Take thought:
I have weathered the storm
I have beaten out my exile.
—Ezra Pound

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PREFACE

No, I cannot tell you what I want;
I cannot show you what I mean.
When we love, we love in obscurity;
If we speak, we speak from exile.

A paltry set of circumstances makes up a man's life, and the sum of all his memories. No vaulting visions, no grand epiphanies, but vacuous, absurd tableaus, photographs of naked infants on bedspreads, frozen smiles, forgotten jokes, old men reclining near comforting bedpans, leather-bound, collecting dust on shelves, provincial and self-indulgent as home-movies; nostalgia and the sweet regurgitant of cemetery worms.

You read now. I, at sometime, in some place, once wrote. You have your family, lover, friends, your sins, ambitions and fears; I have mine. You cannot see through my eyes or speak with my voice. I cannot stand in your place, nor would want to. I can only touch you through these few words that we both understand, and at that soft underbelly of spirit; where thought should be uncommunicated lightning, and as quick to strike and burn.

I can meet you only on that narrow ground we both have crossed before; footsteps of commonality impressed on the various soils of our experience. Let us search it out, and quickly. Let us name it, now.

...Here extend another path, upon which you may apprehend my footsteps, and I, yours.

- k.g.m.
Scene I is set in the cab of an old pick-up truck, two seats, and back window, and some form of gear shift. Lights go on slowly as the sound of a truck pulling over and stopping on the side of a highway, becomes louder. Lights officially go on as the boy (Trevor) jumps into the cab next to the driver (Dan). Trevor is about twenty years old, dressed in old clothes carrying a duffle bag. Dan about forty-five or fifty dressed as a Black workman in large blue overalls; he is a solid man, strong, and still exhibits a great of youth in his mannerisms and movements. As Trevor has hauled himself up into the truck and pulled the duffle bag in behind him, the lights are all the way on simulating just before sunset at the point of dusk.

TREVOR: Oh, thank you very much. For awhile I didn't think I was going to get a ride before dark.

DAN: Yea, getting pretty dark. 'Fraid nobody was gonna t' see ya out there.

TREVOR: (Trevor pulls out a cigarette) I was afraid of that myself. Mind if I smoke?

DAN: No, man, your privilege.

TREVOR: You like a cigarette?

DAN: No thanks, man. Don't smoke.

TREVOR: (Trevor lights his cigarette, settles back for the ride) How far south you going?

DAN: I ain't going very far. Only down as far as Unionville. Just got off work from the canning factory up near Federalsburg. (Signals behind with his thumb.) Just goin' on home. How far South ya want t'go?

TREVOR: Eventually, I want to get down as far as Atlanta, but the rides have been short so it might take me another day or two. I am going down to see a friend of mine who is there. I thought I'd go help him with his work.

DAN: What part the North ya from?

TREVOR: (Laughing) How'd you know I lived in the North?

DAN: (Does not react to laughter) Just standing on the road I know'd ya was from the North. Ya got that look 'bout ya. (Laughs to himself.) People from the South like ya don't live too long. Yea, I used t'work up North, I used t' drive big rigs outside Cleveland (thoughtful) Yea, I like da North. What part of da North ya from?

TREVOR: Just outside of Boston. A place called Cambridge, Massachusetts.

DAN: OH YEA, Cambridge? (Laughs) Bout a year I
DAN: Well you just keep on lookin'.

TREVOR: Well, I'm still looking.

DAN: (Laughs) Oh yea, I had my fun. Ya do a lotta randum strikin'.

TREVOR: Sure, If I can get my hands on fifty bucks, I hit the road. (Both laugh).

DAN: (Grinning, throws head gently remembering). Yes, I know what you mean, man. I know what ya mean.

TREVOR: Get all the way out to California and back last summer on fifty-four bucks.

DAN: Ya jump freights?

TREVOR: Coming back through the Midwest, I jumped one that took me through Iowa almost all the way to Omaha.

DAN: (Giggling). Yes, that's a good life. That's a good life, I dun my ramblin'. You smoke reefer?

TREVOR: Beat your pardon?

DAN: Grass, man.

TREVOR: Grass. Oh sure, on occasion (slightly weary).

DAN: (Lost in his thoughts). Yes, I used t' smoke reefer, I remember them good times. Smoke a little reefer, drink some wine. Used to hang up in Central Square. Yea, I dun my ramblin',

TREVOR: What made you stop?

DAN: Oh man, I met my little woman outside of Baltimore. Don't ya go believing what some people will go and tell ya about gettin' married, man. Ya get yaself a good woman, you'll be a happy man. (Leans over to Trevor with a big smile). You'll find a woman and that ramblin' life (laughs) it won't look so good. Yea, Ise a happy man. I gots ya tiny little woman and be happy all night long. Man, that's the life. The ramblin's good for a while but ya get yaself a woman and you'll be a happy man.

DAN: Well, I'm still looking.

TREVOR: Well you just keep on lookin',

DAN: (Joking) I believe you. I've been looking almost five years now but can't find that right one this letter. I started thinking about how I could bow out of Atlanta. Never really been through the South before, but more than that, you know, more than that I thought maybe I could help somebody 'cause I've had it pretty easy and all, and I know that told him he could keep the rest of the pay check and I packed the duffle and by eight o'clock I was thumbing down the Mass Turnpike on my way to Atlanta. So here I am.

TREVOR: (Pauses) And ya ain't got no place t' sleep tonight?

DAN: No, but I've got a sleeping bag and I normally curl up by the side of the road.

TREVOR: (Another pause) Well listen man. We ain't got much. We ain't got much at all, but if you're like a rood over ya head, you're welcome at my place, if ya wants.

DAN: Yea, Yea, that would be very nice, Thank you very much.

TREVOR: Well I tell ya man. We ain't got much but if that don't bother ya, ya're welcome. Sides that man (he grins) I got a bottle over the kitchen shelf and it is Saturday so we can have ourselves a good time. All right?

TREVOR: All right (with grin, Both of them laugh happily. Lights dim and fade out.)

FAITH: (Standing and turning away from Mother). Baltimore, Mother. If I stay down here I'll be a nigger till the day I die. I'll be cleaning houses and doing White man's laundry. You don't have to be a nigger nowadays, Mother. You can understand that. Up in Baltimore you can't be a nigger no more. (Turns to Mother) Yea, you right. William is scared but Mother don't 'yes suh' nobody. He ain't nobody's nigger cause William ain't afraid to fight for what is his, He's a leader, he's got respect and Baltimore gave it to him. Don't ya see, .

