

Jobs in the Garden of Eden



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Contents	Page
To Eat a Continent Is Not So Strange	3
White Waits	30
Election Day	111
No Cows to Look At	129
Silence of Winter	163
Plate Tectonics Versus Gamma Ray Bursters	205
East Harlem to the Grand Tetons	231
Dendrology	272

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To Eat a Continent Is Not So Strange

Dawn breaks over North America on a bay near Camden, Maine. Last night, wisely got out of my ride at the state park and camped in a lonely spot under spruce trees. Today is cool and clear but the hitching is hard. After sitting a while on the bay, hiked along the water for about a mile and found my way up to the highway through someone's backyard. People along this coast road have been unfriendly, some folks give me the finger or mimic my thumbing. It takes a lot of waiting before someone picks me up, possibly because there are so many other hikers. Most rides are short distances. The best ride was from a woman a little older than me. She is a social worker and has lived in Maine five or six years. We discussed the opposite pulls in us, one to travel and one to settle down. She has been unsettled for a few years but last summer got married. Implanted in her mind now is the phrase "slob for love".

I am taking a promised afternoon rest. Everyday I like to spend time stationary, writing and playing trumpet, so I don't feel compulsive about getting somewhere, sit still long enough to get a feel for a place. Napped in the sun overlooking a river, an inlet leading past Bar Harbor and

into the sea. Later, after some waiting, got a ride from Bill, assistant camp director of Berwick boys camp and spent an evening with the boys of this forty year old camp on an island off the coast. Slept on Bill's cabin floor. Boat ride after breakfast with the camp to the mainland, they were heading out for the day to pick blueberries. A long but pleasant morning hiking up the road. The few cars that came passed me up and left me to enjoy the silence and clear beauty of the early Maine morning. When a ride did come it was a long one, all the way north to the border, through back roads I might never have seen. Clear blue lakes, unpopulated woodlands.

Over the border to St. John, New Brunswick by back roads with a loveable young Canadian guy, having his first baby, he and his Micmac wife, after years as a pothead. And into drunken Saint John, an ugly, spiritually and economically depressed port town on the Bay of Fundy. Many houses falling apart, dirty barefoot kids playing in front. This in itself is not so bad but never have I seen so many inebriated adults, men and women, in proportion to the size of the city. They toss litter and beer cans into park gardens and I get unfriendly even aggressive looks. It is perhaps a rural population that has ballooned in size but does not know how to live as a city.

While sitting in the graveyard-park in the center of town a guy with a bicycle sat next to me and struck up a

conversation. Bryan is lonely, has lived in Saint John four months taking a hospital course to become an orderly. He is originally from northern New Brunswick, a rural area, largely French speaking. I recognized his one-room city blues immediately. We talked a while about this and that, and seeing he needed to spend time with someone, when he invited me to eat in his room I accepted. Strange room! Pictures of skulls on the wall, country-western records on the bed and an S&M magazine. I was paranoid of any homosexual intentions he might have so I cut loose and camped in the park.

Hitched to Halifax and found my way to Halifax's paradise, Point Pleasant Park. Found a spot high on a hill, my back against a wind-blown tree, overlooking the bay and setting sun. Rose in Halifax and caught ferry to Dartmouth and points northeast. Got a ride with three people from Edmonton, Alberta. Blue, Angie and Clare. They took me to a sandy beach where I found an intricate brown seashell. At first I thought to mail it home but when I showed it to Angie its beauty stunned her so I gave it to her. It was her and Clare's first time at the ocean. Later the three of us ate lunch and drank wine overlooking a bay. Easy conversation, late afternoon, fond farewells.

On to North Sydney to catch a late night ferry to Newfoundland. While walking through the residential part of town I frightened a cat into the street where it was hit

by a car. The car drove on and the cat jumped high in the air over and over to escape the pain. I caught it and held it at the side of the road until it died. I left it in high grass behind a house, sorry I couldn't do more for it. A young boy on a bicycle stood nearby the whole time and then rode silently away. That night I boarded the gigantic ferry, slept during the long crossing wherever I could lay my sleeping bag.

The next day started sunny but soon clouds and high winds overtook me. Drank beer with the people I rode four hours north with and helped them fix their flat, having traveled a couple of hundred miles up a dirt and gravel road along the coast. Reached St. Barbe, Newfoundland, more north than I've ever been—twisted, rocky, tortured by wind and winter sea—just a settlement. I was supposed to catch the ferry across to Blanc-Sablon, Labrador but it was canceled due to high winds and waves. So I set up my tent in a spot sheltered by trees. The wind beat my tent but it stayed true and I dreamt strange stormy dreams.

