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NIGHTMARE

I have killed you.
The sunken fireplace, andirons, burnt up ash and the full felt rug where we lay in fall beginning so many hours.

In this square room the flames eat the edges of your eyes, tears scald the gentleness you have hidden.

Now like a dog I lick the pans clean leaving grit. The taste brackens my tongue. I sweat. The gas jets asphyxiate the walls leaving dust, pictures, the emptiness of rooms:

Hugh Ogden
THE ARGUMENT

Terrible haste
to be outside in the snow
courting the lulling

violence that traps
fingers in their gloves,
touches the skins

of animals through their fur.
A lapse of attention
registers a ring of cold

around the neck.
Each long breath
is broken for another.

Chase Twichell

CHAFF

Every moment turns
tree shadows eastward
and shallow graved

darkness sloughed from the trunk
lays its thick net
among the stones

in the branches shells crack
dreams come forth
wingless

The last light blows high
each leaf winnows a star
from its veins

Stephen H. Curtin
ON THE DROWNING OF SHAH OUR SERVANT.

Like a wet dress
Caught at the end of a barbed wire
His soul shrieked as his last breath
Tore from within

His wet body,
He was a servant a plain thing
Out on a hot day grazing cattle
And thought

He’d take a swim.
I hadn’t known him personally
Nor was I at his dying.
But no matter.

In my mind I say
His lungs gasping dry for air
His limbs in frantic activity
Kicking, pulling,

Tearing like
wind swept weeds and his eyes
Big as ping pong balls screaming
Like those

Of a hooked fish.
Stuck in a slimy cement pipe
It took the divers seventy eight
Held breaths

To locate the corpse
Stiff in the act one leg bent
The other caught in vain attempt.
At dusk

The cattle returned
A ritual of bells but I strayed
By the streams edge breathing
His air.

Changez Sultan
CLOTH TEARING

with your hands
stop the sound
of what is between us—
cloth tearing

it is not nakedness
I fear, or silence,

but the sound
of the wearing out

a long cloth
familiar, washed,

but worn, fraying
in the middle
where the seam is

hung where the wind
will grapple with it

I would mend it or cut it

Chase Twichell
“If I were to show you that picture, how would you react?”
“That’s not a picture, doctor, it’s real.”
“O.K. then, it’s real. React. Tell me what you see.”
“Lines and sags. That’s all, lines and sags.”
“How would you approach her?”
“If she were to come up real close, doctor, you know, right up next to me so I could tell what she smelled like, and if she were to pull up her dress and bend down so I could see her fleshy ass, the lines and the sags, right up close, I might kick her; just to see if she’d skid along the ground. God I hate old age, doctor, don’t show me old age ... Anyway I don’t think I’d have the energy to kick her.”
“Good, we’ll move on to the next, then.”
“Show me the cigarette machine, I’d like a cigarette.”
“Alright.”
“You got any change?”
“No. You know you can’t depend on me.”
I know, you prick, that’s why it’s just like I never went to see you. That’s why I’m here, waiting for the train, waiting for the army, waiting for the goddam cavalry to surround the last indian on the plains, waiting to be scalped and herded out to the reservation. Would you clean me up before you take me away? Scrub my crotch and pick my ears clean? Huh, General sir? Huh General Westmoreland, huh General Abrams, huh Custer, Calley, Carter? Huh Sergeant Carter? Here, Gomer’s here, scrub. Not in front of the old lady, please. Please gentlemen, just don’t bother me. Let me just sit on my bench here and wait.

He stretched himself out on the bench. It was the first in a row of about twenty. All the other benches were empty.

You know gentlemen, it’s not a bad bench you’ve left me to rot on. It’s just like I was in a picture gallery, you know gentlemen, art, culture. Let’s take the overall picture first. Title it, hummm, ... ah, “Poughkeepsie Train Station at One A.M.” Hang it right there please. That’s fine, thank you. Oh, there’s a nice one, you have to move back a few steps to really appreciate it. “Arco Gas Station Light as Seen Through Dirty Window.” What’s that? The public demands people in their paintings? No problem, gentlemen, don’t give it another thought, no problem at all. “Grungy Hippie on Dusty Bench.” “Old Woman Walking Through Train Station.” Old woman walking through train station, could I ask you your name? How do you approach an old woman? God I hate old age, old lady, you
know once in New York I saw this lady, about your age, maybe a little older, walking along, just like you, in a bus station, only she kept slapping her right shoulder and yelling things like, "No Mr. Jackson, I wouldn’t like to go downtown with you today! Would you stop it? Not in the bus station Mr. Jackson!" I didn’t see nobody within about ten feet of her. Nope, not a soul. Can you imagine that, lady? Just imagine the look on her face when old Jackson grabbed her real hard and whipped her around to face him. Betcha he was a mean mother, huh? God, I hate it, I just hate it, you think you’re gonna be like that in a year or two? What’s the odds lady? What’s the odds on you and what’s the odds on me? (He wanted to yell it out.) Gentlemen, are you watching me now? Guaranteed proof for you here general sir, guaranteed proof that this boy ain’t fit for the army; what d’you go and want him for anyhow? This rascal here, this cute little rascal on the bench, who thinks he’s the last Indian on the plains, is about to make a stand. Are you ready? Stand back a few steps, I’ve just got to finish putting this war paint on. Ready, WHOOP—WHOOP—WHOOP—WHOOP—WHOOP!!!

He jumped up and started walking after the old lady. When she noticed him she started walking faster. It was no use. He was alongside of her in a matter of moments. He said nothing for a few steps. She put her head down, held her pocketbook close in tight, and tried to make believe he wasn’t there.

"Hi."

You don’t exist.

"I... uh... I seem to be at a loss for words."

She was determined to get to the door and get to a taxi, alone.

"You know we’re all in this together. You and I, caught in the same train station."

You don’t exist. You don’t exist. She will concentrate on nothing but the path to the door, it’s all very transparent, very easy to see through, old lady, very easy. It is not for nothing I have lived these seventy-five years, and I will live to be seventy-six. I will live to see Marcy have a baby. I will live. I will live. You won’t rob me. You dare not touch me. I will live to see Jeffrey get married. Wait, Nana, don’t you recognize me? I’m Jeffrey. I’m your grandson. I’m not going to get married. This girl just kicked me out of her house, that’s why I’m here. Don’t worry, she wasn’t Jewish. But anyway, I’m still not going to get married. I’ve got more important problems. The army’s after me. Did mom tell you that? It’s true. I’m headed north. Wanna come? I’d love to have you come. We’ll get a room and you could cook, keep me fat.