MOTHER: Ya don't have it run away to Baltimore to get respect, child. I respect myself. Baltimore don't teach ya to hate. Did ya see my William come in? He says he came down here to fight. I never taught him that. I never taught him that. It was Baltimore that taught him that.

FAITH: You gotta fight sometimes. William is trying to be free. Mother, He's trying to be free as a Black man. Baltimore teach ya to hate. Did Ya see my William come in? He says he came down here to fight. I never taught him that. I never taught him that. It was Baltimore that taught him that.

MOTHER: William, what ya doing man? (William stands like a statue staring at the fallen policeman.) Come on man. Run man. (William turns, looks at the Second Boy. They all run off to the right. End.)
DAN: It ain't a matter of disobeying anymore. Woman, it's Saturday night and your Dan's gettin' drunk. (Throws his head back and laughs. Proverbs over to Faith, kisses her on the forehead and puts her on the head.) How's my beautiful daughter? (as he reaches up to get bottle on highest shelf at the far end of the kitchen.) Though ya was goin' out tonight, Faith? A beautiful girl like ya, our cillins grown now. One day ya bust Mother.)

FAITH: Look what Baltimore's dun to our William....

DAN: Didn't tell me, ya didn't, and my daughter, Faith. (Trevor walks to the stove. The back door opens. Dan walks in, hugs his wife, kisses her on the forehead.)

DAN: Woman, our cillins grown now. One day ya bust Mother.)

FAITH: Trevor, you got a place to stay down in Georgia?

DAN: Trevor lives up in Boston, right near when we'se all ready eaten. We kept this warm for you. You're late tonight, Father. (Starts to get up.)

TREVOR: I'm going down to Atlanta to meet a friend of mine. (Throws away the towel and returns to his place.)

DAN: It ain't a matter of disobeying anymore, Woman, our cillins grown now. One day ya bust Mother.)

FAITH: I'm going down to Atlanta to meet a friend of mine. (Throws away the towel and returns to his place.)

DAN: Didn't tell me, ya didn't, and my daughter, Faith. (Trevor walks to the stove. The back door opens. Dan walks in, hugs his wife, kisses her on the forehead.)

DAN: I ain't gonna talk 'bout it no more. Now we'se all ready eaten. We kept this warm for you. You're late tonight, Father. (Starts to get up.)

TREVOR: I'm going down to Atlanta to meet a friend of mine. (Throws away the towel and returns to his place.)

FAITH: I'm going down to Atlanta to meet a friend of mine. (Throws away the towel and returns to his place.)

DAN: It ain't a matter of disobeying anymore, Woman, our cillins grown now. One day ya bust Mother.)

FAITH: I'm going down to Atlanta to meet a friend of mine. (Throws away the towel and returns to his place.)

DAN: It ain't a matter of disobeying anymore, Woman, our cillins grown now. One day ya bust Mother.)
WILLIAM: You don't know, do ya! Everybody knows you don't. At all right, then, I'll tell you. They are looking for a nigger on the train. A White cop was shot down last night. A White cop was shot down forty-five minutes ago.


WILLIAM: Mothers bursts into tears. Goes into bedroom. Dan stands.

DAN: (Looks up.) Don't let it bother ya. This happens every time he comes down from Baltimore.

DAN: William, ya ain't never gonna be free now. Ya can't ever stop ramblin'. Ya ain't gonna be free.

WILLIAM: I'm going to be free! I'm free!

WILLIAM: (Nodding his head.) Ya ain't free, William. Ya ain't never gonna be free.

DAN: (As Dan walks into the bedroom.) Nobody saw me. If nobody saw me, I'll be safe here till morning. I'm a White boy, you're coming up to Baltimore tomorrow. You ain't leavin' tonight. I'll put you on a bus in Baltimore.

WILLIAM: He's right, you know. You're never gonna be free.

WILLIAM: What do you know about it, White boy? (Walks over to the stove to get a cup of coffee.) What do you know about it? You never was no fight to be free. If the Black man gotta kill, then he's gotta kill. I see more cats like you - White boys - die, they're gonna ease their conscience for what the Black man has been through - make themselves feel good helping the Black folks. They learn the way Black people talk and they try and be White Soul Brothers and get with the Black. But there ain't no White man who knows how it feels to be Black. You don't even know what the Black man gotta do to be free, how he feel when he can't help you.

WILLIAM: I don't know. Maybe you're right but I've thought about it. I've thought about it long, a long time, and I think, I really think I'm doing what I can to help, I've been lucky. I've been real lucky. I know that. So maybe I gotta help somebody else out. I'm going to do what I can to help.

WILLIAM: I don't know. Maybe you're right but I've thought about it. It's got to be free. It's got to be free. If you don't have your freedom, you don't have nothing. You don't have your freedom, you don't have your home. You don't have your family. You don't have your church. You don't have your school. You don't have your neighborhood. If you don't have your freedom, you don't have your health. You don't have your education. You don't have your everything.

WILLIAM: It was in self-defense that they made no difference down here.
off his forehead) Just you look and see what we got here. A White nigger. The man just told you. You ain't Black and yo sure not White. You just a White nigger. Gonna save us? (Five or six White men come in the door.)

SECOND WHITE MAN:
(Screams out) Hey, White nigger, you gonna save us? (Bursts into laughter.)

FIRST MAN: We'll let you go White boy. I seen lots of your kind before. (Laughing) Hey White nigger, you gonna save us? (White men pick up chant.) Hey White nigger you gonna save us?

(As it gets louder, Faith and William join in. Trevor quietly leaves the stage and joins the audience.)

PARALYSIS OUTLINE

I. Situation

Horizontal I look at my books and think I should be a more interesting person than this. In my parent’s house I clean myself helpless until space measures by footsteps leaving me alone, even the bed does not know me.

Portraits of curly young men I immerse in some flood, and feel instead winter creeping hand over hand over the windowsill...

II. Past

Conversation with several friends in Ohio where by impossible difficulties such as an orphanage in Tibet we are teaching one another distance until dreaming on the floor at dawn I float house-height above the beach where I am really lying, foot in low tide, a sandy blue-lipped drowned boy.

