but my abortive attempt left me depressed.

My only consolation is that I don't approve of her love affairs, either!

A few days later:

I was amazed today that Janie's daughter called and invited my son to a swimming party and that he eventually accepted.

But I was disappointed that none of the long, involved telephone negotiations brought me in contact with Janie or brought me any news.

And I was also deeply upset today to find my hopes of mother being out of town in the near future shattered. She has "changed her plans". I think she suspects.

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I took my son and his date to the party tonight and suffered such great disappointment and bewilderment at both Janie's and "i nonni"'s preoccupied ignoring of me that I maneuvered a silly return errand in order to try to get in and see the gay "trattoria" effect and share a little of the fun. It was Harry who hosted me this time, but I still didn't stay long, for Janie and "i nonni" were still brushing me off.

I was glad, though, to note that Janie has overcome her "shame" of her Italian origin enough to do something Italian. (Had my long, patient campaign of Italian promotion had some effect?)

When I came later to pick the kids up she came to my car as to the others and chatted briefly, but only about the party.

I spent all evening in a strange mood of envy and marveling that my son should be being entertained by these people from SICILEY!

Mother went to a play called "Fiorello" and my daughter insisted on pizza for dinner. Italiano!

I thought, "tonight is a turning point; from now on I am a mother of grown children in their eyes; how can I ever be a "prospect" for N now--if I ever was?"

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The next day I felt it only polite to call Janie and profess that my son had a good time, though He said it was a dull party. But she was short and dull, only asking me, again, to come swimming in a desultory way. Still no mention of any news.

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A day or so later I felt so hopeless I decided to use my last resort and return the Italian magazine. Also I would capitulate and go swimming. What matter? I phoned first to warn Janie I was coming, but only Lilly answered--very dully--and said Janie was gone and wouldn't be back for quite awhile. Since I wouldn't be able to call later I gave up, feeling very depressed.

I am completely discouraged and tired of the whole thing. I am only enduring a great, hopeless longing for N and enduring the incessant, agonizing wondering if he's here yet?

Later:

Everyone went off and left me, which was bad considering the mood I was in. I got into mischief!

My sister had just brought me more fresh cherries than we could ever use. They looked so beautiful I wanted to do something with them. What could I do?

I could take the Italian magazine back and offer "i nonni" a sample of our American produce! But tomorrow they wouldn't be so beautiful and fresh!...

Reminding myself of a similar impulse I had in my childhood, I gathered green leaves and arranged the best of them on a paper plate, sorry I didn't have an expendable basket. I got myself ready, complete with note in case they weren't there. I rather hoped they wouldn't be, I felt so foolish!

I set out out with cherries and magazine in a cold, cold wind--walking. The other time it had been too hot. Now it was too cold!

I felt very romantic carrying my offering through a vacant field gold with dried weeds and the wind whipping my hair and my very full skirt!

The house looked dark, and for a minute, I expected a reprieve, but they were ALL home--watching television.

They were surprised to see me, of course, but Janie urged me to stay, rejecting my false excuses of things to do, and ran to put coffee on.

I produced my plate of cherries, and, for a few minutes, all seem very pleased. Then Harry, the boor! told me they had 30 pounds of cherries they'd just picked! I could have died!

Bravely, I joked it off--there was nothing else to do.

(Later he commented on how beautifully I had fixed them, saying it was very nice of me.)

Lilly spent most of the time on the phone, and the boy went to sleep in our midst, twitching strangely as he slept, which made me wonder if his "brain trouble" was really a thing of the past. Grandfather, N-like, scurried to a dark corner and stayed out of things generally, though he came to the door with me when I left and said "Goodbye" in English!

He did indulge in some horse-play with Harry at first--they were jokingly yelling insults at each other. I did catch a couple of warm looks in his eyes when he looked at me, which relieved me.

Grandma was welcoming and attentive, patting the davenport beside her for me to sit down. In fact she and Janie and I carried on a woman conversation for the bulk of the time I was there--about an hour. I was sorry I ignored her polite accompanying me to the door when I left, but I had to talk to Janie and had to hurry for it was cold in the doorway.

Harry was loud and show-offy and clowning, letting off bull roars at unexpected moments, and so on. He made corny jokes and horsed around with his father-in-law. He overdid it so that Janie chided him, asking him if he was "showing off?". This flattered me, for I rather sensed that he was trying to impress me. But her remark dampened him and he quieted down.

We drank coffee and ignored the TV to talk, then watched a show, after which I planned

to leave and did.

Janie also told me about the anniversary party which sounded very usual and brought out the gifts to show me. They disappointed me after her elaborate build-up of "something musical". I had rather expected a radio or something more sophisticated than the corny musical sewing basket.

There was some talk concerning the Italian magazines (I had refused another, for they were too cheap and vulgar for my tastes).

At the mention of the magazines, grandma, usually so quiet and demure, showed more excitement and animation than I had yet seen in her. She was very insistent about wanting to show me something in one of them. Janie was obviously trying desperately to put ~~off~~ her off, but she would not be put off. So reluctantly Janie got the magazine and hurriedly showed me a picture, trying immediately to distract my attention to another picture.

Guess what the picture was! A photo of an American and his wife in Rome under which the caption stated that the woman was 70 years old and the man 25! I sensed something going on that I did not quite grasp at the time; mamma immediately calmed down after I'd seen the picture, while Janie acted a little impatient and somewhat disgusted with her mother and tried to change the subject.

It wasn't until later when I was plodding home in the cold wind and the dark that

it dawned on me--they KNEW! the jig is up! My actions are as transparent to them as they seem to me! I'm not fooling anyone! Yet they fawn on me, encourage me, seem to LIKE me---? Thank God, I have been careful and am prepared to be "just a friend"!

There was not one allusion to N, per se, though Janie mentioned a congratulatory card from her "brother", but, since she has two, and I had been warned to silence I did not dare say anything.

I intended to ask Janie privately about N as I left, so I was unhappy to have them all, especially mother, accompany us to the door. Too desperate to give up the real cause of my visit I mentally convinced myself in that minute that it would be more obvious NOT to ask than ask after all my professed interest. So I blurted out a question about what they'd heard from N.

I could see that Janie did not want to talk in front of her mother, whom she was unobtrusively trying to shoo back into the house. We had both used the term "brother" rather than mention N's name. Mother was very reluctant to go and looked at us suspiciously, but she went.

Even so, I did not like Janie's reaction. She began to act a little mocking and spoke so evasively that I was hard put to it to justify myself. I lamely explained my interest by saying that her shushing me had made me worry that something bad was afoot. So desperate was I to appear nonchalant that I even risked changing the subject before she answered.

She was digressing on a feeble explanation as to why she had shushed me and I had to bring her around by bluntly asking her if they were going to get to see N?

She looked at me, amused, and said, baldly evading, "Oh, he will come up SOMETIME-- then hurriedly at what must have been a gleam of interest in my eye--"NOT this week-end"---then did she say something about two weeks? If so, hurrah for my letter to him, I thought.

I couldn't keep her any longer--she was shivering with cold--so I left--tromping up the hill trying hard to appear like a woman just out for a "stroll" on a cold, dark, windy night; and looking back over my shoulder at the full moon shining down on their snug house I whispered, "Goodbye---goodbye---"

And here I am home--excited and re-vitalized again--staying up too late to get all this written down while it is fresh.

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Events are not with me, though. There is little hope. It seems now that instead of being left alone for awhile this summer by everyone's planning little and big trips, all plans have changed so that I am apt to be burdened with endless house-guests instead. So my hopes of being free if and when N came have flown.

Nor do I feel any cooperation from anyone in my private dream. I feel that Janie is trying to foil me--that mother suspects and is jealous--my daughter ready to pounce on any misdemeanor of mine to justify her own--my son clinging, resentful--my ex-husband threatening visits. And N is silent.

It is too much, too much to surmount for the little I have to gain! I am ready to give up. I must give up.

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The next day:

My escapade and time I took to write it up last night cost me a lot of grief today. Yet there were compensations. By being late and missing my ride I got to glimpse "il nonno" in Janie's yard as the bus drove by which gave me a thrill out of proportion to its unimportance. And that crazy, impulsive act loosed a lot of pent-up emotion in me.

I found myself so mad at Janie after her little jibes last night that I have pondered a new evaluation of her motives and

have decided to use her own seclusiveness against her and leave her alone for two weeks, relying only on my own carefully tended concern for N to perhaps bring my "farfallona" of happiness back to light on my shoulder again. We shall see. Meantime I am taking a Chianillo vacation.

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Our magnificent summer weather has turned gloomy, dark and stormy. And so is my heart. Grimness and loneliness set in again.

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July

Another month gone. Another month nearer my moment of truth.

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I feel sure N will come next week end. I dread the two weeks of agonizing expectancy. And the very likely disappointment if he does come, for my chances for seeing him are very unpromising. If nothing else I am uneasy the way mother haunts me like a shadow lately--as if she suspects something.

N has become so very, very remote that I no longer believe, I no longer prepare. I shall be almost glad when the secret anguish of waiting and wondering through this next month is over and I can start the long endurance of my half-life without N.

I spied on Janie's house today. I saw nothing except a female figure in the yard I couldn't identify.

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I am forced to ride the bus again this week. Joy!

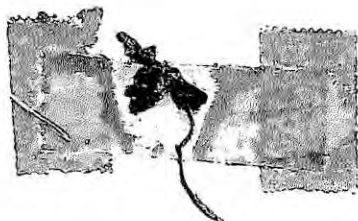
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JULY 4

Without even looking I found a FIVE leaf clover today. Is that good or bad luck?



On July 4th, at exactly midnight, a storm hit us with a crash of wind and rain. One clap of thunder and lightning woke me out of a sound sleep to make me exclaim aloud, "THAT was a close one!" I estimated it struck very near Janie's house.

This morning I found out it did--just three blocks away. It seemed a good chance to call Janie--to give and seek news.

When I tried and no one answered I was alarmed--not because of the lightning--but because I was afraid it meant they had all gone to Spokane to meet N and have their visit there. Then I discovered I had the number wrong.

I called again later and this time I got her. She hadn't heard about the lightning strike details, which we discussed. Then she asked me "how everything was". Thus encouraged I continued the conversation.

We chatted briefly about our holiday and she told me excitedly about how they had taken "i nonni" to Mount Tainier and how impressed they were. This differed so from N's nasty answer to my query if he'd been to the mountain that I couldn't resist telling her about what he said, though I softened it quite a bit. She said N had been, too, which was certainly not the impression he had given me!

To my question she said Pina was coming this next week end and taking "i nonni" back for a visit. The Esgates would go over and bring them back when they wanted to come. At this, I said, "Oh, you haven't heard from N then. He won't be coming for awhile?"

She started to tell about his latest plans, but it got noisy and, though I strained desperately to hear, all I could catch was something about "not until the end of the month (July), then a lot of vagueness about "had to wait to get a week off, since he used a week without pay to get his tonsils out and no one else could do his job, so he had to stay" and, "after all," she said, laughing, "work is important. One can't lose one's job!"

I asked about his new job. "Oh--nothing. I don't know. He doesn't say."

After a little more she said she had to go, but explained something first about having a swimming teacher come. This I didn't like, for I had planned to go swimming with her next week while her parents were gone, thinking she might really open up and talk then and I might learn something when she and I were alone. I had felt lucky that the two weeks gone by when I wanted to avoid swimming had turned cold. Now my hopes were blasted again.

After I hung up I found myself completely upset--too much so to finish the remaining chores I had to do. N is not coming this week end! I found myself saying over and over. I was so sure. We were ALL so sure he was! Again this interminable procrastination! And all the little preparations for his coming I had planned to do this week!

At first I was excited, imagining good reasons why he was waiting. Then I recalled all the excuses and inconsistencies and procrastinations and decided I was only kidding myself.

I got on the bus to come home completely depressed and very, very unhappy. I wanted to cry.

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That damned N! I can't keep this up forever!

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A few days later:

I had an emotional blow-up today. I hadn't realized it was ~~so~~ near N's birthday. But that was why I was so sure he'd come this week end.

And I realized if I sent him a card or anything I must get it off TODAY. I found myself wanting to buy him a gift, and thought and planned about same, but then discovered I seemed to have absolutely no money.....

And I began to speculate on things, trying to figure it all out, when suddenly the horrifying thought came to me that N must be planning on visiting entirely in Spokane and avoiding both Janie and me--and Janie had been withholding from me!

However, before the day was over I ended up discovering a little money and mailing N a gift and a card anyway.

I settled on a florally pretty card, the kind N usually buys which read, "To someone I don't see very often" and inside a sentimental poem about fond memories and thinking of you and happy birthday and happiness through the year, etc.--very trite. I signed it, "love, Lorna" and put my return address on it, but not my name. This carefulness I had been

employing because I wasn't sure what the situation was down there. I wrapped and enclosed one of the little Italian miniatures as a gift and mailed it, checking to note that he should get it within a day.

Things were getting Italiano again, which gave me courage to call Janie and check once more to see if N would be there to get the gift.

I expected a rebuff, but to my surprise I couldn't shake her off.

She launched into a long discussion of the whole N problem as if I, too, were a member of the family. She even consulted me about what to get N and took my suggestion. (I always had thought her gifts to N were inappropriate, showing a lack of understanding of him!)

Then as she went on, she dispelled all my malicious doubts, confiding in me and even expressing the same wonder and impatience I have suffered at this silly, inexplicable procrastination. It did not surprise me a bit to find lying under my hand as I talked to her a large ad about Italian imports.

Before she hung up she said she didn't think she'd be down today, but she'd see me Monday in the store, which I wondered if was a desire, like mine, for us to get together and really talk about this thing. Because of the Chianello undependability about such "dates" I made her repeat to be sure I'd heard right. That is what she'd said.

All this surprising confidentialness alleviated my worries and my bad mood. I even laughed at myself and my "endings".

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I am faced with lonely, frustrated days ahead. My son is going on a week-end camping trip and my daughter is always gone anyway---and no N!

And mother will be gone in August for a week, leaving me her car and an empty apartment---and no N.

Yet----somehow I am not afraid. I sowed, and I shall reap whatever has grown. I tried.

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Finding myself free and with the car the next afternoon, I decided to drop by Janie's and ~~send~~ ^{send} "i nonni" ~~back on~~ ^{on} their trip to Spokane and seal Janie's promise to see me Monday.

But then I found my recent family troubles had left me utterly weary again--soul weary. But, having decided, I forced myself to go through with it, even trying to brush up a little on Italian before I went, but I was too tired.

Unhappily, it was just the time I needed some Italian, but I found "i nonni" alone on the patio and no one to come to our rescue for long minutes. My mind, of course, went completely blank as far as Italian was concerned. I could have cried. Just exactly the situation I had built up to so long--and here I was impotent!

But then "la nonna" routed out Janie and they all gathered round, each going through his particular routine. "Il nonno" feasted his eyes on me (I had dressed for this.)

Mother patted the couch; Lilly presented herself for attention; even the boy showed off; Harry appeared and corned a little, but then Janie took stage center and they all dispersed into audience. They were all trying hard--Janie even put on quite an act--in her bathing suit. But I felt inadequate and unable to rise to the occasion and sorry to disappoint them. I was full of impotence and woe and weariness.

Despite my dampening, nervous rejection of the scene and Pina's imminent arrival from Spokane, Janie pressed me to stay and plied me with coffee.

I gave in, but it wasn't worth it. Nothing but inanities ensued. But they all gathered round to see me off, bless them. I made a point of "laying on of hands" with grandma, (this time conscious of my gesture) and all in all, they seemed pleased with the visit--though I wasn't.

During our coffee drinking, my sorry attempts at Italian had brought on a puzzled inquiry from grandma--"Does she WANT to learn Italian?" and a depressing lack of understanding why I should. (For one thing it kills me to have "i nonni" sit out interminable conversations going on about them. Doesn't anyone share my urge to COMMUNICATE?)

Janie saw me out to the car boldly complaining about her family troubles even after her mother joined us. I knew this time of disillusionment and trouble was coming! In fact it was one of the reasons for my visit today--I thought they might need to ease the growing tension.

Janie insisted again that I come swimming next week, and so did Lilly. She even offered me a suit, and added, ~~and~~ "This time, there won't be anybody to see you next week". At last she understands. And, since it is getting hot again I promised I would. And I will, I guess.

I left and made no attempt to offer ~~some~~ explanation for my long absence when I got home this time. (I have been keeping my visits to Janie's "secret".)

And I found it a chore to write this down tonight, though I have always been eager to before. I am tired, disillusioned and bitter. I was going to use this week end to try to analyze the N situation but-- I find I don't care!

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For the first time I want out. Now is the time when I shall begin to pay for my interference, my "do-good" attempt. The magic is gone, the interest, the rewards. I no longer feel the selfless, warm desire to make everyone a little bit happier, to help all I can in my own small way. I am infinitely tired.

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Monday, the day Janie was coming into the store. She didn't come. I have given up on N. I feel a brutal blow is imminent--a blow that will bring me to my senses? For surely N has not gone two years without a woman! He simply wouldn't--no matter how tawdry an affair it would have to be!

This suspicion is beginning to break through my defenses coupled with the memory of Janie's elation when she spoke of the possibility of N's announcing his marriage sometime; the implication that he might do so abruptly, without any previous implication--and her statement that it would be wonderful. (Just so he MARRIES--tha 's all they want!) There must be a blow that will kill; it is inevitable. I must prepare myself.

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I am cross and irritable and hard to get along with. I don't want to do ANYTHING** --just sit--or go in circles-- Isn't delusion better--if it keeps me going?

July 11, 1964--Tuesday

N's birthday.