They were approaching the door.

"I’m not going to get married," he said.

He opened the door for her.
“Thank you, young man.”

“You know it’s cold out there, nana, you ought to be wearing a hat. Your nice white beauty-parlor’d hair’s gonna get all mussed up in the wind.”

He opened the second door for her and they went outside.

“Should I call a taxi for you?”

She looked up at him for the first time. His hair was blowing out in all directions, covering his face.

“Are you Jewish?” she asked.

He nodded.

“Why aren’t you going to get married?”

Her accent was East European, Polish maybe. He recognized it.

“Wouldn’t work.”

She looked away from him again.

“Look, why don’t you wait inside that first door. It might be a while before we can get you a cab. I’ll take care of it, you go inside.”

“I can take care of myself, thank you.”

I’m sure you can, nana, I’m sure you can. He stood outside with her until her taxi came anyway. His fingers were numb when he finally walked inside.

YOWSA, YOWSA, step right up ladies and gentlemen and focus your attention on the big clock on the wall. The big clock says twenty-two, yessiree, twenty-two past one and still ticking. There ain’t much time left. Cash your chips in now. Pay your money to the man. He jingled the change in his pockets. Show me the cigarette machine doctor, I’m dying for a smoke. Step right up and play the wheel. You sir, you in the white coveralls with the paint splattered all over them and the bright orange head-band on your head; you sir: step right up. Everyone’s a winner. Marlboro, Camel, Winston, Luckies, and Menthol too, if that’s your thing. Something for everybody. Put your money down. He put his money down and won a pack of Marlboros. He was the only one left in the station.

“So what are you staring at, Jeffrey. Dammit, you’re not listening to a word I’m saying to you. I’m not going to go with you; can’t you nestle that in with the rest of your thoughts? Go on, pound your head a few times. Drive it in Jeffrey. I can’t take you anymore! You’re drifting into another world. Dammit Jeffrey, will you listen to me!”

Insects on the wall. Spiders ten feet tall. Girl I want to ball. Standing, hands on your hips, pressing tightly on your lips, curly locks a falling. Tall, very tall you look from this position. Like a goddess. Diana the huntress. Bow and arrow slung against a naked breast. Fine breasts, noble, noble nipples. A presence, truly a presence whenever you enter a room. A Shirley Temple type who graduated to the nudies. God, I love you Diana.
Wide lips, puckered like that you look like a platypus. I love you, I need you more than anything in the world. Insect on the wall, shoot him with a rifle from fifty feet like Jed Clampett. There's a man for you, a real man. Poor mountaineer, barely kept his family fed—and then ... how does that song go ... and then one day while looking for some food, up through the ground came this bubbling brew. Oil, that is, Texas tea ... go get 'em Jed ... so they packed up their bags and moved to Beverly. Hills, that is, movie stars, swimming pools.

"Jeffrey."

"You look like a platypus."

"Oh Jeffrey, don't you understand, I'm not fooling around. You don't speak to me anymore. You're getting manic, I can't handle you. And I don't think it's the army either. It's more than that. Something's gone wrong. Look at yourself. It's after two and you're still in bed. You don't do anything anymore, Jeffrey. Sit around the house and mope. Watch T.V. and nibble on things and mope. I care about you Jeffrey, I really do, but I just can't penetrate the barriers you're putting up. You scare me. What do you expect from me, Jeffrey? I just don't know anymore."

Mommy used to say you sit in the bathtub all day and you'll shrivel up on account of the water. Starts at the tips of your fingers. So I'm comfortable in bed.

"I don't want to get up just yet."

He held his hands out for her as if to take her in. She took a step back and took one hand off her hip to point at him.

"You want me to go away with you? You're crazy, Jeffrey, insane. We can't even have a decent conversation. I'm scared, honey. Things have gotten a lot worse in the past few weeks. I can feel the tension when you hold me. You're consuming yourself with whatever's going on inside that thick skull of yours and you won't let me in to help. Now. I'm not kidding. It's too much for me. I just can't handle it."

Freeze! Hold that position. "Girl at the Point of Breaking Down."

"Guy Lying on Bed With Head Propped up Against Pillow." Good one, eh? Doctor? Real good. Show me that one and I'll go wild reacting. And now, ladies and gentlemen, if you will cast your eyes on the wall to your left, the big, blah, orange-reddish wall of the Poughkeepsie train station with the imitation marble at its base, you will see a slide of Jeffrey Weisburg and the woman he loves. Can you focus in on it a little better, doc? That's good. Now the question is, why won't the young lady, note the resemblance to a bigger, sexier, Shirley Temple. It's the hair mostly. Ahem, Why won't the young lady accompany this otherwise very lonely young man to Montreal, where he is seeking to get to in order to evade the draft. Yes ladies and gentlemen, gasp and shudder as you will (focus in a little closer on his face, doc), the big bad army is after this boy. And
beleaguered with problems as he is, the sweet young thing standing over him is going to desert him. Leave him, the last lonely Indian to face the oncoming cavalry, with their guns and their guns and their guns. Heavens. This calls for a smoke. Mind if I smoke, doctor, I don’t see any signs.

So you see old lady, it wouldn’t work. I can’t communicate, she says, I don’t listen, I’m in another world. Wrong. Wrong, Diana, wrong, wrong. Not true. I do. I need you. But she doesn’t know what I expect of her, doctor. What the fuck kind of statement is that? Tell me doc, who’s the crazy one throwing out statements like “expect”? What do I expect? I expect to stumble upon some Texas tea and swim in swimming pools with movie stars. Yeah, like Shirley Temple. I expect to be sitting on a beach after just coming out of the water, cold and wet and expecting, yes expecting a goddess to sneak up behind me with a towel and jump me with it. Oh Joy! Oh Frabjous day! I loved you for that, Diana. You did it and I love you for it. But you won’t do it now. O.K., that’s what I expect now you know.

Halt, who goes there? I am the guardian of the information desk, all who pass must bow before me. A little man. A little roly-poly man. You look like Lou Costello, a Spanish Lou Costello. Looking for the same train as me, man? Don’t take it, it’s an escape, don’t take it. Confront your problems. Face ’em head on. I can smell the liquor on your breath. Running from your wife, your little roly-poly wife and skinny kids? Don’t do it. I beseech you. And don’t stare at me like that. What’s so unusual about me? Sitting down, I see. I’m surprised you could stand that long. I can stand. Still have the old spring in my legs. The bounce and vigour of youth. See. (He jumped up out of his seat and headed for the stairs leading to the tracks.) A young man, a young Indian in the prime of his life with all the world as his oyster, I am, I am.

