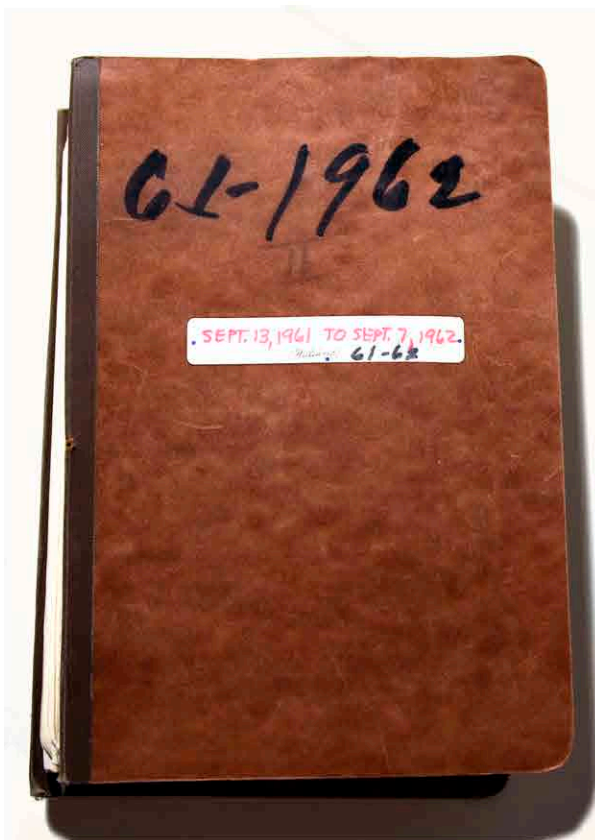


1961 - 62



"Ritorna a Me "

Wednesday--Sept. 18, 1961

NICK WAS HERE TODAY!

I am too full to write it all now--(to write it to re-live later, when I'll need it!)

I spent all afternoon with him--at Janie's and at the Republic.

He promised to come tomorrow,---but I'm not counting on it. Today was enough. Today was everything I ever dreamed.

After I left him and came home, I was in a terrible state. I thought I was going to cry--and I thought what a fool I ~~was~~--spoiling it all by being a soggy, wet sponge! I couldn't figure whether I was real happy or real sad--was there ever such a mood? So I lay down awhile, and discovered it wasn't crying I wanted to do at all--I was HAPPY!--just all shook up.

Being involved and not having time to write, I just made notes to write up later. So here I am doing it...

This was the day I was going to call Janie when I got home and let her off the hook about the apple-pie-coffee hour. We had all given Nick up and I had given them time to settle down after their disappointment. I knew they'd be in no mood to visit so I was just going to offer to bring the pie over or let her come and get it and see what she wanted to do.

I was alone ^{at work} and very, very busy trying to finish up some things. (Otherwise I might have been tempted to call Janie from the store.) The phone rang, and I answered it.

I couldn't believe it was Janie for a minute, but it was. She didn't sound very happy. She launched right into an apology for not coming yesterday, which surprised me, for I hadn't even intended for them to come, and excused herself for today and tomorrow, too. I was thinking, "I KNEW it I told her it was all right--nothing definite anyway--that I had the pie all ready and would bring it to her or whatever she wanted."

She said, "Oh, that's NICE of you! You didn't have to do that!" To make it look less contrived I assured her that I had made FOUR pies and already given one to a neighbor.

(I had done that just so I COULD say this!)- Bet that took her down a peg!) "FOUR!?! " she exclaimed with one of her whoops. (She was beginning to sound more cheerful.)

I then tried to negotiate some arrangement about the situation, saying she might as well have the pie anyway--. But she began to flounder around, starting excuses-- "You see," she said, "NICK came last night-- and---"

I yanked my heart back up from my shoes and managed the interested "HE DID?" that I knew she expected, but it wasn't excited enough.

"How? When?--Anything to keep her going while I sorted out the mess I was in. She began an incoherent babble--something about last night--just showed up at the door"--

while I wasn't listening, just thinking, Is this good or bad? I feel it's bad. I must think about it. What shall I do?

What shall I do? It would be polite to talk to him now, but I haven't time. The Pie! The pie! Thank God for the pie!

"Listen, Janie," I said, "I'm real busy right now--I have to go. I'll call you

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when I get home. Maybe I'll bring the pie over. Is Nick there? Is he going to be there? I'd like to see him." Or some such words. I don't remember. I couldn't quite bring myself to tell her some message for me, a hello. I didn't quite know. I didn't quite know. I had to have time to think.

"Well," she said, "He's getting ready to go downtown at one--he has some people he wants to see--" But we'll be here" (I had to hurry. I had to hurry!)

"I'll call you when I get home," I said, feeling badly because I hadn't said to say hello to N. Would this alienate him? Spoil everything? I couldn't help it! I didn't have time to talk to him now. I knew he'd go on and on. At least he'd have the message that I'd call about one.

Would he wait? Would he leave anyway? This would be the test! I was still smarting from that 3 days in Spokane. If I hurried, If I hurried--maybe I could catch him before he left--! Once he saw me, once he got over the hump, it wouldn't be so bad.

Janie didn't seem too averse to the idea.

I didn't sense any putting off of me. Indeed it was pretty nice of her to call and let me know so soon! She, too, could have waited till I got home! She didn't usually have nerve to call me at work!

I let my work go, though I only had a few minutes more to do on it and it was important.

It was also impossible to do it! I flew to the bus, cursing the discouragement that had made me put on one of my "lesser" outfits today. Would mother be home? Would the car be there? No matter. I'd walk if I had to.

I was in a terrible state when I got home. There was no question of eating, but I forced a couple of bananas into me, so I could tell Janie I'd eaten. I paced the floor in crazy circles. Which to do first? The car was there. Go beat down mother? Or call first? Better call. I said I would. Maybe N was waiting. I called.

When Janie answered, seeming to expect me to call, I asked for and got the details of N's arrival. I didn't have to ask if he was there. I could hear his dear, crowing voice going on. So I mentioned it. Yes, she said, "he's here". Should I talk to him, I wondered? After all, he HADN'T left--hadn't fled. Would he talk to me? "Let me talk to him", I said. "Do you want to talk to him?" she said. "Here's right here. Just a minute." As if she expected it.

Thank goodness. Thank goodness! What should I say? Keep it light. Keep it light. Don't scare him. I could hear him floundering, fussing, taking a good deal of time. Then, "Hello?" It came back, then How tense the voice! How heavy the accent!

"You STINKER!" I said. (There! I'd done it! What would he say?)

"Stinker?" he said, "What do you mean 'stinker'?" Laughing, gay, glad, teasing. (It was going to be all right. Whew!) He had waited--just for me!) It was better than all right, for as we got to talking, gay; glad, glad glad! he even said, "How are you?--I know!--MAD!" (Why, Nick! you were giving everything away--right in

front of everybody!) From then on it was easy. It was fun, it was wonderful!

He launched into one of his long, nervous, related, rushing, hard-to-understand-and-follow monologues, full of endless detail, ~~and~~ prodded by questions by me. It seemed to go on and on. Finally, I said, "Look, are you going to be there? I have to take this pie over anyway. I'll come on over if it's all right?" (how brave I was!)

To my surprise he said, "I'll be here awhile. I was going downtown--to the Republic--to see everybody, but I don't have to go yet." (My idea that he might be on his way down to see me was wrong? Here was a new Nick! What WAS this?")

I dashed over to mother's. Threw a dollar at her and said, "I'm going over to Janie's to take the pie over--(explanation--they can't come, etc.)--can I have the car?"

She threw out her usual, "Well, I was going to use it...if you won't be too long--I'll need it about 3..." (To Hell with YOU! I thought. You'll get it when you get it!)

I drove over, still scared to death I'd miss Nick. I approached by the blind side, to give him even less chance to make a getaway. I HAD to see him! I had to see what he LOOKED like--if I remembered correctly.

This is IT! I thought, as I drove into the carport. THIS IS IT! And I wasn't nervous at all! Thank God for all those practice sessions! It seemed a familiar, easy routine. Nevertheless, I stalled, fussing with my gloves, the Sicilian emblem clipping I'd found so miraculously in the new New York Times that I'd re-

membered at the last minute to give a quick, frantic look-through. I also had a clipping on the new Sicilian best-seller to show Janie. I had honked gaily when I drove in to warn them. (Get ready, Nick!)

Now I fussed over the pie, pretending I couldn't get a hold on it, in case anyone was watching me from the window.

Janie's hand appeared at the window, waving gaily. "Aren't you coming in?" She called limtightly.

"I'm coming! I'm coming!" I called.

Natural as all get-out I was! It was EASY!

I opened the sliding glass door. It was dark in there. I couldn't see. They were all grouped around the counter just inside the door as they usually were when I came, each in his habitual place. I caught a glad look from Janie, ran my eye over the company assembled. Yes, there he was, right before me, sitting next to la nonna, his mother. It was he, all right, looking squat and dark and bulky in the gloom. He had ducked his head (how well I knew that gesture!) ~~and~~ had managed to bring it up to give me a quick look.

Luckily, I nonni were fussing for my attention right in front of me. Mama gave me one glad, glad look. In the confusion I cried "è felice!" as I had planned, but no one heard me. Il nonno now thrust his hand out to me—(he was not going to miss his touch of feminine flesh, that Sicilian!)

I squeezed his hand in my gloved one, hoping I would note the "rapport" between us.

I didn't quite know what to do to cover the first embarrassment--corn it up, I guess. I stood behind N and for la nonna's benefit made hitting, choking

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gestures over his head--as near as I dared come to touching him. She didn't get it. I could hear Janie explaining to her. She didn't like that. This was her boy! All was forgiven. She reached over and snuggled and embraced him in an almost disgusting way.

Janie gathered me up, brought me a chair ~~and a cup of coffee~~ (habit! This time I got fooled--no coffee!). She placed it next to her at the end, patting it for me to sit down. I noted it was next to N, but not too close. All was confusion. Janie was trying to get me to eat soup; I refused (I couldn't have managed a thing! I knew my hands would shake.) She kept after me, asking me if I'd ever had spaghetti with ~~meat sauce~~ *cauliflower* ~~and nonni~~ and ^N were clamoring at me from my other side. I didn't know which way to turn. In my confusion, I got all mixed up with Janie about broccoli and cauliflower. I began to get embarrassed, for N was teasing me, calling my mistake in great glee.

Janie was waiting for me to taste the soup, for that's what it was. And I was waiting to calm down before I tried it. I feared a disaster. I wanted to look at N. I wanted to talk to HIM. I wished they'd leave me alone. I broke away from her and turned to survey N. It was too dark against the light from the door behind him.

As I shaded my eyes, the better to see, Janie got up to close the curtain a little, and N leaned back in his chair--away from me--away from my perusal, his eyes on mine. I was prepared to be shocked. I had often reminded myself that I must remember that the first sight of him is always a shock to

people: he is SO small, SO dark, so hairy--almost a dwarf effect. But it didn't help too much. THIS is Nick? I thought, this is Nick? Why, he's almost repulsive! He looked thick, mashed down, round; his eyes huge and round and black, his hair too much, too curly, too black.

A WOP! He was used to that first shock; he seemed to be braced for it, held in, suffering, waiting. My heart warmed. "Why you look GOOD!" I said, "Just like always--sure enough it's you," (or somet hing.)

From then on it was easy. A great magnetism and joy and gladness seized N and me, and we were off, he launching into one of his "unburdenings" to me and I glued to his every word in fascination. He seemed to have forgotten he was going someplace. And I had, too. I stole glances at in nonni and Janie. I feared what was between us was all too obvious. N made no pretense of covering his gladness to be with me; he simply melted all over me, blithely chattering on about things between us that alarmed me with their revealment of our liason. He HUNG on me.

I saw interest and wonder in in nonni's eyes. I saw knowledge and a bit of alarm in Janie's. Finally my ability to influence him and his complete wranteess in me made them gradually go about their business and leave us to our catching up and work talk. Oh, it was good! good!

(Note: The following report is errattice and confused. I had to wait too long and hurry too much to do it well. I was in too much of a keyed up state that day to be really observant. I cannot get a clear recall. The emotional events superceded the actual. Emotion knows no time or place!)

Wed.
 To continue: First la nonna left. I noted her absence with apprehension. Finally, I turned my attention from N's monologue long enough to ask Janie where she was. She shrugged toward the bedroom. (Later I as to note that invariably one of them would disappear when I came and come back better groomed.) Finally, la nonna reappeared in address rather than the robe she had been in. She was bringing her anniversary present, the corny musical sewing basket, to show N. She was brimful of innocent pride and N reacted as if it were the most important occasion in the world. She was so full of showing and "so full of appreciating that neither paid any attention to Janie's tight-lipped comment, "It plays ~~"Sempre"~~--"Always". (Why that, I wondered?) A little later she repeated her remark, this time catching N's attention briefly. She went on to sing the first few lines. She was implying something to N--that was obvious. He answered her something short in Italian I couldn't catch, and continued his overdone marveling. Whatever the byplay was, it was not a happy one--N TRIED ~~TO IGNORE HER~~ to ignore her. It was not like Janie to refer to something private before me. I interpreted it as either pertaining to me, or having some great mysterious significance to the two of them. N's answer sounded as if it could have been "Basta!" with a few words added. Oh well----

In the early confusion N had brought me one of the brochures he had done all alone down there--he'd been explaining his work to me--our first "safe" topic. Knowing he expected it, I admired as much as my confusion would let me. I sensed there was something I was missing, but it took a comment of his to bring me around.

OF COURSE! His name listed in the credits! I saw it where he pointed--"Nicolo Chianello, Art Director". It looked so familiar I thought nothing of it. He was waiting. Then I realized. I had only IMAGINED seeing it like that so many times in the future that I forgot this was actually the first time. So I began to rave. He was terribly pleased. I found myself saying, as of old, "I KNEW you could do it, Nick! I always KNEW I'd see it like this someday!" And then the old impulsive gesture of starting to pat him on the shoulder; and his old subtle withdrawing. Should I complete it--in front of his family--or shouldn't I? I was too far along to stop it now without too obviously revealing our consciousness of touching each other, so I continued the gesture, keeping it light and brief. He had had time to brace himself and suffered it passing well. Nevertheless, a dead silence ensued.

To fill it in, in a rash attempt to gloss it over, I turned to Janie and winked and said, "I see it's his real name, too." (This referred to the time of his first hate days when she and I rejected his avowal to change it as soon as he got his citizenship.) Now he retorted, "Of course! It's my NAME!" (Period.) Janie to the rescue now--forcing a laugh--"He doesn't even like to be called NICK now---"

Some trivia came up that she started to explain in Italian to them. I got up seeking more brochures, knowing they would be there and they were--a whole stack of them, carried all the way on this brief trip from Spokane to Yakima (and back?) on a plane! How pathetic! They weren't that good or interesting to anyone but me! I fussed over them, making the to-do I knew he hoped for. Then I discovered a brochure from the Famous Artist Course he had been taking.

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Flipping quickly and nervously through it I found nothing pertaining to him and was about to skip it when I noticed him watching me. So I appealed to him. Why did he bring it? He was only too glad to show me that it contained his "graduation" announcement. At this, he ducked and went and sat down, professing disinterest. (He knew how important this had been to me.) Sure enough! There was a paragraph about an inch square, a picture of a fat-looking,

tender-looking Italian boy and an "all I am I owe to Famous Artists type of testimony--signed "Nicolo Chianello, Los Angeles." It made his meager accomplishment sound very impressive. (And it looked like so many hundreds of other stock statements I have often been amused at!) I rejoined them at the counter, making a point to tell him I thought it was REAL WONDERFUL that he had completed the course--TWO courses, he told me, proudly. The significance of it was lost on the rest: the picture of the lonely, over-zealous immigrant"boy" poring night after night over a lonely drawing board, obsessed with making the most of his American Opportunity! (At least I knew where he was for many, many nights!)

I couldn't resist using this blameless bit of English to twit him with. "Did YOU write that, Nick?" I said. Silence from all. I knew it was probably a stock form filled in, but I pretended not and went on to say, "Why that's GOOD English! I thought you said you couldn't write English!" (This was a twit about his perennial refusal to write anyone.) There was silence again! They knew what I was doing!

(By the way, no one made any mention of the pie. When I brought it in it was received and set aside without comment.)

There was another moment that stands out to me. N and I were seated alone at the end of the counter, completely absorbed in talk. I nonni had wandered off. In fact there had been a definite moment when I felt like a robber taking their son and brother "away" from them in this so-short stay (until Saturday night). The other three had surveyed our tete-a-tete hopelessly and rather sulkily turned to other things.

Janie was now fussing over food, a perennial pursuit of hers which always seemed to me to be out of character. I noted from the corner of my eye that she seemed to be upset. I had seen her in like states before. She was professing to be getting something from the freezer, but her erratic, confused motions alarmed me--made me wary. Sure enough! Suddenly some clumsy movement of hers sent everything pell-mell out of the freezer and all over her and the floor and us. The heavy, frozen packages of meat were dangerous and I jumped up in alarm, fearing she might have hurt herself. When she laughed, I said, "JANIE! you could kill yourself that way!" and started to help her pick them up. As I leaned over, N's feet came into my vision, still sitting on his stool. Surprised, I looked up to glimpse him sitting as if in a trance, with a silly smile on his face and still talking. He not only hadn't jumped up to help, but he was apparently completely oblivious.

Now did he offer. He only moved his feet out of the way, the better to allow us two women to clean up. Finally, he did realize something had happened and made a few, futile, too-late gestures.

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The noise must have been heard by i nonni, however, for they now reappeared. After excited explanations, Janie and her mother began picking up the dishes. Janie pushed a cold cup of tea at me, asking me if I wasn't going to drink it? I didn't want it. I didn't remember it being served to me. Besides I was mentally trying to make decisions about leaving, for N had seemed in no hurry when I queried him about when he was going to go, and mother's ridiculous time limit was about up. N was sitting beside me now with his mother fussing tenderly at his other elbow. I took a sip of the tea. It was not only cold, it was SWEET. Ugh! I pushed it away quietly. Now la nonna pressed it on me, anxious to clear the counter. Janie was absorbed. I couldn't make mama understand--"troppo dolce" I ventured. She looked puzzled. N let out a whoop of delight. "Troppo dolce!" he yelled at her--and he and I were a chorus, for I had repeated it just in time to chime in with him. Janie turned around in amazement. Mama nodded and smiled and both launched into an explanation of what had happened.

N had seemed tickled to death at my display of Italian. I couldn't see, as usual, where my pronunciation had differed from his except his final syllable had more of an "uh" sound than the "ey" I had learned from records. (Kubly said that Sicilian Italian sounds like a masculine version of Italian. Listening to them I see what he means. Their speech is heavier and blunter, hasn't the soft lilt of the Italian of the records--except Janie's when she is making a concentrated effort to teach me.) Back to my story--

They were now arguing with il nonno. It seems he wanted some more cigarettes and they were giving him a bad time. I felt sorry for him, being the only other (secret) smoker in the group. I'd offer to run down and get him some. Glowing from my recent success, I wondered if I could manage to ask him directly in Italian. N was talking to me at the time and caught my attention by asking me what was the matter. I explained, venturing "desidera--?" "Desidera!" he sang out again, delighted. I caught a spark of interest in il nonno's face. Turning to his father N said loudly, "desidera dei sigaretti?" Or what ever it would be. (Damn! I thought I could have done it!) Il nonno looked from one to the other of us, then the whole point was lost in a babble of voices and they all went off and left him sitting there..... One day a little later, I tried to ask him again, using sign language this time-- it always embarrassed me to use the same phrase over and over. He didn't understand. I tried "sigaretti?" Still nothing. (How HARD it is!) Until I gave up. Then he shook his head and motioned that he had some.

I had begun to make I-must-go motions, and so had N. He had already started flying around seeming to be getting ready to leave, but somehow never making it. He swooped back and forth through the room like a bird that didn't know where it wanted to land. Is he going to leave-- or isn't he, I wondered. I didn't want to go till he did. He almost acted as if he didn't care whether he went to the Republic or not. This malleability of his now and during my previous phone call puzzled me. It was not like him.

And, too, there was a strange loitering and milling around by everyone. None of the usual decisive escorting of a partner.

guest. What was going on?

"I can take you downtown if you want," I suddenly said to N. (Why hadn't I thought of this before? Of course he'd refuse, though. He always had.) But no! It seemed to be what they were waiting for--what HE was waiting for. With a surprisigg lack of argument it was settled. I made even more flighty motions of preparation; this time disappearing clear into the bedroom. Janie seemed to be trying to snag him, calling out to his rapidly disappearing form. "I thought we'd have some coffee. I wanted some coffee!" She turned to me, seeking my collaboration. I didn't understand. Why this--now--when the dishes were all picked up and it was obviously time to go--later than time to go? She looked so frantic, so desperate, that I said, "You and I will have some coffee, Janie. I'd like some". Then, realizing how it might spoil our getaway--"Well--is it made?" searching for the pot. I wasn't going to wait for it. Surprisingly, it was! When had she done that? She was pouring two cups as N reappeared in a coat and glowing, ready to leave. I said, (too late now) Janie and I are going to have some coffee. Reluctantly he sat down. I didn't. I stood and gulped mine, then made definite move to leave, summoning N, saying I didn't have much time--I could wait for him if he wasn't too long, but I'd at least take him down. (I was quite sincere. My fear of mother was that great.)

At this everyone started gravitating toward the door. I cornered N and tried to give him a briefing on his approach to Ed Cassidy at the Republic. I wanted him to make a success of this Return. He was too keyed up to comprehend. Janie

had to explain to him. She did so testily, impatiently, her mouth grim. (What was wrong? What was wrong? There was something going on here I couldn't understand.)

I then saw Janie go out ahead with N, seeming to gather him up and take him off into the yard AWAY from the carport, apparently showing him something in the yard. What a time to do so! I thought. We were late enough now! Sensing vaguely some delaying action, I decided to go to the bathroom and did so hurriedly. I wanted to primp, but didn't dare take time. I noticed I looked ghastly. Should I dig for a lipstick and risk losing this chance or let it go. I let it go, having some obscure thought about maybe N would want to kiss me and it would be better not to have fresh lipstick on. I think I really expected him to want to stop as soon as we were out of sight!

I came out to find il nonno sitting alone in his place by the door. I made the last attempt to curry favor with him by the cigarette proposal. Since it did not work I proceeded out the door, the following, where we found everyone congregated in the car port.

I gathered up N, which wasn't hard, and, as we approached the car together, the others proceeded on out to the end of the drive. Suddenly, in mischief, and feeling their eyes on me, I held out the keys to the car to Nick, fully expecting him to demur. To my surprise he took them with only a momentary hesitation and the two of us approached the car--like an old married couple!

(How long I had yearned for the day I'd see N driving! And I never had. Perhaps this would be my only chance. I was so glad he had accepted!)

There was quite a delay while he sought explanations of the operation. Then another delay. I wondered what was the matter? What was he fussing about? (Let's get out of here!) Poor guy! He was trying to pull the seat up--his legs were too short! It wouldn't work, despite our combined efforts. While trying, he had burst out masterfully, "Come on, Lorna!-- (that liquid pronunciation of my name!)-- you can do better than THAT!" (Something else about the way he said my name made a thrill run through me.) In fact, his whole demeanor had suddenly become quite masterful--he was a MAN behind a WHEEL at last!

I was getting a little embarrassed and not a little upset at the prolonged delay. It was like a ship sailing. The others had collected in a withdrawn little group apart from us, talking among themselves, "ignoring" us--I sensed the same odd withdrawal from N and me that used to happen at the office.

To draw them in, I turned then to them and started to play the clown, hiding my head shivering in mock fright, saying "I never thought I'd see the day!" to Janie, as N backed out and swung around. (I was being transported at last by my love--in more ways than one!) Janie was translating what I'd said to i nonni and we left in gales of laughter. As I turned forward I noted that N's head was barely above the window. How strange--and humiliating--it must be to be so little for a man. (He's barely taller than I am.)

(Which reminds me. It wasn't until I write this that I remembered that I had inexplicably changed my shoes and put on flat ones before I had dashed out at home. At the time I wondered what I was doing. Now I know.)

It seemed natural enough for N to be driving, I beside him. I forgot to marvel. All I was conscious of was the wonderful feeling of being alone in a car together. All my summer and spring hopes and plans--!! Did he REALLY want to go downtown?

As we approached our house, he whipped his head around to look at the street sign, saying, "Chestnut Street", as if he wanted to remember it--note it. I wondered why at the time. Now I think I know. He seemed a little perturbed, looking about him and making the car swing to one side. I was busy thinking how mother was home--time for the kids--we couldn't go there--if he WOULD--

Nothing was said. The car sailed on, nearer and nearer to downtown and goodbye. Then, "Where are we going?" he said. (This was my chance!) "I don't know," I said pertly, "YOU'RE driving!" (Would he take the hint? Would he?) Silence. Then--"I don't know where I am--".

Cars go too fast for living. One is committed before one is ready. We were already half-way to that unwanted destination. The moment passed. No hope.

Noticing his unfamiliarity with the car, I offered to take it before the downtown traffic, meanwhile secretly spying for a place to stop and talk--a while, at least. There was no place, and I knew there wouldn't be farther on. We would have to decide right now--in the next few instants. I wasn't sure enough of his desires, intentions to change the plans.

Perhaps he had the same thing in mind, for I noticed his interest, as if reading my thoughts, when we came to the open park

next to the school. He murmured something about "I can't stop there---". Disappointed, I turned to look. The grounds were full of school gym classes.

We were about to enter a busy area. I was too embarrassed, too unsure, too full, to say what I wanted. I wanted to TALK. I HAD to talk at least. There was so much to say, such a feeling between us. I didn't want to go down to the darned old Republic. He hadn't been THAT ahppy there! I was hurt that that came before ME. But pe haps he wanted to look for a job there? He'd looked in Spokane, he said. I'd better let him go. This was all felt, r ther than thought. I was giving up hope for today.

Suddenly, for no reason, he said clearly, "You gave me a driving lesson; I should give you and ITALIAN lesson." and gave me a sly, amused look. (What! What! I thought. Did I hear right?--This was our old double-talk for love-making! Does he MEAN it? that look! It was provocative---??) Stifling my impulse to evade for fear of a rebuff just in time, I said, "What did you say?"

He repeated what he'd said, clearly and firmly. There was no mistaking this time what he meant. "I'd like that!" I said.

I think, then, that there was some checking about ~~the~~ when the kids got out of school. We agreed it was too late today (sickening disappointment). He began to slow the car looking for a 1st place to pull over before we hit the intersection and traffic ahead. Some woman behind us honked in irritation--

We had to hurry. (I say "we", for I felt we were both doing, thinking the same things). The result was that he pulled up at the x side of the street in a very temporary way-- as if merely to change seats. This was no place to talk.

Resigned, and sick at heart, I started to move over into the driver's seat. He made no move to get out.!!!(Did he, too, feel the need to talk?) My movement brought me up against him--I leaned toward him-- yearning--he toward me--he was all dark, warm closeness--I felt his arm go around me and heard him say something in a glad sounding tone that made me know for sure that he was coming tomorrow--when the kids were in school.

I got the message, but not the words, for I was too conscious of the sudden withdrawal and then tentative replacement of his hand on my waist. (Damn! I thought. This costume-- it bunches and bulges around the waist. He'd hit the roll of escaped flesh above my girdle--! Instantly I thought of my Italian stories with their repeated descriptions of the typical Italiano's wooing of American girls and the inevitable reflex and exclamation, "Mamma mia! una donna di ferro!"--Well, dammit! Why hadn't he come when he was SUPPOS D to--when I was READY? Why couldn't he let me KNOW he was coming?)

Yet it was possible that He'd merely lost his balance and/or had time to realize what a public place we were in, for I noticed as I leaned toward him that the door was open--he now had one leg out--yet he still took his time getting out. The need, the desire to kiss was between us--I

glimpsed his face--close--elated--eager--
his eyes on mine--but we couldn't--not
here--cars were speeding by us.

That particular moment was the highlight of the day for me. In that brief gesture he told me all I wanted to know--all he'd never said. At that moment I understood why he had snapped at me a few minutes before when I had unconsciously laid my hand on his thigh to accent what I was saying--something about how glad I was to see him, I think. "Don't TOUCH me!" he'd said in a fury. I had reacted with hurt, naturally. Now I understood. I remembered many little things.

He now finished getting out and went around to the other side of the car. Then he stood there, looking about him. He seemed disoriented, very confused. I couldn't figure out what was the matter with him. Then he said, "Where do I catch the bus?" "Why!", I said, "I'll take you down. I told you that!" He wasn't mad; he just seemed trance-like. He got in, then, and settled himself. We seemed agreed, then, that we'd risk sitting there awhile.

I can't remember how the conversation got started. I remember at one time making a concentrated effort, full of emotion, to break the ice with "Oh; it's so GOOD to see you again--it's wonderful--didn't think you'd come"--and he saying something about "Mad--?"--we were both talking at once--he digressing into trivia. So, I brought the conversation back home again--time was so short--it was so short!--with "No. I'm not mad--in fact there's

another letter--another letter waiting for you (don't tell him I didn't know he was in Spokane when I wrote it!)--I wrote another"(smugly). He was staring not writing excuses. "One of those REAL NICE ones," I continued bitterly. He wasn't listening--he was chattering. I looked away, thinking of what to say next---

I heard him say, "I've got myself a negro girl."

Since this pertained to something in our past--Joe's negress--(how contemptuous he'd been!)--I was searching for a double-talk implication. So I asked him to repeat to give myself time. I hadn't been looking at him. He repeated what He'd said. I turned to look at him. He was grinning from ear to ear, as pleased as a pussy-cat.

"Don't you believe me?" he said. I said, grimly, "Yes, I believe you.----I KNEW you did. In fact I was just thinking last night--Nick's got a girl. YOU wouldn't go TWO YEARS without a girl!" (Funny thing is I HAD had that sudden conviction last night! It was the first time it had occurred to me and I wondered at the time why I was so very, very sure it was true!)

He sat silent, tense, his mouth parted in a half-smile--then--protests--"It wasn't like that--". I think I said something about, "I know you! I know YOU!" He didn't like this. He was silent again. We were both silent. Then I said, "Are you JOKING?" (Hope?)

"No! I'm not joking!" he said, beginning to reach for his hip pocket. "Here, I'll show you her picture!" (He was certainly enjoying this moment! As for me, I felt

like a Grade B movie--only I'd never been one of the actors before! I didn't want to spoil his FUN!)

I took the proffered billfold, opened proudly to a largish color snapshot. Color, indeed! She WAS brown--with negroid-like lips; but to be trite, a sweet, pretty mulatto girl smiled back at me (when I wrote this down, I suddenly got awfully mad at the PEN**!)

A wave of relief flooded me for I felt WARM toward her--like the time one of my daughter's friends, whom I detested, asked me to fix her hair, and the minute I touched her, I loved her; she was only a nice, warm, living, human, sweet girl-thing, after all. I wanted to hug her, protect her. So I found myself feeling about the girl in the picture now. There was something a shade pathetic in this brown-skinned girl's face--a vulnerability. I felt for her.

It made it easier. I couldn't tell N what I felt--that rush of maternal feeling. "Why, she's pretty!" I said, my eyes glued to the picture to make a time exposure in my brain. "She looks-----nice."

There was the age-old impulse to turn it over to see what was on the other side. I sensed that N wanted me to, for his hands were fluttering over it as if to help me. But time was too short to wrassle the picture out of its place now--we both knew that. The tender, absorbed way he took it back and put it away told me I'd HAD it.

Now came a torrent from N, while I settled into shock. He was loudly, proudly, gleefully declaiming how he'd told his mother

about her--showed her the picture--even the "LOVE AND KISSES" on the back (!!!)--how shocked and upsets she was--how he had explained to her--as he now proceeded to explain to me--defiantly--challengingly--how unprejudiced he was--how he had CHINESE, JAPANESE, NEGRO, DANISH friends--GOOD friends--how his folks absolutely did not approve of mixing races--but that HE was now tolerant--etc., etc.--how he had placated her and assured her that he had no intention of MARRYING the girl--that he couldn't marry a NEGRESS--that she realized this--that SHE understood--how awful it would be if they had a baby--

Suddenly I was furious! Somehow the other announcement hadn't touched me. (Why, you low-down, nasty, little stinker! I thought. How COULD you do such a thing to that poor girl?)

He now said, "I was in JAIL the night before I left!" Again the gleeful look at me, waiting for my reaction. "In jail!" I said. "How come?"

Away he went. He'd had a fight with her the night before he'd left--he didn't know if he was going back to her or not--he'd see when he got back. But if he DIDN'T (emphatically now)--he was going to find another girl--a MEXICAN maybe, this time--his eyes on me, twinkling. This was the same act he'd pulled a little while before in front of Janie. And she had looked at him, alarmed, and then puzzled at me when I merely made a kidding, flippant answer, for I knew at that time that he was only teasing us. But this was different; this was CONFIDENTIAL--wasn't it? wasn't it?)

--Did I know Los Angeles was full of MEXICANS? he went on, derisively. Did I know that Los Angeles was fifty percent MEXICANS? Yes, of course, I knew, I answered. I'd lived there. And so on, and so on--

It was a very rattled, mixed-up account. He seemed to be jumping from one thing to another. I had a hard time following, even though I was straining to catch every word, every nuance.

Where had he met her? When? At night school. I got the answer I expected, I feared -- last December. (This had been going on since December!)--She was a nice girl--after all, there were a lot of negroes, Mexicans, international element there--in that part of Los Angeles-- (I got an unhappy picture of the low rent district he'd ended up in. He didn't sound too happy about it himself.)

"You mean you had a fight with her BEFORE YOU LEFT?" "Yes!" he said, as if he'd explained all this before.

Then he proceeded to tell me a sordid tale of screaming, yelling, and packing his clothes (oh! Oh!) and moving out (!!!) of his apartment in the middle of the night (!!!!!)--something about her calling in her mother and someone calling the police--and how he'd put his stuff in his car--and the police had taken him to jail, (a mute appeal to me here). He'd told his family about the negess, but not about the jail---

He told this all in a great rush--disjointed, mixed up, obviously re-living the scene in his mind. I sensed that he was ashamed of what he'd done--his tone and manner

were a bit apologetic, afraid. He wanted to get this part over with.

(The POLICE!!??) "You didn't HURT her, did you?" "No! No!" he said, and explained again. They'd had this argument--her mother was there---

(I thought, let's get this over with:) "Is she pregnant?" A very mixed up, embarrassed answer poured out. I got the impression it was possible--he "wasn't too sure"--something about "a couple weeks"--he'd know when he got back--he hadn't seen her for awhile--(he HADN'T?--yet he fought with her the night before he left?--this angle didn't occur to me till much, much later--)
(At the time I merely thought, NOW we know the reason for the sudden flight!)

"What did you fight about?" I was raced to catch the story of pregnancy fears in a lot of evasions.

"You."

"Me! How did she know about me! (The letters! the letters! those damned letters! She'd intercepted them! I felt a fool.)

"I told her. She knew about you.". Then, embarrassment, confession--"I showed her your letters!" "WHAT!" (I could have killed him!) "WELL--not ALL of them--- just a couple---"

(I was amused now. How truly I had predicted! Just what I'd figured they'd be used for!)--"to make her jealous."

I looked at him, laughing. "That's why I wrote them."

"That's why you wrote them---?" He was taken aback. He didn't like this.

"Of course. I figured you could use them.

He didn't believe me. He didn't WANT to believe me. "Use them---?"

"Use them--yes--to make someone jealous--". (What was the use? He didn't understand. Let's end this.) "They WERE useful, weren't they?" (Taunting.)

Quiet. We picked up the thread of the story. "She got jealous. She said, 'Are you goin g to see that Lorna-girl (!!!) when you go up there? You're going to see that LORNA!'" I said, 'Yes,'--and we argued. (I got the impressions here that she wanted to know how far he was going with me--and he had said he didn't know--he'd see when he got here--)"--and she called her mother--I got tired of all this 'Are you going to her; or are you not going to her?'--Etc etc.

(I missed that important two-syllable word. I never did figure out if he were talking about me or the girl in this allusion, but since he didn't seem to attach much importance to the word I assumed the latter.) I made him repeat the word, but I still didn't catch it. It sounded like "marry".

I was gripped with a great, weary sickness by now. This needed talking over. It needed a great deal of talking over. But

this was not the time or the place.

Grimly, I put the car in gear. I suppose we said something about talking about it tomorrow. I don't remember a thing then except fighting the car and my emotions until we got downtown. There was now a Great Thing between us. I believe I asked him if he was still coming tomorrow--and he was very definite, very sure. Yes, he'd come.

I don't think we talked about it anymore. He made one reference to it again, but I discouraged it. I couldn't drive traffic and talk about that, too.

We kept to trivia and comment. He was being a bit dictatorial about my driving,--typically/ Once he looked around and said, "Where are all the PEOPLE?" (It was our usual street scene; Los Angeles has more PEOPLE!--He had acquired sophistication!)

I vaguely remember one more obscure remark that seemed to say that "he should get me a car". It COULDN'T have been!

N's Return to the Republic:

Surprisingly, that scene in the car did not dispel the wonderful mood of the day. It prevailed. It was still with a feeling of great togetherness that we drove up to the Republic building and parked in front of N's old office.

He jumped out and put a nickel in the meter with a naturalness and sophistication I had never seen in him before. I was dying to go in with him and witness this magnificent Return.

I asked him if he'd be long. If not, I'd wait for him. He seemed to want me to come.

I had forgotten to mention the miraculous change in his appearance at Janie's when he came out dressed for town in a dark brown suit and with his hair combed. Suddenly he was HANDSOME--that beautiful hair! Its too abundant curliness was now corraled into shiny, black waves. He stood erect, sure, elated. I was proud to go in with him.

Everyone greeted him. No one seemed at all surprised for me to be with him. Best of all, he, himself, seemed to accept me, want me. He showed no sign whatsoever of the old embarrassment, unease. This was a new N I had never seen before. He accepted me as his natural companion. He didn't try to get rid of me. I felt exactly like a married couple as we toured the whole plant, sometimes together, sometimes apart, but always at ease, agreed.

It was all open, frank, accepted--N and I together. I neither saw nor felt the slightest raising of eyebrows, innuendo or criticism--the aura that used to haunt us before. I was only pleased and proud and happy. N was not angry at me when I sought him out. Rather, he calmly accommodated me. I felt married again when his visit became so prolonged that he unconcernedly handed me another nickel for the meter if full view of everyone.

Once, while waiting for him, I went to a mirror to check. (I looked ghastly!) After freshening up I turned to meet him coming. The way his face lit up as he quickly scanned my face, his eyes dwelling on my hair, was more proof than the mirror that I had done a good job.

At one point I laughed to myself. N, who is so lavish with gifts to lady friends, had never given me anything. But today I got ~~TWO~~ NICKELS from him! Two nickels from N!

As we came out, I said, "Wasn't that FUN? I was so proud of you--" and so on. He didn't answer, but his face was absent-mindedly aglow.

In the car again, there was deep silence between us as we drove by his old apartment and the corner where we had stood and broken off that day. That was a different N, I was thinking. That old N seems like a petulant, troublesome boy compared to this one now seated so companionably beside me.

He, too, was remembering, for he now asked me how I'd learned to drive and told me how he had. I momentarily regretted the necessity of having to get the car back. I would have liked to spend the rest of the day with him. But, then, he was making no offers to flout his family's claims on him, so I resigned myself to making the most of these last few minutes.

I was driving up the avenue, thinking how here I was AT LAST, as I had so often imagined; driving with N beside me on a beautiful, sunny afternoon, white-gloved hands competently on the wheel!--when something in his chatter caught my ear.

Imperceptibly, on this trip up the Avenue, his mood had changed. What was he talking about now? His voice sounded complaining, petulant. He was talking about not being able to stay in Yakima--it was too small--he COULDN'T work for only a hundred a week any more--they'd said that's all he could get--(WHEN had he asked? HAD he asked?) Why THIS angle, I thought. Who SAID anything about staying in Yakima?

I said, "Of COURSE, Nick! Aren't you glad you didn't stay? Think how it would be if you'd stayed here!" (I was still warm with pride at how he'd come back and shown them all up with his success.)

Something was wrong. He didn't respond at all as I thought he would. He sounded cross. "I HAVE to go back--There's nothing in Spokane, either--(an explanation of that. He HAD looked in Spokane!)--I have to go where the money is--New York next--probably never come back--wouldn't come just to see Janie---"

Whatever is he talking about? Who started this? I knew this. He'd said it before. I was only listening with half an ear, intent on driving. What was the matter with him? This sounded like the old "back-to-Palermo" talk. What finally caught my ear in the familiar lament was this: Firmly and definitely he was saying,

"You'll HAVE TO FORGET ABOUT ME. I can't stay here. I have to go back---"

Whatever was he saying? What had brought THIS on? Caught my ear, indeed! THIS caught my HEART, which immediately plummeted to somewhere down between my feet --and out onto the pavement--where it shattered, leaving me with a great hole in my insides. I felt my face go grim and age ten years as I set my mouth and chin.

Loudly, agrily, passionately, I said, "I KNOW that, Nick! I KNOW it!----It's all right. It's ALL RIGHT! (I felt like screaming. Why was he so silent?) Va bene! VA BENE--!" No response. "Isn't that right? Isn't that what 'va bene' means--all right--?"

"WHY do you talk ITALIAN? Talk ENGLISH!" he exploded. (Well, I never! Here he'd been so pleased when I tried Italian at Janie's house! WHAT WAS THE MATTER WITH HIM? Good Lord! I'd been TELLING him goodbye for three years! I'd been good-sporting it all over the place! He KNEW ~~if~~ I knew it couldn't last. Damn! Damn! Damn!

As if to change the subject, he leaned over to look at the gas gauge, and asked me if I was running out? To "make up"

I said, "I'd LIKE to run out of gas with YOU!" and gave him a flirtatious look. It didn't go over TOO well, but he laughed, and seemed better then.

Alarmed now, I felt it necessary to check on our date for tomorrow--yes, he'd come. I gave him a long, skeptical look, remembering. He ignored me. If he DOESN'T come, I thought, it will be because of that look.

The rest of the ride back to Janie's to let him off was difficult. Suddenly, all the fun was gone. There seemed to be nothing to say. I haven't the slightest recollection what we talked about. All I knew was that N was suddenly, inexplicably cross.

Oh yes. With an effort, I do remember: First, I heard N say, "There's my old BARBER SHOP" almost affectionately. (How he seemed to be re-living it all with seeming pleasure. I thought he'd been so unhappy here!--The barber shop.---NOW I find out where it was! A picture of him walking handsomely in the setting sun jumped into my mind--that day he wouldn't ride the bus with me--and when I saw him I thought he was deliberately walking home to pique me. He had been walking to the barber shop!)

Then we passed the building where Hal Scofield now has his office. It was an odd coincidence, for I have passed it COUNTLESS times and have NEVER seen Hal. Today he was standing on the curb.

N and I saw him at the same time. I squealed on the brakes--not sure if N wanted to stop--it was so LATE! A woman behind

glared at me in the mirror (was it the SAME woman?) I saw N hanging out the window waving to attract Hal's attention. So I stopped--a bit farther on--(I didn't want to see Hal!)

N got out and walked back. I waited. Something kept me there. I think I feared Hal's cruel innuendoes. I could always say I was in a hurry. And I DIDN'T want to wait endlessly for N again.

N seemed happy as he talked to Hal, and blithely unconcerned to having been seen with me. (Hmm!) They turned around and gestured to me. N STILL seemed quite relaxed, quite unembarrassed. I waved, glad they weren't insisting on my getting out. I was GLAD Hal had seen me with N. So there! You old fool! I don't care WHAT you think! I only wish it were true!

Thankfully, I saw N break away and come back to the car--in the best of spirits.

It was HAL we talked about the rest of the way home. At last I had a chance to tell N about that last day at Hal's. It happened just right. I said, "I didn't want to see Hal. I don't think he likes me. He's always very cool to me--"

N WAS interested, as I'd hoped he'd be. He pressed me and I was only too eager to comply, having noticed that N VALUES jealousy. I could see my brief report DID give him a little old thrill of conquest. "Poor Hal", he said, "--a broken heart! You should be NICE to men--go around and make them happy--" Some remark like that.

But there was something about his tone that was not quite what I expected--some joke, some taunting---Anyway, it made me mad. (I'll give myself IF and WHEN I choose-- I don't need Signor Chianello's advice!)

Unhappily back ~~at~~ Janie's, I drove into the car port. Secretly thankful no one greeted us, we settled tentatively for a brief, last-minute chat. There was a great feeling of unfinished business between us.

N began again his stipulation that I "must find other interests--I had my ~~xxx~~ kids--my work--(then, hesitation here)--find someone to make me happy--"

(OK. OK! I thought, desperately hurt at this apparently bald brush-off and proceeded to give him a rather false account of how I had "practically signed up for night classes at Junior College--"

"That's it! That's it!" he said, "--keep yourself busy in the evenings--then the time goes--" And he began to relate his own similar solutions for time killing. (what a boring lot of false detail!-- evenings and week ends spent washing windows--cleaning his apartment--running back and forth to the cleaner's--the grocery store--

(Oh NICK! I thought. And where was NITA in this old maid existence you describe?) --never time to read books, though--he confessed he'd NEVER read the Pellegrini book--(What about the Palermo one?)---

"No!" I interrupted. "I mean go to night classes to MEET people!" And, when he

didn't respond, I repeated--entirely unconscious of my implication!

It was a bad mood. He got out quickly and went in the house without a backward look.

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I went home. That last little difficulty soon dissipated in a glorious whole! I had been with N ALL AFTERNOON! HE HAD COME BACK!

I went over to give mother her car keys. As I turned to go, she said, "By the way, did N ever come?" !!!

I "crossed the bridge"--my secret love is not a secret anymore--and it's ALL RIGHT! It is "accepted"!

Yes", I said. "He was there. That's why I went." And turned and went home.

There I had an emotional explosion. Tomorrow! Tomorrow! The day I have waited two years for! She is NOT going to ruin THAT!

I went back and put my cards on the table at last. I told her bluntly what I ~~w~~ expected of her tomorrow--"GET LOST!", I said--and what she could expect of me in the next three days--nothing.

I had grown up.

Thurs Sept 14

Thursday, Sept. 14, 1961

Rendezvous

Thank heaven for a time alone to write this up! What a day! I think I'm cured!

I was determined last night to make this a wonderful day. I bathed and primped and went to bed early, planning to wear my most provocative summer outfit despite the change in the weather. Despite the gnawing doubt that N would show up as he promised. When I saw that I wasn't going to sleep well, I took part of a sleeping pill. Even so, I didn't sleep, thinking of him so close, wishing he'd get up and come to me, even unlocking the door--he might! I imagined him lying sleepless, too--like that time before when we confessed the next day.

(Now I am so sleepy I could die, but I have to get this down while I have a chance, because it's FUNNY! After all this waiting---!) I even stopped smoking--the supreme sacrifice!

My morning at work was good; good mood, a wonderful compliment on my work from the new boss, and a lucky escape from having to work overtime. There were even many unusual chances to roam the store, keeping a look-out for N, for I rather expected him to be in, hoping to encounter me.

For this was his day's plan, as he had told them to me: he would get up early and go downtown, for he "had many people he wanted to see". (He never did!) Then he would come and see me while the kids were at school and I was alone. It was understood between us why. I had made a clear stipulation that I would be home at one, giving him a Mona Lisa smile to show the skepticism I had learned from past experiences with him. This smile worried me all day. I thought,

"if he doesn't show up it will be because of that smile--the knowledge that I doubted him." I romantically envisioned him hastening through his excuses to get away from home, full of the same sexual stimulation I was. I even conjectured that the purpose of seeing all these people was to secretly negotiate (so as not to get my hopes up) the possibilities of getting work here and staying. After all, he HAD tried to get work in Spokane, he'd said.

Hopeless, he also said, though from his account I don't think he tried very well. This idea was also based on his strange, persistent denials yesterday that he could NOT stay in Yakima, when it never occurred to me that he would. Afterwards, when I thought about it, methought he protested TOO MUCH.

He had also said that "he had to buy Janie a present" and I thought maybe it was a Chianello-type hint that he'd roam around in the store, in case I cared. Back came all the old dreams that morning; I began expecting him after 12 noon, as I had suggested in my letters; I began to expect to see him at or on the bus--then rather hoped he wouldn't, for I didn't relish that cruelly lighted, public ride.

He, typically, hadn't mentioned HOW he was going to pursue this course. I asked him and he mentioned the bus, he didn't know. I then warned him about the change in bus routes, but he shut me up with the declaration that he could figure that out himself.

When he did not appear at the store I made a valiant effort to get a hold of myself and be realistic. With the help of a motto on a stamp that appeared by some odd coincidence on my desk--something about "try not to hurt, and all the rest will come"--I produced my sense of humor and new "self-love" attitude and started planning just what I'd

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do and things to keep me occupied if he didn't show at all.

And, thinking of yesterday's events and his elated, boyous, egoistic display of himself, I convinced myself that he was making the rounds of every single person he'd ever known while he was here before--(I even KNEW he'd call Norma after that revealing little by-play with Isa yesterday, when he'd hidden his face from me and his voice had dropped an octave when I asked Isa about Norma, knowing he wanted to know, but was afraid to ask. And he DID call her! He did! He told me so later, voluntarily!)--I thought how, like yesterday, he'd become so engrossed in emotional discharge that he would not notice the passage of time till it would be too late for him to come see me. And then he'd go on home, as of old, assuming I'd know why, never bothering to explain, and not the least bit upset by it.

Also, I began to realize that he'd WALK out instead of taking the bus, something he was prone to do and blithely ignoring the fact that it would make him too late. Maybe He'd decide to do this so he could stop at the half-way point where Hal's studio is and finish his visit with Hal. Then I thought how Hal would be suspicious what he was up to after seeing us together yesterday and would manage to delay him until it was too late.

I conquered myself by enjoying the vision of him spreading his feathers and strutting. I convinced myself that it was pleasure enough for me--for him to be happy in his boyish pride at showing his old enemies and detractors how successful he had become. I girded myself well with exact plans for myself the rest of his visit if he defaulted; with philosophical resignation that I wasn't

losing anything I hadn't experienced before and found wanting. And it worked! I really felt quite peaceful and sure.

And all morning I savored the experience I had so long anticipated, of being utterly happy, of anticipation of the rendezvous so long awaited with my chosen lover. I kept telling myself enjoy! enjoy! this is the best part! And I found, surprised, that I wouldn't want to have to sustain this mood for very long or very often. It was too much to bear. It was almost UNCOMFORTABLE. Life! And I thought, I am NOT going to spoil this with silly, petty fear, jealousy and other unpleasant emotions. It's what I WANTED; I'm going to ENJOY it! And this worked very well----I THOUGHT----

It was a shock to walk out of the store and right into one old "friend" of N's we'd mentioned yesterday and he had not seen. I assumed in my conjecture of his activities that his rounds would include a visit to this friend--and so I was rather taken aback when I asked him if he'd seen Nick? "Nick? Nick who?---ohhhh, NICKY!--No, " he hadn't, and showed not the slightest interest in so doing.

I boarded the bus determined not to expect N or be hurt if he didn't appear, yet found myself looking, looking. And impatient, impatient and short and scolding when the driver made a long, unusual wait. What a SLOW bus! I felt like standing up and screaming, "Don't you know I have a rendezvous with my lover?" The driver was Satan himself deliberately enjoying the taunting of me!

And who but the Devil saddled me with that horrible, middle-aged woman who insisted on accompanying me up the street to my house, though I told her nastily that the street she wanted could not be reached this way. I ALWAYS walked that walk alone!

And, horror of horrors! Hell and damnation! Mother had her car parked RIGHT IN FRONT of the house, even though I had risked a clean breast of the situation last night and just plain begged her to get lost today! I should have KNOWN I couldn't count on her! What if N had already come, seen the car, and left, thinking I was involved?

I was so mad I slammed through the house and over to mother's and, without giving her a chance to explain or offer, cried, "I KNEW I couldn't count on you! Leaving that car out there to make N think I wasn't alone! I TOLD you to get lost! Are you leaving, or can I at least put the car in the driveway out of sight?!"

I had never dared talk to her like this before. There was more I wanted to say--about how such tactics had always ruined my chances for what she PROFESSED she wanted for me, but something made me hold my tongue. I think I didn't want to waste time arguing with HER.

She was, of course, shattered, and muttered, "I'm leaving"--and left. (Probably to spread the story of my "ruin" all over.) I didn't care.

All I wanted was to hurry and prepare for N. There was so little time! I couldn't eat. I couldn't. And I didn't (which I was to regret later.)

And what next? The zipper on my dress jammed--that damned dress everyone has seen and admired all summer and I've worn twenty times this summer ~~expecting~~ N to see it. Another wearing gone and he hadn't!

I stood at the window, fuming and fussing with the zipper, where I could see if N approached. Here I was, after waiting two years, imprisoned, stuck in a damned, tight-fitting dress! Then I began not trying very hard. What a perfect "opening" set-up!

--"Please help me undo my dress--!" I began to wish he'd come so I could ask him to undo my zipper-- and then---

He didn't. An hour stretched out. He'd said "soon after one". Once I would have broken into hopeless, hurt tears. But today I allowed myself the luxury of being pàain mad. I began to figure what might have happened. I was sure he'd walk. But, if he took the bus--the next one wasn't due till two--I'd give him till 2:15. I tried to busy myself (I had gotten out of the drss by now and put on, not one of my carefully planned outfits--it had become too cold (damn!))--but the most easily discarded garment I could find.)--but it didn't work!

Finally at two I just lay down on the davenport where I could watch the window and almost went to sleep while I willed him to come. I had given up.

And then he came. Appearing nonchalantly in the window, strolling and looking about him--coming from the opposite direction from the bus--looking dark, black, so much darker than I'd remembered him--but exotically handsome.

All the visions I'd had of this meeting!
All the romantic daydreams!

We met at the door as casually as if he were father coming home from work. He walked in and began to take off his suit coat. (!!! I thought!) Then he handed it to me and I started to lay it down. Oh no! It must be hung up--on a hanger! I did so.

I went back to the front door and turned the lock, giving him a ~~sendone~~ smile and saying, "facetiously", "I'm going to lock you in!" He said nothing.

He had settled himself in a chair rather than on the davenport as he used to do. (This disconcerted me. It put me in an awkward position. What to do?)

There was no emotion, no magic spark, no mention by either of ~~his~~ on the fact that he was late. (I never even thought of it) no comment on my bizarre, enticing attire, although his eye kept going to my purposely exposed bosom, making me feel a little foolish.

(Well, I thought, I'm in for it! This is IT! Go into your act for He isn't feeling a thing.) Beginning my long-planned Aging Mistress act, I sat myself almost on the arm of his chair within easy reach. Nothing. Trivia. "How did you get here

He just sat there with a sardonic grin on HIS face ~~now~~.

"How did you get here?" I asked. "Walked-- from Jenna's--" "Who?Where?" "Jenna! Jenna--!" "Oh,--Janie's--"

Silence. A play of looks back and forth between us--then

"Where are your kids?" "In school--get home at---etc." "A short time", looking at the clock. "Yes". A pause. He sat with his head pulled back against the ~~back~~ of the chair, watching me, grinning.

So I took his hand--not much warmth there-- and said, "I promised you something--We must hurry--".

At this he laughed and pulled me awkwardly to him and kissed me, determinedly and thoroughly but without any feeling. It was awkward and embarrassing. There I was straddled uncomfortably across his lap and he only waited. I grinned and said, "Most men would be delighted--" He smiled at me. I said, "Let's go in here"--taking the dilemma by the horns and thanking my lucky stars I'd read all those Italian novels.

This is what they did: plan the meeting deliberately, walk inoff the street, lock the doors, undress and go to bed.

I led him through the routine. And I knew I was right--Italians do do this!--when he followed right in the pattern without hesitation--almost like a lamb to the slaughter--he who had been so shy, so coy, so modest before!

"Oh," he said, neither glad nor mad, "Are we going to bed together?..." Is it allright?" I said, laughing, mistress of my emotions, "Well, for heavens sakes, I've had TWO YEARS to plan this!" I was busy closing the curtains--"I think I'll do this--on account of being so old. Like you said, "smiling at him, "they're all alike in the dark." (He had said this about Nita yesterday.)

I fussed around, beginning to take off my dress. I turned and saw him standing beside me stark naked except for his ridiculous shoes, socks and watch. I had never seen a nude man in daylight before--and I was disappointed to see no sign of love. He just stood there.

I was stalling, wishing it were dark, embarrassed more by my lack of beauty than any nakedness--"unaccustomed as I am"--I said, "I don't do this very often--" trying to get into positions that would not reveal signs of age.

He said nothing. Just stood there. Then, impatiently he said, "Aren't you going to get undressed?" When I helplessly threw out my hands, saying, "Do you want to do it or shall I?"--as I'd read in the books, and hoping perhaps it might excite him more, he started roughly pulling down my tights. "What have you got on?" he said, disgustedly. (I rather fancied myself in those tights--I

had planned it that way--they were very successful during our "Dress-up" Days last year!) I pulled up my black petticoat, and postured to show the black tights, (the black was intended to play up my white, red-headed skin, one of my few lures!) He paid no attention. He showed no interest. So I proceeded to help him pull the tights off, leaving me naked from the waist down.

We embraced. Nothing. Again. Nothing. He asked if he could take off my brassiere, which I had planned to come off after I was on my back (better not to sag, my dear) and I was horrified to hear myself say, sadly, "But I'm so old, Nick!" "That doesn't matter, does it?" he said. "They can feel, can't they. Then I can suck on them." (My God! I thought. I, who was married to a Puritan!) Bless his realistic, little Italian heart--(and damn him!) "Let's get on the bed". This from him.

In a business-like way we did and he proceeded to work on me. There is no other way to describe that methodical Italian preliminary. I knew now it was all wrong. There was no feeling in what he was doing. And I knew why, but there was nothing I could do about it. (I may have been married to a Puritan but I'd had my moments--and this wasn't one of them!)

Finally, I realized that he could do nothing. His silence allowed me time to think--the negress was between us. SHE won! Oh, well.

He had desisted, flung himself back, his arm over his eyes. Now, in a kind of muted agony, he said, "This is one of my problems --the psychiatrist--with Nita, too--" and,

as he went on, tense in my arms, with other confused bits, I realized he was telling me one of his deepest, darkest secrets: my oh-so-passionate, artful Italian lover, who had awakened my long slumbering passions, was only the ytpical, much discussed, often impotent Don Juan; the frozen Mama's Boy I had suspected, his negress a victim as much as I!

It was my turn to nurse. I cradled him in my arms and made us close. He accepted it wordlessly. Then I encouraged him to talk, placated him, reassured him, sought to calm him, meantime inhibiting my own frustrated ardor and hoping against hope that every bit of womanly art and wiles and scraps of psychiatry I had ever gleaned would come to my rescue. For I knew he MUST succeed before our allotted time was up to preserve not only his male ego, but his SANITY.

He still lay with his head back, one arm around me, the other still covering his eyes and his tempting blue-whiskered chin in the air. I kissed it from time to time and carressed his brow and hair as he talked on, about how unhappy he was, how he'd always be unhappy (I'd heard all this once before) There was just ashade of falseness to it that made me realize he might only be saving his male pride, or excusing and covering a sudden impulse to be faithful to Nita. Yet I HAD heard this before, this mood, when I was Number One, so I decided not to take any chances, to be on the safe side. Love is never wasted I have learned.

Time ran out. Finally I decided to dare one last attempt--praying, praying this time.

I turned off my mind and let myself go, surprising both him and myself. I noticed a bit of reaction, not much. It wasn't enough, but it restored him a little and justified my reassurances. He became interested again and wanted to try again. He tried hard. I could see it wasn't going to be good at all, laughing to myself at the irony of it all. But I was MENTALLY relieved when suddenly it was all over--for him, triggered unsatisfactorily by some sudden, clumsy gesture of mine. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do it. Too many years of pseudo love-making, "carefulness". When he said, "No babies?" and I said, "no babies." he still couldn't do it. He couldn't get over that hump of too many years of Catholicism and bachelor techniques and Italianisms. He couldn't GIVE himself, cross that barrier to real intimacy. (Poor Nita!) But he seemed satisfied enough. I had to question him to make sure. Then he began talking, talking, unconsciously allowing my reassuring ~~ggs~~ caresses.

This time I was the clock-watcher, the nervous one. He lay naked and relaxed and passive in my arms--chattering, chattering--exposing his inmost self--as well as his OUTMOST! My poor Nick, UNABLE to love, UNABLE to GIVE. Not knowing what was the matter. "I want to make you happy" he'd said yesterday, as if able to bestow great favors; and here he was--with no single, solitary thought for ME, for the OTHER person--aching and frustrated after more than two years!

I was so glad the bed broke down during his last desperate attempt! It gave me a chance to bolster his male ego!

It was just the right, the needed touch!

He seemed hardly to hear me as I suggested getting dressed and THEN talking, but acquiesced as if in a dream. I fully expected him to stay in the old pattern; jump up, dress and rush off. I had no idea I was to sit glued to his jumbled, tortured torrent of words for the next three hours--through my kids return from school, dinner preparations and all. He did not stop once except when I told him I had to start the oven and broke away and went into the kitchen. He waited right where he was. He was in the same position when I came back. And he went right on from where he left off.

~~On 7/14/74~~ I had to steer him to the kitchen with me while I fixed dinner. He HAD reacted to the entrance of my kids. First Denny, at whose size he marveled in a really kind and interested way. He was immersed in talk when my daughter appeared in front of us. It was as if a bell had sounded in the room. Mid-sentence he broke off--"Well!--" and everything in him leapt out at that vision of virginal sixteen year old beauty. She caught it, and reacted like the woman she has suddenly become. It was exactly like the day with Gloria--sheer sudden lust. Just what I had feared! He glanced at me with delighted wonder in his eyes. I said, "You know Julie, don't you--" She smiled ²¹ "as Mona Lisa" and left the room, N collected himself and went on talking.

In the kitchen I began to cook sausages and tried to catch his attention for what I considered a very good joke--offering him a portable, "do-it-yourself" kit, but he only shook his head as if at an annoying fly and went on, glassy eyed.

Only the production of dinner on the table, which he declined, made him get up, put on his coat and leave, still talking, still in that same loquacious trance. My poor N! That suffering, talking, dark-featured face before mine for three hours will haunt me all my life!

He had revealed a very great deal--a lot of it shocking--a lot boring--all of it obscured in his difficulties with an alien tongue. Many past mysteries were cleared up. I suppose it was reassuring that the whole tirade eliminated any suspicion of heart-involvement that I had ever thought he'd had. Except one time when I was twitting him about still carrying the torch for Norma and immediately after, he called me "Norma" and caught himself.

I don't think he realized that he was revealing or that he ended just before he left by listing the qualities his love must have--"now he knows," he said. They were all things I could claim to have tried to do for him--what I call my "therapy"--"she must think of ME, be nice to me above all" he said, for instance. I know he didn't realize how obviously he exposed his "block" during that conversation.

Thank God for my studies--"I shall be ready when the time comes--"!

In that three hours we talked about many things, of course. The most significant thing to me was his revelation of the psychiatrist's diagnosis as almost word for word what mine has been. As he told it, I had the feeling I'd heard it all before-- here in my "book". It was balm to my heart.

He explained that he did not go downtown at all. This was disheartening to me, for it meant that his Return was not evidence of a new "outgoingness", but mostly display, "revenge". Yet, still, it was better than he used to be! Perhaps he would never have gone if I hadn't gone with him?

He had ~~been~~ home living through and unable to break away from a great family vendetta over what to do about "i nonni". About two thirds of his monologue was about that. And during the time I listened his story seemed valid--his reasons why he couldn't share the burden of their visit. As I look back on it it seems self-centered and irresponsible. The whole family has come to regretting the burden of "i nonni's" visit and is trying to shift the blame and responsibility--as predicted by our little old writer!

His talk verified my suspicions and observations about Janie and her family, my suspicions that she only told me what pertained to building up her own interests. I had not gotten a complete, true picture of N through her tid-bits, as I had feared. N had not been as bad as she'd depicted it. In fact, I gathered from his talk how much he has straightened out and opened up and deepened and broken away from his family in a very encouraging, albeit crude, way.

He told me with great glee how he had stood up to Janie today and told her to quit ordering him around like she always had!!! (I note how N's and my affair has made us both break away from our families!)

He cleared up the Gloria mystery, which story doesn't really pertain to this tale, except that he claimed he was never interested, and from the way the story really went, I can see now that he wasn't.

He told family tales of how "I nonni" fought with each other interminably; and of crude personal relationships in the family, shocking things, some of them--like his father chaining up his brother to the bed. And how the psychiatrist had made him aware of these things and their effect on him.

He volunteered the information that he'd called Norma, which I had predicted, and told me all about it. And he wasn't very successful in denying my twitting that she had really been his Big Hope here.

But the really interesting things were the revelations about himself. From things he didn't know he was revealing I pieced together the story of this leason, which is exactly one of the girl possibilities I predicted for him and which I think I later threw away in disgust as being too silly to keep.

It DID happen after the time he won the car, gave up the trip "to see ma" and then I wrote for him to "be happy". Again we went through the things he'd told me the day before, this time more thoroughly. He had gotten this apartment in a cheap, mixed nationality fringe area, being too tight with his new found riches to move a little farther into the Italian quarter, which cost a little more, he said.

This was disillusioning to me. It hadn't occurred to me he was living in a tawdry area. He stupidly missed a chance to better himself there!

And it was a real blow to find that he never went to UCLA at all. He couldn't imagine why Janie had told him that. It was CITY COLLEGE and a Trade School, cheap immigrant training Schools in the sordid downtown LA area that he had gone to. (And I had bragged around to everyone, including the Pelligrinis, about his classes at UCLA and his working for a diploma!) And his purpose had been, NOT to improve himself and get better educated, but only to increase his earning capacity! That bit was a real eye-opener to me!

There he had met this "negress" as he insisted on calling her. He DID NOT want to tell me her name when I asked him, but finally said, when I showed I didn't really care, that it was "John-ita" (Juanita). How odd, I thought, to mispronounce a name that he must have heard hundreds of times. I don't think he realizes what a Spanish name would mean in LA; she is probably a negro-Mexican.

Anyway, it was evidently a handy sexual outlet from his allusions. He said she helped him get books on sociology, race problems, etc. and his talk is newly larded with "political" ambitions "back in Italy" and new social reform dreams.

He obviously ate and slept with her. For his new sexual blaséness and his references to "opening drawers and moving his stuff out" reveal----!!(here a shocked pause while I try to put a few things together!)

He mentioned her knowing of my letters, which puzzled me. Why WOULD she, unless he showed them to her or---they had lived at the same address! Put this with all his talk about he simply won't have his family to visit him--no room! no room!--and he doesn't want them to mix with his foreign friends, he says. And he made a great

unasked for to do about her always phoning him first and if he had free lance work to do that she'd always be very understanding and just say ok and stay home. (So! NOW he can use a phone and have one!) Yet, before, in his ramblings he had mentioned how she sat and watched him do his work. (However, he is so hard to understand when he talks so fast that I often get things wrong.)