I called on Janie again today.

I will run through it, first, then comment.

It wasn't planned, though I expected to get in touch with her sometime this week. Mother let me take the car, and after I'd finished all errands, I still had an hour to kill before dinner. I found out today I'll have to work late all week, so won't be able to go swimming as I promised. So I thought I'd run over and tell Janie. Besides, I had on the dress I wanted her to see, and I thought, "I'll just damn well make sure she sees it!"

It was very hot today. The house looked hot in its still-naked setting. There were no signs of life, but Janie's car was there. I sat a minute or two in the carport. I don't quite know why. Perhaps I hoped she'd come out and I wouldn't have to go in, but no one appeared, so I approached the silent house.

Suddenly Janie appeared from nowhere on the patio, standing facing me with her arms akimbo and an odd look on her face. A look that seemed to say, "Well, here we are again!" She didn't say anything, and, although the look was "comradely", it was not too encouraging.

She invited me into the house. Her son was there and chatty and communicative again, as I'd only seen him once before--the last time ^{I was there} (Seems more relaxed since he's going to camp?) She said, "What do you want, tea or coffee?"

I demurred, explaining that I'd made up my mind not to let her ply me with beverages, because I always stayed longer than I meant to.

She hesitated then and I hastened to explain that I ENJOYED staying---at which she flew to fix some iced tea. (The son fixed his own. I definitely get the impression that Janie doesn't like him.)

She offered me my choice of sitting inside or going out on the patio, and, since she seemed to want to go out, I chose that--and regretted it, for it was hot out there.

She settled down contentedly as if for a good talk and the feeling was good between us. I thought to myself, "Here we go."

But first the amenities had to be got through. She immediately noticed my dress and liked it very much, asking me about it. (I knew she would.) Throughout our conversation she kept scanning my dress, and I realized that hers and Lilly's perusals were probably, as I had thought, just pretty women's interest in clothes.

We were just about to get to good talk when I noticed Lilly and two friends coming down the road in their swimsuits. I remarked lightly that it looked like we were going to have some swimming. Janie was strangely quiet.

There was some chat with the girls and from then on Janie was lost to me. She seemed distracted and not listening, nor interested in talking. She began to be nervous and preoccupied with Lilly's swimming. Then at great length she revealed that none of the family was very good swimmers, in fact Lilly couldn't swim at all and had to be kept at the shallow end of the pool.

This was explained after Lilly put on a silly hysterical act that I thought was only in fun. It ceased when her mother ran hyster-

ically to the pool's edge. My growing impression of mother's pet was further verified!

Before this Janie had opened the conversation, aided by her son, of an excited relating of the accident that had happened after I left the other night. It seems "il nonno" had gone through the glass door and cut his hand. As she related the details, I got a picture of much family friction and more evidence of "i nonni's" primitiveness and Janie's iron rule over the rest of the family. Afterwards I looked up the hospital report she mentioned and I had not seen, and here it is. (I wonder what I would have done if I'd seen it? And I must be losing my "psychic touch"--how come I didn't see it?)

Harry came then, not seeming very pleased to see me, but polite. And Janie excused herself to turn on the oven. It was time to go, and I lingered a little too long, I fear. I had meant to get out before Harry came.

I was sorry to leave without having had a more intimate talk with Janie. I tried several times to insert my comment about N's going to Spokane, but each time something happened and I didn't get it said. Finally I forced it in, but Janie was cold and unreceptive and dropped the matter after angrily saying she didn't care if they did!

So I was glad when she followed me out to the car and starting talking a little more freely, telling me how restless her folks were to get to Spokane, how difficult they were, etc. She skirted any mention of N, and I had to ask her finally if his not coming hadn't caused trouble, which she

admitted, but she didn't seem to want to talk about it. She expressed impatience and anger at him, saying that he'd written them that he felt they were still in Sicily--that it didn't feel like they were really here and that's why he didn't come, although he wanted very badly to see them!

During this talk she mentioned that HER idea was for her parents to stay in Spokane at least a month--SHE wasn't going to chase back and forth with them (A MONTH!--oh NO!--but Pina's husband "didn't go for that sort of thing" and Harry bet when he got the firstweek's grocery bill he'd want to get rid of them. (There seems to be a lot of talk in that family about which husband is the tightest with money!))

She never once mentioned N's birthday.

I tried to get onto the subject of WHY N hadn't come, but had to do the talking myself--and there wasn't much time. It was late and she was standing in the hot sun. When I mentioned the subject myself I saw a flicker in her eyes and felt my own start to waver, but held on inside and made myself look her right in the eye and controlled any give-away emotion. All I could get in was that N could not be judged like most people--that he was obsessed with work; and unable to relax enough to take a vacation etc. She more or less agreed. Then said something about the Seattle sister-in-law who had visited N had said he talked so much about giving up the art work entirely, which seemed to make her mad. I explained that N talked so when he was momentarily mad etc--that it might not mean much. ~~That was about all I had to say. I can think of~~
~~now.~~

I left with a bad taste in my mouth. I didn't feel it was a very good visit. I felt that in that last talk I overdid my "disinterest".

I said, apropos of nothing that I hoped N's not coming didn't have anything to do with ME, and she said, "Oh, no--nothing like that". I thought a minute trying to form my thoughts and then came out with something I didn't intend about N might be mad at me, and ~~and~~ ~~and~~ not want to see me if he knew I was hanging around--that that's why I had tried so hard to make up with him before he left--I couldn't let him go off mad-- etc.

She "didn't buy that one" at all, brusquely assuring me that she never told him anything about how she saw me--none of his business, etc. (Oh, JANIE!)

I could see I was getting nowhere with that tack I had intended to take and had to leave it at that. I left feeling that I'd given the impression that things were bad between N and me (damn me!)--and laughingly assuring her I'd stay away--- *if he came* -

Now to comment: First, "il nonni's" accident struck me as perhaps psychological?--"I am of the view that accidents don't "just happen", especially in that family--and it was odd that it happened at the last moment before they left. I'm sure ~~grandpa~~ ~~grandpa~~ prefers Janie and had no great yen to go to Pina's for very long. Also he is so much like N--so ignored by everyone in the family--one doesn't need some kind of attention, doesn't one? Oh well--

I think there has been some heavy family rows going on and after they left. I think I waited too long to catch the first flush of Janie's ire. She impressed me as talked out--brooding. (I KNEW it was going to be this way!)

And I think Harry's lack of pleasure at finding me there was perhaps because he

usually has a drink when he comes home.
(Why don't they ever offer ME one? I
bet they think I'm a sweet, motherly
type!) Thinking about it afterwards,
I suspect that their gayety and Janie's
unusual clowning and her parents lack
of enthusiasm about it and hers and
Harry's mysterious lingering in the
last Sat. ~~kitchen~~ when I came might have been that
I interrupted a drinking session. It
would be logical on Saturday evening just
before the arrival of a lot of guests.

I was surpr\$ed, too, to find out that
my swimming prowess would surpass theirs
IF I ever get in. Now Janie can't go
next week. And I am getting real enthused
about going. Serves me right.

Ø am, for the first time for along time,
really trying to break my N habits, and
felt a surprised little lift of relief!
Just like when I got around to doing
it after he left; I thought "what a
burden he is!"

One more thing--am I doing all this
now because I just like to WRITE and
have nothing to write about?

No. Two more comments. I think maybe
Janie was MAD that Lilly and her friends came
and interrupted us---

And, that report about N wanting to quit
art work I can't judge because I don't
know WHEN he said it. But it is depress-
ing. It indicates that his art work
hopes are not going well--and, too, I
feel that he does the art work to please
me--which could mean that he is either
trying to hurt me or has given up----

Janie also mentioned that no one has overwhelmed them with desires to go swimming in their pool as everyone had wanted them they would---poor Janie!

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I am getting suspicious of Janie's motives again.

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Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital—Mark Amis, 9, of 206 N. 31st Ave., fractured right collar bone playing; Barbara Shafer, 8, of 610 S. 58th Ave., dog bite on right ear; Melvin R. Carley, Wiley City, cut left foot on object while swimming; Susan Cooper, 7, Rt. 2, stepped on nail with right foot; Rodney Nelson, 7, of 108 N. 4th St., Selah, fell from picnic table, injured left arm; Betty Higgenbotham, 26, of Rt. 2, Selah, dog bite on left leg; Gene Rosenkranz, Rt. 4, stepped on nail; Norville Lewis, Rt. 7, struck in left leg by rock thrown from lawn mower; Helen Cope, 7, Naches, fell, cut lower lip; Giuseppe Chinello, 70, of 3400 W. Walnut St., cut top of left hand on glass door; Charles Shanahan, 8, of 112

July 13

It has been a month since I wrote N--
and a month and a half since he first
said he'd come--and no results.

As for Janie--familiarity breeds con-
tempt--I am disgusted with her. Being
friends with these people is like trying
to be friends with STONES!

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Somewhere inside of me I have unhooked
myself from N.

Since my last visit to Janie, when she
told me she never even tells N she sees
me, I have resisted several temptations
to go see her. After the first few times
it became easier.

In spite of the\$ new "neglect" Harry
and Lilly passed me waiting for a bus
one day--and waved cheerily ----but did
not offer me a ride!

I am wallowing in Italian novels trying
to make things Italian seem commonplace.
And I can't deny the similarity to the
recurring descriptions of Italian men's
tom-cat morals and N's treatment of me.

Nor can I deny that my mirror tells me
my time is running out----

I am trying to account for a new feeling
of peace and lack of rancor, and the
realization that, if N came to the door
now I would be more apt to feel irri-
tated, exasperated and cool than full of
delight as I once would have been. Why?
I wondered.

BECAUSE--

I CANNOT LOVE A MAN WHO TREATS PEOPLE AS N DOES! That is it. This last default of his, not only to me, but to his family, the only loved ones in his life, has killed what love I had for him!

I can HELP such a person; I can pity them; I can still be nice to them; I can even have sexual relations with them (since no one else would be involved now), but I cannot LOVE them. Nothing N could do now could change this. I know. For I have experienced this before. That part is over. Perhaps N knew himself better than I gave him credit for. I can't say he didn't warn me.

What is left is the fellow-human feeling. The Good Friend, the Older Helper--that part could go on. It has turned out as I predicted--as I WILLED it? I have finally crossed to the other side. My "bridging" is over.

Suddenly I am at peace. I do not yearn. I do not wait--hope--expect--
AND--there have been so many times in my life when I reach this point--and suddenly get what I wanted!

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Note: There was no Thank you card for my gift THIS YEAR.

But I have not yet given up my superstitious games. One of which is to turn on the car radio--and whatever comes out is "my message from N". Today it was "I shall love you for all time".

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Perhaps Janie is weary of me, too. I forgot to mention that during my last visit she said, "Oh, I said I'd come on Monday, didn't I?"--her expression and manner almost a shrug as if to say--"it couldn't matter less"----

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Love fades. Perhaps N meant it to. Perhaps that's what he's doing. Perhaps he's exasperated that it takes me so long.

There still remains the other side to the story--MY side--my "therapeutic aims". That is still a good thing--even if I got carried away a little.

Yet, I felt as if the props were knocked out from under me. There was a vital sustaining effect to the feeling of loving and being loved, however secret, however far apart. It kept me young--feeling, young--acting, young-looking. It produced results.

Now all that is gone. I find myself retiring back into my shell, self-conscious and inept; suspicious; immersed again in lonely, compensatory pursuits I thought I'd given up.

Here is revealed the power, the good in loving and being loved. Herein lies the evil, Nick, in NOT loving.

If this happens to me when he withdraws his love from me, what happens to him if I withdraw my love from him--he, who is alone in a strange land, he who so desperately needs it? I think I proved beyond doubt that he flowered and grew under the sun of love. Will he wither and fade and return to evilness, mean~~ess~~ and failure if unsustained?

I have supported him, unasked for two years. Perhaps he has found other supports--friends, another woman. This is good. I must remember that. Yet I am in a quandary. I am impotent--until he, himself, resolves this conflict.

Thinking in this vein brought me to the conclusion that I had nothing to lose and everything to gain, so I wrote and mailed the following letter:

Nick,

The time has come for you to DECIDE. What you are doing is BAD, is EVIL--to torment your loved ones as you have been doing with constant excuses and postphonements.

It takes BRAVE man to love, for loving is full of hurt. Sure, it may hurt you to see your parents. You may suffer. But you MUST see them. They are old. Time is short. Quit acting in a way you will be s rry for later!

They are fine people. Pity them, for life has not given them the chance to show what they COU'D have done!

You must be fully recovered from any medical treatment you may have had by now. tThat is no excuse any longer.

Your job will wait. If they have kept you thislong, they must like you well enough to let you go a wiik or so to see parents that came HALF WAY ACROSS THE WORLD to see you. They are old. They have traveled far enough. You go to them. You will work BETTER when you get back after being away. Quite being afraid you'll lose your job. If you've done a good job you have nothing to worry about. If you haven't done a good job, it's time you were changing anyway.

As for your art work, it will wait, for "Ars est longa".

If there is a woman you "can't" leave--she, too, can wait--it will be a good test. Or marry her and bring her with you--your family would be delighted!

If you haven't the money, tell them so!
Make a clean breast of it and quit making
them think you don't love them! They would
understand about lack of money more than
lack of love.

But come! Vieni! Go to visit them while
they are in Spokane if you don't want to
see Janie or me or Harry. I will take
care of Janie if I see her. I will explain
so she won't be mad. I don't tell her any-
thing because I don't know anything--I
just help her to see YOUR side of it--

Don't worry about me. I have given up.
Evidently you don't care as much about me
as I thought you did, but it doesn't matter--
I like you, anyway---

But I do NOT like your hurting people---!

I hope by the time you get this letter
you will already have decided and made
your plans and let your parents know that
you are coming to see them--either here
or in Spokane---

Get moving!

Lorna

Who asked for my opinion? No one! But
if I DIDN'T love you, I wouldn't bother
to write this, for I wouldn't CARE what
you did! And I CARE.

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At last I went swimming at Janie's. And, in spite of all my worries, it was WONDERFUL!

There was just her and her kids, after all. And afterwards we sunbathed (I very carefully) and then Janie and I settled down for a long talk. Actually I only listened to her, and felt as if I were listening to N again. Somethin' started her off on how she met and married Harry. The tale was so fantastic that, if I hadn't been reading true stories of Italian post-war days, I doubt if I would have believed her.

Time passed quickly without my realizing it, as it used to do when I was talking to N, and for the same reasons. I was so absorbed watching the play of emotions on that handsome Italian face that I almost lost the thread of the story. And, like when I listened to N, too, there were revealing discrepancies and unconscious attitudes that saddened me a little. One was her repeated references to "the younger children", which, of course included N. Not once did she mention them by name, as individual entities.

Suddenly it was time to go and I hadn't heard one word about N or what was now going on. When I began to question her she told me only vague plans that meant I had at least two more weeks to wait. N she brushed off with a shrug and a look, as if to say, "You know how it is."

Though I was suspicious at one point because I could have sworn that an air mail letter I had noticed when coming in later

disappeared, her ensuing actions allayed my doubts by their obvious hinting for me to come again when she was alone next week, even though it turned out that she was more in need of a life-guard while swimming than a friend to confide in.

And the wonderful physical glow I acquired by an extra lone dip in the pool before I left was almost negated by her announcement that she had an imminent job taking care of a friend's baby--which meant to me only a time limit on N's coming--the third week of August--about one month from now.

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I suffered great qualms after mailing N my letter. I had never been so brunt and brutal with him before. It seemed very final.

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The next day was terrifically hot, and, to my surprise Janie called me and asked me to come swimming again, urging me to bring some family. None of them would go, so I took my niece.

Janie seemed tired and dull--and so was I. During the conversation she told me in an angry tone that she "hadn't heard ONE WORD from N. I didn't say anything. What was there to say?

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Taking my neice to swim wit me at Janie's was a calculated risk--and I lost. For my sister is an opportunist and a highly prejudiced person. She not only began to be very nasty about my "Wop" friend, but tried to exploit the situation, which made me call Janie and try to explain after things had gone farther than I cared to have them. It didn't help my worries any to find that Janie was aware of the situation, but I managed to explain it away and determined then and there to eliminate my family from this private little involvement of immigrants that I'd started.

For I'd almost come to the point when I was ready to include my family. But along with this development came a reaction from my sister-in-law, who is involved in the Pelligrini angle in Seattle. She reported thier great pleasure in the wine label desing I'd sent--that is, her friend, GinnY8s delight, MR. Pellegrini, she doesn't seem t like, so that I was torn to interpret her report of their great desire^{to} come and see them as whether it came from the wife alone, or both.

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Another physical ailment of mine negates the exciting prospects of my being alone in the near future. And I have been so involved in realitie lately that I find N fades.

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July 24, 1961

My miracle today! I am so happy I don't know what to say! It worked! It worked! My prayers and my letter to N worked!

I started the day with an afternoon so full of commitments I didn't know which to tend to. One of them was to call Janie who expected me to go swimming with her today and tell her I didn't think I could make it.

I didn't get a chance to call until quite late. She sounded terribly disappointed and begged me to try to come anyway.

I was just about to hang up when my son came in and handed me the single piece of mail that had just come. I was so busy talking to Janie that when I glanced at the mail I uncsciously cried, "Wait a minute! I have a card from N!" before I realized what I was saying or doing.

It WAS! A sealed envelope with his name and address boldly written on the back flap--something he's never done before! I was sure it was just a thank-you card for my birthday gift, but there was a million and one chance that it might be more, and here was Janie waiting to hear. I'd be hard put to dissemble so quickly---

But it was--only a card with his name signed --which I told her. She seemed a trifle "put out" when I said I'd had something from N. I don't know any other way to describe the odd reaction which I've noticed before.