He stopped at the top of the stairs.

“Poughkeepsie Train Station at One Fourty-Five A.M.—Overview.” Drum a tune on the railing. Roly-poly Lou doesn’t look up. Too drunk to notice. He’s not waiting for a train at all, just seeking refuge from the cold. From here he looks, well, small. He looks very small. Well gentlemen, its too stuffy in here. A young man’s got to breathe you know. Burst open the door into the brisk night air. Brisk nothing, its colder than shit out here. Stand by the tracks and bend over low. “Close up Shot of Railroad Tracks Covered With Snow.” A depressing picture, doctor, I can take it though. Jump? The thought never crossed my mind. Hurl yourself in front of a passing train? Tut, tut, I wouldn’t think of it. Fifteen minutes till break time. Break with the past. Keystones, doctor, life is built on keystones and one of mine’s about to fall into place. Cold, cold, cold.

He walked back and forth along the platform for a while and then over
It arrived, on schedule, at two o'clock. He watched the train grind to a halt. He stood by the entrance to the passenger car and waited for the door to open. The window on the door was slightly fogged, but he could make out the figure of the conductor on the inside. He cleared off the outside of the window a bit with his hands, pressed his nose against it, and peered in. The conductor stood there—a big man in a blue suit with a small head and a hat that was smaller still. Graying bristles stuck out from underneath. He took one rather long look at Jeffrey and turned away. Turned away and stood stiff, unflinching.

"C'mon man, you're not supposed to act like you're guarding Westminster castle. Open the door. It's cold out here. He's not moving. He's not going to open the door. What the fuck's going on here. Hey, I want to get on this train. Go north. C'mon, the cavalry's almost here. Open the door. He banged on the window. "Hey, what's going on here, open up, I want to get on this train! Open the door, man!"

The conductor calmly walked to the door and opened it. "Sorry, we're not taking passengers here."

Whoaah, wait a minute, hold on there buster. This ain't kosher. "What do you mean you're not taking passengers. This is the Two O'clock train to Albany and points north isn't it? It's on the schedule and you're right on time."

"I'm sorry, there's been a mistake. We're not picking up anybody here."

"Well, you're going to Albany right? There's people on the train, right? There's one more passenger. C'mon man, I know you've got room. One teeny little passenger? I'll be quiet."

"Sorry."

Jesus, man, what the... goddam petty bureaucrats, petty officials, little gods. Here I am cold and hungry, on the run, a poor boy in need, and I come to you... you prick...

He was staring at a point on the wall just to the left and behind the conductor.

Go on, leave me behind, leave me to freeze in this Russian winter, prick. Doctor, show me the next picture, show me the next one, "Boy Sitting in Warm Train." Yeah, yeah, like that.

The conductor began to close the door.

"Hey don't do that, man, we got some things to talk over."

Tired of waiting, tired of this shit, got to move. Think I'm gonna let you leave me to rot here... just like that?

He pushed his way half inside the train before the conductor could get...
the door closed.

"Young man, we have nothing to talk about and you are getting on my nerves. Get out before I throw you out."

"So how come you’re stopping here if you’re not supposed to pick up anybody. I don’t know anything about these new-fangled machines. What do you call ’em, railroad trains? C’mon, just for the hell of it tell me what you’re stopping here for. Jesus, don’t get tough with me, mister conductor sir. Hey, watch that!"

The conductor was grabbing at Jeffrey’s arms and trying to push him back, out of the train. Jeffrey was pushing forward, driving his head down into the conductor’s chest. He was the smaller of the two. The conductor began to raise his voice.

"Get out, get out, you dirty little . . . ."

"What’s this? Loosing your cool, man? Dirty little what...hippy? You don’t like hippies, is that it? You just don’t like me plain and simple, right? Don’t give me this shit about no picking up passengers. I want on, dammit I’m going to get on!"

The conductor began to give ground, he was getting close to the wall behind him, without realizing it. Jeffrey pushed him hard against the wall, hard enough so he was a bit winded and broke his hold on the boy slightly—not that much, but just enough so that Jeffrey could break free and run down the aisle of the passenger car.

"Ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen, please. Please focus your attention in my direction for a few short moments. Look at me! Cold—would you look how cold I am!"

He wrapped his arms around himself and slapped them a few times against his sides and shook and shivered and grimaced.

"When was the last time you all were outside? It’s cold out there. I’ve been waiting hours for this train. For this train!"

The conductor was walking quickly up the aisle. Jeffrey ducked into a row of seats and started to scramble over them toward the back of the car while the conductor chased him. There were five passengers on the train.

"He won’t let me on because he doesn’t like the way I look!"

"Stand back everyone! This boy’s strung out on drugs, he’s dangerous. He may be armed. I’m doing this for your protection. Don’t worry, I won’t let him get away with this."

"Strung out on drugs nothing. I was just standing out there."

"Stand back."

One of the passengers, a blonde girl of about twenty, with a pushed in face, stood up.

"Anybody can see this boy’s not strung out at all. Let him on the train," she said.

"You stay out of this young lady. I’m doing this for your own
protection. Let me be the judge of the condition of the boy," the conductor said.

"Stop acting like my father," she said, "I can tell better than you whether or not he's on drugs. I've had a lot of experience handling people with drug problems."

The conductor stopped chasing after Jeffrey and turned to the girl. He was out of breath.

"This is my train... young lady... my train and my responsibility... I'll take care of it my way and... without your help... thank you."

Seeing the conductor stop, Jeffrey stopped too. Thank God. A defender has arisen from this slew of enemies. Telemachus has come to aid the weary Odysseus, or something like that. Feels like my fate is being decided by the powers on high. Well girl, go to it. Too bad the other creeps won't join in. No chance of that. It's the young against the old. The classic battle, fought once more before your eyes, brought to you by the people who bring you... nah, that won't work. He took his headband off and ran his hands through his hair.

"Let her speak, let the girl speak," Jeffrey said.

"You'd be best advised to keep your mouth shut," said the conductor.

"Who do you think you are, trying to dominate people like that. I have my rights, this boy has his rights, who are you to stomp all over them. If I want to say something, I'll say it, and the same goes for him. Furthermore, if he wants to get on the train, you should let him on, provided he has money. You have room." She turned to Jeffrey, "Do you have the money for a ticket?"