He also stressed, for no reason, how he NEVER lets girls into HIS apartment--"First thing you know they want to marry you or won't get out!" (Maybe he's learned the hard way?) And he makes a great thing of how he spends his time on domestic chores (a deux?)--I can't remember him showing any evidence of washing windows etc. Before!)

Again he went through the story of that last night fight. And then I remembered how he'd shown Janie and me the "traffic ticket", dated the night he left as we left her house Wednesday. He showed it for no reason and kept part of it hidden I'd noticed at the time. And, at the time, I thought there was something odd about his showing it.

I began to realize that his sudden flight from LA had nothing to do with any warmth toward his family. That he had no desire or intention of coming became apparent with his long description of how he and Pina had fought against Janie's bringing "i nonni" over. After all, he said, for the same amount of money that Janie demanded as their share they could have made the trip home to Palermo themselves to visit and had a longer visit! (No thought of how nice to give "i nonni" a trip!) I began to harbor the astounding thought that he was really fleeing a pregnant mistress with whom he'd been living, and all his job attempts elsewhere were ways to avoid going back!

I mentioned at the time that there seemed to me to be something odd about the tonsil story. In all his talks now he never mentioned it at all, for all his purported worrying and suffering. When I asked him about it it had very, very little to say, and dropped the subject immediately. Something mighty strange there! Now I began to wonder, was there perhaps a June pregnancy? Was that where all his money went? And then when they suspected another one, is that what broke it all up?

Well, well, I thought. My N is a pretty corny character. And his trial attempt at sudden independence ended as I feared--in going to extremes!

And he doesn't love me. That's clear. I am Mama Confessor. During our attempted love-fest yesterday, when he was doing his lamenting I had reached up and patted his cheek and said, "I love you", rather in pity. He said boldly and immediately and flatly, "That's too bad." What surprised me is that I didn't feel a bit hurt. It struck me kind of funny. Because I know he does. But he doesn't know he does. I can't explain what I mean. I said immediately, lightly, "I don't mean you love me, or I expect you to say you do. I just mean I love you." And he accepted it. He said, "I know." We understood each other and it was all right. I made him a gift. He accepted it.

The most significant disclosure N made was his revealment of his *modus operandi* in love-making: He said the negress got the impression that he was a "real nice guy". "You know," he said, waving his hands--sweet, aimiable, etc. he meant. "I gave her lots of sweet

talk, buttered her up, got her way up to here (gesture). But then I got tired of all this talk, talk, talk by her mother (and others)". Again references to his democratic broad-mindedness in sleeping with a negress--"but, of course, MARRYING one was out of the question" and he told them so flatly. HE made them see what kind of a guy he really was (great pride here), HE showed them how adamant he really was! Evidences of pride in the scene he made, pride in the "power" and "vigor" and "manliness" of his temper tantrum, his throwing of things, his firmness in getting his car and putting everything in it, their inability to stop him--even to the point of calling the police. His "courage" and "stamina" in even spending the night in jail for it!

(He claimed he didn't hurt her, but I can't imagine what else he would have been booked on, since he had enough money to pay a fine, and he doesn't drink.)

Then on to say how they'd find out "the real man" he really is. When he is THROUGH, NOTHING can make him go back! He goes to his own place and no knocks on the door, no phone calls--nothing--can make him "give in"! He has to trump up excuses--(keep "busy")--sure, but THEY'LL SEE.

The look in his eye at this remark was not one of "manly determination", but rather of soft, contemplative enjoyment. It PLEASES him--gives him peace--to feed on the hurt he is administering! Just as I suspected!

"Sure", he says, "I feel a little bad for awhile, but not much. THEY'LL see! I'll show them. I NEVER go back!

At this I looked him right in the eye and grinned--hadn't he "gone back" just once--with ME? with whom he'd tried the same treatment? But he didn't realize his inconsistency.

I looked deep into him and said, "Maybe you'll go back to her---" His lips denied, but his eyes showed his interest; his wonder--COULD he? might it really happen? His eyes went soft, interested. He wasn't too sure of himself.

He said, "This negress wanted her own way and he wanted his. (This was his character analysis!) But his manner implied, not total finality, but maybe a CHANCE.

And, before he left, his last words were of a new insight--that one must try to understand the PEOPLE in a situation--(I think he said the psychiatrist had helped him see this)--sometimes it was not just HIM--it was the other people. One must try to see what they wanted, understand THEM. It wasn't always just himself--"Capisci'?" he says to me? I answered, "Capisco." and he laughed, looking at my kids to see the effect we'd made, for we were now at the door. He was on his way out. (Good for you, N, I thought! You're on the right track if you can steady the rudder now and quit yawing from side to side!)

I, of course, did not let on that I noticed he'd shortened his "Capisci?" 's this time to obscure the familiar ending. The first couple of times he'd said it to me at Janie's he'd said "Capisci", the most intimate form.

Also I noticed that he now lards his talk to me with unconscious Italian, like he does with his family. I have been accepted! He never used to use ANY Italian with me!

And so he flew out the door without another word.

Our day today was not the glorious experience yesterday was. We were like an old married couple today--completely familiar, completely at ease, completely one piece--old shoes. We parted without promises, without possessiveness, WITHOUT MY CARING! I do not know if I'll see him again -- and I don't much care.

He doesn't need me any more except as the good friend I intended to end up being. Old loves make good friends?

Thinking back, I realized N is not the N I knew when he was here. Something is lacking--the quiet wisdom, the dignity, the sense of MATURITY I saw in him then. How strange! For now he has acquired the sophistication, the lack of which I deplored before, and now he has lost his MATURITY, the thing I sent him out to gain! This fellow IS Nicky--I join the "Nicky" clan. I think of him, too, as NICKY now--after today!

Good heavens! I wonder if that negress was UNDERAGE? That's it! N has REGRESSED! His try for independence only threw him back to his point of blocking! He has to grow up all over again from now on--my NICKY! He only went BACK--and it STILL has it ahead of him! This time I REALLY can't wait!

Just a corny, cheap, little Wop.

Notes:

Mrs. Picatti called--bless her soul!

I laughed that night when I had to struggle alone to get the bed back on its slats! A judgment on lovers: Some do not even offer to help set up the bed they made collapse! Such is N!

During our love-making I found myself reverting to the old pre-LA approaches. They no longer worked: i.e. I said (testing)"If I could have babies, I'd marry you---"

"Oh no! Oh no!" he says. Realizing he'd misunderstood the implication--that I loved him that much, a reassurance, I added, "--IF I were younger--"

(NO!) a vigorous shaking of the head. He has examined the situation. There is no longer any question of that.

Nor did he "capisce" when I told him today was the time we never got before. He didn't understand that what we did today had to be gotten out of our systems before we were through.

Now, there will be no more kisses. I can smoke. I am content.

He left a "passion mark" on me--to go with the cut in my leg I acquired that day I found he "wasn't coming"?

When I mentioned going to California last year to Mike's graduation there was a catch in my voice I didn't expect and he was very silent. I didn't expect that, either. Was he, too, thinking, "what MIGHT have been--if he'd written--?"

I also told him when he was lying in my arms telling me how unhappy he'd been that "I know it sounds silly, N, but I can FEEL when you're upset--" and told him about the "vison" I'd had that night and then (this was hard to say) how Janie had revealed that was the day he'd "had his tonsils out". This was the first mention of the tonsils, and he didn't say anything, either about what I'd said or take the chance to tell about his great operation. The first he just didn't "go for"; I didn't think he would. But the second--there is some mystery there!

I can't help but wonder if maybe he DID crack up. Maybe he was SENT to a hospital for observation. Maybe that was why that strange, long, mysterious delay and constant changes of plans. I STILL can't see those primitive Siciliáans VOLUNTARILY going to a psychiatrist and staying with it! I can't see him spending so much of his precious money when his main fault is his pride of being able to figure things out for himself. Oh well. I'll never know.

Thought! I'll bet he DID read the Palermo book! THAT'S where he got that "go back and help all those poor, poor Italian people" inspiration! He and Nitashared my birthday book! Damn! Damn!

Friday, September 15, 1961

N had said that first day, I think it was, that "of course he'd see me again--there were THREE DAYS!" I had assumed from my previous knowledge of his behavior that having seen him once, that was it. Of course! THREE DAYS--(all the time in the world!) He sounded as if he expected to see me every day--the understanding, more or less, that it would be like it was before--sort of secret rendezvous.

But, when he left yesterday, the kids were present, and he was in a sort of talking trance, and nothing had been committed between us.

Last night, after the bedroom fiasco, I didn't care. I had a beautiful, peaceful, "it's-all-over" feeling--and he seemed vulgar and worthless to me--not at all the Nick I used to know. This N disgusted me. I wanted no more of him--or his family--or any of the messy, lowdown trouble he was in--ick!

BUT, I couldn't just drop then all--not show the least interest the next two days--it would be too obvious--the negress--and then no Lorna! Besides I assumed that yesterday needed a cover-up; his family was supposed to think he had been downtown. Janie would wonder if there was silence from me.

I tried to think of an excuse to call her, pretending some interest, but not getting involved in anything. I decided the only excuse I had was a feeble inquiry about the propriety of my daughter wearing a Catholic medal. I didn't plan on seeing N that evening, for it was my son's first

football game and I HAD to go. And, to my surprise I found I WANTED to go. It never even occurred to me at the time that it might be a good rendezvous time for N and me if everyone went to the game, like it used to be.

N didn't know I was going. I didn't even mention it to him, assuming he'd spend all evening with his family, and truly not giving a damn--rather glad to have a reason for not seeing him.

After the bedroom scene and his sordid disclosures, I knew there could be no more kisses--and it didn't even bother me. For the type of a man that could live with a negress purely for sexual relief, and treat her as selfishly as he had her, just plain didn't interest me. I was GLAD it ended this way, for it cured me completely.

And I didn't have the slightest inclination to have him come over for the two or three hours I would be home alone before the kids came from school. In fact, I was trying to contrive a reason to call Janie at an hour too late for us to meet privately, so that he'd know if he wanted to come over it would be only for talk.

And the thought of wasting another hour or two listening to the details of the Chianello vendetta, which I could do nothing about and now wished to stay completely clear of, didn't appeal to me, either. I seemed to sense sort of a mutual feeling between us that there was no more reason to get together.

The irony of my sudden change of attitude toward him did not even touch me at the time. I seemed strangely unconcerned.

As for his activities today, I assumed that he'd be downtown again in the morning--or rowing with his family--I didn't care. I just wanted to head him off for those couple of hours.

THEN, I started making surmises from what he'd told me and realized with horror that it sounded as if he were in a real bad, mess. He had made it sound as if there was some mysterious reason he HAD to go back, but he certainly didn't want to. Maybe they had brought an immorality charge against him and he was apt to be deported! Maybe he was in custody with the police! I wondered with disgust why I always get involved with people who get involved with the police! Boy! I wasthrough!

I felt in the dilemma of knowing something imminently disastrous that he was keeping from his family. Should I tell? It seemed to me I owed it to Janie to avert a tragedy if I could. But, first, I would have to check a couple of vital points with N to see if my horrifying conjectures were true.

This view was not pure^a figment of my imagination. It dawned on me as I was telling my daughter about N's escapade. I did so after careful cogitation: reason number one being to reassure her that there was nothing between N and me; reason number two to plant disgust in her toward N to counteract that lascivious interest he displayed in her (as I predicted he would) and which she was well aware of. Jealousy,

of course, I'll admit it, but also motherly protection. As I told it, I realized the implications.

It all depended on the girl's age and the reason N was in jail and how he got out. Was he out on BAIL? So I HAD to figure out a way to "fool" Janie and talk to him somehow. But I decided I'd figure out something later.

Ten minutes before I had to leave for work the phone rang and it was Mrs. Picatti, bless her soul! She said she'd phoned me four times (I'd forgotten ~~about~~ about her). Anyway the gist of her long talk was to ask me to act as go-between to arrange for a meeting between "I nonni" and the local Italians. Once I would have been very excited, considering it a chance to crusade for democracy, but now it only impressed me as a tiresome display of pride and prejudice on both sides. Well, thank you, Mrs. P! You gave me just the excuse I needed to contact Janie!

On to work. Now I was anxious to make my call and commit them before they had a chance to get away from me, but work kept me too busy until noon.

I didn't particularly WANT to see N today and I was, for once, very unhappy to be sent over to his old office. I was very afraid I'd run into him over there. But I went, as ordered. No signs of N. And damme! I found myself a little bit disappointed. I wanted to show him how little I cared--(I guess?)

No one mentioned N's and my conjugal-appearing visit of the other day. I expected to get a lot of teasing. I mentioned it to Ralph--it seemed too obvious not to. He said, in his dull way, "Well, I guess N will be leaving tomorrow; won't he?"

DONG!...TOMORROW? Oh NO! Didn't he know these three days are a week long apiece? TOMORROW? Why, it's ALMOST tomorrow!

That little remark did it. My lovely, peaceful, all-through, wash-my-hands-of-it feeling flew to the winds and teary sadness gripped me and did not leave me again.

O DAMN, I thought. O DAMN!

Back to work where I called Janie with trumped up courage. I was terribly afraid to butt into their great vendetta they were having. I knew I wouldn't be wanted. And I wasn't.

Janie tried very hard to get me to tell what I wanted on the phone, but, of course, I couldn't--certainly not on a business phone. She tried to head me off, but I wouldn't be. So then she begged me to wait till after lunch. She said N was leaving when I probed into his activities, in hopes I could waylay him somewhere. "He was going downtown to buy a gift--they ALL had plans--"

(Downtown?--"to buy a gift"? Maybe that was just an excuse to get out to come and see me? For I was beginning to wonder--too late--if that hadn't been his ruse that first day?) Unsure, I decided I'd better not risk letting him get away. So I asked, "Is N there? (Yes.) I'm wond-

ering if I should talk to him--I have a few points to settle with him--and I'll drop by and give you the other message later--". "I'll call him", she said, reluctantly.

N was slow in coming. I tried to pin him down to a rendezvous, but he started "running"--"I can't see you today--(this, that and the other excuse)--tied up with family--HAVE to buy a gift--will see you tomorrow. What do you want?"

I didn't want to talk on that phone; I had only a few minutes and people kept wandering in. "just a few things I want to clear up/"

But he wouldn't leave it alone. He started guessing, for I couldn't say on my end. About the third guess he said, "About yesterday?" I was getting impatient. I thought he'd never guess right. Besides I was afraid of unwanted listeners on either end.

"No, no, no!" I said (Guess THAT would show him how little that episode meant to me--and it really did, I find!) Finally he guessed, "The girl?--the negress?" (WHY is he so BLATANT about her--has he no shame?) "Yes," I said, trying to put him off.

But no! he launched right into it--on and on and on--while I fumed and tried to slow him down so I could understand him and waved off people with my other hand. I kept trying to tell him I couldn't discuss it now.

But he rudely ignored my problem on my end, saying, "Oh, Janie can't hear--she's talking to Harry"--(how dumb can he get?)

So then he went into this long, sordid tale--and then told me that it was CON* FIDENTIAL; he hadn't told his family THAT part!

The sum of it was that it was as I had thought at first, just a scene and a trip to the police station, NOT jail, as he had first called it--on a noise complaint from neighboring tenants--the girl ~~was 27~~ ^{7/28/28} was 27--No--she had her own apartment--she had seen the letters because he had showed them to her--"to make her jealous" because she was going out with others and HE was jealous--"he's a jealous guy"--he wanted her for himself. (This hurt.)

He went into a great self-laceration about his jealous nature which I interrupted to say, "You know what jealousy MEANS, don't you?" He surprised me by knowing--(the psychiatric sessions?)--for he said right along with me, "Insecurity!"--"It means you aren't sure of her", I said, immediately regretting my mistake--it should have been "of himself". He was rattling on and I exploded, "Insecurity! Boy! That's YOU!" He murmured, "I know it, I know it--".

We went on with our review. He was calling this girl "Nita"--from things he said it sounded as if she were some kind of night club entertainer--drinks--parties--"a little"--he answered to my questions. Yes, he'd lived with her for five months--in the spring--in her apartment. (This

hurt, too.) She did give up her other boy friends for N--and I gathered from his confused account that she made desperate attempts to make up with him after the scene. (This hurt, too. I knew then, that he'd go back to her. Note--much, much, much later: I never noticed for a long, long time the inconsistencies in time in this story; first, the statements that the scene happened the night before he left; and then the reiterated remarks about "not having seen her for awhile, and things that happened BETWEEN the scene and his departure!")

When I mentioned that he might be going back to her, I could tell by the tone of his voice that he intends to. He said, "I'll miss her. I got used to her." DAMN him!

When he said he'd shown her the letters, I said simply, because it was the truth, that that was one reason I'd sent them to him--so he could use them for that purpose. I was surprised when he didn't believe me. He said, "Oh, COME ON now, Lorna--!" He wouldn't believe me, so I let it go, knowing I'd hurt him--perhaps only his male pride.

His first question, after guessing "the girl?" was "You want to know if she's pregnant?" (It's certainly the first question in HIS mind!) "I'll know when I get back--it was two-three weeks then--but I don't think so--I tried to be very careful--"(That blatancy again! I cringed, thinking of all the people who might be listening, including our switchboard operator!)

(Good! I thought. Another score for me!
I know THAT kind of love-making of his--a
and I know it's frustrating and unsatisfy-
ing--and the affair is doomed--just as
ours was--and for the same reasons. In fact,
this flight of his--is it flight from a
feared pregnancy? That's what the scene
was about, I'll bet!)

He would have gone on forever--millions of
petty details--he re-lives every moment--
I had to shut him off. People were wait-
ing. I knew what I wanted to know and
a lot more I didn't want to know.

I wanted to catch him, too, on my visit
to Janie--I had other "psychiatric" points
to make to him, but I didn't expect him
to stay there when he knew I was coming.
In fact, I was sure now that I'd scared
him off.

At the beginning of the conversation, when
he had hemmed and hawed, I had simply told
him, impatiently, that I just wanted to
TALK, not to get all shook up. I was so
firm and short with him I surprised even
myself. I think he will begin to sense that
this time I am through. I mean it.

And so, home. On the bus. Impatient,
impatient to get this over with. Too
tense to eat. (I am losing weight without
even trying again!) I WANTED Mother to be
there today. I WANTED the car there, be-
cause I intended to use it. This time I
was afraid I'd scared her off. I should
have known better.

The car was there. She was there. My

tiæade had not phazed her one bit! I made dictatorial plans with her to use the car, she lamely fighting back with her usual "excuses" and trumped-up "needs" and putting a false time limit on me. It samcked of sheer petty revenge--not one bit of REAL LOVE, I thought.

I tried to make myself delay, sensing that that the Esgate establishment was not ready for me, but I was now bound by mother's selfish "time limit", so I went.

It was too soon, as I knew it would be. Harry's ear was there. (I did NOT want to bother with HIS crudeness in this delicate situation, dammit.) But I went in.

It was wrong--wrong. Too soon. They were in the midst of something. Janie even bluntly asked me to come back later. It was embarrassing. I ffoundered, wonderin what to do. Couldn't Harry take a hint?

I had heard N's crrowing voice in the drive-side bathroom as I had come in. I had a feeling he'd been watching for me--knew I was there. When I came in he was literally flying around--through the room and out again, and back again.

When I came in he gave me one quick look--to size up my mood?--and busied, busied himself about something. When I flashed an appeal of puzzlement at Jane, she said, "He's putting on a shirt." Why? I thought. Where's he going? Janie had just explained that they hadn't begun lunch yet (it was two o'clock!)--she was just fixing it--then some protective remark about N's

having "to go buy a gift".

I couldn't understand. Why was lunch so late, when I'd warned them of my coming? Why was N flying around so now? Was he trying to get away? He came in in one sweater, then disappeared, and came back in a different one. What was going on?

On one of his flying trips across the room, he looked in my direction, pointed his finger and said, "I want to talk to you" and flew out. Since Harry was between us, I didn't know to whom he was referring. And I said as much. Harry was as puzzled as I. For a brief flash I thought, "He intends to go with me as he did the other day. He thinks I have come to get him-- the "gift purchase" is a cover-up."

For I hadn't expected him to be there when I got there. He had been warned. He had had time to escape. Was he caught in his escape? Perhaps. For Janie now said, "I don't know what's the matter with him. Nobody's going ANYPLACE till they eat lunhh."

I heard myself saying, "well, I can take him someplace, if it's short--if he wants a ride." But I really didn't want to take him off alone. I felt rather that it was time for another one of those good family conclaves with me warmly included.

This last remark of Janie's seem to settle the flying bird, for he alighted on a chair and seemed prepared to stay.

(I had been pleased to note the appreciative head-to-toe glance he had given me in one of his scurries across the room. Obviously, he liked the dress I had put on for his benefit. Obviously he LIKED what he saw!)

Now they began to press me to stay, but I still hoped for Harry's departure. Il nonno was humped over some written form. I wondered if this were the scene Janie had warned me might happen--when they'd be told to go home, because N and Pina would not share the burden, and she'd had enough. Perhaps it was a visa or something.

The impression of interrupted family crisis was augmented by the haggard, woe-begone look on "la nonna's" face, which disappeared momentarily as she turned to me with that flash of great love on her face. When her face settled back into that "pietà", my heart was wrung.

In voluntarily I reached over and took her hand and pressed it. She smiled with gratitude. It was a moment between us two. We understood each other. "La lettera": At this moment was my thanks for that Christmas letter I wrote to a strange woman in a strange land in a strange tongue about her strange son's trials among strangers. (How's that?)

I do not know if anyone saw us. It was an instant of truth. We two were alone in the world. We two mothers, we "Marys". (How true what Kubly said that every Sicilian mother is a Mary and every son ~~is~~ Cristo!) My silent look meant to convey to her that I knew--I knew about the negress and I felt for her. She knew I knew. She knew what I meant. This is what I'd come for--to let them know I knew--to join them, to share with them this drinking of the Cup. Nothing else mattered now. I could work out the other de-

tails somehow.

So I left, saying I'd be back later.

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Comment: That look between la nonna and I lasted a split second, but it contained more living, was of more import to me than certain YEARS of my life. This is true: that time is a fictitious thing. We live in split seconds quite apart from what our bodies are doing in their spin around with the earth. On the same premise, the few hours and moments ~~Nathan~~^{me} I have had are worth more than many years of prosaic marriage, or many a series of "Nitas". This is what "tu non capisci, Nicolo!"

And these things here before^{me} as I write: this full ash tray, this untidy coffee cup, these crumpled pillows, these tiresome writings are the Stigmata of my suffering, the Stigmata of the growth of love and understanding. They are SYMBOLS. "Dio, io capisco!" I understand. I thank you for these three days. Three days are enough. I am content.

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I had a hard time killing time after I left Janie's, but I managed to stay longer than I intended. JW/04

I cursed when I ventured back and saw Harry's car still there. Oh, well--so be it. I could brave whatever came.

Summoning "the light touch", I just plain sailed up to the open door and in, announcing, "I'm staying this time! You people NEED an interruption!" (Why couldn't they

confess to what I already knew? Why couldn't they let me in on it, too? Why the pretense, the wall between us? But, of course they didn't. I was an "outsider" and I was to remain so!)

They, too, must have resigned themselves, for now all seemed well. They were ready to receive me. I was surprised to find N still there. (What is this?) This time they all proceeded to welcome me with open arms and glad cries. All but N.

Though he remained in the seated circle about the lunch counter, it was Janie who pulled up a chair for me beside her and next to N (but, not TOO CLOSE, I noticed), set a cup of coffee before me and went to close the curtains, when I turned to look N straight in the face and the light was in my eyes.

It was Janie, bless her heart, who rose to my prepared, humorous ice-breaker and gave it all she had. From then on it was clear sailing. Harry turned a face full of acceptance and interest and desire to please toward me--in his own crude, corny way. Il nonno had completed and put away whatever he had been doing and showed interest (for him) with his monkey-like alert, silent watchfulness, accented with moments of shrewd, real enjoyment.

La nonna was now happy. She petted and stroked and fussed over N sitting next to her. She placed her head on his shoulder in a way she has and smirked and fondled him with almost incestuous enjoyment. While he returned her caresses. He attended her like a lover. I was fascinated.

There had been a couple of other displays

like this before, but short and casual. This time it went on and on like a show while the rest of us all sat silent, watching, until it became embarrassing.

I glanced at il nonno. THIS interested him. He was getting a real kick out of it. I did not look at Harry or Janie, I was too fascinated, but I could sense Harry's uncomprehending fascination akin to mine. (We Americans do not see ~~such~~ displays between mother and son!) Behind me, I could feel Janie's protective bristling.

Finally, unable to stand it any longer, I burst out, "She seems to like him." This broke the spell. Il nonno laughed. N sat up and stretched. (Later I was to remember that gesture with a shock when I realized when I'd seen him do it before.) Harry broke away and roamed the room. Janie snapped, "NATURALLY!" in answer to my remark.

(I had expected that tone. For here was a difference between cultures. A great, looming Difference. We broke into separate nationalities in that few minutes. It was now Sicilians against Americans. Janie was on the defensive. She had sensed our marveling.)

A million years flowed through me in the next instant. What to say? What to say? To heal the breach, but still recognize it? To point out briefly the recognition of a mother's right to love and forgive-- (someone--Harry it must have been--had said, "--In spite of all he's done to her--" voicing my thoughts exactly.)-- and yet to maintain the integrity of my

observation that it smacked of incest; a desperate, pathetic need in the mother for SYMPATHETIC male love, but, as REAL mother love, it was lacking; it was ruinous. It lacked the DISCIPLINE of real love, that which knows only the goal of the good of the loved one. It lacked INTEGRITY, self-respect, SELF LOVE. It was fawning, malicious, weak. It was all the tragedy of la nonna, barefaced.

And it was heart-rending to see N's open acceptance of it--to see him embracing his own ruin.)

I heard myself repeat Janie's "Naturally!", but I said it in a charged tone that conveyed, for those who could hear it, all I have put down here. I do not know if it reached Janie. Perhaps later. (Later I thought what I REALLY meant to say was "UN-naturally!")

This exchange broke the mood of gay camaraderie that had dwelt around the perusal of the clipping I had brought. It had a picture and article about Sicily's official emblem, explaining its symbolism. I had found it miraculously in a quick look through the just arrived New York Times as I scurried out of the office just before I left. N had been having a fine time discussing it with his parents.

Now there was a great reverberating silence. It was time to face the Picatti business, much as I dreaded that burden of diplomacy. I now launched this subject into the empty place in the conversation.

I was girded for battle on this one, and I was relieved to see that N seemed to be "staying with me" until I was safely launched into the subject with Janie and Harry. But, as the battle broke around my head, he turned his back and devoted his attention to his parents in great waves and torrents of incessant Italian. Deserted, I buoyed myself with the hope that he was only translating what we said to his parents.

But later I saw that he wasn't. He had left me to the battle alone, which was typical. Much, much later I realized that he hadn't even been seeing me "safe passage"; he had been waiting to see whether I was going to make trouble for HIM, and when it didn't concern him, he turned his back on it.

It WAS a battle. Janie was resistant, which I expected, but I hadn't known HOW stubborn she was going to be. Harry got into the act and they gave me a bad time. Eventually I turned the tide by appealing to him. I used the device of switching the situation, putting them in the other person's place to make them see that they SHOULD invite people to meet their parents.

Janie, with her quick mind, got the point sooner than Harry, but I must admit that he conceded more graciously than I had anticipated. So--the Sicilian visitors and the local Italians will get together.

During all this I kept an eye on N, for my time was almost up and I wanted to try to reach him with some explanation of his psychosis before we parted.

Also I thought I might make a try on the Nita name being of Mexican origin.

He was engrossed in "ignoring me" with frenzied concentration on his parents.

So I turned back to Janie and said, "Let me change the subject: How are things going?" (Meaning if her parents were going to stay or go.) There was a bit of flopping around by her and Harry. Janie was silent. Bravely, I ventured, "Little brother played out on you, didn't he?" sarcastically referring to N's financial default in helping pay for their trip, which he had revealed to me the day before. (I was mad at N at this point. He was obviously against me for some reason.)

A apuse, and then a vehement denial and defense by both of them--"No, no. Talking had brought about understanding," and sonon. (Little brother exonerated from responsibility again! Little brother lying his way out again!) and a recital of N's "reasons" for not having money and for not having come etc.

Then, during a lame pause, Harry looked me right in the eye and said, meaningfully, "It's the GIRL".

I nodded, eyeing him back. We understood each other. Janie was silent, grim. I turned to her and said, "He told me about it." to waylay any attempts of hers to try to deny it. She nodded wearily, sighed. An unhappy silence.

Still the Italian chatter went on on the other side of me. One ear tuned to be

sure it kept on, I said, "N will be all right." And, then, to my own surprise, I launched into a passionate, succinct explanation of his manic-depressive swings. It couldn't have been better if I'd planned it! Why, somebody is putting words in my mouth, I marveled.

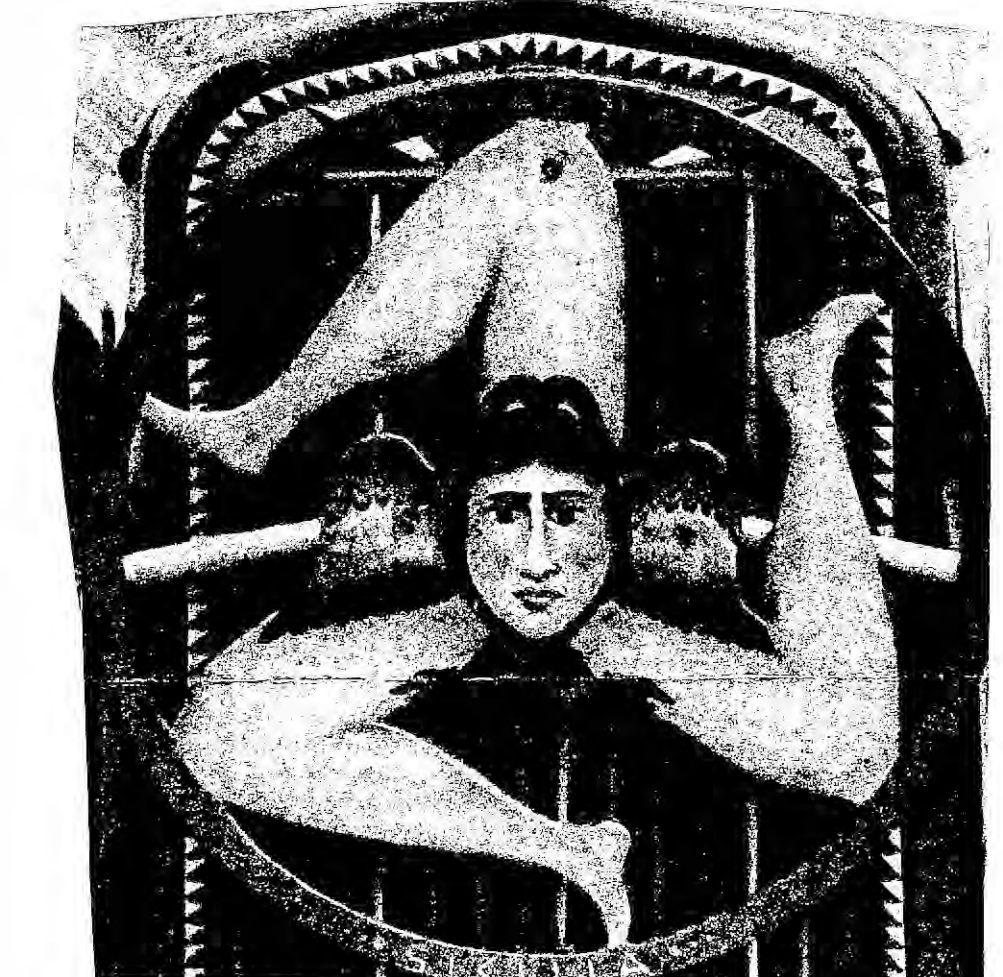
I said, "N will be ALL RIGHT. --This is his first time away from home; he has just gone from one extreme to the other." Pause to see the effect. Harry wasn't with me, but there were murmurs of agreement, appreciation from Janie.

Working on Harry, I continued, "He goes from one side to the other; (wide gestures here). He's bound to even off (gesture again). It will take time., but he'll make it." (What was N doing at this minute? but I was too passionately involved in putting over my point to care.)

This was a new idea to Harry. He didn't quite fathom it, I could tell. I could feel Janie hardening beside me. I must get through to them! I must get through! I thought. This is ALL IMPORTANT!

Harry started to protest. I interrupted him, loudly, it seemed to me. "That's the way he IS! That's the way he OPERATES!" Turning toward N I made my see-saw gestures and repeated my this side/that side gesture and plea against what I subconsciously noted was his turned back.

They both looked at me as if they thought I was crazy. But I could see they were considering the idea. I dropped it. I had gone too far. The Italian chatter went on.



Trinacria is the Latin name for Sicily (after its triangular shape) — and for the island's bizarre three-legged emblem, seen on the radiator of the automobile at left. The bumper depicts the Norman conquest of Sicily in 1061. Both are part of the astonishing story of 3,000 years of Sicilian civilization — its conquerors and cathedrals, poets, martyrs and Mafia — brilliantly told and illustrated in the current issue of HORIZON.



To change the subject, since it was obvious N had heard this last and had set up a wall between us and I now had nothing to lose anyway, I turned to Janie and said, "sotto voce", "Are they going to s#y?"

She was tied to Harry, not listening to me--probably passing some closed husband-wife judgment on me, from the looks on their faces.

I persisted in my question. Harry broke away--wandered off into the room. Janie turned testily toward me. I repeated my question, trying to lighten it with joking, overdone gestures of fear and trembling. She answered me shortly, reluctantly, evasively, then went on to mention that N seemed to be "all right"--defending him.

I agreed, saying, "Oh yes. He seems much better. Has things straightened out. He knows what he wants." Things were getting silent to my ~~xxx~~ right.

It was time to face the music. I faced about into three grim Italian faces. Silence.

Suddenly N grabbed up the Sicilian emblem clipping and went into the same routine we'd already been through once. This started his parents talking to each other.

He leaned back in his chair and looked me square in the eye--challenging. (Here we go, I thought.)

"By the way," I addressed him, "the name 'Nita' means 'JUANITA'--"

"JOHN-ita!" he broke in, angrily.

I digressed to a brief explanation of the Spanish pronunciation of J, calling it G in my confusion. N corrected me peremptorily. All eyes were on me. I had dropped a bombshell with the word "Nita". I meant to. It was all or nothing now.

From behind me came weary collaboration of the Spanish pronunciation from Janie. N conceded. Silence.

"The name 'Juanita'," I continued, "is Spanish and Spanish means Mexican--"

N was before me with the answer. "She's a breed." he said, he said brutally, his chin out--complacent.

I glanced at la nonna in the suffering silence. ("Pietà!") She got up and went to the sink, her face a mask of sickness.

Il nonno's eyes darted about, his mouth set and grim. Six sick hearts beat on in the silence.

In that moment, for the first time, I knew that N sensed what he had wrought. There was no need to say anything. We sat and waited while "the Brat" died, and my old Nicolo was reborn in mute pain. For it was from that moment that he seemed for the first time since he'd been back as I remembered him. Truly a "pregnant" moment!

Harry came to the rescue in his crude way. Laughing, he started to call N a "Don Juan" and made himself a game of trying to think of similar words. Everyone joined in for a while in a bitter, hysterical way. I had been going along with Harry and only realized too late what he was doing.

There was too much confusion at the time to figure out why Janie kept exasperat~~edly~~ly insisting she wanted to know the Italian word for "moff" (moth) when Harry, mysteriously--to me-- got out a fat Italian dictionary and gaily thumbed through it searching for "man-about-town" words to call N. He read off words at random and everybody confusedly joined in.

I was enjoying what I thought was a gay language session and thought "this is more like it; this is what I expected to do with these visitors" ~~when~~^{but} the atmosphere seemed to get more and more charged. I suddenly realized Harry was playing a cruel game. As he read off another word, I heard myself say, "What about DAMN FOOL?" I surprised myself by saying it and the vehemence with which I said it.

There was a dead silence. N dropped his eyes. Suddenly Janie exploded with "Boffo!" It rang in the air. I assumed at first she was translating what I had said. Then I thought she was adding her own comment. The word was vaguely familiar; I had seen it in "Agony and Estasy", I think. I associated it with "Fool" or "rat" or some such--some kind of slang. (Later I never could find it in any Italian dictionary.)

But her tone left nothing to the imagination. Harry got up and closed the book. I gathered myself together, knowing it was time to go.

I don't remember what the conversation was then--only that there was a confused burst of it. I said, humorously, (I hoped) "Well, I guess THAT subject stopped the

conversation--guess I'd better go--hope I didn't start anything--" (knowing I'd started a very great deal. I had meant to. Time and the Chianellos were crowding me out and I had to hurry and cram everything in while I could.)

Janie went along with me to the door.

I had come to reassure them, to plead N's case; to help them all to understand better--to help them. And I was being crowded offstage without being given a chance to say my piece. My heart was full. I had to try once more--a parting shot--Turning to the room in general, I cried, to whoever would listen to me, "I'm sure Nick will be all right---he's just trying his wings--"

Only Janie, beside me, nodded and smiled. "Tres, bien", she said. "--if he just doesn't get his wings bogged down--" I added lamely to Janie when no one else paid any attention to me. Then she forced my attention to notice her newly acquired French. She had nodded again and given me a sardonic smile at that last remark.

But I wasn't interested in her French. I didn't want to go. I didn't want to go and leave N. I couldn't leave without knowing if I'd see him tomorrow--that all important last day. He was paying no attention to my leaving.

I leaned in from the doorway and said, "--and Nick--if you get a chance to stop by tomorrow to say goodbye, I'd love to see you--or, if not, phone before you go--". My voice sounded so

infinitely sad. I hadn't meant it to be that way. I only wanted him to commit himself in front of all the family so they could work it into their day's plans.

"I'll come by," he said--in front of all of them. And Janie verified a few details.

As I left I could hear N talking. As I went down the driveway his voice seemed to go along with me, on the other side of the house wall that separated us. I got the impression that he was going to the bathroom at that end of the house, where there was a window over looking the street where I'd have to leave. Since there is another, better bathroom at the other end of the house, it almost seemed like he was following me.

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I went home knowing that N was mad at me. It was that "damn fool" outburst of mine that got him, I knew.

I made my preparations to go to the football game that night. As I said, I had planned this without even giving a thought to N's activities for the evening.

However, when I'd talked to him on the phone from the store, he had mentioned that his family was trying to get him to go to the game with them. Though he never actually said so, it was obvious he didn't want to go. I assumed it was his usual dislike of such events and that he would sit home alone and brood as he used to do.

I said I was going. There was a note

of joy in his voice as he said, "Are you? Are you?" Without quite knowing why, I had a feeling then that he'd go.

And for the first time I wondered if he'd wanted a rendezvous with me? But I had no way of knowing. I was in a quandary now.

Personally, I intended and wanted to go to the game. I sincerely hoped I wouldn't encounter the Esgate tribe. This was a part of my other life. I didn't want to mix the two. I wanted to sit and suffer "alone" through the game--to be old, to be MYSEF.

N was unreasonably mad. I'd handle him tomorrow. I was positive he wouldn't go, though now I caught myself hoping he would. I wanted to show him I DIDN'T CARE.

I went with my sister and her husband. Somehow or other I got parted from them as we went in. It was with dread that I forced myself to run the gamut of walking in front of all those people, for I had seen the Esgate's car outside and knew that they might be watching me. At last I found my sister, who already had seats. Thank God, I thought, as I dared a look around me--no Esgates.

But there was a feeling--to my right, in back. I knew. I knew. I put off looking, for I didn't want to face the fact that N would not be with them. He would be home sulking, when it would have been so RIGHT for him to be there.

But I had to look. Something was compelling me. Here we go! I thought. Braced

for a quick survey, I turned to see them--all lined up--their handsome Italian faces in classic bas-relief, Harry's typically American pan accenting the end of the frieze. Down the line I allowed my eye to travel, acknowledging their eager, friendly attempts to catch my eye. Janie was waving frantically. It must have been her efforts that made me turn.

Crash! I came to N's face, looking exceedingly handsome in the glare of the floodlights. His eye locked with mine, looked away. I turned my back. (Mad! I KNEW it!)

I froze in my seat and did not dare look back for what seemed like half an hour, but couldn't have been. I was so self-conscious, feeling eyes on my back, I nearly died.

N had come! It filled me with joy to see them all there--Janie's dream come true. I KNEW he'd come on my account. Yet that look he gave me filled me with desolation. I sneaked a few more looks. Yes, he was mad. He was suffering.

This could not be. It had to end. I tried to catch his eye. He wouldn't look at me. This went on and on. He was busily explaining the game to his father, who showed more interest than I'd seen in him since their first day.

Finally I caught him off guard. We were just far enough apart so we couldn't talk. What genius of fate to devise this exactly right situation! Close, but apart.

I began to tell him by sign language and gestures to quit looking like Pàgliacci--HE at a FOOTBALL game--big joke! Chin up! Laugh it off! Heart broken? Chin up!

He got the message.

From then on it was fun. A warm glow established itself between us. And every time I sneaked a look, he was now happy and animated and gave me glowing, hoyous looks from the bottom of his little old heart.

Peace reigned and a wonderful feeling of mutual, intimate enjoyment pervaded me. Enjoy! Enjoy! It ought. It ends all too soon and we must part. Here I was--with N--like a date, yet socially correct.

I had forgotten they played the National Anthem at the beginning of the game. It alarmed me, for that afternoon some inexplicable obsession had started me humming "Your Land and My Land will be OUR Land Someday" and I had run home and played it on the piano with everything in me. Suddenly I had a proud feeling to share in this democratic display for our visiting friends from Italy.

And I began to feel glad and proud to have them see me surrounded knee to back; elbow to elbow in a nest of virile, handsome, middle-aged, typical American males, who, for some strange reason, had all left their wives at home. I was glad to have them see me in happy American camaraderie with these friends of my sister's and her husband--to see

me among my peers.

I was enjoying a moment of international "rapport", for behind us was a jolly Danish-American success symbol who had just returned from a People to People Tour of Europe and who, when my sister recognized N and entourage, and pointed them out, was very interested in our "guests" from Italy. Heeven employed me as go-between to elicit a happy comment from N on the difference between soccer and football in the respective countries.

He looked so GLAD and handsome as he leaned toward me to pick up approval and encouragement to negotiate this bit of international frinedliness. And he did it just right. I was so proud of him!

Every look I sneaked at him nearly overwhelmed me with his nearness and dearness, (asinine as it sounds). How I LOVED that dark, vital, glowing head, which looked different, but equally handsome each time in that flattering light. In this particular situation his stunted body did not show--only that handsome Roman head, lined up with all my handsome Chianellos. How I loved them--even Harry, the connecting link! How proud I was of them! What a wonderful sensation this evening was! Including thehope that N, seeing me here among MY OWN PEOPLE, would feel just a TWINGE of jealousy, of "apartmness". (Little, mean revenge!)

I wanted it all to be perfect--and it was--even to an ~~unprecedented~~ miraculous last instant tying of the score which made "our side" win! Even to a most

unusual Italian-type after game riot among the players. We'd show them that we, too, had emotions! Let this atmosphere play on N and take him over that final hump he needs to make the decision about getting his citizenship--he who has procrastinated so long about it, I thought.

The half-time display I knew was important to Janie, since her daughter usually participated. This was one thing she wanted her parents to see. I, too, gave it my "all" trying to implant all its beauty and pageantry into their souls.

I KNEW N and his father would relish all that pert femininity displayed. And, sure enough! when I peeked, there were lascivious little smiles on their lips and sparkling interest in those four dark eyes!

I couldn't resist a bit of fun with N. I tried and tried to catch his eye before it was over, until I began to get embarrassed with the attempt. I was just about to give up when he looked. I signaled him, "Have two! Have two of those luscious tidbits!" (I KNEW he's gesture back, "one") In the meantime I signaled, "--or three--four--five!" He answered with his finger, "One", as I knew he would. Fun.

I turned back to the display. But I had a feeling he still wanted my attention. The man behind me tapped me on the shoulder and indicated N. I turned. N was gesturing frantically at me.

As I turned he jobbed one finger in the

air. One!ONE! one only!

He's trying to tell me somethin', I thought--this is more than a joke. The look on his face was one I'd seen only twice before. It was all for ME--"Lorna!" it said. I can't explain it. All I know is that that look haunted and blessed me all night and the next day. To recall it was utter love--no matter WHAT. MY NICK--outside of time and worldly happenstances.

The game ended. And with it all the lovely feelin's. We must part. Only tomorrow left--and it is going to be a difficult one. I wanted no aftermath, no encounters, for some reason I couldn't explain. I just wanted to get out--and home--alone. Please! no gay, neighborly, "how'd you like the game?" sessions with the Esgate group. Please. I couldn't think of a thing to say to them. I do not know why. I only knew that the end of the game, the end of that lovely, close feeling, was a wrench I could barely bear.

There was no encounter, no attempt by either side. I walked out numbly, and silent, hardly able to bear the long, long wait to free the car.

In spite of myself I saw the Esgate group emerge, special tonight with that dear black head in it. Fate stopped our car in such a position that the back of N's head was visible to me in their car as they, too, waited.

I watched it secretly, relishing its handsomeness, and knowing somehow that it was making a great display of nonchalance, but, like me, deeply conscious of my being somewhere around. This was verified when his head snapped around, searching, searching, as the cars began to move.. Good night, my dear.

Good night.

Saturday, Sept. 16, 1961

The Last Day

Today was the wretched, unending day I knew it would be--emotionally exhausting.

As what seemed the end of this story approached, I found myself not defending the secret I have kept for three years. It was such a relief that perhaps I overdid it. I could afford to, now. For this past year everyone is gradually beginning to accept this thing between Na and me. There have even been a few feeble encouragements. Now, when our battle is over, and it is too late!

I told everyone quite frankly today that I was committed to staying home waiting for an indefinite phone call or visit from N on this, his last day.

So I imprisoned myself all day, softening the torture only by calling Janie. before noon to give N the face-saving out he was going to need, for I was pretty sure he'd avoid coming somehow.

I planned my talk. First, mention the game. Then "There was a lesson in it for us, Janie. Let's change our motto. For 'Che sara, sara' has become 'che sara, e stato'! Let's change to 'All's well that ends well'--like the game."

It fell flat. It was too sudden, too obscure. I had to work and work to get her to understand. I think she finally grasped it for she laughed and said something in

Italian, Which, at the time, I understood, but I don't remember now.

So then I told her to tell N that, while I'd like to see him, I realized how it would be, and if he didn't make it, to call me before he left. I stipulated that SHE was to MAKE him call--at least an hour ahead of time, because he talked so long. Would she please do this one last thing for me?

When she promised, I said she "was a GOOD KID!" She laughed, and then explained that N was just getting ready to go buy some gifts (again!?)--but that he would probably stop to see me on his way back--no hurry--they didn't have to eat early--but they had a lot of family business to attend to, etc.--that he might take the car--"OH," she said, "Here he is now!"

But I didn't accept the unspoken invitation. I didn't want to risk having him do all his talking now--at NOON--and have it ALL OVER nine hours before he left. I preferred to take the long chance of his coming to SEE me. (Two weeks later I wondered if I had made a bad mistake here!)

Comment: It was going to be a day of dilemma for both of us, I knew. And it was. I didn't know what he wanted or expected and he didn't know what I wanted.

He would be torn between his desire to please me, to placate me, and his fear of a scene or another attempt at seduction, which embarrassed him because of his impotence.

I think that ~~he~~ he'd been assured of secrecy and privacy and having the upper hand, he would have thought nothing of another "roll in the hay" must "to make me happy"--to leave me HIS. But, if it was going to be complicated--which it was--he would easily forfeit it; he had his negress waiting. He no longer needed me for that.

He would vacillate between a desire to unburden himself, explain himself to me one last time, and the pressures and complications of the day.

He, too, like me, would be tense with the conflict of emotions--wanting and denying--the hidden old story between us that flows all the time under the surface of our wordly frustrations and was apt to spill over at a time like this. We were both afraid of it--I admitting it; he repressing it.

Whatever his wants were today they would be self-centered. There would be no mere politeness, social amenities, kindness, thoughts of the other person--that part was MY burden.

Whether he would act his "new" self and actually come in spite of family commitments and last minute chores and brave it out, or whether he would be his old self and show his emotional involvement by "avoiding"--being "too busy". I didn't know.

I suspected the latter. (He'll never lose that tendency--that habit) And today it would take a very brave, a very

thoughtful, a very kind, a very understanding man to surmount the domestic and time pressures of the day. He was none of these--yet. That's why I called Janie.

As for me, I wanted as much of him as I could get today, but I didn't expect it. I figured I'd be lucky if I got a PHONE CALL!

He HAD promised me two or three times that he'd come today. He seemed to take it for granted.)

I started the afternoon at the top of hope, thinking that foolish, persistent reason of buying gifts to take back (as I understood it) was still perhaps an excuse to get out to come to see me--for there were several shopping centers very near to Janie's house; he didn't have to go clear downtown! Maybe he was on his way over now?

Time went by--and he didn't come. I started trying to figure just what he'd do. Why! I thought, could it be possible that gift buying is for the people he's leaving BEHIND him?

In a flash of mad glory I pictured him bringing ME one!--the sweet! I pictured a fine, expensive offering and the tears I would shed in humble gratitude. Maybe that's what he was doing!

There were reasons for me to think so--hints of a growing, warm appreciation toward me, of a burgeoning of kindness,

and my knowledge of his past impulsive
generosities to women he cared for. How
sweet! He was going downtown FIRST, and
would stop on his way back--about three--
four?

Fool! Fool! I thought. Don't even enter-
tain the thought. He never has given you
anything and he won't do it now. (MY gift
was a certain mark of attempted passion
he left on me!)----But--wouldn't it be
nice if he did?----

3 o'clock. 3:30. Oh well--might as well
quit waiting and get busy. It probably
will be about four.

As 4 O'clock approached I stopped my
chores and made myself receptive to re-
ceive a "message"--praying hard. Since
I was in the basement, I thought I'd better
run upstairs and check, for I could FEEL
him getting close.

I got to the front window just in time to
see a red car EXACTLY like Janie's sail by.
Yes it was! Yes it was!--tail fins--white
areas--all checked. License number ending
--966? I ran frantically to get a glimpse
of the license, but was unable to see
either it or who was driving. I could
have sworn it was ONE figure--a dark
mass.

Of course! N was taking the CAR! Typical--
and flattering--of him to sneak by for a
look--or a signal?--on his way down.

Odd. My prayer and feeling and dashing
up just in time to see the red car--even
if it weren't Janie's. It made me hope.

So, immobilized with tension, I lay down (to wait another hour or so) where I could watch red cars whip by. Good heavens! EVERYONE had red cars today! I was a bad case of red car nerves by 5 o'clock when the phone gave a tiny blurrp and quit (!!!???) (How does my daughter STAND being in love? This wearing awareness of the loved one minute by minute, hour by hour, day after day?)

At 6 o'clock I knew he wasn't coming. What hurt was that he'd SAID he'd come. It wasn't too bad until I started realizing it meant I'd NEVER see him again now--(no returns from Los Angeles now--it's on to New York the next time he says) I started to go topieces and had to pull myself together. NEVER to bask in warm enjoyment of contemplating that so very dear, expressive, handsome, dark face flashing and glowing with swift emotions again--oh GOD!

Suddenly our gloriously beautiful fall weather ominously clouded up and that sinister before-storm feeling began. The kids came in full of reports of two sudden deaths that pertained to us. Not only I sensed a feeling of impending disaster--the kids mentioned it--seemed restless, afraid.

As the wind came up and more signs of storm broke out I thought--N's PLANE!--and all it meant if we got one ~~of~~ of our recent terrible storms. And, oh God, I thought, don't tell me You're going to put on another N*leavetaking

storm for me, as You did the last time he went to Los Angeles! Not THAT again!

From then on I was obsessed and immersed in the sense of doom and getting that plane safely off the ground. It didn't help to have my daughter caught in a personal crisis that put her and her girl friend in a state of great fear and foreboding during the next hour or two.

There was nothing left now but a phone call. 7 o'clock. I had planned to wait till 8, and, if N didn't call by then, I'D call. They had told me the plane left at 9. My daughter was keeping the phone tied up. I died every time the phone rang--and it wasn't for me.

Oh Nick! Nick! you MUSTN'T go all AGAIN without a goodbye! Don't spoil this new "normal", socially-adjusted Nick by one of your old tricks. We are committed to at least a phone call before both our families and my friends. It's only a social amenity! Don't make a big tragedy out of this at theis, this LAST moment! NO! No!

Somehow I got some dinner on the table and forced some food down for the sake of appearances before my kids.

7:30. I couldn't stand it any more. I'D have to call. I'd tell Janie that my daughter had been on the phone all the time and, since it was getting so late, I thought I'd better call now than interrupt any last minute scenes there (or be party to any mounting emotionalism!)

I ran out to check my washing on the line first incase the storm broke. Lo! to the west the clouds were gone and blue sky and the faint pink beginning of a sunset showed! BBessed! Blessed! Blessed! Touch of Grace! It was going to be ALL RIGHT! I "was to phone" and it would be ALL RIGHT!

It was not easy. Between dialing and Janie's answer I heard voices and merri-ment--company! I understood!

"Guess who?" I said to Janie.. She laughed her rolling laugh, "I know, I know, " she said; her voice warm and loving. And, hardly bothering to listen to my feeble excuses, which fooled her no more than they did me, she said, "I'll get N and put him on the other phone--away from the company--"

(Ha! who do we thinkg we're kidding?
DEAR Janie!)

Saturday

The telephone conversation

I was prepared for what came: the bird trapped, flapping and chirping its protests! I said,

I KNOW. I KNOW. YOU WERE TOO BUSY.

But I said it kindly, softly. In spite of knowing there would be a few awkward minutes, it didn't look like it was going to work. The preliminaries went on too long. It was just going to be a desolate, polite call. I was about to give up. I wasn't going to be able to settle those last two pints--to make a beautiful ending, after all. I was blabbing on and on, resisting any intimacies--crazy with fear. I don't remember what turned the key. I interrupted his foolish, nervous trivia:

I JUST WANTED TO SAY GOODBYE BECAUSE PROBABLY I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN**holding my voice carefully.

YES YOU WILL! I'LL SEE YOU!..IF I EVER COME BACK TO YAKIMA..I'LL SEE YOU! I'LL SEE YOU!...OF COURSE...

then the realization, New York and so on--a sad setting in. (He surprised me! I ~~didn't~~ ^{hadn't} expect this!) I said,

IT'S BEEN A WONDERFUL THREE DAYS! (And, to my surprise, I felt that way) He didn't believe me.

HE DIDN'T GET TO SEE MUCH OF YOU, he said.

OH, I THOUGHT I GOT TO SEE A LOT OF YOU! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU AT ALL! He was pleased, but still unbelieving.

I'M SORRY HE DIDN'T SEE MORE OF YOU**.

aAND I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT I AM SO
PLEASED, SO HAPPY FOR YOU! YOU ARE ON THE
RIGHT ROAD! YOU ARE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!
I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY OR FEAR ANYMORE. I
AM SO GLAD...SO PROUD OF YOU....A pause

Warm little murmurs of gratitude beginning
on the other end--

YOU DON'T NEED ME ANY MORE... (There! I'd
said it at last! Three years! and I could say
it--nicely, sweetly, loving, kind.) That did
it. The dam broke on the other end. All N's
imprisoned, innate sweetness came pouring
out in a torrent of warm, sweet, melodious,
vibrant tone of voice--different from the
strident defensiveness up to now--the tone
I'd heard only a few rare times in three
long years. The one that belonged to my
real Nick, deep, deep down that I had been
trying so desperately to release. He was
free! free! at last. O Joy! There's no
other way to express it! Joy. Peace. In-
finite relief flooded me in such a great
wave that I knew the whole thing had been
exactly right all the time. It WAS the story
I thought it! It WAS an experience in
which two lonely, frozen, locked-up hearts,
after searching half their lives away, found
real love in each other; grew and matured
in love, learned HOW to love, finding self
love in the process and the ability to GIVE
love to the point where they no longer need-
ed each other! He was saying,

NO! NO! IT'S NOT THAT..NOT THAT..OF COURSE
I NEED YOU... (There was a touch, a tiny
touch of panic here.)...I'LL COME TO SEE YOU..
WE CAN BE FRIENDS...I'LL COME TO SEE YOU
WHEN I COME TO YAKIMA...(He'd already told

me how he was never coming back!) IT'S JUST THAT YOU HAVE TO FORGET ABOUT ME... IT'S BETTER FOR YOU TO FORGET ME...YOU MUST MAKE YOUR OWN LIFE...YOU HAVE YOUR CHILDREN...YOUR WORK...FIND SOMEONE...TO MAKE YOU HAPPY... I said,

OF COURSE, NICK, I KNOW THAT. I INTEND TO DO IT. I KNEW ALL THE TIME THAT IT WOULD FADE...HAD A TIME LIMIT...THAT IS WHAT I MEAN ABOUT UNDERSTANDING ABOUT YOU AND ME.. BUT I COULDN'T SEND YOU OFF NOT KNOWING YOU'D BE ALL RIGHT...NOT FEELING SURE... THAT'S WHY I WROTE YOU ALL THOSE LETTERS.. TO SHOW YOU YOU HAD TO "COME BACK"**.NOT JUST BE MAD AND QUIT...

Obviously he had given the matter of my future a great deal of thought, which was flattering. I was more encouraged than convinced. If he really felt that way, why did he continue trying to please me? Why was he HERE? He was explaining why he didn't write--

THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WRITE...then an explanation of his theory of not writing, his excuses, his "busyness", an evidence of dawning of regret that he HADN'T written--- I'LL WRITE TO YOU...(This surprised me!)... I'LL WRITE...I'LL WRITE TO YOU WHETHER I GO BACK TO NITA...

(This, too surprised me. I didn't in the least care. Why should he think I'd care? And WRITE me? WRITE me? Now? Now, when it didn't matter? Leave them alone and they'll come home! He meant it, too! Actually, though, as he went on he began to talk himself out of it--exactly in proportion to the degree of interest I showed. There won't be any letters. At the approach of commitment, he fled. BUT, he had shown his INTENTION;

just as he had shown his other INTENTIONS to me these three days. That was enough. I was still stinging from the "forget me" bit---

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO ANSWER THEM. I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T. IT WAS JUST THAT...YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GLAD I WAS WHEN YOU SENT THAT FIRST CARD. IT MEANT YOU HAD BROKEN THE CHAIN..THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER NEXT TIME...(I wasn't saying quite what I meant. I couldn't find the words.)

IS THAT WHY YOU WROTE THOSE LETTERS? (Did he sound disappointed?) I realized I was on the wrong tack--

THEY WERE TO HELP YOU...

HELP ME? I DIDN'T NEED HELP. WHAT DO YOU MEAN HELP ME? (It was no use. I was only hurting him. Better to drop it.)

WELL..THEY DID HELP YOU...YOU DID USE THEM, DIDN'T YOU? (Laughing.) I could sense he didn't like this, but I was too busy explaining other things to bother with this now.

THAT'S WHAT I TRIED TO SHOW YOU, NICK, THAT YOU CAN'T TURN YOUR BACK NASTILY...SHUT THE DOOR LIKE YOU DO: YOU DON'T HAVE TO..IT'LL FADE....(How wonderful to be able to speak of these past hurts and mysteries and clear them up!)

HE AGREED. HE AGREED. And he began to prove he understood by what he said. He began to explain how he'd learned, what he'd learned about himself. He poured out his little old heart--all his sufferings and thinkings--all the unrevealed side of the story--HIS story--HIS side--the growth of shame and love and

understanding. He even explained how and why he'd left me so crudely--

YOU SAID IF I MOVED OUT FROM MY FAMILY IT WOULD DO ME GOOD...BUT IT DIDN'T WORK OUT.. AND I HATED YOU FOR IT. I GOT MAD AND LEFT, BUT YOU WERE RIGHT....

NOW YOU UNDERSTAND! YOU ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND!

Another digression about learning to get along with people and knowing himself and trying to see into other people--he'd learned to see INSIDE of people--how the OUTSIDE didn't matter--(Oh Nick! Oh joy! Was this the psychiatric sessions, his own growth, or me, or what? I was so HAPPY!) I said,

I MEAN I THINK YOU ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT US...YOU AND ME...! THAT'S WHY YOU HAD TO COME BACK..SO I COULD PROVE TO YOU THAT THESE THINGS FADE AWAY...LIKE OURS... LIKE YOU AND ME...(a lie!)...THAT'S WHAT I TRIED TO SHOW YOU...IF IT'S GOOD, IT WILL LAST. IF NOT, IT'LL FADE AWAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BREAK THINGS....THEY'LL GO...(I was getting passionately carried away now.) He interrupted me--

I KNOW. I KNOW. I KNOW WHAT TO DO..WHAT TO SAY NOW...HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE...A pause, then, embarrassed

I SENT NITA A CARD...(Ooch!) Here he had practically melted into a puddle. He hesitated now, hoping I'd approve--(I'd TOLD him some girl would bowl him over someday! And it's happened!)

HE WASN'T SURE HE'D GO BACK TO HER...hesitant (He will. His voice gave him away. He's hooked--sexually.)

AFTER ALL, THEY KNEW THEY COULDN'T MARRY.. (Oh dear!) MAYBE....FOR AWHILE...WELL..YES..

HE WAS GOING TO SEE HER..AND MAKE UP WITH HER... I said,

GOOD! THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO TELLYOU..
(Urgingly, pleadingly)..GO BACK TO HER,
NICK...SHE'D HUMAN..IT DOESN'T MATTER IF
HER SKIN IS BROWN... a sort of snorting
laugh here, an interruption--

A DISCOURSE implying how naive I was: HE
KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOVING THE INSIDE
OF PEOPLE AND SOCIAL TABOOS...SHE UNDERSTOOD
THAT! THERE IS A DIFFERENCE...(Ha, ha! I
thought!) SHE IS A NICE GIRL...he began to
list her sterling qualities--(Who the hell
cares? I wasn't listening!) I interrupted--

THAT'S IT, NICK...ONE MORE THING..WHAT I
WANTED TO TELL YOU...DON'T YOU HURT THAT GIRL!

This surprised a flood of eager, pent-up
relief from the other end! Here was a
sympathetic ear! Eager questions that hurt
me (at last) poured from him. (Why! I
thought, he thinks he loves her!)

DID YOU SEE HER PICTURE? Eagerly.

YES, I THOUGHT SHE WAS PRETTY. Kindly.

DO YOU? DO YOU?...LOT'S OF PEOPLE HAVE SAID
THAT! He was pleased, pleased. (Ah, love!)

I THINK SHE LOOKS SWEET, I said. BE NICE
TO HER (pleading)LET HER DOWN EASY!...IF YOU
WANT TO GET RID OF HER...Here I revealed a
"plan" of mine--which I toned down to a sug-
gestion when he bristled at being advised--

HE KNEW! HE KNEW WHAT TO SAY..WHAT TO DO...
I SENT HER A CARD....(no more of that! I'd
HEARD that!)

HOW DID YOU SAY YOU'D MET HER?

AT NIGHT SCHOOL....JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS...

HOW OLD IS SHE?

TWENTY*EIGHT.

HOW COME SHE ISN'T MARRIED? (I had to interrupt him every time to ask these questions--)

SHE'S DIVORCED. Pause. SHE HAD JUST DIVORCED HER HUSBAND AND SHE WAS HATING MEN...another pause, then, in a rush...I WAS HATING WOMEN... and so on and so on--a story of mutual loneliness and bitterness;; race and color prejudice; outcast complexes. THEY GOT TO TALKING...AND...it blossomed from that. I was hugely relieved and told him so. It made all the difference.

OH, I'M SO RELIEVED, NICK! I THOUGHT IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE..

NO! NO! he said, (not realizing it really was-- drowning one's sorrows in sex.)

THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO TELL YOU, TOO...THAT YOU MUST NOT USE PEOPLE...

NO! NO! I KNOW THAT...I DON'T USE PEOPLE! (later I thought, Look who're talking!)-- much explanation here. HE KNEW NOW: HE KNEW HOW TO DMHANDLE PEOPLE! And he does--at least better. He showed me by what he said.

GOOD FOR YOU, NICK! I'M GLAD! I'M GLAD! I told him. (I was so relieved not to be disillusioned.) GO BACK TO HER.

YES, HE WAS GOING BACK. (His voice was soft as mush now)...HE THOUGHT...MAYBE NOT...I'LL WRITE AND TELL YOU he said again.

This was when I tried to clarify that remark and he began to renege. (You're going to miss me as a sounding board, a guide, Nick! You are still clinging, depending, on me. Your voice hints at panic at my leaving you. I wonder what will happen if I desert you now? Maybe it's too soon. --But I CAN'T go on!)

THERE WERE MURMURINGS NOW I didn't quite get-- something about
..GOOD TO ME...YOU'VE BEEN A GOOD FRIEND...
I APPRECIATE IT...more incoherence...

The words mean Nothing without the convictions, the emotions with which he said them. --(Good friend! I thought. Ye Gods! I saved you from DISASTER, boy! THIS was my reward. All I'll ever get. This is as close as he could come to committing himself. Poor boy! He'll think I didn't mean what I said in all those letters--)

BUT I DO LOVE YOU!....(Silence from him)...
I..I WANT YOU TO BE YOU, THE BEST YOU YOU CAN BE! DO YOU UNDERSTAND? (pleading).

I UNDERSTAND, he said...WE CAN JUST BE GOOD FRIENDS....

OF COURSE! OF COURSE! I exclaimed. THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU....

...NO MORE OF THAT BEDROOM STUFF...(nastily)

(What!!??!!) That one hurt more than anything he'd said in the whole conversation... 'Hell hath no fury---' I made him repeat, to be sure. I wanted no more of that language mix-up--that "swiss steak? switchblade? oh! sweepstake!" misunderstanding of the other day on this one! We had been through

this "just friends; o.k., no sex" bit before. My God! the man wants sex without marriage, yet gets mad when it's offered to him that way!!)

NO...0...0...(I HAD to agree, of course) Then I added, too quickly, I WAS JUST TRYING TO PROVE TO YOU THAT THAT PART FADES (what a lie!) THAT'S WHY I INSISTED ON YOUR COMING BACK**. TO PROVE TO YOU IT WAS OVER...(I was hurting, I was stinging from those cruel words--and I was trying to let him off the hook for that inadequate performance Thursday)

..I DON'T WANT TO MARRY YOU: I DON'T WANT TO CHASE AFTER YOU...This was a crucial point in the conversation for me. It was very hard to say. I was desperately trying to play my role of brave, wise, sporting, aging mistress cutting the cord at last, casting him off to sink or swim "for his own good", because I didn't know what he really wanted of me. How it hurt. I was full of emotion. So was he.

There were only MURMURS from his side, sounding like assent, but I knew that my words would hurt him.

This sounds like a lovers' quarrel as I write it, yet we were both getting so elated, so full of a sense of joyous relief, such a feeling of oneness and understanding at last that we COULDN'T have been lying! Actually, what I felt was a mutual, unspoken agreement to cover up our frustration with these "wise and sensible" words. How else to account for the paradox of the great HAPPY ENDING that engulfed us? yet left us quivering with emotion when we tried to say goodbye?