The land is rugged and wild as the Pacific coast. The Newfoundlanders seem to love it, what they know of it since they all hug the coast on this northern peninsula. Lichens, small bushes and stunted pines cling to the land for dear life. The towns are like the vegetation, stunted and clinging to the land, primitive settlements battered by

wind. But because of tv and radio, the automobile and print, their culture is much like ours. On my last ride we talked mostly about rock and jazz music. Only over the past eight or ten years has this place begun to modernize with a dirt road to replace boat and sled transportation. The people are friendly as in the days when hospitality was required in giving a cup of tea to a stranger passing through in winter. The land being so inhospitable, the people must make up for it. I'm told Europeans lived here long before they lived in Plymouth or Jamestown, that they were Vikings and Celts. A fair amount of farming, mostly tubers, is still done here, and fishing, as in Maine and Nova Scotia. The beer brewed here goes down smooth and packs a wallop.

The next cloudy morning was to be my departure down the St. Lawrence to Quebec. I rode the ferry across the Strait of Belle Isle, seasick, only to find in Blanc Sablon that my boat left late last night, early in the night-morning. So back again I ferried even more seasick to begin my journey back south. Every mile threatened storm but now I'm camped at Western Brook, a fast running stream, salmon run in spring, a fertile oasis among Newfoundland's desolate eastern beaches. Sun sinking behind sand dunes and the sky turning pink above me, happy once again after a morning of sea sickness and disappointment. I am prepared for rain or stars and have

just finished sharing supper with a kind middle-aged couple from Toronto. Not fond of camping, they will stay in a motel.

Tomorrow I will enter Quebec after two weeks in the maritime provinces. I sit in a field of yellow flowers near the road, unable to decide what to do, go to the national park and take it easy for the day or continue hitchhiking. The weather is cool, windy and a little cloudy. Yesterday was a bad day. I hitched a long distance in rain. No rest except for a Chinese dinner Kirk Reed, a food coop salesman who gave me a long ride, bought for me. Trying to catch a hitch in the night is utterly impossible so I put up here missing my destination by a few miles. I have had no luck with food since missing my boat down the St. Lawrence, always buying bad or spoiled cheese and papery bread. I am homesick for Boston and New York and will reconsider this cross country trip in Montreal. Now I have found a spot beneath a great white pine on the bank of a tidal river, pile of dead mosquitoes around me, sun going down quickly.

Cambellton, New Brunswick, on the Quebec border, in the Steeves' household, the hostel closed. Household of love, a proselytizing love although not necessarily in a bad sense. Family belongs to a prayer group and religion gives them happiness like Christian Science gave my grandparents. A sense of worth and purpose: to be

spreading love, so they take in willingly the lonesome traveler from the rain. In daughter Stacy's room where I bed is *The Book of Love* by Raoul Forrelleau, almost militant love. It is a person's purpose in life to put love forth and to back down from that is irresponsibility. Charity, not alms. So different from old Chuang-tzu, and yet there is some progression from Chuang's focus on the inner spirit and Forrelleau's purposeful love. In the end, I trust Chuang more. His love and friendship is simpler, more humorous. Still, the philosophy works a beauty in each member of the family, as it did in my grandparents. Photograph of brothers and sisters on the wall emanates joy at being together. In person, Stacy shines, a glow, what need be said when you can see it.

First ride this morning is French. So it begins. I decide to hitch the Acadian Peninsula. It takes all afternoon and, impatient as I am, definitely not worth it. Towns unremarkable. French couple big on Quebec independence give me partial tour of Carquet and its history. Then as rain begins, while I overlook the sea from a desolate New Brunswick vantage point, ride from four Quebecois. Un homme et trois femmes, who work with female prisoners, vacationing together. No English. Very difficult to communicate. While they laugh and have a good time, city sophisticates, I am dumb silent. Yet in the evening when they leave me in Cambellton and I say

J'espere que vous avec un bon voyage a Quebec, there is good feeling. But my French is deplorable so my sense of noble self is in some decline on the road. New Brunswick is a rough province, few rides, land unbeautiful, no lakes, cutover woods, mosquitoes, rain and clouds. In Quebec the French are annoyed because I don't speak the language well enough to converse. A farmer picks me up early morning. I guess he just wants someone to talk with and is disappointed when I am dumb.