I read it to her. "Thank you for the gift"--and, of course, she asked me what gift?--and I told her lightly and easily (thanking my lucky stars the gift hadn't been any more). She didn't seem "to like it".

Anyway, whatever her reaction, she then confessed she'd heard, too, a long letter Saturday--and be an to tell me what was in it. I couldn't believe my ears!

He had apologized first. Then carefully and thoroughly explained everything clear back to last fall--this time in a truthful and almost believable form. He said he had suffered terribly since then with his health and the crises of the break-up of the brochure business and his job worries. That Wolfer Co. put him on the job of finishing up one last \$16,000 brochure, saying he could not leave until it was finished (maybe by the last of August even though he had explained to them about his parents. That if he agreed to this they would train him for strip-in work, get him into the printers' union and assure him of a permanent job in the company. He is already in the union--makes \$135 a week, which will go up to \$145 after the apprenticeship period is over.

(The "fabulous job" fell through.) (This part I didn't believe entirely. I think he is fabricating job excuses for the real reason which seemed to me to lie in what she now proceeded to tell me:--

That, after his tonsilectomy and complete physical, the doctors told him that his still recurring symptoms had no physical basis and suggested he see a psychiatrist--

--WHICH HE HAS BEEN DOING!--and he LOVES it! (I could not believe such luck! This is what I'd always, always hoped for him as the only real solution, but I never could see how it could come about!)--

That the psychiatrist said they'd find out why he "went around with a chip on his shoulder"---!!!! He suggested he take English lessons to help overcome his great inferiority feelings (!!!!)--which he is doing--and advocated his beginning night classes again to re-establish outside contacts again. This, he is also doing three or four nights a week.

He told Janie that the man is making him go clear back through his childhood and tell all and then explains to him how it has affected him, so that he always comes out just feeling fine--as if he didn't care.

All this costs him \$20 a visit (as I knew it would. Of course, as these things go, he won't keep it up long enough to do any good--they never do. When it gets to the hard part--the part that really helps--they quit. But even a little is better than nothing! Thank God! Thank God!)

Then he went on to claim that he never has is not now nor ever intends to be involved with any woman. There has been NO ONE. And he intends to keep it that way. (!!!!) Janie explained here that Pina had her convinced that N had an involvement--(me? I wondered?)

Et cetera, et cetera. That(s all I can remember now.

Actually, the letter answered every point I had made in my letter. He seemed almost to be writing to ME. And it's whole tone was clear, concise, rational, consistent--even with Janie's re-telling--as they had never been before.

All this gave me a chance to bring up things I'd never dared discuss with Janie before--even my letter to her after N left, the one in which I'd intimated a breakdown, the need of help. She didn't act very pleased. I suppose it did smack of "I told you so".

During this conversation I learned that "the girl he left behind him" had married!

I sensed that all this information was the real reason Janie had been so disappointed at my not coming today, and I was more than ever convinced when I called her back after finding I could go and she no longer wanted to go swimming.

However, we finally forced ourselves to go anyway--and it was kind of a work-out swim--just she and I.

We didn't discuss N anymore--Lilly was too much in evidence, but we were happy, happy without saying so, and finally, very much at ease with each other.

She simply wouldn't let me go, so I was still there when Harry came. This time he just plain poured himself a beer--but didn't offer me any--which I thought odd. I am uncomfortable around Harry, however, so I left very soon.

Special Request Feature: *Henry J. Kaiser, industrialist-builder, chairman of the board of Kaiser Industries Corp., has recommended that this article, originally appearing in the April 1941 Reader's Digest, be reprinted*

Obey That Impulse

Condensed from a CBS Radio Broadcast

WILLIAM MOULTON MARSTON



FOR YEARS as a psychologist I sought in the careers of great and of everyday people the inner springs that make for successful living. There are two which seem to me of prime importance: The first is hard work, governed by cool, logical thoughtfulness. The other is sudden, warm, impulsive action.

Admitting that I can't name a single person of true accomplishment who hasn't forged success out of brains and hard work, I still hazard the assertion that most of the high spots and many of the lesser successes in their careers stem from *impulses* promptly turned into action.

Most of us actually stifle enough good impulses during the course of a day to change the current of our lives. These inner flashes of impulse light up the mind for an instant; then, contented in their afterglow, we lapse back into routine, feeling vaguely that sometime we might do something about them or that at least our intentions were good.

In this we sin against the inner self, for impulses set up the lines of communication between the unconscious mind and daily action. Said William James, "Every time a resolve or fine glow of feeling evaporates without bearing fruit, it is worse than a chance lost; it works

to hinder future emotions from taking the normal path of discharge." Thus we fail to build up the power to act in a firm and prompt and definite way upon the principal emergencies of life.

Once, in Hollywood, where Walter B. Pitkin and I were retained by a motion-picture studio, a young promoter presented an ambitious production idea to us. The plan appealed to both of us. It was, I thought, distinctly worth considering; we could think it over, discuss it and decide later what to do. But even while I was fumbling with the idea, Pitkin abruptly reached for the phone and began dictating a telegram to a Wall Street man he knew. It presented the idea in the enthusiasm of the moment. (As delivered, it was almost a yard long.) It cost money, but it carried conviction.

To my amazement, a ten-million-dollar underwriting of the picture project came as a result of that telegram. Had we delayed to talk it over we might have cautiously talked ourselves out of the whole idea. But Pitkin knew how to act on the spur of the moment. All his life he had learned to trust his impulses as the best confidential advisers he had.

Behind many an imposing executive desk sits a man who is there because he learned the same lesson. You've probably seen him in action more than once. Somebody presents him a new idea, say in employe relations. It calls for extensive changes in office routine. Deciding instantly, he calls an associate

and gives instructions to make the change—then and there, not next week or next month.

We envy such men the ease with which they make up their minds and swing into action. But this ease is acquired over a long period of years. Rather than being, as we sometimes think, a privilege of their position, it is a practice that has led to their success. First in small matters and then in larger ones, they have acquired the do-it-now habit.

No one in public life ever seemed less impulsive than Calvin Coolidge, yet he was a man who had trained himself to rely on "hunches." As a young attorney in a country law firm Coolidge was interviewing an important client one day when a telephone message informed him that the county political boss was in town. It occurred to Coolidge that he ought to see the local bigwig at once and propose himself as a candidate for the legislature. Without hesitation, this usually shy young lawyer cut his legal conference short, left the office and hunted up the county leader. That impulse bore fruit, and from then on the inner urges of Coolidge led him consistently to political success.

It should be clear that the person who follows his impulses is not necessarily flighty. The timid soul, however, is fearful lest impulse lead him into all manner of mistakes. But mistakes are inevitable—we are bound to make them no matter which course we take. Some of the worst mistakes in history have fol-

lowed consciously reasoned decisions. If we're right 51 percent of the time in our impulsive actions we aren't doing badly by any standard.

The mistakes of inaction, flanked by heavy reasoning, are likely to be worse than the mistakes of genuine impulse. For one thing, they make our inertia worse day by day. One day a woman whose husband had left her came to seek my advice. The difficulty between them appeared to be one of temperament, which could be easily adjusted. And the woman told me that what she really wanted to do was simply to call her husband up and talk with him. I told her to follow that inclination. She left me, somewhat at peace.

But she didn't make the call; and in a few days she was back again. Once more she left with the impulse to call her husband. Unhappily, she never did. And a domestic rift that a few impulsive words on the phone might have healed finally ended in Reno. From childhood she had made time after time the mistake of letting her impulses die a-borning and, when the time came for a simple, direct decision in a situation that mattered, she was unable to act.

We all know people who go through agonies of indecision before taking any important step. There are always arguments for and against, and the more we think about them the more they seem to offset each other, until we wind up in a fretful state of paralysis. Impulsive action, which originates in a swift subconscious appraisal of the

situation, may save all that worry. And when a painfully thought-out decision proves wrong, how often we remember an original hunch that would have been right!

The way to get things done is to bring mind and muscle and voice into play at the very second a good impulse starts within us. I know a writer who was once engaged on a major project and was resolved that nothing could divert him from it. But he saw an announcement of a contest for the ten best rules for safe driving. The announcement flashed a light on the panel of his mind. Here was something he knew about. He interrupted his job long enough to get to a library and study up. He wrote 250 words. He turned in his entry in his own typing, not wanting to stop his stenographer from the bigger job. Months later that obeyed impulse netted him an award of \$25,000. The project from which he turned aside for a moment finally brought him \$600.

Or consider the young college instructor who sat listening one day to a commencement address by Woodrow Wilson, then governor of New Jersey. The instructor had written a book on political science, but had sought a publisher in vain. It embodied his innermost convictions and its apparent failure had caused him to despair of the future of his teaching.

Something Wilson said made the instructor feel that he ought to seek the governor's advice. He had heard that Wilson was cold and hard to

approach; but at the end of the address he let his impulse carry him forward through the crowd; he grasped Wilson's hand, and said rapidly, "Your speech was wonderful! I've written a book maintaining that . . ." In a few pithy sentences he stated his theory.

Wilson shook his head. "No," he said. "You're wrong. I'll tell you why. See me after lunch at the faculty club." There for two hours Wilson talked earnestly. And under the inspiration Wilson gave him, the instructor wrote a new book. It sold more than 100,000 copies and launched him on a distinguished educational career. The first vital impulse, half-hesitantly obeyed, was the starting point.

The life stories of successful people are chock-full of such episodes that have marked major turning points in their careers. True impulses are intelligent. They show the path we can most successfully follow because they reveal the basic interests of the unconscious mind.

There is in all of us an unceasing urge toward self-fulfillment. We know the kind of person we want to be because our impulses, even when enfeebled by disuse, tell us. Impulsive action is not to be substituted for reason but used as a means of showing the direction reason is to take. Obviously the path is not without pitfalls. To start sud-

denly throwing ourselves around on impulse might be hazardous. But at least we can begin responding oftener to inner urges that we know we can trust.

We *know* that in the midst of reading we ought to stop and look up a word if the meaning is not clear. We know that we ought to speak more words of unpremeditated praise where they are due. We know that we ought to wriggle out of selfish routine and take part in civic activities, that we ought to contribute not just money but time to the well-being of the community.

Such separate moments of achievement are cumulative and result in a consciousness of daily adventure, a sense that life is not blocked out and cut-and-dried but may be managed from within. The man whose philosophy is summed up in the feeble and indecisive motto, "Well, we'll see about it," misses the savory moments of experience, the bounce and gusto of life.

Thumb back over the pages of your own experience and note how many of your happiest moments and greatest successes have followed spur-of-the-moment actions and decisions. They are reminders that only from the depths of your inner self can you hope for an invincible urge toward accomplishment. So, obey your best impulses and watch yourself go!



The credit card has created another American first—instant debt.

—J. Veneziale in *Quote*

Janie told me with great glee, too, how she planned to come back to work at the store after school starts. I KNEW it! I said so, didn't I? I wasn't able to summon much enthusiasm because I happen to know she has been "black-balled". But I know she will manage somehow.

She graciously avoided a very good chance to force me to tell my age today. And I notice that she and Lilly are beginning a covert campaign to try to improve my looks.

I had some interesting thoughts today on how people avoid the alien from fear of the great force they sense in them and their impotence against it, but I am too weary to think it through.

Thank God for taking care of my Nicolo!

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My joy at N's response made me write him a spontaneous letter of which I did not keep a copy. It was something about not being able to tell him how much happiness he created, both with me and his family--knowing he wouldn't fail me--and thanking him.

That I pray for him, believe in miracles, to keep up the good work--va bene--am so lonely for him---and a few hints about my activities in case he wants to plan around them----love, Lorna

Went swimming again today, this time taking a couple of nieces, which, altho we took our own refreshments, didn't seem to please Janie any too well.

In fact, she was in a bad mood. For the first time she wouldn't go in swimming. Later she explained to me how she had been feeling so bad lately and during her talk I realized that she is suffering from what amounts to a real trauma about our current war scare. Heavens knows, she has reason to!

The swimming arrangements are beginning to pall, too. We both have committments; I work; she parties to give. And we both have unspoken desires to let up on it a little which we cover with "excuses". She has begun swimming lessons, and I have a desire to eliminate this pattern of bringing family with me. So today we didn't get together on plans for the future; it was left very vague.

She did admit, at last, that she is not one "to seek people out". How true! How true!

The most rewarding part of this visit was the news that began with her excited opening words about having had a letter from Pina. I was very excited, too, but it was sometime before we got a chance to discuss it.

It seems that Pina had said that N had written THEM, too--a nice, explanatory letter like the one Janie got. (Good for you, N! I am prone to take credit for this, but I realize the psychiatric sessions might also be a reason.)

She said he promised to come the end of August, as he'd said before---(he did?)

BUT--(and this was something new)--he might look for a job in Spokane and not go back!!! I could hardly control my amazement and excitement and wondering, while she shrugged and spread her hands, saying, "Now we go back to THAT again-- I just don't understand." (I do! Janie. I do! But I don't believe it!)

I am interested now in seeing if he'll change his plans any now that I've sent him the dates when mother will be gone. That would be TOO much! I am not counting on the job-in-Spokane angle; to me it merely means that N is in an "up" phase again, whether due to the psychiatrist or me. I DO know it won't last, for, if he leaves, he will cease the psychiatric ehlp--and all the improvement that has gone with it!)

Janie then said that Pina said his mood was good--he seemed fine--"himself" again. (That little devil! I get more satisfaction out of him when I get MAD at him than any other time! Evidently getting mad is "proof of love" to him!?)

Janie also related somewhere in the conversation a disillusioning little vignette about N's suddenly getting sick with a high fever when he'd been drafted in Italy and thereby avoiding it. 0000! I don't like that!

Nor do I like the similarity I noted between atantrums of my spoiled brother's recently and the way N acts!

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I found myself phoning Janie to inquire after her health a . . . an hour when I knew it would be too late to go swimming. It was partly because I have been feeling terrible lately and partly because I am beginning to feel that the swimming has served its purpose and partly because I sense a little drifting apart between Janie and me as we get better acquainted and our differences begin to show up.

We are beginning to see beneath each other's "false fronts" a little. I am getting glimpses of the smoldering volcano that I know is under Janie's winsome exterior and beginning to be a little bored with her superficiality.

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I am disgusted!

I have been taking a little vacation from Janie, but I stopped by today to ask how their physicals came out, and found myself refusing her eager invitations to come in and come swimming again etc. and glad that she came out to the car so I wouldn't have to come in.

She told me what I expected to hear--that the doctor said her ailments were "just nerves" and then went on to verify my suspicions of great family friction mounting up by a long, confusing tirade against Pina whom she now suspected of plotting against her. Because now the plans have changed in some confusing way I couldn't understand--only that it

meant that N might not come for another month at least and then maybe only to Spokane.

She fastened her eyes on me so challengingly, so beseechingly, so very like N used to that I felt I was talking to him again, and not her. And like with him, I was at a loss as to what it was she wanted from me, and could offer nothing, feeling the impotence of knowing that I could not explain to her that her real reason for anger lay deep in family jealousies beyond my power to help.

But suddenly she seemed released and cheerful and broke away and left without any further attempt to make me stay.

I left haunted by the image of N she presented to me--hungry, hungry for him and angry at this new blow to my patient hopes.

Another MONTH! I can't go on setting the stage forever for something that never happens! Again I say "to Hell with it"!

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I spent a very unhappy evening. Surely N tries people to the breaking point--why?

August

Apathy grips me about writing, but----

I planned to contact Janie this week to placate her, to satisfy my curiosity--and to GO SWIMMING! (I find I miss it!)

Her manner of answering was flattering. She asked me to come swimming again and went on at great length, raising unexpected twinges of jealousy in me with her delighted accounts of new swimming friends. I probed her with questions about the family situation. It seems to be in the same undecided turmoil. She said "It all depends on N now", which impresses me as ridiculous--that ten people should await the whim of one lone bachelor!

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I note the pattern beginning again. I need an excuse to encourage N again. I read something that reminds me of my sorties to Janie's house--"a compulsion to visit the shrine"--Janie's house is the "shrine" of my fulfillment, of my dead love.

The happy spark that kindled smouldering embers did not kindle a fire of sufficient warmth. There was not enough tinder. And too many wet tears. And not enough winds of chance to keep the flame alive. It dies down to apparent ashes.

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I made a clumsy excuse of a work need to call Janie today. But it didn't work, and, though she expressed a desire to see what I was working on (she suspect my excuse of work that keeps me away from swimming) I was "business-like" and abrupt and learned nothing.

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And so it goes on and on; day after day; week after week; month after month. I keep desperately to keep the thin thread of communication from breaking. I just want to see N once more--at least once more---

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Suddenly my sister and her family descended on us for what seemed an indefinite stay. I was panic-stricken and heart-broken fearing it would spoil all my plans to see N.--at first. Then I began to be glad for it would help pass the time until he got here, give me an excuse to take a vacation from Janie until things were settled, and, best of all, they intended to take mother back with them!

Since I now didn't expect N until the end of the month anyway and had hopes that he might stay when he did come I was delighted at the prospects of being alone when the kids got back in school!

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I had also reconciled myself to the fact that Janie would never reciprocate my advances and visits, reminding myself that I had other friends who were like that, and it didn't bother me. I would just continue to seek her out as I did them.

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So, I called on Janie again, this time with my daughter, while we were out together on an errand. I wanted to explain

about having company and not being able to see her for awhile--and to make one last check on the Chianello plans.