That afternoon visitors ignore the baby who lives here who smiles and smiles and breathes bad air.

III. Present

I believe I am making a scrapbook. Someone has asked for old poems, I squat on the floor of the garage on red burlap curtains looking through a big barrel looking through my papers I find the words for a love song written on an old paper napkin by a boyfriend two years ago I find an IOU for $2.35 from a boy who died in the summer war Then I find my old painful poems several shiny notebooks with ideas I can’t remember by myself.

I roll my brother’s bike into the driveway. The bike is red. The three kids playing next door ask are you the wolf? No. Who is the wolf?

Autumn wind pressing dry leaves down the drive before me as in Cleveland, Ohio, the same time weeks ago, street from one brick wall to another the sidewalk is covered with soil though it’s summer, then someone steers from the topic as we pass the last wall, he brings up euthanasia and pours all images into the same abstract, but now I have been lying for three days in a bed that doesn’t need to love me and have found that it all goes in circles and that is no news.

IV. Response

It makes no sense so but isn’t this like running over an animal already dead on the highway, a dead goose, so flat, that the car feels nothing passing over...
A WOMAN READS CAMUS

There are no more deserts

she says

she is still

guarding the body's doors

so nothing can come close

no thing

poor word understands void

only as ghosts,

absences in the house

she is afraid of the dark

because night is an empty barrel

because everything is taken away

and nothing appears, left-over

a black pit

swarming with bats

cluttered with ruins

without the bats, the ruins,

without even the outline

of a barrel

she concludes that men

let things fall apart

she is an empty house

with sealed doors

she feels dark and heavy

like a huge worn rock

waiting for the tide

knowing it cannot float

in dark in silence

the ocean washes to the door

but in the dark, ocean

doesn't look any different

than night itself

men ask what is the matter,

she names nothing,

no words,

today she receives

a book with a clue

a gift from a man

a clue she already knows:

the damned aren't real

aren't unreal aren't,

or as she explains to

lovers who ask,

nothing is wrong

nothing is wrong.

- Lauren Shakely

don't sell my rings

I left them on your coffee table

one for each finger and two thumbs

you'll remember the day

it was raining, I woke up funny

rained walking away,

still funny, a skull

full of damp feathers,

rain predicted tomorrow

turning to sleet, also rain

stroking the patterns

coating windshield of cars

in that sloppy movie

we watched on your TV.

you said you felt sick

and gargled salt and water

a noise like drowning

I left on the subway at one

ears yelling AU SECOURS,

AIDEZ-MOI cross-head to each other

I was hoping I'd be raped

or something

so I could write you a note

and leave town altogether

I got home wet

and wrote, heaven-

two sides of a dime

and remembered those silver

rings, send them back.

- Lauren Shakely
Trees bend to the ground
While streams overflow their banks;
Winter lies dying.

STEVE CROUCH: Storm clouds
THE WAGON

It's May now and I still haven't answered Billy's Christmas card. I've really blown it this year, I just kept putting off sending a card and it would be a little silly to send one at this late date. A letter is called for, I suppose, but I hate to write letters and anyway just what would I say? Are you still 1-Y? How's your job? Is the family all right? The same old questions and I already pretty much know the answers. I still has high blood pressure so the army is out of luck: the job is okay but could be better. His family is fine. The fact is, you just do not write a letter to a Christmas card person.

A Christmas card person gets a Christmas card and if I'd sent Billy one I've done every other year there wouldn't be this problem.

I first met Billy in the summer of 1958. That was the first summer that we spent in the cottage on Long Island. My parents had bought the house the previous fall. It was warm but my father had decided that the family should get out of the city during the summer and had made the purchase. The house was located in a summer colony and most of the other houses were owned by people from New York City. Billy's family was one of them.

Billy says he had met me in the fall when we purchased the house, but I'm sure we didn't really meet until that first summer. We've argued about it quite a bit and neither one of us has been able to convince the other that he is wrong. I guess the reason I'm so sure it was summer is because of the wagon.

I had found the wagon in back of the house practically obscured from sight by the poison ivy (vines which has always grown rampant there. It was an old wagon and had apparently been abandoned by the past residents being very much in need of repair, I had put on the two new wheels necessary to make the thing useable but it was still pretty rickety. Fred Schultz, the kid across the street, and I were riding the wagon down the hill in front of my house when Billy first showed up. Billy seemed to know Fred. He watched us for awhile and before too long the three of us were taking turns guiding the wagon down the hill. I was a little afraid and kind of dragged my feet whenever it was my turn to ride. Billy and Fred, on the other hand, were each trying to out do the other and soon decided that the hill wasn't big enough. They both turned to me, since it was my wagon, and suggested that we go somewhere else. I was still concentrating on making a good impression on my new friends and didn't have the nerve to disagree.

We went off to a bigger hill down by the beach. It wasn't as steep as the one at home and it never even came up in conversation. When it was my turn I continued to drag my feet. Fred and especially Billy seemed to find more and more ways of increasing their speed and the length of their run. I felt as if it didn't belong. Yet strangely no mention was made of my failure to keep up with everyone else. Once as I came back from my turn, I thought Fred was going to say something but Billy looked at him kind of funny and Fred took his turn without a word.

We began to spend almost all our time riding the wagon. Billy kept finding new hills to try and Fred always concurred, I followed hoping they would soon tire of the game. It seemed they never would. Every morning I would come out pulling the wagon off to some new hill and I never protested for fear of losing Billy and Fred's respect. Only when I was resigning myself to the fact that it was going to keep up all summer the game stopped.

Billy and Fred came to get me one morning and when I started to go around back to get the wagon they stopped me. We went swimming instead and played basketball in the afternoon. It seemed as if the burden of the world had been lifted from my shoulders. While I wasn't an especially good swimmer neither were the other two and I was the best basketball player of the group. We never played with the wagon again all the rest of the summer and it never even came up in conversation. When the summer ended we parted company with genuine regret. Billy returned to the Bronx, Fred to Queens and I went home to Brooklyn. That Christmas we all exchanged cards for the first time.

We have kept our summer home on Long Island and I have spent at least a part of every summer there ever since. All through grammar school and up until the time when I was a junior in high school, I spent almost the entire summer on the island. When I reached that age where it becomes necessary that one work during the summer isn't so much steeper as it was longer than the other and you could get up a lot more speed. Billy and Fred offered to let me go first but I mumbled some excuse and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and told them I'd wait. Fred got in the wagon and started down. A few minutes later he was back panting and told them I'd wait.