"Yeah. Right here." He went for his wallet.

The conductor moved out into the aisle and started to move toward Jeffrey.

"I've had just about enough of this. Now, this boy's got to go."

The girl jumped out between the conductor and Jeffrey.

"If he goes, I go, and I'll demand from you the money back from the unused portion of my ticket."

"So, you go too. It's no skin off my nose. Here."

He gave her the money back. Jeffrey stood and stared at them, scratching his head. A man witnesses his fate in the making. Powers on high. The Olympian gods deliberate. They argue. Very heated arguments. They trick each other. Their cunning and sneakiness is godlike, far beyond man. The gray-haired pin-headed Zeus with the conductor's cap holds the upper hand. Athena, oh great Athena, can you convince him of my worth? Ah, all is lost. No, there is always hope. Athena the wise is on my side. Take strength in Athena the wise!

"No need to use force, we'll go quietly," she said.

She walked up to Jeffrey, took him by the arm and led him outside. They watched the conductor close the door. Jeffrey stared at the fogged
window. It was completely fogged over now. He could barely make out the path his hand had made clearing it off earlier. The train began to hiss, and slowly pulled out. Jeffrey watched the cars passing before his eyes. Seven...Eight...Nine...

“Well, that was strange,” the girl said to him.

Twelve...Thirteen...Fourteen...Fifteen...

“I mean that guy just really had it out for you, sonny boy. How could you have provoked him into being so mean?”

Eighteen...Nineteen...How many cars, Jeff? How many d’you count. One hundred and two. One hundred and two including the two cabooses. Gee, wouldn’t it be great Jeff if we could hop one of them freights and ride it all the way out west?

“Hey brother, you’re really getting into that. What’s your name anyway? Mine is Cathy. Hey...hey, snap out of it!”

Last Indian on the plains. Last Indian. Break open a cactus when you run out of water. Break open a cactus and let the juices slide down your throat while you wait for the cavalry. Fruit juicy...root toosy...fruit juicy...

“How would you like a real Hawaiian punch?”

“What?”

“Geronimo. Geronimo Weisburg. That’s my name. Leastwise that’s what my friends call me.”

“I’m getting very cold out here Geronimo. Would you like to come inside with me?”

“No.”

“C’mon, brother, don’t be a fool. What are you going to gain by standing out here staring into nowhere. Come inside where it’s warm, I’d like to get to know you.”

We can’t do that Davy, they’d find us. They’d find us and lock us up. Those guys that hop freights never made it out west. Cops come and check out all the cars at every stop. No place to hide, no hiding place good enough. Ain’t that right, doctor, no hiding place gonna be good enough on the back of freight trains. No hiding place good enough on the trains, none good enough on the plains. Last Indian’s got no place to go. Athena, where are you now! Athena and the pin headed Zeus had a little spat. Over me, the last Indian, Geronimo Weisburg, and Athena lost. She gave up. Ladies and gentlemen you saw it, you were there. For the first time in the history of Greek mythology Athena gave up the fight and the last Indian, Geronimo, that’s me, was lost. His fate was sealed. The old Book of Life was closed on the poor guy. No place to hide. Squeeze the cactus. Get the last drop out. The last oozings. Hey doctor, where does that leave me, huh? There ain’t no more juicy toosy fruit juicy in the cactus, I done squeezed it dry.

“You want to buy me a coke?” he asked.
"Sure, Geronimo. You just step this way." She took him by the arm and led him inside.

Why? Why, Geronimo, ask yourself why? Why do you let yourself be led around like this, like some old blind man in need of assistance? What further indignities can the once proud Indian be made to suffer. But this is Athena. Athena in earthly mortal guise. Just like Athena to come in the form of an ugly girl. No girl is ugly my boy, remind yourself of that. Look hard enough and you'll find the hints of beauty. The glint in the eye, the shine of the hair, little signs that she is what she is, a goddess. But she gave up on me. How could she give up on me like that? Diana the huntress gave up on me, Athena the wise gave up on me, a whole tribe of Indians gave up on me and left me in the middle of the western plains to face the charge of the cavalry. Diana the huntress with the noble noble nipples and the bow slung over her naked breast. I want you now Diana, from the innermost reaches of my soul I utter this cry. I need you! I don't want to be here! You think I like it here in this morbid picture gallery? Picture: "Roly-Poly Spanish–American Asleep on Train Station Bench." Moving closer in on it now, you can make out the details. The mole on his right cheek. The one-two-three chins as his head bows into his chest. "Ugly Athena Leading Last Indian to Coca-Cola Machine." Almost down the stairs and drawing a bead on it. Can she find it without me telling her where it is? There, over in the far corner. Uh-oh, the information desk blocks the view a bit, she'll never see it. She'll have to ask me where it is. More questions! More penetration! I can't penetrate these barriers you're putting up. Dammit Diana, what am I supposed to do! You constantly ask questions I can't answer. You put thoughts and feelings inside my head. What's bothering you Jeffrey, you look like you're having a bad dream, like a child just awakened from a nightmare. Nothing, no bad dream, just staring at Picasso on the wall. Blue picture. But you're troubled, the most casual observer could tell you're troubled. Can't you tell me what it is? Talk to me, Jeffrey, can't you at least try to talk to me? I'm happy, Diana, I'm happy, dammit, I'm so goddam happy, see! Look at me smile! Focus in on his ear to ear grin doctor. Wouldn't work. WOULDN'T WORK OLD LADY, you see why it wouldn't work? They give up on me. Can't depend on anybody these days, doctors, goddesses, nobody.

"Are you sure there is a coke machine here? I don't see any."

You're playing a game of course. Being a goddess you naturally know exactly where it is, but you're asking me because ... because why? Why would Athena the wise ask the Indian where the coke machine is? That's a joke, doctor, a riddle, can you answer it? Take your time, bzzzzzzz, oh, I'm so sorry doctor, doctor what's your name again, ah, Dr. Morris Edelman of Tenefly, New Jersey, you must face the consequences. The answer was ... drum roll please, drrrrrrr .... in order that she might
purchase a coke for the Indian. Too simple for you, eh doctor. Doctors
think in complicated patterns, especially psychiatrists.

“It’s over in that corner over there. Follow me. I’m surprised you didn’t
see it.”

Here’s a switch, Athena follows the Indian. Not so unusual, Indians are
known all over the world for their amazing ability as guides. Been like that
for years.
The girl bought two cokes and gave one to Jeffrey.

“So, uh, what are you going to do now that your train ride didn’t come
through, Geronimo?”