I planned to only have her come out to the car for a minute, but she was so mysteriously long that I grabbed the chance to go in for I had my work she had wanted to see with me and I wanted to justify myself. While waiting for her I showed it to Harry and the son and they were duly impressed.

At last Janie came out--from the bathroom--and not nearly so embarrassed as her husband was. She and the kids came out to the car and fawned all over Julie and me and begged us to come swimming, even seeming a little impatient at my guest committment.

I learned nothing new about their plans.

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That night--in the middle of the night--I faced my ultimatum wit N. This is IT--this end of this summer. If he does not come to me, then this is the time I knew must come. I must give him up. And I realized that what I really dreaded--what I was really postphoning--was the prospect of living without loving him--of not being wholly alive--as I had learned to be with him. THIS was the real dread.

Three or four days passed in which I was so busy with my company that I didn't even think of Janie and her family.

Then, to my great astonishment, SHE called ME! She wanted me to come swimming and I truthfully would have liked to have gone, but I had a job to get out which might last for days to come. Also I had no idea how long the company was staying. I had to refuse and explain this to her.

She sounded sincerely disappointed and reluctantly accepted my hope to be free and come next week.

We chatted a long time--about the war scare and the draft and the problems of immigration etc. She said she had made an ultimatum (too)--that she was going over to get her parents the end of the month no matter what N or anyone else decided to do.

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I had sent for a free copy of the story of Michaelangelo, but had given up on every getting it, and had put in a reserve at the library for their copy to read. I now got a notice it was in, and the thought occurred to me that I could send N the free copy if it came--it would give me the excuse to contact him that I felt was needed after this long interim.

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One blow follows another. Suddenly there are a couple more inescapable

involvements for me at the time N will be here, and, worst of all--a very crushing blow--mother refuses to go back with my sister!

I am getting more and more resigned to not seeing N. I feel suddenly to have aged a great deal and, though there still remains a feeling of camaraderie with men, still none seem so RIGHT, so MINE as N--even now--There is something there between us----

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About a week later:

My guests are still with me, still indefinite about how long they are going to stay. I have taken upon myself to get Janie some Air Raid Shelter literature based on one of our conversations and as a means of keeping in touch. But I have been frustrated in an opportunity to break away to see her or call her.

Today I gave up and decided to call her and try to hint to her that I still wasn't able to come. It was difficult to convey my message for I couldn't get away from my sister--a jealous type person.

Janie answered the phone with a cheerful "Hi!" and I tried to explain to her. Her reaction was odd--almost desperate. She challenged me in the truth of my involvement. She clung, She kept talking. She poured out her woes. She begged me to come, reminding me that

the weather would soon be too cold for swimming. She asked me if I was through with that job I had been working on, and when I said "No" with a sigh, (for it, too, had been a long, drawn out, frustrating thing) she said, "Oh, come now, Lorna (with that odd little lilt she and N give to my name)-- you MUST be finished with it by now--"

Then she went on to tell me she was going over to get "i nonni" this week-end and "that was THAT"--that she hadn't heard a single word from any of them. This attempt to force everything alarmed me--I was terribly afraid she'd blow everything sky high after all this time--.

The whole conversation left me even more depressed and frustrated. I was getting tired, tired, tired--and most desperate.

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By the next day I was nearly crazy with the fear of a break in the relationship at this late date. Janie was leaving this week end; she was angry with me; their plans were still unsettled; I was tied up--how would I ever know what happened after all this long wait?

I was determined to take the pamphlets to her at whatever cost. I tried frantically all day to break away from my family and still keep my destination secret, for there was still a faint hope mother might go if she didn't suspect why I wanted her to go so badly. But I was unable to make the break that

afternoon. So I planned to go that evening. What happened? A violent electrical storm broke over us--so terrible that a building downtown caught fire--no night to go calling.

How unhappy I was! I felt time running swiftly between my fingers. I do not want the end of August and the end of my thin, weary hopes to come!

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I awoke in the middle of the night to wrestle with my emotional dilemma--the only time I could be alone any more! I thought how the "pattern" had been building, building this last week. I thought about my intuitive feeling that I HAD to go to Janie--and how that unexpected storm held me off. I felt delayed, held off. I felt as if the time wasn't "right". And I remembered how things never worked out for my if I seemed to force the "pattern"--how miraculously things worked out if I just rode along with it and quit trying to engineer it. So I decided that is what I must do. I resigned myself again to "che sara, sara".

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It was in this mood of sad acceptance the next day that I watched my hopes of seeing Janie before she left seem to dissipate and disappear in the day's events.

When suddenly Bang! Bang! I found myself caught in an unexpected change of

sequences that put me in my sister's car with her and her fat, fat daughter heading for Janie's. (It ~~wen't~~ work; it won't work! I thought. It isn't "right"!)

I left my guests in the car and took the pamphlets into Janie's house. There was much scurrying and cries of "It's Lorna!"

Then came Janie's cheery "Come in! Come in!"--the insistence on staying, the offer of coffee; the inviting of the others in; my showing off of the house; the pressure to sit and talk.

I tried to fight it for I wanted none of the displays of snobbery and prejudice I had learned to expect from other members of my family, but I fought a losing battle.

It was with a sigh of relief that I saw my faint hope that this sister might prove different materialize when she caught up my bait of "foreign glamor".

The conversation dwelt on foreign foods, things Italian. I got Janie started on Sicilian history and customs and legends. Lilly joined in, and my sister ate it up. Janie was aglow.

Then the mailman came. Silently I thought of how I'd so often wanted to be here when he did--perhaps bringing a long-awaited letter from N. And how it had never happened that way. I watched Janie furtively to see, but she only glanced at the mail, sat down and joined in the conversation again. With a sigh

I, too, turned my attention back to what was being said.

But, what was this? Janie was fumbling with a letter in her hands, surreptitiously trying to open it as one does (but N doesn't!) when one has guests but is anxious to read some long awaited news.

Thinking it was perhaps a letter from her folks and knowing how anxious she'd be to read it, I started to tell her to go ahead, but didn't have time before I heard her say to my sister, "Pardon me if I read a letter from my brother-- I haven't heard from him for two months!--" (A lie!)

Her brother? Her BROTHER! Yet, somehow-- I knew--of course--it had to be--the storm---the storm that delayed me until today when the letter and I would both come together----

Janie was beginning to read snatches-- explaining to my sister--(and at the same time informing me)--that N wrote that he would be up for one week at the end of the month. Where should he come? Spokane--or Yakima? (He did not know his parents were in Spokane? There had been no correspondence between Spokane and Los Angeles in all this time?) Janie went on explaining--explaining---

"N will come up--" rang in my ears.
JANIE! My heart turned over in me!
Janie! What are you SAYING?

Suddenly I realized she was blithely exposing my carefully guarded secret-- about N's coming up--to the biggest tattle tale in our family--who would

trot it right back to mother--who would proceed in a hundred little ways to spoil any hopes I had of seeing N alone----
Now there was really no hope--after waiting all spring--all summer--and only one more week to go. This was it! This was the way it was meant to be! O God! It was all over----as Janie said--so little time--only one more week-----

and it was all ruined----

I listened numbly to Janie explaining to my sister how her parents would go down to Los Angeles now and leave from there and N wouldn't have to come up again----(all over,--all over--never more--never more---) The rest of the visit was as nothing to me.

There had been a strange something in the air when Janie started reading excerpts from N's letter, glancing at me and getting my silent message---(I hear you, Janie, I hear you; but play it down--hold it, for I can't bear it! She KNEW! And I knew she knew. One of those moments.

Twice in that long, long moment I felt solidity slip out from under me; I felt infinite, infinite sadness. I felt as if I were going to pieces--then--I caught myself. Then--I'm going to cry! I'm going to break down! Right here in front of everyone! Help me! Help me! Whatever is the matter with me, I thought? Just a split second of eternity it lasted--and was gone. But it puzzled me.... I recalled it afterwards. JANIE was DOING SOMETHING TO ME! That's the way it felt.

And so home---home to the evening's plans---

Which were to go see a show. Who cared?
A film about France--who cared? Who
cares about FRANCE? And here was an extra
film--oh dear!

I was alerted instantly. (For YOU,
Lorna, it seemed to say--for YOU, you
who are reading about Michaelangelo and
Italy--) "This is a color film through
the beautiful town of Assissi, Italy--"

Then the picture we'd come to see--what
is this? The hero is dark, foreign;
looks like N! The story was one of
self-sacrifice and ironic frustrations,
not the usual sentimental trivia. I
was completely, utterly absorbed--moved
to my very core--as I had not been since
N left. The tears poured down my cheeks.
The sufferings of the N-like hero nearly
killed me.

Time to go--gather yourself together--
put on your mask--(who says those in
the THEATER wear the masks?)--go to a
place to eat--put unwanted food next
to that aching heart. Music is playing--
oh no!--it is too familiar--I must not
listen--I will burst into tears---I did
not allow my memory to furnish the name--
of that song--the words. For me it was
N--N's "message" to me today--I do not
know what it was--I did not dare know---

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Later--the emotional crisis--reading
my book, watching people enact the return
of a loved one--I realize I CAN'T see
N for the first time in a roomful of
people--for we could not hide it--what
we feel for each other--it would fill

the room with crackling lightning for a
all to see--even if we could restrain
ourselves from flying into each other's
arms--and I couldn't--I COULDN'T!! Nick!!
I WANT you!

Am I right, Nick? Am I right?

--even across thirteen years--and all
my wrinkles? Love, love! What a strange,
awesome thing you are!

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I also learned today that the job that
kept me from seeing Janie so long was
burned up in the fire I mentioned.

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I wrote my heart out that night. It was
two a.m. before I quit. And then I dreamed
restlessly the rest of the night.

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This morning my heart is so full that
my eyes overflow and I feel fit to burst
with longing and love and impotence!
I feel trapped. I feel desperate. I
am afraid. I would do ANYTHING this
morning to assure my seeing N. in that
short week. I have thought of the most
fantastic ways to do so.

And yet there is NOTHING I can do. I
cannot even think of a reason to write N.
which is what I finally resorted to when
I got to work this morning and found I

had an hour alone. I started to write and then realized I could say nothing, for his letter that Janie read had been addressed to his parents and I should reveal the fact that Janie had opened it. I "shouldn't" be knowing that he was coming for a week, since his parents are still gone. I could not write.

What a frustrating summer!

Now I am obsessed with getting to see Janie privately before she leaves day after tomorrow, for I want to know WHAT ELSE was in that letter she might not be able to say in front of my ~~sis~~ter? IF her parents come back with her--and that I do not know for sure, either--there will be no more chance for private talks between her and me. And I do not see how I can get to see her before then, unless mysister leaves before then? Is she? Is mother going with her? Is my son coming home for a visit while N is here? Are Janie's folks coming back with her or will N visit there?

I can only endure--until time solves these thing.

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Next day: My sister is not going this week ~~edd~~. I cannot see Janie before she leaves. Mother is not going.

I tried to call Janie but she had company, Lilly said. I could hear them laughing and talking.

Saturday I sneaked by Janie's house on my way to meet mysister to see if the car was gone, which would mean that they had gone to Spokane.

To my great consternation both cars were there! Did this mean that "i nonni" were staying in Spokane to await N's visit there?

I was so alarmed I drove by in hopes someone would be outside and could give me a quick explanation. Joy! They were all out in the patio. I called out, "I thought you were going to Spokane?"

They shook their heads at me, and I was about to drive on, when Janie said to her family "I have to see her" and came running out to the car, motioning for them to stay there.

I was delighted. This was more than I'd hoped for. She began an explanation:

They had changed their minds. Since N's was coming so soon--the 26th--they would let him go for a few days visit in Spokane and then pick them all up and drive back here via Coulee Dam (sightseeing) and N would leave from here that week end. (That meant he would have a day or so here--dawdling his precious time away in Spokane and sightseeing trips. It didn't sound like anybody wanted to see ME at all!)

Hopefully, I said, "But that week-end is a HOLIDAY--Labor Day--" "Well," she said, "he'd probably stay over then--" (over the three-day week end)--a few more

days! Then, woefully, I thought, o no he won't. The planes will be crowded and N will use that as an excuse to leave earlier--I know him---)

I was trying hard to follow her--to concentrate on dates and details so I could remember, for I was in a hurry and could not take time to have her repeat.

She acted very insistent, as if she wanted to make sure that I understood. (Why would she care so much that I get all the details?)

I kept my dark glasses on and the engine running. The first was to hide my eyes for fear they'd reveal my anguish at the shortness of the visit and the second to show my "casualness", my "just happened -to-dro-by-ness".

I was desperate. Here was time really running out; Janie had changed the subject; Lilly was coming; my sister was waiting; I could not write to N. I had know that I was going to see N. This was my last chance! I had to say something in a hurry--even if it was a bald appeal to Janie----

I interrupted her chatter--
"I'd like to see that dumb brother of yours while he's here, but I can't figure it out---"

She stopped. Thought. (I was not encouraged at the hesitation.) She said, "Why, he'd be here a few days---"
There was no invitation, no encouragement. Lilly was there listening by this

time. There was something between Janie and me--something not quite happy. It saddened me.

That was all. The conversation turned to other things--because of Lilly's being there and I left, promising I'd come to swim next week as soon as my company left as she had been begging me to when I interrupted her. Why is she so anxious for me to come that last day, or so before she leaves for Spokane? Something about it alarms me--discourages me.

It's all very discouraging. At least for my private hopes. What good will a few days of holiday family activities on both ends do me?

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August 21

Trapped by my conviction that N awaited more encouragement from me; by my guests' continual delays in departing; N's imminent arrival; my fear of betraying Janie if I disclosed knowledge of his coming, and my impotence in the face of all this I dashed off a last urgent appeal to N:

"I love you.

I want you.

L"

--put my lip imprint on it and mailed it. The rest is in the hands of the gods.

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Notwithstanding this noble thought, I suffered great qualms about having sent it in the next few days.

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Now I have gotten to the last day of my guests. I have one more day of taunting, goading, critcixing family friction to get through. (None of this pertains to the N situation.) This spring and summer have been too much for me. Too little of what I really want and too much frustration and torment. I was reaching a breaking point. I didn't know if I could make it through another day or not. I didn't.

Someone heckled me once too often at dinner. I flew into a screaming rage. I grabbed my purse and flew out of the house, not knowing where I was going. Not caring.

I walked blindly, desperately--RIGHT INTO JANIE'S CAR ROUNDING THE CORNER! It couldn't be! It mustn't be! Not NOW! But it was. Please don't let them recognize me or offer to pick me up. I'm not in themood! Please!

They see me. They wave--Janie and Lilly. They slow down. Janie says, "Where are you GOING?" (Like N that day at the bank--"Where are you going?")

I was too confused to do anything but confess the truth. Making a mock gesture of great rage, I said, "I'm MAD!!--I'm going for awalk!" Janie looked at me oddly, said nothing. Then slowly eased her car in and was gone.

I sat out my emotion in a nearby park, frustrated at any better outlet. I wondered what I could say to Janie when I saw her again except perhaps something I read once--that "we have more to fear from the atoms bombs within us than those without"--she and her war fears!

How odd it was to run ~~into~~ her like that! The timely coincidence of that encounter nearly finished me and the tears came crowding. Only the exposure of the public place kept them back.

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The next day the guests finally left, and I called Janie, as I had promised, though I was terribly weary of people and situations.

I can't say it was a very animated conversation. She was full of assurances that I could always come swimming--I didn't have to ask, etc., but she seemed to me to dwell more on getting as much swimming in as possible before the season ended as on wanting the pleasure of my company.

And there was "good" news. She said they now planned to come back from Spokane a day earlier than they'd expected to, next Wednesday. One more day of N's being here! A little more chance that I might get to see him. One week to wait!

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As if to prepare me, the little Italian salesman that reminds me so much of N came in today. I happened to look up--and there he was, standing there!

Yet how hard it was to summon that resemblance. THIS is like N? I thought. Did N talk like THAT? This man was very hard to understand. (This is good for me, I thought. This is a test.) A test that made me realize that the feeling of N is gone--it's gone. When did it go? Why, IF I see N, it will be like strangers meeting again!

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More than two years I've waited! I've spent months this year grooming and clothes-planning and keeping ready! And NOW he comes--for a mere three-four days, on a week-end when I've never dressed up, after a long session of guests that leaves me tired, disgruntled, unkempt--at my very worst!

I no longer react with the great emotion that used to elicit pages of rapture from me after a Chianello contact. Familiarity has bred contempt. I see now why I wanted N to stay, why I wanted us to see a lot of each other before he left. We would have wearied of each other and it would have been easy to part!

I am overcome with a great lassitude. And so is Janie. An odd, new kind of indifference. Are we tired? Is it the interminable hot weather? Is it dread at impending events? the threat of war? I do not know. Only that something is different.

First, after Janie's urgent insistence that I come this week, she gave me little encouragement yesterday. And I

found myself feeling little interest in going. I even almost forgot about it and had to force myself to go.

And when I arrived and drove in the driveway all was silent, the doorway even newly draped as it had never been before. The son and a friend in swimming completely ignored me. Even the dogs were silent. I sat. I re-parked the car. Nothing happened. No cheery greeting or invitation from behind the kitchen window as usual.

Finally I got out, went to the door, rapped. No response. I entered through the curtain. Silence. Darkness. At a loss, I called out, "Is anybody home?"

Janie called back from somewhere far off in the house, not cheerily, not happily as usual. Then she appeared, NOT arrayed in her new swimsuit and eager to show it off as I expected, but carelessly dressed in rumpled shorts, and looking distraught, tense, harrassed.

I said, "Oh, am I too early?" A mechanical negation. She excused herself to put on her suit. She took a long time.