Then it begins. To start is all you need. Then it begins. To start is all you need. Then it begins. To start is all you need.

It just begins.

One day you stop. You don't know why. You don't care, really. You just do. You look around and wonder, what am I not doing anymore? And you don't know.

Then it begins. You grow desperate to start. You don't know what. To start is all you need. You do. You don't know what you've started. It just begins until.

One day you stop.

- W. K. Mayo
My mother died as I shall die
Alone in an upstairs room,
On a summer's yellow afternoon
With old lace curtains swimming in the air,
A worn rag rug on a bare plank floor
An open transom above the door,
Two threadbare sheets on her father's bed,
And two flies buzzing on the window-glass.

- Tim Cope
The summer closed hard that year. You could almost hear it fall with the leaves, clattering like brown paper to wet pavements. You could hear it falling with the wind and the afternoon sun, falling discernibly earlier every day, the ruddy disc aging to a feeble yellow as it bled across the month of September and stained the earth brightly in its wake. You didn't walk in that season, you waded, splashing through the leaves in the rustling ebb-tide of the year, brushing into the street ripples of fiery decay.

It had rained for days, and you had the odd sense that even the streets were clean; they were shining black and smelled of still water.

And at times the sweet sauce of rain would coat the streets and sidewalks so smoothly that they shone like mirrors and shot the blinding sun into your eyes from a hundred angles, from corners and open alleys. And that intense blue sky...

But now, anyway, you remember the way it was. And you remember the way Stacy used to dress, especially around the flat, in that long pinstripe shirt or a sweater and not much else except her sandals. And I would come wading in through the leaves and the dusk every evening, freighted with half a dozen cardboard tubes and a briefcase and an arm's crook-full of new paperbacks, my fingers giving out completely just as I got to the kitchen table and dumped the whole assortment down with a clatter and a sigh.

Men never tire of anything, unless it is done so repeatedly and so poorly that their souls can find not the smallest beauty in it. But we worked and loved well, and so I never tired of the walk back from the bus or the kiss on the back of Stacy's neck there by the refrigerator, or the telling of the day's events, outlines of new designs, and synopses of the new books. I never tired of it, I swear, and some of the most placid moments of my life were spent over soup and coffee and crisp gingham, waiting for the sun to burn itself out in the sea of flat roof-tops outside the back door, the pattern of light from the latticed kitchen window creeping higher and higher and dimmer and dimmer on the blue stucco wall. And Stacy would sit quite calmly, respecting always my silences, watching the movements of my hands or glancing out the window with me, I think we must have picked that flat because its back wall faced the west, I don't recall, actually. But she would sit in quiet deference to thought, waiting easily for my cue of words, always nimble to follow it.

"Did you look over the synopsis to that poetry anthology?" I asked.

"Mmm." she nodded through a mouthful of coffee. "Beautiful. I think the forest design will be right for the cover." 

"Appropriate?"

"Yes."

"Not too.." I propped at the air. "...light, maudlin?"

"No, I don't think so. Depends on how you handle it. Keep the colors broody..."

"Mmm," I agreed. "What do you think of this?"

I tossed one of the new paperbacks across the table to her. It was a new James Kirkwood novel, I had finished the jacket design for it a month earlier, she picked it up, inspected front and back, fingered the cover.

"It came out well, don't you think? Printer did a nice job on the mid-tones."

"You notice anything different?"

"Well..." she hesitated, "looks a little, uh, simpler than I remember it."

I snorted. "It should. You'll notice they cut off half the collage from the right-hand corner."

"Oh God, yes. She studied it a few minutes in silence. "Any reason given?"

"Yeah. Detracted from the author's name, or something. And they switched the position of the title at the last moment. Isn't the effect I'd intended at all. Look at the size of that blurb copy on front. Can't see half the background detail for it."

She sighed. "Uh-huh, I think it still works, though."

"Well," I blew across the surface of my coffee, "no use worrying about it now. It's gone to press."

She smiled and put the book down, folding her arms, familiar as an old photograph.

"Anything new come in today?"

"Yes, another short story anthology and a history piece on Harry Truman. I thought a nice A-bomb blast might be interesting for the jacket, maybe another photocollage, much as they're overdone."

She grimaced her displeasure over the Truman assignment, "I hate history. You're so limited with..."
than I am already."

I looked up at Stacy, bent over the paper just as I was, smiling attentively. I was subtly pleased some-
how to notice that she was chassing sweaters in the few hours since lunch, I had a sweetly netting vision
of a beautifully long-haired girl pulling a sweater down over her head, freazing the strands that had
gotten caught inside on her shoulders, and brushing, brushing her long hair smooth and shining as some
finely-textured wood.

Some of the vision found its way into my look,

"Yes. . . ." she smiled, reading it.

"Forget it. I'll show you when I get it worked out better." I rolled up the paper and shoved it back
into its tube.

We made love a little later, and were perfect together, as usual, I could almost feel her smile in the
darkness afterwards, I smiled back.

"Happy?"

"Consistently," she mumbled sleepily. "We really are unusual in a way, I think."

"Mmm? And in what way might that be, young lady?" said, kissing her neck between words.

"Oh, I don't know, we're just so good together. Do you ever get to feel that we're part of one another,
you start to take on yours? It's funny, I often wonder if that sort of thing would happen."

"We were always pretty compatible, miss," I said, pulling the sheets tighter around us.

Winter came up quickly. You could hear it in the cold conatations of the flat, in the wind past the
shutters. You could see it creeping in the icicles down from frozen cornices, scattering prismed light
darkness afterwards. I smiled back.

"Do you remember the last time we had an argument?" she asked finally, frowning at her reading.

"I doubt that I could be," she said through a yawn and a stretch. "I doubt that I could be any happier
with mirrors. . . ."

I perched on the stool and flipped a light on over the assorted papers and tubes, "It's the jacket for
that story anthology, the design with the double mirror effect. I don't think I showed it to you,
"What's your commission on this one?" she inquired, leaning gently on my shoulder.

She nodded. "Have you read the stories yet?"

"Mmm, yes, I know what you mean. The infinity of mirrors. . . ."