Make conversation, that’s good, make conversation Athena, get the
Indian on your side.

“Wait, I guess.”

“Do you think that’s wise, brother, I mean the conductor really
thought you were far gone. Dangerous, he said, this boy might be armed.
There’s a good chance he’ll call ahead and have the police come to check
this place out.”

That’d be nice. A little tete-a-tete with your friendly neighborhood
policeman. Athena has the wisdom of the ages on her side. She knows
what’s best for you son. Pay a little more attention to her, she wants to
help.

“You think that’s possible? I wouldn’t think he’d bother. Anyway, how
the hell could he do it? The train’s already left the station.”

“I don’t know. They have their ways.”

Yes indeed, Athena. They do in fact have their ways, they always do.
Another tiny pearl of wisdom you have let drop from your god-like lips.
How should I describe the beauty of a goddess? It’d be nice to get it
down, in case, you know, in case you ever run across someone who’s
interested. Well, it’s a wide face. Something about the cheeks I guess that
gives it the flattened effect. Everything else doesn’t protrude quite
enough. Dirty blonde hair, that’s the give-away, I think. It’s soft looking
and it shines, like it’s just been washed. That’s probably it though, she just
washed it. And, oh yes, it almost slipped by me, Athena is wearing
make-up, around the eyes mostly, around her brown eyes, not much else
you can say about them, and the slightest hint of lipstick, yes, on her lips.
A long white coat, sheep-skin I think, right in style, and underneath, gasp,
you can see her legs. Nice legs, a little on the heavy side, cause that’s what
she is, a little on the heavy side, and you can see them cause she’s not
wearing pants. She’s wearing a dress that’s shorter than her coat. Athena’s
got class. That’s right Athena, they have their ways. We all do. You and I
have our ways too, don’t we baby?

“What are you going to do? I’m the one that should be asking you. After
all you were already on the train, you were already there,” he said.
“Well, I have friends in Poughkeepsie, really fine people, you’d really like them I’m sure. We could go out there, just for the night of course, then come back, you know, when the heat’s off, as they’d say.”

Jesus, she was just waiting for me to ask that question. Yes indeed, we do have our ways. Can I have a little instant analysis, doctor. Just a quicky. Yes, of this stylish, but unattractive goddess. Look at the way her eyes lit up when she said that. Well, I have friends in Poughkeepsie. Shit, I think you’re lonely Athena, I think you’re very lonely indeed. Oh, doctor, I’m sorry, you handle the analysis. Show her a few pictures, that might help. How about one of a naked man. React. React Goddess, dammit react! She’s looking down at the floor. No, she’s looking inside her coke bottle, almost empty. Have another sip my dear. The naked man moves toward her. Places his arms on her shoulders, draws her in. React. React! He begins to undress her, she looks up at him. She wants him, she wants him. The first hints of the animal arise in her. He is her computerized date. Her lonely hearts club beau. It’s more than she can handle, he’s seducing her and she wants him, she wants him but she’s holding back until the last moment where she can’t resist and ... and ... and ... blam, he has her in the palm of his hand. Let’s do it right here on the floor of the train station. Or do you want to go into the men’s room. No, you want to get to your friends’ house first, get a little stoned, get a little loose. She looks up from the floor, she looks at me, she’s about to speak, there’s something on her mind. It’s me, Geronimo, I’m on her mind, she can’t get me off her mind. I’ve been looking at her the whole time. Have I? Well, maybe I have. She’s waiting for an answer. Will I go with her to her friends’ house? I’ve hesitated, it’s been a rather long silence. A snort breaks the silence. Roly-poly Lou is beginning to stir. I’m not pretty enough for you, she thinks, she is becoming self-conscious. She has planned this out very well, in her alter-ego, Athena. Athena knows it’s not easy to fall in love with an ugly goddess. It’s a test. It’s a farce. It’s a goddam farce. Why do the gods have to interfere with the affairs of Indians? Diana, I need you, I don’t want to be here. No more questions please. I know you’re going to ask me a question. Stop! Don’t say it. Stop, please stop!

“Hey brother, is something the matter? Is something bothering you? You look...”

He smashed his hand into the soda machine, turned and started walking across the floor.

Back under the covers, put the pillow over your head! Quickly! Quickly! The cavalry’s almost here. Abandoned! Deserted! DIANA!!!! Stop it, don’t say those things! I want to go back to sleep. Talk to me in the morning. Put it off, I’ll hang in there, I’ll pull through. But you’re clinging to me, you’re depending on me for so much, Jeffrey, don’t you see, like a big block of wood on my back, I can’t carry it any longer, it’s
much ... Stop it, no more questions, no more crises, no more. I just want to live, I want to breathe again. Diana, come for me, I want to breathe again. I'm young, I'm strong, help me breathe. I'm being surrounded. I'm being suffocated. Diana!! Is she following me doctor? The goddess, I know she's following me. Make her stop. Picture: "Young Man Back in Bed; Sweet Dreams." Look at the smile on his face. It's me, doctor, It's me. Got his woman, got his freedom. It's me, doctor! Show me that one please. Put the goddess back on the mountain. Zeus, you can do it, take her back. Place the scene back, put her on the train again. She wants you, boy. One look, one sweet glance and she's yours. But my hand, it's killing me. Doctor, you know anything about hands? In medical school maybe, one or two courses. Is it broken? I don't want her. Don't follow me Athena. Ain't never been a goddess in the whole history of Mythology been raped in a train station. I'll do it. You watch me doctor, I'll do it. General, sir, I'm not fit for the army, psychologically unsound. Watch me. Goddammit, watch me!!

"Listen Geronimo, or whatever your name is..." She put her hand on his shoulder.

Don't talk to me. Don't touch me.

"I'm worried about you. Why don't you come with me? Relax, smoke a little dope. Nice warm house, fireplace, warm beds..." He whirled around and grabbed her by the shoulders, shaking her.

"Beds, who needs beds! Why not here, let's do it here! Come on baby I'm ready. COME ON!!!"

"Hey get your hands off me! What the hell..."

"It's what you've always wanted, what you've always wanted. Don't try to get cute now, Athena..."

She tried to pull away from him. He held her tightly by the collar of her coat.

"What are you talking about? ... You're crazy ... Athena? ... What the..."

Time has come Athena, no turning back. Last Indian's making his stand.

"Shut up! Don't fight it! Shut up, dammit!!"