I wandered the room aimlessly, finding nothing to interest me. All was neat and spare. All signs of intimate family living out of sight. No family photos on the mantel any longer. No Italian magazines lying about as before. No handiwork of *il nonno's* in evidence.

Before she disappeared Janie had crossly attacked the freezer contents, fretfully explaining that she had company coming

for dinner and finally slammed two frozen packages of meat on the counter.

When she reappeared in a provocative cerise suit she asked me to fasten the back for her, an intimate job that rather embarrassed me.

All the time she was chattering, chattering in a disinterested, impatient, disjointed way that left me ill at ease and confused.

I gathered something about other company--women--coming to swim. I couldn't quite understand. She got a little cross with me. I felt unwanted, somehow in disfavor.

She went out to swim in a desultory way, as if it were an unwelcome duty, after explaining that we could swim for half an hour and then must get out and wait for her while she went downtown to get Lilly. Then we could all go in again when she got back. It was all very confusing. Finally I understood that the "rules of the house" were not to have anyone in the pool when Janie wasn't there and, if we didn't like it, it was just too bad.

We went to the pool, which was taken over already by the two boys, I wondering why we didn't wait for the guests.

I tried to summon admiration for Janie's new swimming achievements and she seemed pleased as a child, though I could actually see very little difference. She kept plaguing me to watch her--just as a child does. I did not understand.

When presently, the guests came, she seemed in no hurry to greet them, but finally she clambered out. She and the two women, who had brought their children, stood gaily conversing on the patio, while I stood ignored and at a loss in the water, feeling disgusted at the pangs of jealousy I felt.

When she finally brought them out and introduced them, it all seemed very difficult. They seemed not at all interested in me or the least bit receptive to my advances.

In the pool Janie alternated periods of fawning, private conversations with the younger woman while ignoring the rest of us with spells of seeking me out and clinging to me and ignoring THEM. I do not know whether it was clumsy hostess gesture or social ambivalence on her part. Anyway, I had long since wished I were somewhere else, even before they came.

There was one embarrassing moment when Janie was urging them to bring a picnic lunch and come and spend the day, not including me in the invitation. They did not leap at her proposal, I noticed, but agreed somewhat warily. Then they all suddenly turned and looked at me silently. Janie laughed and gestured, "Oh, SHE! SHE works!" It was all rather crude.

We just stood around in the water. It was too full of brash children and bodies to swim. Finally, an alarm went off, and Janie left in an erratic manner, ushering us all out and leaving the gate unlocked for all her admonitions, calling as she left that there was coffee if we wanted it.

I heard one woman remark to the other as we got out of the pool about Janie, "Isn't she a dear?" Somehow it did not imply great intimacy. Nor did their ensuing remarks after Janie's departure. They seemed quite familiar with the house, but equally unfamiliar with Janie's private life. They were strangely resistant to conversation when I tried and I was relieved when Janie came back.

But she was still in a bad mood, cross at Lilly and cross at me when I interfered. A halting conversation began in which I was not included. Suddenly and rather deliberately Janie said something about not having time to write letters, and then, to my surprise, said, "I should write to my brother, because----he wrote my sister and said he hoped I wasn't mad because I hadn't written---After all, she said, "He IS COMING Saturday.."

I had a feeling she said it definitely for my benefit, especially when the others showed little interest or reaction, only murmuring politely. What did it mean? Noticing the other's lack of interest and Janie's discomfiture, I led the conversation away from the subject.

Later she brought up the subject again by hoping the weather would be warm while N was there so they could spend a lot of time in the pool--although she didn't know if N could swim or cared for it at all. Ensued a trivial exchange among the ladies on how easy it would be for him to pick up swimming trunks on sale now, etc. while I sat thinking (No, Janie. No. N doesn't swim nor will he care for that kind of diversion

at all. How little you know your brother! My guess is that he will sit rooted to the patio the whole time, smoldering with boredom.)

Now the women became engrossed in clothes talk, poring over a catalog. It went on and on. I began to make excuses about leaving. No one stopped me. No one paid any attention to me, except Lilly. They merely acknowledged my adieus but did not even look up as I started the car, backed up and left. Strange, I thought. Very strange. Janie ALWAYS walks me to the car, tends my coffee cup--or at least waves goodbye.

I went away very puzzled and depressed. And very dubious about getting to see N. I thought about Janie's always general insistence I come swimming, yet not once has she intimated that I come to see N while he is there. In fact my one mention of a desire to see him while he was here had been met with nothing but eye-flicking silence.

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5 a.m. the next morning.
I am alone tonight--both my kids gone.
What an opportunity--if N were here--
if mother were gone--if N were different---

I thought I would be filled with happiness when I knew N was coming and here I am not sleeping well, feeling unwell, having horrible nightmares; full of apprehension and dread at the blow I expect; the results of this test of all of us--N, Janie, and I.

I hope to God it will not end in bitterness and recrimination. I hope I have

the courage and wisdom to see this thing through. ...It is dawn....

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Friday.

As the time draws near and I have no further assurance of seeing N. I begin to plot and plan some way to make them commit themselves. Whacking my brain I finally hit upon the idea of asking them all to coffee, since I knew they wouldn't agree to any more ambitious sortie. Even though it meant perhaps sacrificing a chance to see N alone. Anything! Anything! I just wanted to SEE him.

But how to do it as it had to be done, lightly, easily, tentatively? Draw them a "keepsake" invitation! I grabbed my pencils and poured out all my observations of the Chianellos onto paper. When I got through, just as my kids arrived, it was good. I had to put it aside.

When I looked at it later I was shocked. It was TOO good! It was stark, naked, brutal truth. Too brutal to use as I intended, but too good to waste. I wanted to share it with someone who would understand. There was no one but Janie. I wasn't sure.

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The next afternoon I had a wonderful opportunity to deliver it, but I still wasn't sure. I sensed danger. But I went leaving it to chance whether Janie would be there or not.

The car was there. I approached the house, tapping on the window as I went by to warn them. My mood was serene and sure because of having read an article which helped me see N as a difficult personality, inflicting unnecessary suffering on others.

Lilly greeted me with great warmth, "HELLO, Lorna! Come in! Come in!" Janie's voice chimed in, not quite so warm but enough so to put me at ease.

I was taken aback to find both kids there for I intended to have a showdown with Janie. Nor was I encouraged by the son's ignoring me. (They are good barometers of their parents' feelings toward me, I've found.) But Lilly urged me to sit and Janie pressed coffee on me and settled herself for a talk, acting like her old self again.

Janie launched into a long listing of complaints, then, spying the paper protruding from my purse and wise to my ways now, demanded, "What have you brought me? What do you have there?"

I had been waiting for the kids to leave, but her rude demand made me produce it now. Hoping to enlist her understanding of what I intended and why, I began to warn and explain. But she wasn't

listening. It went over like the proverbial lead balloon. It was wrong. I shouldn't have brought it. She took it too personally, as I had feared. She didn't understand. I tried to explain. She still didn't understand. She floundered for something to say. I gave up!

Suddenly she let out an amazing guffaw that showed the entire inside of her mouth and cried, "It looks exactly LIKE Nick!" It was a dubious victory, for it indicated ridicule, dislike of her younger brother on her part--when I had hoped for insight.

When I began to explain about asking the four of them to coffee she reacted with the now-familiar symptoms of being put on the spot. She was silent. Her eyes flicked while her mind searched for a way out. She didn't want this. She rejected it by her manner. (How like those once baffling reactions of N's!). It was just simply something that didn't appeal to her. That was obvious.

And, again like N, she began to demur-- "It was a HOLIDAY week-end--so busy-- wouldn't I be busy, too? (She HOPED!) And, N-like again, when she sensed she was cornered, the grim challenge, "Why don't YOU come HERE?" Not joy, not wanting, not thanks. My turn to demur.

She slammed the drawing down, dismissed it, ignored it--as she always does with the papers I bring her--left it lying, discarded. (All my hard work! I wanted it if SHE didn't!) And, with

that gesture she dismissed the whole topic and went quickly into something else.

My "raison d'etre" was over. I wanted to finish my business and leave.

The phone rang. And suddenly I was embroiled in a family argument in Lilly's defense, championing her as I have often sensed she liked me to do. It involved ~~a desire of~~ an invitation for Lilly that would keep her from going to Spokane with them. I was delighted at her display of boredom with the interminable family, Italian-speaking sessions, with her passionate announcement that Uncle Nick did not care at all about them as Janie was maintaining. I was pleased to see Janie confirm my suspicions of forcing Italianate family conclaves against private wishes. It helped my necessary disillusioning process.

When she hung up Janie chattered on, but kept glancing at the clock and I prepared to leave, silently planning to force my settlement with her whether she would or not before I left.

So, leaving, I said, "I should feel very bad not to see N at all, but I understood the situation and did not expect them to go out of their way---"

She said, TOO firmly, that "she would arrange something--not to worry." (She admitted defeat. I had had my showdown--and won, at least a little. It wasn't until later that I realized I still waited on her.)

I think Janie understands that my reason for cultivating her is N, and when N goes back--BECAUSE N goes back--she and I are "through". This, I believe, is the unspoken meaning behind her telling me today, apropos of nothing that she and I won't be able to see much of each other (for she has made plans to take care of a small baby when school starts)--"Kid!" she said, pretending an affection that overdid itself a bit, but actually giving us both a face-saving way out by mutual silent agreement. I did not bother to point out to her that the reasons she gave could be easily surmounted.

Underneath everything is our knowing that she and I are PRETENDING and that she is warning me that she does not sanction my "pursuit" of her little brother. I wish I could deny this, but I cannot.

This is all going to end as I knew it must; a love that lives apart and feeds on intangibility, a love without possession. There will not be much more to the story. It is almost over--there will be only the interesting watching to see what happens.

N is getting ready to leave tonight. I wonder what he is thinking--and feeling? The silent full moon looks down on me with "simpatico", as it did on one of those first nights after he left and I thought of how it performs a "triangulation" between separated lovers.

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So N is going to spend five days in Spokane, when he had his choice and he could have been here all this time! I have given up!

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N arrives in the state of Washington today, and I am in a state of receptivity to receive some "sign", some psychic "message" from him. But, truthfully, there is NOTHING--only the sudden emergence of grim reality.

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I only note here that tonight N is in Spokane and I don't feel a thing--no "message"--no nothin'--just depression.

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Thinking back, I am beginning to note how Janie and mother dominate N and me. Why don't we arrange our own affairs between ourselves? Why do we give in to the plans and plottings of others? How cowardly we are!

I now see that neither of us would have the courage to fight for our love against our families, so we retreat into romantic "ill-starred" love, and art, and work, and loneliness, and suffering, pretending we are NOBLE and WISE. When we are only weak--AFRAID to love!

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The Esgates leave today for Spokane. Tomorrow night N will be sleeping only a few blocks from me. Not so long ago

I would have written "N comes tomorrow!"
in great capitals. Note that I do not.

I have gotten ready for him: I have
cleaned house, made myself and my clothes
as attractive as possible, avoided all
commitments for the time he will be
here, sized up every move my associates
and family are apt to make, mentally
and physically prepared. Yet, all the
time I do it, I remember how many times
I did it before--to no avail.

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I feel no "messages", no "psychic pull",
no emotion, no elation or excitement.
In fact--I don't much CARE! I even
ALMOST wish I wouldn't see him; ALMOST
look forward to the time when he'll be
gone for good--forever!

For I can't help but know that his pro-
crastination, the shortness of his
visit, his going to Spokane, the utter
lack of communication are bad omens.

I am beginning to realize the futility
of a few days--then gone forever. Why
stir it all up again? Except perhaps
to prove to ourselves that it ~~is~~ all
over? THAT is why I feel I should see
him at least once more, whether HE
wants it or not. Perhaps, N, it will be
the CURE!

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I got all ready for N. Now I have even gotten ready for disappointment! I have armed myself with two books--Italian, of course--are there any other kind?--one to disillusion me in case, one to absorb me while recovering.

Mother is acting vè y suspicious. She has turned down invitation a ter invitation to go away this week-end--for NO REASON. This she admits herself. It is as if she has planted herself immovably to GUARD me--to stave off any chance of my being taken away from her? To me it seems as if we are involved in a grim cold war. I could weep! I could kill her with my bare hands!

She makes it even worse by pretending nothing is up. She'd be fantastically indignant if I accused her of such intentions. Why can't she quietly and unselfishly fade away for a few days?

And why can't Janie give us this tiny bit that isn't going to hurt anyone but ourselves? Since when have they all become so MORAL? Oh! PEOPLE!

As I said, I alsmot wish these few days were over with their agenizing, waiting, hoping, frustrations. These restless hours when I HAVE to be away from home and I'll NEVER know if anyone called or came!

Right now all I want is achance to LOOK at N--to look in his eyes--and see what I can see! I have to know! I don't want to live with this crazy, nagging thing the rest of my life! Help!

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I detoured around by Janie's house today to see if the car were gone. I hoped it would be for then they might be back sooner. It was there.

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The weather man predicts a change from this hot weather. I hope! I hope! For I want no swimming sessions. And I want them all cooped up so they'll get on each other's nerves so N will want to get out!

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My "bibliotherapy" is working fine! I have been reading for the hundreth time accounts of the Italian male's modus operandi amore and it has brought back my sense of humor.

After all, it's exactly what I want-- a dash of very romantic love WITHOUT STRINGS! Why am I complaining? An Italian affair may be stereotyped, but I pity the American woman who has not had the experience!

It helped pull me out of my doldrums and made me determined--if I see N again--to give him a run for his money! Now I am GLAD I forced Janie into asking me over!

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I shall start a countdown now.

Today the Esgates should leave Spokane with "i nonni" and N. I do not expect to hear from anyone tonight.

My mood is cross and irritable. My family, who usually leaves me all alone, hangs about tonight. Why don't they go someplace?

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I try a little Bible-opening:

"I have much to write you, but I do not care to set it down with pen and ink.

I hope to see you very soon and we will talk face to face. Peace be with you".

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I am getting dinner tonight, wondering where they are now, and thinking how there is a certain peace and rightness and consistency in N8s NOT coming, of his remaining in character so I can count on him in the future, when--what's this I hear on the radio?

"NICK nack, paddy-whack, give the ^{dog}~~man~~ a bone! This old man came rolling home!" Verse after verse of that joyous jingle--with all its "NICKS" ~~came home~~ "choruses!"

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Am becoming obsessed with watching the streets approaching Janie's house. Perhaps I might glimpse them on their way home! With this in mind I loiter over yardwork, but here comes mother! Not, as usual, immersed in television or a

book. No! Not tonight! Tonight she follows me around like a lost dog. All I wanted was to get rid of her.

She must have sensed it. She must have noted my unusual interest in passing cars, for suddenly she said, "Aren't Janie's folks supposed to come home? When are they coming?" as blithely as you please. (Old dog-in-the-manger!) I answered her curtly and shortly, claiming I didn't know and was so cool with her that she finally wandered off home in that martyred way she has-- with its intent and effect of making one feel guilty.

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One day, one evening gone. How many to go? Is N here, or not? Nothing tells me. No "sigh", no feeling-- nothing is different--except, it is raining--gently. It weeps?

I spent the evening waiting as ^{those} who who love so often do--waiting--fruitlessly, of course, for it was really too soon. I had forgotten the ~~small~~ agonies of having a loved one near, but not near enough.

And I had not realized how apathetic and indifferent I have become--about all things--as people do when there is no hope...

I thought I would be GLAD to have N back--so close--How I envy those who have eager loves that communicate as quickly as possible!

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I am over-reading, over-smoking; taking naps and sleeping pills and then not able to sleep. I find myself more emotionally keyed up than I have been in a long, long time. I am nasty to my children.

Everything's wrong. This morning it's cold and rainy spoiling all the costume plans I'd made in case I saw N today. And I overslept, so there isn't time to change.

THIS is love? THIS is that wonderful glow that makes everything wonderful? I feel not the slightest happiness or joy or excitement at the thought of N being close. I feel only irritation, anger, martyrdom--a sense of injustice at his not letting me know anything. I am beginning to toy with the idea of turning Janie down if she DOES suggest anything!

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Thursday: I did not really expect anyone to contact me last night, but I prepared, anyway. Tonight is the second night I have prepared darefully for a lover that didn't come--that I sat alone all evening--waiting--keeping poor mother away with tongue-lashings I cannot explain to her now.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" I read in my book, and--"You can get accustomed to anything--it becomes a matter of habit--we accept what happens to us and cease to rebel against it."

My heart is sick--even tho gh I knew it would be this way. I sit and suffer and plan revenge--how I will not go now even if Janies does invite me, for it is too late. It is already too late. Even though it is only 9:15 and actually the first possible night N COULD have come, it is still "too late". For passion, love, even mere kindliness would have brought me at least a phone call by now.

And I have put myself on the spot by making that deal with Janie--for now I must sit and wait until summoned!

It is unutterably quiet. There is not a sound--after the wild, sunshine-saturated wind-storm this afternoon! After the cold, gloomy, cloudy morning. After the melodramatic, sudden change from our long, long hot spell. It has not been a day to go wandering the streets--even to a reunion with a lover--this I confess.

I shall go MAD sitting here in this strange, silent vacuum, aware of N and all of them noisily, boisterously chattering away just beyond a couple row of houses! How ridiculous it would be for N and me to sit out his entire visit just two blocks from each other!

Yet, though I feel desperation and capitulation creeping up on me, I cannot, will not go to them! This is the test. This is IT. Only a shallow feeling could let me wait this long. Passion would have let me know by now. Why prolong the pretense? Janie said, without real reason that "we would be unable to get together". It is time for me to take the hint.