"Exactly. It's fascinating. Two mirrors facing and reflecting one another, the image of the first
reflected in the second, and back again, and so on. You always imagine that if you could straight
down that corridor of images, you would see at its end -- well, what? Some devilish face staring back
at you, or some spot of whitest light or deenest blackness, you know, some visual representation of in-
finity itself. Disturbing. But of course when you move to look down the corridor, your own reflected
image blots out the view. Standing to one side and trying to peek doesn't help, because the slightest angle
of vision cuts the corridor's end off from sight. Any photographic device installed between the mirrors,
no matter how small, would still necessarily blot out the crucial center point with its own reflection;
I demonstrated with my hands, "It's a sort of Pucko's box, permanently locked by the laws of physics.
There's probably nothing to see down there, but denied the view, you can never be sure. Curious, hmm?"

"Forget it. I'll show you when I get it worked out better." I rolled up the paper and shoved it back
into its tube.

She kissed the top of my head, walked over to the easy chair by the window and plopped down with a
smile, "We're doing fine, baby. There's no real reason for it. I'll let you know when things start looking
brighter, that's all."

"What's the ID for this one?" she would have to use a calculator to figure out how many hours would have to pass.

"We're doing fine, baby. There's no real reason for it, I'll let you know when things start looking
tight."

"Oh," she smiled, returning to the magazine, "Just thought I'd ask."

I perched on the stool and flipped a light on over the assorted papers and tubes, "It's the jacket for
that story anthology, the design with the double mirror effect. I don't think I showed it to you,
"What?"

"I say do you want to work again?"

She nodded. "Have you read the stories yet?"

"Mmm, yes, I know what you mean. The infinity of mirrors. . . ."

"Exactly. It's fascinating. Two mirrors facing and reflecting one another, the image of the first
reflected in the second, and back again, and so on. You always imagine that if you could straight
down that corridor of images, you would see at its end -- well, what? Some devilish face staring back
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There's probably nothing to see down there, but denied the view, you can never be sure. Curious, hmm?"

"What?"

"What do you think depends largely on you. Would you be happier working? I asked, reaching for an eraser.

"What do you want to work again?"

"I think about the last time we had an argument, implied, flushing at her reading.

"What?"

"It's the last time we had a serious fight or something. It says in this article that it's normal and healthy
for couples to fight fairly frequently. Gets out all their frustrations and latent hostilities, and is an
indication of the continuing operation of two unique and distinct personalities in the marital partnership,"
I never blamed you,  
You, who think I might have blamed you,  
I never blamed you.  
At least, I do not blame you now.  
Maturity is Destiny's only master,  
And if my bones are set cross purposed,  
the coxswain in my skull  
must parallel the oars  
by calling swift clean even strokes,  
and must remain a constant sentry  
against the spasms of a sudden catalepsy.  
No man is an island,  
God knows that's true enough when all's said and done,  
but I am my own person  
belonging to no one but ourselves,  
navigators who reckon the sounds of a  
of a northern continent, marking the bays  
of distant hounds on the jagged coast,  
and seeking passage to a warmer tropic  
with spiced and gold, incense and mirth.

- Tim Cope

SEPARIDIAN

a shoe box, or maybe a tobacco pouch,  
anyway, I need somewhere  
to lie down and think about everything;  
a separidian for my soul.

- Bill Whitmore
Gentlemen:

I am an artist and, as such, a man of great sensitivity. I am telling you this that you may understand the profound grief I feel in having to take this action. I want to assure you that I am not one of those people who try to have relatives or friends committed simply to get rid of them. It is indeed with regret that I must ask you to accept my wife into your care, I have tried to help her along as best I could, but I have at last been forced to realize that my endeavors have been inadequate and that her problem has become so grave that I will be negligent in my responsibility as a husband if I failed to seek attention for her. I probably should have taken this step months ago.

I shall recount the history of this case in the hope that what I say here will convince you that my wife needs your services. Also, this may be of help to you in treating her should you accept her case.

As far as I can tell, my wife's difficulties began when we were told that she could not have children. We learned this a year ago after her miscarriages. Having children meant a great deal to her and she was understandably very despondent. For a while she wouldn't do anything but gorge herself with food all day. I tried to persuade her to do something that would take her mind off her troubles. She even refused to go to parties (she had always enjoyed partying) because she was becoming obese, a result, of course, of her excessive eating.

I suggested to her that we could adopt a child, but that simply made matters worse. She was adamant that she did not want to raise anybody else's child and that the presence of such a person in her household would be a constant reminder of her inadequacy. I couldn't reason with her.

Hoping that time would heal, I waited patiently for my wife to recover from the effects of her ordeal. However, she failed to improve. She even took to drinking behind my back, encouraged by our maid who, I discovered, was a completely shiftless woman bent on reaping the maximum profit from her relationship with my poor wife.

Mrs. Kaufmann (our maid, a widow) treacherously wormed her way into my sick wife's confidence with false expressions of genuine sympathy. For several weeks Mrs. Kaufmann and my wife kept themselves busy with daily shopping trips and with the project of redecorating the entire house, except for my studio. I would not allow them to interrupt my work. I tolerated this activity, expensive though it was, until I found that some of the expense was for large "bonuses" for Mrs. Kaufmann. These bonuses included substantial amounts of cash and some rather lavish gifts of fine clothes, furniture, and the like.

I could afford all of this quite well, but I could see that my wife was being used and that her new-found friendship would soon or later do her great harm unless I intervened. I confronted her with the problem and she took my interference very nastily. I am afraid that I did not handle the situation especially well. I couldn't persuade her that she should resume her associations with her more worthwhile and truer friends. She simply clung to Mrs. Kaufmann and went into a demonstration of absolute rage when I suggested that the woman might have to go. At that point I had no idea how I should proceed, I was forced to let the matter drop, but you can imagine my concern.

However, the breaking point finally came when I ascended from my studio to the middle of the day about a week afterward and found my wife and Mrs. Kaufmann very much inebriated and carrying on in a pathetically frivolous fashion. Soon thereafter I learned that this sort of thing must have been going on regularly behind my back. I found a collection of bottles which proved that the consumption of alcohol in the household had risen to a level which could be explained only in that way. This evidence served only to assure me that I had been right to sever Mrs. Kaufmann's connection with the household immediately upon discovering her in that drunken scene with my wife.

My wife protested vehemently at my dismissal of the maid. She cried rather bitterly and claimed that I was depriving her of her only friendship. Naturally I felt very deeply for her, but of course I had to do what was right.