That wonderful feeling of agreeing to disagree? It seemed like this:

Let's part; let's part
Forget me ; I don't want to marry you
no more bedroom; just friends
I'll tell you if I go
back to her ; I don't care
(io t'amo) ; (I love you)

HE MENTIONED IT WAS TIME TO GO. We were both full of emotion. I said,

YES...IT'S TIME TO "VOLARE"..("our" song!)...

A WARM CHUCKLE FROM HIM. he knew. He felt it, too. I tried to think of something to say because for the first time I was getting all shook up. We were close, close.

THAT'S SILLY, I said...USING IT LIKE A VERB...

AN EMOTIONS FRAUGHT AGREEMENT FROM HIM. he was shook up, too.

I HATE TO SEE YOU GO. WHOOPS! I said, for my ~~woole~~ broke.

Again HE LAUGHED, gently, sadly, understandingly. I got hold of myself. That was the only time I broke down. I wish I could describe his voice as it was now. I never had a man talk to me in that low, melodious, intimate, loving tone. All I can say is that, no matter WHAT crude things he may say and do; what cruel/wise judgments he inflicted on us; what deliberate wooing he may have been guilty of, no man could have FAKED that tone of voice. He was speaking to someone he loved dearly, no matter what he professes. This is all I have to go on, this instinct of the truth. It is more than enough.

WE SAID GOODBYE. He said it first--hesitating, lingering, beginning something. I cut it. (the time was here)

GOODBYE!

A little LAUGH-LIKE GASP FROM HIM...FROM ME...
a pause.....

We hung up!

Happy! Happy! My Nick is happy! He will go out, glowing, to his family--and Janie will slip him a look and she will see that he is happy and everything is ALL RIGHT! He will join the leave-taking group full of joy and elation and well-being and all will be well.

And I am happy! happy! What a wonderful thing! Thank you God, for this experience! Talk about JOY!

We had our "happy ending"!

After the phone call I ran to drink the three cans of beer I had impatiently hoarded to dull what I thought was going to be this hour of heartbreak. But, instead of heartbreak I was feeling this strange ecstasy. The beer merely fanned it into a last "flame of 'youth'".

For, in spite of the preseence of my daughter and her friend, I ran ecstatically around the housse andyard at the sound of every plane that went over, just in case it was N8s. I wanted to "see that plane off".

Once, as a plane went over, I was leaning against the door jamb, every fiber of my being throbbing with the engine of that plane, and my daughter said, "Are you in love, mom? You act like it."

I returned to earth, looked her full in the face and said simply, "Yes, I am." and burst into tears. It was such a relief, such a relief to say it, after three years! And so simple. So easy.

The girls rather enjoyed it. I stopped then and laughed and said, "It seems silly to think that old people have feelings, too, doesn't it?" They agreed, and presently went about their affairs, unperturbed.

By this time I was flying as high as any plane. I felt as light and young and free as a bird. For an hour I chased the thrums and blinking red and green lights of planes among the stars and trees until I could no longer see them or tell whether they were landing or taking off.

Although Janie and N had said the plane left at 9, I was suspicious. They had told me the 15th of June once, too!

Simply, I asked my daughter to call the airport and ask when the plane was leaving for Spokane. She complied gladly "It's leaving now, " she reported.

I flew out the door as the plane roared over. Nick! Nick! Then, puzzled, as it disappeared in the wrong direction, I went in and looked at the clock--8:30? I felt an utter fool. I'd said SPOKANE. I meant PORTLAND.

At 9 o'clock I simply walked out the door and down to the end of the street, where I could see better. I stood beneath the church tower bathed in moonlight and waited.

I stood and stood. No plane. Janie and N had lied to me. I started home. A plane! I whipped around just in time to see Esgate's car pass on the street below me. Nick!

I waited again. Nothing happened. I went home. No one there. I called the airport. 9:30, they told me. Dully, I did the dishes. 9:30 passed. No plane. I gave up. What had happened? Then--

There it was! There it was! I ran out as fast as I could, straining, straining to see it rise over the hedge toward the moon; feeling trapped here in my leafy hole on the ground. I could hear it. Louder. And louder.----I never did see it--but----

I sent that plane off to the moon with everything I had: "Volari! Nicolo! Volari! To the moon--!"

For that is one of his favorite expressions--I'm going to the moon. He said it the other day and Harry said, "What's he talking about?"

I laughed to myself. I knew. I knew Nick knew I knew. Janie shrugged, with a Giocenda smile, "He said--he's
GOING TO THE MOON!"

VOLARE!

I love you, Nick. I love you. "Not in your time, or in mine, but in God's". And you love me. You understand a little now, but real understanding will come to you when you, too, are old and the greeds and passions of youth have become ashes in your mouth. When the Nitas prove all too human flesh, when you step off that plane and find Nita, with her aura of guilty shame and prejudice and "careful" embittering, pseudo-love making, and she will begin to not seem so wonderful, and distance will lend enchantment to ME then, and my love will become what it is meant to be--something to sustain you through all those mucky, glad/mad, bitter, angry years ahead.

Just as your growth to happiness will sustain me.

N is gone again.
This time "forever".

Comments on my reactions from the telephone conversation:

About N and me: I don't think N realizes that he loves me with the BEST kind of love, the kind that may or may not need sex. Poor thing! He has many Nitas, many sordid crises and sexual disillusionments to go through before he realizes that sex, however rapturous, is not love. That, seek as he may--and he will, he told me so bluntly--he will not find again the rare combination we had. It comes rarely and sometimes never to most people. He will THINK he has it, but no younger love will ever give him the peculiar combination of love, sex, and subtle guidance that he found with me--that he doesn't know he needs.

He doesn't realize that sex is only the tool, the expression of love. It is not the other way around; love is not the expression of sex. He would say, "I don't want you for sex; therefore I don't love you." I would say, "I love you, therefore I may want sex from you." When, of if, N ever gets to this point, we'll have something---and I'll be too old!

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During that phone conversation, he told me he had taken his father aside and given him some money, starting to say, "You know how he is--" and then realizing I didn't know.

But he told me enough to give me a clue to the mystery of why the father is so ignored by the rest of the family. He

is evidently a grudging, resentful "have-not". HE never had any money or chance to get any, and, by gosh! his sons OWE it to him when they get some!

The old Italian custom. Mrs. Picatti revealed it in her questions about the son, asking me how much he made, and remarking on how nice that was--that making \$600 a month, he could help out the old folks, couldn't he?

This is the first inkling I had of how very selfish N is with his new-found riches and what all the family undercurrent of friction is really about. They are just plain, greedy, "have-not" Italians, like all the rest!

REACTIONS I got to that revealing talk in the car:

What I feared would happen happened: N could not make the grade socially, and he consoled himself with outcasts.

That revelation in the car was like a favorite puppy bringing you a mangled, half-dead rat and laying it at your feet proudly, tail wagging, seeking approval. And when you say, "No! No! not THAT!" he is bewildered and unsure, torn between love and uncomprehending shame about his offering.

That outburst of how he couldn't marry a negress! He couldn't see what a blatant give-away that was!

I was right about the time of the winning of the car being the crest, the turning point for my hopes! Up till then he'd obviously had "no other love"--and

whatever quirk of fate it was that kept me from getting his message about coming up to see me--whether it was the circumstances that kept Janie and me apart for a month; whether it was deliberate withholding on her part, or a strange inadequacy in her personality; or whether, which is most likely, it lay in N's odd inability to approach his own problems directly--that queer inability to communicate--whatever it was--and I'll never know for sure--it was then he "took his revenge", turned from me and sought solace--in Nita. It WAS right before Christmas, as I suspected. He "was hating women" he said, after a significant, revealing hesitation. WHAT women?-he hadn't had any for a year and a half, evidently?

He said Nita was freshly divorced. It takes TWO to make a divorce! Whatever SHE brought into an unhappy marriage would not be cured in that short a time. And whatever kept N from marrying for so long was by no means cured. I predict a bad end to that affair!

WHY did I have that sudden conviction the night before that N HAD A GIRL, when I didn't even know he was here? Why was it at the very time he must have been telling his family about it?

I'll bet he used NORMA'S picture--(the one I "stole" for him)--and MY letters combined to show Nita--just as I imagined he'd do. Made it look like one and the same "girl"!

Nick and Nita. Damn! That makes a cute combination! When he left I wondered

what the inevitable Los Angeles' conquest's name would be. I guessed "Rosa". Not far off!

Reactions after Thursday:

I could BPIT when I think of all that primping and grooming and buying I did preparing for his coming all summer! And then I was at my worst ewhen he came; hair dirty, skin erupted, clothes a mess, tired, faded.

N himself: I noted again how his head is too big for his body. And how his arms and legs appear STUNTED. I noticed that when I took hold of his naked arm that day. My artist's eye noticed how unnaturally short it was between elbow and wrist. I swear that war scare he had a the age of 14 actually "scared a year's growth" out of him! In fact, it stunted his growth INSIDE and OUT!

I noticed, too that the upper area of the hair on his chest was quite gray-- it wasn't like that before! But he HAD had gray hairs in his head! It wasn't until days afte wards that I remembered he NO LONGER HAD ANY! What has he been doing with them? This disgusted me. DYEING his hair, the better to attract young meat?

Also, though he was dressed in his best suit when he came that day, I was a little hurt when he took off his jacket IMMEDIATELY--(whether that was a good or bad sign I haven't been able to figure out)--and I could smell sour, stale sweat. He had never SMELLED before--

dark as he is!

Yet one thing I liked--I loved that unusual, expressive gesture of his when he was talking to me afterwards, of putting his grouped fingertips to his forehead and squinting in mock concentration every time he said, " I TEENK**". He did it unconsciously.

Friday impressions:

As I got to writing this up I realized how often I had described his movements as bird-like. They are. There is nothing else that describes them so aptly. This is odd considering that once he told me he likes to draw birds better than anything else; that he has a trauma about eating fowl; that his pet pigeons were stunted and crippled from sheer fright during the bombings of Palermo (just like HE is?); that his leavings and comings are done by flying in a plane; that "Our" song was "Volare", meaning to fly; that his favorite expression was " flying to the moon". Nicolo, my BIRD.

Sunday--the day after N left

I had no intentions of going to Esgate's today, but when I found I'd be out with the car, the compulsion to go would give me no rest.

I no longer questioned these feelings. If I HAD to, there must be some reason. I'd search for it later. I was aware that it was a very, very bad time to go there. I KNEW I would not only be unwelcome, but might get myself into serious trouble. Yet go I must.

First, I instigated a serious row with mother. Poor thing. She didn't understand. Suddenly it's N and I against all the others. That's the way I felt. Among other things, he and I have found the strength at last --in each other-- to cut the silver cords that bound us to our families, but--too late, too late.

Then I went--fast. To get it over with.

I just plain sailed in, unannounced, crying out, "Don't say it! Don't say it! Don't say, 'Oh no! here's LORNA again!'"

It w sn't funny. It was exactly what they felt. Bad time indeed! They were eating dinner.

What eyes turned to me were hard and suffering. The two men ducked their heads into their plates and refused to look up. Janie stood behind the servin counter, her serving spoon poised, her eyes begging me to leave.

Only Lilly looked at me in doubtful pleasure.
(She hadn't been around the last few days.)
La nonna turned to look at me as she
usually did.

I EXPECTED the tear-reddened eyes, but
I did NOT expect to get no response to
my usual smile. Waht was in that look?
Hate? or suffering? Pain? I didn't
FEEL hate. Just no response. Glazed.

Janie was AGAINST me, as I had not seen
her for months. I said my planned piece,
"Well, did N fly to the moon?" expecting,
at LEAST a mere report. That's really
why I'd come--just a polite checking to
see if he'd gotten off all right.

Not funny. They evaded answering. Then
forced it. It was a bad moment.

I apoligized lengthily, plaintively for
coming, mentioning that I'd had to post-
phone my grocery shopping because of
waiting for N yesterday--and he hadn't
come. Janie said angrily, "I TOLD you
he might not come!"

That mad me mad. The hell she had!
That's exactly why I have always writeen
these things down as soon after they
happen as possible--so I could check
back. Damn her! Always her damned
family first no matter how much rude-
ness is involved to others! But I only
said, "I know. I know. I didn't expect
him. It's all right," looking around
at thoss alien ~~heads~~ eyes and bowed
heads.

Then, trying to be funny, I heaved an
exagge ated sigh, "I'm EXHAUSTED!--I
imagine you are, too. THREE YEARS and

THREE days!" (No reaction, of course, to this enigmatic remark. Try again, Lorna.) "This Picatti business--let's let it ride awhile--" Janie nidding agreement--"that's what I want to say-- I won't be dropping in for awhile--let things settle awhile--(why didn't somebody SAY something?)--if I don't show up for awhile--that's why---"(Lamely.)

Janie looked exhausted, anguished. She inserted something about, "yes--they were busy--" indicated it WAS a bad time--" going to take the folks on a trip today-- to Wapato--to see an Italian family--"

"To WAPATO!" I exclaimed. (That was no TRIP! It wasn't until later I realized she meant to please me--for this was a victory for my diplomatic efforts). But all I was thinking of was getting my two messages across. For it was now or never! I didn't care WHAT they were doing! Janie KNEW I wanted to talk to her! Why didn't she give me a chance? I, too, was having my emotional crises! Where were their hearts?

(It was a long, long time before I figured out what it was about that scene that seemed so WRONG--that angered me so--that FINISHED me so. Sure, I intruded! Sure it was a bad time! But, dammit, if our family, or the people I know had had a dear one leave the day before under very trying circumstances and a dear friend had dropped in to see if he got off all right, even if we were eating dinner, we would have at least ASKED them to sit in, and would have been

glattered, appreciative of the thought, the interest! They were just downright RUDE!)

Now I looked squarely at Janie. "Three years and three days it took. I'm exhausted. But Nick's going to be ALL RIGHT. I talked to him last night, you know--(Dammit, if she wasn't going to give me a chance to talk privately, I'd just do it publicly!)--she nodded--"and he's fine--a different person--he'll be all right--Who asked for YOUR opinion? the eyes said)--"We MADE it, Janie! we MADE it! I'm very happy! (A cursory look from those now hard, dark eyes. You ARE happy? they queried. Wrong word, wrong time. I dropped it.)

I was trying to bring HER into my solo-sounding claim. Janie! Janie! Reach to me! (Hal she seemed to say.) "Three years and three days it took to teach Nick to love instead of hate!" (The eyes hard now: why don't you stay out of our affairs? Shut up! they said. Go away! This is no time for this!)

A pause, and then I plunged. "I'm glad it's all out in the open--I don't have to pretend any more" (Pretend that I'm not pretending to chase your brother and son I meant; I let him go, didn't I? Doesn't that prove my good intentions?) I smiled at Janie in the horrid silence. "You're a GOOD KID, Janie!" and a look, trying to get my meaning across--trying to make her understand that I appreciated

her support in all this long pretense. (What are you talking about? the eyes said. They looked me up and down, head to toe. Now they were hard, black--the ALIEN look. Ruined! All ruined! This was my dismissal. It'll take a long time until we are friends again. She didn't get my real meaning--about my loving N enough to give him up.)

I tried to get Harry to look at me. I had one more message--the one I'd been trying to get to him for three years. He wouldn't look at me, although he was the only one who had made any attempt to ease things earlier by joking about their always eating when I came.

All right. All right, I thought. Shoot the works! And, out into the unlistening room, I said, "I feel bad about having encouraged N to go--(the first time I meant)--I'm sorry--"(THIS wasn't what I meant to say! It was no use.)

Turning one last time to Janie, I made one last appeal, "We'll talk about it later--some other time--(she nodded thankfullly, glad I finally got the message.) I HAD to go--that's why--if you don't see me--- I'll just be doing other things--(Janie nodding.)

As I left, everything a great mess, I heard Lilly say, "What did she mean, Mom, about---??" I didn't catch it. Only Janie's anguished, irritable attempt to gloss over the wretched mess I'd added to their troubles--

I left, feeling it was selfish of me to insist on getting my own anguish over with instead of waiting for the proper time--but, when would it have been?

Now, here I am, parked just anywhere in the car, trying to figure out why Janie hated me when I said that about "it being out in the open"?

Good heavens! She thinks I mean the NEGRESS--that I knew all the time and didn't tell them! Oh God!

I only meant reassurance and encouragement and a gallant stepping out of the picture I thought they'd like. It was wrong--bad. I just made a other mess to clean up! I STILL have my "secret". Yet--perhaps it's better this way--?

How can I get out of this one?

Epilogue

Today, the day after N left, I feel a soreness like when novocaine comes out. And I discover a thrill almost to nausea whenever I hear the male thrum of a plane overhead. Little did I know the sound of a plane was to become NICK to me!

The voice of certain singers on the radio--any and all little unexpected associations--bring a feeling of soreness, of emptiness, of having lost a vital organ. Not the traditional "aching void", for there is no ACHE. No tears. In fact there was rather a release of energy, of tension after the state of shock wore off. But there is definitely a bruised feeling--tender spots--sore places--

Already the whole three day episode seems like a garish emotional binge; some fantastic dream that happened to someone else. Hav yourself and Italian operatiff! It will knock you for a loop!

A feeling of prevading regret: N will begin to think and ponder over my words and actions and begin to feel rejected, I'm afraid.

I have learned three great truths from this experience, truths as fundamental and unchangeable as saying that "children are young". First: Prejudice is never one-sided. It is always on both sides. Second: Immigrants make big successes in America, NOT from Idealism, but from sheer "have-not" greed. And, the next battle, after prejudice is hurdled, is to keep the immigrant family from fighting over the spoils! to teach them that in America THERE IS ENOUGH FOR ALL.

Third: Men are biologically made to seek (impregnate) YOUNG women and to unconsciously reject older ones. It is nature's law for the survival of the fittest. They can't HELP it!

Too, the undoing of a love affair goes in three stages: First to go is sex, for that is easiest to replace. Then go committments of love, until there is nothing left but "friendship"--if that.

The timing of the close of this affair could not have been more fitting. September. September Song. This week after N has gone and I am closing up my heart and finding my way into the beginning of old age, the weather has suddenly turned cold. We face the onslught of winter. Daylight saving has ended, and withit, the summer. Youth prolonging and longing must end. It is getting dar and cold.

Winter is coming.

"After-nick"

The Door That Won't Close

I often close a mental door
On thoughts I vow I'll
think no more;
Most doors can boast a
dependable latch,
But the one marked "you"
has a broken catch.

Margaret Eveiyn Singleton

The Monday after the Saturday that N left:

And how do I feel?

Surprisingly, NOT anguished!
Not at all like the other time. Yet I
am not happy, as I was just after that
phone call, either.

There has not been the great, horrible
weeping sessions I expected when it was
ALL OVER. Not at all. A few tears have
squeezed out, making me realize the dam
may break yet. I am not out of shock.

I was surprised to feel the happy feeling
fade. The feeling that took its place
made me realize I DID care, I DO care,
I love him.

But, right now, I feel as if riding, a
bit sadly, on a firm, soft cushion of
faith, of oneness with N. We love. He
loves me. I know it. We are ABOVE,
BEYOND jealousy and life's frustrations
and needs. The Nitas don't matter; they
are the solaces. Youth has made its
claim and I bow to it. He knows. I
know.

I feel pervaded by N, his voice, his
manner, his smell, his look. And I have
the same feeling I had before when he left--
we are somehow CLOSER far apart! I have
no feeling at all that is is ALL OVER.
Rather, I feel that love has just been
BORN--how strange!

I suffer pangs thinking that there will
be no more letters, no more use for his

address. He mentioned once that he should move--to "a better address" he said--typical. Now I understand. He did that before. Just as I have put away all the clothes I waited for him in--stored away the reminders that hurt--so he will want to move away from ~~mail~~ mail-boxes that have no heart.

I wonder if he feels this Monday morning like I do--expecting work to be a solace a cure, a hide-out, but finding that the heart can still be sore while the hands are busy?

And I tortured myself all day imagining his reunion with Nita, for I know he went right back to her in spite of his unasked for recital of EXACTLY what he'd be doing after his arrival.

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It was with reluctance that I found it necessary to phone Mrs. Picatti and finish up that business, and then I had to call Janie about it. Now I found it just a lot of tiresome business with a bunch of trying people.

I was afraid to call Janie. I felt they all hated me now for some reason I couldn't understand. I determined to make it light. "Hi, 'come va?" I said.

"Hi, 'come va con te?" she said gaily--so fast that I couldn't catch it.

"What???" I cried. She laughed merrily, "I caught you that time!"

(I couldn't believe my ears--she used the FAMILIAR with me--and I thought she was mad at me. That and her gay welcoming

reassured me and I launched right into the Picatti business, not daring anything else. It was hard to bring her around, but I finally did, and then she hurt me by excluding me from the gathering. Before, she had tried to gain my support.

But now she refused my proffered help, grimly choosing to go it alone. "That's a brave girl!" I cried, knowing she was really afraid. Her reaction made me think this made her mad.

Then she gave me an account of the Wapato trip and how perfectly marvelous it was. Then a brief, bitter talk about her parents, whom she seemed to be very fed up with.

N was haunting us. She brought ^{him} it up first by telling of the gifts he had bought and mentioning that he DID take the car. (S~~h~~ it WAS Him that went whizzing by! I was so mad I could make no comment.)

Then, wanting to force her into more vital disclosures, I said, "I'll bet he bought Nita a present." Silence. A LONG silence. Then, "Who's NITA?" "YOU know! You know!" I answered.

She, VERY emphatically, "No. WHO IS NITA?" (What was the matter with her? Why doesn't she keep pretending she doesn't know what I'm talking about, when all her previous actions have indicated she does? Surely this was an overdramatic way to tell me that we don't talk about her?)

"Why, his GIRL FRIEND!"

Pause. Then a rapid denial--he hadn't

spent much money--he COULDN'T have bought her a gift--" (She wasn't going to talk about it, damn her--when it was the key to a year's worry between us.)

I said, feeling mean now, "Well, he sent her a card. He's going back to her--" (meaningfully). End of THAT conversation as far as Janie was concerned.

I said, "Well, we'll have to get together and talk about things---". A torrent of excuses, "busynesses", evasions--"SOME day--SOME time--" I added, compromising. Silence. A big, black, embarrassing silence.

Then, coldly, "JUST WHAT IS IT YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT?"

(What in the world?) "Why--nothing---nothing--I just thought--N told me a lot of stuff--we were wondering what had happened--" (What was the matter with her? And she was so sweet at first!)A Another dead silence, then she added, sarcastically, "Yes, it's nice to REMINISCE sometimes!". (Wow!--I don't get it! I just don't understand!)

Then a definite brush-off--"maybe I'll see you at PTA sometime--" (PTA! in other words, please do not mingle in our FAMILY again--there is a place for you--PTA and such)--"if I'm downtown sometime I may drop in--" (or I'll come to you--at work--in public--IF I want to see you--)

Well, to hell with them? Why the sudden switch? What injury had she dreamed up now? I KNEW this had to be! To hell with all of them from now on!

Tuesday--Sept. 19, 1961

I have been busy writing out my psychotherapy, of course--for that's what it has proven to be--so that I am no longer ashamed of it or compelled to be so secretive.

I write far into the night, then wake up early and begin again.

This morning I woke up NEEDING to write Janie. It was all formed in my brain. Of course! another "Letter to Janie"--the only way to reach her--the most unembarrassing way.

After getting the rough draft done I had no time to revise or copy--yet experience had proved to me it was wise to keep copies--I needed them later to continue with. Yet I was obsessed to get it in the mail.

At the crucial moment I found I had no stamp and no way to get one. Was it a "sign"? I have regretted before sending off letters too impulsively. I fought against it, but finally gave in and spent all the rest of the day re-writing and making a copy.

When I got through, it was exactly what I wanted to say and contained many obscure points I wished to make that I could not have possibly gotten into a hurried, interference-fraught conversation. Perhaps it was better this way?

I was sorely tempted to be overdramatic and go put it personally in the mailbox, but restrained myself by visualizing the unhappy possibilities.

Luckily I had just the right kind of errand--what instinct made me save that errand? and I got it mailed without incident.

Ugh! ~~There~~ I have mailed pieces of my heart for two years. This time the whole thing went in the slot with that letter.

On the way to this errand, driving alone
in the car in the beautiful fall sunshine
I have no heart in this year, I found a
trickle beginning to leak out from behind
the dam within me. My eyes began brimming
so with tears I could hardly see to drive.
Oh, oh, I thought, it's almost time!
For fun, let's play the turn-on-the-car-
radio to see if I get a "sign"--a "message"
from N; whatever the first song is they
play--that's it. No fair cheating. So.
Frankly crying now I turned the knob.

A Nick-like" man's voice--(some aren't)--
burst out full of low, passionate inti-
macy, backed by an unusual throbbing slow
syncopation like the beat of an over-
burdened heart--"I'm crying!--cry-y-ing,
crying----for I found I loved you after
all--more than I thought--after we parted--"

Good God! It was a shock! I managed
somehow to get the car to my destination
and stopped while the song poured around,
through me, into me. Then I had to sit
a minute and recover myself; push all
those burst-out pieces of me back under
the lid so I could go do my errand and
mail the letter. I could feel them pushing
against the lid to be let out while I
sailed around--head high, heart breaking.

I went out to get in the car to go home.
Suddenly I found myself roaring out to-
wards the hills and the setting sun,
crashing through deep, loose new gravel,
my foot to the floorboard, my hands
fighting the wheel, the radio turned full
blast, not knowing where I was going,
not caring--only intent on getting
beyond those hills, beyond those hills--
Reckless! I'd never done such a thing
before in my life. I'd never driven like
that! Why, this is the way my children

feel--our teen-agers feel--I realized...
this is pure unleashed emotion!

Not being a teen-ager, I sobered, turned, re-traced my route. Then roared home, into the empty house, into my room, shut the door, threw myself on the bed and let go. I cried for everything--everything--everything. I couldn't stop. Not even when I heard my daughter come in and fling open the bedroom door. I didn't care.

My daughter, my little brat, for whom I'd done this same sort of crying over all spring. Suddenly love and understanding and ~~two~~ WOMEN were in that room.

"What's the matter?" she said, quietly, softly. "I'm crying." I said. She walked over, got a kleenex, put it in my hand and went out quietly, closing the door behind her. My daughter had become a woman! TWO victories of love I have had this year!

A little later she came silently and laid a red rose on my bosom and left.

Two romantics! Two romantics in this house!

Getting an idea from the "switchW technique that had worked on Harry and Janie the other day I started writing up a reverse version of the whole story--putting myself in N's place--as if I were he.

It was hard, long work, but it was worth it. The new insight I gained from that, the crying and the relief of the confession to Janie brought me out of it. I found my heart at peace and my energy released this next morning at work. I am learning.

*Note the lie about "la lettera" in the letter - why I sent it!
didn't realize I had lied at all!*

Miss Julie
Sept. 19, 1961

Second letter to Janie.

Dear Janie,

I came last Sunday meaning to reassure you all because I knew you were upset. But I only made a mess.

I KNOW I made a scene. I'm not even going to say I'm sorry except that I AM sorry I said it in front of everybody. I was in a bad state. I simply couldn't help myself. I've tried to hint to you that I needed to talk to you. Everyone else had had a chance to explain and straighten things out and I demand my right to. If you won't give me a chance to talk--and I can't figure that out-- I'll have to do it this way, for I, too, must solve my emotional problems and get on with living.

Maybe it's BETTER FOR me to write instead of talk. For I'm afraid I'd get mad or burst into tears, and we Americans are ashamed to do that.

And I AM involved, whether you people think so or not. When Nick had such a terrible scene with his girl friend that he ended up in the police station just because he told her he was going to see me--I AM INVOLVED!

Nick told me that he'd TOLD you all that he'd been living with a negress for almost a year. Otherwise, I wouldn't have said anything, of course. HE was the one who told it! I thought that, since you all knew anyway, and we had said goodbye to each other and he left never to come back again, I could at last explain everything that has driven me crazy for three years.

I have felt like a hypocrite and I can't stand it any longer. That's why I wanted to talk to you. I wanted to make a clean breast of everything and find out where I stood with you people. I love you all and I don't want to hurt or deceive you--

At first Nick and I tried to help each other because we liked each other. I wanted to keep people from being so mean to him at work, and he said he felt sorry for me.

BUT, we fell in love doing it! And, of course, we couldn't marry or even think of it under the circumstances. I don't have to list them, do I? Why do you think he went away? Believe me, it wasn't easy! You don't know how close you came to having me for a sister-in-law (I would have loved it!) Naturally, being so much younger, Nick probably didn't take it as seriously as I did--To you~~th~~--happiness is always just around the next corner!

But, it's driven me crazy not knowing ~~what~~ you people think of me--or expect of me. I always thought that you suspected, Janie--you've been so nice.

I never knew if you wanted me to leave him alone--you couldn't POSSIBLY have wanted me to marry him, I'M sure!--I don't know if you think I'm chasing him or what. I don't even know if Nick was just giving me the old Italian line. But I don't think so.

I think he is genuinely fond of me. But we both know it would be better for him to marry someone else. We're TRYING! Please try to understand. I couldn't help it--but I never loved any man so much in my life--isn't that ridiculous--at ~~any~~ MY age? Poor Nick. Now he's trying to drown his sorrows in sex--and I'm TRYING to act my age! I forgot the main thing I wanted to say--if you're going to hate me I'd rather you'd do it for the truth instead of some misunderstanding. What I REALLY meant to say is that I realized afterwards that what I said last Sunday might have sounded like I knew about Nick and the negress all the time. I DID NOT. I only suspected.

Tues ~~Wed~~ - Sept. 19, 1961
Second letter to J.

He meant it to hurt me--or he wouldn't have told me--and, of course, it did.

I think he is trying, in his crude way, to make me "forget" him.

I wanted to tell you that I think what happened started last October when he won that car and said he'd see me when he came up. He should have written me himself instead of depending on someone else to tell me. (Everything might have been different if he had. This Nita business ~~might~~ ^{might} never have happened.) For I didn't hear about it until a month later. I didn't KNOW about it. And I'd been trying to prove I was a faithful friend, at least. When I didn't write him and tell him I'd like to see him, he got mad and hurt (how many times he has done this!) and went out and found himself a girl--somebody that he knew would cause hurt to people; somebody he knew he wouldn't HAVE to marry. (I though I don't think he realizes how he keeps picking women he CAN'T marry.) Anyway, I'm just guessing. I'll never know the TRUTH about it.

You see, Janie, all the time these things were hapeening that you told me about, there was this other story between him and me going on that I couldn't tell you about. Because we were trying to be "sensible". We were both trying to get over it and "forget". But I COULDN'T let him down entirely. He NEEDED someone. You don't know how dangerously close to the edge Nick was. (There is a name for his trouble; it's called manic-depressive; they're either way up in the clouds, or way down in the dumps--and they can't help it.) This negress thing isn't as bad as it seems. He HAS To have someone. (But he also HAS to have a chance to prove himself a success at work--he has to be where he can do that.)

That's why I had to talk to him Saturday before he left. When I found out the truth about ~~Nita~~/Nita I was terribly relieved. It is not what it lookslike. They were just two desparately lonely people-- with some of the same problems--(and so were Nick and I!)

But Nick is beginning to understand all these things about himself. First of all I tried to show him that at least one person-- it had to be an American--believed in him and cared for him, so that he'd relax and be his own sweet self. And it worked! That's what I'm happy about! He is really and truly trying to be nicer to ~~people~~ and not be so afraid and suspicious--oh well, what's the use of going into all that--our prayers were answered!

In spite of our making our peace with each other while he was here, that Nita business did make us say ~~things~~ some things we didn't mean. I hope he doesn't take it wrong. Even if I never see him again, I'd like him to feel he can count on me.

I wanted all this cleared up before your parents left--I don't want you all to misunderstand me. When I wrote "la lettera" to your mother in Sicily that time I meant it only as a kindness--as one mother to another. I felt maybe you were all upset about Nick and nobody was telling the GOOD side of his being in America--and it had to be an AMERICAN telling it---

I didn't know then that I was going to fall in love with him and wish I were younger and free so I could marry him--I didn't know what was ahead--

Capisci? CAPISCI? Gianna? I love you all-- I can't stand to have you all look at me the way you looked at me Sunday--or have you talk to me the way you talked last night-- Oh Janie--I miss him so--I miss him so!

That's all--(It's enough!) see you some time. Lorna Allora, è troppo tardi-- è fini--Nicolo ha andato--è

"giovanne"--sono vecchia---

(how's THAT?)

(over)

I tell you this experience has almost
made a Catholic of me--I believe in
miracles now--Let's keep on believing,
shall we?

*Typed - Sept 20, 1961
Wed.*

"giovanne"--sono vecchia--
(How's that?)

(over)

This experience has almost made a Catholic of me--I believe in miracles now--let's go on believing in them, shall we?

Note: This is a copy from memory--this last page. For I've LOST it! Thank God, it's cryptic and not signed, though the Italian is a dead give-away. For I'm sure I dropped it in the office, where Mozelle might see it. Pressed for time, I took my pages down there to sort and must have dropped one. The damned conscientious janitor will probably put it on my desk!

Once it would have panicked me. I have lived in horror for three years that someone may stumble over these writings. But now it doesn't bother me so much. It's all out in the open now, anyway--even if too late--all but the intimacies, which are never anybody's business in a love affair. And it's such a relief!

I suppose it is rather a feather in my cap, to have had a love affair that lasted for three years, beginning at the age of 43! At least the sentiment lasted. And to have him come back to me, albeit only to say goodbye, --come back to vindicate me with all doubters. He didn't understand that that was what I meant in that last telephone talk when I said it was a wonderful 3 days-- "he came back, didn't he?" He came back and saved me looking like a fool. I didn't know what I meant at the time either. But for that I thank him.

(over)

After I mailed my letter to Janie I realized with alarm that I had really burned my bridges--without really meaning to. For now everyone knows. Everyone will be on the alert next time, if there is one. Any moments alone or mysterious rendezvous like this time will be suspect, guarded against. I have COMMITTED myself to being "just a friend"! My subconscious took care of me that time, whether it's good or bad, I do not know.

Yet, in this insight into why I DID enjoy the three days in spite of everything and why I now feel strangely calm, self-assured and self-confident, there is balm for N too in my exposure of him to his sister. After all, he, too, does not look like quite such the fool--in case he did.

Speaking of miracles! I just found the page! To think I would not have had that insight if I hadn't thought I'd lost it!

Wednesday--Sept. 20, 1961

These are the new insights I gained from my labors:

I had acted with a touch of cruelty and revenge toward Nick while he was here.

Nick had expected me to be a push-over.

Here was someone who had been crawling to him for two long years, begging for mercy, for crumbs. He had expected to keep the upper hand; "gently" expalining, using the new love for a weapon, to sever me from him--to make me break off "for my own good". This affair, so ended, would become just another conquest for him, he the victor as always. But he was proud of himself this time; this time he remained the "wise" man he really was--going his way--not hurting me. (It WAS growth for him.)

That I was actually more cured than I realized. It wasn't the revelation about Nita. I discovered I'd already hurdled that last December, when I suspected it. It was his revealing procrastination--that long summer wait--that prepared me. I had already made half my peace with myself by the time he came.

It made me see that this Nita affair was doomed--just as ours was--for the same reason. It made me see the strange similarity of the affairs. Why the Nita affair was almost an imitation of ours! A second run through for him? A chance to do it better this time? No wonder he wanted my approval! In a way it was flattering.

But I digressed. I saw the Nita affair could not last anyway. It had not the right elements--just as ours didn't. It might run a little longer. It probably will. For, after all, he advanced a little farther this time.

In fact one could almost say that he created it in his need to finish what we did not. Just as my bedroom attempt was an attempt to finish the unfinished. (Yet I knew this; I told him this that Thursday.

But he did not understand.) He has to finish his new affair--go through the inevitable ending before he knows what I was trying to tell him all the time. I was right. I had done the groundwork--set him up a trial run, as I realized at the time for something he wasn't yet ready for. As I foresaw someone else would reap the rewards of my effort. (Just as I did with my husband--and knew it. Just as I got Nick out of his-brother-in-law's house and got no "thanks" for it. Knowing these things is my reward.)

I saw my shame at my bedroom attempt. I saw that I judged it a mistake.

I saw that I humiliated Nick--why, it did not work--why he was angry--impotent.

Why he dismissed any further attempts like that--not only from fear and shame, but from bewilderment, uneasiness at this unexpected treatment ~~from me~~ from me.

Then I saw that my bedroom attempt and my whole series of actions were not a mistake, were not ineptitude. They were unconscious fruits of my daughter experience this spring. I was 'playing it 'cool' "--just as Dr. Nelson had told me to do--and I'd found it had worked. Leave them alone--self-love--make them REACH. The kind hand, yes, but firm, unyielding, sure. Not groveling, not capitulation, not MACFOS HISM! I had learned! I had a new tool, which I used unconsciously!

N had not expected this. He had expected a weeping, begging, jealous distraught woman whom he must throw off. He had expected exactly what he got from Nita. This he could have handled. He was prepared. He had a pattern for this.

But my "cool", "kind" actions threw him off guard. My statement that I had intended, expected the letters to be used to create jealousy in a new situation. This he did not understand. He needed time to think.

He fled. He was prepared to tell me, typically Italian, that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. He did not expect to be left with only that bird!

He would return. He'd go back to Nita. He needed solace. But there would be a ~~new~~, a new undercurrent in him--a beginning of shame, a growing sense of having acted childish, inadequate, a beginning of the realization that maybe HE'D made a mistake; a slow birth of regret, of having perhaps thrown away something good, something ir retrievable--the beginning of a new humility. It would take time. Eventually he will come to know what I meant. Too late, of course.

Nita will sense the change in him. He will be remote, irritable while he figures all this out. Not knowing, she will attribute it to other things, she will get jealous, demanding. Troubles will start again. Nick, like me, now that the goal is removed; the joy of the chase will no longer relish it. Nita will begin to look more like trouble, less like love. She will try to goad him into passion again. She will go out with others. Bang! Poof! Over. Am I right? How long will it take? Quite a while.

So. What it all boils down to is that this was not an AFFAIR. It was a learning process for N and me. The affair part was only a method!

Wednesday. A little devil in the back of my mind expected a letter from N today. There wasn't one, of course. A little devil found a place that hasn't had time to heal over yet--to get calloused.

For, in contemplating the future, I saw that a letter from Nick was the only thin connection to something ahead. That that crucial little thing is entirely up to him; MUST be done by him--or nothing. Even for friendship. I don't think he realizes it. He is not ready. Some day he'll know that that's what he should have done as he now knows what he SHOULD have done.

A week from the Monday after N left.

During this interim I found myself inexplicably making long distance calls and writing to my ex-husband, but managed to stop it just in time when I realized I was merely "on the rebound."

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I woke up in the night with a conviction that N was with Nita. I found I was RELIVED that he had someone to take care of him!

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I came across this article of Sweitzer's and was so moved by it that I bought and mailed ~~J~~ and Janie some of these satirical cards they have now.

N's was one I'd wanted to send before, but didn't. Now it seemed perfect. I was able to find it again.

It said, "We should get married-----
--but who'd have us?"

I sent it "incognito". I expect no answer.

Janie's said, "I've been beastly--
forgive me." Lorna

I think they'll both laugh. It's up to ME to mend the broken fences. THEY never would.

Curiosity made me call Mrs. Picatti tonight. Janie had never called her to invite her over. Oh damn! What's the use?

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The feel of N haunts me.

Tues.
Sept/ 26, 1961

Conclusion and plan for future

I would dearly love to have a couple of weeks free to perfect this, my baby, my book. But I do not have it. I am going to allow myself whatever hours it will take to read it entirely through when I feel the clinging aura of N has faded enough.

In time I'm sure I will begin to view him objectively, for the man I can never reach because he is thirteen years behind me all the time, who walks beside me, but always hears a different drummer, one playing a gayer, younger song I no longer hear. We hold hands, but only around the space left for another woman's body. So be it.

The article I meant to wrestle with this afternoon, which may be my last bout with this affair, I have lost. I shall have to replace. But I wish to end this story with its content that brought me completely to this resting place which may last for years.

For N went away the first time. I filled him too full of things to reach for. He had to break away and fight that battle alone. He has done it. Now, in three days I have assigned him a new goal. He has gone again, this time better armed, to fight this one out.

The article I have lost made it clear to me what this new goal is:

His first assignment was to break away from his family, become an independent male; to acquire the habits and sophis-

education of the independent male that he would need to accomplish HIS goal-- money, success, independence, the best training available to him, friends, and sexual relief and practice and understanding of these things to give him self-confidence. These he has accomplished.

Also, with the lucky break of the psychiatric help, he has begun to understand and free himself of his chains. In these three days I saw a NEW Nick, a FREER Nick than the one I sent away. BUT, he is not a BETTER Nick! He has better tools to work with, but he, himself, is not better.

This I helped give him, the freedom, the proper tools in his hands. This I can be content about. BUT, and this is the point of the article, the freedom and the tools alone do not make him a better man, a moral man, a different man. When new crises arise, when there are new decisions to make, new situations to handle I must not be there to hand him the proper tool and show him how to use it; he must be free to decide himself; he "had" to go. I HAVE to let him go--for better or for worse. Otherwise he would be as the article said, only carrying out MY ideals for ME.

And the hard part of these three days was realizing that he mis-used his tools and freedom. That was the part that hurt--the Nita part, the cruelty to his family, his crude handling of me. He has not changed his morality. (The other part was the part that made me happy--the independence and self-confidence; the new habits and insight.)

But now remains another trial run. I cannot go with him. This is HIS show.

I must leave him alone. Perhaps he will fight his way through to the realization of what he did "wrong"; perhaps not. Perhaps I shall never know. I should like to. But I have learned that anything can happen. We are on the verge of another great war. No one can tell.

find I find myself sure that I have instilled a measure of doubt in him as to his morality; I have faith because of the way things have been that he will eventually find a working balance between the things that hurt and the things that work.

My time is almost up ^{to write} and I started out to evolve a plan for the future. For N, I leave him alone--his family, too, if necessary. (I cannot undo their chains, too). I depend on chance to use any more influence with him. As I told him, he ~~does~~ not NEED me any more--(I hope.)

As for me, HE wants me to remain "his", I think, but apart. He showed either doubt or reluctance to have me "find someone to make me happy"; he evinced an expectation of my "keeping myself busy" (as HE would do), but always at his disposal. Of course, this is what I promised him. I had to close my ears for three years to my own drummer while I listened to his. I was listening to see if his drummer was playing OUR song, but I found it a tune I heard and discarded in the past ten years and that MY drummer is still playing for ME. He cannot hear my drummer; I can no longer dance to his tune. I am going to follow my drummer now wherever ~~he~~ takes me--away from N, back to N, to other arms, to new, unknown delights, I do not know. But I must

dance my own steps--to my own music.

I have learned to dance, (thank you N !,)

but now I no longer need you so much!

Specifically: I am going to sign up for the class that really interests me at Junior college, NOT to keep myself busy, not entirely to meet someone, as I told N, but to absorb myself in what really matters to me. Let come what will.

There have been other articles that make me realize again the slim, slim chance

I have of finding a man, of finding love at this stage of the game. Again I resign myself to that impossibility and turn to the things that are possible, the satisfactions I have yet to achieve!

You do not understand this, Nick, you who are yet young. You do not understand that money and success and sex and companions in daily activities are as nothing in the face of far greater things!

I go.

Wednesday, Sept. 27, 1961

Howmuch longer these things take than we expect!

Nothing from Janie. Absolutely nothing. No sign of her anywhaere. No re response to the card.

No spying, no seeking on my part. Don't even think about them much. When I do it is to wince. I don't WANT to see her!

The tender sweet aura of N has begun to wobble back and forth between sentiment and reason. I catch myself hearing again, over and over, that tender, caressing way he said, "You have been a good friend to me; I appreciate it". It makes me feel warm, blessed, loved. Then reason takes over and I think with bitterness, I was only one of his growing list of "impossibles".

So it goes.

*All Kind of "signs" today - Sicily +
Palermo + Italy, real potent ones.
Just for fun, let's see what happens.
I spied to night. I am homesick for
my Chianello's!*

*~~Wonder if my~~ Sudden inexplicable
yearning, longing and suffering again,
then the thought - N got my card
to day - that's it!*

Fri - Sept 29

Friday, Sept. 29, 1961

I've FOUND IT! The answer to N's sexual problem! In a book on Frigidity!

After that Sunday I found myself with no inclination to pray any more for N. Last night I did. For some solution to this knot that has formed; this Janie-hates-me; N-has-left-me knot.

This morning I stumble across this book in our new book department at work. YOU call it a sign! I'm tired.

I was only curious. The title of the book, which I don't remember, intrigued me. Thumbed through. Here--this sounds like N---

--seem to be committed to TRANSCIENCY in love affairs--may pay lip service to idea of marriage--may even talk of hope that this one will last--but never does--always ends--always some reason can't marry partner--never gets real love feeling--though claims to want. Commits self to sexuality over and over--always begins to fight back at first indication of marriage--begins to get impotent.

May have countless, sexy, sexual affairs, but always FURTIVE ones and always with UNLIKELY partners!--thinks wants marriage, but last thing really wants. Affair may appear promising, but at first signs of committment sexual troubles start--impotency--frigidity. If affair goes on will find self absolutely impotent and affair will end. Will always be thus.

The Doctor who wrote this says that in her practice there ALWAYS turns out to be an early sexual traumatic experience--almost

always at age 6-7-8--usually a sexual seduction by some one the patient has been taught to "love"--as a member of the family--may even unwittingly be the mother (!!!)

Patient doesn't attach much importance to it--but probing finds that REALLY suffered guilt, shame, trauma and conflict that ruins them for all normal love-giving and commitment--

The only way out is a real LOVE experience---learning to GIVE---(I didn't have time to read this--I ran upstairs and made notes immediately, so this is almost a direct quote.)

Exactly! exactly! My "instincts" were right! "Doesn't WANT marriage"! "Will ALWAYS flee"--Ha! the Nita affair will end in sexual impotence and despair. He will have countless superficial sex affairs--always pick unlikely partners--like me, like Nita--ones he CAN'T marry.

His mother HAS seduced him--and neither of them knows. And the only way to cure is REAL love--as I have done--release from all commitments--free--"leave 'em alone and they'll come home." Then potency will return--it did! it did! in my very small test case. I was right! I have nothing to worry about! Nothing to lose. PSYCHIC RIGIDITY it's called.

I was RIGHT!

These damned Italians and their sexual aberrations! These Sicilians and their ingrained traumas! THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE! The ugly, nasty, horrid, revolting shocking truth, Janie! The psychic results of forced, opportunist, "convenient" marriages like // "I nonni's--that sexual tyranny that ends in ages of bitterness and tragedy and misunderstanding. Janie the truth would shock you! You would never, never believe it! It would end our relationship for a lifetime if I told you that N will

Fri Sept 29

NEVER marry because your mother has used him incestuously for her own needs! Have plenty of children, you Italians, you Catholics! so that the loss of one does not matter! Do as Nature does with polyps--have too many, for many are forfeit! Forfeit my Nick! Sacrifice him! Who cares? Only one little sad Wop!

BUT, the truth has freed me! I feel a glorious glad/sad release. I prayed and was led again to that which I was seeking--
the ultimate understanding,
cruel and sad.

Sunday Oct 1-1961

Finished? Over? Neat and tidy? I have power over things? People? Emotions? Time? Ha!

After all these wise and neat little decisions this morning--a battle with an impulse to write N and remove that one last thorn I left in his flesh--his disillusion about why I wrote the letters. A conflict about letting him suffer that thorn to match the thorn of Nita in mine; to keep him GOADED about me--or to make peace, make it easier to forget utterly at the risk of scaring him off with what might appear to be a new barrage of letters. Had finally decided to let muddy water clear of itself--Janie and all--when-----

In comes mother with the Sunday papers.

"A nice picture of your...friend--" (a nasty stress on that last word that gave me an ugly start of premonition.)

Sure enough--this following picture of Janie and Harry.

All my new found peace and resolutions fled in a sick wrench of my insides. Oh NO! Again I was completely upset, more so than ever, as bad as that Sunday two weeks ago today. It spoiled my day--made me cross and angry with everyone.

For I knew I'd have to call Janie. The unfinished Thing between us would have to be finished by the tone of her voice. SHE cannot forgive openly; it all remained on the outcome of some future encounter with her when I tentatively planned to ask her, along with necessary amenities, "Tu, voi, or Lei?" She would know what I meant. She

would tell me. I couldn't ignore this without appearing openly to have turned my back on them. I do not wish this appearance on things. I must chance it.

I called at a time I was surrounded with people, purposely, so I'd be "casual". I was sick with fear. Denny, the son, answered the phone. He called his mother. I could hear much talking. I knew they'd be eating again. I didn't care. Good. Good excuse. Janie answered.

I said, "that was a real good picture of you in the paper" etc. etc. She was braced; prepared, polite. We passed it off with a few remarks. Then--pause--

"Do you want some tear sheets---?" Fighting, backing off, retreat--then coolly, "No, I think our friends and relatives can save enough---" "I could mail them to you--" I said, in defeat. "We-ell---maybe--one--" then in a rush, "Excuse me, we are about ready to eat--I'm sorry----" "yes, of course, --fine---" We hung up.

As deliberate and final a brush-off as I'd ever gotten. Absolutely no chance. No loop-hole. Whatever it is that is bothering her is VERY IMPORTANT to her. I cannot fight it. Finis.

SHE was scared, hurt, too. It upset her, too. This wound is very deep, whatever it is. I wish I knew. For myself, I am utterly shattered. THIS is going to take more neuroticisms! Damn!

Sun Oct 1 -

First Dance Slated

The Yakima Formal Dancing Club's first dance of the season Saturday is also the first of the season on the dance clubs calendar. The event will be held in the Harvest Hall at the Chinook Tower, with a cocktail hour at 9 to precede dancing.

The formal dance will be themed "Autumn Fiesta." Also on the club's calendar are a harvest dance, Nov. 4; the annual Christmas ball, Dec. 15; "Snow Ball Capers," Jan. 20; "Sweethearts' Frolic," Feb. 24; and a St. Patrick's ball, March 17. All dances are held in the Chinook Tower.

Harry Esgate is president of the formal club; Bob Bly is vice president; Mrs. Wal-



Wanting to write it out and not having a chance, I did the next best thing, and attacked the yard work hanging over me with a fury that made my head whirl. Cut! Slash! Dig!...My God! I was going to give Janie and Lilly some Lily-of-the-Valley bulbs, come fall!...Well...I might as well..."return good for evil"...play the "Cristo" role...

I dug up lilies, vinca, and oregon grape and prepared a box. Somehow, sometime, I will get them to them. The mysterious offering--a dagger, a "stiletto", thrown quivering from the dark into that stiff, unbedding Sicilian pride--that "omerta"--romance--a la Chambreau. Like N--I'll SHOW them!

...vinca..vinca...lilies of the valley... These are romantic sounding. I look them up. vinca...conquer, win. Lily of the valley...Renaissance symbol...the root once used to cure HEART ailments. vinca...myrtle...myrtle...once used as a Greek offering to Venus...oh NO!

I think I'm going crazy...!

Later: Yes, I am. Prepared for an opportunity to deliver my package, I grasped one tonight. Some conversation came up that drew my attention to the fact that the movie "ST. Francis of Assisi" is coming this week. I had planned to see it with Janie when it came, but..now...no ..For some reason I tore the ad out of the paper and stuck it in the box, from which I'd crossed off our name, though only with crayon--easily scratched and read, Gianna mia!

Then I dashed to mother's empty apartment to see if she had by some unusual chance left the car key. It all depended on that. She had!

I waited till dark. Then slipped out, and driving up to the house on the blind side, eased the car up in front with lights out, ran to deposit my package near the front door and fled.

How crazy can you get?

(Note: All my attempts to make neat copies of this are frustrated because I type in a nervous frenzy, afraid any minute mother will intrude on my privacy. All my efforts and diatribe at her are to no avail; she prowls and pounces on any privacy of mine like a cat on a mouse! I hate her!)

Next evening:

Not a PEEP from Janie. And unexplained bad mood at noon today made me wonder if she'd found the package and was feeling bad, too?

Have decided the only thing to do if I encounter her is avoid, if possible; greet if necessary; and snub until time heals.

Her attitude seems to me UNREASONABLE, at least. Certainly UNCHRISTIAN. And THAT is what finishes me! I am aware, too, that N was capable of putting me in a bad light willingly--if he had to--to save him self.

There is only ONE thing this story needs added: the reason for Janie's anger at me--if I ever find out.

Oct. 5, 1961--Thursday

This "book" started out with the Prayer of St. Francis of Assissi. I found it for the first time in my life about the time I started to help N and kept it as the best expression of what I felt about the N experience.

It seemed odd that the movie "St. Francis of Assissi" came to our theater this week when I am battling for peace and understanding about this experience.

I felt a compulsion to go that no one could understand, least of all myself. And no one would go with me because of anti-Catholic prejudice!

Determined to go alone, I was pleased when my daughter asked to go, too. This is unprecedented! She would never deign to go to a show with me usually. I was pleased because she, too, has been an experience in the "miracle of love" for me this year.

We went. The Prayer was a moving part of the picture. How comforting those now familiar words were! And also the accusations flung at him--"Who do you think you are--God?"

The two of us came out full of amiability when we'd gone in "hating" each other over a last minute difference.

I went to bed and slept for the first time since N's leaving without restlessness, suffering and unhappy dreaming.

In fact, two or three times I roused

to find myself snuggled up against the wall, full of a vague, comfortable sense of peace and well-being. (I had never before snuggled the wall--partly because my bed hasn't BEEN against the wall!-- Eachtime I remember thinking in a half-conscious way, !I am snuggled against N because he wants me there--and all is well."

I awoke with a pervading sense of the "peace that paseth all understanding".

This mystical, pseudo-spiritual lingo I deplore as being a weak and sentimental way to express what I feel. There should be stronger, more vital terms.

Yet an incident yesterday brought me a balance of realism that I haven't counted on. An unusual set of events resulted in my spending the afternoon in the company of a woman who lectured on hand-reading, if you please! This, too, I deplore as being pseudo-scientific. However, her unasked for reading of my palm made her declare, "You are very idealistic. In fact...you are too idealistic for your own good!" There were shouts of agreement from all of us, including me!

This is true. (She had had plenty of briefing on me before I saw her!) And I know it's true. It is me. I can't help it. It explains all my frictions and dissatisfactions. Yet, it is my role, my place in life. I belong to the small group of the world's perfectionists, the dreamers, the goaders, the banner-carriers--to use the more flattering terms.

Knowing this, I must be careful to use this characteristic when and where possible to INSPIRE, rather than GOAD; to "set an example", rather than brow-beat; to LEAD and GUIDE, as with N and my children, rather ^{than} to interfere and to force. But I must know when to release, as with them; and when to stop, give up, as with Janie. And not to suffer and yearn wastefully after those who lighted their torches from mine, like N, and went on; nor to suffer and hurt needlessly over those who see only a fire-brand, not a torch, like Janie--who do not WANT to see the dark places illuminated.

My job is to stand right here and keep the torch lit, to be used if and when needed.

Oct. 6

This morning I saw it all so objectively that the card I'd purchased for my new "just friends" campaign with N seemed quite inappropriate. I decided to skip it till I perused the New York Times, (which is losing its charm) and came across an article that was too, too pertinent (just news that he'd find very interesting). So I mailed the damned things, figuring I have nothing to lose now anyway.

(What objectivity is there is the new pang I feel on seeing pretty negresses lately?)

Friday night.

OIO! I went to the football game tonight-- the first here since N went that night. And it was BAD!

How I've dreaded running into the ESgates at this game. What happened? Nothing. Because I went to elaborate precautions to hide from them. So I didn't see a sign of them--because I didn't look! Maybe they were there--I don't know. When I was hurriedly sneaking out I thought, Why, I act EXACTLY LIKE N! And I was acting that way because I am WOUNDED! I am badly WOUNDED! And how I missed N! How terrible it is to be lonely!

The card:

I can
only
offer a
shabby
excuse
for not
writing



See Dec 1. 111

Oct. 8, 1961--Sunday

If I trusted my "psychic news source" I'd say that N and Nita had a big reconciliation last night, and he offered to marry her, and they are considering it. Since this is "ridiculous", why do I put it down? Because it might possibly happen, as other ythings have happened, and I just want to see.

Reasons: A sudden, out-of-nowhere conviction last night that N is making love to Nita--and he has "broken his psychic barrier"! With it I felt an inexplicable pang, a wrench. Then an unprecedented playing of the old song "Juanita", and a rash of several "marry me, me, me" songs.

Foolish? We'll see.

I think they did. This time they "went the limit". He "impregnated" her. He stayed all night. This morning, on awakening, she she was too clinging, too eager, too sure--and he found himself impotent, disinterested! He had COMMITTED himself. Now he was sorry, scared. There would be friction, tears, accusations over breakfast. He'd find some excuse and leave, go home early. He'll avoid her for a day or so.

And--today he'll get my card and clipping.

Imagination? Perhaps. Yet I am self-assured, now. My writings have proved my "intutions" all too true, too possible.

(over)

In Fromm's book I found what could be the answer to N's strange "laying of Nita at my feet":

"If the right woman...is not willing to condone his love affairs with other women (or even have an admiring interest in them)...."

This is it. This is what I sensed in his strange attitude: he expected me to ADMIRE him for the Nita conquest!

This is part of a discourse on the "neurotic love of a lover who has remained attached to the figure of a parent...who transfers the feelings, expectations and fears he once had toward (mother) to the loved person in adult life; ..have never emerged from a pattern of infantile relatedness, and seek for this pattern in their affective demands in adult life....affectively a child of (eight?))...intellectually and socially his chronological age. IN MORE SEVERE CASES, this emotional immaturity leads to disturbances in his social effectiveness...

Men never weaned from mother...still feel like children...want mother's protection, love, warmth, care, and admiration...mother's unconditional love, a love given for no other reason than that they need it...

Such men are frequently quite affectionate and charming if they try to induce a woman to love them, and even after they have succeeded in this.

But their relationship to the woman--as to all people--remains superficial and irresponsible. Their aim is to be loved, not to love....usually a great deal of

vanity in this type of man, more or less

hidden ~~grandiose~~ ^{grandiose} ideas. If they find the right woman, they feel secure, on top of the world and can display a great deal of affection and charm, and this is the reason why these men are often so deceptive. But when after a while, the woman does not continue to live up to their fantastic expectations, conflicts and resentments start to develop. If the woman is not always admiring them, if she makes claims for a life of her own, if she wants to be loved and protected herself, and in extreme cases--(see above about affairs) the man feels deeply hurt and disappointed, and usually rationalizes this feeling with the idea that the woman "does not love him... (is selfish or domineering)"

Anything short of the attitude of a loving mother toward a charming child is taken as proof of lack of love. These men usually confuse their affectionate behavior, their wish to please, with genuine love--so think they are being treated unfairly. They imagine themselves to be great lovers and complain bitterly about the ingratitude of their love partner....

Under unfavorable conditions--naturally the most frequent--his love life, if not his social life will be a serious disappointment. Conflicts, and frequently intense anxiety and depression arise when this type is left alone....

...mothers who relate themselves to their children in this swallowing-destroying way---(keep him) unable to love except on a superficial sexual level--degrading to all women--not able to be free and independent, but a cripple...."

Enough said!

Oct. 12, 1961

Two mailings today. One to N-- another card, though I didn't mean to send one so soon. But four similar pertenancies collided in one day and I couldn't resist it.

I couldn't get my book at the night class I signed up for (and I LOVE it) so went down the next afternoon-- closed. Had to go that evening.

Next morning an article in the paper about a girl named Lorna attacked just about where I was about the time I was there! And the lovelorn column advised an aging widow who had trouble with men who "wanted to make her happy" but wouldn't marry her to "go to night school". One of the silly cards I decided not to send said "You could learn things about love----Care to sign up for a night course?" All that with N's and my double talk about going to night school (meet a new love) was too tempting.

*Didn't
Send
this*

I fixed the card and the attack article and added a note:

"Funny thing--I was there about that time (marking my name in the article) have started a night class at Junior College and LOVE it. Va bene. Don't mind these cards. They're just for fun. They won't last forever---"

(No signature, no return; all typed.) Resisted the temptation to twit him about same and say something about Nita.

Then home determined to finish up the Buon Viaggio "card" for the Chianello "nonni", tho not at all in the mood

any more and full of many, many bad troubles of mine own that keep piling up and piling up.

Was lucky in having time alone to do it and managed to finish it. There is a lot of heart in those pages of sketches--and a lot of work. Too bad people don't realize how hard those things are to do; all they see is the sketchiness and lack of resemblance to their favorite self-image. Actually, there are some darned good resemblances in some of them; they turned out better than I had hoped---oh well---

I shall mail it at the first opportunity.
How very final I felt as I sealed that envelope. I merely wrote,

"Janie,

I had this ready----

You might as well have it----

Throw it away if you want to----

Lorna"

DidN't succumb to that temptation to tell her off, either.....

Mailed the package to Janie Friday noon.
She should get it Saturday.

Friday night:

To football game. Again "hid" and didn't
see any Esgates. But on my way home,
found the Esgate's car following me.

Saturday:

Not a peep from Janie. Did she get the
card?-the package with the laboriously
done souvenir drawings for her folks?

Tuesday:

Still nothing from Janie. Though the
kids reported that a woman had phoned
mewhile I was gone.

The two most popular songs now that I
have to listen to over and over are
the "I'm Crying" one I heard in the car
that day and "This Time I'm really Losing
You". Yet I am more mad than suffering.

A month after N left:

I'm doing very well. My psychology class
at night school has revealed to me that
I have been carrying out atypical "psy-
chological experiment" the last three
years! I am going to write my class report
on "~~P~~redjudice and the Immigrant".

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Am very much regretting that I threw
away my predictions about N's love-life,
for one of them was exactly what happened:
" He might meet some odd-ball girl at
a night class--"

On the strength of that one let me predict again:

N will set himself another Two-Year Plan.

During that time he will have at least one more, maybe two, possibly three of these same "IMpossible", sexual affairs that will last about six months each--for I have read that is how long affairs last.

He will, of course, figure them as "possibles." Specifically, I predict--and this one I'll keep--that his next affair will be a Mexican girl. He said as much himself. And this one will be a little closer to what he wants, because a Mexican girl COULD pass for Italian. But he wouldn't dare try an Italian girl yet. He might get "caught"--it would be too dangerously "possible"--and that would spoil his Plan.

BUT, THIS girl THIS time he'll go just enough farther with that she'll give him a bad time, put up a real fight, call in the families; it'll be a BIG MESS, so that he'll have to leave LA to escape her. (I see now that his jobs last as long as his affairs. When they blow up, he makes a change; he ESCAPES.)

When he escapes THIS time I think he'll head for New York and his uncle's protective wing, for Pina has become too domestic; Janie too prying. He will become warier and warier about his women relationships until he ends up with the usual expensive mistress in an apartment, whom he'll leave as he sees

See
Dec. 11

fit, becoming weary of "scenes" and expense, which will only make him more mercenary.

It will probably all end by his acquiescing --like all his countryment--to a marriage aranged by his relatives.

Remarks on re-reading:

This is what re-reading does for me (always berring the possibility that I merely am rationalizing)

It shows that our impression of the things people do and say, while we THINK it reflects their feelings and intentions, "AIN'T NECESSARY!! SO!"

For instance: re-reading that Wednesday: I see that I expected to be rejected completely, both by N and Janie. I expected N to avoid me, to discourage me, for whatever reason. I expected Janie to try to keep N to herself, AWAY from me.

They did neither. N came back. He INTENDED to come back. I would say that he even intended to STAY. At least he meant to size up the situation (secretly) and decide. Witness his remarks about job-hunting, his declarations to Nita, his readiness to forego the Republic visit, his waiting for me, his open establishment of a rendezvous with me and his sticking to it even after the Nita revelation, his almost-leaving after the rendezvous was established.

Witness Janie's call to me at the store-- something she only dared once before--to be sure to catch me. ~~The~~ coffee thing could have waited; she hadn't called me the day before about it. She even made a point of letting me know N might be gone if I came.

But N lacked boldness and self-confidence in carrying out his desires, so they didn't work out very well, as usual. That fear of rebuff. It is of course the whole reason

for the defeat of his projects--and for the defeat of our aims. For I, too, am guilty of it.

I was so busy looking for signs of rejection, that I was blind to any signs of encouragement, until too late. (I wonder if M is going through this, too?)

Even the Nita thing: I said I sensed that it was not quite the I-am-telling-you-I-have-another-girl-and-that's-that thing it naturally appeared to be on the surface. For, if so, he wouldn't have made or stuck with any attempt at a rendezvous--at least he wouldn't have expected it--would have avoided it and me, figuring on unpleasant scenes. He would have told me that FIRST, to get it over with and get rid of me so he could enjoy his visit.

I said it felt like he was bringing me something, laying something at my feet that he expected me to approve of. At the time I wondered why all the prejudice talk went along with ~~that~~. Now it seems as if he were saying, Look, see how I have gotten better! I no longer am prejudiced. I am an AMERICAN. Aren't you proud of me? And then there was an undercurrent of blame an ~~resentment~~, YOU sent me down there! It was horrible! Nothing but Mexicans and negroes. Look what it got me into! It's all your fault! I could have stayed here and we'd have been happy.

That would explain his sudden bad mood after the Return and the realization he couldn't come back. That would explain that odd look that passed between him and Cassidy.

Why he was so silent when I said it was "respect" etc. In his odd way he was hoping

Cassidy would want him back, make him an offer, now that he showed how successful he was. It might even have been based on my assumption I passed on to him that they were toying with taking back the brochure business. Cassidy disappointed him and his secret dreams. Therefore, the mood.

Therefore, the you-must-give-me-up pitch. HE was giving up, and it hurt and he wanted to hurt me, too, especially when I "sent him back". He doesn't WANT to go back. I am "cruel" to force him on! Naturally, he will come around to seeing that it is the only thing, the best thing, as he has seen that about the first move. He really knows it. But it hurts. It's hard.

That explains the New York bit, too. It was the same old line--the THREAT. OK, you send me away, I won't come back--ever!

The Nita bit only brings her into our Club, too. We are the people "nobody likes". We can't "make the grade". Ergo: prove it. See! All these people I "can't" marry! Look what I got in with! I deserve better.

This always happens to me! (Why?) Because we haven't self-confidence enough to dare turn anything down, to try for something better. THAT is the "vulnerability" I saw in Nita's face. That is the reason for my pity. She, too, can be hurt. She ASKS for it! Just like N and me!

I failed in my story to reveal sufficiently how terribly SHY N was. I made him sound mean and conniving, when he was so horribly AFRAID. Yet, perhaps, I uncsciously revealed the basis for shyness; dislike and distrust of people.

Re-read_n THURSDAY

Before I do. Mood I have left about that day two weeks later:

At end of that day was disgusted. Gradually that began to be replaced by a NICE feeling. Why, it was GOOD, that day! We went as naturally to each other as husband and wife.