She started screaming—wild, high shrieks that echoed throughout the station. He had her down on the ground and was wrestling with her, trying to get her coat open. The Spanish American got up, saw what was happening and walked quickly out of the station.

Jeffrey heard the door slam shut. He relaxed his hold and looked up at where the man had been sitting. The girl began to squirm away and he let her go. He got up and started walking away, slowly.

"What the hell was that all about? That was an asshole thing to do! I really thought you were serious for a while. You're crazy, brother, crazy!"

"Get out," he said, almost under his breath.
“What?”
“Get out of here you ugly bitch before I really get mean! Go on, split, go to your friends. Just go way!”

He walked past the rows of benches counting them as he went by. At the twelfth row he stopped, took a long look at the big orange wall, then walked to about the middle of the row and sat down. He lit up a cigarette, and watched as the girl finished adjusting her clothes and her hair and started toward the door. She still looked a mess. Her eye make-up was smeared and splotches of grey were on her white coat, from the floor. At one point she looked as if she was going to say something to him, but thought better of it and continued to walk, out, and onto the street.

Roly-poly Lou probably called the cops. That’s nice. Athena’s got herself some good stories to tell her friends. Oh, that’s nice, that’s very nice. Last Indian’s got himself some very fine tobacco. Like a smoke, doctor? Sure tastes good after you’ve been running around a lot. Guess it’s too much to ask for a picture of Diana coming to save me. Yeah, I know, I can’t depend on you. I’m tired doctor, it’s been a long day, can we call it quits for a while? My girl’s waiting outside to take me home. Can you dig that? O.K. one more picture. Here it comes now on the screen. “Two Policemen Entering Poughkeepsie Train Station.” Whatever for, doctor? One policeman catches sight of the orange head-band and turns to the other.

“Will you lookee here, Sam. Just look at that thing on his head. Looks like we got us a Navaho Indian, or something.”

Michael Gross

TWO WAYS TO WOO A WOMAN

1 Like something moving
   over the water making
   waves
   a wind

2 Like a big bird
   wings flailing
   eyes clenched and colliding
   feathers on fire

Cotter Smith
I HAVE JUST WOKEN

I have just woken
from a dream

the image of a child
is still clear

under water
and very still

in a white frock
and brunette hair

Her eyes would open
intermittently

and her lungs
would heave. In the

slow current
bending over

the low bridge
I caught her.

Her limbs were lifeless
her color pale.

Outside
the night had been rough.

A storm had taken
a heavy toll.

In the slow current
I bent over

and picked,
a white flower

from under,
two inches of rainfall

Changez Sultan
PUNCTUATIONS

lamp
posts
punctuate
space
between your room and mine

when I walk across
each pillar
stabs me with a little thrill
a little illumination in the pulse
glow worms beat along my blood
ey they throb through veins and tubes
to warm me up inside
I begin to burn
like a japanese lantern
or phosphorescent log
each light lifts me high
when I reach your room
reach for you

your arms
punctuate
space

Gigi Bradford
A “Dear John Letter:”

Dear John Kendrick,

I am writing, two leagues above the Atlantic, to thank you for introducing me to those quality cigarettes of yours. Little did you know when you caught me smoking one of your Camel-covered gems fifteen years ago that I would grow up to be as devoted to good tobacco as you. It took me two days to plan the theft of one of your cigarettes and just as I was peacefully lighting up on the jump-seat of the Chrysler you stuck your lizard’s arm through the window and snatched the butt from my hand. “Doity!” was all you said to me, then you went inside my grandparent’s house and cleaned out the garbage in the sink. You would plod up to the drain in your banana-boat shoes, roll up the sleeve of your only (poor fella) and sink your arm elbow-deep in the egg shells and cantaloupe rinds. Maybe you were searching for your wedding band or a ticket back to the mother country because you didn’t seem to mind the slime. Fishing in garbage for John; (remember Aunt Sarah, when John is in the room there’s a job to be done, never address him directly; after all this time he might not know how to deal with a personal request. You must communicate with him through some mystical medium, maybe the coffee aroma, and say, “Would John like to clean off the table now?” He might not answer you Uncle Ira but he sure as hell would get the food off the table.) fishing in garbage for you was like peeing in pants for me. You kind of hesitant at first but after getting a bit wet you can just let go and enjoy it.

The thing of it is you’d go out by the hammock right after the garbage and finish that butt; as if you didn’t have two cartons of those Turkish cigarettes by your alarm clock. One thing you did have was cigarettes. Didn’t you spend your money on anything else? “Doesn’t John spend his money on anything beside cigarettes.” Now I’m not begrudging your skill in money-handling; Lord knows, you’ve got over a hundred-thousand dollars tucked away in your toilet kit. But a couple of bad investments John, they’re what really hurt you. A cigarette is a temporal pleasure but one can always be replaced by another as you, with your three packs a day, so amply demonstrated. Tobacco gave you your only real pleasure for sixty years, as well as emphysema and varicose veins and yellow hands to match your purple veins. It turned your brain to dental floss and your guts into cotton—kind of a cigarette filter cotton. And you still could’ve been the strongest of us all with your woollen trousers from Petrograd and your sick-looking sausage breakfasts which you ate for half-a-century. But you kept smoking those cigarettes long into the night, long after you were declared aesthetically dead, goddam you! Because you’re so concave and
Like I was saying though, you could have done better if it hadn’t been for those two investments. I think we ought to look into your finances before someone else does. You and I are a lot alike as far as our garbage goes. We joined the cavalry of the Czar’s army at age eighteen. You had the grotesque sense of timing to marry your childhood sweetheart six months before the Revolution. Being the true Communist that you were, you defected to the enemy in the heat of battle then deserted altogether and left the country. I remember you told me in your attic bedroom that you had planned to send for your bride as soon as you got the money but she ran off with some Cossack. Isn’t that right John? Or was life too appealing as an American Short Order Cook? The Kopecs were coming in fast and heavy—maybe they dimmed your memory of the mother country and all you had left behind. No, I believe you John. She did run off with a Cossack as I recall; there’s no use for regrets. I guess I was just angry at you for that night in the attic. It was the only time I really talked with you. It was probably the first time anybody had spoken with you in fifty years, and you scared the living shit out of me. All I did was go up and see if you were alright after all of that vomiting. Everyone was up for Labor Day and we thought it was a heart attack; a seventy-year-old man doesn’t go around vomiting for nothing. But you did. Everyone figured it was ok though since you hadn’t been sick since nineteen-thirty-five in Florida when you pulled the man-o-war from my mother’s arm. My grandparents and aunts and uncles all figured it was ok for a change, like when they gave you a carton of Camels every Christmas. “After fifty years of life like that a man deserves to puke,” that’s what Uncle Ed said.