Actually, she seemed to be recovering well after this incident. I even persuaded her to attend a party given by some friends of ours. Unfortunately, the influence of Mrs. Kaufmann had not worn off and I was unable to keep her from overimbibing. She became uncontrollable and we had to leave early. I must assume a large part of the blame for this incident for attempting to force her back into society too quickly.

Later that night I was awakened by the sound of her crying and I found her curled up in front of the door to my studio. When I finally stopped her crying she told me that she had wanted to see my paintings but she couldn't find the key to the door. I took her in and showed her the paintings, explaining each one individually. Her interest came as a great surprise to me since she had never shown any concern about my art before. She seemed particularly drawn to Words, an abstract depicting a resolution of the struggle between silence and cacophony.

After that night she came to the studio frequently while I worked. She would just sit watching me and I would explain what I was creating. I was pleased that we seemed to be coming together and that she was coming out of her shell. I began leaving the door unlocked while I worked so she could enter whenever she liked. She even had friends in and brought them down to the studio. It appeared that she was making rapid progress and I was gratified to see that, I'm afraid I became overly optimistic and I have come to regret that feeling profoundly for the damage it has caused.

Yesterday morning I went to the studio to find that I had left the door unlocked for the night. I entered to find that Words had been savagely slashed, utterly mutilated. My wife admitted the deed readily and seemed to feel no remorse.

She has continued to go about in a seemingly normal fashion. But I am compelled to recognize that there is something terribly wrong with her. It is ironic that depth of her sickness has been revealed to me in its fullness only when she finally seemed to be coming around. I am certain that you will understand my despair and will admit the necessity of placing my wife under your professional care. I will make myself as available as possible for consultation, I want to offer as much assistance as I can to you and to my wife.

Sincerely,

- John Whitt
He walks on into
The dawn
Emerging from the gray
That precedes,
The gray that made phantoms
He had not felt great fear
He had only been afraid, a little
The gray land
Had shown him only shapes
He could scarcely discern
His fertile imagination had caused
Both the little fear
And whatever moved him onward
Until the gray land had lightened
It was perceptibly brighter
Presently
Though still in the black
And while of early dawn
He discovered his shadow
Passing over the ground in a
caricature image of himself
The image followed him, even preceded
him in his wanderings
The shadow was cast on whatever
He came near
His darkling alter ego took many
forms
All of the same mold, though
none of the same
Splashed on concrete
Swishing through the grasses
Mocking as it danced on walls
Rippling at the bottom of a clear
pool on whose surface...
It began not long ago... A faint chuckle was rising from the sea. The waves were frothing the beach. A damp, chilling fog was rolling in. And still I stayed. I was held, entranced, I could not grasp what my mind was searching for, what it is still searching for. My eyes were drawn out to sea but my gaze was lost in the fog. A series of scenes began to fill before me -- a dim curtained grey formed the background. The setting was the same in all, the island. The island--it is all I know, my world, unique and mystical. The scenes faded and the fog thickened. Soon I was enveloped by its evil shroud, with the spirits of the sea whispering unseen in the gloom. The spirits cannot be ignored. They are the ghosts of this island, an island of 500 ship-wrecks and 5000 lost, graveyard of the Atlantic where ships are caught by shifting sands and sink into eternal sleep.

"Corinna, the storm, we must know." The chilling air was filled with portentous elements so befuddling to my reason, I ran from the hated place, scattering the sand in blind past, I experienced true loneliness. Then I saw the fog parting ahead of me -- my aperture to reality. I was through the door, and for the security of the monasteries now extant, existence. But half I had been deceived. I had not escaped. I had been led to the hated threshold of the graveyard, I was drawn into its mist by a powerful force, shadowy. I wanted to run but some phantom hovered behind me, bracing me, retaining me, inviting death, I looked around me -- nothing but dull slabs of stone wearied by weather, staring into space, repulsive in their blankness. Then, a transformation. The detestable slabs became living spirits, spirits happier than myself though dead. I was dazzled by their death chants, their dance, they were like wispy breaths of air, detailed, I wanted to imitate them. The spirits enshrined my soul and lifted me to a point just below their realm. It was all so odd, I felt mania and depression.

A stray ray destroyed it all. Once again I saw harsh, grey slabs. My original feelings returned, I knew it was wrong to lose myself, but it seemed so necessary to resist, Is there reason to resist now?

"Reuben, get the provisions and put them on board. We'll give her a few minutes. It's all we can afford." I can hear the voices around me but my eyes refuse to focus. For the present these people are not here. The house, it is to my right. It is not my home -- only a crude imitation. It hurts my eyes, my whole soul to stare at that small, weather-beaten abode, Sorrow echoes around it as the wind cuts the corners. A man lived inside, my father, also a crude imitation. He was lost in a past I did not know; a past where my mother, my sister, my father, and I (an infant) lived in a home on the mainland, so far away in distance and time. Yet he lived in its remoteness. He told me once, in a lucid moment, about my mother, about her death, about his irrational voyage to the island with Heather and myself, misery and depression.

That sadness has returned again. Just as the rain erodes the soul. The tears lessen memories--so loyal Memories that can not stay

"My God, Corinna, we're leaving. What do you want, can't you see? Tell me, it's our lives too, be quick. They're waiting out there, it's you last..." An unrecognizable voice, is it mine?

No, the island, that's all there is, I told my father I was Corinna, not Heather. And I am, I have to be Corinna. She couldn't find it. He never existed. Ah, The Ipswitch Sparrow, her song signals the end of heavy thought, I'm sorry, No, Leave." They went, followed by a riotous sea.

- Linda Notzelman
FOR MISS DIDAWICK

Never having been in the right place at the right time, the Borealis have shimmered just constantly outside my field of vision. Of course, I'm not prone to stay up at hours when such phenomena most frequently occur, and I reside in platitudes where such do at scattered and vagabond intervals. I have been known, especially when humming a nocturne to refrain from catching or wishing upon a falling star,

But something I do do -- on Easters wishing upon a falling star.