In fact that is exactly what it ~~felt~~ like.

Familiar, right, natural, comfortable-- and not rapturous, just necessary and agreed. It grew on me. I began to feel a sense of tenderness and comfort from it.

A day or so afterwards it dawned on me that N was completely passive. He came to take, not give. He was completely soft, malleable all that afternoon as I have never seen him before.

I was ashamed, disgusted with myself that day. A week later I was GLAD I'd done it, taken the initiative. Actually N didn't fight it at all. It was enjoyable, nice! I began to be very, very glad we had that hour.

On re-reading:

I note the old belligerency had crept back into his story of how he handled Nita, a nastiness. THAT is what disgusted me. The day before when he'd told me, he was almost contrite, ashamed, confiding. Then I remembered the big family pow-wow he'd just been through. Back to the old pattern? They'd hounded him into the old attitude again?

I note that I was full of expectations and fears based on his former performances.

I note that I again expected too much. I expected him to be completely concerned with me all day, just as I used to.

I realized that I didn't act as he'd expected from the past and the letters, either.

Trying to probe his strange, unenthusiastic demeanor that day I re*eracted his part in it--as if I were he. This is the way it felt. Tense, holding in. Holding in a great anticipation, impatience to get on with the Big Thing, and scared to death to show it. Frozen into immobility by the very importance of the thing; the fear of not doing it good enough, of not getting it done at all. An almost sick feeling in the pit of the stomach, of something too important. This follows. It sounds like him; it fits his actions.

I realized that the word to describe N's look at me as he sat in that chair was "sardonic"; a sardonic grin was exactly what he had on his face. Probing into the meaning of this word I find, "forced," "forced gayety," "grief forced to laugh against her will". EXACTLY!

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Re-reading makes me begin to suspect that Janie knew about Nita ALL THE TIME--at least that N had a girl. I can almost see that she was trying to WARN me several times--it could account for her reluctance to have me throw myself at him, to write him? It was JANIE withholding information, not N?

Oct. 18, 1961--Wednesday

Janie called me today.

It went like this:

I was busily engrossed in my first of the morning chores, running around the store.

I do not know whether it was before the store and switchboard opened at 9:30 or not, but it was soon after that, if not before. What I'm driving at is that it was about the earliest possible time to reach me at work, a time when I rarely get calls except for emergencies. And I rather expected one from one of my sick children this morning.

Anyway, I was paged over the intercom while chasing around. I assumed it was my office wanting me, so was surprised when it wasn't. My next thought, as above, was that I was needed at home.

There was a great deal of commotion and noise and talk in the office and I could hardly hear who was on the line. Whoever it was had to repeat and I finally heard "This is Jane" in a sort of defeated tone, as much as to say--of course, it has to be, doesn't it? you got me on the spot--that's what you intended, wasn't it? (It was. It was. A test.) (but there was no animosity, no coldness, no spite.)

I said, " Oh, yes!" as encouragingly as possible. For I knew she was doing a hard thing for her.

My cohorts were deliberately trying to drown out a personal call at such an hour,

so I could only catch enough to know that she was thanking me for the "card". (Well, GOOD! Good for you, Janie! Being caught in such an inconvenient situation made it easier for me to be polite, receptive and "open-minded". I must give her every chance, I thought. This is not easy for her.)

She was going on full of excuses, in her Chianello way, as to why she hadn't called before--when they got it--"on Monday". She "had wanted to call me, then, but had out-of-town-company"--I THINK she said something about "her sister" and was "busy" (OH!) et cetera, et cetera. (It didn't matter to me; I was used to this sort of thing now, the main thing to me was that she HAD called.)

Not too sure whether this was capitulation, duty, or pressure brought to bear, and not able to chat under the circumstances, anyway, I said, as feelingly as I dared, "Why, thank you very much for calling!" And then went into MY not-so-true reasons for sending it etc., meaning to let it go at that, telling her it was too noisy, I couldn't hear her very well (no cooperation from the background) and trusting she'd understand we were busy and unable to talk.

I left it "either way", in spite of my difficulties. But she didn't beg out; she clung. Her voice was dispirited, a bit life-weary.

After a pause, during which she did not break off, I took a chance and said, "Are they still here?" (I really wanted to know. And I was a little puzzled by her remark, "I'm sure they will (WILL?) like it.")

"Oh, yes," she said, without emotion. And then some things I couldn't catch about what they are doing. "after all when they've seen all there is to see---"

I didn't know what to say. Wanted to express sympathy, but wasn't sure, so there was a silence.

"They will leave about the 14th of November", she said, and some more explanations I couldn't catch. I explained I couldn't hear. She repeated. Another silence.

Then I asked her if she was coming to work? This was a feeler about our future relationship. "Oh yes, if they called her--next month" etc. I couldn't hear.

"Well," I said, "I'll see you or talk to you--" I wondered if I should tell her I'd call her when I got home and see what she had been saying, but decided not to chance it. I'm not really too anxious to get into that again:

I am going to be very busy--really! Next month is time enough. Some feeble apologies about having been busy--kids sick etc. and thanked her again and repeated that I'd see her or talk to her--to clear the air between us for future encounters. So I hung up, saying I was too busy now, which I was.

She had mentioned in the first part of the conversation when thanking me for the card, "--so much work; we appreciate it--" or something. (Anyway, she did appreciate the work, but no comment on its contents. (But she wouldn't have called if she'd been insulted.)

That remark about them liking it in the future I decided must mean they were out of town now--maybe I missed that part of the conversation. It was not till some time later I thought that maybe she's saving it as a going away gift when they leave. Could account for the stress on their leaving date.

Or is that a hint to me? Like the hint when N left that I never figured out whether it was encouragement or discouragement. I guess I should have, because here is the same thing again; and the same discrepancies in dates. For they were supposed to leave the 3th, the 4th, I thought !

Conjecture:

Maybe those two calls I missed WERE Janie! (For there was another yesterday; I guess I mentioned it.) Typical of her not to reveal her "humiliation" at not getting me; her embarrassment at seeking me out. She is always reluctant to confess such attempts.

And that would explain the strangeness of her calling me so early at work. For one call was just after I got home (usually) and the other at 4 in the afternoon. Then this "desperate" call to be SURE to get me????

Note: I am no longer ashamed at these "analyses"; for my psychology class has taught me what they are: the "introspection" needed in pursuing the solution of a psychological problem.

And this "book" is nothing more than the accepted "daybook" or record of a case to be used in study--just as I have done!

Saturday, October 21, 1961

I write with reluctance. It has become a chore. Yet I want to keep this record to the end.

This last week I have experienced what I call my "little miracles" minus any relationship to the N story. I have been wondering if it were a phenomena peculiar to this one experience.

I mailed N a package today and I saw Janie tonight. Neither was intended or wanted; neither held any of the former excitement for me.

My intentions were to desist from any further communications to N, except, perhaps, a Christmas greeting. For I feel that I have lost control; I can no longer influence; I no longer care to. I have dropped him from my prayers, but the last couple of nights I felt an urge to pray for him--I don't remember why. Yesterday I was seized with the impulse to send him the message at the end of this.

And yesterday a series of incidents led me to the discovery of a sex book we have on sale at the store. It was a good book; short, concise, truthful and informative. The more I thought about it the more I wished to read it to find out about N and about me. I ended up buying it.

It told me exactly what I wanted to know. It not only explained N's behavior that day, but cleared up many nagging fears and doubts I've had all my life. And it reassured me about N's and my compatibility.

I decided it would make a very good Christmas present for him, for it would help explain and relieve his worries about himself and interest and help him in what I have decided is his major interest in life--love-making.

Then I decided he should have it right away. Why let him suffer two more months? But I couldn't figure out HOW to send it, a reason for sending it.

I came home, took a few minutes to "obey that impulse" and wrote him my message. While I was doing so, the mail came and there was that damned "Agony and Ecstasy" biography of Michelangelo I had meant to give him, but had given up ever receiving.

Three things now to send him. It was too temptingly simple to cut out a section of the anthology containing the biography, which he wouldn't be interested in anyway, and insert the sex book, for they fitted exactly in size and it disguised the "pornography" for mailing. I had marked the sex book faintly in pencil at passages I wanted him to note. I inserted my personal messages.

I would have liked to have mailed it immediately, but I postponed it.

That night in the paper was a picture and an article about one of N's few friends he'd had at the Republic. Four things to send him--and I hadn't intended to send anything! Oh, well, wrap them and see, I thought.

It seemed impossible at the time to find the right opportunity to make this secret mailing, but crazy things began to happen that made everything work out just right, and I mailed it, being careful to delete anything incriminating to me.

The crowning touch of coincidence was that I happened to drive by the post box I had put the package into just in time to see a mailman take it out.

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My doubts about going to the football game that night and risk seeing the Esgates again were settled for me when a last minute injury to a player made it necessary for my son to play--and I had to go see him, of course.

My plans to "hide" again were changed at the last minute when it started to rain and mother decided to go, making it necessary to sit under cover and making us late, so we had no choice of seats. The result was that we had to sit ~~right~~ facing the promenade where everyone went by.

Mother asked me something and I turned to explain to her. As I turned back, my eyes alighted on--you guessed it!--the Esgates seating themselves not far away. They must have passed by in front of us when my head was turned!

My reaction? I was damned glad I hadn't seen them! And I was glad they were far enough away so we could avoid greetings. I was not a bit happy about seeing them. I noticed "i nonni" were not with them.

Janie's thank-you call to me had made me feel better, easier toward her and dispelled my uncomfortable feelings and my desperate desire to hide from them, but I still didn't feel reconciled enough to want to greet her.

All went well. There were no attempts at greetings. We avoided each other's eye. But my secret eyeings of Janie gave me the impression that she was "acting", "posing"; I had a feeling she knew I was there. I had a premonition she was going to attempt a greeting somehow.

So I was chagrined when the game turned out to be one of those when people started leaving early--and here came the Esgates! I couldn't leave, because my son had just gone into play and that was what I had come to see. I glued my eyes on the field, hoping something would happen to justify my "interest". Nothing did.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Janie pass in front of me and when I felt it safe I gave a quick glance, just long enough to catch an image of that beautiful head tossed, skin defiantly in the air; her son behind her seeming to be gesturing in my direction, and Harry lagging behind, evidently not seeing me.

Eyes back on the field, heart gripped suddenly with unhappiness, I was hoping mother hadn't noticed. But she had. She was very interested in their passing. She nudged me too obviously, indicated Janie and said, "Isn't that

your FRIEND?" I nodded grimly. (Had Janie seen?) "She doesn't seem to see you--but the boy was waving to you--" (Good! Good! I thought. A good sign! I hope he thought the nod was for him.) Harry, following, took his cue from what happened and passed on without acknowledgment.

Other friends passed just then and my snub of Janie was more obvious when I smiled and nodded and greeted them.

Nothing more was said between mother and me until we got home, when mother said, plaintively, "How come you and Janie don't speak to each other? What happened that was so bad--it wasn't that bad, was it?" She seemed unhappy about it--she who USED to ridicule my relationship with Janie!

I passed it off, angry at her belated interest, "Oh, no--it's just--embarrassment--who's going to greet first--" (Is it?) Then I explained hastily, evasively that I had talked to Janie on the phone--that she was coming back to work, and so on--.

So. NOW. WHY do I feel so angry at Janie? This one will be a hard one for her to get over. WHY did I do that?-- Because that's the way I FELT. I'm damned mad at her. The phone call helped somewhat, but it was too late. She and Nick--and Harry and "i nonni"-- I don't like the way they treat people! I've HAD it.

I'm convinced. I was WRONG. There IS some basis to their reputation. Even if I was right in my REASONS for their actions, they are all too HATE-full to bother with. I haven't time. With N gone, I no longer have enough incentive.

Specifically, Janie's ignoring my offering of the plants, the letter, the card of apology. These things DEMANDED an ~~ack-~~nowledgemnt. Before that it was her refusal to talk to me in my great need; before that her treatment of "i nonni" and N and Pina; her rude treatment of Mrs. Picatti. I can forgive her her treatment of ME, but I cannot forgive her her treatment of others!

And N is worse than Janie. Janie TRIES. But N GLOATS in hurting.

I can't be bothered. I can't be bothered. " Words are Stones".

Oct. 21, 1961

This is your Christmas present. I send it now because you might need it and because I don't want to keep it around where the kids might get into it. I hope I don't go to jail for sending it through the mails! Buon Natale in October!

There are times, like today, when the realization of what it has meant to me to have known you overwhelms me so that I have to tell you, whether it is right, wrong; wise, foolish; received or unreceived.

For, ~~ch~~ lo sa?, in the next five minutes one or both of us may be dead--and it would have gone unsaid.

Today I am full of the realization of what I owe to you, of gratitude for simply having known you. For, although you have brought me more misery than I have ever known, so have you brought me more happiness than I have ever known.

is the
But this new thought: the things I was forced into doing because of knowing you have brought me the most happiness of my life (and I don't mean men!) which does not end now and will never end. Knowing and loving you made me a better, happier woman--for the rest of my life! If I brought one tiny bit to you of what you brought to me, I am content.

You know who.

Since I sent for this free sample I got a chance to read the book. I was going to give you this copy when you were here, for I think you'd enjoy it is story of Michelangelo--he reminds me so much of you! (Besides it won't hurt you to read a book for a change!)

However, it just came, just after I wrote this letter, and just after I vowed not to send you any more stuff, especially since I have no way of knowing if you're still at the same address. But I keep seeing things I think you'd enjoy. If you want me to stop all you have to do is send me a post card with one word on it--"STOP".

(He didn't)

Thursday--Oct. 26, 1961

I "reconciled" with Janie today.

But first. Finding myself near Janie's house last night I forced myself to drive by. But it was unpremeditated and reluctantly done. I have given them no thought the last week, being immersed in serious troubles of my own.

The house was shrouded and dark as I'd never seen it before. Somehow it seemed very appropriate--dark, closed, finished. I went home and gave it no further thought.

Today, because of a big sale, I wondered if Janie might be ~~working there~~. I searched about, but saw no familiar blonde head. Dismissing the thought, I looked up--and saw her standing several yards in front of me, talking to the manager of the beauty parlor.

Overwhelmed with lassitude and weariness and emotionally bruised from the last few days' events, my feet simply carried me on my errand--away from Janie.

Then it was as if a wise and very gently hand took hold of me and guided me back toward her; this is the moment; this is the time. It's hard to describe the sensation I had. It was as if I myself was not there; I was not me. I was a spirit of infinite compassion in a weary, weary world. That laid a very gentle hand on Janie's coated shoulder and said, very gently, "How are YOU?" Someone else did it. Something else did it, not I.

And I knew she would turn and recognize this something and not be alarmed. And so she did. She turned to me as naturally and easily as if I were

the warm sun she expected to greet. I know no other way to say it.

The ensuing conversation was completely easy and natural and included the beauty operator. But Janie and I unobtrusively pulled away from her and paused to talk. I asked her how things were and she gave me an easy, general answer.

Then I asked her how her folks were and she said with that same mysterious stress I've heard from her before that they were leaving the 13th. (It was the 14th before, wasn't it?)

Then, "They are getting very anxious to go--" "Are they?" I said, amazed.

"Oh yes. They have all their shopping done-- (avoiding the Bon Marche and me?)--and they are anxious to get it over with--"

More questions by me bringing the information that Pinao would come to stay for a week before they left--(all this time a mutual skirting of any reference to N.) Then a pause, a long look at each other. What to say? What to say? An inexplicable reluctance on my part to make any commitments--a search for a "safe" subject--some chit-chat. And, then, the amenities exhausted, suddenly we were face to face with each other with all that was between us.

She gave me a look and I gave her one. It was like that last look between N and Me in the alley that day--too much to express in this casual encounter. It was time to part.

Janie looked unpretty, bedraggled, a little gaunt. I said, "You've lost weight, haven't you? Your face looks thin." And she said, "Yes, a little." We both knew why. We both knew that I, too, looked older, tired--and why.

We both knew that this was all--for now. We had made our peace; that we had both intended to--wanted to. We parted.

As I left I saw the beauty operator observing us with interest.

It has been a time of battles and hatred and then gradual forgiveness and peace for me. Janie was the last on the list.

Tuesday, November 7, 1961

A very unusual encounter this afternoon with "il nonno" and Pina.

I took the bus home. I was busily engrossed with talk with a fellow employee also on the bus, when a little man came struggling onto the bus with a very large, new, cheaply-made trunk.

He looked so very familiar. Then I realized it was Mr. Chianello! And I simply couldn't believe it! What an odd thing! Where was Janie and her car? I searched for Janie or some member of the family, but saw no one.

He sat down one seat away (sideways to me) without seeing me. He seemed to be with this very pretty brown-haired girl. Pina? It COULDN'T be! My only meeting with Pina left me with the impression of a very drab, very wan little person. This girl was strikingly beautiful—more beautiful than Janie!

I couldn't resist it. I leaned forward (all my Italian escaping me, of course), put my hand on the trunk and asked, "Going on a trip?", at which the girl leaned forward, smiled, and agreed.

I said, "You're Pina, aren't you?" And she nodded. Then "il nonno" greeted me.

We were separated then by a friend of mine who got on and sat on the empty seat between us, and a fat lady who almost blocked my view of "il nonno".

I regretted my involvement with the two friends, but was glad we had vital things to talk about, as it gave me a chance to appear animated ("young").

I was completely shook up—just like old times; my heart pounding, my eyes seeking them out—and

encountering theirs each time. I wanted above everything to talk to THEM, not to my friends, for they were very friendly, nodding and smiling at me. But such was not the situation.

I hoped for more rapport before I got off, desperately and unsuccessfully wracking my brain for Italian phrases. But it had been too long.

I explained to the Bon employee who they were, and she said, "she thought so, she'd seen them in the store with Janie"—SO! just what I thought; they HAD been in—and never dropped in to see me, as Janie had said she would.

I did manage a couple of short exchanges, talking through Pina, but, as I said, the circumstances were against me.

I caught "il nonno's" eye on me too many times for it to be accidental. I was glad I looked my best today—my red rose and black outfit, and my hair clean. I wondered what it was that Pina said to her father that made them both turn and look at me and he give a slight nod of assent. I could tell, too, that Pina was listening to our conversation, and, of course, I played up to THAT.

There would be no time for talk when I passed them on the way out, and the bus continued to be too crowded for me to change seats. All I could think of by way of farewell to "il nonno" was "Ciao"—so inadequate.

But that's what I said as I went past them to get off. They were eagerly responsive. I added to Pina, "That's all I can think of right now—". She said something in Italian, but it was too unexpected—I couldn't catch it and there was no time—the bus driver was waiting for me to alight.

I shook my head at her. She laughed and said, warmly, "Ciao!" I got off--reluctantly.

How odd, I thought. On the very day when I'd gone and made arrangements to send them the little corsage and package of cigarettes as goodbye gifts! Darn! Now they'd think it was because I saw them on the bus and was reminded, instead of the PLANNED gesture it was!

Is it fair to find my "signs" afterwards? I brushed them off the other day when I found them beginning. Now I claim them. And the papers are full today of the terrible fire in the Los Angeles Hills, which has kept N on my mind these twenty-four hours.

November 10, 1961

Next Monday Janie's and Nick's parents leave here to go back home to Palermo, Sicily.

I felt a vague, passing sadness, not even large enough to be fully conscious today, as I went through the motions of preparing my gifts for "i nonni". There was very little feeling connected with what will be considered "a lovely gesture". I did it hurriedly and almost "admittiffully".

* * *

Hal's wife, Louise, appeared inexplicably out of the past to take me to lunch yesterday. I suspected some ulterior motive connected with N, but she seemed not at all interested in my long account of him I "laid at her feet".

The only significant remark she made was, when I was relating some experience of mine, "Lorna, you get yourself into the awfulest messes--you're just too GOOD*HEARTED!"

This surprised me, for Louise, of all people, has no reason to think of me as "good-hearted". How strange people are! It does not seem to me at all that I am "good-hearted". It just seems that there are simply things one has to do--that one gets caught in--and sometimes they are very, very difficult.

* * *

In spite of a strong feeling, I saw not the slightest sign of Esgates at the LAST football game tonight.

* * *

I have given little thought to my Chianellos lately, being immersed in serious personal family problems, and my night school classes taking the place of the mental entertainment these writings have hitherto afforded me.

See
Dec.
1st.
When I do think of N. it is as a stranger. There is an odd, insulated feeling that "he is no longer mine"; he has returned to being "other people"; nothing "special" any more. Love and romance are missing in my feeling for him now.

Sunday, Nov. 12

Janie has not called to thank me for her parents' gift as etiquette demands. Any gesture now would be too little and too late. One more mark against her.

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It seems to me I have aged considerably, physically, these last six months. And I feel that I have matured inside. My psychology class makes all this seem very silly and romantic....

My Italian prowess fades--I am no longer interested....

I feel mostly disgust toward N.....

BY ABRAHAM KAPLAN

Psychotherapy is not confined to the clinic; it may occur in almost any human relationship—with members of the family, friends, coworkers, even strangers. A kind word and a sympathetic ear have therapeutic value.

... A faith sustained only by expectation of rewards—a mental or physical cure in the individual or in society—indicates a real sickness of soul.

... It may well be that the human mind cannot be fully understood without attention to mystic impulses. Still, this does not justify mysticism in a science that claims to illuminate the workings of the mind. The psychoanalyst's patient may be helplessly caught in a tangle of personal problems, including a problem of religion. But the analyst's problem is the scientific one of explaining how and why the patient got entangled, then using the explanation to help him extricate himself.

Religion begins where therapy leaves off, or rather, religion works through what health is given us. It takes a healthy maturity to see all things as miraculous and the world as a revelation.

But whatever its merits as a theory, it involves the great danger in practice that the therapist might impose his values on the patient, confusing his personal ideal with impersonal scientific truths. In psychoanalysis the patient often develops a certain exaggerated admiration for his analyst—the so-called “transference relation.” The danger here is that the analyst may accept the role of omniscient moral authority in which the patient casts him. The 1960 report of the Committee on Psychiatry and Religion of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry warns against molding the patient to the psychiatrist's values, rather than helping him

“A faith sustained only by expectation of reward . . . indicates sickness of the soul.”

As theory, it is concerned rather with the conditions that must be met for moral standards to be relevant at all—the absence of compulsion and inner conflict.

As therapy, it aims rather at producing a morally responsible person, one responsible both to himself and to others. It can stimulate the capacity for moral choice, but it cannot make the choice.

Some immoral behavior, to be sure, arises from destructive neuroses, as in drug addicts, alcoholics and rebels without a cause. If therapy succeeds, it provides a basis upon which to erect a new system of values. But not every scoundrel is neurotic, nor every fool either. While psychoanalysis makes moral choices possible, it certainly does not make immoral ones impossible. The removal of unconscious conflicts does not rescue us from the specific moral dilemmas we all face. It merely enables us to face them in full possession of our faculties. And to redefine moral issues in psychiatric terms does not resolve them. It merely enables us to weigh whatever factors of mental health and illness may be involved in the issues. Psychotherapy can free us, it cannot show us how to use freedom. Here ethics and religion must take over.

duct. But there is a crucial difference between a neurotic conflict and a perplexity about a situation in which basic values conflict. Such situations underlie every moral dilemma; to recognize them indicates moral sensitivity, not illness.

The psychiatrist might help the young man achieve a mature emotional independence of his parents, while the clergyman might reinforce the injunction to honor his father and mother. F

Psychoanalysis can illuminate the workings of conscience and show that a conscience too severe may be as harmful as one too permissive. A man may feel free to tyrannize others because he tyrannizes himself, w

Notes:

Reassuring "supports" I have found in my reading:

The sex book:

"Psychic impotency occurs when (a man) has gone without sex over a long interval...

--or even when they've had a normal amount.

They may have a normal desire, but they have a mental distortion.

..a constant compatible pattern will cure (impotency)....

Psychic impotence may have nothing to do with a mental lack of desire. In fact it could be just the opposite--too much anticipation....

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Book on Prejudice: Reducing prejudice through personal contact and acquaintance:

" Contacts between individuals who perceive one another as threats can be harmful rather than helpful, for artificiality may mar the effort. (Jane, Picatti.)

Lacking a DEFINITE OBJECTIVE GOAL, goodwill contacts may lead to frustration or even antagonism. (Jane)

The best device to break the ice is reminiscing about and comparing customs. (Why that afternoon I took my sister over went so well? I did it INTUITIVELY!)

Re-enacting the other's part helps...
(How clever I am!)

Individual therapy is the best of all methods, but the proportion reached will be small.

Almost any prolonged interview with a person concerning his personal problems is likely to uncover all major hostilities. He discovers a more wholesome and constructive way of life and his prejudice may abate.

THE NET EFFECT OF PREDJUDICE IS TO PLACE THE OBJECT AT SOME DISADVANTAGE NOT MERITED BY HIS OWN CONDUCT."

(My original observation about N!)

Nov. 13, 1961

I tried real hard today to whip up some feeling, some reaction to its being the Chianello's last day.

I honestly couldn't summon a thing. So what? I thought. I even drove by their house the other night in the dark to wish them "farewell". Emotionally, it was a flop.

Today I felt dull and hopeless. Everything seemed tiresome, futile. I came home and put my hand into the mailbox--

a letter from Mr. Pelligrini! Not from his home, but from the office at the University. Whatever could it be?

Well, he wanted me to go ahead with the wine label. It was rather a business-like letter but it was signed, "Our love to you, Angelo". Hmm! Well! I was thrilled.

How odd, I thought, for that letter to come the day Janie's parents are leaving. Sort of a full circle--Chianello-Palermo-Monte Pelligrino-Pelligrini-Chianello.

I began planning the work involved. And came smack up against my need for more information on the Sicilian pilgrim I had inserted merely as a Janie contact. I honestly tried to think of some way to get it, but I'd been all through that before and Janie was my only source.

Perhaps her parents, being older, would know the legend even better. But they were leaving in four hours! Should I? Should I? I had been wondering if I

should make a personal farewell. Fear gripped me. I paced the floor.

Then suddenly I grabbed the phone and called. Such a little thing. What did it matter, after all?

Several things. I found myself a little disappointed--more at the destruction of a strange coincidence than anything else.

Then Harry's voice, abrupt, hurried. OH, oh! Last day--big doings--HE was home! I thought. I asked for Janie--a long wait--voices--commotion.

Then Janie, recognizing me--or forwarded?--before I finished saying, "This is Lorna." She sounded pleasant and enthusiastic enough.

I was prepared to go through the amenities. I asked about their last day first. She didn't go into much detail, and when it began to bog down, she inserted a rather duty-bound, sigh-accompanied remark about "What I did for them". (Like N's allusion to my note; no definite reference at all) and thanked me, saying, "You didn't have to do that."

My impression was that I had gone too far; I have overburdened them with gestures. I didn't care. I really didn't want to hear about it. I was only interested in the fact that they'd gotten them.

Again she said that "she thought they would like them". Again that puzzling future tense. "And that they would

Mailed Nov. 11, 1961

from University of Washington

My dear Lorna,

I don't remember whether I have told you how pleased I was with your preliminary sketch for a Wine Label — I have been and still am — so damned busy. Well, it's been on my desk all this time — here to my left where I catch it now and then out of the corner of my eye. Would you consent to do it for me — precisely as you have it here, incorporating all the suggestions indicated at the margin? I will be happy to pay you for it, of course: that is, for making the model — or, is that what you call it? In any case, whatever it is that the printer, lithographer, or engraver must have to produce the finished product. Gin, too, is very pleased with it; so we would be ^{both} grateful to you if you undertook the job. Please let us know. There are no questions we can think of or suggestions to offer. The Pilgrim figures are fine with the

Legend

— Sempre Avanti! Alla Cantina
Pellegrini —

Always onward to Pellegrini
cellar

Leave wide spaces to write in
name of wine & date — wide
enough so Gin may print the
name in without being cramped —

Our love to you

Angels.

probably thank me themselves sometime.
IN THEIR OWN WAY"--whatever THAT meant!
It will be interesting to see.

I said, "I KNEW I didn't have to--it
wasn't much--wish I could do more--".
I was at a loss for words, and surprised
at the emotion I put into those last
words. ~~I had a feeling~~ For some reason
things were getting a little emotion
fraught.

See
Sec. 1

(I had a feeling Janie was waiting for
something--I knew not what.

To get off that difficult subject, I
launched into the reason for my call,
saying I wished to ask a sort of favor
of her and then explained.

At first she seemed to have nothing to
offer and I was afraid it was wasted
effort and was beginning to get a little
panicky. How was I going to find out
about my Pelligrini pilgrim?

I tried to get through to her that may-
ber her PARENTS might know the legend
and pertinent facts--that that's eh
I'd called--to catch them at the last
minute.

She didn't seem to absorb that. But
then she began bringing out quite a
deal of information, as if a chain re-
action had been started in her memory.

Listening, I realized that she WOULD
be able to help and I began to assure
her abruptly that there was no hurry;

I didn't need it now; I knew she was busy today. I asked her if she was coming back to work, implying I'd see her about it then. But when she told me not till after Thanksgiving I realized with horror that that would be too late. Then I gave her a message for her parents about enjoying meeting them--it was a thrill--and hung up.

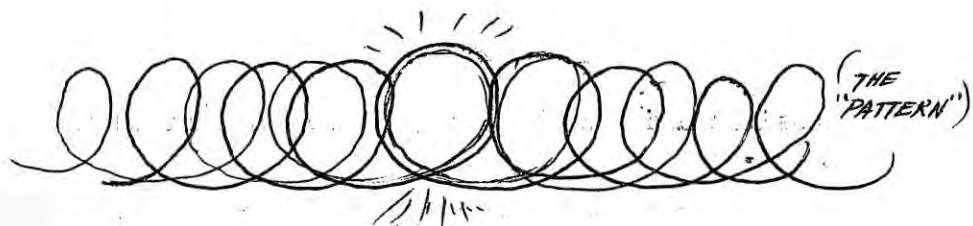
Somewhere along in here she suddenly got cool and formal. I couldn't understand why. But there was a definite change in her tone. It bothered me, and still bothers me. I can't account for it.

It left a bad taste in my mouth after I hung up. It left a pervading feeling of gloom about what started out to be a nice call. I was momentarily upset and sad, but it didn't last long. Only the unhappy feeling of something not quite right.

*(See Dec. 1 - Did Jamie withhold
information from me?)*

sempre avanti alla cantina **PELLEGRINI**





Saturday, Nov. 19, 1961

Today there was another letter from Mr. Pellegrini giving me a free hand in evolving the design for the wine label. This is an unprecedented thing in my years of commercial art, and it was a big thrill!

The letter was written from his office in answer to mine, which I had sent to him there in great doubt, wondering and TESTING to see if he preferred it that way—eliminating Ginny somewhat by not writing to his home. I was a bit hurt by its hasty and abrupt tone that ignored every personal comment I had made.

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I called Janie about the Pilgrim figure information. But this time I used a new caution. For both she and Mrs. Picatti have been too obvious in their hints that I WARN of my visits. My IMPULSIVE gestures went too far. I must learn!

I called her from the store to avoid any digression into upsetting chatting. We were interrupted by my being paged, so I told her I'd stop by today. This time I stipulated AT HER CONVENIENCE.

She didn't sound too happy about my coming by, although she'd seemed happy enough at first. I sensed it was more that Saturday was too much a family-surrounded day for her than any slight to me.

But, today, as I tried to plan my day to include a visit to her, I found I really preferred NOT to—it just seemed like TOO MUCH TROUBLE. (Muzzing!) So I was glad when the day's events made it im-

possible and I could merely phone her instead of going.

I did, and it was much the same as of old, before our alienation. She was gay and chatty and didn't sound relieved or happy I WASN'T coming, I noted. While I debated whether to prolong the conversation by asking about her parents, she settled it for me by launching into a long discourse herself. And then we got to talking about Pina. (N would be next!)

But I was very glad when I was interrupted and had to cut her off--I didn't and don't WANT to hear about N!

Janie expects to be back at work after Thanksgiving she said. I'm GLAD I'll be too involved until then to try to contact her. Things have changed with me!

* * * *

My divorced neighbor and I did a bit of "bar-hopping" last night and danced with a couple of strange men, who tried to lure us into further involvement, but I wasn't interested. We came home.

There was a very N-like leading man in the show we went to see before. But it didn't thrill me very much, just gave me a feeling of sad nostalgia.

* * * *

mailed Nov. 17, 1961

from the University

My dear Norma

We are delighted that you will proceed — even in a busy life you see, the things that must be done, get done in time.

There is absolutely no such thing as a deadline. The reference to Xmas was — just in case. Take all the time you need. And how about the printing? Here or there?

I am leaving Monday for a couple of lectures in L.A. at UCLA. Back on Thanksgiving day. Call us when you come — or give us notice if you can.

Our love to you
Sue

Mailed Nov. 25, 1961

from the University

Dear Norma -

Go right ahead. All your suggestions are ok. Use all the colors. We ask only one change: a bit longer strip in which to print - (etc) etc)

— As for your fee \$10 is outrageously low. Take at least \$25.00 and gratitude for a very ingenious creation. Is this clear? 1000 prints (etc) -

Our love to you
Angelo -

December 1, 1961

About two weeks later.

I have been enjoying new involvements in my life as much as my Chianello game! I can say something that I learned in my psychology class--the "halo effect" is gone; N and Janie have become only people to me again. I caught myself thinking a day or so ago, "N, you are CHEAP! It is a long, long way from the streets of Palermo to where you COULD go with the right opportunities--and I HAVEN'T TIME TO WAIT!"

It no longer hurts. I have ceased sending and ceased wanting to send N any more cards and epistles.

BUT, in spite of this, about Thanksgiving, I began to FEEL something. It hadn't even occurred to me to send N a card or anything. Yet the feeling was so very strong the day or so before Thanksgiving that I had to pay attention to it. What IS this? I thought. OH! This is a HOLIDAY! I should have sent N some message--some "link".

It had been part of my original plan, yet now I had not the slightest interest in ~~do~~ doing, one way or the other--so---I didn't.

Then "the Pattern" started appearing. A wondering. A conflict. A scoffing of it. I ignored it. "Too busy". It persisted--

To the point that last Saturday or Sunday morning I lay in bed hearing myself

say, "What IS it, Nick? What do you WANT? Why do you NEED me? What are you trying to get through to me?" In spite of an apparent disinterest and apathy I have felt him so STRONGLY the last few days, It made me wonder.

Saturday my daughter brought home a record she had forgotten to bring the day before, she said. It was the first timeshe had bought anything but teen-age trivia. "Mother," she said, "I bought this record for YOU!"

It had "Arrivederci, Roma" followed by "Que Sera, Sera", two pieces that were very pertinent to the N episode for me. (I didn't know she knew!) She played them over and over all week-end while I suffered and thought, "Why? WHY? Why this sudden resurgence of N things?

I tried to account for it and couldn't. This is sentimental, I told myself. This is ridiculous! This is absolutely NON-OBJECTIVE, NON-EMPIRICAL!! But it was there! It was there!

Sunday night I felt a great compulsion to pray for N again, something I'd given up. I thought, "Tonight I PRAY for N; I pray for SOMETHING.---Perhaps I shall see Janie tomorrow. Yet--ridiculous! They have already hired their extra help and she wasn't there; I looked for her. Why ~~W~~MORROW? Yet--I think she will be---"

So.

This morning at work, I flew about, busy, tired, preoccupied, distracted, and walked RIGHT INTO JANIE!--at her usual station.

"Gianna!" I exclaimed. She didn't hear me? So I approached, collected her attention, commented on her dress, passed through the amenities.

Is she cool, careful, unsure as I expected? No!

She began to elucidate about how she was here FRIDAY, and how long she had been here; how she'd EATEN here, as if to imply we could have LUNCHEd together, and so on, and so on. The whole implication was, "Where was I?" (I couldn't remember--I'd looked for her--I'd missed her?)

So now she said,--carefully, complacently folding, patting and tending the merchandise beneath her hands, and looking archly, happily at me, "I have NEWS! I have NEWS for you!"

Something in her manner must have warned me, for I knew in the brief instant Before she said it what she was going to say. (This is IT!):

"Nick is GETTING MARRIED!" she said.

And then the details, the usual details; the diamond ring--marriage next June--will take three weeks off then and come up here. A nurse--a surgical nurse--met her after he went back in September--at night class. She knows "all about his troubles" (?)--and "doesn't care". Such a relief to him.

She is from South America--San Salvador (she believed)--speaks English pretty well--only three-four years in this country--"just like N". Small, dark--sent her picture. Talked to them both on the phone just LAST SUNDAY--(?) Both so happy--we are all so happy--TOLD HIS FOLKS BEFORE THEY LEFT--everyone so happy, so HAPPY. Named Lillian--(laugh here)--just like her daughter!--only spelled different--with a "Y"---

I must have expected it, been braced, for the shock was not too great. My first reaction was a mixture of embarrassment (as she suddenly looked at me to see how I was taking it)--and a feeling of JOY!

(Why, this is GOOD! I was thinking. It's better than I EXPECTED! MARRIAGE, yet! NOT SORDID AFFAIRS! MARRIAGE! A ring! An engagement! Why, Nick! No NITA? So short a time? Nita overthrown so QUICKLY? HURRAY!--- A NURSE! Hurray! Just what is needed! A "Latin"--as he had threatened! Suspicions here: so SOON? so PLANNED? So APT! A NURSE? Too apropos. TOO good. A ~~nurse~~ nurse!!!??--the tonsilectomy? the psychiatry?)

Yet, I felt PLEASURE! I expressed it.

Doubt, wariness, suspicion leaped into Janie's eyes. Just a moment. Just a fleeting moment. Then, things outside intervened--customers--business. We had to part.

I was unsatisfied. SHE was satisfied. She pulled away. There was nothing to do but leave--

She was muttering something about lunch hour--when did I eat--? She caught me unawares. My lunch hours lately are unplanned, erratic. I was necessarily vague. She evidenced discouragement--began to renege--lost interest. I left.

And flew to our new book department and looked up San Salvador. (I was right: CENTRAL America, not SOUTH America--a MEXICAN!!!!???)

I ran back and told Janie. She wasn't interested.

Then I hovered, waited, as of old, trying to get a chance to finish our conversation--to find out more. Besides now I felt it was safe to broach an idea I'd had about suggesting N could ride up for Christmas with my son, who was looking for a passenger. They could BOTH come now; that way it'd be "safe".

I finally got her short and now disinterested attention. "What do you want NOW?" she said.

Hesitantly I broached my suggestion. No, she wasn't interested. N wasn't coming up for Christmas. I tried to explain it was just a suggestion, even said something about Now it's all right. No interest. Brush-off.

I went back to work slightly upset, but not much. Not as much as Janie expected me to be, I thought smugly. Adn, surprisingly to myself, not as much as I expected to be. A little shook up. But no great SWING of emotion.

"Touché!" I t ought, as I wended my way back to the office. "Touché! Janie. Touché!" For, unable to sleep last night, I had found myself obsessed with daydreams about letting N know I had married (fat chance!) before HE did. Touché! Janie! You beat me to it!

What do I feel? I thought, as I went back to my duties. What do I REALLY feel?

I'm not as shook up as I thought I'd be; I'm almost RELIEVED; almost happy. I hadn't expected him to capitulate to MARRIAGE!

Yet, even now, I felt secure in my knowledge of the impossibility of him having any married bliss--not with HIS personality!

And something--again SOMETHING--was too "pat", too "apt", too abrupt, too "in character"----

Yet--Marriage. Love. Sharing.---- Success, success for me! for my "baby" has at least "decision-ated"! I was GLAD!

(And--it's a long time till JUNE.-- AFFAIRS last SIX MONTHS!!!)

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Time passed.

Sadness began to creep in. Not despair.
Sadness.

Love. How illusionary it is.

How SAD. For it was a compromise on N's part. What else could it be? What else could he do? A solution. The BEST solution. The best--under the circumstances. Nick! How "wise"!--How "re-vengeful"!--How characteristic!

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Then I was seized with a desire for more information. Janie had hinted for lunch. Well? I had other tentative plans. What difference?

I called her--unemotionally. She was "very busy". I wrote a note and went down to leave it for Janie, carefully avoiding mother whom I saw coming in to ask me to go to lunhh with HER. But it didn't work. I ran into my sister and friends before I got to Janie and was committed to going to lunch with them, for they had come to meet me.

Then I discovered that I didn't really want to go with Janie alone. I was only trying to placate her now, ease her out, for I felt that now all was over between us.

I thought of asking her to go with us, though I knew it wouldn't work. Even so, I chanced it, but she excused herself,

as I knew she would, and I was relieved.

But the others appeared as I was still talking to her. We all urged her to go, but she wouldn't.

Then a little devil took hold of me and I deliberately disclosed her news to them all. (I'd SHOW her how easily I could pass it off!)

She seemed surprised, but pleased at the polite reactions and the attention it brought her. But, in an awkward moment, when I tried to get her to disclose more particulars, she emphatically refused to say anything more. No, she "hadn't asked. I'm not NOSY!" she said.

(Touché, again, Janie! I'll get you for THAT!)

So, we went to lunch without her, and I enjoyed IGNORING her on my way back making a great show of being immersed in gay talk with my friend.

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But then I "pestered" her all day as I used to, in case that was what she wanted, what she expected. I even asked her for a ride home when the opportunity arose, but no, she was being met by her husband and gave me no encouragement.

And she seemed to have lost interest in me after disclosing her news. She ENJOYED telling me that.

Oddly enough, we ended up back to back during the coffee break. But I was with my cohorts and she with hers and I only had time to ~~to~~ repeat to her mother's very apt comment about her refusal to go to lunch with us--that "she plays 'hard to get, doesn't she?" (There's one for YOU, Gianna mia! It's warfare from now on!)

For the first time I was caught with a cigarette in her presense. (I always tried not to smoke in front of her, for fear she'd tell N; they don't smoke.) Now I thought "I don't care." I was almost relieved. Now I can be myself!) But I noticed I felt guilty, uncomfortable, in spite of myself and surreptitiously hid my cigarette case!

It was after that I asked her for a ride home and she refused me. So I ran to the bus, glad then of "a way out". I had been nice to her the early part of the afternoon; I had "done my duty". Now, to hell with her!

I rode the bus home wondering why I'd felt an urge to wear my black dress with the red rose ("for my love") today and why it had been necessary to draw a medieval herald, which held an obscure reminder of N that I have not mentioned.

That night I reviewed my feelings. I found myself a little surprised, a little mad, a little hurt, but not hurting really badly. For, somewhere along the line, I have lost interest.

And--

I am too sure of N's inability to be happy under any circumstances to feel any great loss. This sustains me.

And the fact that the whole thing seems too ridiculous: why wait 34 years to marry a foreigner he's known barely a month? why wouldn't they be ANXIOUS to come up for Christmas under the circumstances? Why wait for JUNE--at th~~at~~ar ages? Why be so VERY anxious to be SURE that everyone knows, including me?

It smacks a little of "rebound", and "revenge". It is too much like what I'd like to do to HIM!

I can't help but think he is merely disguising, masking his latest AFFAIR!

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I hurried to write him the following letter--going to great pains to figure out the Spanish as a nasty, dirty, underhanded way to force him to have to dis-
close his acquaintance with me to LiYan! (thereby making my "sweet" letter really very hypocritical!)

Dec. 1, 1961

Dear Nick,

Today Janie told me your news. How wonderful! What an excellent solution! You are, as I've always said, a very smart "boy". I sincerely wish you both very much luck. Happiness, too. I know you are happy. I am happy, too--for you.

She says you may come up next June. I would love to meet your bride and bless you both.

I know she must be wonderful--she sounds just right!

Love to you both,
Lorna

¡No me digas! ¡Vaya con el mozo!
Dicho y hecho. Le felicito a
Ud. ¡Es stupendo! Dale mis re-
cuerdos a Lilyan. Buena suerte.

(Don't tell me! What a man! No sooner said than done! Congratulations! It's wonderful! My regards to Lilyan. Good luck.)

Friday--Dec. 15, 1961

"For You at Christmas"-----

"To wish you the happiness that is Christmas--"

Lorna Chambreau

This is the message in the cheap card I addressed to N tonight and sent.

It is the outcome of a feeling of sadness lately. I am beginning to weary of my psychology class. It is hard work, which I don't mind, but the disillusionment I do.

As a means of contacting people, it has been disappointing; and so has psychology itself.

It certainly has dispelled the "romance" of these writings, making them seem merely neurotic. I have learned a great deal--true--but it is all so "cut and dried", so purely intellectual, so cold and impersonal. It is so devoid of imagination, intuition, fun, LOVE, HEART! It lacks something very, very vital.

Sure! It convinces me that I am neurotic, that N is neurotic, if not psychotic, but--the last day or so I FEEL for N--whatever page THAT is on!

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Circumstances have brought Janie back to work, but circumstances have also kept us apart. Which has fitted in well with my recent lack of interest in her and hers, including N.

Since she told me about N's engagement, my conscious self has made me keep up the barest amenities with her to ease my conscience, to stick to my precepts of "kindness", but all my actions

toward her have been hurtful and avoiding. I have gone out of my way to show her "I don't care"--about her, or N or any of her family.

N no longer seems "mine". Somehow he has become another person--someone, like my former husband, whom I feel sorry for, sympathy for, but no longer any emotion towards or interest in. The N I knew and loved has somehow disappeared.

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I would have said once in great excitement that "miracles are happening". Now I merely say that Christmas activities have changed our pursuits so that I have encountered Janie, her husband, and her son in the last day or so.

Janie I have been deliberately "mean" to, consciously trying to snub her. Today I was so nasty to her that it made me feel very unhappy and long to make amends.

Later I had a chance to, and did, though I refrained from my former overtures, and kept only to what the occasion demanded. But it relieved my guilt, feeling somewhat.

My encounter with Harry was unexpected, short, and jovial with an underlying "rapport" that satisfied me. We gave each other a look of understanding about everything in general.

Today when I went home on the bus, their son got on. I had a bag of popcorn, which I offered him, and, to my surprise, he accepted, for he is very shy.

What really mattered to me was that, although he didn't sit with me, he acted very pleased and friendly and kept eyeing me in such a manner that I knew I couldn't be being talked against at his home, as I had suspected lately.

As for N and our future, I am resigned; resigned to the fact that our ways have parted. I secretly believe that this marriage will never materialize, at least that it will not be happy, but it is no use telling anyone this conviction; they would not believe me, especially his family.

But it will take about two years for what I know will happen to materialize. In the meantime there is nothing I can do but go my way and let them go theirs. In that amount of time all will be very different. For one thing I will be much too old for this particular thing. M will be what N was forever destined to be—unhappy and hopelessly neurotic no matter what happens to him; and life holds—we know not what....

Sat. Dec. 16, 1961

Among my Christmas cards today was an odd, teeny, tiny, foreign looking envelope. Its strangeness alerted me and I was pretty sure what it was going to be.

And it was—my thank-you from la nonna.

I was glad she had waited and sent it from Palermo for its foreignness was exciting to me, if to no one else. And I was glad she added a little note and that it was in Italian. Other than that I could work up no emotion, though I tried hard.

Frankly I had rather hoped for a little gift from Palermo, a memento to keep. Oh, well... I suspect Janie bought the card before they left and told her to mail it to me when she got home !

Because the address was on the back, I succumbed to temptation and wrote a little card in reply, thereby going back to my original intention of sending them a Christmas card in spite of Janie's nasty disapproval when I asked her about it the other day.

I wonder if N and Janie will send me cards?

December 21, 1961

Before Christmas

And STILL the story goes on!

At first I was going to show la nonna's card to Janie and have her read it to me, but pride made me struggle to translate it myself first, which I did.

Then my enthusiasm waned and I ended up merely accosting her at work and telling her, my hand on her arm, that I'd had a very sweet note from her mother.

She seemed unduly warmed and pleased and participating again. It returned us to our old footing.

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Lately, when I went to mail my little reply card, who should be at the window at the post office but the man who'd asked me once "Why I didn't speak for myself" with N! I had long since lost contact with him.

It seemed a very fitting opportunity to tie up another loose end, to close another door behind me, so I told him that N was engaged to be married and the details. Fini, fini, fini!

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I have had a couple of very hurried impersonal encounters with Janie since the above. Our relationship is now much pleasanter, but I am still careful to avoid any family references.

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Last night a very unexpected turn of events sent me, alone, to a Christmas party made up almost entirely of men.

And one of the men there was N's former boss, Ed Cassidy, with whom I have never been very friendly. For some unaccountable reason he attached himself to me.

The drinks were flowing freely and soon I found myself telling HIM about N's engagement, and then (hating myself) about the NEGRESS. He was horrified. (A very definite fini--that!)

Oddly enough, he insisted on bringing me home, and, odder still, made violent love to me in the car. And oddest of all, I LET HIM, thinking all the time, "now I have REALLY crossed the bridge!" (In fact I dreamed a sexual dream about crossing a bridge that night!)

Even still odder was that he, too, like N that day, could not get an erection, which seemed to puzzle and upset him. What has HAPPENED? What am I doing to these men I never did before? They are very aroused otherwise! Is this some strange aftermath of my operation? (N! You have given me YOUR problem! And, N! I let the man who hated you make love to me! What could be more final than that?)

But the biggest oddity of all was that my conversation that night with this man started by his seeking me out to ask me in a puzzled way, "Did N want to ask me for a JOB when he was here? I definitely got that impression when

I talked to him. He said he wanted to talk to me--and then he never came back--what happened to him? Why didn't he come back?"

(Oh NO! I thought. It WAS true! I was right again! If I'd only known! What a difference it might have made! The fool! Why didn't he tell me?--- Because he didn't want to have to stay-- that's why!)

I was completely overcome by this new, too late disclosure.

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So, today, not COMPULSIVELY, but with that old I'm-being-worked-by-strings feeling that made me do things naturally and easily I made an opportunity to discuss this with Janie.

Which opened closed subjects with us again. In fact, she was ahead of me by deliberately and emphatically asking me how things were with ME. I evaded by using N's "busy, busy" line.

But then, when I brought up the other subject I was surprised to hear myself telling her about N's and my conversation about his not being able to stay here during our trip back in the car from the Republic that day. (I know now that was the turning point.)

Actually, I was trying to find out from her if he'd mentioned any intentions of staying here and working while he was here.

Evidently he hadn't. And now, for all her former talk about trying to get him to come back and stay, she is apparently against the idea for she said, "--it is different now when he has his girl to care for--" (What away to put it! Imagine N caring for anybody!) Then she went on peevishly, "

"I haven't even heard ONE WORD from him!"

(I wasn't one bit surprised. I expected this. My intuition tells me the whole engagement might have been just to spite me. Perhaps he didn't like my un-jealous letter?)--Anyway, N is undoubtedly immersed in another affair--as he was last year at this time.)

But what did surprise me was her intimation that "they (N and his girl) might just drop in anytime!", and a happy look went with it.

"Are they coming for Christmas?" I asked. "I thought you said they weren't--" At this she looked surprised and puzzled. (Oh no! I thought. The old Chianello game! No more of that, please!)

But I dropped the subject and went on to other things, telling her about my oldest son coming (and ALMOST telling her about my arrangements for the kids' father to spend the holidays with us. I caught myself just in time.)

I did not like her reaction. She exclaimed too loudly, too gladly, "MAMA!! and all her family!"

I was puzzled. I asked her what she meant. And her explanation gave me the impression that it constituted a

pleasing "revenge" to her to have me caught in such a domestic, middle-aged role. (What does she picture me as?)

I was paged, then, and had to take the phone in her area, so we really had quite a long session together, the first in a long time. Then I had to leave.

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Much later I thought, how unhappy a twist of fate! Will it be that N returns, with or without bride, and catches me in an apparent reconciliation with my ex-husband?

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These events led me to dash off a note to N telling him what Cassidy had said, and then adding--

"--did you? (intend to ask him for a job.) If I had known that it might have made a difference. Life is funny. And so are people. Perhaps it's all for the best, anyway--Chi lo sa?"

Lorna

I wanted to rid myself of the thing, so I sent it to his apartment since I did not have his office address with me, though I knew I risked having HER get to it.

I don't know why I did it. It just seemed to have to be done. There is something "wrong" somewhere that needs "righting" and it seemed a way to do it.

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I still wonder if N will send a card. I promised Janie one today--it was too obvious not to.

Dec. 29, 1961

After Christmas

As we face a new year, I observe that we have come full circle: it all started on Jan. 1, 1958--and now it ends--exactly. Jan. 1962. Four years "to the day." That is quite awhile for such a strange love affair to last!

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It is odd that Janie is still at work, for Christmas help is usually through by now. Although I have been too busy to pay her my former attention even if I'd wanted to, I'm not sure if I wanted to. Her cruel disclosure came just at the time when the hurt was beginning to heal and I was about ready to resume relationships with her. Its effect was to make me retreat again; I could not bear to risk discussing N or thinking of him in this new role--not with Janie, that's for sure.

I wanted only to keep my mind from it and let time pass and get used to the idea. So I made no attempt to seek out or avoid Janie. I have simply let what happens, happen. If I encounter her I have carefully maintained superficial, impersonal conversations, avoiding all private references; avoiding all mention of any member of her family, for fear it would lead to N.

Our usual pattern had been a casual introduction and chat and then, if the occasion warrants it, one of us would insert a probing question, a mutual

signal that we wished to launch into more intimate disclosures.

It seemed to me when Janie first came back to work that she expected this to continue, after the initial embarrassment of reconciliation wore off.

I sensed a couple of times that she was awaiting just such a progression. And, when a couple of times, I fooled her and walked off, not even responding to her baiting, I sensed a disappointment and hurt in her. So much so that I would detour by and make a pleasantry to all-
-eviate my feeling of guilt. She responded each time almost gratefully.

But, as I continued this impersonal relationship, even avoiding about asking her about ~~N~~ or ~~her~~ family's Christmas, she became conditioned and seemed to accept the fact that our friendship is over, everything is all over; and began to treat me exactly the same way. Oddly, it doesn't bother me much--like today---

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I was chatting with the girls near her counter about some business episode.

Janie was not busy, but stood at one side listening to us. I intended to enlighten her about the conversation afterwards, as I used to, but when she got busy, it didn't bother me to give the whole thing up and not try again, as I once would have. There is no longer any compulsion.

Nor did I plan ahead as I used to.

When someone wished me Happy New Year, the thought passed through my head that I should walk by on my way out and wish her "Buon Capo d'Anno". But I didn't care much. I tried, in a desultory way, but when I didn't immediately see her, I went on.

Having given up the whole idea, imagine my surprise to look up and find her right before me as I walked down the street. So! I was supposed to wish her "Buon Capo" after all?

She went into a doorway as I began to catch up with her, and appeared to be window shopping by the time I reached her, but, since she was clearly visible behind the glass, I was left with the same doubt as I had been with N that last time in the alley. Had she been caught hiding, or was she waylaying me?

We spoke, again keeping closely to impersonals. This time she gave me a dose of my own medicine by excusing herself and leaving abruptly! It only made me laugh to myself, for I STILL do not want N mentioned between us!

It was only after we parted that I remembered to call "Buon Capo d'anno!" after her, and she laughed, and returned the greeting, making it sound different from mine--as usual!.

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We are "repressing". We are "forgetting". Addio, Nicolo! I feel the same abhorrent withdrawal from a disagreeable "emotional battleground" that I felt when my

mother-in-law and ex-husband were here this week end. I was badly, badly hurt both times. I want NO MORE of either!

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Back to Janie: Yesterday I was somewhat upset by her rather unusual reaction to a chance encounter:

I had^f passed her in the store and she was busy with a customer. Instead of ignoring me, brushing me off as she usually does when she's busy, this time she ignored the customer and attended to me --even more than my remark warranted.

And the face she turned to me was so drawn, so woe-begone and unlike her usual face that I knew something important was bothering her deeply.

There was anguish and appeal in her eyes. My first^f thought was, since I had not really seen her since Christmas (I'ts something about N--something BAD. She didn't hear from him? He's broken his famous engagement, or something equally N-like?)

To eliminate other possibilities I asked her "if she was tired?—If Lilly was still sick?—If she'd had a nice Christmas?" Her replies to all these only verified my impression that it pertained to something between her and me ALONE.

It must be N--or her parents. Yet, the latter she would have mentioned. Anything about N she would usually wait for me to take the lead. I definitely felt that she wanted me to "turn the key"; she wanted to unburden herself about something.

But I couldn't. I simply couldn't. Oh no! I thought. I want NO MORE! I TRIED! If N is in trouble again, that's just too bad! I've made up my mind to sit this one out! I don't want to hear ONE THING about him--not for a long time!

Not till he's learned what he has to learn! I tried to warn you, Janie! I tried to help. And you'd have none of me! Now, YOU fight it! I'm THROUGH!

So. I didn't ask the question she wanted me to ask, and she volunteered nothing. But the sensation of her wanting to tell me something stayed with me so that, for the first time in a long time that night I allowed my thoughts to dwell on N. There is some trouble, I know.

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So, this morning I was surprised to confront Janie almost the first thing. She usually doesn't come to work so early.

And I was surprised--and a little piqued--to find her yesterday's mood apparently dissipated and replaced by a "sly, winsome, pleased-as-punch" one--as if she "had" something on me.

I supposed that maybe she hadn't heard from N; or that the engagement was off, or that he was in a foul mood or something and then perhaps she'd gotten a letter and "everything was all right again". I don't know. I didn't ask.

Because--whatever--I have something on HER, too. My "Cassiday" letter to N. Could THAT have accounted for his change of mood, if so? Ha, ha!

Anyway, from now on it is all between N and me; no more Janie in the picture for me; not as a go-between. That is, of course, if there IS any more contact between N and me. At this point I doubt it.

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For I realize now that what I wait for is for N to RE-EVALUATE our relationship. That is: in time, as he matures and learns, he might come to see it, not as an ill-starred "amore" as he now views it, but more as the well-intentioned attempt to help him that I have been trying to convince myself it was.

And, like his glimmer of understanding, expressed in his "You have been a good friend to me, and I appreciate it", he will appreciate it more as he grows older and more disillusioned; as he learns the rarity of such treatment.

This is the only reward I can hope for. And it may well be that I could be mistaken in my faith in his ability to

arrive at that evaluation. Not many people could. I believe now, at this point, that he is capable of it. I may be wrong.

Janie can never do it. That is why, I think, I am through with Janie. HER heart has not the insight to see beyond the superficial aspects. Her jealousy would always keep her from giving me due credit.

Whereas N's need was so great that there will always linger in him a dependency on MY kind of treatment of him, which he will continue to seek and seldom, maybe never, find. Thus, to him, I shall remain a "warm spot" in his heart, which he will misinterpret as love and/or lust; not as the symbol of the gratification of his own need, which is what I really am.

And that is why I now forfeit my former convictions of future contact with him. Because I have re-evaluated the relationship lately. Things have happened within me and without that have changed my evaluation of MY need for N.

For, the things I learned about him while he was here dispelled the picture I had of him as the man who could fulfill MY needs. And subsequent experiences of mine have verified these new insights.

Specifically: We fulfilled each other's needs AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME, and IN THAT PARTICULAR SITUATION. There was nothing "wrong" or deluded in our enjoyment of it. It was true need and

true fulfillment. At the time it seemed the ONLY "cup to be filled". But, when IT was filled, to our mutual surprise, we found we each had other, entirely DIFFERENT empty cups that demanded filling. He, being so much younger, has many more "cups" to fill than I. Many of mine have already been filled by sheer time.

And, most of all, I find that HE wants HIS cups filled with the heady, deceiving "wine" that youth craves; money, status, sex, possessions, and so on; while I have reached the age when I am sated with the wine and crave slaking of more fundamental thirsts.

Here we part. I now seek knowledge, learning, understanding and compassion. He either has not reached this, or-- I have misjudged him--and he never will. Only time will tell.

In the meantime, he has nothing for me, nor I for him. Content, with our first cup filled, we each now turn to other pursuits and needs. He to his dreams of domestic bliss and I to my intellectual compensations.

When and if these fail us perhaps we shall once more turn to each other. I do not know. Nor do I any longer predict, for I have learned at last to admit change.

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I digress to ponder a certain psychic phenomena of mine~~x~~, first begging excusing of my "autistic thinking"--(for what difference that a love affair dovetails with the CALENDAR?*for instance*)

I refer to things like running into Janie despite my "giving up the idea". Such things leave me with the impression that the THOUGHT almost CREATES the event. It is unnerving.

I have watched these experiences to see if they only pertain to the Chianellos, and I find they do not, but the DO pertain to experiences with people important to my emotional life.

It goes like this:
I feel an "emotional involvement" with a specific thing or person. They suddenly appear in my consciousness.

I find myself thinking about it or them for a concentrated few minutes and wishing something, planning something.

Then the thought or wish is dismissed or wiped out by some new external stimuli. A short time passes in which I give the matter no further CONSCIOUS thought.

Then suddenly that very person or thing that I thought or wished about appears, in some slightly altered form, in my EXTERNAL environment!

It always produces a slight shock in me; a shock of "recognition". I think "of course! I expected this! Here you are." It is a familiar feeling, a sort of pre-cognition; a COMPLETING, a REALIZATION,

a PROJECTION of an inner thought into an outer reality, albeit in somewhat altered form.

My reaction to these increasingly occurring phenomena is mixed. Coupled with the feeling of calm recognition and almost ~~a~~complacency is a little thrill of fright and doubt of my SANITY; And a great sudden need to dissemble, to cover up, lest any present person notice what to me seems very transparent and think I am "out of my mind!" (Sic!)

For, each time these things happen, especially if it is a person I'm confronted with, it takes me an instant to recover and I am always afraid the other person will notice my momentary shock and demand an explanation, which I'd be hard put to to give. In fact, too often, a particularly sensitive person will eye me oddly in that first instant while I am grappling for "reality". While they give me an odd sense of power, they worry me.

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A minor example happened today when I bought a pair of shoes.

Ever since my Italian fetish period, I have desired a pair of Italian import shoes that are currently so fashionable--and so expensive that I can never afford them. Aside from sentimental reasons, I admire their fine craftsmanship and beautiful design .

Yesterday, I was forced into buying new shoes because BOTH my only pairs were mutilated by a couple of odd little accidents.

While shopping I found some exquisite Italian ones on sale, but they were frivolous, too youthful. Reluctantly, I passed them by.

Then I ~~stumbled~~ stumbled on a matronly pair I'd long admired in a window. They, too, were on sale. Ensued a long private, emotional battle, which must have driven the shoe salesman crazy. Little did he know that my nerve-wracking indecision was really the last straw in a middle-aged woman's conflict in giving up a young lover!

For I couldn't decide whether to persist in wearing the uncomfortable man-luring clothes I'd adopted for N; or to give up--now that it is "all over"--and act my age.

Reluctantly, I bought the "sensible" shoes. And suffered torments the rest of the day.

That night as I went to put them away, a little tag fell out of the box. Picking it up, I saw a map of Italy--(!!--and read, "You have just bought a pair of the best hand-crafted leather shoes every made....This style is 'Firenze', etc. etc...."

"Firenze"?--"Firenze"--FLORENCE!
Florence, ITALY! My favorite Italian town! (I can't quite accept Palermo!)
Home of Michelangelo-(and other sentimental gobbeldy-gook)---!!!

Well, thank you, Good Fairy, for that
little "reward for virtue"! (It isn't
many people that can make a Romantic
Adventure out of a commonplace thing
like buying a pair of shoes!)

But this is what I mean. Is it possible
that THOUGHTS can project into REALITIES?

Jan. 15, 1962

This I reconstruct from notes made at the time. It is the only "little m" that has happened in a long, long time.

It describes a new link in my chain of N-started experiences. (Because of N I went to night school; "because of him" I took psychology--the teacher and I become friendly--his wife is an artist--she starts work where I work--we have mutual friends--we become good friends--she, too, has free lance art work--book illustrations--for children--(one of my favorite day dreams--))

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Today she disclosed the subject of her illustrations--a little Italian boy from Naples. Somehow I KNEW that was what it was going to be. How I envied her that job!
So--

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Downstairs and out to go home, detouring from habit past Janie counter, though she is no longer working. Today she WAS!
In spite of our cursory relationship lately, I had some feeling today that I should make one of the old efforts and ask her how things were--

"Trouble!" she said.

(At first I was alarmed, afraid it was something about N.) But Lilly had had her appendix out. I was relieved that I did not have to talk about N. We talked about Lilly a little and then I went on my way.

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I had a few minutes to kill and an impulse led me to the stationery store. There, while I waited, a woman at my elbow said, "What was the name of that man who wrote 'The Leopard'? I can't think of it—" (The book about Palermo I'd made, Janie read!)

I couldn't resist. I told her. We talked about the book. So FEW people are interested in it! How odd!
So—

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That night, to solve a problem, a neighbor suggested that I signal her by taping a piece of white paper in the dining room window. It was HER idea, not mine! So, next morning, there I was, putting up a white paper in the window, just as I used to do to signal N when he went to night class—"Spero". Odd!

* * *

The next day, still most unusual circumstances found me needing a ride from the school back down to the store. Trying to think of some way I remembered that Janie, who lives near the school, was working and might be going down about then. Should I call her? But things changed and I got use of a car. On my way home from school there was Janie waiting on the corner for a bus—as if she'd read my mind! She waved gaily, but I couldn't offer her a ride, because I was not going down toll later.

* * *

And that was the end of that little series of isolated, but strangely related little episodes—and there have been none since.

Learned from psychology class:

I was right: I maintained that N and I should have "finished" our affair, because somehow it would have been "easier".

Now I learn that "it is harder to forget something that is incompleted."

I was right: I needed some absorbing interest, some new love or something before I could forget. For "lack of a SIMILAR experience makes it harder to forget." There was no "intervening activity" of great import to me.

But this is new:

"Memories that threaten our self-esteem are most easily forgotten." THAT is why it was suddenly so easy for me to forget N when I couldn't before after Janie told me about his engagement. Before he was "mine". When he professed commitment to another it threatened my "self-esteem", my "desirability"--and so!--I could forget--at last.

Feb. 1, 1962

Nothing has happened.

Only tonight I tried an experiment. I was reading about ESP in my psychology book and thought I'd try to "contact" N., especially since I flatter myself that I have some kind of extra-sensory rapport with him.

I concentrated. A long, long wait. Then I realized I would have to have some verification. But one knows not what. One just waits.

Then + "felt interference" by my neighbor friend who claims to be very adept at ESP. This was unexpected--and unwanted. I had to "get rid" of her.

Then, out of the blank: "N is writing a letter to his family"--and a wave of sadness--he is not happy? But this didn't seem "right"--not a "true" message.

I waited. Again a long time. I didn't have much time. I was getting tired. Then--for what it's worth--an electrical shock-type sensation--and the words "A BOAT!"--and a visual image of an upward-pointing prow somewhat like a gondola, filled with--clams? shells? a net?--against a shining, lighted expanse of water. That and that alone.

A BOAT!?! Oh, for heaven's sakes! How ridiculous! What has that got to do with anything? I was very disappointed. Nick and a BOAT--at 9.p.m., Thursday, Feb. 1st? Anyway, I'm writing it down--just for fun.

It wasn't much of an experiment. I guess it didn't work.

I was just about to give up, when a burst of music came from the living room. Oh no! Not THAT record--not THAT singer--the one whose voice timber reminds me so much of N--those songs that remind me so much of N. The only thing that still breaks me up is hearing that record.