I believe all you said up there John but I just want you to know you scared the eight-year-old shit out of me. Then again, it was only the second time I’d been up to your attic. The first time was to steal one of your cigarettes and it was plenty scary. And the second time I only went up to see if you were alive and if you wanted some sausages. If I had known then that I would sit at your bedside for two stinking hours listening to your autobiography I would never have checked up on you. If I could do it again, now, I’d try to turn this plane around. But you’d just send me away with some Siberian grunts and groans. You’d probably know why I’m on this plane and ask me to recover some personal effects from the Czar’s palace.

I guess I stayed up there so long to ask you why you never married again but then I was so interested in trying to follow the eyes behind those spectacles of yours I probably lost interest. Your lenses are so thick I never know where your eyes are from one minute to the next or whether you have eyes at all. Just as I never knew whether you had legs or not.
You’d sit on the back porch after cleaning our evening catch of perch and swing one woollen leg over the other like a Russian scarecrow. Why did you wear those woollen pants in the summertime? Good God, how come you didn’t rinse the vomit out of your mouth? I guess you could rely on the cigarettes to mask the smell, but I sure noticed it that night in your bedroom. There was a thousand years of Russian history in that breath and maybe that’s why I’ll never forget your story. You were really pale that night; silver whiskers stood out on concave cheeks and your hair scattered like white dust every time I spoke.

Still, I was getting down to asking you why you spent your life with my grandparents and their two generations of children. I was young but I still didn’t expect you to say that we were “like a second family” to you like my Grandmother said. That’s when you left to take a piss in your white cotton socks. It was when you returned that we were off the subject and you told me the story of your second bad investment.

When your nephew surprised you with a visit about fifty years ago you were pleased as hell. It was good that someone from your family decided to join you. You wouldn’t have been so happy to see him if you’d known he would be your only visitor for the next fifty years. You would’ve been grief-stricken had you known he was going to be the second bad investment. But you were young and you were frying a lot of expensive sausage in that diner. You weren’t so much a Communist then. But still spoke fine Russian and remembered enough about your wife to ask for her. Mitja told you all the news, including the bad news of your wife’s death a year after you left. That was possibly your last regret. Am I right John? Brief remorse over the pancake griddle? Well, she died with that Cossack of hers so there’s no use lingering on it. Still, it was good to hear all the news from home. And Mitja brought you a newspaper from Leningrad (times have changed, John Kendrick) which you forgot to read; that was your mistake. And he brought you an American newspaper which you never bothered to read; that was your downfall. But your nephew brought news from home and a lot of what seemed to be love and devotion.

So you spent about fifteen-thousand dollars to support him over the years. You didn’t give him a pair of woollen trousers and a white cloth shirt. Let it be known that John Kendrick outfitted his nephew in a complete American wardrobe and sent him through the finest American school of journalism. That’s a lot of cigarettes John. That’s a lot of fried sausage, kid. Just the same, Mitja did find it in his heart to visit you once a year and bring you a newspaper. And there was a good deal of news when Mitja made a name for himself. It’s just that you had to get it from the TV screen because after a while, that’s the only place you saw his face. He owed it all to the sausages and the garbage. I guess he lost your address.
though. That's when my grandparents took you on, wasn't it? I guess he didn't know where to send the newspapers.

But you didn't need the newspaper. You certainly didn't need Mitja Kendrick. Like my dog Toby said after the Thanksgiving dinner was cleared from the table: "What more does John need? He's like one of the family!" Don't ask me how I heard him. It could've been Aunt Mae, but if I can understand you, John, I certainly could've understood Toby. "John doesn't pronounce words so well because of his teeth so we all have to do our best to understand him and communicate with him." Like hell Mom. Pardon me; Bullshit! All that tobacco just went to his brain and smoked the sense out of him. Dialectically speaking, John left the Mother Country and never made it to the States. Linguistically speaking, John is somewhere between Siberia and the American mainland, with a bit of Cheyenne Indian in there to be sure but nevertheless, far out over the Atlantic. He just didn't care to hang around with any Russian folks when he lived here. And you don't have to know much English to fry sausage. A Japanese fisherman can have an American smoke. When Robinson Crusoe lived in Siberia who was he going to speak to? As long as Crusoe had a Zenith radio that plugged into the sand and played ballroom music what did he care? Isn't that the way you figured it, John? Isn't that why you let yourself slip back into Neanderthal man? Maybe you were just holding back for fifty years till I came up to the attic. You probably had involved conversations with yourself down in the laundry room by the steam press. How could you do it John? Pardon me again, Mom, I think it was his teeth. And his being concave must've had something to do with it too. That is the way you lost your speech isn't it John?

"John, Misses wants you take garbage outside. John, Mister says please get 'em furnace going." "Unnh, mmm, Meester?" (John why did you always grunt as if you'd been startled from a sound sleep? You must have stoked the furnace on every one of your waking winter hours.) "John. Meester say please put 'em wood on fire so we can get 'em out of bed and make'm some french toast for the children." "Ugh." Some winter mornings I go 'em down to furnace with John. Other times, Cousin Meg and I stuff snow down the grating and drown his fire. Meg and I hear Siberian grunts of anger echoing through the heating duct. Me go over to table in pajamas with rubber feet and watch 'em John eat his oatmeal and sausage. Ugh.

I didn't know I was joining in the elders' game by doing that. You had to allow us our youth John. We were sorry for all that. You have to admit that after a while my sister and I were the only ones who talked straight to you. When Janie was learning Russian she tried to engage you in a little native conversation, but you were always peeling potatoes. All in all, you weren't very sociable about it. The conversation never got much beyond
“Strosvege” and “Dosveedonya.” Janie’d do her share of talking, and I’m sure it was as hard for her as it was for you. All we ever heard out of you though was an occasional “Da.” “Talk talk talk.” “Da.” “John, are Mister’s shirts done yet?” “Da.” “Oh John, I don’t want to hurry you but are potatoes done?” “Ugh.” “Da. Da.” “Ugh.” Well, you can say what you want, but don’t tell me I didn’t see a little smile there behind the mound of peeled potatoes.