I have been known, such do at spacious and vagabond and I reside in platitudes where outside my field of vision. place at the right time, the Borealis Never having been in the right

FOR MISS DIDAWICK

- Tim Cope

AS DROWNED MEN RISE

He was the strange one
With a surname no one
Could remember to clear
From his palate, and a given name
That sounded farther out -
Orbiting, hand-me-down,
Launched and never recovered,
A consolidation of flesh,
Bulbous of head, but, nose,
He looked better sitting
Than standing, and when buffeted
By the straight lean kind,
As he usually was, he moved
Sideways, with crab's gait,
To a more distant seat.

If he is remembered
And he will be so long
As drowned men rise --
It will be because his voice
Became whatever thoughts
His mind could shape,
And when he read words
He made love to them
From the deep dark caverns
Of his loneliness,
I remember him too
For his juggling feats -
All that bulk moving under
An unknown poem,
Making it cleave the air:
While he danced, airy with desire,
He said: "Furthermore,
If turned on its side,
He was the strange one
As drowned men rise.
I remember him too
For his juggling feats -
All that bulk moving under
An unknown poem,
Making it cleave the air:
While he danced, airy with desire,
He said: "Furthermore,
If turned on its side,
He was the strange one
As drowned men rise.

Hoyt thought to himself that it must have been close to one -- maybe even one-thirty. That evening he had picked up the kids from his mother-in-law's at seven. During the summer, they were over there all day long. David, the oldest, was still not twelve years old, and his younger brother Allen could not have been much over ten. Hoyt was not certain. Perhaps seven some summer day.

Then there would be a problem with the youngest, John. But this summer they could spend every afternoon over there, as long as Skipper's mother did have a pool in her back yard.

As Hoyt walked into his own dirty kitchen, he wondered why Skipper's mother could not keep the place clean. Both of his parents were dead, and so he looked to Skipper's family. They kept their house to take care of such situations "as God damn Skipper," he mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." He mumbled to himself, his papers "as God damn Skipper." 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Hoyt stood on the front porch, and perused the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollar homes. The light was on across the street. He felt rather like a fool with his one hand in his pocket, the other holding a drink, but resigned himself to have a good time nonetheless. He stopped under the street light on the other side of the street, and looked toward the lighted house. He could see no activity, but walked up the brick walk to the house just the same. He tried to look through the curtains in the window, but trying the door knob and finding it unlocked, decided to go on in.

"Darn! Chet, anybody home?" Receiving no answer, Hoyt stepped into the hall. He heard the television in the family room in the back of the house, and walked back to see who was still up. Just before he entered the room, one of the neighbor's kids walked out into the hall. He could not remember the name, but knew that she was Barb and Al Harris' daughter.

"Oh, see Mr. McIntyre, you scared me. . . I'm baby-sitting tonight."

"Dave and - oh, the Rays aren't here, huh? . . . I saw the light on and thought there was a party."

"No, they're down at the Norris' party."

Hoyt wondered why he had not been invited. Even though Skipper was not there, he could still have gone. He had been to many of those parties without her, and besides, he was a relative. Hoyt looked at the girl. She was fifteen. She still had braces, but Hoyt could see that she would soon be looking attractive. He wondered if all that he saw was really her, or if her mother had worried her into false looks.

"Thanks," he said.

"Should I tell them you were here, Mr. McIntyre?"

"No, . . . hey, uh, which one are you?"

"Peggy."

"Oh yeah. . . Peggy. Listen if you need some more jobs. . . you could sit at our house sometimes."

Hoyt put his hand on Peggy's shoulder.

"No, I really don't think so, Mr. McIntyre. My parents really don't want me to do much more sitting. I mean, I've got lots of work in school this year and . . . well, you know how it is. . . ." "With Skipper away I thought I . . . well anyway. . . . Do long. . . ."

"Bye Mr. McIntyre. I'm really sorry."

"Yeah. . ." Hoyt quickened his steps as he heard the door. He was glad to get back outside to the night air. Skipper and he had made love in the wet night grass in weather like that. "That Peggy's got a nice little ass," he thought to himself. "To bad she's one of the neighbor's kids," he laughed to himself.

He stopped beneath the street light again and looked down the street to the Norris' house. He really hadn't been back on the cocktail party circuit and though he might as well start again that night, "To hell with Skipper," he said out loud as he walked steadily down the street. He walked into a tricycle a shove with his foot, he sent it rolling into the street.

There were no cars in front of the Norris' house, but there was noise emanating nonetheless. Hoyt reasoned that the party must have been one of those spontaneous ones, just neighbors, and to longer felt badly about not being invited. Without reservation, he walked up the house and stepped inside without knocking.

The party was of a spontaneous nature. It was to celebrate the Norris' day-old announcement of their daughter's marriage. The daughter, Nancy, was a junior in college. She had been dating steadily for months. It's hardly her duty to take care of those brats of yours, but still, Mom feels a certain responsibility... We don't. Leave us alone. Please."

Amanda Norris was talking with several women from down the street. Rob Norris was Skipper's sister. The two families never really got along -- Skipper's mother bought both sisters the two houses on the street. Hoyt never did want to move in, but Skipper had rationalized to him that they would never have been able to find or afford as nice a house anywhere else for a long while.

Amanda was not a bad girl in Hoyt's opinion. A little stuck up, but so was Skipper. He felt glad that he had finally cured Skipper of her false airs, but he rather liked those qualities in Amanda. Amanda was not a bad girl in Hoyt's opinion. A little stuck up, but so was Skipper. He felt glad that he had finally cured Skipper of her false airs, but he rather liked those qualities in Amanda. The two sisters both dressed well, but Amanda somehow seemed more aloof, classier than Skipper. Hoyt always regretted that he never got to know her better. He finally spotted her talking to Nancy and her new husband.

"Hey there, Grandma, how are you?"

"Oh, Hoyt, why . . . well it's nice to see you. Have you met Doug yet? Doug, this is Nancy's uncle, Mr. McIntyre."

"Nice to meet you, sir."

"Yeah, you too. . . Come on Nancy, give your old uncle a big kiss. I got to kiss the bride don't I?"

Hoyt wrapped his arms around his niece and gave her an affectionate kiss. Stepping back, he caressed her stomach. "Got a little something cooking in the oven, Nance?" he whispered into her ear.

"Really, Hoyt, I wish you wouldn't act that way," Amanda warned as Nancy and Doug left.

"Come on Amanda, let's be honest about the situation. . . If the girl got herself. . ."

"Hoyt, I'm warning you. We've all tried to be helpful to you; you've got no reason to act this way."

"Really, Amanda, I don't think so. . ."