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Friday morning.

September 1.

The beginning of the long holiday weekend after which N must be back at work.

Two days have gone by since Janie said they would be back, and I have heard from no one. This is N's last "day of grace" to contact me as far as I am concerned. No grudging invitation from Janie now is going to make up for N's default--whatever its motivation.

No belated contact now is going to minimize the fact that September 1 means to me that the summer is over--the whole long summer that I have waited for him--that he has kept promising to come--since JUNE!

To me, my "September Song" begins today--"the days grow short when you reach September----I haven't got time for the waiting game/---" All I want now is for Tuesday to come--the holiday to be over--for N to be gone again--for the beginning of my old age. I must face facts.

What are they?

In a wordly sense: I have fallen for an Italian's line of patter.

In a humane sense: I have been idealistic, and failed.

In a psychological sense: I have again made unsatisfactory social adjustments.

In a religious sense: I have erred in faith and humility.

In an emotional sense: I have displayed the faults of my upbringing.

I dream of revenge, but it is not needed.

Janie and N carry their own punishment with them--even as I do.

I am in a bad mood.

Later:

I hope everyone stays gone for awhile--as they are now, for I have a great hurt to write out and a broken heart to somehow get control of by the time everyone needs me.

Let me try to tell how this first day of September went, the day that is symbolic to me of the end of this summer of waiting, the beginning of the autumn years of my life, the last renunciation of love and youth and hope--forever.

It rained last night--a little. This morning the sun was shining, but there is a terrible, terrible wind blowing that is cold and it has not let up all day. It not only ruined my carefully prepared wardrobe plans, for this week-end, which I pathetically spent many hours and some precious dollars over, but it tore at me, slapped at me, BUFFETED me till I could not help but think of it, too, as symbolic.

I wrote my gloomy record this morning, then dragged myself reluctantly to work with a heavy, heavy heart.

There everything went wrong. It was a trying day. Even my artistic integrity was sorely tried. Yet, at one point, work itself cheered me enough to think, "Of course I'll go if Janie calls. I'll go--and listen to N's tale--just listen-sympathetically. That will be all. But first I will bravely tell Janie,

"I won't harm your little brother; don't worry." I would simply be the harmless older woman. That was my best point of the day.

Then I got to thinking how I should just tell them, "We Americans do not understand how you Italians keep sons in the family imprisoned until they are old and gray--"

For I was getting mad, very mad! I had wept and prayed last night--just as I used to do. And, as used to happen, I hoped today things would change and my "little miracles" would start. All day I have looked for the signs of them, waited for that "guided" feeling. But, try as I might, there was nothing--nothing.

And I kne why, though I wouldn't admit it. Before, I'd give up, REALLY give up, and come to that peaceful feeling when I became nothing but love to give to others--expecting nothing, wanting nothing for myself. This feeling was lacking. I still was being selfish--FORCING it.

Even though I played the "open-Bible" game and the messages was "Religion of the mouth is not religion. Religion is helping widows (mother?) and orphans (Julie?)--" And I have been mean to mother, neglecting Julie. I vowed to try harder to be nice, but my heart was too full and heavy. At least, I thought, I am LIVING. I am FEELING again!

Abruptly I remembered, "This is the LAST day! The last day for that chance that I have been plotting and awaiting since early spring--for N to carry out my suggestions to appear here at work!

Immediately I began to carry out my part of these suggestions, roaming the store and trying to set up my schemes; but all was wrong. Circumstances were against me. And, of course, N did not appear--nor Janie, nor did I see either of their cars as I searched the streets on my way home.

The wind still blew. And things still went wrong. I was sore beset to find some clue, some answer. I was crazy to know IF they'd gone? If they wer back? I had hoped to have the car today in order to spy on Janie's house.

But mother has not been letting me take the car lately. In fact she even insisted on picking me up, which at first delighted me, for I was anxious to get home and see if perhaps, just perhaps there was some message for me there. Then I was thrown into despair as mother dawdled--she had errands.

My first stroke of luck and opportunity came when she couldn't find what she was looking for. Fighting her baffled resistance I insisted on taking the car and doing her errand for her, even inventing some of my own to assure the need.

Away I went, my heart in my mouth, my brain frenziedly contriving routes of espionage. I should not be driving, I realized. I was too distraught, too obsessed with what I intended to do--and horrifying revelation!--unconsciously trying to kill myself, for I had some narrow scrapes, which I found I ENJOYED!

I went at a snail's pace by the one thoroughfare that offered me a brief glimpse of Esgate's carport, thanking my lucky stars for the bicycling girls who got in my way and gave me an excuse to slow down.

No red car! The family car. The one they'd travel in! But Harry's business car there. At first I thought--Janie's gone to the store; Harry's home for lunch. Then, my heart turning over, I realized it wasn't the lunch hour. Perhaps they'd gone for a little drive--a "gita" with "i nonni"--on a day like this--that almost blew the car off the road? No!

I went on my silly errand, my brain awirl. I HAD to get another look, a Surer look--from somewhere where I couldn't be seen prowling around. What if Janie or N were looking out a window? If they were trying to hurt me, get rid of me, they'd feel so smug, so victorious to see me pathetically trying to find out something.

I prowled the next street and found I could not see, so rashly roared right by the house, confirming my mounting suspicions that there was no sign of life.

In horrified alarm I realized they had not come back AT ALL! They are still in Spokane! They must have changed their plans! In spite of Janie's insistence that she HAD to be back--she had promised to start caring for this baby--and that Harry could only take a couple of days.

Reluctantly, I saw the picture: they had been talked into staying over, FOR N IS NOT COMING TO YAKIMA AT ALL! He will leave from Spokane. And they had

decided there was no use in his coming all the way back here for just a day or two. He must simply have bought a round trip ticket to Spokane, knowing all the time that he would avoid Yakima--and me!

I have been eliminated! Janie had said with that scheming look, "I will manage something." She managed, all right! Oh, you mangged very well, Gianna mia!

And, too, I thought. No wonder I felt no "message" from N--only agonized hurt. He was not here! He was NOT sleeping two blocks from me! That mysterious phone call that Julie got to before I did last night when someone hung up at the sound of her voice was NOT a test call by N after all the family has gone to bed over there! No wonder I have't felt that old happy thrill of being in the same town with him--perhaps we'd meet--perhaps he's spying on me--He wasn't here!

I was so perturbed that I ran into the car door getting out, gashing a big cut in my leg and tearing my expensive stockings. Such things make the long held back tears come. Good! Good! I thought. I'll have a bloody souvenir of today!

And so home. Home to a living room full of boys playing plaintive songs of lost love at top volume. Boys who would not be leaving for an hour or so. Oh go! go! boys! Leave me with my breaking heart! Why do you pick today, THIS time to play music to me? Why? WHY?

I started to change my clothes--to take off the man-luring raiment I had so carefully prepared for the day. And,

because it was cold, too cold for my N-awaiting attire of last night I decided I might as well be comfortable--what does it matter now how I look? Yet something withheld me, some remnant, some last shred of hope. I compromised--between comfort and lure.

And I waited, furtively writing this, waited for the boys to leave, for them to stop playing "Smoke gets in your eyes" as I lit up and smoked furiously the cigarettes I had denied myself when I thought N was coming. Damn those boys and their music! Damn them!

At last the boys left and I left my writing long enough to fly to the phone and put through a fake call to the Esgates. No one answered.

My brain teemed with plans of revenge. Desperate I ran and opened the Bible again. Under my pointing finger I read, "Do not be over-hasty--you may find yourself responsible for other people's misdeeds." Ha! I thought. I'll "play it safe"; I'll read on. (Oh, the human mind!) but no. "Before God and Jesus Christ and the angels, I solemnly charge you, maintain these rules, and never pre-judge the issue--"

Oh God! Oh God! Why do you do this to me? Why do you lead me on, only to make me suffer like this?

For my insides roiled with the old hurt of Janie's and N's betrayal; of God's betrayal! The three possibilities of

expañation clamor at me, but my injured heart clamors louder, for this is a body blow. This is something I shall NEVER recover from--this second proof of my inability to capture real love--this second breaking of my heart. This absolutely utter disillusionment in the human race, leaving me NOTHING to encourage me to ever be nice to anyone again! This driving of the last wedge to open my Pandora's box of self-doubt!

The three possibilities? The worst I have just been through. The other, that they may still come home tonight for some unforeseen, unpremeditated thing might have happened. Some accident, some calamity beyond their powers to change.

The other; that N may plan to come here to stay. Perhaps they are lingering while he uses this last day to look for work in Spolane--and then they'll come, if maybe only for the holiday. But this I do not believe. Besides he would have brought his car, and I'm sure he didn't.

The truth lies somewhere, as always, between my self-centered brooding suspicions and the many evidences of their fondness for me. But it is a truth I may never, never know.

For all my instincts tell me to leave this thing alone from now on--to go on with my chin high and my heart broken, avoiding all temptations to find out, to revisit the familiar haunts, to crawl for crumbs, to mull it over, to probe the wound.
--To go on living.

And what happened after this lament?
The dam broke. At long last I broke
into uncontrollable tears.

And, as I cried, I found what that
mysterious barrier was that I hadn't
crossed this time. It was HUMILITY.

All spring, all summer, I have been consumed
with pride and lust and selfishness. It
is pride that keeps me writing now.
At last I found peace and my sense of
humor began to come back mixed up with
odd bits of wisdom and sheer rational-
ization and compensation.

At least I would be free again. Free to
be myself, to be old--and comfortable. To
sit on the sidelines, to just know and
not have to feel. To release love to
use where it belonged--with my children,
my family. Free from brooding over a
stranger who took a moment's pleasure
from me. Free from wishing for something
that could not be. Free from the ob-
session to write him.

Recovered, I spent a very pleasant evening
with my children and their friends, for
once not begrudging the time and attention
they were taking from my secret love.

As for N, I thought,
"Silly boy! I grieve to think of how
you will regret before you die your
peccati d'omissione these last three
years"1 Va bene.

Next day.

I do not deny a consuming curiosity about how this will end.

I drove by Janie's again today. Everything was the same. I am pretending to be very, brave, very philosophical, but I'm not. I even heard myself whimper aloud as I drove by the house and saw what I was afraid of seeing.

I wrote a letter to N, but I have not mailed it.

I have learned that I must be patient and wait. Perhaps I am being taught. I await.

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I am beginning to realize that there's no point in sending N the letter, for, if he could understand what it meant, it wouldn't have been necessary to write it.

Better to leave revenge to God: what they sow, they shall reap.

And now I understand what that message from the Bible meant--that I could be responsible for other people's misdeeds. For, so far, if I have done wrong, I did it unintentionally. Revenge now would be intentional. If N and Janie intentionally wronged me, I could become just the scapegoat they were looking for if I did anything mean now!

Although I am feeling great hurt, I have an odd feeling that somehow it is all right. Strangely enough, I don't feel as shattered as I think I ought to be!

Sunday.

I spent many wearying hours trying to figure out about N and Janie. Today I feel an overwhelming lassitude. Death in a walking body me. Grim hours to get through today.

I have a wedding to attend.

I slip away before going to spy on Janie's house. The car is there! THEY ARE BACK! Hating myself for a resurgence of hope, thrill, anticipation, I hurry home--maybe Janie will call!

Go to the wedding. Occurs to me during the wedding--same scene--same family--two years ago--at wedding--thinking how I'd feel if N going up aisle with someone else. Remember how I couldn't imagine it--that N would laugh-somehow...

Tried to picture N going up aisle now--seemed normal--little black-haired Italian tying himself up to dream future--ok--no emotion. Tried to pray--get church feeling--rapport with God--. Nothing. No feeling. No "message". Dull. Trite.

Get home. No call from Janie. Can't eat. Feed kids--drag around--pretending upset by world situation. Drag through day--no interest--afraid to think--feel--

Can't understand--What has happened?--What to do? Can't go on this way--Hurry, time--go. Hurry, death---

I spent Sunday and Monday--writing--writing to N. Not secretly this time--but openly in front of my family. I wrote at least six letters to N. They were all wrong, wrong. It wouldn't come right. For I sa I HAD to write--that just turning my back would be the same sort of petty revenge that I accused N off--that was breaking my heart. I searched, searched for the right thing to say. I couldn't find it. I suffered horribly. It was the "betrayal" that bothered me.

Wanting to put an end to these writings, I perused them, astounded at the VOLUME I had written these three years! I toyed with the idea of burning it all as valueless. But it has value to me--it represents three years of work; three years of my life. I kept it.

I tried to break off my interminable scribbling; to leave the house and my interminable waiting for Ja ie to call me; to force myself to turn this rejected love into some evidence of love for others. It was a great battle.

Finally I went to mother and offered to go with her to visit a trouble-wracked friend. It was not easy. And I was ashamed at the half-hearted way I did it and my immediate attempts to try to get out of it. (She accepted with alacrity.)

Bedtime found me still trying to write to N. I gave up and went to do a chore. Suddenly I went to my desk and wrote furiously in an entirely new vein of thought. Why, this is it! I thought.

Whatever made me write THIS? It is not what I intended to say at all! I laid it aside for later re-reading to get its tone.

Going to the sink to get a last drink of water before I went to bed, a star shone before my eyes as I tipped my head to drink. I said, "God, send me a miracle!" Then I felt foolish, ashamed. What was I saying?

I grabbed a minute the next morning to re-read the letter. How surprised I was! This was not the angry, accusative, blasphemous letter I thought I had written! It was more of an infinitely SAD letter.

And I laughed at myself as I noticed I had not put on a stamp--a sign I wasn't sure I was going to mail it. In fact, my last thoughts the night before as I wept in real humility, and prayed in real humility were that I should wait--for I really had no proof that what I surmised had happened--I was only guessing.

But then, figuring, I realized that to elicit the answer I wanted from him it had to be mailed right away. I mailed it, throwing it down the chute with a great crine.

"Nick--

If you were trying to hurt me by letting me think you might come to see me when you came up and then deliberately not doing it, you did very well.

I am damned mad. And this is to tell you so! What a way to do things! How much simpler and more decent to have simply written me a short note sometime in these two years and tell me to stop writing you! To let me KNOW that you didn't intend to see me at all.

What an involved, long kid of revenge you have been enjoying these two years!

But I haven't the capacity or desire to spend two years "punishing" you with silence without telling you so! The love and time and attention I wasted on you and your family can now be turned to where it's needed and wanted.

I am not the fool you might have thought I was. I was waiting to see how many times you would bite the friendly hand extended to you. There was always hope that you would finally quit being suspicious and afraid and accept what was offered in all sincerity. But you bit once too often--you turned your back once too often--I haven't time or patience to go on forever--much as I love my Chianellos--much as I'll miss them.

For I include Janie, too. Yet, she, too betrayed me about this.

What in the world did you people think I was going to do to you? Disgrace you? Corrupt you? How unfriendly can you be? How suspicious can you get? You Sicilians!

I ran up against something bigger than me--age-old hate, prejudice (on both sides), love I couldn't help--when "Destino" brought you my way--and all

I can say is that there's nothing more I can do. God knows what I did wrong! God knows I've suffered enough over you! If you can't be nice, if you aren't interested--I'm sorry. I'm very, very sorry.

To hell with you and yours! Go home! Get out before it's too late if you don't like us! I TRIED. It wouldn't have killed you to have written me a short note. It wouldn't kill you now to write an explanation and prove that you are not a monster, but a human being worthy of being loved by some decent woman some day--not necessarily ME--

But I am not going to sit and wait for that MIRACLE to happen. And I'M not going chasing after Janie trying to find out how you are anymore. If she can't trust me--if she's so afraid I might lure her precious little brother out from under her thumb--she can sit in her old swimming pool and rot, for all I care!

I'm not even saying goodbye. I've said it enough--only "Va con DIO"--for what can I do?

Lorna

I am disgusted with you, to say the least.

And so the holiday week end that N was supposed to have come ended with my thinking:

This story has ended in a different tone than I expected. N did not come. That I anticipated. Janie "betrayed" me. I cannot describe what I went through this weekend.

But now the real end is revealed to me: I probed into the nature of prejudice. Three years of great suffering has brought me to this bit of wisdom:

That prejudice is never one-sided.

That it cannot be cured in one generation.

That it takes agonizing years of suffering by many, many people and years and years of passion--in the heart and bed--before the ingrained habits and attitudes of another culture can be even dented.

It never occurred to me: Who was going to protect ME from the prejudice of the ITALIANS when I set out to protect them from our prejudice?

This, then, God, was the lesson I sought? The reason for all that suffering?

I have found a kind of infinitely sad peace in realizing my impotence in such a great thing and some small compensation that I didn't learn it AFTER I was caught in marriage---like Janie?--like Virginia Pellegrini?--like others?

Tuesday.

The "holiday" is over.

And so, back to work, hoping to be busy enough not to be able to feel. I went with "head high; heart broken". But let not one strain of music reach me (I nearly died of anguish when my neighbor turned the car radio on to a love song on the way down!); let not anything touch me, for I am hardly, barely self-contained; the tears are very near the surface! I feel like some fragile, oriental vase full of water to the brim. (And I was just getting to the point where I could listen to music again--after two years!)

Then I got busy, and it was all right--until the time I was left alone in the office. Even then I experienced a kind of peace; the peace of new-found wisdom that comes from suffering. There were many wise, new insights that crowded into my consciousness--things I never realized before. And I found myself thinking of Janie.

Seized by some mysterious agony I flung my head on the drawing board. Why, this was the way Christ felt on the cross! Now I KNOW! Now I see why He said Heaven was AHEAD of us! It's ALWAYS ahead of us--as long as we live. We have only to wait--to hope! I heard myself moan, "Oh, NICK!" and knew, not felt, but KNEW that he and I were sharing an instant of the deepest agony known to living man. The tears were flowing down my face. The feeling started to fade. I grasped at it, clung to it--but it was gone.