The last five days since Western Brook, Newfoundland and missing my boat up the St. Lawrence have been less than successful. For the most part I have been in a rush and passing through places I haven't really wanted to be. But that's no excuse. The traveler should relax and be where he is but by tonight I was so fed up with hitching that I grabbed a bus from Riviere du Loup the last 150 miles to Quebec City, woke up in a youth hostel. Sun through basement window of church, about a hundred men and women travelers. Take shower early, use all the hot water, hoist pack burden and out the door. Find quiet memorial park first thing. Pick bench in sun and eat breakfast of peanuts and old oranges, view from hilltop to the lower city. Leave park to seek laundromat on Rue L'Alverne. Pleasant to do the laundry at ease, sit on front steps and watch people, true Quebecois, go by. Most of them are climbing from the lower city to the upper. The

Quebec women are attractive, something in their spirits, sexual, not exactly inviting, but provocative.

I pack up to explore the city below, la ville au bas, and buy deux journaux to see what's happening tonight. A jazz band at L'Harmonique, mostly bad movies, violence and pornography, and Woman Under the Influence might be interesting to see in French, numerous art galleries and that's about it. And tv like everywhere else, three French channels. This I read on a bench among traffic. I have bought une crème glacée, the fat woman smiling broadly at me, perhaps finding my attempts at the language cute or charming. After walking residential streets, poor city streets, no trees, I discover the neighborhood's main road, Rue St. Vallier. Find the post office and with help from a clerk who doesn't mind speaking English, buy stamps and envelope to mail my unemployment slip. I feel myself attracting people's attention, obviously a traveler by my pack.

It is now late afternoon, a little more walking back streets, impatiently now because I'm hungry, buy food and come upon, on my way to la haute ville, a grotto dedicated to the Virgin Mary, busted beer bottles, overgrown, isolated and ignored. While I'm sitting here quietly a woman enters the grotto, falls to her knees in the gravel before Mary and begins to pray. What can I do so I sit and wait. In fifteen minutes she is done, I am worried

about her knees, wondering what it would be like to sleep with her, her skinny legs and attractive French spirit, thinking why sex, why not god and the universe, why aren't my thoughts out of the gutter yet, and she comes over to me a little hesitantly. She speaks very little English but is patient with my French. I am extremely grateful for this patience that few people show, city or country, so I am into my first real conversation en français. She is in her thirties I'd guess, black hair lightly coifed, dressed in knit skirt and sweater, smooth complexion, fleshy face and kind eyes but with a somewhat steely glint that says she wants something. She is a missionary, gathering money for the poor of the world from the rich in America and Canada. She finds the work difficult and the Quebecois unfriendly. Her work puts me off but I'm so grateful for this chance to converse in French that I sympathize. When she asks I tell her I play trumpet and that is what I'm doing in the grotto. She suggests that I always play for free, for god. I say that's usually my situation.

At dusk climb to la haute ville, to La Rue St. Jean where the action is. To look for L'Harmonique and hear some jazz tonight. On my way I find a small tea room. I'm the only customer. Thé vert, s'il vous plait. The proprietor wants to talk but I seem brusque because I don't fully comprehend, so he is put off and cold thereafter. But the

rock and roll on the radio sounds good, the tea warm and relaxing, the place calm. When I return to the streets it's dark. I am easy and happy wandering down toward the old city looking in shops and bookstores, independent of people and therefore open to them. The moon is in the sky over the city and the clouds make the moon une enchanteresse. On a door somewhere I read about a dance performance tonight, a solo performance one of the stage hands tells me, one who edited the music for it, different from what I'll see anywhere else. After checking out L'Harmonique, the usual bourgeois attempt at a jazz spot, I decide maybe he's right, why not rub shoulders with artsy Quebecois.

The dance studio is posh, on Rue de l'Auteil in the old city. A canopy over red carpeted stairs down to the street. Inside, round large comfortable tables and chairs, shiny spacious dance floor, chandeliers and mahogany bar, the beer hidden but not the expensive booze. The bartender and his wife working people a little out of place at this dance spectacle. I must be too with blue jeans and backpack because numerous people ask if I know what I'm here for, this fanciest art-fart place in town. My stock answer is I have a nose for special places. They are flattered and flatter me for being here.