"Oh. . . Amanda, why. . ."

"Yeah, you too. . . Come on Nancy, give your old uncle a big kiss. I got to kiss the bride don't I?"

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"Really, Amanda, I don't think so. . ."

"Oh. . . Amanda, why. . ."
“Amans, I don’t know what the hell you’re talking about.”

“As far as we’re concerned, the whole thing died with Skipper. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’ve got to check on some things in the kitchen.”

Left, standing alone with his drink, Hoyt looked around the room for the bar. He thought of going after Amanda, but noticed that Rob was now watching him, Hoyt moved slowly to the porch where a Negro in a white jacket was mixing drinks at a make-shift bar. With a fresh drink, he carefully stepped down the steps onto the patio in the backyard. Nancy was sitting alone on a white porch chair, Hoyt sat down on the brick patio beside her. “You happy, baby?”

“Oh Uncle Hoyt, I’m sorry.”

“Sorry? About what? Why you’ve got a great husband there, isn’t he the one that’s going to law school?”

“That’s not what I meant. Yes. He’s the one. I’m sorry I didn’t come home. That was the week that I... well that was when I found out.”

“You know that doesn’t matter to me. Your mother was a little upset that you weren’t there, but that’s only natural, baby.” Hoyt pulled a cigarette out of his pocket and lit it with some matches he found on a table near Nancy’s chair. After he had smoked it for a few minutes in silence, Nancy took it from his hands and took a drag herself. She gave out a loud snuffle and wiped her nose on her arm.

“Oh Uncle Hoyt, I’m so sick of all this. I wish I could just move in with you.”

“Don’t think your husband would like that, Think your mother would like it even less.”

“Why’s she so mad at you, anyway? You’d think it was the way she talks.”

“I sure as hell don’t know. Occurs.” After a few more moments of silence, Hoyt picked up his drink from behind Nancy’s chair. After stirring his drink, he licked his wet fingers. “She was always like that -- your mother that is. I don’t know what it was. Probably damn jealousy.”

“I’ve never ever met Mom!”

“Once, Hell, she was so friggin’. Oh forget it, babe.”

“No, Uncle Hoyt, What was it?”

“No, you like your ass. Yeah. She could make me talk. Made me forget those goddamn snobs,” as Hoyt squatted whiskey through his front teeth, Nancy took a sip and did likewise. They both smiled with delight. “No, your mother was against me from the start. Then when Skipper and I... got married...” Hoyt waited for Nancy’s reaction. He did not know whether she knew the particulars of his marriage. Nancy gave no indication either way.

“Yeah, but she’s not like that with me, either.”

“Give her a chance,” Hoyt laughed. “No, she’s careful about who she dates,” Hoyt thought that perhaps he should stop; it was her mother he was talking about. But again she showed no reaction. They walked slowly around the yard, passed up the steps to the porch.

Nancy stopped by the swing hanging from the huge oak tree. “Yeah, You look like your aunt. She used to walk out of those parties without telling me.” Nancy sat in the swing. Cradling the ropes in her hands, she leaned far back to look up into the sky, faint with stars, Hoyt, standing behind, closed his hands over hers. Leaning over her, he kissed her softly on her neck. She stood and faced him. “They embraced through the swing. Taking both hands in his, Hoyt kissed them then placed them on his chest. Then giving a quick laugh, he said, “We’d better get you inside before your mother notices that you’re gone,” They stood for a moment in the cool night air before walking back to the terrace. As Nancy ran the last few feet ahead of her uncle, she called over her shoulder, “Hey Uncle Hoyt. I’m gonna have a sip of your drink.” Nancy took a good gulp, and then handed Hoyt the glass. The two walked to the door of the porch.

Giving her a slap on her bottom, Hoyt barked, “Get your ass inside!” Nancy laughed as she ran up the steps to the porch.

Hoyt did not walk into the house. He stood looking through the door as Nancy re-joined the party. There were too many people whom he did not see, too many who did not want to see him. They had all shown at the funeral, and he had received them as all friends. It made his blood boil to think of them. He took a sip from his now almost empty glass.

Hoyt walked quickly to the back porch. He could never remember how the latch worked on it, and it took him almost a full minute to get it opened. Once opened, he walked out onto the new re-surfaced driveway. He sat down on top of one of the garbage cans and took off his shoes and socks. Holding his shoes by the laces in his left hand, his drink still in his right hand, he walked slowly down the center of the smooth, almost sticky driveway toward the street. Once beyond the front of the house, he cut over toward the neighbor’s lawn, leaving a trail where he walked in the grass, wet with a silver colored dew.

As Hoyt walked quickly about the room, picking up his dirty clothes as he went. As soon as the room was cleaned, he made his own bed, pulling the bedspread over the pillow tightly. He then stepped into the bathroom where he vigorously brushed his teeth for several minutes.

He moved slowly to the front door. Hoyt stepped to the full-length three-way-mirror that he himself had installed for Skipper when they had first moved into the house. Quickly he undressed until he stood naked. Then, lighting a cigarette, he stepped into the bathroom where he vigorously brushed his teeth for several minutes. Once out to the street, he sat down on the curb and leaned against the trunk of a tree until he finished his drink. Slowly and rhythmically, he chewed in succession each of the remaining ice cubes. Aiming for the street light on the far side of the street, Hoyt threw the now completely empty glass. It had been the same glass that Skipper and he had received in as a wedding gift from some aunt in Ashzbella. It had been something of a miracle that it had lasted as long as it had.

Forgetting his shoes and socks on the tree lawn, Hoyt turned and sprinted back to his house, still marked by the lights burning on the first floor. He stopped abruptly before he entered the house until he remembered that it was he who had left the door ajar. He closed it firmly behind him and bolted the door with the chain. He then slowly ran around the downstairs, turning off the lights. The kitchen was still a mess.

Hoyt then returned to the hall and began to climb the stairs quietly, taking them one at a time. The florescent light in the upstairs bathroom illuminated the hall enough so that he had no trouble finding his way to the master bedroom. He flicked on the light and scanned the disheveled room. Clothes and magazines lay over the floor. His bed had not been made for weeks, but Skipper’s twin bed on the other side of the nightstand remained neatly made, untouched since she had died two months earlier.

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What Exile from himself can flee?
To zones though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be
The blight of Life -- the Demon Thought

- Lord Byron
(Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto I)