Oh well, I thought, maybe they're playing the OTHER side, the one that doesn't pertain. But, here it was. Here I am in a "trance" trying to "contact" N and here comes that voice out of nowhere-- "Chances are you think my heart's your Valentine---Well, chances are--your chances are--very good--". Then the other songs. I wept.

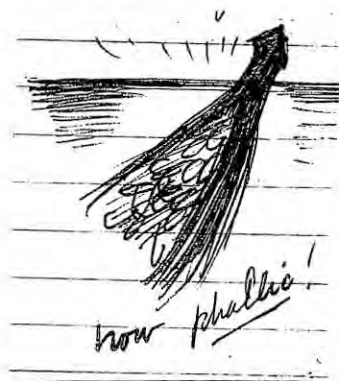
Then I got up and went about my affairs.

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Later it hit me. VALENTINE? Why, I'd forgotten all about Valentine's day! I HAD given it a thought--to send N one-- then gave it up.



Between Feb 14 & 21

February 1962

For the first time in four years I wasn't awaiting Valentine's Day in order to have an excuse to contact N. It hadn't even occurred to me until my little "experiem~~t~~" in ESP reminded me. Even then I felt not the slightest desire to; it just plain seemed ~~like~~ a lot of uninteresting bother. I gave it no further thought and didn't even try to find one for him when I searched for some for the family.

Until yesterday. Searching for family cards I could find nothing to interest me except one that said "Valentine's greetings from and old, old old, old, old,old, etc--and, on the inside a sketch of smoldering embers with a bit of red flitter-glitter on it--"flame." This struck me as funny, but I could think of no use for it.

Until the middle of the night--why! it's exactly the thought I had once about N's and my affair--ashes, but yet a spark still smoldering! How apropos!

Enough said. The card "came to me"; I did not search for it. Today I went back and bought it and typed his address and sent it off without any clue as to the sender.....

My "reasoning" being that dropping him entirely after news of his "engagement" smacks more of the "jealous, revengeful, jilted one" than the "staunch, old friend" role I claim to maintain.

Feb. 21, 1962

"It" has been building up again. Ever since I sent N the Valentine.

--the N-like salesman was in again. This time I tried to establish some rapport with him and saw his eye light up with wondering interest--

--I saw Cassiday on the street. First time I've seen him SINCE--. We mutually avoided each other.

--somewhere I heard "Volare" today. It's been a long time.

--many other little things too numerous and inconsequential to mention.

--I have been very "aware" of N lately. So much convinced that he "needed" me that I even wrote him an enigmatic post-card--and then tore it up.

--I want very, very much to hear SOME*
THING about N.

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Today, after a long, frustrating struggle over the Pellegrini wine labels, suddenly they they were--finished. Exactly as I had first visualized them! It was a thrill, a thrill!

I wanted desperately to share them with someone. There was no one; no one the least bit interested--except Janie?

But Janie and I weren't "getting along". I hadn't seen her for ages.

As the day wore on I found myself involved in an unusual chain of events that led easily to Janie.

Seizing the opportunity, I went to her house carrying the labels, in spite of everything--hoping she would share my joy with me. She did not, of course. Herewith the story:

Ready to go, I panicked. Not for fear of JANIE, but from reluctance to face the inevitable news about NICK.

Then I convinced myself that I "owed" it to Janie to let her see the finished pilgrim. This was the time to face up to N's marriage. I could do it if I had to.

went, tho I her
I ~~even~~ deliberately procrastinated,
hoping ~~the~~ kids might be home and "save"
me. They weren't. And she was. ~~She~~
~~was~~ alone.

It was as before: the wait at the door,
her appearance, surprisingly well-groomed,
from the bathroom direction, the pretense
of surprise and polite pleasure.

Then the coldness, the nervousness, the
embarrassed play-acting by both of us.
She tried hard to go through the motions,
even the coffee insistence, but there
was cold hate in her eye. She was not
at all glad to see me. She obviously
hoped I wouldn't stay. Nor did I want
to. For once I definitely ~~refused~~ the
coffee, and then tea, and meant it.

She was not interested in the label.
She only toyed nervously with it. She
was definitely on the defensive, disputing
everything I said, professing lack of
interest in this and that. I didn't delve
or care what lay beneath the silly pre-
tense today. I merely acquiesced and
let her prattle.

I did try to show no animosity, simply
pretending that there'd never been any-
thing but friendship between us and some-
where she began to warm up and started
in on some of her favorite subjects,
which today, bored me. This time I
did not give up my pretense of hurry,
and she did not try to detain me. But
she was going to let me go out the door
with out mentioning N--she HOPED.

I fooled her. I interrupted her point-
blank, "What do you hear about the

engagement?" I caught her off guard, as I intended to do. She didn't know what I referred to. (The word "engagement" was not uppermost in her mind--after all her excitement about it?) I had to explain. She was very reluctant to go into that subject, obviously. Neither of us used N's name. We were sparring. I was tense, nervous. So was she. But, though I felt tight control, I felt no other emotion. In fact, when I saw her fear of the subject, I deliberately began to taunt her, keeping her on the subject whenever she tried to get off of it.

The result was almost a head-tossing defiance on her part. It became increasingly obvious to me that she knew nothing new and that N had been evading her inquiries, for she kept reiterating the same meager information she had given me before Christmas.

She did say that N had sent his parents a couple of pictures, but she had referred to pictures last Christmastime, and she had none to show me now when I asked.

She explained that "he said he couldn't answer her questions 'for he'd left her letter at home'--". (for TWO MONTHS?)

We seemed to have exhausted the subject--(there seemed to be so little to relate!) and Janie changed it by announcing happily that new babies were expected in the family. In reply to a question of mine she said very pointedly, eyeing me curiously, "I have only ONE sister-in-law--".

I rounded off the subject by saying, at a loss for anything better to say, "Well--the family's growing---and, when N has babies---"
Her low toned reply was hesitant, reluctant, unhappy--incomprehensible. I got the impression she was withholding an unhappy thought--

The telephone rang. And I used it as an excuse to leave. She did not detain me in any way--not by look or gesture.

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I went to the school and picked up my son. He informed me there was a letter from the Pellegrinis awaiting me--which did not surprise me at all.

Nor was I surprised to find it an exasperated little note from Ginny. But, nonetheless, I was disappointed. I had feared I had maybe gone too far in my apologies--and its tone made me think I had.

Its timing, of course, was perfect.

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Gianna and Ginni; they both disappointed me. Neither shared my pet enthusiasm. I was hurt at their obvious impatience with me. I decided they just "weren't my type".

Janie's reaction I at first interpreted as: pique at my neglect of her, lingering embarrassment at the revelations in my letter to her, maybe some pity at my obviously painful position, and perhaps revenge by denying me the in-

formation I sought about N, and the denial of any satisfaction to me at having predicted correctly.

The latter I concluded because the most perfect revenge would have been a glowing account of N's happiness and detailed account of specific marriage plans. These were not forthcoming. In two months there should have been more details!

Janie's whole demeanor evinced doubt, fear and helplessness, as well as defiance. She knows me well enough now to know that I would have PRETENDED great happiness in her "happiness".

Virginia's real reaction was obvious behind her too-sweet words. And it was inevitable. My impression was that I and the whole wine lab business (even before my entrance into it/) are a source of irritation to her--(why?)

These were first impressions. Now I see that it is only natural for both women to be on the defensive with me--for, what I'm really interested in is the MEN behind their protective fronts! Of course they don't like me! These are THEIR men! And, actually, it is encouraging, for it implies a DANGER in the situation!

(Guess I worked THAT one around to my advantage!)

I struggled against a most horrible temptation to let fly a brilliant "bon mot" at Ginny--

Mailed Feb 21, 1962

from Virginia

Dear Norma -

Divest yourself of your hair cloth & stop worrying about the Pellegrinis, problems with the printers, wine labels etc. We aren't that kind of people: If the labels never materialize the important thing is that you, our kind conscientious, generous friend, we and the wine survive.

We have had wine served in unlabeled bottles for 27 years; we have had, as we told you, several friends who have offered to design a label & dropped the matter at the good intentions stage. You are unique and we have nothing but humility and appreciation for your efforts on our behalf. You have done all you could and suffered a damned headache besides.

Now, relax. Our patience is almost limitless & we are probably the least demanding & least crotchety friends you'll ever have to know.

Our love & warmest wishes
Virginia & Pelle

"My hair shirt and your HALO go well together!"

I gave it up as too revealing--I can just hear Pelle saying, "Now, girls! girls!)--and by realizing that by the end of the summer my wine label would win laurels for ~~me~~ by being viewed by all those guests they are bound to have for the World's Fair.

And the N situation can be only cured b time--as I have long since decided. Marriage or ~~not~~, in two year's time N and Janie will be disillusioned enough to appreciate me more!

March 2, 1962

At work today I entered the floor where Janie works and the word "Italian" leaped at me from the maze of signs facing me. "Ha!" said I to myself, "It 'means' Janie is at work today?"

But there was absolutely no reason for me to think this--for her to be there. I laughed at myself and went on. No, she wasn't at her counter. Of course she wasn't.

I tended to my business there, turned--and there was Janie. "Well--JANIE!" I said. But she was "busy", though pleasantacting.

I became involved in conversation at a nearby counter--a legitimate conversation, not contrived. Who comes prowling around under our feet, ostensibly seeking something (out of her own department?) but our friend Janie.

But gone was the old opportunity seizing. I merely finished my business and went on.

I had planned to buy something in Janie's department that day, but I didn't try very hard to contact her. I waited till noon and then, not finding her there, I made my purchase from someone else and went on. There was a tiny little echo of regret, though, I'll admit--for what once was.

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I fully expected to find a letter from the Pellegrinis when I got home and it was a severe blow when there wasn't one. It has been a week since the labels were shipped to them and there has been no acknowledgement. I suppressed a temptation to write, deciding to wait one more day.

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That night I went to the show. . At first I got quite a start when the silhouette of the couple in front of us looked exactly like Janie and Harry. A wary eye kept on them later proved it false.

There was a second film showing that I had paid no attention to. It flashed on with an endless list of Italian credit lines, and I prepared to see something good, for I have not lost faith in the ability of my Italians to do exceptional artistic jobs, though I have lost faith in many other aspects. I was not disappointed. The film was excellently done, with the amused, subtle cynicism I love so in them.

That is all.

March 8, 1962

I can't UNDERSTAND the lack of response from the Pellegrinis!

It will be two weeks tomorrow since the labels are supposed to have been shipped.

I expected immediate "cries of joy" from them, based on their former ~~lovy-dovy~~ overtures to me and their apparent delight with the design.

I ignored Virginia's condescending note. Maybe that was a mistake. But I did send a curt post card two days ago, for I thought they should be informed in case there has been some accident in shipping.

Needless to say, I am full of gloomy conjectures.

Mailed March 9, 1962

- from Virginia

Dear Lorna -

Flu has kept me out of this world, hence the late response. The labels arrived some time ago and we are simply delighted. So far we have used but one label on a bottle at table for Angie & Tom to see. They, too, were infinitely pleased. Our warmest & most sincere thanks to you, dear Lorna, for the extraordinary contribution.

Affectionately,

Virginia & Pelle.

Mailed March 14, 1962

— from Virginia

Dearest Lorna —

Guess I've got myself a pen pad. Every note from you is a stimulant. Were we physically closer what wrinkles, what plateaus, what noether & von neuman we'd probe. We'd probably run out of spirit & wither for lack of sleep for our gabbing and interacting.

All high falutin' language aside — we'd love a chance to share your gleanings apropos of your little protégé, tragic-comic incidents, the insights — in short — all or anything *nella tua vita*. When?

Brought a bottle of our Cabernet '56 dressed in its new label to a dinner party Saturday night. Much admiration for joint Chambreaux-Pellegrini achievement. There we met Paul Honiuchi & wife — (he is an artist enroute to the top in Seattle) just returned from a months' stay in Italy where he "did" a mosaic wall for Century 21.

So you see we had a high
class audience.

Correction! I had the flu
(all over but the spitting now). Pelle
never gets anything - at least if
he does he won't tell. My in-
vincible Pelle with the little round
belly - also answers to Superman.
Brent & Tom were sick with different
ailments & the dog (story here about dog)
- - The cartoon is a love! How
Clever, how truly creative you are,
Lorna. Hope you're appreciated!!
This gets framed & will join
the *memorabilia di amici* in
the little kitchen gallery,
Affectionately,
Virginia

April 1, 1962

I have been typing up these notes to reduce their volume.

I have had an excellent opportunity, for mother is on an extended visit in California. Which proves that she CAN do it if she wants! She can go and leave me alone to write up the story of a broken heart, but she couldn't leave me alone to live out the EXPER* IENCE that might have kept my heart from breaking!

The alienation between us that resulted from what seemed to me her grudging mistrust of me during the N affair has resulted in her making an extended stay this time and I have plenty of time to reminisce--(as Janie says)--now it is too late.

And Janie's grudging possession of N and her rejecting mistrust of me has resulted in an alienation between her and me. I no longer see her; I never seek her out; our rare encounters are merely polite now. I no longer write to N. I have "left them to their fate."

It seems an eon since I have seen her or concentrated on N. I am astounded to see it has been barely TWO MONTHS! I note with surprise that the same thing happened last year--and the year before--this cessation of contact in the early spring months. Why, come to think of it, even the year before THAT! Why, N has a PATTERN of breaking relation-

ships at Christmas and New Year's time! There is a cessation of contacts with him just before Christmas each year!

I note that my superficial reason for dwelling over this record is "to reduce its size" so that it can be locked away as a memento. Yet, I perceive a deeper reason. It is a "fight on paper". It is an attempt to adjust to a situation in which I am denied access to the participants of the drama. Psychologically, it could be the wrench that comes from trying to break the "transference" that occurred in therapy? And I have not finished fighting. I have not wholly adjusted. That is why I can't relinquish it.

I keep expecting, each time I re-read it that it will seem completely objective; the truths, the facts all blatantly apparent to me--a tale that will seem humorous, inconsequential. It is not so. Certain parts of it still have power to rend me, send me.

I still remark with pathos that underlying evidence that N cared a lot for me--that he wanted me or needed me more than he revealed or I noticed at the time; that is "amores" and my incessant "good-sportsmanship" were only whistlings in the dark; that our families interfered and deflected this "unholy alliance" more than either of us realized; that OUR trying and THEIR trying too hard merely fanned the flames of what might have been a quick, cleansing, useful fire that would have burned itself out if any of us had had the

courage, the trust, the sophistication,
the wisdom to face the truth of it.

I see N's strange ambivalence; his wanting
to have his cake and eat it, too; his
use of me; his unrecognized need of me;
his futile playing of jealousy cards that
thwarted their very purpose.

I see that he came back with a "dream"
of staying, and a "proof" to me of
my "wrongness" in sending him away.
He came back thinking, as I knew he
would, after a time away, that I was
more "possible", more "available" than
I had seemed when he left; that things
had changed--they would be better--
both with me and the situation--"green-
er pastures"--again---

He came back only to be confronted by
the same old problems--after the first
glow of reunion wore off. Yes, I
loved him! Yes, we were glad to see
each other--very, very glad! Yes, we
WANTED each other still--

BUT--the families were the same. They
accepted me, true, but not as a WIFE;
not as a LOVE; not as a POSSIBILITY.
I was still OLD--there were the wrinkles
the gray hair, the tired flesh he'd
forgotten about. There were my children,
huge and forbidding. There was my
mother, my family--suspicious, demand-
ing.

Yakima was still too small, too frust-
rating career-wise--reality, reality.
Run! Run back again to Los Angeles
and Nita, whom absence added a halo
to---

Bitter, hurt, disillusioned again;
both by the situation and my weary
"lessons", I think he must have made
some rash statements--maybe about me--
that last day that destroyed his
family's illusions--that destroyed
the whole careully constructed struc-
ture of better relationships I was try-
ing to build--that produced those hard,
enemy eyes I confronted that Sunday
after he left. It would have been
typical of him.

And he dashed back to LA--to busy him-
self in work--in money-making--in sex--

And then he took his "revenge" on me,
the "symbol" of his disillusionment
here. He "hurt" me (he hoped); he
"fooled" and "satisfied" his family;
"justified" my "rejection" of him by
frantically wooing and engaging himself
to the first possible girl he could find
before his family left for home. All
false, false!

And now I realize why I "no longer
care". For I see now that people unite
only for a common purpose--even in love,
in sex. I "joined forces" with N and
his family for the purpose of bettering
understanding, alleviating an unhappy
predicament, freeing N to find himself,
better himself.

These things have been accomplished--
in a small way. I was disillusioned
in my bigger goals; I found them
impossible, myself impotent, deluded.
The PURPOSE is no longer there. The
common goal has been removed. We all
drift apart, no longer united by
common interest.

There is no longer anything to keep Janie and me together: N returned; he left, "for good"; his is independent; he found a "wife"; his is making money, "secure".

Her parents came at last; they are gone, "for good"; they saw N; he is "happy", engaged to be married.

The attempt to lessen international friction was abortive, too big for us. It's one reward was to bring me friendship with the Pellegrinis, who care, who understand.

All else was the camaraderie of temporary goals. N and I were united in a business alliance that no longer exists; in artistic ideals that reached a parting of the ways; in mutual sexual need for which he found substitutes; in career ambitions for him, which have been more or less achieved; in the resolution of a crippling family situation that has been resolved; in a relationship of need and help that no longer exists.

The job is done. The time of need has passed. "As flowers open to the summer sun--and fade and die---" I say "goodbye"-----I guess.

April 2, 1962

As I mentioned, I am in the throes of typing this record, which riles me all up again, makes me dwell on it all and wish I could find out what has happened since.

I mentioned that Janie and I have parted ways. She came back to work here, and I believe I also mentioned that I got the impression she "wanted to make up", but I was so disillusioned that I gave her no encouragement.

I have wondered if perhaps she would cease working here, for I have sort of observed through this chronicle that she almost seemed to work in order to contact me!

Today I ran across an article that pertained to N and his art course—it might mean national advertising for him. I honestly tried to talk myself out of showing it to her, but it really seems important, and circumstances were such that I could not mail it to here.

So, on another errand, I asked one of the girls in her department if she ever came in, so I could show it to her. I really found out some news! She is "not with us any more"! (I was right?) She sought and got a full time job at another store. (She has given up on me!-- turned her back) Because her parent's sojourn was so expensive that she has to go to work to pay for it, the woman said. (So! Nick did not pay his part! I find.)

I have errands that way, anyway, so, at this present writing I am planning to take the magazine and see if I can find her. I seek out Janie again! And I assure you, it is with great trepidation!

Why? It is another time when I feel that I am "forced" to. I have not bothered to note the build-up to this this time, for I am sincerely trying to be objective and give up. But there have been too many reminders, too many coincidences lately. Even to seeing Ralph on the street—unusual!—and having him ask me, "What I heard from Nick?"—and, for the first time, I had nothing to offer....

April 2

I went to see Janie. She was there. When she saw me, I gave her a "Well, what's this?" kind of smile and she returned it, but immediately turned her back on me and got "very busy". She was NOT happy to see me.

She looked terrible. She really had a customer, but I still got the impression she was keeping more busy than necessary. Certainly she was not encouraging me or giving me any signals to wait.

I prowled around. She took so long that at one point I got mad and decided to leave, but was also mad enough to just stay and go through with it. It was only a minor thing I wanted--would only take a minute--and would be difficult to do again.

I forced her to pay attention to me finally. She wasn't at all happy about it. She was quite obvious in showing me that she was mad at me. Why, I don't know.

I showed her the article. She wasn't much interested. I was persistent in making my point. We discussed the new job and so on and things were a little better between us when I showed much more delight in her new job than she did. She said this was her first day.

I had a few more things I wanted to say, but she wasn't giving me a chance. I forced them. One was to ask her hours--I planned to offer her a ride to work in my new car, for I have been looking for someone to

take. She very empahatically showed that she was glad her different hours made it impossible. Nor was she the slightest bit interested in my news that I had acar.

She tried hard to break away, but I snared her again. I was real mad by this time and wanted to annoy her, so I told her that I was to visit the Pellegrinis and they wanted to know all about how Nick was getting along--that when I got ready to go I would call her or something and find out. She only nodded, without interest, and pulled away. I said, "They really ARE interested; they want to know how he's getting along--", forcing her into some comment.

Her whole manner said that she knew I was trying to find out something about N and she absolutely wasn't going to tell me, so it was almost defiantly that she said, "He's s getting along just fine."

I said, "I know that. I told them that--and--everything--" (a reference to the engagement and she knew it.) She glared at me. I turned on my heel and left. She said, "I'll see you"--and smiled, but ~~I was furious. Even if she thinks~~ it was only for the benefit of onlookers.

I was furious. Even if she thinks over my attempt and decides it is a reconciliation offer, I am through with her. Obviously she won't tell me any truth about N anyway, and whatever mysterious reason keeps her mad at me, there is nothing to be gained from cultivating her again. If she's going to lie about N, I want none of it!

April 2

Later I had to go back to that store, and I was detained, running into people I know. In fact, this is one of those days. I deliberately left two minutes before Janie got out of work, when I could have offered her a ride home. She had said she rides the bus.

Comment:

How different from my fawning chasing after her before! How mean I'm getting! But I am sincerely sorry I came on her first day. I hope it didn't cause trouble for her.

How smug and victorious she looked when I expressed shock at finding her gone. Let her have her little victory--I don't care.

I note that Janie said only that "N was doing fine". Aside from her desire to pique me, I'll bet she deesn't really know. She was defensive, defiant. She'd die before she'd let me know that my warnings might betru; and I am positive she'd have spread it on thick if the marriage and engagement were progressing well. So--her manner told me more than her words.

I suspect that N's and Pina's default in contributing to i nonni's trip caused a great rift--and I ended up on N's side in Janie's mind. And there I shall remain, says I!

In fact, the more I think about it--what WAS it about Janie's looks? Why did I get the impression she looked terrible? It washer HAIR! --her hair was drabl and limp and dark. For Janie was not "coiffured"!

Her first day on a new job, too! That was significant! It showed she DIDN'T CARE!

And, if I were truthful, I'd admit the woman told me that Janie TRIED to get more work at the Bon first. Having access to me--for whatever reason--was secondary.

Secondary to Janie's great change. Last summer was a blow to her, too, as I predicted? She, too, has relinquished all her hopes and dreams and youth? It turned her into a bitter, vindictive woman. (Has it ME?)

As it dispelled my illusions about her, and N, and Chianellos and Italians, and love and brotherly love, so it dispelled hers about me and N and her family and Americans and her marriage and ambitions and "happiness"!

THAT is what happened to Janie!

Like the movie--"Suddenly, last summer---"

SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER--we were all faced with the truth about ourselves and our situations! Now is the time of our reactions--how we all faced it!

About myself I know--introspectively, at least. Pina's and I nonni's reactions do not concern me--

But---

I WISH I KNEW ABOUT NICK'S!

Epilogue: Poor Janie! If life threw us together, I might try to help sustain her, but it doesn't.

Exit Gianna.

April 6, 1962

Despite myself I brooded all week on my encounter with Janie. Though I tried to deny it, I was hurt.

Living went on and new developments came out of old commitments. Wednesday I had artwork to do in the evening and felt in the mood to play an Italian record I had bought. It had a piece called "Sarracino" in it that was exactly the word Harry had been looking for that day to call N.

I became crazily obsessed within the next twenty four hours to revenge myself by sending the record to Harry incognito. I even went so far as to buy another copy and got almost to the point of mailing it before I came to my senses and secretly took it back and exchanged it. Whew!

Then other things piled up until it became necessary for me to begin to plan the details of a trip to Seattle next month. Beginning to realize I would need a companion, it became increasingly evident that Janie would make the most fitting one for this particular expedition, which was to include that visit to the Pellegrinis. Debating the wisdom of introducing her to them, I finally laid aside the idea for future cogitation.

Today, Friday, a weird sequence of events made me need information that Janie could give me, aside from the above and a strange conviction that N had gotten married.

If it were anyone else I would have gone to the phone and called, but I could not bring

myself to call her.

In the meantime I indulged in my usual Friday night drinks before dinner. After dinner I had several phone calls to make, some necessary, some merely social.

First thing I knew I had dialed Janie's number along with the rest. In a moment of panic I thought, "What am I DOING?" Too late. I heard Harry's voice answer.

I was relieved, for at the last minute I had realized that Janie was probably working on Friday night--she always used to. If she were, and Harry were alone, I planned to engage him in talk for a change and insert my "sarracino" bit and feel him out about why Janie seemed mad at me.

I said, "This is Lorna. Is Janie working?" (hoping by now she was.) "No," he said, neither mad nor glad, "I'll call her." (Damn! I thought. Now, what will I say?)

"What do YOU want--now--?" Janie said gruffly, unwelcoming. But, insulated by my drinks, my mind on my other calls, I hardly heard her. I treated her exactly as I treated the other calls--by simply being myself--and the first thing I knew she was merrily chatting away about everything she could think of and I could hardly get her off the phone--just like my other calls.

I began by asking her about her new job, partly for politeness and ice-breaking, but mostly because that was the reason I had called--there were certain things I needed to know about working conditions there

Am 6

for reasons not necessary to go into now. This conversation went on and on--she was evidently anxious to talk about it to someone. It ended by her making allusions to WHY she had to work, which brought us to the family talk we had both skirted thus far.

But first she upset my plans by almost immediately talking about week end trips to Seattle--as if she'd read my mind. So that I found myself inviting her and revealing my idea before I had even decided whether I should.

She seemed very pleased and delighted and never actually said no--only made polite noises--so that I brought it up again later and even urged her this time. But this time she almost definitely begged out, but thanked me very much anyway. (I was rather relieved, to tell the truth. Not that I wouldn't like to have her go--I think it would be great fun, but I wasn't sure but what it would be an imposition on the Pellegrinis, so soon.)

To my questions she told me a great deal about "i nonni" and Pina, none of which matters too much except that she has worked through the blows of last summer more philosophically than I gave her credit for.

But the whole point of this is to tell what she revealed about N--a subject I was also forced into before I was ready. For I suddenly heard myself asking her, "Is N married yet?" as bald as you please.

"No." she said. And to my amazement chattered on quite blithely about him.

"No. Not yet. --not supposed to be till June--the girl doesn't want to be married till then--wants to wait till they both have time off--and N can't get any time off till then--HE said he wanted to get married right away, but she doesn't--she wants to wait--"

"Well, why WAIT?" I said.

"--Oh--she didn't know--she has to finish school--they-re still going to night school you know--". Then here a digression about N's having to get his "diploma"--will take two years yet--at the "University" (she called it)--his BA --in art-- (I was frantically trying to recall what N had told me, for this didn't sound right at all. She certainly has a different version than N's--a much more glamorous version--no wonder I got mixed up and got the wrong impression before!)

I disputed her on several points, but gave up--she just doesn't have the picture straight at all.

She was saying something about a fire--that the Wolfer company had burned down! and N was out of a job until they rebuilt--I'knew that, she said!

I was astounded. I certainly did not know that! It was a very dramatic story--even a dead night watchman. She claimed it was part of the recent great fire in LA, which I disputed, having lived there and knowing the two were miles apart. She seemed very unsure, very confused--in January, was it? she said.

Something about the story--the dead watchman--rang a dim bell in my memory.

Helen

I do remember reading something about such a fire in downtown LA and wondering at the time if it had anything to do with N, but something about the story made me decide it didn't. I can't remember now, either. But I WOULD have remembered if it could possibly have pertained to N. Seems to me it was an apartment house--I don't know.

Anyway, she went on, confusedly, about N seemed to be getting along all right--unemployment compensation and all--they'd promised him they'd keep a job for him--it wouldn't be long now--.

In her talk about her parents she had brought up and stressed several times, as if an almost established fact that N would very likely soon be going to New York. "N in New York--when N goes to New York--"

So---that was all. Now I "know".

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Comment: What do I know? Not much. Just the same old N line he's been feeding her, the same old confused discrepancies. Either she gets it wrong or he tells it wrong. To me it's his same old "I'm unhappy" patter; the vague, procrastinating plans that never materialize, the job worries and inconsistencies; the threats of New York

I found this today while reading:

"She could not stop writing. She felt under a compulsion....simply, she could not stop. It was a thing laid on her to do. So she wrote, but she wrote "in private". There were times when she was in despair, when it ~~seemed~~ her writing became and Old Man of the Sea. Would she never be rid of it?"

So I feel.

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It has occurred to me that Janie knew that N was engaged that day I talked to her on the phone, the day her parents were leaving! That she knew all the times I talked to her from then till almost a month later AND SHE NEVER TOLD ME! She must have, for she said N told them before her parents left!

Yet, I remarked at the time that I felt she wanted to tell me something, and that I purposely didn't give her a chance. And I made very much a point of avoiding talk about N with her for quite a long while after he left. I can't help think how odd it was I had that feeling the night N and his girl called Janie. And how odd that something about the Pellgrinis always comes up to keep things going when I think they have ceased.

When I view all this psychologically I can say that my "experiment" is over; my "hypotheses have been supported". I have new "working principles" to go on:

That even "impossible" people DO respond to love and concern and attention, but that they require such abnormal amounts of ~~same~~ that it is almost impossible for the normal, untrained person to give.

That they always reject and misinterpret help because they are not aware of their need.

So that all the ordinary person can do is give love and attention when possible, determine when it is impossible, and give up if so.

April 21, 1962

I have turned my mind back to the demands of daily living. And poor Janie has imprisoned herself in a full time job to pay for her expensive show of last summer. I never see her any more.

Tomorrow is Easter, the biggest event of the year to Sicilians. I have not even sent N a card, though I thought of it. No more of that. Fini.

Yet I awoke this morning with a feeling of great beauty. What was it? Why, 'd been having a beautiful dream! It was sort of an allegory of Janie's and my attempts to bring happiness to N.

It began with my secretly building a careful, exquisite sort of a construction dedicated to N. At the beginning, Jane was "with" me, approving, loving, but pretending not to know what I was doing. She stood by all the time, watching, exchanging warm, knowing looks with me.

Gradually, section by section, my construction grew--several times by leaps and spurts, because it seemed that, in some strange way, N reappeared at intervals and unknowingly aided its growth, while Janie and I gave each other glad looks.

Each time he appeared, somehow the secretiveness became less secret, but in a way that bothered Janie and me not at all.

It was like building a tower of blocks, working toward the apex, the keystone,

the crucial last piece that would make it perfect, while Jamie stood by, watching, anxious and excited with me, approving.

We both felt mounting excitement as I began to fit the last piece--when suddenly N appeared--happy, playful, clumsy, innocent, like a child--and--

the whole structure fell in a heap and N disappeared. And Janie and I looked at each other, not mad, not desolate; just BITTERSWEET--resigned---
"He didnt make it. He didn't QUITE make it,"we said to each other--

And I woke up--with, as I said, a feeling of what I can only describe as beautitude--something lovely--something wonderful--something a little bit bittersweet; a feeling that lingered with me all day --like a blessedness.

Odd.

(Until I notice its resemblance to what I wrote a few pages back!)

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This afternoon, like a bolt, the thought came to me, "I wonder if N will come up for EASTER?" I have no way of knowing or any Great Compulsion, like formerly to find out. In fact, it complemented an earlier thought, "I wonder if N will get married on Easter?" It's very possible.

But, somehow, it didn't matter much. Lately I feel APART from him, but pleasantly so. Not separated, or lost, but two seaparate pieces together

as part of a wonderful whole.

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Tonight I am alone, kids gone, mother at last sufficiently walled off; a car of my own at my disposal. I COULD run out tonight and prowls around Esgates and see what I can see if I wanted to! What freedom! I think I will!

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I went. What a joy it was to prowls around the house in a car they don't know--no one to account to--spying--doing as I pleased!

I saw more than I expected. It was a shock to see a strange car parked in the driveway after wondering if N might come up! Then it was a relief to note the Washington license and other indications that Pina had come for the holidays.

But my heart fell a little when I realized that it was still possible for N to come tonight--by plane--with bride--or bride-to-be.

It was not with quite so much serenity that I started home noting, with alarm, the similarity to that night he left: the full moon, but this time murky, misty, dramatically crossed by one single oval black cloud. A clear night, a beautiful night. And I, alone, going past the same church--

I went in the house, absently noting that it was 9:35. 9:35! Time for the Portland plane to come in!--At that

instant a plane roared over.

Back it all came. I found myself full of that throb, running to the window, chasing those blinking red and green lights--seeing the plane circle to land---

I couldn't stand it! Had the Esgates left after I went by to go down to meet that plane? I couldn't resist the opportunity of THIS time being able to humor my compulsion.

I ran out to the car, drove to Janie's again--down to the airport--back past Janie's. Then I skulked home, feeling like a fool. For there was no one at the airport--and, on the way back, I saw Janie and Pina happily chatting through the window.

Surely, then, N was not coming? What matter? It was only a chance to vindicate all those frustraed times when I COULDN'T go to see---

April 25, 1962

Symptoms of converging incidences again. (There is no longer any "miracle" about them, either big or littel) So far they have led to Janie, but not to any news of N--yet. Or, perhaps because I didn't force it, as I used to.

For events led me to Janie to look for a dress for my daughter. As I entered her department, she came sailing in my direction, saw me, turned, and sought out another customer to help while I was left waiting. She made no sign of recognition.

But when the woman declined help she turned to me immediately and warmly, almost embracing me in an affectionate way. But I drew back, for I have had time to note that she is ~~always~~^{often} warm to me in public. I immediately stated my business and kept all our conversation on that level. And, while we were ~~very~~ friendly, neither of us did any personal probing, and I left, somewhat reluctantly, without saying athing, except to reiterate that if I didn't find a dress here I'd be forced to go to Seattle. She ignored this pointedly every time I said it.

Before I went over, when I realized I'd come in contact with her, I tried to check on the story of N's office burning, having good opportunity to do so in the last few days, but my attempt only led me back to Janie's version, for Isa had gotten her information from Janie.

I am sorely tempted to write the Wolfer Company myself, but can't figure out how to do it.

Janie didn't look a bit pretty; she still doesn't seem to be taking as much pains with her appearance. But her happy manner and lack of embarrassment with me made me suspect that everything is all right with N-- (dammit.) She was not evasive or defensive at all.

And so our relationship has become a casual acquaintanceship, without meaning or mutuality at all--only the thin thread of hope and nostalgia for what might have been remains with me.

And, after Easter, I experienced a definite feeling that N was angry at me for not sending him an Easter greeting, and, typically, will turn his back on me--might even force himself into this marriage "for spite". I ALMOST sent one at the last minute, but it just didn't seem "right", so I didn't.

April 27, 1962

Summary:

N left to go back to Nita--"maybe". He found the situation here for him and me just as hopeless as it was before. He told me I "must forget him" and I more or less agreed with him. We parted, obviously "forever"--albeit sadly.

In a week, I sent him a card saying, "We should get married----but---Who'd have us?"

Three weeks later I sent another card, "I have good reason for not writing--me."

Two weeks later another one, "You could learn things about love--How about signing up for a night class?" And told him of an episode relating to night class and that I LOVED it.

Two weeks later I sent him a book on sex, with passages marked on neurotic impotence and sayingt that the only cure was a "constant love". With it I enclosed a resigned, farewell-type message.

Two weeks later He made an uncharacteristically effective effort to let his family know, before they left these shores, that he had met a girl in night class and was engaged to be married to her; had given her a diamond ring and planned to be married 7 months later--in June. This I did not know about--no one told me.

Two more weeks and Thanksgiving go by without any exchange between N and me.

On Thanksgiving Day I felt very strongly that N was trying to get some message to me.

The following Sunday evening I have a very, VERY strong feeling he is.

The following day Janie told me for the first time about N's engagement. She also told me that N and his girl had phoned her long distance Sunday evening. She looked me right in the eye and said "His girl is VERY JEALOUS!"

That night I wrote N a congratulatory letter stating my approval and that I thought it was an excellent "solution" and inserting a crack in Spanish which N can't read, but his girl can.

Three weeks later I sent an "innocent" Christmas card to N.

Just before Christmas Janie implies that N and his bride might come up for Christmas. I go to a party where someone tells me he thought N was looking for a job here when he was up. I write to N and ask him about it, saying that it might have made a difference if I'd known, but "maybe it's all for the best."

N and his girl DON'T come up for Christmas. I get an "innocent" Christmas card from him--not including his girl.

After Christmas Jamie seems VERY upset about something. I sense that it is something about N. She doesn't tell me.

Over a month later a strong feeling results in a dream about N and an unexpected reminder about Valentine's day, which I intended to forget.

I decide not to send a Valentine but, at the last minute chance upon one so pertinent to a thought I once had about us that I send it. It said, "Valentine greetings from an old, old, old, old flame," and had picture of dying embers on it.

Two months later Janie tells me that N's office burned down in January, she thought, and N has been out of work.

A month later Janie gives me an evasive, defensive negative answer to my question if N is married yet.

Two months and Easter go by with no contact between us. Around Easter I dream about Janie and N and me. I dream about N and me.

Janie becomes uncommunicative about N, but lets slip remarks about his plans (or threats?) to go to New York.

April 29, 1962

I DID write Wolfer Company--foolish as it was!

But I became more and more convinced that this is the missing link. If N lied about THAT----!!!!

May 4, 1962

I have looked for a reply the last two days and have gotten none. Afterwards I realized I should have written to a LA newspaper, but--too late now. It is hard, hard to wait the days between my crazy correspondence and the answers!

May 2, 1962

New insight and new understanding from re-reading:

Back to "Easier forgetting when self-esteem is threatened."

This time I applied it to N. And it made me understand his subsequent surprising action and why I was so bothered about his misinterpretation of my reason for writing him love letters.

I was fighting a battle all the time to finish our affair, not quite knowing why. Now I know why, as I mentioned last fall. The letters were really part of my luring him back for this reason, whatever reason it seemed at the time.

When I told him, without meaning to, that there was an ulterior motive, obscure even to me, in those letters he did not understand. He did not sense, as I did, the long-term good, the necessity, of forcing him to some commitment--to me, to Nita, to anyone.

I see now that he was expecting, looking for, a reason to find those letters false--and I unwittingly gave it to him. Ergo, his self-esteem that I had so laboriously tried to build up was threatened and he found it "easy to forget" when he got back.

And I was deperate to repair the damage I'd done, but now I cannot. It is too late. I have not the means. I unwittingly did what was necessary to do: forced an ending to something impossible, so that it wouldn't continue to hurt us so unbearably the rest of our lives.

Sunday, May 6, 1962

I dreamed about N last night. It was not a particularly pleasant or reassuring dream. It, too, like the Janie dream, was probably a result of my concentration on finishing up this record.

For, it dwelt on a murky relationship with a very dark, foreign man, not QUITE N. For the man was a mixture of N; the Greek, whom my divorcee neighbor is currently pussuing (an "imitation" or "identification" with me, I wonder?) and a dash of Hindu from the book I just read.

There seemed to be an ambivalent sort of liason in a setting of art-work and art school, with a series of comings and goings, partings and returns among vague family situations and interspersed with sharp, clear images of furtive seductions by this man with very dark, foreign young girls.

The man was alternately hovering/indifferent; loyal/perfidious to me all through it--as is N himself.

I woke with a bad taste in my mouth--a leftover feeling of murky, unsatisfactory perfidy.

(Which word reminds me of the night of my pizza party: My son had the sheet music "Perfidia" on the piano. At one point it caught N's eye and he went up and scanned through it, saying, "That's my song; that's the story of my life"--or some such reference. Of course HE

meant that someone had been perfidious to him!)

Still Sunday, May 6,

Are we hitting a period of "perfect timing" again?--what I call "the Pattern"? It almost seems so.

For I had just finished writing about my dream when my daughter arrived home from Seattle, where she had purchased a dress, since the one Janie showed her was not right.

Neither was this one--it needs shortening. As I fingered the pale green sheer material back came an image of Janie doing exactly the same to exactly the same kind of dress--that day last summer when I went there to swim and a friend of hers dropped in to get her advice on shortening just such a dress.

"And here's my present for YOU," said my daughter just then, and handed me a box of Italian import candies, very exotic, unique. !!!

My subconscious immediately put all together: Janie is the only woman I know right now with sufficient sewing skill to advise me; wouldn't she be interested in the Italian candies? Could I use it as an excuse for a visit, an opportunity for a hypocritical little probe, ("Janie, where and when can I send N a wedding present?")

Just then mother called from the attic, where she was doing something, "Look what I found--!" and--plop!--at my feet fell a dead, a very dead, bird--a sparrow.

(Nicolo! my BIRD!--"Let not one sparrow fall--"----Lorna, my ROMANTIC!")

The old compulsion seized me. I could hardly wait for an opportunity to call Janie, this time trying to be very careful to CALL first, NOT to impose or intrude. But when? when?

"We ar going bowling. We will be gone an hour or two," my kids now annouce, and away they go.

And here I sit, fear, great fear gripping my vitals, trying to get up nerve wanough to call. I am right back where I starte d again--hurt, rebuffed, scared.

I called, my heart in my mouth.

A long ring. Panic. Then--Lilly answered. I asked for her mother, then called after her, "Are you eating--?" "No," she said.

Janie a long time coming. Forewarned? Ahe answered heavily, warily, with a heavy laugh at my announcement, "It's Lorna." and gave me no help, no encouragement getting a conversation started.

"Is this the woman who sews so well?-" I began lamely, finding it even harder when there was only a long pause. Finally, with great embarrassment, I got out my preliminary explanation and we got to talking about the dress.

As it went on and Janie skipped with only a slight hesitation over the part that would have been her chance to

ask me to bring the dress over, I realized that she was just going to tell me on the phone; I had to give up my hope of a visit.

^{Janie} Resigned, ~~We~~ went on to talk about dresses, dances, school activities, her job, while all the time I was stalling, trying to think when and if I should bring N into the conversation.

She mentioned that she had NOT gone to the Mothers' Tea (neither had I, wondering if SHE had gone), that she would work this year, but maybe not next. SHE didn't bring up N; she seemed to be holding me off, wary, afraid.

Then she mentioned her break periods. (MY chance! I can bring up the bit about Isa's telling me that Janie had told her about the Wolfer fire when she saw Janie on her break.) I do.

After unwillingly agreeing, Janie begins to head me off, talking about seeing Isa. (Oh no you don't, Janie!) I said, "She said you told her about the Wolfer fire--" (a sigh from her?) --a reluctant capitulation to the inevitable (she knew what I was leading up to)--and she begins an unenthusiastic recital, still about Isa.

"Has the buidling been fixed?" I interrupt.

" Oh-h--she guessed so--she didn't know--- N hasn't said--I didn't ask him--". Then a rambling, incoherent account of how they'd planned to move to a better location for a LONG TIME anyway--the fire was a good excuse.. She ~~swelt~~ ^{swelt} interminably on this, obviously shun-

ning talk about N--and I had to play along.

(Enough of this, Janie!) "Has N been OUT OF WORK all this time?" I interjected. "Oh YES!" blithely, and some chatter. "I can't IMAGINE him not working, he must have some free lance jobs or something--" I added to keep her going. (Get WITH it, Janie!)

"I don't know--I DON'T ASK!" (!!!Well!) "He doesn't seem worried--unemployment compensation--seems happy--I'M not worried about him (a heavy attempt at laughing unconcern here. all right. ALL RIGHT, Janie! and I let her have it)--"How's the wedding coming along?--you'll have to let me know so I can send a present--" This last lamely into the silence at the other end. Then, abruptly, a gay laugh! "I don't know! YOU tell ME! I want to know, too--" (A lie? too glib. She'd had a chance to think?) Then the usual--next month, etc. and I, playing for time asked about announcements and so on--the kind of wedding--

"Is she Catholic?" I asked. Floundering at the other end--"Uh-u-mm--I don't know--" "She must be--they usually are, " I said, for she was unwilling.

She interrupted me suddenly--something about 30. I asked her to repeat, not expecting her to. She did. "The girl's 30 years old, I found out," she said. Nothing added. What was I supposed to say? "She's never been married before?" I probed. "No!" "Good--good," I murmured, thinking (Is it?) I galled in with approving comments--just what he was looking for, etc. She was talking, too.

I stopped when I caught something about
"--seems like a very sensible kind of
girl"--(Oh? some AREN'T?)--"she was
RAISED AS WE WERE"--(this VERY emphat-
ically. That's GOOD? I thought to
myself?)--makes it easier for N--HE
says--he's happy about it--"

Then she inserted in a sudden rush, as
if anxious to get it in at all costs,
"Of course he WON'T COMEUP THIS YEAR --
maybe next year--"

(Why that? I thought. Why the switch?)
"Oh", I said, as she was saying "no
money--no vacation"--"Oh. You mean be-
cause of not working--because of the
job--". "Yes."

Then abruptly, "I must go now." (This
was the bluntest brush-off I'd ever had
from her.) "I think I'd better get
ready." (No elucidation, though I
waited.)

I tried to cling, mentioned the dress
again. To my surprise she answered.
(NOT in such a hurry?) and, after an
exchange of comment on the dress we
hung up.

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I was badly shook up. Mad. As of old.
And desperate to write it up immediat-
ely, before it faded. But I had no
choice. My kids hovered, almost sus-
picious acting. What could I do?
What could I do?

I had planned to GO OVER--take the
Italian candy--to PLEASE her--win her
over--have fun--and watch her face

while she talked. I had had to forfeit that and I was very disgruntled.

My son had been showing an abnormal interest in the candy. He found more and more interesting things about it that made me more than ever anxious to show it to Janie--have her translate the Italian. (I could say it was a "thank you" for help on the dress.) But how to get some away from him without arousing his suspicions?

The phone rang. A legitimate errand! One in which I could pretend to take some of the candy to show!

Later I went, spying carefully on Es-gate's (which is getting harder and harder to do because of the homes building around it). I see the red car gone, but ANOTHER red car parked on the street side-????

I knock. The dogs bark furiously from the inside. No one comes. FOR THE FIRST TIME NO ONE COMES! I leave. Mad. Upset.

I go and park somewhere and write it out just as I did that Sunday after N left. I decide to go back and leave the candy with a note. I do so. But all through my ensuing activities runs a feeling of doubt, of wrongness.

What if my son asks for the candy, I think approaching home? I had lied. But I didn't figure that one out--and I was to regret it, for he did ask. I decided on the truth. He seemed so upset--he was saving the little boxes or something--that I invented an

errand and went back and scooped up the candies, feeling like a fool and hoping the neighbors wouldn't report me to Janie, and brought them home.

For, I thought, what difference? I have tested and tested Janie and it is obvious that she hates me now. "East is east and West is West--". That's all there is to it.

And, as soon as I retrieved the candy and note, I felt better--vastly relieved. (WHAT was that red car? Thank goodness, it had a local dealer's plate and a local license. It COUDN'T have been N's!)

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Later I thought, one thing is sure: one does not have to DRAG HAPPY news out of people; nor is anyone ever considered "NOSY" who inquires about a HAPPY, sure event--like a wedding! Janie is HURTING. Janie is SMARTING about something. Whatever it is I do not really know for sure. Perhaps because I have intimated her brother is a bit crazy--and she assumes I'm blaming her family? (I wonder what N TOLD her?)

Everything she said to me today cried, "Leave him alone! Leave him alone! IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!"

I don't doubt but what she KNOWS the date of the wedding--that she is lying. Obviously she is NOT going to tell me anything more about N--EVER. Surely, they'd both WANT me to know about the wedding--what better way to get rid of me? But maybe they're waiting till

AFTER--till it's "un fait accompli".
But, if so, why this frantic fending
me off, this OVER PROTECTION--if there
is not an element of DOUBT?--if there
was not a chance of my being--to Janie--
a "Dangerous" influence?

I haven't lost sight of the fact that
N's marrying would be a kind of (sad)
victory for me--psychologically. Or
That mooning after N has become a HABIT
with me, a substitute for lack of some-
thing better; that I don't know what I'd
do with him if I HAD him, etc. BUT--

I don't want him to make THIS kind of
a marriage; not a SPITE one! I don't
want him to "sell himself short" as he's
doing! I don't want him to succumb to
such a SUDDEN choice; to be deluded by
superficial likenesses. He isn't READY!
Wait, Nick, WAIT!

* * *

Monday, May 7, 1962

How I wish I'd hear from Wolfer! It is
the KEY. But I don't think I will.

* * *

Am writing the Pellegrinis today and
planning my little trip over, but have
lost all inclination for it now. I
feel alienated from aliens again.

* * *

And, I rather regretted that new epi-
sode with Janie, even if I "brought it
on myself". For I had this all typed,
at last (and a monumental job it has
been!) and everything ready to file

away--(AGAIN!)--and I found it a CHORE,
a time and interest-consuming bother
to go through all that emotional up-
heaval again.

Bitter as the pill will be, this story
should end with N's marriage--the "happy"
ending. If I only had away of knowing
for sure. But now it's all spoiled again.
Janie won't tell me and there's no other
way I can know.

Except, of course, some day AFTER June
I'll run into her and she'll tell me
with great glee, "well! Nick's MARRIED!"

Otherwise----

what?

May 7, 1962

Finishing up now, even to copying the Pellegrini's letters. Which, combined with a quick run-through on ^{my} contacts (or LACKof) with N and Janie since he went back is most revealing!

I wrote, gifted, phoned, visited Janie for more than 7 months, I see, and she hasn't made ONE SINGLE advance to me! Of course nothing at all from N. This made me feel like a fool till I went through the Pellegrini letters and saw the difference! I had expected the Chianellos to react like the P's did and got exactly the opposite. Surely this absolves me from blame! Especially coupled with my Sicilian notes!

All in all I have come full circle, as I said. My Sicilians are as impossible as I found them in the beginning; all my efforts changed them not one whit. I only untied a few knots, and made some good friends in the P's, which is actually more than I expected. And so was my happy interlude with N, short as it was. I regret none of it. It was four vital, interesting years.

May 10, 1962

I wish I would stop this!

But such an absolutely overwhelming Pattern has been taking place and such a STRONG N-mood that I can't ignore it.

I keep thinking I'm finished. THIS time it seemed I really was--all typed, all menemtos cleaned out, filed, pasted; book all arranged and then---a whole section missing! a most important section! And also still no answer from Wolfer Co.

Lsoing the section panicked me. Though I was resigned to its loss, the thought that it was somewhere around where someone could find and read it nearly drove me crazy. I looked and looked and could get no clue.

In the meantime, everywhere I turn I am confronted with not only Italian things, but SICILIAN, most unusual. Things I had forgotten about, had forfeited suddenly appeared, so very much of it that, having "folded my tents" I was in no mood for them; they were, for the first time, a NUSCIANCE. I took them on and bled them for information and sentiment, but more from a sense of duty than anything. And found myself giving them up in the middle, merely scanning, not at all thrilled and compulsive as before.

For that last retyping of my reading notes and the comparison of the Pelligrini treatment of me to the Chianello treatment made me damned mad at the Chianellos. So Janie is looking for

people "raised like we were", is she? Well, we, too have our code of behavior, and I find theirs a far cry from it!

Then, there was the necessity of contacting the Pellegrinis again, which always seems to come up at a crucial time.

And though all this has been such a damnably pervasive conviction that N was trying to get through to me that yesterday I was thrown into a very, very bad mood--one that incapacitated me and made me write him one word, "Don't" (Don't get married.)--and then tear it up. I feel sure he was having some struggle and "needed" me, but suddenly the feeling dissipated; I slept like a log last night and it is gone today. I would say that whatever it is he has solved it.

Then, this morning, I was FORCED to go to the Republic, though I tried to get out of it. I haven't been in a long, long time and haven't cared.

Then, while there, an impulse seized me to go through the Press where N used to work, even at the risk of running in to Cassiday, the reason I have been staying away from there, as well as Ralph's coolness to me the last time I was in.

Cassiday was right in front of me as I went in! But I could have avoided him, as his back was to me. Instead I went right up to him and twitted him about the wine label (which had ended

up at his press). Might as well get this over with, I thought. There was a momentarily flicker of eyes between us, but he passed it off better than I thought he would. It was going all right and then suddenly embarrassment crept in between us and I made movements toward withdrawing, making hasty hellos to Isa and Ralph.

To my surprise neither were very cordial. Just like the last time I'd seen them, which made me suspect that something was awry in our old relationship. (It has been this way since Isa, a notorious gossip, had seen Janie, I thought--hmm).

I had not intended to mention the Wolf-er fire again, since I felt I'd already gone too far with that one, but some devil made me turn in the doorway and say to Isa, "We never did find out about that fire, did we..?" And then a few lame explanations for my interest when suddenly all smiles disappeared from their faces and grim look appeared. Isa became engrossed in her typewriter and Cassidy stared at the wall. Well, what was THIS?

I felt a fool, and sorry I'd said anything, and got out of there as fast as I could, determined never to mention N or anything pertaining to him to them again.

My first reaction, of course, was guilt; it was something personal against ME. Then I thought perhaps they hate N now, feel that he gave me a dirty deal? But no. If that were the case

they'd be WITH me, on MY side, wouldn't they? The smiles would not have gone? A fleeting thought passed that they DISAPPROVED of my interest in N, but at that my thoughts and feelings froze and rejected it--and them. I decided I didn't know and couldn't know.

Now I await some word from Wolfer, which annoys me so that I have written them a other letter and sought out the address of a LA newspaper and have a letter ready to send to them, if I don't hear anything else.

Trying to figure out why I am so obsessed with wanting this information I find that I want to know if N told that big a lie. If he did, he could lie about anything. In a way I HOPE he has--for that would really finish me.

If he hasn't--then I must face the uneasy knowledge that he probably IS going to get married; that he is an unhappy kid that has really been out of work, and that I would like desperately to help him and am impotent--and sorry, sorry, sorry---for everything.

Thursday--May 10, 1962

Well, AGAIN there was nothing in the mail. I fussed around and then decided I couldn't stand sending off those other letters and waiting an interminable time again. And I couldn't stand not knowing if there WAS a fire. So I PHONED the Wolfer Company! How desperate can you get?

Did N lie?

No. Not about the fire. There was a fire. BUT it was NOVEMBER 8!

The operator at Wolfer was very curt (thank goodness! I didn't want to pay for a LONG call!) She said she had another long distance call on the line I was interrupting--

"Yes," she said, "the Wolfer PRINTING company had had a fire."

"Was it rebuilt? Are they operating again?" I asked.

"No. The Wolfer PRINTING company is DISSOLVING," she said. "I really don't know--it's all such a mess--".

"Is Wolfer PUBLISHING different from Wolfer PRINTING--?" I started to ask, but she cut me off for the other call.

Now I know. Od DO I?

For this is startling! For November 8th is BEFORE "i nonni" left; BEFORE N announced his engagement; BEFORE Christmas, even before Thanksgiving! All this time N has been out of work? SIX MONTHS? How long does unemployment compensation LAST? Is that girl SUPPORTING him? Why, that was only about seven weeks after he went back!
Poor N! What bad luck he does have! Or DOES he?

When I think back on it all with this new knowledge--I am shocked--to say the least!

But, after the shock wore off, I felt a great, great sense of release. I was GLADI called; it was worth the couple of dollars.

After a few hours -- (and a few amazing little "m" prods from my environment)--I found myself pen in hand, writing N. Why, was THIS my REAL reason for wanting to know? Hamme! What is this? It's not LOVE, as such. I expect nothing. I just feel a deep concern, a responsibility, a need about N.

Herewith the letter:

Letter to N--May 10, 1962

This is the first letter to him since my unsigned Valentine, Feb. 14th--3 months.

I read in a book last night--"(he) well knew the wisdom of delay, the advantage of an interlude in which expectation could develop and recollection could have its way."

N should get this letter Monday or Tuesday at the latest.

Dear Nick--

I just found out about the Wolfer Company fire, which Janie just told me recently and then someone else told me and that the Wolfer Printing Company is dissolving and it's all a big mess. If you don't have the damndest luck! Who gave you the "mal occhia"?!!

I realize, of course, that you may not get it is, for I have no idea of where you are or what you're doing, but I wanted you to know how sorry I am about it.

Janie said you seemed to be all right and getting alone fine--something about unemployment compensation--But I can't imagine it lasting this long or YOU BEING OUT OF WORK. Surely, you must have some other work or prospects to keep you going?

How I'd like to know if everything is all right with you. But I am resigned to the fact that I probably never will know. For Janie seems to hate me now; I very seldom see her. And when I do she makes it very

clear that she intends to tell me nothing about you. In fact, it is largely because of her that I have left you alone. She has made it very clear that she considers me "nosy" and meddlesome and trouble-making; that your family affairs are "none of my business." She practically told me to leave you alone when she told me about your engagement on Dec. 1, telling me VERY POINTEDLY that "Lilyan is VERY JEALOUS" !

She does not understand that my "nosiness" etc stems from real interest and CONCERN in you and what happens to you, ~~and~~ for I am so very fond of that nice man beneath that "bristly" exterior! I suppose it is the difference between us, our customs, etc. I am getting resigned to the difference--that what seems friendliness to one seems rudeness to the OTHER; and vice versa; that Sicilians don't answer letters or phone people or visit t em, do they?

I'd like to know if you're still getting married, I'd like to send you both a nice gift, but I can't afford one. Probably nobody will even TELL me--and I can't think of anything I'd be more interested in!

After all, as I told you, it's not an easy thing for me to contemplate, but what can I do, but be nice about it? For what have I to offer you? It seemed strange that you should wait some 34 YEARS and suddenly pick a girl in a few WEEKS, but I suppose you know each other pretty well by now. Pretty damn well, huh?

One other thing, if you get desperate for work you MIGHT wrtie the Yakima Bindery (thy're Union)--they're always crying

about how they need help on "camera" and paste-up etc--though I doubt if they will ever do anything about it--Just another not much good suggestion--

That's about all; for it's no fun to write to someone you don't know if the're there and know they won't answer if you do.

It all makes me very sad. I thought I'd tried so hard to make a little better understanding all around, but it seems we're all right back where we started from.

Have you noticed that Famous Artists School is running National ads with pictures and stories of their graduates? Think they'll use YOURS sometime?

Well, Nick, I hope you get this and know that I am still concerned and interested and miss you and hope all's well and you are happy and things work out well for you--
I do--I do--

A rivederla--

perhaps

Lorna

By the way: I DID notice a small news story in the paper about a fire in downtown L.A. and was alarmed, wondering if it had anything to do with you--but thought, "Well JANIE will tell me--". I was damned mad when I found out she'd withheld the information for 4 months--and that she waited a MONTH AND A HALF before she told me of your engagement! WHY can't you people COMMUNICATE? Am I THAT bad?

May 12, 1962

In yesterday's mail was still no word from the Wolfer Co. (perhaps the mailman, knowing our name sent it back, for I used a fake name) but this note from Ginny, which is just about what I expected, though somewhat warmer in tone.

Dear Lorna,

Delighted! Pelle leaves for Chicago the 18th so have dinner with us the 17th. How I hope you won't arrive too late. Our big Ryther lunchenn downtown is that day so we have to dispense with careful dusting, place cards, etc. But the food will be good & the Pellegrinis will scintillate. Let us know if this meets with your o.k. Pelle wants to be among those present when you come so we shall keep fingers crossed. He will be gone until the ~~17th~~ following Thursday.

Hope my note is coherent. I am so sleepy I can't see to dot my eyes & cross my T's.
Affectionately, Virginia
(crude face sketch here)

Comment: I waspleased: at the invitation to dinner, the immediacy of the answer; the obvious effort made to have me when she had such good excuses to get out of it; the necessity for informality; and, above all, at Pelle's desire to be there when I was.

But I suffered a little conflict over the hidden that it was a "bad" time, that perhaps I wouldn't be able to make it in time, that Pelle was "unavailable" except for that "inconvenient" evening, and the

reference to "sleepiness" and incoherence (an unconscious "psychological evasion"?).

Took I was alarmed at the Ryther meeting, the only time she sees Paula, that same day. She will undoubtedly tell Paula, perhaps include her for dinner and that I was trying to avoid, since Paula "stiffened" our former visit. And, so many years of human relationships have made me alert to little revealing characteristics in people. (Of course this works both ways!) I am a little wary of the tendency to "self-enhancement" in Ginny--her claims of "goodness". of humility, of loving people, of utter charm and hospitality. It is a bit thick. I have run up against this before. I have become exceedingly wary of too much CHARM in people!

However, this tempers my former immature excitement about them; it is the advantage of aging. I feel no foolish thrill this time, only a warm glow of NICE people, a little good, a little bad--like all of us.

I view this visit with equanimity, a mixture of unpleasant effort and warm bits of pleasure, as in all good friendships. And so, too, do I find myself feeling about the N relationship. I have noticed in myself lately an aging, a lessening of emotional swings, a new lack of desire for them, a "leveling off"--an acceptance. It is a peaceful feeling.

May 11, 1962--Friday

I went through all my usual neurotic ritual: I decided the letter was hypocritical; I started to write another--an honest MAD one, for I've noted that reaches him better than "niceness"; I toyed with NOT sending it. I read and re-read it, carefully hiding from the suspicious eyes of my kids, whom I think knew what I was up to. (Incidentally, for all my protests about not having privacy for all this, I find that when I DO have it loses its fun! Strange!) I prayed real, real hard, "God, give me some of our now so familiar little "signs" to show me what I should do. I do not know. I am working in the dark. Guide me!)

This morning I mailed the letter. And then felt so very, very GOOD about it that nothing else mattered--why or what. Back came all my GOOD feeling about people and life.

I keep telling myself through these last few days of Pattern that it is ending, dissipting, but it goes on. I mailed the letter this morning, saying to myself, There, N. That's that. The Pattern's over, etc.

But no. Hal, of all people, called me this morning; I had to go to the Republic, which brings back memories of N; AND--a buyer came in just now, leaned on the counter and burst exultantly into singing "Volare"--for NOR REASON! These are my "signs".

There is no rhyme, reason, sense to any of this. Crazy, neurotic, psychotic--unreasonable--whatever it is, I am guided only by very strange and very unaccountable "feelings". that will not be denied. So be it. I do not know. Che sara, sara.

May 19, 1962

I have just returned from a few days vacation which I planned and executed with the purpose of making myself adjust to this new phase of my life which is beginning; that of middle-age, when my children no longer need me and I am alone.

It turned out to be a sort of break-through from frustration and daydreaming to reality and self-fulfillment.

And it was GLORIOUS!

I went alone to Seattle and I drove both ways, the first time I'd done such a thing in my life! The artist wife of my psychology teacher could not go at the last minute, and I had to force myself to go through with my "selfish, self-centered" plans. But it was worth it--well worth it! For the first time in my life I felt free, and sure, and competent!

Obtensibly it was planned around using my gift ticket to the World's Fair and fulfilling my promise (or threat?) to pay the Pellegrini's a more leisurely visit. The core of my plan was the invitation to dinner from Virginia P., and all else stemmed from that--and it worked out beautifully!

I had secret hopes to be able to work in one of the many Italian movies that are current, and we do not get here. Preferably one of the three filmed in Sicily. But they ~~had~~ changed so rapidly that I began to forfeit that plan.

When lo! the day I left there was an announcement in the Seattle paper that "Jessica", the one I had anticipated for

almost two years (since I'd first taken the clipping about its being produced to Janie) was beginning in a first run theater there--(most convenient to my plans!)

So went the whole trip. I seemed to have charmed luck, starting with catching the Pellegrinis just at a free moment between engagements.

The Fair and all else was more than I'd hoped for; it seemed as if all my dreams of years materialized all at once. I felt while I was over there as if I'd COME HOME. I had gay and heart-warming encounters with strangers, who seemed to respond to my feelings of gladness and liveness as if drawn by a magnet. I even had two fairly personable men trailing me all the way to my car as I sought it to start home, urging me to come have a beer with them. (I didn't).

I saw the spark of interest in the eyes of people I met for the first time. How amazing it is, this "key" to life that I discovered almost too late. And how grateful I was for finding it when I suffered for an hour listening to my younger brother's frustrated gropings for it--and realizing that it is something you can HARD to people; it is something that is born within you after arduous seeking and striving and suffering.

(I had to leave him with impotent pity, batting and brusing his head against something that comes only by quiet receptiveness. I could do nothing for him; only thinking to myself, "Seek, and ye shall find.")

As for the Fair, it doesnot pertain to this story, except for MY seeking and

finding only at the last minute (after I had given up) the Italian exhibit. With Italy's new found prosperity I was surprised to find it meager and tawdry, and utterly inadequate for my dreams of trying a little Italian and conversation with a native.

For the woman who waited on me when I decided to buy a cheap, not-very-pretty "Florentine" pin as a memento of this trip, turned out to be FRENCH, and obviously well-versed in English, while all the time a velvety eyed, handsome young Italian stood silently behind his counter of curios that were too expensive for me. He gave me a deep look in answer to my glance of helpless frustration.

The movie, "Jessica", was a disappointment, too. Though I couldn't really call it that, for I didn't expect much. I had read beforehand that it was a silly thing, and had already become resigned to forfeiting seeing it when I found out it was filmed in famous, overly-lauded Taormina, instead of Palermo, as I had thought. It affected me just as the other Italian-located picture I went alone to last Friday night did--showed me the scenery without lifting my heart any.

I had a desperate time working it into my plans time-wise and secretly, and arrived breathless at the theater door after a hurried spring uphill to the theater.

But I missed only a tiny bit of it, and it served its purpose as a physical respite in my frantic program, as well as acting as a "cure" and disillusioning process for my long Italian "daydream"--something the whole trip effected in just the right way.

For, the rather wearily repetitive scenic bits showed me a dry, bristly, over-rated country ~~very~~ much like California, and very much as I had imagined it, and the Hollywoodized versions of the natives, far from giving me the "this-is-NICK" emotional orgy I expected, left me feeling as the other picture did: These are only PEOPLE, just like us; this is only grass and trees, and rocks and mountains--just like ours, neither better or worse; not even much different. This is no DREAM land! This is only an extension of the same reality that I live in! ROMANCE is only in the mind!

And my little emotional-orgy release expectation was further dispelled by the invasions of a fussy, sandy-haired, parcel-laden little old lady--all alone--into my little island of privacy. She chose, from all that theater of empty seats, the one in front of me, then left me in charge of her parcels while she bustled off somewhere.

(This is I? I thought. Such am I?--a lonely little old lady come here to suckle and mull over a lost dream?).....

It was a shock when I sailed into the rest room afterwards--(a rest room overwhelming me with memories of youthful experiences spent in this same theater)*--to be confronted by a vision of and erect, handsome, slightly aging woman sailing into the room--a woman with a pale, high-strung look to her face surrounded by an aura of blondish, loosely waved hair---

It was me.

The mirror image was not at all like the little old lady who now swooped, bustling, on me from nowhere--(my friend!) "did you understand that picture?" she said. "Did YOU know what it was all about--?"

(Did I know what it was ALL ABOUT? Did I know--about Sicily, and "omerta" and cruel, passionate, Sicilian predjudice? Did I know? Did I know. Lady! what a tale I could tell you!)

She took me so unawares, she so abruptly pointed out to me the depth and difference of my four years of Sicilian suffering that I was at a loss for words.

I passed it off laughingly, and we parted. I wended my way out with my heart and eyes brimming for the first and only time on the whole trip.