I sat up, shattered--knowing I must call Janie that minute--NOW. I must not wait even till I got home. It had to be NOW!

I dashed to the phone and dialed before I had time to think, feel. Panic seized me.

Strangely, I heard noise--voices--chattering --a la Chianello--on the other end of the line before I heard Janie's voice--gruff--heavy--"Hello?"

"It's Lorna--" (not cheery enough.)

"Oh!--I've been thinking about you--" (!!!)

--going to call you--(!!!)--how are you?

(No guilt--no shame?)

"Oh--pretty good---" (Liven it up, girl! don't give yourself away! I can't do it! I can't do it, I thought. For I had sat at my desk after knowing that I must call her while I waited for a listener nearby to leave and realized that I MUST call her and beg for one LAST hour--this afternoon--as soon as I get home. And I would simply tell her that I loved her brother more than anything--but that I would never hurt him--that I was going away--and stay away--and I had come to tell her--and, if I cried, I would cry--right in front of la nonno, il nonno--anyone! If I threw my arms around Janie's neck and cried on her bosom and sobbed that I loved her, I didn't care--that was the way it had to be. And I would give her money to buy a candle and tell her to burn it in the church for N for me. And I would tell them that they must take N home with them--his parents--home to Palermo--he must go--hemustn't stay--for it will break his heart. I would tell them, if I had to, how little chance he stands here of ever attracting an American girl--how he frightens them. All this I was full of when I went to the phone. I went to grovel--to beg--to INSIST on one last hour with Janie---!)

She was saying something about "Your cartoon--it was so right--it was exactly right---"

I was puzzled. WHAT cartoon? What was she talking about?

"---the CARTOON!---the picture of Nick. It was so true--HE DIDN'T COME!"

Didn't COME?!?!? The world reeled about me. Janie was chattering on--"went to Spokane--HAD to go--had to come back---N had wired (?) and said it was nouse his coming now, for it looked like the job was folding--he'd be fired soon--He didn't want to make a trip up and then have to go back and get all his stuff. He might as well stay and do it all at once----". Stars fell around me!

("The Agaony and the Ecstasy"--title of my book of the season! The Cruxifiction and the Reserrection! I believe in miracles! I am truly awed!)

Janie was going on. It was time to question! Time for the amenities. Yes, her parents were here with her. Yes, the kids went, too. NO! they hadn't had a great fun reunion--was I KIDDING? She and her parents planned to walk over to my house some afternoon----

(I missed that one. I had been too busy thinking and interpolated something about being busy all week with a lot of work, which was true, before I thought--)

"Could I come for just an hour?" I asked.

"Of course, of course!--Anytime---"

"we-e-ell---when?---"

I'd better let her call me, she said, maybe she'd be coming downtown--(It wasn't a brush-off. Rather I got the feeling that

that she wanted to talk to me away from her parents--just as I wanted to talk to her--alone.)

"And--did I know--", she went on, "that her baby-care job fell through? The woman changed her mind....What were the chances at the store? Could I inquire around? She had to find some work, etc. etc...."

I was numb. I'd think later, I thought. I just stood there, absorbing. We hung up on the understanding that she'd call ME--when the time was propitious.

At one point I almost told her about the letter I had written. It was on the tip of my tongue. Something withheld it--and I heard myself saying, about N's not coming, "That really upsets me" or something like that. It was just right. It turned out all right.

I ~~flew~~ hung up and flew to my desk and wrote N a passionate appeal and apology, finishing it just as the others came back to work.

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From agony to ecstasy in two minutes! N had not come because he was coming to STAY! How could the whole world change so fast? Suddenly it was full of beautiful, wonderful people and sun, and love, and joyous living!

I rushed through my work and to the post office to deposit the so-precious apology letter to N. Everyone I encountered was jolly and friendly! Here I was meeting all my old N-time friends come out of

hiding just to celebrate this afternoon!

Why! I'm young--and beautiful! What ever made me feel old and used-up? Look at the men eye me! Of course! Of course! The miracle has started! Oh, precious, fragile, tiny moment of happiness! Treasure it! Hold it! Savor it! It will be gone before you fully taste it!

Of course! Of course there is a REASON for suffering. It is to soften us, humble us; strengthen the bond of empathy, of love between us poor humans, for otherwise we'd kill each other off! It balances our instinct for self-protection.

God, keep me humble! Do not let me again begin to take smug credit for all this. For there is many a long struggle ahead.

I must stop...already I feel doubt begin to creep in again-----

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Let those who wish to laugh do so: When I abstained from writing N a mad letter that first time he changed his mind about leaving, I imagined in minute detail his going to the mail-box and not finding a "I am mad" letter from me. The timing of that moment of anguish today would have been the exact time when would be doing this. I did not think of it at the time.

Wednesday

I savored my moment of happiness without questioning for a few hours, until the elation wore off--as it must. Afterwards I found myself very tired. It has been a long, long summer of waiting--It was a release, not to wait, to hope to bother so much how I look every minute.

It was a letdown. And now comes a time of work, of duty, of mundane thing until N does get here. A dull time. But it is needed. I couldn't have kept that up much longer. Everything reached a climax and now there is a respite, and, I hope, a refreshing

I hope to be able to keep myself from getting into such a state again. THIS time I will not pursue the matter every living minute, for, according to Janie, N was very indefinite about when all this new promise would happen. But I can never quite trust him again. Now, at last, I feel if he comes, he comes. If he doesn't, he doesn't. At last I am free of waiting.

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I forgot all about my promise to Janie to see about work for her. Once I would have been over-eager. When I did think of it now, it was with DISTASTE! Today I even let good opportunities slip by, then finally forced myself to do something about it. To my surprise I got an encouraging answer.

I did get a thrill of anticipation then when I realized I had a reason to call her. In fact, I couldn't even wait till I got home, but called from work.

I expected her to be NOT bheerful, for she is obviously wearying of her guests, but I was unprepared for the GREAT lassitude and disinterest and heaviness in her voice when she answered, and even after I told her who I was.

Now, however, I was beginning to realize that such moods did not necessarily pertain to me, and I was convinced when her tone raised almost to the old lilt before we were through. Yet she was not as sweet and gracious with me as she has been. She is beginning to ORDER me, to INSIST on HER way in t ings. She wasplain cranky today.

She claimed she was coming in tomorrow and would see me, maybe only briefly, for she might have her parents with her--(and she didn't sound too happy about it.) I am not counting on it. Besides I'ma afraid I'll really be very busy tomorrow and won't have much time to chat.

This time I urged them to walk over some afternoon as she had suggested. I even offered to make them an apple pie--which she said her parents had neve tasted. This, to my surprise, seemed to please her. Encouraged, I suggested again that I take them to see where N had worked. This time she seemed more interested. (She is getting desparate about entertaining them--that's for sure!)

So, we shall see. It seems more like work to me now than fun.

Next day.

I am utterly weary tonight. For today was a glorious, happy day. It seemed a culmination of increasing "little miracle" signs the last few days.

This morning I had aimlessly opened a magazine to be confronted by these words: "Why don't we live with JOY anymore?" Reading a little, I thought, THIS is what my "little miracles" are--moments of pure joy--joy of living, of being alive, of being aware of all the wonder and beauty. They are moments of loving--all my senses and being "in tune"; my creative forces spilling out at full tilt. The article mentioned that such moments are rare--not experienced by very many people.

But, when I am in their grip, like today, everything is right--everything falls into place. I see myriads of friends I have not seen for ages all in the same day and something in me pours out a magical something to them and they respond in such a manner that each encounter is a full-living experience--

Like today: a co-worker picked ME to wear the blossom she'd brought to work; the engraver put his arms around me twice in affection; my co-worker and I settled amicably a long standing difference. I had a rare opportunity to do some GOOD artwork, and the equally rare opportunity to do it in peace--and it turned out GOOD!

Why! when I think of it, there were even encounters today with about a couple dozen of my favorite people I haven't seen for

a long time--and each one was a "joyful" experience. I loved them all--and, by some strange alchemy, they seemed to love me--

Enough! "Basta!"

The climax to this wonderful day was that Janie DID bring her parents into my office--and the timing couldn't have been better.

I was alone and assured of being alone for quite awhile--and, for once, looked like a "real" artist, as people like to think of me--and as only happens about twice a year on this job. It must have pleased Janie to show off her artist friend to her folks and have me actually doing something interesting!

Because I knew the moment had a rare rightness, I was full of just plain JOY, which must have seemed like mere eccentric excitement to my co-worker when she came back briefly just at the end of the visit.

I had more or less kept to the office awaiting Janie, but had just returned from a necessary errand and was thinking that perhaps I had missed them, after all. And I was thinking how I'd say when Janie walked in, "Ah, "una modella"!--just what I need!"

I looked up to see who had entered and there was Janie standing there, joy on her face, dressed to meticulous perfection and looking her most beautiful.

I said, "'Una modella'!--just what I need!" She didn't seem to hear me, then I realized she was beckoning, urging her parents to come on in.

They came shyly and hesitatingly--while Janie explained my witticism--(she HAD heard, after all!) La nonna was approaching my desk with that (pardon me!) adoring look in her eyes and intent on my noticing her. Which, of course, I did. And nothing would do but we must almost embrace. I was delighted that she seemed so glad to see me again--for I had feared the judgment of the long intervening time of family discussions.

And when i nonno, too, pressed forward and put his hand warmly in mine, his usually indifferent face full of interest and his glance going first to my bosom, then up to my face in true Italian male fashion, I felt aglow.

We talked at great length, I trying to bring i nonni into Janie's monologue by questions and joke attempts with single Italian words (my hard-won skill again deserting me when I needed it!) Whenever I glanced toward either of the parents I caught them devouring me with their eyes--the mother's so full of overt fondness that it embarrassed me; the father's more piercing, more sophisticated somehow--a bit disconcerting, a little too KNOWING.

Janie was in her element, in a state of great elation and rattling on at a great rate. She brought up and discussed N's default and included her mother in the conversation in a way that surprised me. She said N had PHONED--and should know by the 15th IF he'd be fired--in answer to my questions. Personally, I am skeptical--and I said as much, which they seemed to take with great glee. At le

At least Janie and her mother did. I have been very curious what N's father's reaction to N's actions is (because I think it could very well be the crux of the whole matter) but, when I glanced at him, his face was inscrutable, closed. He seemed not to be listening to the female chatter. I noted his rapid, perceptive silent perusal of things in the office; the boredom at trivia; the restlessness of an impatient, quick mind; the curiosity he evinced as he silently prowled around looking into things. (That is where N gets his intelligence--as I suspected, I thought. I find him a great deal like N--though "burned-out".)

None of us wanted to break it up--we were all enjoying it so, but it was necessary.

The warmth of their parting touched me and left me shaking. Janie sailed out, her chatter trailing behind her. La nonna maneuvered to reach for my hand and grip it and then there was it Monno's hand. There was no avoiding it, as I thought he might have preferred; he WANTED me to take his hand, too. Without meaning to I gave his hand an extra squeeze, because I feel sorry for him, so bored, so restless, so ignored by all. At this, he quickly withdrew from what started to be a very warm handclasp, and rushed chin out, after the women. (How like N!) (Funny how much there is in a split second when you really break it down! And funny how much energy I find to express these experiences when I'm so tired!)

The left, leaving me thinking how I had broached the coffee-Klatsch again and to my consternation Janie ACCEPTED and PROMISED. And I have begun negotiations to invite an elderly Italian-speaking couple my neighbor knows so well and nonni will

have someone to talk to--and I am committed to baking them an apple pie--Will this be like my "pizza party?"

I was not surprised to find N's and my horoscopes in the newspaper both very, very pertinent the last couple of days--and very PROMISING, though I think those things are ridiculous. It just added to the fun.

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All year I have been trying to find a copy of Erich Fromm's "Art of loving" because his "Men Against Themselves" helped me so much in understanding N. I thought this one might help me in knowing what to do now about N. But I have been unsuccessful. Today, my day of days, I discovered we had a new book department in the store that I hadn't known about. And they had ONE copy of this book--at my price. I bought it!

I have only scanned it tonight, being too tired, but dear man! he says "Loving is an ART--to be studied and worked at!" That relieved my mind about "plotting" against poor N.

Also he made me see what I had sensed--that it is the LOVING that is so wonderful--not the object!

But alas! he also confirmed a half-formed thought I have not faced--that the INTENSITY of the love may be only an indication of the INTENSITY of the previous loneliness.

Next day.

Today had startling developments.

And I have learned another lesson from these last developments: that interpersonal relationships never end, except by death. I have been as bad as N-- trying to TURN SOMETHING OFF!

Today I was so exhausted by my "joyful" day yesterday that I was almost frightened.

This afternoon I sought out the elderly Italian woman I hoped to invite to my Chiamello coffee hour. I found her house almost next door to Janie's sister-in-law's-- the one she doesn't get along with. Oh-oh!, I thought.

The door was open. I could see a woman "hiding", pretending to be very, very busy. She was obviously reluctant to come to the door.

But I turned on all my charm, explained my errand, even produced the newspaper picture of Janie and her family to shorten expalantions.

At first she reacted with myriad excuses to my invitation. Then she openly launched into an expose of Janie's status among local Italians. And it was not good.

She said they had all made overtures to Janie and her parents, but Janie held herself cool and aloof.

I protested that Janie blamed it on her husband's crudeness, unaware at the moment that this was a friend of Harry's family. That, to me, they seemed SHY, rather than rude.

I could see by ner narrowing eyes and set

expression that I was getting nowhere. Then she said Janie "didn't WANT to be an Italian" whereas SHE was proud of it. (But she ducked her head and buried her glance in the corner of her chair as she said it. She didn't ACT proud!)

Anyway, I gave up. I began to lead her to face-sav ng ways out and turned my attention to her daughter who had come in about then. We had a pleasant visit for a little while longer and then I left.

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On the way home I gave in to an impulse to drop in and supply Janie with a few minor details about her imminent working.

Harry's car was there, dammit. I didn't want to see HIM! No one was outside so I went to the door. There were glad cries to come in.

Everyone was there but Lilly. Harry and the boy were rather indifferent to me. Janie fawned on me. I nonni looked glad and interested.

It was a hurried, embarrassed visit on my part. I remarked on the peculiar color of la nonna's eyes in that light; I noticed Janie wince when I came close to her and wondered if my unhappy over-smoking lately had made me foul-breathed; I was unsuccessful in trying to charm Harry.

Janie trailed after me and we did most of our talking outside. I remembered to ask Janie what il nonno's reaction to N's actions had been, mentioning that N's report of his father's temper might have something to do with his delays.

She said he never says much, then startled me with a swift change in mood. In great glee she announced that they'd had a mad;sad letter from N yesterday, I couldn't quite follow her except that it sounded full of the usual laments, excuses, etc. and something about "Why should he come up, since Pina had promised to drive in nonni to Los Angeles--" (Ridiculous! snorted Janie). She said her mother had been terribly upset at this new refusal to come up, but she had placated her with a bet that they'd have an opposite mood letter today.

And they did! A fine, glad, good letter, as if he'd never written the other at all, and saying he might take the plane and arrive Saturday (tomorrow!)--but she wouldn't believe it till she saw it!

(Oh no! I thought--not NOW! This is a very bad time for ME! I prefer the come-on-the-15th-to-say promise!)

Janie rattled off some more explanations: How he was awaiting news from a courier to Seattle to find work for him t ere...how her mother is writing him to quit the damned job and comeup..he could always get another... And then a long dissertation on something that bothered me, for it could be a reaction to my letter--about how he said he NEVER could understand these Americans--never get used to them...(About what I'd implied in my letter!)

This was mixed up with Janie's emotional declaration that she and il nonno had decided that N should go home with them--girls there were freer now--if he went for two months--- (the marriage market again). So I confessed I'd called her the other day to suggest just that--that he go home.

The conversation was just getting interesting when out wandered il nonni, disconcerting us both. Mother joined us and I lamely explained the sudden silence by saying we were talking about her son. Janie's translation to her didn't sound like what I had said to me--but mother seemed satisfied. Il nonno was wandering background at this point. Janie overtly changed the subject and then dismissed me and I left, going slowly past il nonno standing idly in the yard.

I had a feeling he was trying to make contact with me, and gave him every chance, but he stayed standing a few feet from me, his back turned and his glance glued to the blank wall in front of him.

I sensed his embarrassment so, wondering shy he didn't leave, I slowly settled myself into the car. When the engine refused to return over I knew he would turn involuntarily, and he did. So then I mustered my courage and waved. He waved back, shyly. Then, when I cried, "Arrivederla" as I drove off he smiled, nodded, chuckled his head the way he does.

In the house his face had shown the most lively interest I had yet seen in him. Every time I looked his way, I found him looking at me with participation. So much so that I wondered if he and Harry had perhaps had a pre-dinner drink?

Was it odd that I felt compelled to go that way when there was news awaiting me? Was there any connection between N's mad;glad letters and my mad;sorry ones to him?

Next day.

Today I found out another startling development.

Today I spent all day getting beautiful just in case N did come--dropping everything else to do so.

As the day wore on and I wondered and suffered, I began to think, "How ridiculous! Janie wouldn't be surprised if I evinced curiosity in the outcome. I'll just call her."

So I did, using as an excuse the question I'd forgotten to ask her yesterday--if N were still going to a psychiatrist?