I just want you to know that when I get over I’ll tell all your folks about you. I don’t know when I’ll get back. It’s true, there’s a big shortage of Short Order Cooks over there; and didn’t I learn the art of frying straight from the plundered house of Romanov? Maybe you should send somebody over with a newspaper after a while. Oh, in case you’re still plagued by some nagging doubts, one of the chocolate bars we hid is lodged inbetween two strings of the grand piano. It must be plenty doiny by now, but it oughta do someone some good.

When I return we’ll all have to go down to Florida for the winter.

“Look John, you can’t miss ’em trip this time. Mister needs you John. And what if there’s another man-’s-war; there are alot of them this year John. Remember when you pull im off of Lois’ arm.” Yeah, John, ya gotta go down this year. This is the year my Aunt Sarah learns how to drive and almost backs up over my sister. You’ve got to go down because this is the year you dash behind the fender and save her, and this is the year I’m born in. You wheel me to the beach on your way to fishing and look at you through the mosquito netting. “John!” “Ugh.” “Mister needs you John and you’ll have a bed in the train and, John, the cab is on him way.” And there you stand before the annual train ride to Florida, adamant in your refusal, cutting a stoic figure in your wool pants and tweed overcoat. Your gray fedora is tilted at an angle only Kafka could appreciate. But you relent. You pick up your brown brief-case and we’re on our way. Miraculously, we are all together in the yellow frame house by the beach. You are cleaning the sea bass you caught for me. “Don’t bother John, he’s working on the fish.” “I know.” I watch your bony hands laboriously working over the fish; hacking the head and tail off, slicing along the belly, cleaning the intestines out like garbage, yanking out the backbone. Your hands are covered with scales and fish-blood and the blue veins in your arms are bulging. Cleaning the fish is your job. My job is to watch you clean the fish and to get the credit for it all at the dinner table. When the torrent of praise is reduced to a trickle, I settle down and eat my fish, chopped as soft as butter (the way I like it—by John). I promise you John that someday I’ll catch a fish in the Volga and give it to one of your great-nephews and let him get the credit. I swallowed alot of sea bass in my day without fear of a single bone marring its passage down my throat; it’s the least I can do.
While I'm making verbal amends, there was one other thing I've always wanted to do for you and me. Especially when you were cleaning the fish or when you had trouble walking, I wanted to make little incisions in your arms and legs with the fish-cleaning knife. It would be so easy to pull those angry blue veins from you, just like scarves from a magician's hat, just like spaghetti from out of the mouth. But when I became more sophisticated in my thinking I realized that all those swollen vessels are tied up or attached somewhere together. Probably it all connects to the dental floss and the cotton from the cigarette filter and if I pulled it all out it would be like unraveling a ball of yarn. There'd be nothing left but your banana-boat shoes and your trousers, in a heap, on the floor. I guess you'll just have to carry your garbage around with you.

There's nothing more, of course, except for some questions at the end. My plane's landing soon and I'm carrying around a lot of garbage with me. Just tell me this John Kendrick: Did you know it was me who picked the stuffing out of the headboard of Mister's bed? and, Are you still concave? "Da."

PS: Ashes to ashes, crust to crust.

David Rosner

We have inherited
the wealth
of the dead:
it sits in southern comfort
by the fire,
stroking the siamese cat
in its lap.
At four o'clock
the nurse carries in
the tea and cakes
on a small tray
woven of olive leaves
from Nepal.
The wealth of the dead
is alone today—
an uninvited guest
in the house
of its descendants.

Margie Erhart
...and so he sat on the docks every morning, never moving, a beer in one hand, his eyes in the other.

old man: victim of that discolored amphibian time, you roll in the water with your eyes lusterless like the eyes of the shark and the dark with its persecuting grin absolves from the ocean the sin of your death.

old man: helpless in his nets, his feet are so wounded. your boat rolls beneath the clusters of the stars and the stars sway in keeping with your eyes, the pale fire of thinking shines from your face and rusted ships steaming in the night pass and see the silent gleam that fades with sleep.
old man:
a blessing from your lips.

your shoes are cracked and smell
in your motionless eternity.
the leather is warped with brine,
the stench of the fish is
overpowering;
and waiting for the tide, you
are waiting for the tide
that reaches with swift fingers
to pluck out your eyes.

old man:
a blessing from your lips.
it is all we crave as we,
moonless, stand upon the beach
covered with the thin shawl
of our youth.

old man:
swaying and motionless,
do not sleep,
do not sleep.

Carlos Martinez
I was sitting there, drowsy in the plastic poshness of the B.U. library and thinking how sick and tired I was of blue parka jackets. During my two days in Boston I had seen at least seven hundred of them on Kenmore Square alone. Now I watched a girl two tables down from me putting her blue parka jacket over an otherwise sumptuous looking body. Susan's roommate, Marie, had bought a blue parka jacket just that morning. She said it matched her skis. And Susan, sitting next to me, had a blue parka jacket too. Now she was using it as a pillow, Hesse's *Siddhartha* having forced her into a study break.

But wait—

A cute blonde in a camel coat walked past our table towards the circulation desk. "Hurray for you, cute blonde thing!" I thought, jumping up from my seat and bumping into a football-playerish guy in a blue varsity parka jacket. "Hey!" he said. I ignored him and started after the cute blonde.

"Congratulations!" I exclaimed, gently grabbing her arm.

"Sssshhh!" said the library in an evil icy blue parka hiss as she turned around.

"Who? Wha'?" she asked at the same time.

"I just wanted to compliment you on your camel coat," I replied.

"Oh this old thing?" She smiled like summer. "I only borrowed it from my mother because my parka jacket is at the cleaners."

I was dismayed, "You mean you own a parka jacket?" I asked.

"Yes," she said. "It was a gift."

"Oh. What color is it?"

"Well, I got a blue one but it didn't go with anything else I wear. So I exchanged it for one that's sort of a rhubarb color with alternating gold and black pinstripes and orange flecks."

"May I walk you home?" I asked.

She had to leave a copy of DeSade at the circulation desk so I got my things which were an empty notebook, a pen and an old tweed coat. Then I walked her home, leaving Susan, Hesse, and the B.U. library behind us. They are still sleeping soundly.

We were married in March. To the dismay of our parents, who were Wasps, we had a very elaborate and entertaining wedding day. Ceremonies and celebrations included the fertility rite of the ancient Druids, circus acts from Spain and Portugal, the Pornography Fair from Sweden, recital of the Russian Orthodox marriage vows, and a musical concert by a group of African tribal drummers. But the highlight of the day was the self-sacrifice of a Buddhist monk who burst himself into flames before the bedazzled eyes of our guests, his blue parka jacket waking into liquid fire.

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