* * * *

So. These were the details, the embellishments, to the real reason for the trip, The Visit to the Pellegrini's; the consummation, so to speak, of what I was surprised to observe has been three YEARS of acquaintance; it seems like only a few months.

It will take time and much effort to get it down while it is fresh. I have learned this by now. I hope I will have the opportunity to do it, for I am full to the brim with it right now!

My thoughts dwell and return persistently to my evening with the P's. It is the richest and most vital experience I have had in a long time. At least it was

rich and vital to ME.

For, actually, it was a very ordinary evening. I called first, as I'd written I would, went at the specified time, had dinner with the family, was taken to the daughter's apartment for coffee, and came back and went "home" to Paula's to sleep.

To go back: Paula seemed to have lost her enthusiasm for the P's. In fact, she seemed very derogatory about them. I sensed "sour grapes". I could be wrong. Once it would have bothered me. It no longer does. "Chacun a son gout".

Anyway, I played down my anticipation. I felt not at all panicky this time for I felt sure of their friendship. That is, until I phoned, expecting to be greeted by a glad-handing Ginny at the other end.

I was not. A gruff amn's voice that I didn't recognize answered. To my announcement that I was Lorna there was a short silence, and then that same querulous tone that had greeted me at the door before said, "--But I just got home--"/

I was taken aback. Though I expected a late dinner hour, it was already 5:30, and, even so, it didn't seem quite the way to greet an invited guest.

Since he maintained silence, I asked desperately, "Is Ginny there?"

"She's resting," came the answer. No elucidation. Then he began something unenthusiastically, about expecting me. I broke in, more curtly than I intended, "Yes,--but WHEN?" A pause, a consideration, and then, "About 6:30---I think everything will be under control by then---"

(Under CONTROL? What did THAT mean?) I hung up then, for the first time, beset with the old doubts and fears.

When I explained to Paula, she was carefully cynical, making innuendos about "cocktails at the luncheon--maybe Ginny had had too many--" with a little one-sided smile--and allusions to "bohemianism" and a "double life". (My Ginny a drunk?--It's possible. It fits.)

By that time I was nervous and so was very grateful when my brother suggested a drink and it turned into two. I was debating the third, thinking how Pelle had deplored too many cocktails before dinner "that spoiled the appetitie" in his books, when Paula decided it for me by announcing that THEY were having a third drink, but I was not. So there was nothing to do but gather myself into the coat she lent me and leave.

She also decided for me that I was taking the car, which I had debated because of the shortness of the distance and the possibility (the hope!) that I might be pleasantly inebriated before the evening was over.

I popped a mint in my mouth as I left, and then threw it out in disgust as I rounded the corner to their house. "TOO BAD if they don't approve!" I thought.

I was glad for this later.

I approached and parked without emotion. It all seemed quite normal to be doing what I was doing--no thrill. The house

looked vacant, dark. I searched and found no bell, so knocked, not producing much noise.

In the rather prolonged wait I heard muffled, low bickering voices between man and wife. Then the door opened on a rather confused little scene, as if there had been an interruption on just who WAS going to open the door. I remember it all as confusion, but a PLEASANT confusion.

My first impression was of facing Ginny, who held back this time--not going into the hugging overtures of last time, so that I was forced to make the opening gesture, extending my hand to take hers and saying how nice it was of her to ask me. I saw her begin to respond somewhat, but all the time I was conscious of thinking "where was Pelle?" and that there was some confusion to my left that was holding Ginny's attention.

My next sensation was of being SWOOPED up (HERE was Pelle!). It was the same sudden attack of last time, but this time I was prepared to be hugged. I was conscious of trying to include Ginny in our embrace and dimly aware of some resistance on her part and of some INSistence on Pelle's.

Why, he was trying to KISS me this time! (Oh well! I was game!) and I gave a laughing kiss to the thin, black-beard surrounded lips presented at a level with mine. There was nothing else I COULD do without being rude, as he had me surrounded in a hug of arms.

But no! Pressure from the arms and searching by the mouth gave me to understand that this was going to be a BIG kiss--and it was!

He kept his lips compressed, but they were insistent. I remember having a fleeting thought of the difference between these thin, rather puckered lips and N's full, wide, soft, strong ones--and a fleeting regret.

Then it broke up in gales of polite laughter. He broke away, pleased with himself, and again I caught a glimpse of Ginny's eyes twinkling, but this time a little more sardonically.

Embarrassed and sorry for that Woman's" look in her eye I tried to gloss it over by putting my hand on her arm and changed the subject by saying, "But that's not FAIR: YOU had a REST!" She recovered then and went into one of her over-sollicitous acts which I cut off, as I was to several more times that evening.

There was confused, embarrassed breaking and roaming then after that episode, which, of course, lasted only a split minute, and I was glad that Paula had asked me to look at Ginny's paintings on the walls, for this gave me something to dountil I was scooped up and taken to the kitchen to see me supposed-to-have-been-private letter sketches framed and hung in their kitchen gallery for all guests to see.

Pelle had whooshed through at one point here and put a tiny, lemony drink in my hand, which pleased me for I was afraid there wasn't going to be any.

Then began the same confusing attempts by both of them to point out all their mom-entos to me at the same time, ending,

as before, with Ginny winning out by sheer number of words and Pelle impatiently conceding by dashing off into the other room and then back to see if she were through with me and then away again as Ginny persisted, as before, in now rather crossly expalining something that I was not the least interested in. I was least intere ted in my own display there, which seemed to disappoint them. They seemed to expect me to be very pleased. I was thinking how much Pelle's movements were like N's.

This time all this displaying was done over the head of their poor son, who was trying to read under their gesturing arms. He finally silently ducked under the arms and left. (And I didn't blame him. I suppose this show of momentos was a routine thing to him with his parents vying for the guest's attention. To me, as/ a guest, it was only stressful. I could hear nothing, understand nothing, and cared less. There was something not quite right about it; these things were too much, too INTIMATE for quick grasping. It was akin to foisting thefamily photo album on a just-arrived guest.)

Anyway, when, after a couple of looks, Pelle seemed to give up and roamed off, I tried to give my full attention to Ginny and found she was explaining some ceramics to me. Debating, and, for some reason, not wanting Pelle to hear, I told her sparingly about N's ceramics not being put in Janie's swimming pool. She did not rise to my obscure bait about appreciating the "primitive" art of Sicily, but only looked at me, puzzled.

This produced a needed silence and Pelle was suddenly at my elbow, his glass raised in salute to mine. When I touched my glass to his our eyes locked in a long look--(what were we drinking to?)--our eyes saying something we were at a loss to put into words.

I felt Ginny silently observing this little play when suddenly Pelle cried, "Viva SICILIA!" I wasn't sure I'd heard right, and when I was sure, I was non-plussed. Why THAT?

Ginny, too, seemed startled, for she let out a little laugh, and said, "Why, Pelle! why did you say THAT?--so you'r going to be nasty about it--!!" This last was lost to me at the moment for I was busy saying "Yes, that's what I was wonderin'--why THAT?"

Pelle shrugged, and gave a little smile, and walked away. This broke up the scene, and then there was more confusion, until he suddenly walked up to me and announced, peremptorily, "Let's eat. I'm no good till I eat. Time to eat," etc."

Ginny was busy in the kitchen. He softened it now by escorting me grandly to the empty table and seating me graciously in a chair with such a high back that he said, "This will be YOUR cahir--the POPE'S chair", laughing. I laughed, too. It was an easy moment, and he began to pour the wine and the two teenage children were brought reluctantly to table and I was served a dinner quite ordinary in quite an offhand manner. (There was no spectacular Italian cuisine for ME, I noted, though the food was nicely sauced. Nor was the wine of

a very precious vintage. I noticed that, though Pelle was making quite a ceremony of pouring the wine, swirling his glass, as if it were brandy, and then making me sniff it, that he kept the label turned from me even when he was displaying the label I'd made.

There was then a clumsy ~~pretense~~/period of pretense between us with them pretending, by saying nothing, that this was a FANCY dinner, evidently relying on my naivete to get away with it, and I pretending to be impressed and interested by what was obviously a second-rate effort on their part. (Not that I cared. I would have been ill at ease at any greater display, and they were wise enough to know it perhaps.)

I was delighted when the sulky daughter exploded the false note by passionately accusing her father of lying when he quietly nodded (in boredom?) at my fawning inquiry as to whether the mushrooms were "hand-picked". When she continued her tirade, complaining about the eternal GARLIC, and the Italian concentration, and so on, I could stand it no longer and reached for the wine bottle, turned it baldly around, noted the very recent date of vintage, and said, cruelly sarcastic, "You SHOULDN'T have--for ME?-- I'm FLATTERED!"

Pelle knew the jog was up, then, and he rose to the occasion with some quip that I was able to make a rejoinder to, and, after that, things relaxed, and we enjoyed ourselves.

In fact he broke out of the reticence I had so far noted in him and began to

relate anecdotes of his past in language that made no pretense of ~~being~~ his being anything but pure immigrant peasant. Things were getting honest now, and, when I met him blow for blow and didn't flinch at his vulgarity he opened up at last and talked freely of his work after I rather deliberately challenged him to.

In fact, he got so carried away that he ran and got his latest article and gave us a dramatic reading when I expressed a desire to hear it. He was obviously enjoying himself, and I wondered if ~~we~~ we were aware of how much it sounded like all the flowery Italain rhetoric he so much deplored in his books. He made a great point of showing me it was all hand written (he HAD heard my question that last time!)

When he was through, he heard out our plaudits, mine enthusiastic, for I had found it amusing--~~as~~ he kept telling us, the LIGHT touch; Ginny's wifely restrained, a bit dubious and critical. I had noticed that she didn't seem to "get" the humor.)- and then, N-like, he flew out and disappeared and then in again while Ginny was expressing surprised doubt in my overtures.

She had expressed this some doubting surprise when I had complimented Pelle on the HONESTY in his books, and the odd, meaningful look she gave him when I said it reminded me of my lurking suspicion that he seemed a bit of a "poseur", that time before.

Now there came a difficult period. There was much flying around and mysterious phoning and suppressed bickering between

Ginny and Pelle. Perhaps sometime in there was my cue to leave. Perhaps I was supposed to have left right after dinner. (Once this thought would have bothered me terribly, but it doesn't at all any more.) But whatever they were up to I was not the least conscious of any hinting that I should go--and I am usually supersensitive to such things.

At one point, one of them, I think it was Pelle, came up to me and asked if I was in a hurry this time. The manner in which it was asked made me assure them that I had plenty of time--no hurry. Then I believe he said he'd like me to meet their oldest daughter, Angela, at which I expressed a warm, truthful desire to.

More scurrying, more phoning, more bickering, and then Pelle came out and announced that we were going to Angela's for coffee.

There was an odd moment and then I realized they expected ME to drive, but, by the time I realized this, I had already demurred because of too much wine and unfamiliarity with the city. At this they readily enough agreed to wait for Toni to come back with their car.

So we were in for a period of waiting. Ginny was now busy trying surreptitiously and rather crossly to pick up the dishes and keep an eye on me, all the time trying to get Pelle to settle down in the living room and talk to me.

But he wouldn't. He was obviously under some inner compulsion. N-like, he kept flying around, pacing the floor, picking at Ginny. My impression was that he wanted very much to get to Angela's

that Angela was his pet; that he wanted to be with her; he wanted out of there. He finally settled, but across the room from me, and our conversation soon died.

I was sitting thinking how I had come to tell them MY tale, when all we'd done was talk about THEM, and how I really didn't care--not even enough to bring it up, which I sensed was what Pelle was waiting for me to do.

As if she'd read my mind, Ginny sailed in, sat herself and announced, "Now, I believe you came to tell us something about someone--".

(She didn't even remember the name or what it was about--and they had expressed so much interest! This coupled with numerous other questions they'd asked me during the evening made me begin to realize that they remembered nothing about me, or anything I'd ever told them, and I began to suspect the sincerity of their interest--that I was only one of many passing admirers--.)

I began to lose my enthusiasm for telling them and sincerely desired to skip the whole thing, for by now I realized the gull import of Ginny's comment on the Sicilian toast Pelle had made, and saw clearly the truth I had suspected behind their almost too easy overtures to me: they had no real interest in Sicilians or N's story; they felt that I had been naive and gullible--that I had been "took". I even strongly suspected that Pelle, at least, suspicioned the TRUE story--the pathetic seduction.

And this was born out in the jabbing questions he inserted into my reluctantly drawn out story, which I now was making bitter and critical without intending to: "How OLD was N?" "How did I meet him?" etc. and Ginny's carefully gentle interpretations that she appealingly planted into Pelle's grim, contained silence. Also by his one N-like, pa sionate, "laughing" warning, "You have to be CAREFUL of these Sicilian men, you know!"

I could see that Ginny was placating him, warning him, subduing him; silently urging him not to express his REAL feelings and that he had the lid clamped tight. For, as my story went on, he began to cease all comment, and kept jumping up and roaming the room in obvious agitation. It alarmed me, for I could see that he would not suppress anything ENCOURAGING to me. Although his anger (if that's what it was) SEEMED to be directed against his "own" people, I am too disillusioned to really believe that he would champion a native of his adopted country in his heart.

Little things this evening had already revealed to me that this was NOT the wise, gentle, unde standing, uniquely GOOD man that I wanted to think him--that he himself pictured in his books. There is no such man anywhere--or woman, either. This man suffered all the delusions, prejudices and self-enhancement tendencies that all men do--even those he explored in others. He, too, was only a bitter, prejudiced, maladjusted Wop--not much better than N, for all his wise and careful writings. He was only a man; after all, quite as capable as any of seducing a woman just for kicks, even! So I was no longer nervous or afraid of him.

I related my story very sparingly, dwelling mostly on Janie and I nonni, and coloring the whole thing with the tone of disgust for Sicilians that he had unwittingly revealed in himself. I realized I went too far sometimes, for Ginny came once or twice to their defense--and so did I when SHE began to paint a picture of the typical, exploiting, Italian immigrant family and their "Sarracino" son.

Pelle was with me at first, laughing and raising his eyebrows at the allusion to the dreams of transporting the whole family to America; giving Ginny a pointed look at the size of the family; grudgingly admitting that SOME of the Southern girls COULD be beautiful; asking me about their coloring, their English prowess.

He enjoyed the story of N and the car n and showed an unexpected degree of interest in my assertion that I thought N had won it by copying a quote from HIS book. That really seemed to tickle him (his ego?). He dwelt on that one, though Ginny tended to dispute my suspicion.

As my story progressed he got more silent, more suppressed and began the manetesta-tions I have mentioned, till I began to sense that I had "lost" him somewhere, especially when I noticed Ginny's ginger handling of him and realized I'd brewed up a storm, whether good or bad I didn't know.

But I realized I'd have to stop. They were not receiving the story at all as I had visualized they would. I began to cut my story, leaving out much that I had meant to tell them, for, instead

of the empathy and understanding and interest and explanation and discussion that I had expected, I could see they viewed it with the same old shallow, intensely personal prejudices I have learned to expect in everyone.

The story of the negress I had to let drop at a dangerous point, for it was met with black silence by both of them, and all my hurried patchups only left me feeling that they saw through my thin dissembling--I was bitter because of NITA!

Ginny's summing up was disappointingly shallow and trite, though she had made some very understanding and pertinent observations at times. Pelle said nothing. I said, "No, Ginny, I don't think it's that--" I searched my mind for layman's words for psychological things--"they feel---" I looked at Pelle appealingly (Do YOU understand, Pelle? YOU know what I mean--YOU know the cruel, cruel prejudice on BOTH sides--YOU know the infinite warfare--the impotence--) the black eyes only looked back at me--"--that they feel-----out of place," I finished lamely.

What was the use? It was not enough. It was not right--I do not know if Angelo knew what I meant or not.

I only know that he suddenly rose and wheeled across the room, making a strange detour as close as the coffee table would let him get to me as he passed me and ending up behind my back, where he seemed to be making some agitated movements, and then he was away again.

The conversation was obviously over. I made one of my last-ditch appeals.

Pelle was still at my elbow, still full of some explosive emotion. I didn't know whether he wanted to kiss me or kill me. But I felt I had lost his attention. I turned toward Ginny. "one thing I learned from these people--" I said, "I have never seen people so full of hate--of bald, utter HATE", etc., even mentioning N's "now you know about people". Did I see slight nods of assent?--I was too impassioned now to care. But they had had enough--it was time to stop--had I gone too far? I didn't care.

Something happened then. I think the girl came back and we left. Sometime during the evening--it must have been before this (for this scene was the climax)--they gave me the third degree about my work and made feeble, well-meant offers to help, misunderstanding, and only skirting the one way they could help--illustrations for Pelle's writings. I had to deflect them, for they were too much the laymen to unders and the problems, but not before I got a glimpse of THEIR picture of me--an obscure little flower blooming unappreciated in the hinterland. I think a few allusions of mine gave them a temporarily more sophisticated ~~picture~~/picture of me, but I don't expect it to stay with them, any more than it has before.

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The trip to Angela's was pleasant--very. I found her most charming and beautiful and she and I hit it off fine. I liked her husband, though I found him a bit conventional for my tastes. Their apartment was surprisingly unpretentious (and surprisingly near my old school haunts)

and when they immediately pulled out a lot of half-empty bottles and informally served brandy and coffee, I felt right at home and relaxed into the general family-slanted conversation.

Pelle orbited completely around his daughter, seemingly content, very quiet now, a "boppo", a papa, while Angela seemed to bask under his fond gaze. He became the center of attention only once when, while characteristically flicking his finger on his wine glass, the whole top flew off and fell at my feet. He looked incredulous and laughed, but made no further move about it. Everyone let it lie, and finally I leaned over and picked it up.

Other than that, my whole impression while there was the same one I'd had all evening--that they were holding in, putting on an act, not being entirely themselves, being polite for my benefit. How much I would have preferred for them to have let down their guard and their hair and we'd all had a good old drinking, talking session far into the night, such as they obviously indulged in when at ease among their friends. I had hoped for that.

Actually, the undercurrent of stilted politeness all evening left me feeling quite disappointed and somewhat bored and unsatisfied when I left, which I did immediately after we got back to their house.

Yet my largest feeling was one of acceptance and enjoyment. They had made me "one of the family" all evening. I could-

n't deny that, nor that, on the whole, they were very, very nice and gracious to me. Ginny even offered, at the very last minute, to sleep me if Paula didn't have room. Naturally, it was too late to accept that well-meant offer.

What stayed with me the most was a warm, close, intimate feeling of rapport with Angelo (which name I prefer). It almost bordered on the first little glow that comes when falling in love, and coupled with his warm, spontaneous chuckles whenever I (unintentionally) put a check-rein on Ginny's sometimes "too-too" hostessing and with little needling manifestations from Ginny toward me throughout the evening, it almost created that little "triangle" sharpness that has become so familiar to me since I've been a divorcee.

This was confirmed even more by his unexpected warmth and intimacy ~~to me~~ in the car and the "coolness" of Ginny on the other side of me. For they "made" (and Ginny "allowed" me) to sit between them after Pelle's strange actions just before we left. I was surprised at how he opened up and talked as we rode; by his easy joking and chuckles; and by his peasanty nudges in my ribs with his elbow accompanied by sly looks that suddenly reminded me so much of Mrs. Picatti, and made me realize how much he looked like her. at joke

But, most of all, I was completely surprised when, as I was making my adieu to them in front of their house, I felt him go behind me and closely circling me, put his hand up and ~~expressed~~ my hair and the back of my neck and shoulders so slowly, gently and lightly that I was

suddenly shaken from head to foot by sexual stimulation, or thrills, if you prefer. (All this in full view of his wife! I was non-plussed.) Then, instead of going toward the house, he started down the street.

Ginny, to whom I had been talking, looked a trifle grim, but seemed not at all surprised when I said to him in amazement, "Why, where are YOU going?" "I'm going to see you to your car," he said, and Ginny acquiesced, as if I should have known, and turned and went in the house.

I wasn't quite sure as I approached the car--but he did nothing but open the door, bid me a few words of farewell, and I felt dismissed. Odd, I thought.

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The next day, when I was again alone and driving over the Pass to come home, I found my thoughts dwelling mostly on my Pellegrini evening, and, to my surprise, I carried with me the same warm glow from Pelle's treatment of me that I used to get from N!

Thank God, I know now these things pass--don't last, and distance, time and/or further acquaintance will dispel what Ginny feared, and I deliberately walked into!

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Now. A few things I missed: I have often compensated my "loss" of N by "revenge" daydreams of the Pellegrinis helping to foster a new romance for me, and maybe getting me into wonderful book illustration jobs.

They ALMOST did both these things that evening.

They told me how a painter friend of theirs had been unable to produce adequate illustrations for Pelle's stuff, and remarked that perhaps I might be better able to with my commercial experience. However, it did not seem the right time to press the matter. I felt as if the idea were not quite "ripe", so I let it pass.

And, while we were eating, at the point when rapport was best between Pelle and me, he suddenly said, "I wish MARIO were here! We should have MARIO here!" Ginny took it up with great enthusiasm, "Oh, yes, that would be just right! I WIAH we could get ahold of him!--Pelle! I'll bet we could---!" And she proceeded to run through a travle ininterary, seemingly very anxious to produce this man.

I couldn't tell what was going on. What did they mean? WHY should Mario be here? I cannot remember what was transpiring at the time so I could get a clue. I sensed that it was someone for ME--that I would enjoy, especially when Ginny became so insistent and Pelle immediately retreated and rejected the idea. All of a sudden he seemed to decide that he didn't REALLY want Mario there.

"WHO is Mario?" I interjected, completely puzzled. Pelle began to describe a cosmopolitan sounding man--Polish, I believe, by the name of Mario "Pillowsnitch", which name threw us into gales of fun. I still did not understand. "He sounds

interesting, "I said, and Pelle went on with his story. Obviously he admired the man for some reason. Not sure yet, I took a chance, "How OLD id he?" I questioned archly, hoping to force something out of them.

But neither he nor Ginny paid any attention to me. Pelle gave me the blank look of a person immersed in his own thoughts--the look I'd seen so often in N's eyes when he was talking awhile a minute about some experience of his. Ginny was hanging on Pelle's every word as she is prone to do, giving the effect of adoting mother intensely willing a favorite child to come to the conclusion she desired him to come to.

It was no use. I gave up. Picking up something Pelle was saying about the man's mode of life and taking my cue from the approval I sensed in his tone, I led the subject away and no more was said about Mario the rest of the evening. I was vaguely disappointed. They were not going to work very hard at it. But the man didn't sound too promising, anyway.

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The P's looked this time more as I had expected them to look in the first place. First, they are older than I thought, making me feel quite young and gay in comparison. Gone was the decrepit car I saw last time. This car was fine and new. Gone was Pelle's odd, wild mop of hair and the beetling eyebrows. Both had been trimmed closely and the effect was much more mundane, and his hair appeared almost entirely gray, which took

away a lot of the dark Italian look as it so often does. He looked very much the typical college professor. I noticed that his hands were an odd shape--broader than they were long with short, stubby fingers--peasant's hands.

Ginny appeared even older than she had the last time, when I had been shocked to find her so old. Neither of them were dressed in the slightly outlandish, Bohemian get-ups they wore before. Pelle was conservatively "dressed up" in tie and coat, I believe. But Ginny looked nondescript in a drab housedressy sort of thing and sneaker type shoes. When I first saw her I realized that "we are not dressing" for Lorna.

About a week afterwards I thought of how they were more often than not unresponsive that evening. Both had a disconcerting way of greeting remarks or anecdotes of mine with absolute silence. Also I was able to put my finger on the impression our conversation at Angela's gave me: I noted at the time that there seemed to be a great deal of "name-dropping". So much so that I, too, joined the game.

The rest of the talk was mostly "self-enhancement" type: the people we know, the books we've read, the gay experiences we've had, the way we look and why. It

was not at all obnoxious. Far from it. Rather I got the impression that they were displaying their very best; they wanted to make a good impression on this comparative stranger. It was flattering in a way.

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After Paula had alerted me, and because of my former suspicions, I began to look for indications of alcoholism in either of them, and found more support than otherwise, I fear: Ginny's "resting" so much; the late hours; the immediate production of all those nearly empty bottles at Angela's and Ginny's exclamation of pity that they should be so low; Pelle's addition of liquor to his coffee (an important symptom, I've found); the family tales of early morning escapades; and especially the way Ginny GULPED her drinks all evening. Both she and Pelle kept filling their glasses absentmindedly as if from habit. Then there was the chronic disappearance of one or both of them kitchenwards all evening. But, most of all, was Pelle's bringing a brimful glass of wine after dinner, AFTER both had made several mysterious kitchen tours, and not bringing any for either himself or Ginny and saying, "Here, this is the last of the bottle." when I had particularly noted that we had emptied the bottle at dinner. (WHAT bottle?)

Mind, I do not sit in judgment on them. Quite the contrary! I was disappointed that we didn't loosen up more and get nicely tight!

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As Pelle warmed up during the evening (probably during the wine drinking) he discussed his own methods of creativity quite frankly with me which I found flattering, especially after Ginny's gentle rebuke last time.

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I have always liked to think of rainbows as rather personal little blessings, for it seems as if I see them on some of the happiest days of my life. As I approached the mountains to come home from my trip, a RAINBOW bloomed across them--and disappeared. I whispered, "Thank You, God," as I set myself for the long drive home.

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So, all in all, the whole trip was most refreshing to my spirits and ego. I have spent the week end since savoring it. Tomorrow I must face the other "long drive home".

I found when I got back that I had forgotten ALL ABOUT NICK! Until I was faced again with my kids' incessant radio-playing and here came the song, "This time I'm really losing you", one I haven't heard since they played it so much just after N went back. I have heard it not once, but over and over and over since I came back. Poor N, I thought, poor N. And that was all.

It didn't hurt any more. The veil of love has finally been rent aside with the help of the Pellegrinis.

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All through these happenings what I call The Pattern has been unusually long, positive and rich. For instance: I waited for more than a year for a chance to see some of these Italian films. Just before I left one was showing. I went to see it. In Seattle, I went to see another. I saw

in our paper there would be another one here while I was gone. I regretted that I'd miss it. Last night my eyes alighted on the announcement that it was still her, but the last night.

I didn't see how I could go. Circumstances changed so that I could easily have gone.

But I CHOSE not to! At last it DIDN'T MATTER! I am SURFEITED with things Italian! I preferred to stay home and write up this record. So I did--without regrets. I have found substitutes for my daydream at last!

Was that all? No! Catching up on the magazines I'd missed I saw an announcement that there was to be a TV show on the slums of Palermo--done by a man I used to go to school with. A shock gripped me from head to foot. (So, it wasn't all gone, after all, all my interest?) WHEN? Oh NO! while I was gone--I'd missed it!

But now I was at peace with my N problem and so I could openly ask mother if she'd seen it. "No," she said, "We always get them a week late. This one will probably be NEXT week. He had something different this week." "Well, let me know when it's on," I said, "I want to see it."

(Note: I waited all week for it. They did not have it on.)

With or without N, I find my interest in Sicily and its problems lingers. This program is evidently based on the book I sent N for his birthday, and I am glad the world is taking note of their problems.

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So, once again, I figured I was THROUGH;
everything neat and tidy and finished:
Janie alienated and left to her own life;
N gone and planning to be married; my
acceptance by and curiosity about the
Pellegrinis satisfactorily achieved; all
finished, ready to be tucked away as a
memory.

Then came the unhappy thought that I sup-
pose it is my DUTY to let Janie and N know
about the TV show. Dammit, I have COMMIT*
TED Myself to concern about them. It was
an unpleasant chore to write the follow-
ing, for the Chianellos now seem not
worth bothering with. Why I did it I
don't quite know. It seemed worth the
obvious risk of breaking the "bridge"
with them for the possible ultimate good
it may do, for N, at least, professed a
deep concern for these poor people he
left behind.

May-20, 1962

Dear Silent One,

Chet Huntley is having a television show
about the slums of Palermo. Did you see
it?

I hope this means that Danilo Dolci's
efforts are beginning to bear fruit and,
at last, the world will begin to do some-
thing about poor old Sicily, who got
stuck in the crossroads of History through
no fault of her own!

I, for one, hope I live to see the day
when the people of Sicily, whom I have
learned to love, will take the place
they deserve in this world and things
like Omerta and Vows of Silence will
become things of the past.

Love, from Lorna

It seemed quite right and natural to put "love" on it, though I knew I shouldn't have. Somehow I felt imbued with the kind of love I tried to tell N I felt for them after my wonderful trip. If he misinterprets it, or it causes trouble--too bad.

Gianna mia,
I don't dare approach you any closer than a letter while you have this Big Hate on for me--(why I don't know, any more than I know why Nick was mad at me for so long)--But I wanted to tell you that Chet Huntley is having a television show about PALERMO in case you didn't know. It will probably be the next one--Saturday, I think. Maybe you won't be interested since it's about the SLUMS of Palermo, but maybe it will make America look not so bad, after all.

Lorna

I ha a harder time writing this one, being sorely tempted to be even nastier. Once I would have mulled and pondered and worried over it. Now I plain don't care.

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A couple days later, still not having heard from the Wolfer Company, and afraid some word might come in themail while the kids will be home to get it during the imminent summer vacation, and wishing to be relieved of worry about it, I wrote them a sarcastic, naonymous note telling them to skip it.

It might be valuable or interesting for me to relate my account of the Chianello story as I told it to the Pellegrinis. I don't know.

I do know that by the time I got to tell it to them I was bitter and disillusioned and did not tell it as I once would have. Whether that is good or not I do not know, either.

As I said, Ginny came in and sat herself beside me on the davenport. Pelle was seated in his evidently favorite seat across the room. And Ginny said, "I believe you were going to tell us about something or someone--"

I have already told how this put me off, and how the belatedness of their mentioning it also discouraged me. The evening was now half over and we would soon have to go to Angela's. Obviously they did not intend to devote much time or attention to it. I had expected a relaxed, cosy, drink-stimulated evening perhaps going on far into the night discussing heart to heart the problems and observations on alien adjustments. This was just a polite, gracious social gesture to one of their devoted "fans", with, perhaps a touch of "guilt-riddance" for getting the wine label so cheaply. ^{evening}

I began to demur, saying that perhaps they weren't interested, etc. "oh, but of course they were!" This from Ginny, of course--(she handled all such things.)

"Well," I began, sighing and hoping I could shorten the story sufficiently, "of course I know that Sicily is a sort of

step-child of Italy--"

"Oh, it isn't that," Pelle cut in blandly, "It's just that it's SEPARATE--"

"Oh, I know how it is," I said, not interested in keeping up this false note.

"You have already given yourselves away-- who was it that said it--You? (turning to Pelle)--no, YOU (turning back to Virginia) YOU said, 'So you're going to be nasty about it?'" (I had them there.) They said nothing and I went on.

Pelle interrupted. "How did you meet N?" This annoyed me for I had already told them this. I digressed to make a quick summary. "Oh, I knew N before I knew Janie--I was in this studio with a photographer and a couple of artists and N worked for the newspaper--(This bothered me afterwards, for I felt it gave them the impression that I had FORCED my acquaintance with N. I wished I had made it clearer that his work was in the same office I was in.) "He seemed nice and I got to talking to him--I was interested in hearing about his country and all. Nobody else paid much attention to him--they said he was too hard to understand (I looked at Pelle here. He made no comment.) We got to talking and he began to tell me all his troubles--they really were in a mess--"

Here I began to explain the family situation--how Janie had married a soldier during the war and had brought back N and Pina after a visit home. Here Pelle made some chuckle or something and looked at Ginny, sharing something. "How many WERE there in the family?" he asked. When I said 5 and began to explain, he wasn't listening for he laughed and raised his eyebrows at Ginny, as much as to say,

"You see?" which left me puzzled. "What happened to the sister?" he asked now. I told him and then went on to say how beautiful Janie and Pina were--and dwelt on this till Ginny came back, for she had gone kitchenward for some reason. This was when he made his grudging admission about Southern beauties.

As Ginny came back I went on--" and so Pina got married right away, but N was more of a problem." The other two seemed to be having some joke between themselves now and, feeling somehow that I was presenting N too seriously, I tried to lighten it by saying, "--little brother wouldn't adjust!" This wasn't quite right somehow. They weren't being at all interested in N. "How dark is he?" Pelle asked.

I realized the insight of this question and explained and when he didn't say anything tried to fill in with other descriptions of coloring in the family. They weren't interested.

I pushed on with my tale, feeling that the important thing was "i nonni's" coming, I began on that, explaining how they'd all concentrated for years on bringing them over for a visit or--here a laugh from Pelle made me realize that he was perfectly aware of the immigrant's finagling to get the whole damn family over, so I gave him a knowing look and laugh, which he returned.

He interrupted me somewhere to ask, out of context, how Janie's accent was. I said, "Oh, not bad at all. Just enough to be 'cute', you know--she works at the store where I do " etc.--implying that she spoke well enough to hold down a job.

I began telling how Janie seemed obsessed to build a new house before they came, even though the old one seemed nice and more appropriate to me, and how they had gone through hardships to get this house with swimming pool done. Pelle was following this closely and with evident enjoyment, for he laughed before I got to the point about the swimming pool being done just as the parents arrived. This was the best moment of my tale as far as reception went. This really seemed to tickle him.

But not Ginny. She was sitting in a grim, little hunched up knot, her face squinched into a look of solicitous woe. Now she cried out, "The SWIMMING POOL--it must be SYMBOLIC of something--what do you suppose it's symbolic of?" (I felt like saying "O, come off it, Ginny! I TOLD you these tales were tragi-COMIC**don't you get the pathos? the sad humor?)

I ignored her and turned back to Pelle, eager to capitalize on his understanding. I said to him smiling ruefully, "I don't think the parents could have cared less--" but I got no understanding response.

Then I began~~d~~ to tell about "i nonni's" trip anxious to make the pathetic point about their not eating on the train. This took a little too much explaining. When I tried to tell about Janie's phoning and finding out they had no money, it fell flat, for I couldn't remember what that pitiful amount was--and I appealed to Pelle, "They were going to come clear across the continent with only 2--5? dollars!---" He only looked at me. What had I said wrong? I hadn't stepped on his toes any about

HIS family doing the same, had I? That was long ago; this was different.

Whatever it was, it was at this point that I lost Pelle. He made one remark when I finished the story about he'd never heard of a railroad giving a FREE meal and that was the last word he said. Gone was all his humor and seeming enjoyment. He now became silent and grim and seemed lost in his own thoughts and began the restless movements I referred to.

(Oh yes, he had responded to the car story, which, I believe, was before this.)

I was sorry to "lose" him because Ginny does not respond to things as I do and he does. I had tried very hard to tell the story factually, impersonally, and without bias one way or the other, for I was afraid of showing my bitterness and I wasn't quite sure of my audience.

But something obviously had changed and I was afraid it was something I had said or some way I had said it. Since Ginny was the only audience I had left now, I turned to her and told the rest of my story in her direction, not caring much now whether or how I told it. She listened without looking at me. All her attention was centered on Pelle.

She began that careful handling of him I have mentioned, interpreting my story to him as to a child, softening it, almost seeming to be pleading with him to accept her interpretation. Someone had waved a red flag at her carefully husbanded bull and she had her hands full. She had no time for me. That was the impression I got.

I was disappointed. This was not what I had waited a couple of years for.

What did I tell now? I let down my guard somewhat for, after all, Ginny is an American and a woman and married to an alien. I told how i nonni just sat all summer, how I took them my language book and it did no good, how they only spoke two words of English to me all summer; I referred to my Picatti attempt and what she said about Janie not wanting to be Italian; and my attempts to get a coffee party started and the last minute trip to the Italian family in Wapato. (At this, Pelle said, disgustedly, "There are LOTS of Italians in the lower valley!" (he DID say something, after all!))

One of Ginny's explanations to Pelle at this point about i nonni was, Maybe they were OVERWHELMED, Pelle. Do you think they were overwhelmed?" He didn't answer her.

I told how Janie got fed up and sent them back and that there was a big scene over it. I told about i nonno not having any money and the mix-up in his pension. Here too, Pelle answered--before I was even through my sentence, (guess I was wrong about his silence!). He said, explosively, W/"If he DID get his pension, it wouldn't even have kept him in SMOKES by the time it was changed into American money!"

Then I told, a little fearfully for fear of giving myself away, about N8s not coming all summer, though he was expected in June. I said that Janie said, "I wonder why N doesn't come?" Here again Pelle was before me, for I was just going to tell my suspicions when Pelle let out a laugh and a gay, sly look, which I caught

and raising my finger in the air, I cried, "I was suspicious. There was only ONE THING that would keep N away--!!" Pelle nodded and laughed along with me. Ginny, as usual, didn't seem to get it. "And, sure enough!" I continued, "When he came back he announced that he had a negro girl frined!" Not being at all sure what their views on this would be, I waited to see their reaction.

They gave me no clue. They both stared at the floor and said nothing. There was that black silence I spoke about. Then, I think, Ginny began a character description of the typical "Sarracino" son. She seemed to be speaking to me, but she was looking at Pelle. She said, "Maybe that's the way he is--" hesitatingly, as if afraid of saying too much.

I wasn't very surprised. They were verifying my suspicions? They had their own ideas about what really happened, and were trying to be kind to me? Well, this is what I'd come for--one thing--to see what THEIR reaction to these people would be. THEY knew more about Italians than I did, that's why I'd appealed to them for help.

So I caught myself and seriously considered N from their view, the one Ginny presented. Suddenly I saw that that was exactly N's trouble--he was trying to ACT like a Sarracino--but, WAS he one? No, I thought, no. All of N's protests against all that sort of thing, all of his driving ambition and self-sacrifice and the grueling hours of study alone, all the guilt of sexual escapades, the buried, sweet yearning for a really nice girl--no, no--N didn't quite fit the picture,

though I knew what she meant. Hadn't I, too, been through these doubts. "No, no," I said to Ginny, "N's not like that--". I didn't expect her to believe me and she didn't. Nor did she ask what he WAS like or why I should protest. Oh well, I t ought, what's the use?

Yet neither was he as idealistic as she was trying to make him earlier when she stood up for him during my account of the car-winning--maybe he HAD written the essay on What Democracy Means to Me, she said. Again I had said, "No--N's not the type--". Somewhere between the two. Somewhere between. Once again I was totally alone in my belief in N. They never once asked me to tell about him.

This was about all I'd told. After I defended N, I said into the big silence, "It just about killed his mother--" wondering if they knew what I meant about THEIR great prejudice. No response. No comment. No questions.

THIS part I wanted to tell. THIS part I wanted their help on--WHY N picked a negress; how he downgraded himself when he got on his won; THIS was the crucial adjustment picture. I glanced at Pelle. No interest. So I turned once again to Ginny and tried to explain how I thought N was trying to prove his new "democratic" accomplishments to me. I was quite prepared and willing to acknowledge the hidden suspicion they might have. I had planned how I'd laugh and say to Pelle, "Moni soit qui mal y pense!" and leave it at that. But nobody had the

courage to bring it out in the open I guess, if they DID think it.

I said, pointing to my fingers in turn, "I" said, 'I have a Chinese friend--"(etc.) They weren't buying that one. They left me hanging. So, once again, I said, "It just about killed his mother--". I wanted to bring out this prejudice discussion, but I could not. All I felt hanging in the air was the unspoken words--("His MOTHER!? And what did it do to YOU?") This was when I felt that they might be thinking (THAT'S what finished her! THAT'S what changed her attitude, etc. etc.)-Poor woman! Poor, deluded woman!) All right! All right! True! I'm willing to admit it. But there is another, deeper hidden story to all this! Don't they want to know? Aren't they interested?

This was when I gave up, for Pelle had now crossed the room to our side, giving an impression of wanting to break this up, of impatience. Once again I was gripped with the old impotence. They didn't care! They didn't care! These "fine" people I had counted so much on! These people whom I thought were carrying the torch for better understanding! They were just like everybody else; they saw and cared only for the superficial. They neither suspected nor had any interest in the PSYCHOLOGY, the deep hidden river of motive and tragedy underlying every heartbreak. Once again the door slammed in my face.

It was then I made my last appeal about Hate. Couldn't they see the centuries of tragedy that brewed this hate? Couldn't they understand and forgive even the most mercenary, the most grasping of Sicilians?

No! They couldn't! They agreed, yes, with mute little nods--(Sicilians are full of hate--yes. We know that. We have always known it. You are just finding out. You bore us.)

What Pelle really was thinking I do not know. I would give anything to know sometime. He was deeply agitated. Why? To some worthy purpose, I hoped? HE had the power and the means and the audience to let out a cry, a plea, as he had already done in his books. Had I planted something, helped anyone, anywhere?

Had I struck a spark in this man again? This man who was supposed to have written another book a year or two ago and never has, who has frittered his talents away in commercial trivia?

I asked him point blank just before we drove into their street on our way back from Angela's when he announced proudly, happily apropos of nothing that his book, "The Unprejudiced Palate" (which I found MOST prejudiced!) had gone into paperback edition and sold about 20,000 copies (I believe he said.) At this Ginny had exclaimed, "PELLE! NO!?" in glad wonder. (This was twice he'd told me something that evening that Ginny had never seemed to have heard about!)

Anyway, I asked, "Will there be another book?" I was sitting between them and therefore very close to him. In the pause that came I was wondering if Ginny thought I had "temerity" to ask such a question as she had said that first visit.) But the expression of warm bemusement on the fine, intelligent face so close beside me

the ~~eyes~~ eyes focused far ahead --on the road and on the book he was going to write--reassured me. He answered in his simple, direct way, "Yes."

I said, "I'm waiting."

Ginny said nothing.

May 23, 1962

Oh-well, I might as well give-up and pretend I'm an amateur writer, for little things keep happening that I can't resist recording. This is nothing, just odd coincidence that I would like to think over later:

I keep expecting the end of this thing I call a Pattern--at least this phase of it--but we seem to have a Pattern on MUSHROOMS going on!

Now, mushrooms is something that just simply has never been in my life before till I called on Mr. Pellegrini that day and "they had just gotten back from picking mushrooms". They served me mushrooms for dinner that night--not in a sauce, as I've had them before, but mushrooms "per se". We talked of them and he related how he was going to CleEllum to gather them--how that was the best place to find them--soon. (It is? I couldn't think how odd it was that I felt that compulsion to stop and explore the hills behind CleEllum that day on my way over! I'd never done THAT Before!) *help but*

I come home. Mother comes in with a handful of mushrooms she has picked from the backyard, claiming they are edible.....I am working with old newspapers at the office. As I cut out ads, here under my scissors is a gay article about the Sons of Italy starting a contest this year to find the "King of Mushrooms", etc. *in CleEllum* I cannot resist sending it, with sketch, to Angelo. I do.

Right after I mail it, the news is full of a plane crash in which everyone is killed--a plane leaving Chicago. I remember with alarm that Mr. P. is leaving Chicago by plane today or tomorrow. I hope it is not *his plane*. Everyone assures me it wouldn't be that plane. (I must check later).

I go by our book department, and a book I'd never seen before is lying right in full view--a very complete book on MUSHROOMS!

End of mushroom story.

A couple of hours later:

End of Mushroom story? NO!

I got a call for work and guess what it was for--a brochure for CLE ELLUM!--a big, job, a fat job, just what I needed to recoup my finances! For a lodge there that ~~could~~ be the vrry place Pelle stays when he goes there.

It was such an unbelievable coincidence that I couldn't help mentioning my connections with Sle Ellum recently. Ensued a camaraderie talk with the printer slapping me on the shoulder and asking me if I'd ever been to Cle^{ll}llum on a Saturday night? Had I ever drunk Dago red with the Dagoes up there? Etc. (It made me want to go and see!) It's easy to see why Pelle likes to go and wants to go without Virginia, which upset her no little!

I swear the Pellegrinis bring me luck!

May 25, 1962

At work yesterday my boss announced that I was getting a raise! In my usual way I could try to tie this in with the Pellegrinis, but I am beginning to worry a little about my persistent "ideas of reference" even though they are reported with "tongue in cheek".

I could say that "the Pellegrinis bring me luck". Actually, this is true in that they bolster my self-confidence, thereby making me more daring, more effective. It could be that the raise was partially a result of my subtle implication that I was going to Seattle to look for work, which was only partially true. Even so, the P.'s afforded me a good excuse for going--albiet unwittingly.

I find during this week back that I am really cured about the Chianellos, the difference this time being that I dare not backslide. For the P's obvious disapproval of the Chianellos helped verify my suspicions, and keeps me from resuming my daydreams. Because I value the P's esteem and friendship more than the C's. I now find myself *myself* reluctant to renew my broken relations with the C's for fear of the scorn of the P's. All this P and C business merely means I have found a better substitute for the N daydream.

I grant that, if I had not made the grade with the P's, this would not be so. As it is, I feel very sure that my last careless contacts to N and Janie have alienated them. I feel a trifle sad to end it on this note, but it was necessary to risk "destroying the bridge" to "help" them in the long run.

The chances of either of them coming to me voluntarily in the future are so slim that I do not even entertain the notion. I feel no further

desire to put myself out for them any further, not even to Christmas cards. "Go your way, and I'll go mine" is the way I feel about them at last. (They probably have long since felt this way about me!)

And, unless, there should be some startling development, there should be no further reason to keep this journal going, for it would become only my personal journal--and not the story of the Chianello episode.

Dare I once again write---

FINIS?

May 27, 1962

A few more observations.

On the Pellegrini evening:

I was only trying to be nice when I gave that interpretation to our conversation at Angela's. My true thoughts are that the P's show a great deal of evidence of being name-droppers. Pelle, especially, by his books and attitude impresses me as being quite a "climber." Nothing against him; he SHOULD be proud.

On his reaction to my Chianello story: He WAS mad, no doubt of it; Ginny was placating him; he WAS trying to avoid my tale, I am still not sure why, but I have a new slant on it: Remembering my first desire to unload on him, I remember that I was afraid that he is probably overburdened with these tales of woe--a result of his books. Now I see that, having no real interest in Sicilians (for I have learned the intense regional rivalry that exists among Italians); and being much more prejudiced against Americans than he realizes he is and therefore protective of his own people, also without realizing it, and being eager for approval and acceptance, which he also does not realize he is; that he feigned an approval and interest in my "good deed" that fooled even himself.

The seeming mellowness and acceptance and adjustment in him could well be a superficial result of years of intense effort on Ginny's part, for that is the way she treats him--like a personal creation. (This is exactly what I would have done to N!) For I can see the same ugly undercurrent in him I see in the Chianelles, though his is better masked.

And, just as I wearily face the same old shallow, trite unburdenings whenever anyone learns that I am an ARTIST, so must Pelle be weary of tales of Italian immigrants by Americans. That black, un-answering look I got to my silent appeal to him

probably meant that I had revealed the same old American attitude without even knowing it; that all HIS efforts toward better understanding had accomplished no more than mine--his efforts being from the other side. The other side of that impassable chasm. We each stood locked in alienness, challenging each other. He probably WAS ~~NOT~~ desirous of both motives, to kiss AND kill me! To kiss me for trying; to kill me for failing.

It might have been the basis for his rather unrelated remark after his brooding silence at Angela's about all races intermarrying and erasing the differences.

How well now do I understand the real wisdom in that line from (Twain? Kipling?) that "East is East, and West is West and never the twain shall meet" (THERE's where I got the TWAIN!) I thought it outmoded and superficial. Now, after four years, I REALLY understand it.

"Races", or ETHNIC groups can never merge in one lifetime. They can only call a truce.

So--I could say that "truth" is "truce"?

May 29, 1962

(No! I dare not write Finis! As Maurois says, "NOTHING is ever finished in life--")

I found out that EVERYBODY at work got a raise--my BOSS lied. So--no credit to Pellegrinis!

I found out that the Palermo program I sought was not the one I thought. It is a program of CONTROVERSIAL issues that we do not get here. And, besides, the Italian government BANNED the show! Ooch! If the GOVERNMENT wished to suppress it, what will JANIE want to do?

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In a couple of days it will be June again-- June, my month of sorrows---On June 7th it will be three years since N went to LA and I wondered what would happen.

I must admit that the only thing that I didn't really, truly expect was his return. Otherwise it has been very much as I predicted--with my BRAIN, that is, not with my HEART!

May 30, 1962

This holiday (Memorial Day) I have been battling my deep and bitter disillusion which is the inevitable outcome of all these preceding pages. All day I have been thinking that I simply can't stand to go on feeling this way----

When my daughter, who had been busily typing all day, handed me a copy of what she had been doing, remarking that she had copied it because she thought it was simply wonderful--and could I tell her what some of it meant?

It was a copy of Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem "Renaissance," which is one work of hers I am not familiar with. Reading it now I could have wept--there could be no more perfect answer for me. I wish she had made another copy, for I'd like to put it here at the end--it is so utterly fitting!

But it is too long to copy here--I must not delay any more on this. Suffice it to put only the ending--

"But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat--the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.
(And)

The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
(And)

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky--
No higher than the soul is high."

(Pardon, Edna, for rearrangement!)

It was a rare moment, and a rarely beautiful day. I debated if my daughter were old enough, if I grabbed this chance to pass on my torch--would she understand-- Would she understand now if I told her the story of Nick and Janie and the Pellegrinis and what it meant to me? What it means to the world--HER world she will have to live in?

I took the chance. We went outside and sat in the sun and Life let us alone long enough for me to tell her briefly the meaning of that poem and my four years past-- She understood.

I never thought of handing the torch to my children when all others failed me!

June 14, 1962--Thursday

Sheer curiosity ^{about N} and the observance of the Pattern beginning again has led me to seek out the latest wrtiings on ESP.

The books mentioned that investigators have been curious as to whether ESP can be SUMMONED. (I have maintained that it cannot.)

So, I decided to experiment, because I muchly desire news about N. So far it seems to work. At least there seems to be a small preliminary build-up, one of which is the entrance into the background of my life of a new popular song, an Italian one, sung in Italian--"Al di la"-- (Beyond), a bittersweet, Volare-type song.

Last night I concentrated HARD: "LET ME HAVE NEWS OF N!"

Now, how in the the world could that be accomplished under the present circumstances, I thought. I simply could not see how it could be done. I gave it no further thought.

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At work today a crazy set of circumstances made it imperative for me to go to the store where Janie works. At the time I didn't even realize what was happening:

The products I was supposed to sketch were not yet uncrated. For various reasons it was impossible to get them uncrated. "Go to M---'s (the store where Janie works) and see what they looke like--they have them." came my orders.

"So FAR?" I queried. "Aren't there any closer? Are they the ONLY ones who have them?"

"yes."

"Aren't there any PICTURES--ANYTHING?" I persisted. (This was ridiculous!) No. Absolutely nothing.

I did not believe it. I searched, but the buyer was right. How very odd. I had to go to Miller's.

I had been paying no attention to the time. As I left I was surprised to see it was just noon. Why, I might encounter Janie on her way to lunch! What a strange thing that I should be FORCED to enter Janie's orbit! I wasn't at all sure I wanted to.

Suffice it to say that I went and I did not encounter her. And I was rather glad.

It was not until I got back that I remembered my prayer of last night. Well! THAT was CLOSE! But the Pattern obviously was not "ripe" yet. I have learned to "go along with it", so I didn't fret about it.

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Later, that afternoon, Alberta, Janie's sister-in-law, from whom I have drifted apart and have not seen in ages, came into the office, pointed a finger at me and said, "I want to see you about something--later--when I have time." Whatever does she want, I wondered?

Alberta! Alberta! Of course! I can
ask HER about Janie--about N! What-
ever it is she wants, it will give me
achance--if I care to take it!

I wonder----

Thursday--June 14, 1962

Notes from reading on ESP

"In both England and America experiments conducted under rigid scientific conditions have now shown that it is possible for one human being to become aware at a distance of another's thoughts or feelings.

"If the percipient himself is asked to describe the process of ESP he can give little help. When it surfaces it either seems to come to him "out of the blue" or to be accompanied by an awareness of conditions indescribable in ordinary terms to those who have not shared them. He therefore is liable to speak in terms which seem nonsensical to the investigator.

"This surfacing sometimes seems to be delayed--we may guess that it often fails altogether--and the manner in which it takes place is as mysterious as the manner in which it is transmitted.

"The form in which all ESP finally reaches surface consciousness seems to vary with the temperament and mood of the percipient--sometimes vague and shadowy--sometimes sharply and accurately--sometimes in symbols, as in dreams.

"All percipients agree that a process of "stilling" is the first step of ESP.....It requires some relaxed state--sleep, near-sleep, maybe aided by drugs or alcohol; a relaxation of conscious controls--a sense of self--a READINESS for ESP.

"It requires an emotional set--love or hate to or toward another or others--a feeling of relatedness, of connection, of link with another person.

"It is a kind of "magical thinking" which proceeds by "leaps"—destroys boundaries—proceeding on the theory that all things can be related. It has to believe in "signs".

"ESP is PRIOR to consciousness. It is cause rather than consequence. It erupts rarely—and as if from some deep well of psychic energy.

" People who experience ESP are called "sensitives".

"One form of ESP is known as "spontaneous cases"—(the "out of the blue" kind)—They have been described thus:
1—a conscious perception of some kind
2—a sense of conviction
3—but consciousness itself is not altered
4—the ESP message is experienced as if it had come through the ordinary sense channels

" A mental image may be dynamic—IT MAY CAUSE THINGS TO HAPPEN. Thus ideas are dangerous things because they have a tendency, however slight, to come true!

ESP works in such a way that some people can divine hidden motives in others and "inexplicably" get mad at what another does or says.

end-

No one ever "forgets" something he really wants. Anyone who constantly "forgets" is to be avoided; they are too utterly self-absorbed."

June 15, 1962 *Friday*

Well, I don't have to wonder any more--
not ANY MORE!

I went to see what Alberta wanted reluctantly--very reluctantly. I found out what she wanted and then mentioned that I'd seen Esgate's house was for sale, and from that led her in to what I wanted to talk about, but dreaded.

She was a "good kid". She told me quickly, suddenly, without my probing, "We got a WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT from her (Nanie's) brother yesterday---oh dear, another present to buy---" and so forth.

I watched her carefully, controlling myself.

No, she didn't SEEM to be up to anything--it all went easily, naturally. "Sometime the end of the month--not right away", she said. She didn't know just when. I tried to pump her a little, but she wasn't sure of anything, acted "disinterested".

Suddenly all I had planned to do this afternoon seemed of no importance. I tried to control myself, but I was sick at heart. I found myself devastated--not so much at the prospect of N actually marrying--(I feel a delayed reaction on that)--but the fact that I didn't receive and announcement. That is what bothered me all the rest of the afternoon.

I went into an emotional tailspin. Uppermost in my mind was the desire to do some scathing revenge on N--send him a blistering letter or post card. (But I don't know where he is!)

"Luckily" I got an unfair parking ticket and could take out some of my ire on City Hall.

But my project for the afternoon was ruined—a vow to buy myself a new dress—not to give up to my kids again, but to buy ME something. But, alone with all those mirrors and cruel lights and my aging, fat, ugly, impossible body, and my head and heart bursting with emotion ("He DID IT: he DID it! He's ACTUALLY going to MARRY; some YOUNG flesh! He stayed WITH it this time! All the time a little murmur underneath saying to me, "It's SUCCESS, Lorna. Without YOU he COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT! YOU helped him to this; this late, late commitment. You're lucky. You're wise. What a narrow escape you had!—Thank God, you FOOL! APP*RECIATE it!)

But, larger than that feeling was the rejection, the cruel, cruel finishing touch of NOT EVEN GETTING AN ANNOUNCEMENT—when I'd worked so hard, tried so hard—The "Betrayal"—"God, take this cup from me—Why did You forsake me—WHY did You lead me astray?"

I was no good. I did what I had to do and came home—utterly whipped—all my neuroses descending on me "in toto".

This is a cruel blow. Prepared as I was; "wise" as I am—I am suffering.

Before I came home, I "fought the Devil", literally. I was sorely, sorely tempted to go to Millers—where Janie works—the only place I didn't look for a dress—and just plain blast off at her—"I HATE you! What RUDENESS! You two and your primitive Sicilian customs you try to inflict on us!" I stood on the corner and fought myself.

But all I have learned—all my unhappy "principles" won out. (Wait! Wait, I have learned. Tomorrow it won't hurt so much. No one understands—no one is "with you". Hold on. Carry on. God works in mysterious ways. THIS you

June 15 - Fri.
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have learned. That disillusionment about Chianellos and Pellegrinis and Sicilians doesn't matter. You have "proved" that there is a secret beyond our power to know. Wait. Hold. Do not judge yet.) I didn't go.

To be perfectly frank, I was so utterly ego-stripped that I turned to neurosis # 2 and gulped some wine frantically when I got home. But it didn't work! Under all my surface acts was a huge, raging mad. It would not be denied.

Now tight with wine, I grabbed the first opportunity and dialed Janie's number--meaning to talk to Harry this time, but some instinct told me he is an "evader", so I asked for Janie.

I made no attempt to be nice at all. At last I let every nasty tone I felt out in my voice. I don't remember what I said exactly. I launched immediately into the fray--

"Alberta says she got an announcement of N's wedding. I didn't. Frankly, I'm hurt. I had it all planned what I'd send them---"

At first she tried to be nice--explained SHE'D just gotten HER announcement "the day before". I was somewhat mollified, and admitted the same. But it was no use. She then started pulling "customs" on me, saying "her BROTHER'S business was none of hers"--evading, letting herself out--she, who ^{had} managed N's every move for him!--"it was up to N", and so on.

I apologized, and we almost had it settled nicely when she said something that really made me mad--I don't remember just what. For once I called her on it, instead of letting it go by. I said, "Yes, that's EXACTLY what I mean--why SHOULDN'T we be friends--what have I DONE?"

Now, at last, she was talking honestly. "Those letters you wrote me—all those letters—how could I answer them—how could anyone answer something like that? You IMPLIED things—you implied—it's none of my business—IN OUR COUNTRY when a man proposes marriage and is refused WE HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH THAT FAMILY!"

"Janie!" I said scornfully, "What YOU'RE talking about is and "INAMORATA"——"

"Yes! Yes!" she agreed, "That's exactly what I mean——"

"THIS isn't like that——" I continued, "——it's not that at all——". More lecture from her, more references to what I had implied in my letters, more scolding about how such things weren't done in her country, more scoffing at my interpretation of N's actions.

"Oh, Janie!" I said, "That's all OVER——"

We were going it hot and heavy. At last we were talking openly and freely—as I had wanted her to do when I sent the letters—my reason for sending them—(how different everything might have been if we'd cleared the atmosphere THEN!)-

My son came in. I didn't want to stop. I'd waited a longtime for this! I chanced it—holding on, hoping he'd go away—hoping Janie wouldn't hang up on my sudden silence. He looked at me queerly, then walked over and looked at the open telephone number list which I had stupidly left open in front of me (such nerve!), looked disgusted, and turned and walked out. (How much more disgusted he would have been if I'd done what I'd wanted to all this time!)

Relieved, I turned back to listening to Janie—only to hear muffled strange noises from her end—uner-watery sounding "oh's" and "ah's"

Later: in the middle of a very bad night:

No wonder I dreaded and avoided finding out! It hurts. "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned"--even when she PLANNED to be scorned!

I am lying awake going through all the usual first emotions: fantastic plans of revenge, repression of my own guilt and shame, self-justification.

And then the subconscious layer coming through--I begin to remember bits and parts of my conversations that change the picture I first got somewhat:

1. When Harry came out after me, he was really making a PLEA for Janie--just as she did on the phone--trying to absolve her from responsibility and blame for what N does--that at last N is FREE of them--to do what he decides, right or wrong. They know now something of the truth about "little brother" and want no part of it! Mission accomplished! Good! I think that is why I left feeling satisfied. Just as I found out, hard as it was, that N no longer needed ME--now I know for sure he no longer needs JANIE!

2.

I forgot to say that while Harry was dwelling on N I cut him short with some remark I don't quite remember and said, "But what about JANIE?" And, looking him full in the eye, "JANIE has to get along, too!" I remember thinking and wondering if he'd get what I meant, not being sure at the time just what I DID mean. Now I think I know.

Had I KNOWN for sure, as I did now, that they were "through" with N, through with being responsible for him, I don't think

I would have called or ~~come~~^{gone} over. At first I thought I was there to "help" Janie--to insist on maintaining our FRIENDSHIP for her own ultimate good in adjustment-- Would he, he who suffered so much from Janie's inability to adjust to American ways, would he understand? Would he realize that if Janie could "forgive" me and be friends, she would have come along way and life would be easier for him? Would he understand this?

No. He did not. It was like John being confronted by the priests, "Who are you? Give an account of yourself." And I could say, evenly, calmly, as John did, "I am not the Messiah. I am a voice crying aloud in the wilderness!"

No. It was no use. Janie rejected not only her role of go-between (which I now suspect was my REAL reason for coming--panic at losing contact with N) but any and all overtures of friendship by me "per se". She does not want me for a friend. Harry does not want me for a friend. I gathered that they never did. So why bother, why try anymore?

3. The onset of sleep released the repressed memory that Janie had said on the phone, "Your letters IMPLIED (etc)-- personally, I think you got the wrong impression. I don't think--Nick never said--he didn't MEAN to give you that impression (marriage)--(So they HAD discussed it! She HAD told him! He HAD tried to defend himself as he had prepared to do all the time!)

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Naturally, I had scooted this down and out of my conscious mind, for it was true. N never committed himself that far, and I knew at the time I was risking a great deal by implying it.

N had been very careful to go no further than an ALLUSION or two to marriage. Obviously he was an old hand at this deduction game. He'd been through this before. He KNEW he'd have to face his family some time. He KNEW how women scorned reacted!

That was uppermost in his mind all the time, and I was right in my suspicions that his own self-protection in the ultimate showdown with his family was far more important to him than any feeling he had for me, at any time.

It accounted for all his strange actions and reactions. He knew. He admitted it. He even warned me. Here is my "proof" four years later that he never had any serious intentions toward me at any time, just as I so unhappily suspected that night I first tried to break off with him and he acted in such a Baffling way.

So--why did I make those dangerous allusions to Janie? Because I was trying to get her to face up to the REAL N. Trying to win her support in helping him. But she was still too deluded about him. I didn't have the nerve then to expose N's immorality. I was trying to soften the blow; posing as a "girl friend" until she could face the fact that N indulged in mistresses.

Now she knows. Perhaps she always knew.

Whichever way, it doesn't matter now. I only thank God I played my hunches right and didn't get in any deeper. At least I supported N through his break into more maturity. Nothing can take that away from me.

(I wonder if Lilyan will regret that she didn't play HER hunches some day? For no one could change THAT much in a few months! Marriage or not, it will still be "easy come, easy go!")

4. Then I got to thinking of Janie's alarm when I inadvertently mentioned Alberta's seeking me out to do a poster. And then it occurred to me--that's exactly what she did! For I wondered at the time why she didn't get her poster through the usual channels and why she kept telling me WHY she had wanted me to do it. Did her getting the announcement the day before have anything to do with it?

And why did ~~she~~^{Alberta} react so strangely when I mentioned N and Pina not paying "their share"? And say, "Their share of WHAT?" And her long explanation of Janie's "reasons" for selling the house and Janie's tying herself up to a full time job? No wonder ~~Janie~~^{Alberta} looked alarmed at the possibilities of Alberta, her enemy, and I, her new enemy getting together!

5. And then I remembered Janie's allusions about "we don't know, either--I just got MY announcement YES"ERDAY--first he is and then he isn't" and "I FINALLY got a picture of the girl!" and then her sudden shutting up and changing the subject. This, coupled with Alberta's allusion to some "postponement". Did this have anything to do with my "challenge"

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to N that "nobody would send ME and announcement--nobody would let ME know"?

But I cannot deny the fact that the announcements WERE mailed. This is IT. One prepares announcements a long time ahead!

Well! Well! So THIS is where the Pattern led me this time--my ESP experiment? To news of the knowledge I craved--and dreaded? After Alberta told me, I deliberately sought out my "signs" and "omens" expecting to find them dissipated. They were.

★ ★ ★
Later: I just thought! I COULD put it this way: I DID LAND MY FISH!

I led N to the altar--when no one else could! He swore to me 3 years ago that he would not marry for 7 years and scoffed at my scoffing. Even if he counted the 7 years from the t/me he arrived, and simply decided the time had come and did it, I put him in the POSITION where He COULD marry. For he never would have accomplished this if they had all gone on the way they were going when I met him!

Of course I didn't produce the LA opportunity, but I made him ready so he could seize it when it came. I "sent" him there; I "kept" him there; and I "sent" him back--and they all hate ~~for~~ me for it--including him.

It was my doing. I admit it. By subtle encouraging and discouraging I led him into marriage. I played my fish carefully carefully, snagged him from out of that tepid, stifling pool and landed him, not in my lap, where he would have suffocated, but into the stream of life, where he belonged--where he could find a mate!

(You can't have your fish & eat it, too!)

Later. On Saturday.

My mind keeps dredging up details that may or may not be significant:

In my talk with Alberta I was TOO engrossed with my dissebling so that I didn't really listen to her. I remember now that she went on at great length about "N's big operation--you know," she said. "He has to be careful, Janie said--" etc.

I remember wondering at the time what she was talking about. I was completely confused--it was a tale, a version I'D never heard before, and I couldn't figure out what got her started on THAT.

Hertone of championing a family cause made me wary and kept my mouth shut. I THINK it started from her saying that she didn't remember the date of the wedding--"No, not SOON." She was emphatic about that. "Sometime the END of the month--I don't know what the DELAY was (I hadn't referred to any delay!)--some thing about N's operation--he had to have another one, you know."

When I evinced surprise, she kept saying, "YOU know--his BIG operation--he had to have some repair work done--or something--I don't know--when ever it was--"

"You mean LAST YEAR--before he came up?" I asked.

She seemed very confused, very puzzled. "Yes, -- I think so--a BIG operation--he has to be careful, Janie says--"

Suddenly it struck me funny. Poor Janie, covering for little brother again! "Oh, you mean the TONSILS--" I said.

"Yes,--I guess--I don't know--"

I laughed and dropped it, for I could see the family politicking and I didn't want to get involved. I thought of saying, "I don't BELIEVE he had his tonsils out," but decided against it, realizing what it would lead me into.

Anyway, now I am beginning to wonder what this DELAY, this POSPHONEMENT is that both she and Janie alluded to. I asked her about N's job to see if MONEY could be the basis of the delay, but she didn't seem to know much about that. All I gathered was that IF there was a delay, it couldn't have been money or job trouble, because that would have been the easiest, the most logical excuse.

And this operation foolishness is a big lie—a blatant cover-up; for N hadn't had anything more serious than his lung operation many years ago I KNOW—certainly not LAT SUMMER. He was in fine shape the doctors told him—to his chagrin. THEY sent him to a psychiatrist!

Maybe THAT'S his illness! Or, is this something new? Something had had done this spring? Something connected with his "prostate trouble" Janie told me about? Anything to do with her unhappy shaking of her head when I mentioned the children he'd have? her reference to Lilyan's "knowing all about his trouble and not caring—it was such a RELIEF to him!"—and her bafflement when I asked if she meant the TB. Did it have anything to do with any of these things? I remembered N's bleeding one day when he was with me? And Janie's allusion to his having "hurt himself". And his "impotence" troubles. And I remember N referring to telling a doctor about his "control prowess" and wondering why he and the doctor had been discussing such things.