"No," she said, "He hadn't mentioned it." Then she asked me to wait while she changed phones, as too many people were listening. So I knew something was up--

Sure enough! N had phoned Pina in Spokane. He said he'd arrive there tonight at eleven by plane, and to contact Janie and have her bring his folks back to Spokane so he could see them the week he'd be there. He used as an excuse that he wanted to look into a job there, for he'd said in his "bad" letter that he might work a month in Spokane and go home with his folks--or maybe stay in New York.

Naturally, all hell had broken loose at Esgate's. I won't go into it all now, but Janie and all of them AT LAST had refused to give in any more. I agreed, telling her my long-concealed opinion about all this.

I was shocked, to say the least, and baffled, to say the least. While Janie talked, I searched my mind for MY reasons for this latest development.

Janie and I discussed the situation in the light of its being "normal", which of course is not the way to judge N.

I have learned to take notes while Janie is talking to me on the phone and telling me news of N to straighten out and think about later. She doesn't notice my silence. In fact, it works better.

From my notes: N claimed he had signed a new contract; he would stay in Los Angeles; he had signed up for algebra and English classes at school--("Why ALGEBRA?" she said in disgust). I pointed out to her that we had gone through this before and it didn't mean a thing.

I also deplored the lack of opportunity to check on N through the Wolfer Co. or something. She said that Harry had mentioned doing exactly that. In fact, they are THROUGH. If this keeps up they will send i nonni back home in November--and that will be that!

To my surprise she revealed that N's "bad" letter had been written at the time of my greatest suffering--when I thought he had betrayed me by going to Spokane

Later, at home, depressed and sad, I heard them announce a new song on the radio. Lo! it was in Italian--and I could understand it--"Ciao, ciao, amore--" Ciao, Ciao, amore, indeed!

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I spent the evening trying to figure it all out again. My conclusions were that N is really, really crazy. Was this the effect of my exasperated letter? Was he trying to show me what it means to criticize Signor Nicolo Chianello?

It all sounded so familiar. I had been through this before. I have an odd feeling that it's only a game--only one of his threats. Somehow despair will not come.

I predict that N will NOT go to Spokane. We shall see.

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Sunday, next day.

I spent most of the day alone, pondering and suffering over the N problem. I read Fromm, which helped. I wrote N a long letter, based on what I'd read. I burned part of it, kept part of it.

I turned on the radio and heard "Arrivederci, Roma" played for the first time in a long, long time. Then they played a lot of new Italian songs. I could almost understand them, and it seemed like N singing to me. A great sadness gripped me.

The thought of having to go through with the coffee party now sickens me, yet I am glad of that last excuse to keep in touch.

I am AFRAID to call Janie again--afraid of what I might hear.....

Sunday evening.

Sunday evening I was still alone, still suffering. I just plain hurt in my very being.

Something told me to burn my letter to N. I did. Something told me I was to "wait".

I pored over the Fromm book about loving, finally tackling the part I'd been avoiding: "One cannot love without loving oneself." I battled with that one, finally having to admit that I did NOT love myself--never have! I do NOT love life! I prayed with everything I had to learn how to love.

Then I went about my chores, miserable, miserable--to have to WAIT---

Like a bolt from the blue came the thought, "If I really loved myself as I love others, (for that is what Fromm said) I WOULDN'T TREAT MYSELF THIS WAY! I wouldn't allow myself to suffer! I wouldn't make someone wait in agonizing wondering--I'd DO something--I'd INFORM them! Why, if I loved me, I'd FIND OUT!

I wouldn't go on with this self-inflicted punishment! No one ASKED me to suffer! N never ASKED me to suffer for him! In fact, he never even encouraged me to--I must admit that! I simply am doing this thing to MYSELF! Why, I'll simply call Janie and find out! Who said I had to wait--who said--but ME?

A great peace descended on me. I had stumbled on something right--a truth. I have been trying to play God--me and my letters! As Fromm said about people

who really do not love because they don't love themselves: when they "do good" they only make people feel guilty--for they SUFFER so over it. Why, I am only making N feel GUILTY. He didn't ask for this; he didn't encourage it. I cannot help him if I'm going to SUFFER! In this light my letter to him was RIGHT; I had had enough; I had a right to think of myself. I thought of Stevenson's "if your morals make you dreary, they are wrong."

I went to the phone and called Janie. It was not the same as my former DESPARATE calls. It was different. I called three times--and got no answer. I was unable to call again because of other involvements. So--I was forced to "wait" in spite of myself. But my new mood lasted.

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Later my neighbor came over and we discussed Mrs. Picatti, and I pretended to go along with my neighbor's glowing opinion of her, but I was lying. I didn't like Mrs. Picatti--she is one of those who ENJOY life; she is sufficient unto herself. She would not help me with my lonely ones, my troubled ones, my different ones!

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This new mood--this new concern for ME--is very comfortable!

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I bought a binding for all these writings and put them in last night. I surveyed the results with unanticipated creative joy. Why, I'd written a BOOK! I've always wanted to write a book--and here

I have done it without even intending!
There is product of this N experience,
after all--a sort of "child"--as it were---!

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monday-next day.

I cannot express the peace and release
I have felt since the revelations brought
about by the Fromm book. Why, it has acc-
omplished what I have been trying to do
for three years--get rid of this N obsess-
ion! Here I was, going about it all the
wrong way--trying to "forget"; trying to
"help"; trying to substitute; to "endure".

I keep thinking with the greatest joy,
"Why, I wasn't HELPING N at all! I was
only adding to his burden of guilt, of
trying to meet impossible demands. All
the time I had implied that he had a
bad life, that he needed help, that he
couldn't go it alone--when I thought I
was doing just the opposite!

Then, too, I found as I surveyed my past,
that I am not perhaps as deplete of self-
love as I at first judged. For that is the
very basis of my determination not to
marry him--it would ruin MY life! Isn't
this self-love, for heaven's sakes? I
would not marry him, I said, for it would
ruin his life, not admitting that it would
also ruin mine, for at the time I felt it
would be selfish to say that.

Yet there was self-interest and exploitation
in my lust after him. That is probably
why I preferred to mask it as "therapy"--

and why I felt better when I did.

Too, I began to think that the Chianelles DID suspect a desire on my part to marry N, for their world cannot conceive of a woman being FREE in relation to a man. To show interest presupposes an intent to marry to them. This is evidenced in their wife-picking plans for him; these people pick out a wife in a matter of weeks-- woman--marriage; just like that!

And poor N was caught in the dilemma: what to do with a woman who keeps pre-
fessing she loves you and you can't marry. Naturally, his solution is to "forget" and go on!

All this new sense of release shows me what I am very reluctant to admit; that I found the mysterious X factor I was seeking in all these writings; the thing I was subconsciously aware of all the time; the thing I am so quick to observe in others who are unhappy--the trouble was ME!

Already I feel a patience I could not feel before. Now it suddenly doesn't matter if I don't see or hear from Janie for days--a week. I don't even care particularly about the coffee session anymore.

I no longer feel the compulsion to write N--to "do him good", to "sustain" him. With the knowledge that I am not helping him, I can leave him alone. I feel almost the feeling that I searched so hard for--that my work is done--he can go alone. For his very rejection of me signifies exactly that, doesn't it?

No longer need I heckle him, needle him in the guise of "help"; insist on his doing what he isn't ready for, doesn't understand. Let me just dwell in the comforting, self-respecting revelation that I made N a very handsome offer--there was nothing wrong in it--most men would have been delighted. He was not. Or he would be here by now!

So what am I worrying about? I made a mistake. I learned. What more is there?

Today is Monday.

What had happened at Janie's over the weekend? Had N arrived in Spokane as she expected? I was very anxious to know.

I planned to drop by Janie's on my way home from work--a SUDDEN visit, so, if N were there, I'd surprise them all--catch them. Or at least be an hand to hear the latest tale of woe from Janie. I visions of comforting Janie, of advising her, of having her appeal to me to help them with N.

But then I remembered she had spoken of bringing her mother down to the fashion show. I'd better call and see if they'd be there. I fully expected her to want a long chat with me.

I was so wrong.

She answered so nastily that I was shocked into asking, "Why, what's the matter with you? You don't sound very cheerful."

Instead of launching into her usual long story she asked me "Why?"

She seemed almost annoyed that I should call her. And when I explained that I was checking so I'd know what to do about the coffee party, she seemed to act as if her committment to me was just another annoyance that didn't matter. Why should I bother her about that? she seemed to imply. Why didn't I just get lost. We could settle that matter later.

When I mentioned the fashion show, she had FORGOTTEN. Then went on to explain, testily, that they couldn't go, and they couldn't see me, for they were going to Alberta's for dinner tonight. (I wondered

if there was any connection there from my plea to Mrs. Picatti?)--and her mother was in curlers, and so on.

And then they couldn't leave the house, because they were waiting to see or hear from Pina--that they hadn't heard ONE WORD since the last news that N was arriving there Saturday night. She said all this crossly, as if I should know.

I exclaimed in surprise. I had understood her to say that she intended to call Pina BACK. I thought there was going to be more negotiations. When I suggested that I would think she'd be calling Pina by this time to find out what happened, she said in great anger, "NO! I'M NOT GOING to call Pina!"

They were just going to sit there and wait--and hold up Alberta's dinner party. "How could they leave until they knew?" she said. (Good heavens!)

She was definitely giving me the brush-off. They'd see me later in the week IF NO ONE CAME...(Get lost!)

I wanted to say, Well, for God's sakes, I'll make the damned pie and just bring it to you and forget the whole thing, as I'd sort of thought of doing anyway, but I didn't.

She said if they didn't come or they didn't hear from them today, she was just going to go on as if nothing had happened. I asked her what she meant, saying, "You can't, can you? You're sort of involved." but she would have none of that.

So there was nothing to do but say I'd check with her later or she could call me, which she said she'd do. But I got the feeling that it was more a ruse to get rid of me than a promise or real intention.

Such a definite rejection upset my nice mood and brought back the twinges of old hurts.

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I drove by later. Evidently they were still there--waiting. For more than two days Janie had defiantly sulked, without making an effort to find out! Something HAS to happen. At last N's bluff is being called!

What a hard way to do things! Much ado about nothing all the time! Tempest in a tea-pot. Of course! the notorious temperamental Italian family! Why, they are having FUN! They're enjoying themselves up to the hilt--making a big drama out of what could be so easily solved! Bet there'll be tears and reconciliations and all the fireworks before they're through! Ha! I remember this is what I said I LIKED about Italians--this emotionalism! What did I read?--that one sometimes senses that they (Italians) create the drama on purpose!

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I can't account for this great feeling of peace that has descended on me. It is more than the session with Fromm. (Besides, one doesn't change that much in an hour!) I just feel that it is ALL RIGHT all of a sudden.

Tuesday, Sept. 12

My feeling of peace persists. It is a strange thing. I do not even feel angry or bitter. I seem to have lost interest.

I think it is the difference between the word "hopeless" and the word "useless". The first implies a frustrated goal; the second a wasted effort.

I do not even feel sorrow or pity for N as a mentally ill person. I do not feel that anything is GONE. I simply feel APART.

I was excluded--and that is that. I am unnecessary. Not even unwanted. Just unnecessary.

Tuesday--Sept 12, 1961

I wish I really knew how to write, for this must be a story in this someplace. I wish I knew what to leave out and what to leave in, but I don't, so I'll just go blithely on putting down what is important to me.

Here I am today being FORCED, it seems, by circumstances to carry on this tale, tho I feel no heart for it today. I just plain don't feel anything, one way or another. More of that later. First I'll tell the new developments.

Last night I conceived the clever little scheme of pumping Alberta today to see if her guests came to dinner--to see if she'd give me a clue whether N came. Then I remembered that on Tuesday I had no reason to go in her vicinity and she and I have not been on our old chatting terms for a long time. I don't know what happened--she just doesn't seem interested in me any more.

When I got to work I saw that we had a hat ad I'd forgotten about and I had to go up there, willy nilly. I went, thinking it was too early to catch her there, but no, she was the first one I encountered and she opened the conversation for me on just the right note.

So, after a bit of banter, when it seemed natural to ask her doings, I asked her if she had her dinner party last night. She launched into a detailed account of a previous one that meant nothing to me, just briefly mentioning that she entertained last night, too.

She seemed tired, cross and uncommunicative. I wondered if she was deliberately playing with me, knowing what I was up to?

Anyway, she made it so that I had to keep prodding at her, and her answers were suspiciously light and airy and off hand. "Oh yes," she said, as if it were of no consequence, "I had the Esgates to dinner. I had Jackie and Harry and Lilly and Denny--" a pause (the stinker!)--"a-a-and--oh yes--Janie's mother and father---(pause)---"who don't speak A WORD OF ENGLISH! Ha! ha!" and away she went.

(ok, ok I thought, as I pursued her. You win.) "I just wondered if they came--" I said. She professed puzzlement--what did I mean? Finally she capitulated and breezily said in a loud voice, "Oh yes, I guess they were expecting the boy--something about the boy--I don't remember. No, not the boy--Nicky! --that was it!--Nicky! (Nicky, my eye!) --Janie's brother from LA was supposed to come". She was pulling away, "busy". I finished off with some chit-chat and left. I had used her. But I didn't care, I didn't care.

All I knew was that he didn't come. And that was all I wanted to know. I was right!

Now. Friday is the 15th--when he claimed he'd quit and come up to stay. IF I wrote--I wonder if I should?--what should I write?--It would have to be today--airmail---how come there happens to be another letter I am supposed to go buy another air mail stamp for today--I had planned to ignore it---oh heavens! I suppose I shall have to write----

Having determined to do so, I was at a loss what to write, and I had very little time in which to do it. Later I shall examine my moods which made me truly uninterested in writing. Yet at the back of my mind was the thought that I should write. That mess I'd made needed cleaning up no matter what happened.

Even if I had erred, even if everything is finished, it was dangerous to leave N with the impression that I had betrayed him. Things are bad enough for him now anyway.

If I was going to step out of the picture, he should at least have that assurance. If I was going to leave him free to make his own choice, he should know that it was all right either way, not be influenced one way too much as he now is.

I didn't have time to make a copy and I shall have to try to remember. It is too bad because I've found that some twist I give my letters that I do not keep a record of is often the crucial influence.

Letter to N--Tuesday Sept 12, 1961

Mailed air mail at noon. If I figure 9 hours as the man said---??? He should get it Wed. at the earliest--maybe Thursday. I could have a reaction to this via Janie by Thursday or Friday. Better plan my coffee attempt for Thursday. Friday's a bad day--and too long to wait to contact J.

Dear N,

I have been thinking and I decided that I was not doing you the kindness I thought I was when I kept telling you ~~I/you/you/you/you~~ that some one believed in you and loved you. In fact I might have been adding to your burdens--and heavens knows you have enough of them right now--when there was nothing you could do about it.

Especially when I got carried away with the excitement of the possibility of seeing you again.

You are a real good, wonderful "simpatico" (wonderful Italian word!) guy and you have managed to solve troubles and difficulties that would have broken a lot of people.

(A lot of baloney!--and an intentional challenge there!) You have proved that you have the strength to solve a lot more (or words to that effect) and it will not leave you. I know that you will be able to figure things out. It will be ALL RIGHT.

I wish and hope and pray for wonderful things to happen to you. I hope you get your difficulties with your family straightened out...

I want you to do whatever you think is best for you. Don't worry about me--I'll be around for a long time---Settle your problems

first. I hope you believe that I love
you a great deal, etc etc.

love,

Lorna

I meant everything I ever said to you
except that last nasty letter--please
forgive me....

(The same old line--an attempt to calm
him, restore faith etc. done in a great
hurry and at the risk of repetition. I
felt only rush and franticness doing it--
no real emotion. No great anguish or sad-
ness or anything--and still don't. It's
probably too cool to do the job. Oh well--
nothing to lose now anyway.)

(They played "Volare"--our song--today.
Haven't heard it for a long time--not
since the last time!)

Oh yes, I said something at the last about--
keeping your sense of humor until these
troubles are solved.

And so I mailed ANOTHER "last letter" to N.

I nearly broke my neck hurrying home for fear Janie might call, and then felt sure, paradoxically, that she wouldn't. She didn't.

And Mrs. Picatti never called. I didn't think she would, either.

I am not suffering. I feel indifferent. I just can't figure this new mood!

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I decided to make my apple pies in preparation IF the Chianellos come this week. On my way to the store near Janie's I saw her son Denny.

To my surprise, he had stopped and was watching me with interest. I waved to him and he waved back. I guess I surprised HIM when I turned into the store instead of up his street!

I figured he'd probably tell them he'd seen me anyway, so they'd know I was in the neighborhood. This gave me nerve to drive by the house. For the first time I zoomed on by--and, for the first time, felt a thrill of satisfaction in doing so.--even if Janie saw and was hurt!

Also I resisted a strong impulse to call her today instead of tomorrow, which was the day I planned for the coffeeing. Let her sweat awhile! Besides, she is supposed to call ME!

There was no evidence of Pina's having

come, by the way--only i nonno sitting reading on the patio.

Wednesday.

It dawned on me: "lack of interest!?" That's it! I'm getting bored. When I lost my goal of helping, I lost interest. If N doesn't return, if there is going to be no more understanding, no betterment for all my work, what's the use? It becomes boring. They become just another bunch of unproductive people with an interminable list of complaints and no attempts to better things.

And, with the loss of self-interest, cold facts loom up. N MUST have a woman! HE wouldn't go TWO YEARS without sex! I remember my original observation of him--so family-bound, so dependent that only a WOMAN could make him break away!

I must hurry and get my coffee party worked out, for, with loss of interest, I find myself getting critical and impatient with them all.

I plan to call Janie this afternoon. The pie is made. Time to eat it!