What IS this illness of his?

Saturday.

And I remembered Janie's unavailability when I appeared at the door after hanging up the phone on her. Despite my attempt to park out of sight, she COULD have seen me in time, (and the brakes squeaked when I stopped) from the dining room window to fly to the bathroom and pretend an "indisposition" like I'd caught her in once before.

It was quite possible from the scene I encountered: Harry out of sight, the boy perched silently on a kitchen stool, looking first at me and then toward the bathroom area in a puzzled way. And Harry's sudden appearance and explanation of Janie's "indisposition"; his lack of embarrassment about it this time; his one attempt to get Janie to come out; his whole manner of being reluctant go-between. And then his last "brave" attempt to protect Janie when he saw I was really mad.

Was Janie AFRAID to face me and my questions? Was Harry WARNING me that there were no troubles that "were none of my business"? To "leave her alone"? Would they do all this if he were in the process of a happy, smooth, ordinary pre-marriage preparation? When they could merely say to me, "Look, Nick's getting married on the --th of June. He's happy. We're happy. Everything's fine and all right. Whatever was between you and him is all over now. He's found a girl and a wife, and that's that." THAT would have been the simple, the ordinary, the best thing to say. The best thing to shut me up and get rid of me.

But no! All these allusions, these evasions; Alberta seeking me out; me FORCED to seek information; their hiding and excuses! THIS is a happy wedding day? When everyone rejoices and spreads the news and gives and receives present eagerly and expectantly?

It makes me wonder. It makes me suspect something's wrong. The usual? Pregnancy? No. I don't think so. Not after such a long premeditated engagement and a possible postponement. Not with a nurse.

My guess is that perhaps N is pulling one LAST, ULTIMATE THREAT on me? Why would Janie say "when an offer of marriage is refused"? and then inform me that everyone had the RIGHT to be mad? If she had serious doubts that N wanted to marry me she would have played it DOWN, not UP. Why would they all be so intensely mad at me if N hadn't been serious? Why didn't they just laugh me off? Oh, well.

And then I began to realize that perhaps my cohorts were wiser than I after all. After all, NJCA aliens get accepted! Maybe they sensed N's personality and avoided him for THAT reason, after all!

Saturday.

It has been an unhappy day for me. I suffered and wrote into the dawn, barely escaping physical illness by recognizing in time where I was headed.

And then, before I went to sleep, I felt as I have not felt in a long, long time--that everything in me cried out to N, "I love you, Nick! I love you! I couldn't have done what I did if I hadn't loved you! For I wouldn't have BOTHERED! Please God that you understand that some day!" And I burst into tears--and then fell into a peaceful, (drugged) sleep.

But I awoke in the morning with that terrible heartsick feeling one has after a death--Oh God, not another day to be faced--to be lived!

I felt all day as I had so many times long ago--nervously heavy-hearted--and often secretly bursting into tears--wallowing in this latest intentional hurt that he has given me.

It is the loss of friendship now that bothers me--the silly, narrow, cheap prejudice of their views--that they could condemn me for overstepping their silly little primitive rules--"one turns one's back on a rejected love and all their family forever!"

How I wish I could just get righteously mad like most people do and just forget about them! But, when I do feel that way, I keep remembering their sweetness, their warmth, their humanness when they were trying to please me--and I get very sad.

At one point, when I was alone--(the only time all day)--it was too much for me and I wrote a blistering letter to Ned and Lilyan admitting that N had never actually proposed and denying that I'd ever entertained the intention of marrying him and thanking them for the flattery of NOT sending me an announcement.

For, I realized, when one did not come in the mail today, that they had very likely limited them to just family and, of course Lilyan would not send any to anyone she suspected of being an old LOVE of N's! Why it ASSURED my role of "old love"--it showed that N felt more and took it more seriously than if he'd just casually sent one, as if to just a friend! Didn't it?

Of course, knowing N as I do, I'm quite sure that what he intended was spite and revenge--his famous "When I'm through, I'm THROUGH!" code.

Whatever, I didn't send the letter, as I knew I wouldn't, for "Words are stones" with these people.

Nor did I seriously entertain my wishes to get N's address from Alberta and use it revengefully. I called her and finished up my commitment with her so there wouldn't have to be any further contacts. Let revenge be God's!

I toyed with a new solution of sending a gift masked with Hal's and Ralph's name added, but I am afraid of that, for I know they no longer care enough to make that much of a gesture. (I don't know--maybe I'll still try that one.)

Anyway, I was frozen into immobility today with repressed emotion. Time has taught me this will pass--it will wear off. I tried. I'm not sorry. It's all for the best, but hard, hard, hard.

And I have my compensation--my tiny revenge--in the knowledge that N's marriage does not have the proper ingredients for happiness; and the observation that Janie was AGAIN and YET unenthusiastic on the phone when I said, "But isn't it WONDERFUL Janie, that he's getting married?"

I distinctly got the impression that she is not a happy about it somehow! In fact the only time she really sounded happy about it was that FIRST DAY, when she told me!

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Sunday.

Yesterday I was sitting wondering, for the first time, if this marriage is really easy for N, for I suddenly felt a great sadness. Just then that damned radio announced and played "a NEW song"--and out came a VERY dramatic rendition by a man sobbing out in a slow, heavy agony--"It is so hard, so HARD to break up--make it easy for yourself--"

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I wonder now what to do about my dress problem, for I do not want to go to Millers⁸ the only place I haven't looked, for I DON'T WANT to encounter Janie! Yet I have a "conviction" the dress I want is there.. I find I am not AFRAID to go--I just don't want to hurt her more by seeming to go ON PURPOSE!

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My daughter just brought me a sprig of "mock-orange blossom". It is here before me--limp and faded.

Monday, June 18, 1962

Here I am again--parked "any old where"--a fugitive from what I wish I could join whole-heartedly--want all others seem to enjoy--immersion in the Here and Now; their friends, their daily activities, the come and go of everyday life. But where am I?

Mooning, despairing, dreaming over an impossible, wrong, lost "love"--here in the sunshine, the flowering weeds, near the earth that vibrates and speaks to me--me, full of visions, goals and purposes that no one else seems to sense. Emotion I cannot explain grips me utterly.

WHY did the radio have to be playing "Volare" when I walked in today--after my day-long battle of "adjusting" to N's marriage? Why? Why? What a blow! Why dig up that piece at a time like this?

All I want to do is get this N marriage commitment over with--this grip of emotion I can't do anything about.

For, on top of my big loss today, I have suffered through little disappointments: the feeling that Alberta wasn't being sincere--she was an "evader", a "pretender" for some mysterious reasons of her own. I had a feeling she was trying to play both ends against the middle--(as I am?)

And I had to forfeit my months long dream of sending N an arrangement of artificial flowers as a wedding gift, in which I hoped to have placed one red rose--"just one"--if I had the nerve--hoping N would understand and Lilyan would hate it every time she looked at it. It was also to be a means of renewing my interrupted acquaintance with Lillian Mathews, who does the arrangements. I had to forfeit both.

Altogether, I am suffering from my deliberate championing of a "lost cause". Today's contacts have shown me again that no one likes N. NO ONE will go that last mile to forgive and extend a hand. Like Alberta, who was sweet, toosweet pretending to act as if I were "just a friend" of N's.

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Monday - 1

Let me try to get this down and get it out of my system. I am very tired. I have to hurry. I feel I have made a big mess of things today.

Last night I had my mind all made up. I thought everything was settled. I made many noble resolutions and sacrifices-- emotional ones, that is.

Sacrifices

Today, when I got down to work, I found it was a naught. I was completely upset and confused. I found pouring out from underneath all my good resolutions a great passionate need to do something, carry on somehow, my N commitment. I was too upset to think straight or figure it out. It was a trying day anyway, one in which my brain and my emotions would not work together.

So. Let's see. I started out obsessed with getting my dress, but virtuously determined to avoid Janie in getting it. I had, as I remarked, a "conviction" that the dress I wanted was where Janie was. I determined that I would leave Alberta alone; not bother to send N anything; concentrate on my own life and "forget" all that other.

I didn't. I went on an emotional binge, did things I didn't want to do, that I know are foolish and dangerous, spent more money than I could afford, etc.

I went down and deposited the poster for Alberta where it was to be displayed, figuring to merely phone her in her department and tell her. I was chagrined to find that the idea I had called her about had not worked out, because I didn't have the

nerve on the phone to tell her that I wanted her to go down and measure for me; because she sounded bored with me and my pestering and dashed off, saying she had a customer. Afriad of overdoing everyth g, of "showing my hand", unsure of myself and my motives, I let her go, spoiling all my carefully laid plans.

Imagine my chagrin when I got up to the office and found her there, arranging a gorgeous bunch of flowers she had brought me for doing the poster (an unnecessary gesture. She had told me she had brought one already Saturday and found I wasn't there.) So, here she was, with another. I was chagrined for she thwarted my intention to use her for another "payment" - the N address, etc.

By bringing me flowers, she canceled her debt and left me in the position of forcing the N issue. Not only that, but the little devilish ideas I had of revengeful conversation, of gossip, she frustrated by immediately ignoring me and turning to "charm" my boss.

Ok. I thought. Ok. So be it. My WISHES for revenge were thwarted and it was better so. I am not as noble as I pretend. I let her go.

But it didn't work. All I wanted to do was to get her to talk about N. Janie had failed me. Alberta was my only hope, and such a DANGEROUS one! Harrassed and torn among duties I should be doing, desires I wanted to satisfy and emotions that would not be denied, I pro-

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ceeded on³ a series of actions that left me sick at heart.

Obsessed, I detoured her way, interrupted her in her work, and made a nasty remark--an uncalled for remark--about Janie. To my surprise--and relief--she first looked puzzled (as was natural, under the circumstances) and then, pursing her lips in a knowing smile, said, "Oh!" understandingly.

What was it I said? (My shame hides it from me!) For, after being frustrated in my morning plans, I found myself on the "other side," bitter, nasty. The "sweet conversation" I had planned dissipated in mounting self-righteousness. I planned what I'd say ahead and then went and said it. "I hope Hal and Ralph don't want to send N a gift, for (this with burning sarcasm) IT MIGHT NOT BE THE WAY SICILIANS DO THINGS!"

She was busy and the encounter was too public. I realized this would take some follow up explaining. So I was burdened with that the rest of the morning along with other unusual commitments and duties.

I held off until some of the other things were settled, hoping I'd get over it, but, at noon, when I was free for a few minutes, I still felt compelled to "have it out". So I trotted up and accosted her again. She was free, and, again to my surprise, seemed delighted to see me and launched into talk about the poster. I had to make a deliberate insert into her chatter to bring up what I wanted to discuss. I didn't do quite as well as I had hoped to. I was nervous and somewhat embarrassed, but I am getting used to people thinking I'm a bit queer about Chianellos.

I started out--" About this ^N business--
(you are hard topin down)--Did you REALLY
get an announcement--do you have the
address? I was thinking that Ralph and
Hal (and had to explain who they were) might
like to send a card or gift--that we
might go together... I'm not sure if they
will--after all, everyone's a little "off"
of N because he didn't write to anyone---"

Here I had to listen to a long, long dissert-
ation on how men didn't write and how one
doesn't expect them to, etc. She reminded
me of Janie--defending N--though her defense
was broader--she was defending SOMETHING.

I had to cut in, repeating that ne~~ver~~the-
less they, especially Ralph, were hurt.

She was listening to me, agreeable; no
one was bothering us, so I decided to be
braver. "After all, we all worked with hi
---I like N all right (a reserved tone
here)--though he WAS Difficult--(I tried
politely to bury this, but not before I
caught her acquiescence, which encouraged
me.)--I planned to send him something--
I DID put myself out for N quite a bit--
(another emphatic nod of agreement here
from her and a "You certainly did")--and,
(bitter laugh) all I got for it was a slap
in the face----I'd like to send N some-thing
even if Janie doesn't approve...."

She caught my bait. "Why wouldn't she
approve?"

"Well," I said, "The reason I asked YOU
is that I called Janie about it and she
started pulling that 'we don't do things
in Sicily this way and that way'--she
doesn't approve of me--A SINGLE WOMAN--
sending N a gift--

*Alberta responded with "This is Sicily; it's
America!" (my very words yesterday!)*

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"Why, what's the matter with that woman?" she cried indignantly. (And I felt a little sorry at ^{having used} using a half-truth) "I think N would LOVE to hear from you! Why, YOU know how he is--he APPRECIATED things so--why he'd be so pleased to hear from YOU"--etc. etc.

This approval was more than I'd hoped for, though I suspected her sincerity. Warmed, I admitted that I'd had hot words with the Esqates yesterday and Harry had told me "not to blame Janie for what N did" when I confessed I'd complained to Janie because I hadn't gotten an announcement, though I realized, I said, that maybe they were sending them only to family.

She showed more insight than I thought her capable of then, when she remarked that maybe Janie was ashamed for N and covering up for him, etc --more in this vein.

She told me at one point that ~~N~~/Janie and Harry had lived with them for 8 months after they first came here. She ANNOUNCED this as if in explanation. (Aha! I thought! THAT can be disastrous! I KNOW!) This certainly surprised me. So much that I lost track of her next words, but I think she dropped this--never quite explaining why she brought it up. She didn't HAVE to say any more--I KNEW what she implied.

And, again, when I expressed a great curiosity about N's intended, she probed me, and we agreed that the girl was a Mexican--quite little and cute and pretty, Alberta claimed--evidently on Janie's say-so, for she went on to say Janie had met her, which I disputed and she conceded

maybe it was just a picture. She made some politely derogatory comments about a Mexican and an Italian getting along, then laughed and said, "I guess they had quite a hard time getting along when N first met her--neither of them could speak English and they had a hard time conversing.." *very well*

I picked up her slight tone of ridicule and joined in. "I'll bet N hurdled THAT barrier all right, " I said with a leer. She laughed agreeingly. And we got down to brass tacks.

I came right out then and told her that that was the reason I wanted to check-- that N was always saying he was going to do something and never did and I didn't believe he really kept to this commitment-- (this was after she had agreed to bring me the announcement and SHOW me and give me the address WHICH WAS ON IT, while I pretended to be trying to think of the address and conveniently found my mind a blank.) I then (cruelly) told her about N's sudden courting of this girl--and (hating myself) even added "when he had ~~not~~ *hardly* even broken up with the one he had last summer--" I saw her look of surprise and decided to explain that later, for she now launched into a long digression about how some people are just FRANTIC to get married and went into a lot of long-winded case histories, one about her son.

I didn't have the feeling with her that she deliberately changed the subject to avoid talking about it like Janie was prone to do. Rather I felt that she simply wasn't much interested in Janie and her family--she confessed even, at one point that she didn't listen to Janie's tales. She ALWAYS gets to talking about her son and herself and I had to suffer through

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quite a few of these digressions, waiting impatiently ~~back~~ time for a chance to get her back on the N subject, for my time was short and I couldn't see a clock. Luckily I could use this to explain my nervousness, which I did.

When she had finally proved her point that many people will marry anything in a shockingly short time just to get married--(she wasn't listening to MY versions of this subject)-- I brought her back by saying, "That's why I was interested when you said Janie had claimed N was sick last summer--" I stopped and looked ~~wisely~~ bemused here, waiting to see if she would encourage me.

She didn't. I think she must know the truth, for I got the impression she would rather I wouldn't go so far as to tell, so I merely said that N had told me he had a girl friend that he hadn't quite broken up with when he was here, and she said, "Yes, Harry had told her husband something-- they had laughed about it once." (And I was sure that her husband would have told her.) So I left it at that.

She spent a great deal of time bragging about the present they were going to send and made comments that made it sound like a real wedding and reception. I was dying to ask her WHO in the hell was coming, and more particulars, all the time hurting, hurting hurting at the vision of N actually going through all the long drawn out commitment of a formal wedding. But she was through and I excused myself and rushed off.

Rushed back to the office to call Ralph and Hal, which I wanted to do in the short time I had left, for I had decided to check FOR SURE with Alberta first and then

make the gesture of at least asking Hal's and Ralph's permission to use their names, quite sure they wouldn't go so far as a PRETENT and sure I could shame them into at least an agreement to use their names, too, on the gift & I intended to buy and pay for myself, (thereby "protecting" myself.)

I had already called Janie's store, and asked ~~for~~ whether they had the type of dress I was looking for,, breathing a sigh of relief when Janie didn't answer the phone. I was a little shook up when the report came back that they had some I might be interested in. What to do now? How to look and avoid Janie?

I called again to inquire "about Mrs. Egate's lunch hour" and was shocked into numbness to hear the girl say "WE've never had any-one of that name working here".!! Then I realized I had called the ~~wrong~~ store both times, their names being very similar! So I called the right store--and they did NOT have anything for me. (Guess that fixed my "conviction!") *[A few weeks later, a friend showed me a dress she'd bought from Janie that was exactly what I'd wanted.]*

I got Ralph right away without any trouble. He was his usual apathetic self. Showed very little interest, said he didn't think anyone would be interested, but grudgingly agreed that I could sign his name to a card--he didn't feel like sharing a gift.

I couldn't get Hal. And had to call hours later after I got home. And then he had to call back. He was his usual snotty self--at first rather agreeable and then plain snotty--counting up the time that N had been gone and hadn't written him and the "15 minute visit" he had been allotted on his return. I worked on him till he consented to a card ONLY, stipulating NO MORE.

June 18 - Mon - 5

By this time I was so hot and weary and emotionally exhausted from the days' events and two hours shopping with my daughter and mellow from the swig of wine I resorted to to keep me going till I could collapse that my devil came out and I forced him to ask me about N's bride and told him all--even the negress, at which he was completely disgusted. (He's a fine one to talk!) (I was afraid I'd tell someone! Revenge would have its way! My only excuse is that I have long since learned that cause carries its own effect and that is the best lesson of all!)

Alberta's flowers didn't interest me. I wanted no grim, funereal reminder of weddings and flowers and this day. But I was afraid she'd be hurt if I didn't make some attempt to bring them home. So I took part of them, knowing they'd wilt during our shopping spree, which they did. I have them here now, appropriately and symbolically drooping and spent.

All day long I wanted only to get home and write this out, for I have found it a release that nothing else affords. It was with a sigh of relief that I entered the front door, planning to call Hal and Lillian (who does the flower arrangements I intended to order as a gift for the other Lillian). I wanted to get it all over with today and be done with it all, for I was sick and disgusted with myself and my neur~~otic~~tic inability to unlatch myself from this phobia that brought so much pity to people's eyes. Let me throw the damn flowers away, do my calls, my writing, and FORGET!

But no! The short respite I had to do all these things was filled with people and doings. And, worst of all, as I entered the door full of shame for my foolish, foolish "St. Francis" delusion, I was greeted by the opening strains of "VOLARE!" on the radio! I haven't heard it since last summer, I swear!

This "sing" I could not deny--it was too, too. As all the assembled, gay teen agers broke ^{into} singing -"VO**LAAA***RE---!" I ran and broke into my wine bottle--hating myself and everything, everything--including the little white envelope that was the sole piece of mail and looked so much like an ANNOUNCEMENT--and wasn't.

Many neurotic wine sips later I fled from the continuing hubub around me and "went to the store"--taking my notebook and pencil and parking again to write what I couldn't get written at home.

And tried to forget the furtive whispering my daughter had done to my son and his friends and the mocking looks they all gave me as soon as she got home after catching me looking in the Los Angeles Times while I waited for her in the library. SHE knew what I was doing! Looking for marriage announcements--for Lilyan's last name. (I didn't have time to find it.)

I wrote till I calmed down, then set out to the store which carried the best assortment of wedding cards, for I realized that I'd have to forfeit my gift idea--my kids' demands had taken all my money--and it wouldn't do to have N thank Hal and Ralph for a gift they didn't agree to send.

June 18 - Mon 6

So what happened NOW! Every street I tried had detour signs planted on it. And when I finally found one there was a red tape and workmen blocking it and I couldn't get through! I couldn't get through to the store where I planned to buy the card. Does this mean I should get the gift anyway, I wondered? No. No. I had decided. It was foolish to spend money on a lost cause.

I made myself go and pick a dull little innocuous card, reluctantly passing up many, many ones I would have LIKED to send.

The everyone dispersed and here I am, wearily beating this out of my system, sick, sick sick of this thing that will not end, of myself who hasn't guts to make it end --who forced mother to go with me to another Italian picture last night in spite of her cruel insinuations about how I "certainly should go to Italy some day!" And I found the picture dull, too full of Italian, which I found I could understand quite well!

Notes and thoughts:

Verse on the card I sent to N:

"For your wedding"

"With warmest best wishes on this day
YOU'VE LONG LOOKED FORWARD TO,
For all that brings you happiness,
FOR ALL YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE."

The capitals are mine. Remember the road maze of detours that day I went to buy the card? As if I were "led" to this one card? Later I looked at many places to see if I could find a better one, and I couldn't find one that had such an APPROPRIATE verse!

Notes I took off the wedding invitation:
"Mr. and Mrs. Joaquin Sosa....Lillian
Bianca...S. (N's middle initial)....
Sunday...24th...2:30...Wee Kirk...Forest
Lawn...reception 2630 Range Road (Eagle
Rock), Los Angeles 65. (This is a queer
address ↓

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Alberta speaks of people DESPARATE to get married: I think: Why, N and some such men marry to be FREE--free of sexual frustration, free of housework, cooking, caring for themselves; free to go their own way, to work as often and late as they please; to come home, be fed, dressed, and sexed like over-rown babies--and live their REAL life away from home.

N is marrying a NURSE, a nurse in more ways than one. A woman he could hardly communicate with at first, Alberta said. But in six weeks he was engaged to her--As Alberta said, they probably communicated like Harry managed with Janie!

How could it be LOVE? Why, they wouldn't even know what each other was really like under the circumstances! He'll get just what he's after--a housekeeper, a nurse (maid) he can sleep with!

(And yet they stayed with it (except for that mysterious "postponement") for 7 months! I have to admit that. Surely they knew each other well by that time! Yet--they say a sexual affair lasts about 6 months----

Could it be that my prediction was right? That the next one would be a Mexican who with her family would bring pressure to bear on him?

Tuesday, June 19.

I burned with shame today when, searching through etiquette books to see how to address the card, I discovered that ANNOUNCEMENTS and INVITATIONS to the wedding are two different things! It is an INVITATION we have been talking about! It is possible that I could STILL get an ANNOUNCEMENT. (I was right--I SHOULD have waited!)

Yet, reading on, I also discovered that it is extremely important to invite ALL former acquaintances and even business associates. That it can be considered an INSULT not to get one--even if one is unable to come--!!!

Now I AM insulted!

Thursday, June 21, 1962

Just some comments.

I reached Stage # 2 again. Since I last wrote I felt that same surge of RELIEF to be rid of the unhappy ^N problem that I experienced before after he left. It is all so unhappy, unhappy--impossible!

And back came my feeling of not caring, of weary resignation to the kind of people they are--not really my kind at all, not at all.

And I found that I no longer cared even if or when I sent the dumb little card I signed with our three names. If it doesn't get sent at all--no matter. When Alberta did not show up with the address and so on the last couple days as she said, I found myself relinquishing the whole idea.

For, in the meantime, looking for something to read to pass this trying time away, all I could find was two books that AGAIN fed me just what I needed--about Cultures of the world, the differences in them, the chasms between, etc.--all very helpful--all very, very interesting to me--and to no one else. Wisdom again, to ease an aching heart.

I was again going to write up and finish in this vein--another "ending"--when Alberta appeared, full of promises and apologies and new reasons for contacts for the two of us. In fact she walked in just as I was set up to begin typing this and nearly shook me out of my shoes, for I was just about to write her name!

And today was a rare, rare opportunity to sit here alone in the office and type it is on this better typewriter, but I could see it wasn't going to work out. When, lo! things changed, in a most unusual fashion and I've had a chance to do all this in private and peace!

In fact, this is MY day--one of THOSE days! Perfect timing on everything-- Italian songs all day--timed just right to my moods. Today I purchased the Italian shoes I have been coveting--no hitch, as the last few days--they were--waiting for me--"al di la" the hit song of the week--and suddenly, while listening to it on the car radio as I came home, weeping for N and KNOWING he regrets the NECESSITY of this marriage as I do--suddenly I understood what those Italian words I have fought with for two weeks mean---

"al di la" Nicolo" al di la--de la vita, de la volta infinita"--beyond! beyond life, beyond infinite time-- it is you!

exactly !

June 22, 1962--Friday

I'm not doing very well. I feel bad about N's "deserting" me. I had a bad day yesterday--an 'ESPday'--especially about 5 o'clock. Lying half asleep out in the back yard, I had a strong strong sudden conviction that N was PLEADING with me to contact him.

Trying to account for it, I noted with surprise (AFTERWARDS) that it was "coming-home-from-work-time for most people: time to look in the mailbox and see that there was STILL no mail from that letter-writing Lorna--and it had been a WEEK since they'd mailed those "announcements"! No gift? No nothing? When she'd said she wanted to give something?

As my ESP notes say, words cannot convey the CONVICTION, the sure KNOWLEDGE of these experiences. They happen first, and THEN one knows why. I can't describe the aura of utter woe that "came to me"--lasted fifteen minutes or so--and then suddenly dissipated, despite my efforts to cling to it till I explained it. Then I 'knew' that N had had his attention diverted and there was nothing I could do to bring it back.

Nor can I account for the sudden sensation I had before it all started, when I was not even thinking of him--just "vegetating"--that someone put his hand on mine, warmly, intimately, caressingly. I could feel the body warmth of a hand on mine so definitely that I sat up and moved my arm in alarm. I thought someone had come up behind me and touched me! *No one had.*

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Today I HOPE to finish up getting the address and date from Alberta. There is no reason I have to SEE the "announcement"—I wonder why she makes such an effort that I SEE it? For I don't know as I can STAND to look at these engraved words:

"—(so and so) requests the pleasure of your....at her wedding to Mr. Nicolo —?—Chianello at...."

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Last night I tried to think HOW N could get out of this one. For I'm SURE he is panicking—I FEEL it. And I "ESP'd" him, "No! NO! No! Wait! Not NOW! This isn't "RIGHT"!" (I don't know why it isn't—I don't mean he "is for me"—I just feel it isn't right somehow.)

Then I remembered how Janie had said he'd gotten "sick" when drafted in Italy—and therefore avoided the draft! If N feels as I'll bet he does from my observations of him and my intuitions—I should not be at all surprised to be confronted by Alberta or someone someday and have them say, "You know—N DIDN'T get married! —He got SICK—isn't that TERRIBLE?"

And I would just smile a Mona Lisa smile.

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On the other hand, what WILL make him go through with it is his own bull-headed committment to his own pipe-dreams. This is part of his Great Plan. Therefore he "HAS" to do it, no matter how he feels. I said once he didn't commit himself. I meant to others. He'll do it if it kills him now. (Or unless his subconscious fools him!)

And the most normal assumption is that they are "sublimely happy", wrapped up in each other etc.--not even thinking of me--which is the view I must learn to live with.

Later:

I saw it! It's for real! THIS Sunday! I'm GLAD my card will be late--I hope he wondered! Mr. and Mrs -SOSA announce (pardon) request etc. Mr. Nicolo S.! ---"

Thank heavens Alberta was gone and I was able to copy off all I wanted almost alone--only the pity-filled eye of another "gal" in the department. I didn't like the vague pity I sensed from her and later Alberta when I saw her momentarily. (Their pity isn't half as much as I feel for myself!)

It was N's same address--so he COULD have expected something from me. The wedding sounds usual and corny--FOREST LAWN--little Chapel o' the Kirk or something--ugh!--I've BEEN there! Reception, etc. ~~Th~~ Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Come on, ESP!

I am now going to address the card and mail it.

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Come on, ESP! I said, and then felt like a perfect fool. (Why con't you DROP it, Lorna? N's happy. He's not thinking of you. Why do you persist? Go mail this card lying there before you--the card you are so tempted to do something nasty on--to mutilate somehow--go mail it! Finis! Finis! Finis!

I took my little white, square envelope addressed air mail to Mr and Mrs. Nicolo S. Chianello. (I had put in the S to

show him that I'd seen the invitation;
to show him SOMEONE cared enough to show
it to me--not Janie--he'll find that out--
to show him that I hadn't solicited this
information) I took it in hand, resisting
a horrible temptation to put lip imprints
all over it and, clutching it to my
breast I finished up my errands here and
there. (How I hated part with it--it,
the very last epistle I'll ever, ever
send N.) I held it in full view all
the time I was on my errands. Look!
Look, all you people who disapproved,
who laughed, who pitied! Look! He got
married! See, it all meant nothing--
nothing. I let him go. I was "good",
"wise", conventional--all those lovely
virtues our culture demanded of me!

As I went to the mail box outside a sad,
sad love song was playing on our store
music, which usually kept to something
light and gay. It didn't help matters
at all.

Reluctantly, I dropped it into the mail
box outside, glad I had a chance to be-
fore I met my daughter with her knowing
young eyes. I hurried to do it before
the passion which gripped me made me
do something foolish.

Before I let it go I gripped a corner
of it and cut into it as hard as I could
with my finger nail. Would N notice
that nail imprint and interpret it cor-
rectly? Would Lilyan notice it?

I went on my errand and to meet my
daughter feeling like the poem--"let
not one leaf fall"--and gripped my
insides in agony when a carillon began
to toll the noon hour like a church bell--

All I wanted was to get home alone with some wine to numb me and write it out. But there were many frustrations ahead of me.

Thank goodness, for once the car radio wasn't on with all those popular songs, "Al di la", "This time I'm really losing you", "It's so hard to break up", etc. Thank God for that.

(Now, let's hurry home, dear daughter! Mother can't keep up this front much longer!) When screech! she slammed on the brakes and stopped at the teen age hangout. "We MUST have a coke!" she said. (Oh no! Oh no!) I sensed some crucial reason of theirs for this stop. She parked very close alongside a car with two girls in it. Then she and her friend hopped out.

I sat there hurting, waiting. Suddenly came loud strains of music from the other car and I recognized the opening bars of one of my PRIVATE Italian songs--not one they usually played on the radio.

What was it? What was it? I battled my memory as a torrent of passionate male singing in Italian broke over me. (Nick! Nick! Don't! Don't! Don't DO this to me!)

Then I thought I knew what it was--"Ciao, Ciao, Bambino" (Bye, bye, Baby), one of the Volare group of songs I hadn't yet heard on the radio, but was sure I had at home.

Straining with everything in me to catch some meaning in those fast-falling Italian words, to catch some "message"--I could have killed the girls when they piled

noisily back in and started to roar off--
away from that musick; from that song I
HAD to hear--my "message" from N!

Shut UP! Girls! SHUT UP! my heart screamed.
They were too busy in some excitement of
their own. As we pulled away I looked
despairingly from the myriad buttons on
our unresponding radio I had reached and
turned on to the girls in the other car.
I wanted to call to them, "What station?
What station do you have on?" For by the
time I found it the song would be over.
(Help! help!)

"I've GOT to hear this song!" I cried.
"It's 'Ciaou, Ciaou Bambino!" At the
mention of Italian my daughter understood
and gave enough of her attention to get
the song full on the radio.

As we roared up the hill in the beautiful,
beautiful "wedding" weather, the Italian
words swelled and rolled around me, getting
more and more passionate, more heart-redning,
building up to a climax.

O SHUT UP! GIRLS! For I couldn't catch
the words--all I got was "Addio! ADDIO!
AMORE!" (Why, it wasn't "Ciaou, Ciaou"
after all, it was "Addio"--which was
worse!) Addio is the most DEFINITE form
of goodbye--go with God--no hope--no
return--no future meeting. "Ciaou" is
merely casual, momentary. Addio is for-
ever. (That's why I used it that day when
I wasmad at N, instead of "Arriderci" or
"Arrivederla" (till we meet again).

So was "Amore" mor intense in meaning
than amore slangy "Bambino" (Baby). Oh
Nick! Nick!--this is for REAL--this is
FUNDEMENTAL!

As the girls stopped to noisily greet a passing friend, the climaxing words rolled out in great anguish--"AD-DIO--ADDIO**AMORE#E-E!!"

"You have just heard 'Addio', written and sung by Modugno," came the announcer's voice. Modugno! the writer of "Volare"! No WONDER it was so passionate! He is noted for his melodramatic delivery of songs! And I haven't heard a recording of his played since he went out of style after that first summer of "Volare"!

(And I didn't catch the words!--oh well--I have it at home. I'll listen to it privately when I have a chance, I thought.)

Needless to say this overwhelming "Sign" nearly killed me! It was so UNEXPECTED! So coincidental! So apropos! All my morning doubts and "common sense" talks to myself fled before the absolute CERTAINTY of the "sign" of Signs"! N loves me! He want ME! He doesn't "want" this marriage. He bids me a heart-rending goodbye from the ultimate depth of his being to the ultimate depth of mine where our love lies ~~secretly~~/ dwelling, a secret between him and me and God.

He tells me, "Lorna, it must be so. We must go on living this horrible, stupid, unahppy life. We must go through the motions. But only you and I know how we really feel. Let laugh who will. Lorna,.....Goodbye!"

All this I was thinking while the girls chattered and exclaimed so much over their own problem that they finally caught my attention. It seems that the reason we had made that sudden stop that made me able to hear that song was because my daughter had spotted her rival in that car.

Ah, how I wished I had that realistic approach--to openly fight for the love I wanted!

We got home and I fled from the confusion to go to my room and close the door and write up this experience--so urgent it seemed that I did not even care that my action aroused suspicion in my family.

I had to stop to take my son to a dental appointment realizing, with alarm, that I would have to sit and wait in that same ante-room where I had sat and wrote N that desperate angry letter that brought him home. I hadn't been there since, and I didn't relish the prospect.

But things turned out differently. I found I had to wait near a grubby little bookstore that I hadn't been in in years. Something enticed me in there--some feeling that there was something I should look for in there, but I couldn't think what it was. It wasn't until much later that I realized that that was where N had sold some of his art books when he left.

But I did not remember this then. I went in wondering "what am I doing here?" A saleslady began pre sing me, "What did I desire--?" (What a question for today!)

At a loss, force of habit made me ask, "Where are the FOREIGN books?" though I wasn't at all in the mood. She showed me--a little room off by itself.

My eye, well trained after four years, automatically sought out "Italy", "Italian". Nothing. What next? "Travel" read the shelf sign in front of my eye. Oh, yes--travel--Italy--SICILY! Let's play the game! How about Sicily today--today of all days? No one EVER has books about Sicily--let's try my luck---

"Waters of Sicily" loomed before my eyes--stark and alone. It was the only one--an ancient, battered, yellowed volume. Oh well---

I picked it up--skimmed through--dated 1900---ugh! Then something caught my eye--"I would sail tomorrow from Palermo and leave Doris behind--to her marriage--to her young lover--I was too old". So? THIS sounded interesting!

I took stock of the environment, settled necessary problems and picked up the book to read the last chapter. The book was all in letters, which seemed significantly apropos.

"Dear L: I am writing to tell you I am leaving Palermo--I guess you know why--D is marrying another--a YOUNG man--the SON of the woman who betrayed me to marry another so many years ago--when I was here in Palermo when I was young--"

Then a scene in which D came to him in the eleventh hour, inadvertently confesses her love for him, as old as he is--explains that she could not express it before and tells why she is marrying the young man, while the narrator tells her it is better so--youth calls to youth---

"I don't know how it happened," D says. "There was the moon--and all the young people making love--and P made love to me, Although he bores me--I shall be very bored married to him--he makes love excellently and he is different then--I could not resist. The first thing I knew he was slipping the ring on my finger--"

So far the tale was balmy to my injured heart, BUT, the hero proceeded to cancel his plans to leave

and stayed--with D--while another character quoted a Sicilian proverb meaning "I guess there was something to the gossip, after all!"

Great! That's just great! I thought. The ROMANTIC ending. Circa 1900!

Nevertheless, I was tempted to buy the book as a souvenir of today, but, asusual, I didn't have enough money.

* * * *

When I got home after the bookstore episode, I had to go over to mother's. She greeted me with these words: "The wedding isn't going to takeplace."

Very startled, for I hadn't told HER about N's wedding, I said "WHAT wedding?"

Then she explained about a family wedding I hadn't known about. What a coincidence! What a heart-breaking coincidence!

And I found I didn't have the record, after all.

* * *

There is a big interim here in which I was completely frustrated in my great need to write this out. I had so much to say that I was almost bursting, but I not only had a great deal of work to do, but I had to listen to about four tales of woe, never once being able to unburden my own aching heart.

I had to wait till the next morning, till Saturday morning before anyone else was up. I lay in bed and wrote while it was quiet, a habit I have gotten into and which I shall miss.

I expect an emotionally bad week end for me. Not only all the silent suffering I shall be going through thinking of N being married tomorrow, but the necessity of having to go alone to a large party with people with whom I have nothing in common.

Besides that I discover I have againlost a page of writing and have deduced I must have dropped it in the office for all to see! The page in which is my lament on N's marriage--and I cannot check on it until MONDAY!

To go back: after I had some homeand done my frantic bit of writing a frantic emotion siezed me.

Suddenly I wanted to MARRY someone! ANYONE! I wanted this desparate lack of love and sex to end! I wanted to be at peace, assured for the rest of my life. I wanted to be rid of this unhappy mooning and wondering "Who? Where is someone?"

Whom could I marry? Whom? Whom? Suddenly I wanted to re-marry my husband--though I don't love him. What matter? Someone to sleep with, someone to pass the time with, someone to go through the motions with for these future unasked for, interminable remaining years. Right now I'd marry anyone--and he, my ex-husband, was the easiest!

I caught myself thinking this very seriously. And then I remembered. You did this BEFORE! This is REBOUND! Watch it

And then all of a suddan, I understood about N. This is how HE must have felt! It could be!

It was a sort of giving up. All these YEARS chasing the will-o-the-wisp of love--so tiresome--so wearing. Someone to join up with. What does it matter who? Society demands it--a coupling. Let's do it andget it voer w th. If I can't have what I want, what does it matter who?

Suddenly I understood how N felt.

Now, back to Saturday morning.

I expected to lie an bed and give myself up to emotion, even to have that good cry I expected to have to have. I expected to feel sad and heartbroken andweep.

I expected to be unable to "reach" N as I have before.

But, to my surprise, I had the most wonderful sensation of love and peace that I have had since he has left! Without my even trying, he "came" to me, warm and tender and UTTERLY LOVING AT LAST--as he had never been before! I felt this glorious, half-conscious message, "NOW I REALLY love you, Lorna! NOW I know at last what you MEANT!" And he seemed to be mine TOTALLY, as he'd never been before!

And I realized suddenly, surprisingly, happily, "Why this is BETTER! Now he can relax and be STILL and realize the full wonder and beauty of love and how I felt about him--AS HE'D NEVER BEEN ABLE TO BEFORE!"

For, by marrying, he will rid himself of his sex obsession and be able to see the big differences in loves, the PERSONALITY differences, and he will at last be able to appreciate me!

I fell asleep to a beautiful, peaceful dream. I don't remember what it was, only that it left a lovely feeling.

And I was puzzled by the feeling that N and I had had a conversation in which he kept saying, "This is FOREVER, Lorna--forever." And I, who do not believe in an afterlife, suddenly knew for sure that N and I would meet again--this time on a REAL basis, a REAL understanding, though I did not know how, why, when or where. And I kept telling him so.

Even so, I awoke later with a sick heart and hating to face a new day--and life--life without N--without love.

And yet, I thought, N and I did not need MARRIAGE. Someday he will understand that. Someday he will understand that (to quote) "marriage is a way of sexual adjustment and a way of raising children".

Some loves do not need that. Someday, maybe about
two years fromnow, he will understand exactly what
I always hoped he'd understand--what I meant--what
I still mean when I say--as someone said before me--

I love you, Nicolo Chianello--

"not inmy time----

or in yours----

but in GOD'S!"

I am waiting for you to understand.

Sunday morning.

This is the Day. The day when I join N's long list of pre-marital mistresses.

I doubt that he is giving me any more thought than he is giving the others. For, if he were not completely absorbed in himself, completely immersed in the "bella figura" he is going to cut today--(just today only, perhaps)--there wouldn't have BEEN me and all the others!

I do not feel 'sah or emotional at all. In fact, physically, I feel wonderful! It is beautiful, beautiful day, and my body glows from the long swimming workout I had at what turned out to be a very lovely party last night. And, futhermore, my emotions are insulated and numbed by the pleasant afterglow of many, many drinks of Scotch I consumed, and secretly preceeded by many private toasts of Italian vermouth to N's wedding day. My feelings are NUMBED--as I intended them to be.

And my ego is refreshed by the man attention I received last night. One wife even yelled at me, "He's mine! I like him! You leave him alone!" when all I'd done is respond verbally to the glad eye of another drunk in all that stuffy crowd.

Anyway, my mind is full of the party this morning and has no room to think of N. I know he's as happy as he'll ever be today--and I do not care. He has many a dark road ahead--let him enjoy today.

Old age may have its tragedies--like being seduced by lonely, opportunist young Italians--(siad she, not "caring", "not caring" AT ALL!)--but it also has its compensations--like knowing that the glories and illusions of the wedding day are transitory and meaningless without the deeper glories of knowing how to really love and be kind--not only to one's bride and her family you wish momentarily to impress, but to all the world--the past loves, the past enemies, all and everybody around you, native or alien!

Someday, Nicolo mio, we shall meet again--for you will be very curious to see how we who scorned you" reacted to this day of glory of yours; this marriage of a Mexican and an Italian in a Hollywood imitation of a Scotch "Wee Kirk", in an alien land neither of them could adjust to!

One and one always still equal TWO, no matter what equation you put them in, said she, whistling bravely in the dark.

2:30 p.m.

Nick is all ready to march down the aisle. He is hot, nervous--almost sick. Although he doesn't drink his mind is benumbed with stressful emotion. It all seems unreal to him. He goes through the motions in a fog of unreality. Tonight he will be tired, exhausted depressed from sheer emotional tension. So it is with all of us at such moments.

I wish I knew if it were a Catholic ceremony, for I have been to some, and I could visualize it step by step in my mind. In fact, it is almost as good, if not better, than being there. Another of the advantages of age--I need only to draw on experience, memory! I don't even NEED TO be there!

I doubt if it is a Catholic ceremony, for wouldn't she be married in her OWN church instead of Forest Lawn, where ANYBODY can be married--for a price?

Strangely, I can't seem to summon the hate I expected to feel. When I put myself "there", I feel a sad/proud glow for my Nicolo--ALMOST like seeing a son go down the aisle: Be happy, little one, be happy. Time is so short; life is so hard; you are so young. I'm proud of you. I'm glad for you in this moment.

Grab pleasure! Surfeit yourself! Kiss her! Hug her! Possess her!--as closely as one human can another. Look into those shining, happy black eyes surrounded in white veil, adoringly fixed on yours, her mind on tonight, expecting a glory out

of this world. Impregnate! Let go! And breed---
-----and learn!

It is almost 3 o'clock.

About that hour you will say those words--those empty "vows" that will tie you up for life to one who may well look the same way into other eyes someday--who may never, never understand your dark, unresolved passions any more than you do; who will weary of them--yet never let you go.

There you are standing there, Nick--hot, uncomfortable. Listening to high-flown words at which you, with that wordly cynicism I lived so, are silently scoffing at. You are wondering, "What am I doing here? Who is this woman beside me? Who are all these people? What do they really mean to me?"

For a flashing instant you want to run, get out of there--start over--but someone asks you to do something, produce a ring, put it on this slender brown hand extended so trustingly toward you. You fumble--you look at that trusting face--

Suddenly, you're sorry--desperately sorry--Lillian! Lillian! What am I doing to you!--I'll be GOOD to you! I'll be very, very good--for your sake--for Your sake-----(for your sake, Lorna.)

We all feel this way, Nick! We all feel panic at this moment of Too Much Commitment. Years later you will not be able to summon this feeling of dedication you feel at this moment--"la bella figura"! you are striving for in front of all these witnesses. Years later when all your good resolutions are as naught--when you have hurt and wronged and sinned against this personality put in your trust!

And you, my son, my own son, who roams and spies on me--wondering what I am doing writing so much so secretly--you, who has not the wisdom, the maturity to leave me alone this afternoon--you do not know

what I have done for you--"this is a far, far better thing than I have ever done"--this sitting here letting my love get married. This disgust you feel for me is NOTHING to what I COULD have done to YOU!

And you, mother of mine, who HAS the wisdom to go off and leave me alone in the mood I'm in--only to tell, to gossip, to pass on my tale of heartbreak masked as something else. ~~that~~/I For I had to tell you this morning that Janie and I were "broken off" so you wouldn't make a mess of things when you go in, as you have announced, to buy a dress from Janie next week. I had to tell you to snub her, ignore her, that's the way she wants it! I had to tell you Janie and I clashed "because N didn't send me a wedding announcement"--and risk letting you make of it what you will--(and you WILL!) Janie wants to be ignored. She wants things to be easy, conventional, "safe". Oh, that's what we all want--of COURSE!

Salud! Nicolo! It is 3 o'clock.
You are saying your vows. I drink to you in Italian vermouth--sickeningly sweet--with a bitter, bitter aftertaste. Salud!

That's the way we all want it —
easy, conventional safe!

"Salud! Nicolo's" It is 3 o'clock.
You are saying your vows. I
drink to you in Italian
Vermouth — sickly sweet —
with a bitter bitter aftertaste.
"Salud!"

* * * * *
Which I call now the "Cup
of vinegar" while I sit in my
secret crying place and think
on Judas Iscariot.

For my son haunted me —
he would not leave me alone —
and mother came driving
in after her petty - revengeful
gossip tour — I escaped — "to
the street" — God grant me the
necessary aplomb to go
"through the motions" with my
cup of vinegar bitter in
my mouth & the salt tears
drying on my withering cheeks
mixed with the sweat of
this first unappealing hot
day that is still — still —
too still — threat of storm in
the air — another storm
for another parting of Vexed?

Just before I left — "going
thru motions" like crazy —
trying to "be with" N at this
crucial moment & write
my impressions of same —
my son calls from ^{Edvarent}
"It's flooding down here! It's
flooding! Change the hose!"
(Damn! That's not all that's
flooding, Boy! I think!)

I go out to change the
hose & then am glad, for
I need to be out at this moment
with God — under this sky —
with His flowers, His trees.

I have to pick off a sunny
star of Coreopsis in my way —
Symbol of Sun God — Eternity.
It reminds me I look to
your one ~~red~~ red rose
bush — See (as you have
sought before) if there is
a red rose for love
blooming — the rose you
would have liked to send
N & would not. There should
be one — "just one!" —

I looked. There it was — one —
just one! Absolutely perfect —
at the most perfect stage
of opening — its penis-like
middle firm, red, potent.
It couldn't be. (My roses are
never perfect!) I looked for
flaws. None. No insects — no
blemish — ah — yes — here's one —
one plumed petal.

Enter Porn criticism! I
wept. I stood under our big
tree & searched the sky & wept.
& prayed.

Go in — your son has the
radio on — go in & see what
piece is playing now "for you" —
for there will be no more of
this, came the "message".
(Must I? Must I? Must I
face this?)

I went — fearfully —
Sadly, sadly the man's voice
sang to me "I hope the
star of love will shine down
on you — I hope the star
of love will shine down
on you —".

Yes, Mark, you Of

Course you do. Thanks for
the thought! You ~~hadn't~~
guts enough to offer it to
me yourself — let someone
else do it — You're walking
out — let someone else
give me "the star of love"
I deserve —

Croush. Basta infinita!
I went ~~in~~ took one last
gulp of "vinegar" & left.

I am here now. There are
morning glory blossoms to
greet me here in the woods —
morning glories — greedy,
possessive, throttling false
ones — there is a dove
cooing in the orchard. It is
quiet — unnaturally
quiet.

I found my self sucking
& tonguing the heart of
the rose — unconsciously —
"nastily"? — as I had sucked
N that day & brought
him back to the potency
he thought was gone —
"Nasty!" I thought that
day, too. But it was

utterly unconscious - instinctive both times - Marty? God? I do not know. All I know is that it was good - his marriage is good - Blessed my sacrifice - my abortive "therapy" was good - altho it brings me understanding I would be happier without.

A - You are a thousand miles away - over the sea - silent hills to the south - busy, frantic, harrassed in the throes of a wedding reception. I drove by James on my way - (by the back street) - to see what they were doing while you committed yourself so late - too late - ~~to~~ all alone - to something you think is happiness.

All was "usual" there - both cars there - a household absorbed in its self -

Nicols alone
against the world,
I go to my duties -

Note! I'll bet N called
Jim long distance the first
chance he got - (look at me!
look at me! I did it! I
did it! Tell the world!)
[Tell Loma.]

As I left "to go to the
store" I asked my son
if there was anything
he wanted. "Bring me
"Science & Fantasy" he
said. "Or, if you 'cant
find that - bring me
"IF".

How appropriate! I
thought. How very
appropriate!

And - when I came home,
eased, my emotional tension
dissipated, I entered the
house to the same lament -
"I hope the star of love
shines down on you!"

Monday, June 24, 1962

I hate to keep adding to this, but, actually, I ENJOY this writing--I shall miss having something to write about--

Just a final little mood report, at the risk of turning this into the chronicle of an aging divorcee's moods.

I felt simply wonderful this morning, physically and mood-wise. I spent rather an unsettled night visualizing Lilyan and N together, but drifted off to sleep and woke suddenly just at dawn--wondering why, wondering if N and L had woken at dawn, too!! The storm that was threatening never materialized. All was quiet, quiet, except for one madly trilling bird--(my N is happy, happy happy?)--As I lay there half-asleep, peaceful, peaceful, suddenly I heard a drip. Drip. Drip, drip, drip. Then, faster and faster, drip, drip, drip, drip, drip.

Out of the great quiet rain began to fall, crescendoed into a full downpour and then as quietly faded away--like a great release of long-pent up tears--like someone crying helplessly after the great release of a magnificent orgasm. (?Good, Nick, I thought. Good. Good. Peace has come to you at last.)

And, thinking of Shakespeare's words "it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven--" I went back to sleep--Mercy. Mercy. In Nick's happiness I find a vicarious peace and happiness of my own.

This mood lasted all morning and broke only when the music at work played some haunting, beautiful melody over and over. A melody with a sad, hovering overtone to it, as if someone had at last found peace and beauty, and yet--and yet--was vaguely disappointed. Was THIS all? Was this all--all the waiting, striving, yearning all

these years—to find THIS? THIS is what ahppi-
ness is—this peace, beautiful as it is. Why,
it's nothing but a great calm, a sense of beau-
titude—not the glorious ecstasy I expected,
at all. Why, everything else is still here, too!
And THIS was here all the time, too! All I
had to do was to reach out and touch it!

Why THis mood hit ME, I don't know—I didn't
get married! I felt as if I were feeling for
N—Nick was feeling so?

I do not know. I only know that I am no longer
bothered—that Nick and I have reached a goal
—somehow TOGETHER—and all is well.

Va bene. I hope it stays this way!

Monday - June 25 -

Late afternoon -

Well, I have escaped to my "place" again; (it is like Grand Central Station around home!)

But, this time I have faced the car (and myself) symbolically (?) in the opposite direction, for a gale is blowing from the other direction. It fits with my mood of today, for I find I feel like New Year's Day - full of zest for what's ahead, a new order, a clean slate; and weary and sick of looking backwards at what's behind; with a feeling of completion and relief - (what a heart-broadening chore it was!) - a slight nostalgia for "what-might-have-been" and "what-never-is-to-be" and a determination to make a new life and close the door on the past that I am aware won't last.

I even find a sudden distaste for the job of typing up this last emotional upheaval. I tried and found I didn't want to. Besides, it is extremely difficult right now to find the privacy for typing. I am weary of seclusion, the nervous

hurried feeling that someone will catch me with all these ^{strange} papers before me; the sudden pulling out of the sheets ^{from the typewriter} & gathering up in alarm at any suspicious noise, and then finding no one coming and starting in again — only to have to do it all over again.

I need a rest from you, N. I think I'll file these away ^{untyped} — made as I'd like to have it all neatly finished & done with — and wait for a better opportunity. Perhaps by that time it won't hurt at all —

Back to today. Everyone is sitting around awaiting a threatened storm. It still seems imminent — in spite of the false peace yesterday.

But it is a strange storm, a "sunshine storm." And I can't help thinking how symbolic it is of N's wedding: apparent joyous summer and sunshine & peace and bird song and happiness. Yet all the time the barometer is falling; the wilful, unyielding wind blows

in an unusual, wrong direction; ominous clouds hover and disappear low on the horizon and there is a sense of apprehension and fear of something disastrous brewing, of a storm of unusual intensity coming. A false peacefulness.

I could not help persisting in a curious awareness of some "message" from N this afternoon when he should receive my (disappointing, I'm sure) card in the mail — to see if I might still get an "announcement", which should come today, according to polite custom.

I did not get one, but there was another large, white envelope addressed, with no return, to "the Chambrain Family" from California. It was a shock, and odd that it was accompanied by a voluminous brochure from a printing co. However, both were from other sources. It didn't bother me too much. I hadn't really expected anything.

I rode home today to "Star of Love" song, which didn't surprise me. I wonder if I would have been able to pick appropriate song

backgrounds to suit me from the current popular ones I'm forced to listen to if my experience had been different?

For it strikes me as very odd how the Songs of the Week "follow" the the ups & downs of my pseudo-love affair. It strikes me as odd that Italian songs began to be popular that first summer I knew N and now they are the rage, becoming increasingly common. (I'm sure it was done just for me - ha! ha!)

Anyway, I couldn't help thinking to myself - "We'll see what happens - what song I hear about the time N would get his mail. Of course I have no way of knowing what the circumstances are - perhaps they're gone on a trip - moved. Perhaps Lilyan gets the mail before N. - Whether they're on vacation - one or both working - I don't know, of course.

But, it was a little too, too, when, ~~about~~ the time I'd ~~deduced~~ deduced -

my daughter turned on the radio
and out poured Italian — oh No!
it was the "Addio" record! — and
then, ^{next} again, "I hope the star of love
shines down on you!"

Make of it what you will.
I am perfectly aware that all this
exists in my imagination ~~that~~
including my pretense that N
loved me more than he did all
those other women in his life —
even the young, first love that
tears a man apart in the prime
of his manhood. I am only
pretending, I know. Yet it does
seem that even discounting my
natural tendency to ~~pick out~~ what I
want that the environment —
the 'psychic environment' — gives
me strange encouragement.

* * *

So — let us capitulate. As my
daughter found and read aloud
the prayer of St. Francis this
afternoon I thought of how I
should close with that, for
my sense of happiness at N's
happiness has not left me,
but I have not time as ~~interest~~
incentive

enough to copy it off again here.

In the real sense, where do we end? Strangely enough, it has all worked out somehow so that everyone seems to ~~give~~ ^{have} the impression — even Janie — that I could have married N and refused him. How that came about I don't understand. (How did I work that?) Anyway, it is an unexpected bonus when I planned to face the stigma of being exposed as a jilted mistress — a fool — a silly, middle-aged fool.

Somehow, I have survived that — and I am thankful, I feel a certain respect and understanding from people I did not expect about ^{this}. As for N it is quite possible he feels I have betrayed him — made him look a fool — created an untrue impression. Perhaps I have. Perhaps he even hates me, but, hate is more akin to love than indifference and I know he is not indifferent. I reviewed ~~I must go~~ ^{in my mind} again last night all I know of N and I found him wanting — for me, that is.

I had to ^{admit} that, in the face of his actions, I ~~gaddened~~ ^{gaddened} a lot that is not there, and most of all, I am fully aware that "the gift without the giver is bare". Whatever is real or imaginary I don't know — all I know is that I feel happy — and I did not expect to!

I'm thinking now that a great deal of this peace of mind that descends on me — and I'm sure N is experiencing the same feeling — is an overwhelming ~~unconscious~~ relief that the secretiveness, the sordidness of illicit love — (if ~~you~~ ^{you} a lifetime of it for him) — is over at last — the joy & peace of indulging in sex openly, approved. I suppose he & I will mistake it for ~~part~~ ^{an aspect} of their love.

And yet — and yet (I can see I have many pages to go yet before I resolve this thing, or find something else to take its place!) Even this doesn't quite hit it — there's something else —

Even when I recognize the lifting of guilt, of shame, of embarrassment, I still feel a relief —

I do not feel the gnawing, insufferable pangs of jealousy I should feel as I visualize them in intimacy. I feel almost relief — like my surprising reaction to Vita when N told me. Thank God! somebody's taking care of him! I can relax!

Do I feel guilt — that I let him down? No. He didn't want me. Maybe I have felt responsible for him! Could it be?

All I know that N was always on my mind: I've felt all this time "he is unhappy! he's unhappy!" and no one understands — no one helps him. He doesn't even understand it himself — and he's always doing something wrong! What will he do next?"

I have felt ~~off~~ fear of deserting him — I have felt it dangerous to even give him the slightest impression I was — I felt he needed me — he needed someone to care — someone to lean on — someone

to cry to - someone that would do him good - not harm, like his mother or Jamie.

Is this it? Is this why I feel this way?

I feel a certain boredom, a growing disinterest in the problems of marriage & family raising. Age? Contemplating a meeting with the two of them, I honestly feel I could give them my blessing - go to it, kids! Thank God! I don't have to go through all that again!

Especially not with Nick - ugh! Domesticate him, tame him, Lilyan, be always available for that passion he thinks he's so full of - that he over-values now! By the time I would ever see him again - he will be a wiser, quieter, humbler man, who will be more ready to listen to me, and understand what I'm driving at.

Why, if you do a good job, the fire the thorns will be taken out of him and we won't need me!

Now - let's take a new slant
that has occurred to me in my
search for the truth of this ~~un-~~
~~expected~~ peace I feel - for I am
suspicious of my claims to lack
of jealousy - to religious principles -
to mystic claims of "storms brewing!"

I did feel badly - very badly.
I have only to read a few pages
back - (that's why I write it
down!) (But I am trying to work
through to a way of living with
what I don't ^{really} like!) So -

I feel relief because all
my future possible rivals
are narrowed down to one
only - for quite a long time
to come - Hilyan!

I don't have to wonder &
worry - now who? Is this one
more important to him than me?
[I still assume, of course, for
the sake of my own ego, that
I am #1. What I mean
is that I exerted the
longest, strongest influence
I guess. I assume that men have
to take care of women the best,
~~but I can cope with~~ -
after I get over
even if there are many!)

Now - one I can cope with! Especially after I get over that first hump. For, I know where he is. I know he "has" to stay there. I know it will pall — as all love does. I know that the circumstances of this marriage could not possibly fulfill his needs — needs he does not know he has. (I have gone into all this before. I needn't go into detail about the needs of a ^{middy-aged bachelor,} a man-as-boy, an alien, a psychotic). Suffice it to see that I have lived long enough to know that a 27-year-old "old maid" nurse of an alien culture wowed & won in a mere six weeks could not possibly fill the bill for an extended length of time. (If she were that good, she'd have long since been married & a mother! I couldn't fill the bill, either!).

So — there is a storm brewing — perhaps not to day (it didn't materialize, by the way) but the elements are there. Time will tell.

This is the peace that comes from being old — of having seen a great deal of life!

I stand aside — and let
what will be, be.

Che sarà, sarà.

Tuesday, June 26, 1962

It isn't fair! Here I am trying to be a good kid! Trying to be sensible. Trying to finish this all up and put it out of my mind.

It wasn't FAIR for a new series of recordings to greet me as I came in to work this morning first with "I'll See You Again" and then--damn! damn! DAMN! "Non Domenticar!" (Do not forget). I was trying to be realistic and admit that what song happens to be playing in my environment has nothing to do with ME!

Oh Nick! Am I wrong about you? DO you still care, or don't you? Did my card convey the message it was meant to--and leave you with a pervading feeling of guilt and regret that will stay with you all your life?

*

*

*

Alberta made arrangements with me to do another poster for her this week. I thought to myself "if she doesn't appear, if she doesn't ask me to, I shall be very suspicious that the first "need" was fictitious--had some other motive....I noticed today that she had gotten a poster through the usual channels!

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I checked through the LA papers again and could find NO marriage license listings AT ALL. Strange.

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i drove by Janie's, thinking PERHAPS the newlyweds might be up here. Neither car was there--making me wonder. Then I de-

cided I should quit tormenting myself.

*

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Last night when I was going through this "storm brewing" bit I happened to sit down next to a deck of cards. For fun I cut the deck to see what "sign" would show up about N and me. I cut the Ace of Hearts! Fool! I said to myself. You and your "storms" and your "signs". I picked up the paper. "Italian train wreck!" screams a banner headline ~~under~~/a over a huge gruesome picture.

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I have thought how amazing it is that I have seemed to manage this four years of secretive writing without ONCE getting caught enough to have to explain, except for those two pages I have thought I lost, and then, both times found them safe.

But today I have been caught half a dozen times, not only in this but in exposure of mementoes and everything I have kept hidden. Perhaps I have gotten careless. For the firsttime I forgot to hide things. As for this writing, I am frantic to get it over with and have dared more than usual--and it didn't work. Nevertheless, a few of these exposures have been because of things that never happened before.

I am almost through. (If I'd only quit adding to it!) I HATE this typewriter! I don't know if I can stand to finish up with it or not. Yet I can't stand any more of this concentration on N. If I'm not careful I'll be right back where I started from--just plain daydreaming this time without ANY HOPE WHATSOEVER!

Tuesday - June 26

Accompanying is a doodle I did in sheer desperation at wishing I could see N + Lylia together - see the picture in my mind's eye - and then I realized that I have a gift - (They tell me) - I can draw it - so I did.

It doesn't quite look like N. It looks too young - a little too handsome, but I am afraid to toy with it for fear of spoiling the little resemblance there. It didn't catch the sparkle in those dark, slightly oriental, beautifully lashed eyes I wanted to ~~put~~^{get} in. It hasn't quite his slightly Arab cast of face - not quite enough of his too - much hair.

The figure hasn't caught his dwarfish, top-heavy look - head too big - bull chest, but legs and arms ^{muscular} stunted, ending in dainty, toy-sized feet and hands - those monkey-like - hair covered hands - so slight - so spidery fascinating - so clever.

I wanted a picture of two little people - 2 darkish, foreign-looking little newly weds cutting their "bella figura" on a brash, sun-soaked, artificial, corny Hollywood street. Both natively

1005
1/2
dressed - too ~~conservatively~~ ^{conservatively}, too
modestly dressed for that raw,
indecent phase - gloves - tie,
N's pants painstakingly creased
(wonder how Lylian will like that
mighty ritual he goes thru?) - his
shoes shined to a sparkle - no
Hollywood sandals for him - he
says they look "like monkey"!
N - happy, proud, strutting like a
little banty rooster.

Lylian on his arm, adoring,
meek, accomodating - "dark,
little, pretty" as Gamie reported
(from a picture? I made her
prettier, more stylish more pro-
vocative than I believe she is.
I made her real pretty - sexy-
lush. N would want her to
wear white gloves - (tho they
don't in L.A.) - for he likes them -
he thinks they're "lady-like." I
tried to make her look like a
face that appeared before me as
I drifted off to sleep one night
and someone seemed to say,
"this is Lylian". (I often see
people I've never "seen" before
like this before I sleep. Pictures
complete in every detail.)

But I don't think she'd really look like this. Pretty - yes. *N* likes 'em pretty. Petite - yes. He's conscious about his size. Shapely - yes - he eats 'em up. But, he also likes non-aggressive women (for marriage) - "good" women, meek, compliant women - his country's ideal of a wife. He wouldn't allow her to go out as undressed as I have made her - he'd be too conservative; too jealous.

But nurses, I have often noted, are seldom pretty, despite popular ~~opinion~~ ^{opinion}. For nursing is hard work - it takes & gets a sturdy physique; pretty nurses are soon snapped up by male patients, young doctors and in-terners. They don't last till they're 27 years old! Nor do I think *N* could survive the rivalry of a pretty, popular nurse - would present him - nor could he survive the jealousy of her "other life" where he couldn't follow if she were sought after.

Nursing also attracts the dedicated, the servile, the other-centered personality; not the kind of woman interested in her personal appearance. Therefore, nurses are not usually

dressy, also they can subsist on uniforms & Lylian obviously needed money, or she wouldn't be studying for a better-paying job, — a surgical nurse. Surgical nurses, in my experience, are self-effacing, meticulous, quiet, rather homely girls — who "don't care" whether they meet the public like a pretty woman does.

Then, we have the Mexican heritage, of which I've seen many — having lived in L.A. Short, dark, dark-skinned, stocky; Indian-like features.

That is the Lylian I see.

The sketch of me is a good resemblance of my prettier moments. I did it in front of a mirror.



Wednesday, June 27, 1962

I risked staying up very late last night to review back from the day Janie told me about N's engagement through to the present. I read only what actually happened, skipping my personal interpretations.

Now, to the strains of "Hello, Young Lovers, Where-ever You Are.....For I've been in love like you!" playing on the store music, I am thinking about the strange reaction I got—not at all what I expected!

Mostly I was surprised to see that there is not necessarily any ending: anything can happen and anything always does! Just read the daily papers!

I was surprised to see how little encouragement I gave N and Janie since N was here; how very definitely I cut them off—inexplicably to them, I see now. According to my words and actions, I seemed to have no further real interest in him. It sounded very much as if I considered it all a thing of the past, and for some mysterious reason of my own, had gone my own way with only an occasional polite interest in them. At no point did I sound like a woman who had found her man and wanted him, wanted to keep him, to mend things, to fight for him at all costs!

I was very much surprised at this. For I thought I was doing just the opposite! I was surprised at the CONSISTENCY of the WHOLE picture, as compared to the little separate, unrelated moments I was living. I was surprised to see it read as if there was very much an opportunity for me to have mended things, to actually have captured N if I had really tried!

And that I DIDN'T try, but consistently maintained some 'mysterious' barrier beyond which I would not go.

For, by reading it thus, I lost my own identity, so that it seemed to be a tale happening to someone

else, and, to my great astonishment, it sounded like a logn, drawn-out, very carefully carried-on "courtship" carried on by means of a family "go-between", in which the principal parties pretended not to know what was going on, while the family tested, tried, discussed, arranged, encouraged, discouraged and worked on the problems of the case over a long period of adjustment. A time in which social approval and diplomatic relations were quietly being worked on. It sounded like an old-fashioned ritual! Why, it sounded like Sicilian marriage arrangements, almost!

For the family HAD accepted me, more or less sanctioned N's return to me, tried, according to their code to privately straighten him out and cover-up his faults, to create his "bella figura" for the possible time when it would be proper to present it to the public and my family? It appeared almost as if they were working on this problem, since it HAD happened. Of course, if THEIR ideal of a marriage for N came up in the MEANTIME--well, how could they HELP THAT?--that would be just my hard luck!

And, then, for some reason they couldn't understand, I walked out on it. I began to find fault with N, criticize him. I wouldn't "play the game". To them my "letters" and strange attacks on them constituted a "rejection". So, that was that, according to their code. I should have stepped out of the picture if I wasn't interested--never to return again. And they would begin a new search for a bride for N!

They couldn't understand why I persisted in contact. This was beyond their comprehension. What in the world WAS it I wanted? It was perfectly clear to them!

And, when N began to pull a perfectly normal--to them--

Next day--

I was interrupted indefinitely in my frantic attempt to get down the refreshing, encouraging impression my re-reading gave me. I grabbed moments all day and evening trying, but I only got side-tracked and bogged down. I could not recapture my original revelation and feeling of hope and peace and all-rightness that went with it.

I used my HEAD till it ached trying to figure it all out--to study it, to come to some workable conclusion to go on through the years with. I found myself trying to prove whether N loved me or not, whether there was ANY way through the Big Wall for anyone, including N and Lylian, but it was all no use.

My only conclusion is that only the heart knows; the head cannot explain.

My heart tells me that N is not so happy now. My head tells me why: the glow is beginning to wear off. Reality enters. The future looms. It is not going to be easy for him to adjust to Responsibility, to living every moment of every day tied to one comparative stranger, whom he can't get rid of now, who must share his every activity, every thought, every intimacy--he who has spent so many, many years alone, He is beginning to feel CROWDED!

Let revenge be God's!

(action)

He turned immediately from the rejected love and asked another woman to marry him, making sure that the rejecting ^{one} knew about it (making sure his go-between knew about it, rather;) making sure that there was plenty of time and no absolute commitment — a six-month engagement.

(Now, this would mean nothing in our culture; one has to know that this is the Sicilian custom; one uses jealousy to force one's love to capitulate. (If I ~~didn't~~ not researched on Sicily, I would not have known this myself and would never have even recognized the picture when I re-read it! As it was, the familiarity of the story struck me so much when I read it as a whole, that I beg license here to remark on it, and excuse myself from "wish-thinking." For my own interpretation stands as recorded, and it is only my surprise which makes me even bother to put down this new insight (?))

In our culture — we no longer bother with these long

engagements - especially between two people approaching middle-age. What was my puzzlement at the time at this long engagement! In our culture, N would simply have married - eloped, possibly - figuring on a divorce, if necessary, later.

In their culture, divorce is not recognized, so the testing period comes first - the trial, the engagement.

N & Janis, of course, worked on this premise, mutually understanding it, assuming that I understood it, too.

And here we come up against the Big Wall - the thing that eventually wrecks all these inter-culture marriages and love affairs - the Big Wall that Lylian and N will undoubtedly come up against when the similarities of their cultures are exhausted. This is the "storm" I spoke of, the "hope" ^{and} the "justification" I sensed.

~~The~~ In this light, the "revenge" motive I sensed in N's action was true; it was there. But it

was misinterpreted by me in the reasoning of my own culture. To them, it was not revenge, it was the Challenge! My role was to passionately oppose it, declare myself, and claim "my own"!

This I did not do. Perhaps my instinctive desire, (my past observation of N's reactions) to write him passionately that I loved him — please do not marry! was what he was waiting for — expecting — biding his time for. (If I had, he would not have "rushed to my arms" but would have found some "Magnificent Excuse" for breaking his engagement, and gone on the same as before, assuming that "eventually", he "could" marry me (some Sicilian engagements go on for 10 years!) In the meantime — well, he was a "free" man — ! wasn't he? I would have become the Magnificent SECRET Excuse — (justification) to himself for not marrying — for going on the same as he always had — for not progressing, maturing, assuming responsibility & commitment. And I would not have gained a thing. I, too,

would be caught in the vicious circle!
never gaining him, only the
eternal hope of him!]

Perhaps this accounted for
the long evasion of N to Jamie &
Jamie to me about his marriage
and the lingering threats of "going
to New York" (his habitual signpost
of unhappiness.) Perhaps this
happened during my long silence
from Feb. to May.

Perhaps he was waiting, waiting,
still hoping for the Capitulation.
And my little series of cards
gave him hope.

He did not dare break with
Lylian during this time, for Jamie
had lost touch with me and he
couldn't follow things — any more
than I could. Yet he hadn't
totally committed himself to L.; he
was using her.

Perhaps the ^{wedding} post phone went
came after my May (?) letter about
the fire in which I gave him
faint hope again. But then
followed my still-unpersonal little
notes, so that he was forced to
play his last card — letting L.

~~His~~

mail the invitations? When this still did not evoke the desperate response from me, I felt his last minute cry of anguish before he jumped into the abyss. (Perhaps.)

I know I was surprised at the apparently related sequence of incidents, "messages", changes in Janie's attitude toward me - (her increasing exasperation) - and apparent activities on N's part. They were not disconnected, unrelated, happen-chance as they had appeared to me; they interwove, they followed in logical sequence, they made a story!

The "proof" that Alberta "sought me out" "to see how my side of the story was going" almost revealed an open curiosity and knowledge and interest in the progress of our affair by everyone that I was not aware existed, closed up as I was in my "secret" love. It is even possible that Alberta was on "my side" and was giving me "one last chance" and defying all the family by doing so. For she urged me to send N a gift; she was unduly dis-

appointed when I didn't, and duly
alarmed when she found the time
so much shorter than she thought.

Now; I do not say that any or all
of this is true, I merely say
it is a possibility from the
evidence.

If it is so, then I made a
Big Mistake 'if I wanted N to
marry me; made it, like all
Big Mistakes, mostly from sheer
ignorance. In spite of N's
apparent disinterest in marrying
me, I am aware now that I
have been gaining enough
support that if I had really
"set my cap" for N as I have
seen other women do, I could
have gotten him to marry me!
But I did not.

Even if I had been suffi-
ciently motivated sub-consciously
I could have at least achieved
a Great Show down.

But I did not do that,
either.

Why?

BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO
MARRY N!

Except in that first 6 months when love is most overwhelming and most blind because nothing has been revealed except one's very best, people-catching qualities. (The time when he "caught" L. If he had waited another year — ??)

I wanted to marry him then.
And I wanted N to want to marry me. And he did — again ^{with} that first 6 months.

But the above declaration is the name of that Barrier I put up that I stood firm against and would not go beyond — whether I knew it or not.

Because, if I have learned anything the last few years, it has been "proven" to me by these writings that our subconscious is a form of homeostasis we cannot escape: if I had truly wanted to marry N — I would have managed!

And I did not repel him,

as I've often suspected, because I am afraid of marriage again.

No.

As I grew to know N and became more aware of the way he treated me and what it meant, without knowing I did it — calling it something else — I protected myself from the what I sensed would hurt me — committment to a man who would still always have half an eye on every pretty passing girl; who still was motivated by youth's Big Dream and Search for the Right Girl, the Perfect Girl, the Perfect Wife; who still believed that somewhere, someday the Most Glorious Marriage awaited him.

I could not committ my self to N — (nor he to me) as long as he felt that way. And he did. It was all still ahead of him — (though it should not have been at his age)

I could have forced N to marry me, perhaps. But I did not want a husband with a roving eye.

And only one thing could cure him — what is happening to him now — experience of the thing he thinks he wants. That is why there is some compensation, some peace of mind for me in N's 'marrying': I lose him as the only way of gaining him.

And since, as I have noted, anything can happen, there is more hope this way than if I had deterred him from this experience.

Even if I never catch up with the time lag between us, he is a better man married as soon as possible, than endlessly seeking the will-o-the-wisp, for, the sooner he understands, the more hope there is for him to mature.

I wanted to be his mistress till my time ran out, ~~but~~ leaving him free to have the other experience, too.

This was what I was working on.

But again I ran up against the Big Wall. Such a thing was not in their culture. It was "all or nothing" to them —

Experience has taught me to compromise, to bend. But not with them — all or nothing. Their way, by the rules of their game, which

I did not know, did not perceive.

I recall that remark that Janie said N made after one of my letters to him, "I'll never understand these people!" (these Americans) He had run up against the tragedy of the Big Wall.

Of course, he'll never understand — not until he's willing to try to understand his own culture. Can he begin to understand another and see the differences — and the human root of both!

And so, rereading, I realized I had to summarize, to try to bring it all into focus — his view and my view before I could understand and put it away.

Another thing that struck me on re-reading is that, whereas at the time I write these dissertations, they seem obscure and muddled and unnecessary, on re-reading it is encouraging to note that they contain some

sense, some goal, some purpose. It is also encouraging to note that they contain only one viewpoint, despite all my striving, and that 'outside' of me, in the environment, is more encouragement than I'd dare to declare myself.

And so, bringing in evidence from the outside, I can content myself again that it was not necessarily lack of love, but lack of understanding. That I forced N into marrying, because I didn't understand that, in his way, he might have been forcing me. Jamie et al didn't understand why I would profess to wanting to marry him and then wouldn't do it. They didn't understand that I stood firm in my discipline of their spoiled son, at great self sacrifice - to make him learn and grow - to make him suffer the consequences of his acts. They will never understand.

They will never understand that I forfeited personal goal #1; then personal goal #2; and then personal goal #3 for long range goal #A - N's welfare, that I took it upon my self

to judge and influence,
I hope I have been right.

June 28, 1962--Thursday

After I wrote the foregoing, I finished my book on "Cultures" and wish to note the following, because it so closely approximates what I was driving at: (I have changed the wording somewhat to fit the case, but every thought expressed here is based on something in the book.)

"The whole is more important than its parts...No analysis of separate perceptions can account for the TOTAL experience...The framework of the past is crucial..The whole picture determines not only the relations, but their very nature...One is apt to approach a problem with a preconceived idea. A record of actual facts and happenings often produces a different picture."

(This is why I re-read. This is why it helps. This is why I get a new slant, a new insight.)

"Any understanding between two entities must consider their different natures...the achievement of one cannot be judged in terms of the other, for each was attempting to achieve quite different goals... Any understanding must consider the INTENTION... Sometimes one is making use of standards incredible to the other. We may be traveling different roads in pursuit of different ends and the ends and means of one may not jibe with the other."

(In other words, speaking of love in absolute terms does not make it possible to speak of love as it pertained to N alone, or to me alone. ^{unless it} We each had something different in mind. To try to prove we LOVED each other is not possible, unless we know what LOVE meant to N and what it meant to me. We loved "each after his own fashion".)

"The cultures we were brought up in conditions our thoughts and emotions..Some cultures view life as a series of threats from the outside..(Nick's).. Some foster the idea of inward development of personality (mine). Some cultures stress reaching for the infinite (mine) while some stress merely the superficial aspects of life (N's.)

This was why I reached an impasse with N and Janie. They simply could not conceive what I was driving at--(N's inward development.)

"Our cultures provide the raw materials for our lives...One cannot achieve unless the culture provides.. Some cultures are meager and the members suffer. Some are rich and its members prosper... Some cultures are still uncor-ordinated, dissonant, geographically isolated, crippled by certain historical experiences, still embroiled in finding themselves and the basic necessities of life." Such is the contrast between Sicily and America, that made N and ^{his} I different.

"When one leaves a meager culture and seeks a richer one, one runs into special conflicts brought on by two cultures at odds with each other...It takes an open mind, a hospitality to new influences, a great desire and willingness to intergrate...a great curiosity about the new culture."

Janie and N are still immersed in and battling this conflict that I do not have, but they are battling it with CLOSED MINDS, and this made all the difference when I sought to help them integrate. This is what I ran up against that I could do nothing about.

This is the difference I noted between Pellegrinis and Chianellós, this is back of N's ^{adamant} ~~adamant~~ declaration that he could not marry me-(or any other ^American;) this is why he married a Mexican, whose cultural dilemma and framework SEEMS to him right now to be similar to his.

"It requires give and take...some traits will be maintained, some discarded... some will be accepted, some rejected...Each culture uses only a segment of the total possible range of human behavior... What is highly prized in one culture may be abhorrent in another..Things like Jealousy may serve a purpose in one culture because it is ~~based on~~ ^{based on} conditioned by the local sexual regulations, but will not pass through the needles's eye of social acceptance in another culture."

"A person's personality may not even fit into his own culture and he may therefore be considered neurotic or psychotic...for some, traditional arrangements evoke a very high price in suffering and frustration...Such people ARE ALIENATED FROM AN IMPOSSIBLE WORLD...tradition can be as neurotic as any patient.ⁱ
(Such were N and I.)

"The recognition of CULTURAL RELATIVITY carries with it its own values which need not be those of the absolutist philosophies. It challenges customary opinions and causes those who have been bred to them acute discomfort. It rouses pessimism because it throws old formulas into confusion, NOT because it contains anything intrinsically difficult.

As some of the new opinion is embraced as a customary belief, it will be another trusted bulwark of the good life. We shall arrive then at a realistic social faith, accepting ~~on~~ grounds of hope and as new bases of tolerance the co-existing of equally valid patterns of life which mankind has created for itself out of the raw materials of existence."

patterns of life which mankind has created for its self out of the raw materials of existence.

And, this, in a nut shell was the problem between Jamie, N & me. I was too far ahead of them? And they did not understand.

Perhaps N understood. I prefer to think he did — that he was protecting me from the impossible — and therefore showed the wisdom and courage for which I loved him, though he carried it out brutally.

Or, even, if he did it, unknowingly, to protect himself from what he knew he couldn't accomplish (which is more likely) it still shows an innate wisdom — a form of "homeostasis" better than most people, who, like Jamie, would have jumped and regretted later.

This is the understanding that N and I had. ~~It does not~~ It does not mean we didn't love each other. It could

mean we loved each other
enough not to hurt each other.
That he did for me what I did
for him — gave him up because
I loved him. He didn't, of course, he, at best,

But I was braver, (^{gave me up in spite of loving me} more of loving me)
supported by my culture?) than he —
I wanted a "temporary compromise"
until he was ready for the Bigger
Commitment.

And now I understand why
I felt his marrying Lylian was
"not right" — (not that she isn't
right for him — a Sicilian
marries for different reasons
than an American does — it
does not even have to be love) —
but because it was a second-
rate solution.

If he had waited a little
longer, he would have found
more support yet in his
adopted culture (as he is finding
more all the time) and have been
able to make a better solution.
If he had "bided a wee" with me
we might have had him ready
for that Italian-American
girl he should have married!

June 29, 1962 *Friday*

Finale. Final report. A couple of little last-minute bonuses I hadn't counted on.

^{told me she}
Mother went to Miller's to look for a dress. Janie approached her, smiled, said, "Hello", asked to help her. Mother said, "No, I'm just looking." That was all. I believe mother said Janie "didn't look very well". I don't remember. I couldn't think of anything to say, so I said nothing.

★ ★ ★
Encountered Alberta this morning. Established "rapport"--she wants more posters. After the "Battle of the pages" preceding I felt sure enough, calm enough to seek her out and ask, without preliminaries, "What does Janie think of N's marriage?"

In spite of myself I found my heart pounding and had to go carefully. She hadn't seen Janie, she didn't know. She didn't seem to care much, and certainly was not much help, revealing by her mixed up remarks that she was not a good source of information. However, I managed to get in a few final remarks about how N had told me "he couldn't possibly marry an American girl" and "that he seemed to have planned this" and "that a Mexican had a more similar background and might be better" and that "I thought Janie seemed a little unhappy about it--that I thought she'd rather he'd have married an Italian girl"....I was ready to really go into the matter, but Alberta doesn't seem to care and I had to discuss other things with her.

Anyway, I've had "my last say" in case it is passed on to Janie and/or N!

I find myself basically unhappy and have to keep busy, and my mind off of it all. I shall be glad when time passes and it doesn't hurt any more.

Sat. June '30 -

I shall be glad indeed! - When I reach some workable conclusion that will serve me through every mood and I won't have to keep searching page by page!

ESP I wish mainly to remark that, speaking of ESP, it was quite a shock to call Lillian Mathews yesterday and have her tell me "I kept thinking of you all last week - I don't know why - I almost called you -" (For all last week I was on the verge of calling her to prepare N's wedding present.)

About N: I wish I could stick to the thought I had last night! Why, N's impossible! Let him talk about being through! I don't know anyone who has more reason for being through than I have. And for a moment I felt exactly that. At least that is a progression!

For, "I brought" him where I intended to bring him - to independence, success, marriage.

there is absolutely nothing else I can do for him except to remain a fine friend.

But who can be a friend to him? He is impossible! Compared to the friendly activities and efforts of all the people I know, he is definitely beyond the pale as a friend.

And, finishing up another book I read, I realized, as it said, that Italy always has been — always will be? — primarily obsessed with phallic worship — I can't change that!

And, to quote again:

"The misfit individual may cultivate a greater objective interest in his own preferences and learn to manage with greater equanimity his deviation from the type. If he learns to recognize the extent to which his suffering has been due to lack of support in a traditional ethos, he may gradually educate himself to accept his degree of difference with less suffering."

How true! How true! Witness N's
& my battle these four years! Ex-
actly what we were each trying
to do — and I can be serene in
knowing that we each made
some progress — that we helped
each other — and it was not
effort wasted!

[Quote] "Both the exaggerated emo-
tional disturbances of the manic-
depressive (N) and the seclusion of
the schizophrenic (me) add certain
values to existence which are not
open to those differently consti-
tuted —"

There is peace for me in these words!
For it supports my claim that my
imagination can afford me as
much emotional satisfaction as
actual experience. — (though it
is hard on the cerebral cortex!) —
and it offers a greater range
of "experience" than is possible
in reality. No one understands
this.

No one understands that
a concentrated imagining of
a scene that will never happen
in which I encounter Jamie

and we discuss N's marriage,
and I turn and leave her
saying, with a laugh, "Well,
I don't ~~imagine~~ ^{think} there were
~~any~~ eggs broken on that
doorstep!" [An allusion to
the ~~Sicilian~~ Symbolic Sicilian
marriage custom I just learned
from my reading.]

No one can understand
that my imaginary picture
of Janie's face, first giving
me a look of puzzlement and
then ^{utter} loathing, affords me
^{almost} as much cathartic emotional
release as the actual fact,
and is not as dangerous. ^{Socially}
~~For~~ my body suffers no
more from ~~any~~ chemical
damage than it would
suffering the anger, guilt &
prolonged suffering of actually
going through the experience.
It only suffers a different
damage!

Or that N's abnormal
silence is full of such visions
and "experiences" as mine, as
real and satisfying to him
^{protective}

as mine are to me. And, above all, that there is some evidence, some support, to the fact that such people as N and I share these experiences, know what each other is feeling and thinking in a phenomena of living that some people never experience.

[Quote:] The unsupported individual who valiantly accepts his favorite and native virtues may obtain a feasible course of behavior that makes it unnecessary for him to take refuge. in a private world he has fashioned for himself."

This is the quality I love in N whatever the consequences to me; that valiant attempt. This is the reason he married Lillian, and why I respect his decision. He brought himself out of his private world "~~by~~ his bootstraps". he rejected his neurosis! This is what I mean by saying he has achieved a "success" of sorts - and I hope I was instrumental in perceiving the problem & helping him to solve it!

And this is the battle I now
face — to reject my own
private world — this is what
I am fighting — why I am
trying to summon my own
valiancy.

For it is harder for me now.
as it was harder for N before.
For he now has more support
from the environment than I
do. Mine is a longer range,
harder, less hopeful battle
than his ~~own~~.

And this is what I mean when
I say I know N is feeling for
me. He understands this. He
knows his impotence to help
me — that I must fight ~~that~~
battle alone — perhaps without
ever achieving success.

This is what is behind my
mysticism in referring to
the songs "Addio" and "I
hope the Star of love shines
down on you —"

I know beyond a certainty
that I cannot explain that
while N goes through the
motions of his "happiness" —

he, in his "youth", is wishing for me the same "bliss" he is now experiencing that he cannot give me. From the bottom of his secret heart, ~~where I~~ ^{where I} furiously reached, which is warm and tender beyond anyone else's knowing, he is wishing me "happiness". This is what I mean when I say he "loves" me. Why I can never turn against him.

He does not understand that the "star of love" he wishes me from youthful ignorance, has already been mine and is inadequate for the time of life, the battle that now confronts me. He does not understand as Angelo Pellegrini understands, because he, too, has passed this age, that there is a peace we seek beyond the impossibilities of life — beyond the "never-nevers" beyond the ^{Big Wall} ~~heavens~~, the ~~Nitas~~, the ~~Big Wall~~. For — (quote) "He may gradually ~~further~~ achieve a more independent and less tortured

attitude toward his deviations
and upon this attitude he
may be able to build an
adequately functioning existence,

He may. He (she) may not! And
the best reward available
(sic!) is only adequate, note, ^{McCole}
Thank you, N, for your wish ^{mis.}
for the "star of love", but you
do not know. You do not
know yet that the "butterfly
of happiness" you gave me
sustains me, and that the
"star of love" you mean is behind
me.

For I have discovered a
great secret I have yet to find
in anyone's writings any where —
that sexual activity without the
possibility of impregnation —
despite what either male or
female claims or professes thru
the ages — becomes only the
"scratching of an itch" — even
tho we never, never may realize
it — it becomes a hollow
act, instead of a hallowed one!

This is all behind me — and
ahead of you. The "love" ~~we~~ we now
seek is beyond your comprehension —
until your time comes!

So — Addio, Nicolo. Addio,
"private world" of this book. For,
though I cling to it, hoping some
miraculous thing will come to pass
which will be necessary to record,
no one, no external influence, can
make me close this book.

Only I can close it. And
this I must do. Valiantly, I
release it to its spot in Time —
to its place in my life. If
some "miracle" happens — it
shall be noted.

Other wise —

Addio.

Waiting one more week — until
I'm sure the 2 weeks you may
have taken for your honeymoon
(you would never take more!)
and the haunting suspicion that
you may be here in town — you
and your bride — though I

doubt it from my observations of
activities etc - are over and
I am 'safe'?

"Unless some 'miracle' happens —"
I beg a "little m" tonight.

Actually, it has nothing to do with the N story, except that it pertains to my attempts to give up my private world that ~~has~~ been N-centered, and it evidences an "ESP" supporting of same.

I mentioned how Lillian spoke of thinking of me last week when I was thinking of her, and what a shock it was to me.

Tonight, my daughter & I, with whom I have great rapport lately, were discussing my neighbor best friend ^(the ESP one) and her loves, and also ~~coincidentally~~ discussing my "going out more". I was beginning to work on my "re-entrance" into the world after closing the door on my private N-world. She was working on trying to break down my ~~my~~ seclusiveness, which bothers so many people — as she proceeded to tell me.

The phone rings. It is the ESP neighbor who proceeds to read me one of her latest

writings (she, too, 'writes it out'
but in verse & always seeks
an audience), It was about
her lovers. Then she went into
a long discourse on how we
(she, she meant) could seek &
find more social contacts - find
some men etc.

After this long talk, I sat
thinking, striving against all
my personal wishes how I
could please these people, be
more "normal", force myself
to go out - meet some men -
all those silly things I'm
supposed to do that don't appeal
to me.

I thought of one thing I could
do and determined to do it.
I don't know if I've menthored
it - a most unprecedented
encounter with a friend who
is "lame-ducking" a ^{young} Japanese
woman who is living with
one of the town's "eligible"
"bachelors". I almost
rode to Seattle with them
at ~~their~~ ^{the Japs'} invitation that time
I went over. I almost

joined up with Ginny (what a parallel of names in my life!) in her lame-ducking, I intended to pursue it, but then, decided no. I'd had enough of 'neurotic' bachelors and foreign "lame ducks!"

Well, I do it, I decided — maybe, — next week — maybe —

The phone rang. "This is Ginny — Paul Osbo is here — (11)eta. I ended up going over to her house — & spending the evening talking to Paul and Ginny & her family. Nothing special. Nothing "promising" (the "bachelor" is a drunk. I discovered).

The odd thing is that it all ties in with a man who started me in my career — a classmate — since married & very successful — & to whom I intend to go again when I "pick up" my career — it all ties in to this one man — the Japanese, the Pellegrini who know him, & the relative of a relative I met last night at a party, who turned out to be a good friend of this same man's. It all points in one direction — a direction that should be rewarding for me.

Odd, I think. — how the

Thought seems to create the incident sometimes.

It gave me the feeling that I am currently "on the beam" and my thoughts about N are "true", therefore. And, at that moment, the radio produced "Al di là".

Not only that. I forgot to mention that when Jimmy gave me directions on how to get to her new house, I couldn't believe my ears! It was on James street. So that I found myself spending the evening in that neighborhood last night!

And as I passed their house on the way home, it was dark, closed & both cars gone !!!?? Have they gone out of town for the holiday (the 4th)? Where? Where?

Or did they go to see the picture "Jessica" which is now playing here — (and I am so glad I don't have to go see!) ?

Today - alone - I turned the radio to my pleasure in time to hear ~~an~~ news story about a bus-car collision in California in which 5 people were killed. I must confess I prayed that it be N + Helen!

So -

I am working hard trying to "give up my private world", but, like all neurotics - I only find the reasons I have retreated into it - for, suffice it to say, that all my "valiant" attempts have been met with the same cultural obstacles that sent me fleeing into a private world in the first place. They are all still there!

And I find it - lonely, lonely, without my little toy dream to play with.

I am tempted to go on writing, just because I enjoy it - recording the funny, silly things people do and say. Not the N story any more - just observations.

Like the thought I had - the "leap" of insight? - ~~that~~

about manic depressives & Schizophrenics: Why, it's as simple as this:

MD's (from my observations) are people who have always gotten their own way (when children) and their "ups" are when they are getting what they want & their "downs" are when they are not!

And Sch. are people who never got their own way — and got too discouraged to try!

And my observations of Griny & her "lame duck" last night! It was funny! I saw how it looked from the outside. I had a very good chance to enter into it, but I didn't care. Poor starved woman!

And my "ESP neighbors" reaction to my account of last night's "ESP" experiences — why, she was jealous!

What a world!

July 3 - 1962 - Tuesday.

I'm trying. I'm trying real hard. I'm doing every social thing that comes up, picking up every invitation, suggestion; thinking up things and doing them. I'm trying to be real & enter into all this bustle around me and participate. I've been real busy - having "a good time" - (nice things, not bad ones.)

And I'm exhausted. (I was never tired before.) (I felt sure, and calm and peaceful and knew where I was going.) Everybody's real proud of me - now -

- and I feel awful! I feel dirty, disagreeable, joyless, and un-me! I feel grimy and soiled. I do things I don't like at all - don't enjoy. And everyone begins to tell me all the "wrong" things I was doing before - secluding myself, "sacrificing" to my children "spoiling" them, "not having any fun" - etc. A long list of things they've kept from telling me before.

They're going to find me men - dates, "fun" - (sordid,

Unhappy impossible middle-aged men, burdened down with problems + responsibilities — with whom I have nothing in common — with whom I could spend an evening or two — a night or two — and then have the unpleasant chore of getting rid of them! Men I could never love)

They are cleaning up ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~ex-husband's~~ ^{ex-husband's} & I getting to gether again — and I can't convince them that I'm not interested!

I keep thinking — Why don't they leave me alone? Why don't they let me be me? I've been through all this before and they just don't understand. Why do they interfere?

I catch myself saying it, but I cannot face saying it, for it echoes exactly Harry's Esqates words to me? "We've been through all this — & you just don't know!"

And my "answer" to them was that they didn't b

try - they didn't love & they closed their hearts, their minds and their ears & isolated themselves.

And I don't want to face these words as applied to myself! What is the difference?

There is a difference! For they were unhappy; I was not! I enjoyed my "self-sacrifice", I was accomplishing something by it, for I was intent in dedicating myself for a specified time to my children; I had a goal & a purpose! I did not want what I denied myself and they did! I am marking time, they are living their life.

Anyway, I have been spying on Esqates - and they seem to be gone! I don't understand. For Jamie is still working & she is not eligible for a vacation this year. My first thought - which I forgot against - was that they'd gone to Spokane - to Pina's for the holiday - to see N & his bride who'd meet them there? - or to California - to see N & L?

The very thought made me

furious! How like him to deliberately by-pass Yakima, Ha! I thought - he's scared of me! And so is Janie!

And I had some miserable visions of the family reunion & N happy, proud, strutting, working hard at his "bella figura" & showing off his birds.

And I thought how I could find out - if I really wanted to. But it's too much trouble - too dangerous - and too little reward, - and too upsetting.

I contented myself with the wisdom of the middle-age & much living brings - that nothing in life is as wonderful as we think it's going to be.

Even by now - a scant two weeks, N is already getting disillusioned, (but it will be long before he admits it.)

Even sex reaches the saturation point - especially in marriage when one is sure of it and begins to take it for

granted — when one has ~~run~~ the
gamut of this particular partner
and the two people who seemed
one for awhile begin to separate
into two eternal strangers again;
when nature has had her way
and nothing remains but this
personality who has separate goals,
separate habits, a separate culture
from yours — and one is tied,
imprisoned, committed to endless
days, years of the same, cut off
from all new opportunities. So
N will begin to feel — as we all
do.

And he will let down on his
intense effort to please, to charm, to
ingratiate — for no one can keep it
up forever. And all his difficult
moods and characteristics will
begin to show and come through
again. Ha! Let Lydia have
it — I don't envy her!

For, just as this left-over
writing session habit, used to
be a great joy and relief to me,
with its physical price, now
it is tiresome, disgusting,
unwholesome, not worth
the physical price. I have

come this far, anyway!)

Even though the "pursuit of happiness" as advocated by my environment leaves me cold, disgusted at its prettiness, its futile "immediacy", it points out to me again that my hard-won decisions and goals I adopted and fought for these last ten years are worthwhile and best for me; that I will lose more than I'll gain by adopting false standards for me to please the environment. That I am different — and I must maintain my integrity, even if it is not understood in this present environment.

My attempt has already served its purpose: it has broken my N-habits, given me ^{another} ~~a~~ good look at what's around me and set my face forward again, with the realization that the N-episode was "time-out"₃, unsought by me; worthwhile but over — and not worth regretting! —

Notes from research on Italian & Sicilian sexual customs.

The Avventura is a Southern Italy (Naples) love affair.

It almost always ends in disappointment for the girl, but it is flattering while it lasts.

Every young man who claims to be a man at all is expected to have at least one, but preferably several avventure before he gets married.

It consists of falling passionately in love with a girl & flinging himself in wild abandon at her feet.

Selects girl then goes into ritual of adject adoration which has won him reputation of being most passionate lover in world.

Begins with passeggiata - (walk) (or stroll among poor) - done in car or rorobatt if can. Hangs a doringly over girl during this sighing over her beauty. Seizes her personal triva as keepsakes. Endless snapshots in romantic attitude. Asks people to take their pictures.

Goes to public beauty spots not secluded ones, because wants to cut "bella figura".

Wants everyone to see him at work adoring girl. Dresses resplendently - brags about own appearance - never notices what girl is wearing. Is a peacock

If woman visits an isolated spot will go, for a woman must be obeyed, but if no one is about, is apt to sulk.

Leads up to tender moment with elaborate & subtle tactics; then suddenly glances at watch & excuses self - to make a phone call. Not an evasion. Calls male friend & brags & hints at intentions. Makes call as public as possible. Is making a doubly beautiful figure.

Sends post-cards & pictures to all to prove -

Then exchanges rings - usually cheap. Then man puts on another ring on top of his ("faithful" ring). This is climax. All this time woman has been overwhelmed with praise & admiration, declarations of passion between watch-watching.

contacting friends to brag etc. May not necessarily include love-making.

Man now relaxes & waits for woman to throw herself on him & say she cannot live without him.

If she does Heaven help her. The adventure is over & her lover will begin to treat her as woman she really is. She is no longer a goddess; she will be observed with a remarkably cold and realistic eye. The game being over, the next step can only be marriage and for the (Southern Italian) there may be profit & comfort in matrimony, but there is no romance.

If she resists the temptation to give in to her lover - she will get the same chilling douche. Her ardent admirer of the previous weeks or days becomes an irritable, quarrelsome man perpetually anxious to be off and away.

She does not understand that he is about to enjoy the last

exquisite pleasures of the game. He isolates himself from her & plays the role of the broken-hearted lover for all his men friends & family who enjoy the spectacle. Knowing full well he has probably lost her address, forgotten what she looks like & is mentally calling her by the name of some other woman.

The peppagallo -

is a devotee of the cult of "la donna". They are the outgrowth, the left over of the "cicis'beo" - the sanctioned consort to a married woman.

- is a romantic & melancholy young man who devotes himself to the pursuit of women. May not be handsome, but foppish in dress. Likes foreigners.

The Italian people [believe] that a woman has one husband in her life and no more than one. She may have lovers; but there is only one man to whom

she submits. A man may have a dozen loves, with one of whom he may stay, if she can hook him, and if she can hold him?

Notes
-- In Italy, there is no divorce. The Italian trusts a woman to know what man she wants as her husband - and it does not trust husbands at all. A man may go scot-free by the law, but not by his wife (or his families - 3)

Concerning the carnal passions. They are realists. They do not believe a man over 40 can fall in love. The young It. lover is indulged & encouraged. In a country where there is no divorce the condemned man eats a hearty meal. The average has 3 engagements before he gets married. It is the groom that cries in Italy, not the bride.

Notes
I read this after wards
Married life really begins only with the first coitus. Before that a wife expects her husband to love her as she knows full well he has

loved other women. After that she has no illusions, or, if she has her family or his will knock them out of her.

Fathers are not lovers. Nature has made motherhood beautiful to think about but not to look at. They raise large families because there is nothing else for them to do together. [They think] God did not intend men & women to be friends.

Notes from research on sexual customs of
Italy and/or Sicily:

Vocabulary:

Avventura--(Southern) Italian love affair

Passeggiata--the (lovers') walk

Bella figura--the "fine figure"

Pappagallo--the Italian "wolf"

Sarracino--the Sicilian "wolf"

la donna--saccharinely sentimental cult
of woman worship

strafalaria - Sicilian prostitute

buon costume - decent behavior

June 8, 1962 *Saturday*

Report on my progress in "forgetting":

This time it worked! This time is for real! I not only don't seem to care about N and Janie, but I actively DISLIKE them!

While I'm still CURIOUS about whether N gets married, I find I don't seem to care enough to make the effort to find out. Right now, when I contemplate seeing N again or thinking of him married, I only think, "So what? Who cares?"

I even had an excellent opportunity to discuss him, his work, and the fire recently over at the Republic, and I simply refrained from mentioning it or him--and so did everyone else--and afterwards, I was glad I had--it was a RELIEF!

I do not feel ashamed or embarrassed about the whole thing as I always thought I might someday. I just feel a sort of awesome wonderment about the strange workings of this thing called "love"--this peculiar "way of seeing" that grasps us off and on during life.

There has, of course, been no answering contact from either N or Janie--and this helps, naturally. I feel a great disgust for people who act so unnaturally.

* * * *

I find myself still reading about Italy, though I notice a tendency to pick books now that will disillusion me. In one true report of an American's experience there that I am currently reading I found a reference to a man, a real, live, living person, whom they called "Milo Checkovich". The description of him and his character and activities and the similarity of the name to Mr. Pellegrini's "Mario 'Pillosnitch'

made me wonder very much if it wasn't one and the same man!

Especially when it described him (disgustedly) as an international hanger-on of writers and a self-appointed liason man between Greats and Near-Greats, or Would-be-Greats. It fits very well with my suspicions of the Pellegrinis, and could account for Pelle's sudden dismissal of my meeting him.

* * * *

I seem to have lost my desire to listen to Italian records, study Italian, even to see the Pellegrinis again--to travel in Italy some day. Italy once again seems like just another country to me.

Also I seemed to have lost interest in someday acquiring a man--in ever getting romance, and therefore in keeping up my appearance. Farlty, I suppose, because I have aged considerably in the last year. It is no longer possible to disguise my age by careful artifice as I have been doing.

* * *

I felt a touch of finality when, driving by the Esgate's old house--the house where I lived when I loved him the most and where I can always "see" him standing in the yard as he did one day when we went by--I saw a sign on it

FOR SALE!

July 9-1962

I saw Jamie today. And I think I saw her yesterday.

This is the first time - since - Not that it matters. We are bound to encounter each other a few times. It means nothing at all, unless I want to make it mean something.

And I could. For there has been a strong Pattern lately that I have chosen to ignore. And I certainly don't expect anyone to believe me now, after the fact, if I say "it led up to" seeing Jamie. Even if it's true.

I always still give a look of curiosity at Jamie's when I'm in the area (to see if maybe I see any signs of N being here) (I just thought! Wed. is his birth day! He will be 35! I think) But I never drive down their street any more, for they know my car by now.

What I have glimpsed made me wonder if someone isn't visiting there - maybe Pina I don't know. And I am very

alert to any small Mexican looking girls around ^{town}. I have seen two that I thought "could very well be", one so beautiful it hurt, & the other (to day) just about what I expect her to look like.

Anyway, that sets the mood. Except for my feelings. Which are mostly "all right", mostly mad, mostly a sick feeling in the pit of the stomach; an ability to get engrossed in my daily life and a great relief at finding myself, at last, able to listen to "our songs" without identifying myself with them! An acceptance — of a sort.

(Sunday)
Yesterday I was reading near the front window when Jamie's car whizzed by. I ran to try to see for sure, for I have often been mistaken, but all I could see was an impression of a blonde driving and perhaps someone in the seat beside her — someone very small — and seemingly feminine — too small for her daughter, who is as tall

as Jamie. The combination of car + blonde convinced me it was Jamie. But I do not know for sure.

I do know that I pondered quite a while on why she would come down our street, for she never, never has, and has 'no reason' to. Especially now.

All I could think of was that she wanted me to see her. Why? ~~Then, trying to figure out who~~ Then, trying to figure out who that might be with her — not N — there wasn't enough bulk to it — Who would be small and feminine that Jamie would go out of her way to have me see her with? Why — Liflian! — N's bride!

Of course! It would be very, very typical — quite in character. No mention to Liflian of who lived here or anything — just a mysterious, hopeful sortie for "revenge" + hoping I'd see her, hoping I'd be mad.

I don't know. I don't know at all.

Anyway, today I was approaching the stop light

near our store on the way home. I was alone. And there stood Jamie on the corner, her back to me.

She might well have seen me as I passed her when the signal turned. In fact she might well have seen me during my half-hour's prowling the streets looking for the car my daughter had left parked somewhere.

It might very well have accounted for the strong feeling ~~that~~ I had all that time that just such a thing was happening; I felt that Jamie or "one of them" was watching me, and I was very self-conscious all the time & glad I looked my best.

Jamie looked neat, tho not as fancy as she used. Her expression was grim & sulky-looking. But, best of all, she was alone!

Which made me surmise that she's still working & there must not be any company — for she would be spending her own hour with them, wouldn't she?!

July 20, 1962

Everything's fine. It really is "over" with me. I amuse myself once in a while thinking about some aspect, or imagining future encounters.

But, even they palled, when I discovered that if I ever met V again there would be nothing there! And, trying to imagine what I'd say to him even "if he came back to me" I realized I'd be at a loss "You were just — inadequate, Nick, inadequate —". I could think of nothing else.

In a moment of boredom during my current vacation I (reluctantly) unearthed these last few pages, started to read, was interrupted, (and glad of the interruption!) — and did not go back to it.

The next morning I realized that I had dreamed a very real, very "rational" dream in which Jamie pleaded with me not to discard her, not to break up our friendship be-

cause of what her brother
had done, for she couldn't
help what he did —

Why, I never thought of it
that way, I thought the next
morning! Is it possible that's
what Jamie (and Harry) meant?

But, thinking it over, I
decided — no. No, they still didn't
encourage me — and there was
still Harry's remark "Why don't
you leave her alone?" That was
surely not an invitation to
further relationship!

And mother reported that
Jamie was absolutely non-committal
in a recent prolonged encounter
when she & a friend shopped
there.

That is all.

July 23, 1962

I have a bit of romanticism to record. I haven't time tonight, but, if I wait till tomorrow, it will not be "true"; I will "over-judge" it.....

Later:

I had to wait. I don't know now if I can recapture that passing conviction I felt yesterday; that feeling of sureness worthwhileness that compensates for all the bad memories and impressions I have.

Anyway, I'll try.

To pass time these summer days and help me get through another time of personal stress and a new family tragedy, I have started reading again.

I decided to finish up my list of Italian books I wanted to read. I was surprised to find suddenly a great quantity of them in the library. I thought I had read everything they had. (Note: I have been able to intersperse a few NON-Italian ones, too—a victory!)

One I had picked at random I had lying beside me when I was discussing this latest tragedy in my family. My eye, wandering during the discussion, was caught by an Italian phrase on the book jacket just as I was wondering if there was any possible way out of this dilemma.

"Fa o miracolo!" the phrase said, (in Neapolitan dialect). ("Make a miracle (God)!") "Make a miracle! Make a miracle!" I prayed silently.

Feeling a little foolish, I nevertheless felt an inexplicable conviction that everything would be ALL RIGHT, though, at that time I saw no possible solution EXCEPT a miracle.

The feeling of surety persisted through the ensuing two weeks of trouble and trial, so much so that I

was able to sustain others involved , all the time privately wondering why I was not as upset as the occasion warranted.

Suffice it to say that yesterday THE MIRACLE HAPPEN^{ED}—and it was almost of the same nature as the one described in the book!

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The other night I went to the show under what was, for me, rather unusual circumstances. I admit I arranged to go because it was a show I 'd been wanting to see for the reviews described it as a middle-aged woman's passion for a much younger man, and I was curious to see how the problem was handled--(naturally!)

But that's all I knew about the picture. I did not know that the plot was so very similar to my N experience: one in which an older woman with a family attempted to help a lonely, unhappy immigrant, and found, to her amazement such a personality rapport with him that it led them both into dangerous waters.

Nor did I expect to see the foreign "boy" so N like—in mannerisms, appearance, personality, problems, et al. There were times when the look in his eye and the credo and philosophy he presented brought back the BETTER things I liked about N, that I was deeply shaken.

So much

I wondered if my companion (the only one to whom I'd confided about N) realized why I'd wanted to come, or if she "got the message" portrayed in the movie (be nice to aliens). I think not. From her comments the whole import of the play passed completely over her head. (I am learning to live with this mass indifference I find in people.)

Anyway, my heart was wrung again by the circumstances presented in the picture, and, too, it made me realize that they are not isolated circumstances, happening only to me as I thought, nor are they without worth or as socially condemned as I was beginning to believe.

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The next morning some one told me that the man who is Janie's new boss, who seemed so marvelous at first has turned out to be such a tyrant that three of the women have quit. Poor Janie!

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Yesterday afternoon, I agreed to watch a very special TV broadcast with mother, and was "rewarded" for my small concession by having them announce that one of the places to be shown would be SICILY!

Imagine my excitement at the opportunity of viewing what was going on in Sicily at that EXACT moment!

And imagine my consternation when the picture failed at that particular moment and all we saw was a short glimpse of Sicilian fishermen!

However, it turned out we didn't miss much--that's about all there was, and even it was very exciting to me.

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The next item concerns another Italian book I picked up yesterday that inspired me to bother to write all this down after all.

For, it was a book written by a man considered to be one of Italy's best modern authors. The book has been reviewed as being exceptionally profound, good, wise, et cetera, et cetera.

I was amazed! For the tale was as romantically "foolish" as this tale of mine! If THAT is a wise observation on life, I thought, MY poor experience may be worth something after all. So I broke my resolution to record no more.

And then ^I was amazed to find that the present circumstances which have prevented my writing lately changed just enough for me to have time and opportunity to write it down!

What struck me about the book was that it was a tale of a man hopelessly in love with a woman who didn't love him, though she encouraged him. When she married another he attempted to find someone himself and then found it unsavory to him and spent forty years alone with only the faithful memory of the woman he loved. They never saw each other again.

But, during this time, she learned to love him BECAUSE of what he'd done and eventually left her husband and she too lived the rest of her life devoted to his memory and faithful to it. When she left her husband she wrote him one letter which contained a phrase that made him utterly happy for the rest of his life secure in the knowledge that she loved him and they two were one though they never met again.

What she wrote him shocked me, for it was exactly what I wrote to N just before his marriage:

"I do not want you to marry. I love you. But what can I offer you? So you must.."

THIS, then, was considered a tale of most wonderful love, good enough to be written down and published not only in the author's own country, but to be translated for all the world to read!

.Hmmm.

What struck me about it was the fact that it never occurred to me that my May letter to N might have made him HAPPY ! Sad, maybe; mad, maybe, I thought, but certainly not GLAD!

I admitted the fact that I could go on, more or less content with a "psychic marriage" which made all other liasons ~~and~~ meaningless automatic necessities, but I never really seriously entertained the idea of HIS feeling the same way, even though I professed that he was.

The lovers in the book had no more contact than N and I have had. It made me realize that it is POSSIBLE; that, instead of my letter making him mad and going ahead marrying to SPITE me, it is possible it made him serenely secure and comforted in the knowledge of my love and understanding for all time and made him better able to face the impossibilities of reality with serenity.

Perhpas that is the strange happiness I felt about the whole thing.

I hope so.

July 25, 1962

I feel as if I have been led by invisible strings to a place where I had to go by someone invisible who has somehow miraculously cleared a path as we go along, brushing aside cobwebs, and planting significant props along the way.

I even fell as if this were being written, not BY me, but THROUGH me----

I know where we are going, though I thought we had arrived long ago. But I am not afraid now. Someone is taking me there, and I must quit fighting against it, for I am safe. There is some cushion supporting me. We are going where I always knew I was going all the time, but I got lost somewhere. And it won't be long now---- All those things I was afraid of are all over--almost all over---

This mysticism above is an unexpected outgrowth of this current ESPisode I have been describing, which leads me by some magnetism within me to seek out and find the things I have needed.

This time it was the series of books I gleaned from the library, some sought from previous clues, some merely chanced upon.

Now I have just finished one which turned out to be a (fictitious) case history of the therapy of a schizophrenic woman. It's story and ending was so significantly poignant to me that it was as if someone ~~had~~ turned a key and some dam within me broke--and a door I did not realize was locked opened before me. I put the book down thinking, "That's it, Nick. Give me back the other half of me; the half I gave you and you are keeping. Give it back, for you do not need it now--

and I do, for I know where I am going--
(in the words of the book)--where I was
going all the time--and I need my other half
I lent you---"

And I looked around me, marveling to find
myself utterly and quietly alone at this
moment when, with the help of this book,
I find I have crossed the bridge--the toll
I had ready is all paid--and, as soon as I
have rested and caught my breath a bit, I have
only to pick up my parcel--this other half of
me that Nick has left lying here in the road--
and go on.

For, oddly enough, this day when mother is
gone to be gone for two blessed weeks of relief
for me, my son has gone for over night and
my daughter busy elsewhere--and all things
fall into place; these books with their pertinent,
significant messages for me all sugar-coated
with my favorite, pet little fetishes--
Italian "mottos", "psychological therapy",
"miracles", etc etc.

This is the Time. This is a time of growing;
of starting a new phase. All these horrible
things that have happened to me these past
few years have reached their climax, their
end. The Nick story is finished, complete;
RIGHT. And so is the parallel tragedy of my
daughter. It is over. They are both over.
The rest is clear sailing--at least for these
two stories. And in them I have found the
strength for whatever else there is.

I have things to do--and I go to do them, full
of new strength and peace and understanding.

July 27, 1962

lost "I know that I did right,"
quote from Italian movie (I saw tonight) - Firenze - Florence -
Italian - Catholic wedding "sponsored"
by titian-haired aging woman
against "better judgment" of all her
advisers - She wanted that
mentally crippled young person to marry.
I drove by Janie's on my way home and
repeated the above line aloud.

Aug - 2 - 1962

A long, interesting article
about the filming of "The Leopard"
in Palermo, in the New York Times
today. I mailed it "in cognito" to
Janie.

August 17-1962

I started to write up an incident the other day and then threw it away — not interested enough to finish.

In ~~this~~ time since my last writing, (which seems like years) I have not had a thing to do with either N or Janie. And my recent week's vacation completed my re-entry into the world about me. In fact I found myself unable to re-enter my circle of neuroticisms when I got back!

And during that vacation I found myself totally immersed in a relationship with another highly neurotic person — this time a woman. It was reassuring to me to note that I found myself as obsessed and haunted by this woman's problems as I was with N's. Obviously, it is the why and how that fascinate me?

Anyway, when I came back to face again all the old reminders of N, I found that N had become a stranger to me — someone I had known closely in the past — someone

in whom I had not the slightest interest — just another person — Pellesgrino, too —

But, as the days wore on and boredom crept in again, I found myself toying with the old habits, a little.

Till suddenly, the other day I was forced to ride the bus, something I haven't had to do for what has seemed a long, long, long time. Thrown suddenly into the old familiar pattern, I was shocked at the changes four years had made.

No reason now to detour past Jamie's counter on my way out — for Jamie is gone, gone, gone. No reason to seek and hope for N to board the bus with me. He, too, is gone, gone, gone. No difference which corner I wait on now. —

No interest in passing by ~~the~~ Italo's new place of business. All that is in the past. Gone. All gone. For N is married, settled, gone forever from me or any

Aug 17

part of me, settled in a faraway city never to return; a married man, a working man, a settled, ordinary, run-of-the-mill, integrated alien-American like thousands of others. Very dull. Very ordinary.

And I am old and tired and back again in my grim game of marking time, of time killing. But now I am surer, more satisfied, less resentful.

How much has happened in four years! How things have changed! I thought as I rode that bus.

* * * *

Tonight while prowling the library in search of something — NOT from obsession with things Italian or ~~the~~ answers to the quandaries of loving — but from sheer need to find something time-killing — I had little success and reverted to old habits.

But I found myself passing over Italian books that I would once have grasped

in excitement — there seems little new I can learn about Italy — it has become as familiar to me as my home town.

Passing the out-of-town telephone directories, I thought dully of making one last look to see if N were listed yet. (How I used to search for his name there!)

He was in the new one! There is was — ordinary, normal, open, one-of-millions: "Khuanillo, Nick - 1841 Sunset Blvd - UN 5-~~xxxx~~" How dull. How dull.

Yet somehow it made me furious! It spoiled my whole evening. I am not sure why.

There was something about that name — once so magical to me — listed there so normally, so trite, so openly that aroused a great anger in me.

How many times I had looked for it! How I had battled for him to get a phone so we could reach each other and how he had resisted!

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How he had fought against that normal, easy means of communication. And now, now when it was of no use to me, now that he was free of me, now that he was sure I couldn't and wouldn't use it — now he lists himself — openly, publicly, invitingly.

"I am Nick Chinello. Call me. I am available. I have a wife and a home. Call us up sometime. I am a normal "American"."

Oh! Even though my small still voice whispered to me again. "This is success for you, home. He made it. He's "normal". You helped him to accomplish this — this normalcy. "Without you he couldn't have done it" — even if you get no thanks — no credit —"

Even though I thought this, too, it was still like a slap in the face: it said to me all too clearly — "Now that I'm rid of you, I dare to open my lines of communication!"

Damn you! Nick! Damn you!

Little comfort was it that

my vacation-week involvement smacked in miniscule of the whole Nick attempt: the same unknowing need and cry for help which I tried to give at great, exhausting cost to myself; the same thankless, sneering, patronizing reaction to my efforts; the same smug taking of credit to ones' self, ~~for the same~~ for benefits gained; the same cold shoulder and back-biting as my "reward".

It is always the same: those who demand help merely exploit the giver and those who would appreciate it would never ask for it. One's only purpose must be a large-scale, long-range attempt to protect the innocent from the ravages of the demanding; to try to deflect or minimize their destructive ~~harmful~~ activities.

~~At's address was the same as~~
~~I noted, and that was the~~
~~new 1962 book.~~ In this light, we are inadvertently helping the "good" people by concentrating our efforts on the "bad." We are fighting

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a battle — waging a war — for
the protection of all — even though
it is not recognized as such.
The question is — is it worth it?

I noted that N's address was
the same — (and this was the new
1962 book.) This simple fact
conjured a picture in my mind
of possible unhappinesses that
brought some comfort to me — that
I had "lost" little — my "sour
grapes."

For it implied that N had
kept his apartment — the one
he "didn't like", the one in a
"poor neighborhood", the "not-very-
nice" one; the one from which
he "desired" and "intended" to move
from, he told me.

But evidently, he has not.
He took his bride home to this
"undesirable" abode. He ~~made~~^{did}
not accomplish the effort to
better himself. And she went
along with it. She had no
desire, no power over him to
live in a better manner, to

and him to better himself.

this is a character revelation - of life? she is a "have-not," content to live uncomfortably? she is under N's thumb - meek, compliant. She cannot - does not influence him for the better? She succumbs to his inadequacy?

The picture comes to my mind of two "failure-types", two misfits caught in a web of inadequacy and hopeless, baffling misery.

Two little lonely, ~~substantially~~ unhappy aliens clinging separately, sexually to each other in sordid, depressing surroundings whistling in the dark, pretending they're "happy" - hoping they are.

Faced, inevitably, with overwhelming, crushing problems when the (unwanted) babies start coming and they will need more room - suddenly, too suddenly -

~~Sour grapes~~ They can have it - I don't want it!

"Sour grapes" - or wisdom? Whatever, I reach a point of "balance" when the burden of these people

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weighs evenly with the joys derived from them and I choose to "live with them" — they, in their niche, I in mine.

(Or should I say "Nick in niche"?)

Sign
sep - I like
Lois men

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Further notes!!

In spite of my claim of "abstinence from Chinello's", I had sent the clipping to Jamie, glad when I did so that I was immediately leaving town for a week.

During that week I had no time to think of Chinello's except one late evening when speeding down a ~~rain~~ highway with relatives. In a momentary lapse of conversation I was gazing out the window at ~~the rain drenched woods~~ when suddenly there leaped into my vision a white sign ~~stood~~ standing out stark against the dark, rain drenched trees. "Chinello", it said. Only the one word.

Immediately, I thought of Jamie and the clipping and wondered for the first time what her reaction had been. I also wondered about the sign. Tho the "A" was left out, it is a very rare and unusual name. ~~I suppose it was some~~ One

Seldom sees just that combination of letters in our country. I suppose it was some political candidates' advertising — tho I did not see any others then or later.

* * *

This morning I thought about N and sex, thinking how sharing a sex experience with him. I always had the feeling that he was thinking "I enjoy this —", while I am looking for a man who ~~would~~ can say, "I enjoy this with you!"

I suppose this is a general difference between male and female, but I always had the suspicion that he could have added — and you are the only partner available to me at this particular time."

It accounted for that missing link I always sensed with him, and, altho I know now, that such an attitude is more general than unique with men, especially of his type, it is the basis for my prediction of trouble in his marriage.

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I have noted before that he was looking for a sexual partner, not a wife, not a companion, not a mother for his children etc. Now I add that, probably, with the approach of his 35th birthday, he feared that his ability to attract partners would increasingly diminish and he'd better grab one fast so he could be assured of the ^{constant} sexual ~~activity~~ ^{pleasure} he desired (so much more than he needed.)

That this hedonistic approach was more the basis for his hurried selection than any amount of love or planning.

That, wearying of the chase, the uncertainty, he grabbed the first (and perhaps last) girl that appeared to meet his qualifications. (which I did not.)

While I admit this is the basis for perhaps the majority of marriages, I maintain, nonetheless, that it defeated his purpose — for he does not yet realize the nasty little ability of a disgruntled wife

to withhold that very thing he
married her for! He may end up
with less than he had before — as
so many before him have!

* * *

As for me, I need not waste
my efforts searching for another man,
for I have only to observe the
trials and disappointments of my
divorcée neighbor friend, who
has more to attract with than I
have.

I am resigned to the fact
that that part of my life is over.

Aug. 20, 1962

Nothing ever ends in this life!
I felt little wonder or excitement at evidences
of a little of the old "Pattern" emerging.

Today, as I came in to work, the canned music
began to play "Volare". I was alone, and I
stood and absorbed it, calmly wondering what
would happen today of significance to the N
story. No more questioning, no more excitement,
no more arguing with it; the playing of that
song meant there would be some N thing today--
and that was that.

There were a couple of little things--not worth
mentioning. Then a call came through from Hal
Scofield letting the office know that he is
leaving town--moving to Portland. He, too,
has given up trying to make a living here.

I called him, not really caring much, to say
goodbye, and he was nice though I hadn't ex-
pected him to be. So--THAT is that. One by
one they go.

And I could not get any emotional response at
all from listening to Volare. It produced a
clear image of N in my mind: I could see him
clearly as he used to look coming in the door
of the office, smiling at me, for me alone--
dark, squat, not too very desirable.

And it didn't hurt any more. We had our time.
We enjoyed each other, for we were both lonely,
but it was only for a time--and the time is gone.

Sept 7, 1962

Just a year since N left
my life.

Nothing at all to report.
I never see or hear of Jamie or
anyone any more.

But just a capitulation
as I face an imminent date
my divorcee neighbor got me
with a middle-aged bachelor
artist in town ("whom nobody
likes," she said in her first
report.) I am not excited
at all and I expect nothing.
Neither do I want anything
to come of it.

As I face it I realize that
I prefer the kind of romance
I had with N — one that
grew out of mutual liking
& interest — not one that ~~was~~ ^{is}
forced!

What shall I tell this
new man about myself
if he asks?

"I am 47 years old.
I have been divorced 11
years. I have 3 children
almost grown. I have had
quite a few momentary
little "adventures" in this
11 years — and one big
affair that started when

I was 43 years old and lasted on and off for 4 years." Would this be the truth?

And, if one pried further into this "affaire", and asked "what happened?"

"Well,—he had to go away. When we broke up, he immediately got engaged to a comparative stranger and eventually married her—"

The truth?

Perhaps not the whole truth! Not admitting the secret part, the man 13 years younger part—the long separation—the "foreigner" angle — ~~etc.~~

But still— it makes a "good story" — better than 11 years entirely without a man —

non è vero?

It is fitting that I came across this article right now, for it makes a fitting ending:

(From An Analyst's Diary)

"I am set apart--I listen impassively to hope, joy, sorrow, frustration, fear, despair--gradually, as they talk, emotions coalesce around me. I become the father, or brother or mother around whom the torment rages--Then I become the object of their love, and--without warning--of their hatred---

But within myself, I must preserve both the equilibrium of a stranger and the involvement of one who cares. I must remain objective, yet concerned, gingerly explain the person to himself. It takes enormous energy, this balancing game---

I sense the enormous potential for life in this person. I yearn to release it--The healing process seems painfully slow--

Trust is the narrow bridge over which I cross to the person's life. Without trust no therapy can work. Yet, if the therapy is going to make progress, I must occasionally take a chance on destroying that bridge by telling the person certain things he does not want to hear. It is another, sometimes, nerve-racking aspect of the balancing act.

My worst temptation is to play God.

When they discover that I not only cannot, but will not, make a decision for them, the first reaction is often raging disgust--

I sit apart and slowly try to build a bridge of trust by accepting their rage

their disgust, without a trace of emotion.
Little by little we build our bridge--

If I felt all these persons suffered I
could no longer be the objective voice, Int
ing to the jewel of insight in the muddy
flow of emotion. And that, of course,
is what we are searching for. Out of in-
sight grows the strength to be persons
on our own terms, not on those we inher-
it, or mistakenly adopt---

We get a glow of pride when we hear one
of our "graduates" is doing well--or a
small thank you comes to us---

It takes strength to say goodbye. I have
worked to build that strength and I must
permit it to grow. I cannot permit myself
the luxury of sentimental attachment--

Those who leave and accomplish give the
richest feeling of accomplishment to me
because I can think, WITHOUT ME HE
WOULDN'T BE MOVING AT ALL!

Quite often the trust between man and
woman therapy grows into love on the
patient's side. It is a normal part of
transference. I cannot permit myself the
luxury of counter-transference--

I am guided by questionable rules--
Therapy cannot change the harsher facts
of life--my cures are marginal. It is
my job to give them the gift--not of happ-
iness--but of strength to DISMISS THEIR
SORROW and to find happiness ON THEIR OWN
TERMS.

I quote: Pray as if everything depended
on God and work as if everything depended
on you. "

and I quote

(from where I just now opened the Bible)

"Judge for yourselves.

We cannot possibly give up speaking
of things we have seen and heard."

Notes from research reading on
Italians and Sicilians

* * *

Italians are emotional people, fond of drama, fond of gestures. A lovable, alughing poeple. Their courage is always balanced by a strange, almost cynical realism that enables them to cut through bunkum like a knife.

In their way, Italians are passionate lovers of freedom. They lead intense, personal lives and have intense, personally opinions which they will not surrender to any man, and they love freedom in an intense, personal way. They will fight only for that in which they DEEPLY believe. They are that simple and that honest.

They have a deep sense of pride, which has been hurt (by the war) and a deep sense of loyalty. They are lost without expression--they are the most expressive people on earth. They are eloquent and subtle and warm. They are people of the sun.

*

*

*

Italians are--gifted and energetic. Good at power, conquest and magnificence. But full of corruption and social cruelty. They are either GREAT or bad and wicked. They are poetic, descriptive, argumentative. They have an orgiastic religion. They are in the grip of fatalism. They are people of violent contrast: splendor/squalor; triumph/despair.

One pays the price for loving a Sicilian. They are as sexy as rabbits, and about as moral. They are very good in bed, but no good at all in love.

When a Sicilian says "love" he means Ebed".

A Sicilian's life story seems to consist entirely of overlapping love affairs, interrupted by mothers, husbands, brothers --to hear him tell it!

Italian men shower women with attentions. When he wants to be attentive and devoted he is better at it than other men. To him this is routine. He has made the same, identical protestations of love a hundred times--that's why he's so good at it!

He is an amorous "confidence man".

Italy is the bordello of Europe.

The Sicilian would never ask to let him hold your hand as a sign of friendship. For one thing, he would not trouble to ask, and, for another, he would not be interested in friendship!

An Italian cannot open his mouth without bragging to other men what a Don Juan he is. Sicilian men gather and exchange long and detailed comparisons of intimacies with women, stories involving first, seduction of tourists and married women and winding up with the prostitutes available.

We Italians enjoy discussing women because we know how to love them more skillfully than anyone else!

Foreigners come to Italy for one thing and we are glad to furnish it--for a price.

The Sicilian has no compunction about making love to a married woman, providing there will be no trouble with the husband.

He may carry on an affair with more than one woman at a time.

The Sicilian man is extremely proud of his virility, which he proves by the NUMBER of his conquests.

He brags and lies about his prowess to his male friends, especially his conquests of foreign women!

He has no compunctions about using love and ardent lies to procure material benefits such as a rich wife, a visa, etc.

One has to figure out in his bragging how much is true and how much is wish-thinking.

The foreign woman, be she 15 or 50, is highly prized as an acquisition by the Italian man.

He is not choosy. He is as sensitive to beauty as any other man, but he has been brought up on brothels and amatory concentration and has learned to compromise.

Italian saying: "An old hen makes a fine broth."

Americans are all "rich" and even a short conquest is something to show off and brag about to friends and acquaintances.

Often the foreign woman is approached in the most harmless and impeccable manner. But, whatever the opening, it is only a short prelude. Very soon the Italian gets to the core of what is in his mind with a directness that some women find funny, some childish, some insulting, some disarmingly sincere, some flattering, some disgusting. Furthermore it is not only the speed and directness of his approach, but his perseverance, which the foreign woman finds astonishing.

This behavior stems from two main streams: calculation and vanity. His common sense tells him the foreign woman has not the hold over him the Italian woman has. He can behave as irresponsibly as he wants and no punishment befalls him.

To the Sicilian there are only two kinds of women: respectable and unrespectable. (*donne oneste and strafalarii*) The latter is fair game for any man. If a respectable woman slips and is found out her life as a respectable woman is over. She is delegated to a brothel or a nunnery.

The young Italian girl cannot afford to have a lover. Once she has slipped her chances of getting married are poor.

There are many young, pretty, well-groomed and well-dressed Italian women on the streets, but they are never

followed like the foreign women. If an Italian promenades on the Corso with a young girl, he is immediately lays hi self open to trouble, Mama wants to know what his intentions are; or the girl will throw scenes and dissolve in tears to make him declare himself and he'll have to fight for every kiss; or she will set her whole family to his heels, esp. father or brother, and threaten to blacken his name in the whole town.

The Sicilian's bride MUST be a virgin. It is a matter of family pride. His wife must be virtuous. She must behave. Even if he only sleeps with her once a year. One's wives, sisters and daughters you honor, support, and protect.

Sicilian men gang together, but their women are not allowed to participate in their discussions and activities.

The women of his family and respectable women are not allowed to be seen alone on the streets or in public places; or loose at public festivals, night clubs, etc.; never alone on the streets at night; girls do not go to restaurants or theaters unchaperoned. Sicilians would assume they were not respectable when they got home.

An unattached American woman and Sicilian man seen walking on the street together would both be under suspicion. They are shocked at the liberties American women have--"just like men"--they even choose their own spouses!

To a Sicilian a respectable woman's place is in the kitchen or the bedroom

or on a dai far above the crudities and temptations of life. His wife is the mother of his children. Sicilians worship motherhood. In Sicily every mother is a Madonna and every son a Cristo.

Sicilian men are almost forbidding in mien and they are extremely jealous. To them nothing is worse than an unfaithful wife. When she gives in to another man, she gives up everything. If he found his wife in the arms of another, how would he shoot them both; his wife first.

But with a man it is different; he can carry on with another woman without getting serious, isn't that so? (says the Sicilian.)

Hope and ambition, qualities which I find rare among young Sicilians.

They will quarrel over a nephew spending the holiday with them (families are so strong.)

A girl will marry someone, not for love, but for betterment.

Most of the men are bitter or cynical in their attitude toward the clergy, are content to leave the church attendance to women, children and old men.

They are unwilling to differentiate between cruelty and indifference.

The idea that De tino has the upper hand in all of man's affairs is at the root of most Sicilians thinking. It is an ancient attitude--so strong a sense of resignation has the Sicilian.

After having known Americans, the girls could no longer tolerate Sicilian

could no longer tolerate Sicilian born bachelors. Americans were kind and treated their women as equals. Sicilians, on the other hand, were cruelly possessive and tyrannical.

No one will ever know, I suppose, how many Italian girls became prostitutes as a result of the war and how many were engaged and jilted. In most instances they became social outcasts and would run away from home to avoid public disgrace or being ordered out by their families.

A Sicilian might revenge himself on a girl who jilted him by kidnaping and raping her, even if she was marrying. I gathered this was not an uncommon procedure among spurned Italian suitors!

Those maddening, exasperating, impossible Sicilians, who never knew what truth was and have long lost all notion of what a human being is. A sort of sulphurous demons. But, let me confess, that I am not at all sure whether I don't really prefer these demons to our sanctified humanity!

The Sicilians' casual attitude toward the past and the future; their complete and earthly preoccupation with the present.

Anyone who approached Sicilians sympathetically could find in them a refreshing warmth and wisdom.

Love Without Love

Bell' Antonio (Levine; Embassy), directed by Italy's Mauro Bolognini, is a serious and discreet discussion of a case of impotence. The hero (Marcello Mastroianni) lusts only for women he cannot love; the woman he loves (Claudia Cardinale) he imagines an "angel," and he cannot imagine muddying her wings with animality. When she wins an annulment he is desolate, and his family is disgraced—in Sicily, where the family lives, a man's virility and his public position are intimately interdependent. In despair, the young man turns to a servant girl, gets her with child. The honor of the family is thus ironically redeemed. Mastroianni's mother shouts the good news from the housetops, the neighbors come from all sides to offer congratulations. "Now you can have a home and family," burbles his best friend. "Now you can be like everybody else." Mastroianni smiles vacantly. To a grown man, what is sex without love?

TIME, APRIL 13, 1962