As I sit alone another bearded loner asks to sit with me, Vous etes seule? Oui, asseyez-vous says I. When he

sits I explain Je ne parle pas beaucoup de francais. He doesn't speak beaucoup d'anglais and his face drops, if only he had known before he sat but now he's stuck. There are long uncomfortable silences but we work at it and by evening's end the acquaintance is well made. Jean-Marc is a mechanic of some sort who lives in St. Felicien on Lac St. Jean and who's in Quebec ville looking for work and a place to live, so far unsuccessfully. Although it's not apparent in his face or by his bored, impatient manner, he seems to have taken a liking to me and asks for my address in case he ever travels. Salut, he says, and a lot more I don't understand but I assume it's all farewell. Bon soir, Jean, the n's rolling nicely from the back of my throat. When I left to return to the youth hostel the streets were full of lovers. The streets here are always full of lovers, so something must be right.

Heber City is no beauty spot but it's surrounded by majestic mountains. My first night in town, consisting mostly of Route 40 lined with motels, was spent in a run down one that advertised \$5 per night but cost \$8. The town and room were so depressing it was funny so my lonesomeness was a little less intense. I slept from dusk to dawn and dreamt I was on a NYC subway where a lady got her arm caught in the doors and the train began to move. I awoke just in time for my new job with the U.S. Forest

Service.

People on the crew are friendly. Today we built cattle fencing. I teamed up with Roger, a school teacher from the nearby town of Midway. The other two new workers are Allison and Craig, both forestry students from Colorado. I am most curious about our crew leader, an old guy named Paul, short with blue eyes and a large swatch of mole on the back of his neck. I enjoy meeting his eyes, they have a sense of humor as well as kindness and intelligence. For now I'm staying in the motel room until some living quarters turn up. Last night while wandering around town I came across a car for sale, '57 Chrysler for 50 bucks. I think I'm going to buy it.

A week of work under my belt, I like the crew, in the sun on the mountainside digging fence post holes. I enjoy being teased about being from New York, and teasing everyone a little about their western twang. Allison, Craig and I are looking for a place to live, we are considering sharing a three bedroom apartment in Midway. The people at work are Paul, Lamar, Carl, Sue, Shelley, Roger, Allison and Craig, the father and son from Kamas, Kinny the boy, and the guy in cowboy hat and moustache who never speaks. Most of the men are miners, temporarily laid off from the local zinc, silver and lead mine. The women, Allison, Shelley, Sue have mixed and guarded feelings, few women among many men. They seem to

need men but they have been hurt or are just plain fed up.

Allison reveals that she's been married and divorced and had twins but for some reason I don't believe her. She is fit as a dancer. When she saw I was stunned by her past I acted tough like it wasn't so much compared to what I've heard and seen in NYC. Been to some big towns, heard me some big talk. Allison realizes (as she lies rather seductively on my motel room bed) that here she is, a little incongruously, with two virtual and perhaps incompatible strangers, Craig and me, in this time and space, summertime Heber City, Utah, out of her past and into her present in a flash or by surprise. The same could be said for Craig or me.

Mid-afternoon of another cloudless day, Memorial Day weekend, a lot of traffic passes through town on its way to the scenic spots. Although I suppose I should be one of them, exploring the mountains and canyons, I am sitting in my motel room taking it slow. My new car, or should I say old car, the Blue Moose, rests outside the door. Early this morning I drove out to check on our prospective house and on the way back to Heber, Allison pulled up behind me. A propitious coincidence so we have breakfast together and she smiles when I suggest we not invite Craig. She tells me about her boyfriend, her sweetheart as she puts it, of six or seven years. I tell her of my plans when I return to New York. Allison drives to

Vernal for the weekend.

I drive to the house in Midway again and find Allison's note has been answered. I call the landlord and arrange to see the house on Sunday, two three bedroom apartments. There will be trouble with this Parley Love about the two sexes living together, my first encounter with Mormon dogma. Parley Love keeps assuming that it is three "fellows" who want to live together. Allison is a fellow, she's a fellow worker. My preference would be to simply deceive Parley, where I come from this is not an appropriate question, but I want the house, the location couldn't be better, in walking distance of the mountains.

Parley Love arrives two hours late for our appointment, with his wife and two daughters. His loud wife starts right in showing me around with hardly an introduction. They turn out not to be Mormons, often rent to black folk to the chagrin of Mormon neighbors in Salt Lake City. They seem to own a fair amount of property. Parley Love is a quiet husband with some influence as head of household. The girls are buxom teens with their sexuality busting out all over. The members of the family are all ugly. I choose the top apartment for its layout, better furniture and more sunlight. The rental contract is obnoxious, especially the clause about no guests without permission from the landlord. Parley Love fairly dulled my ear talking on and on about this and that in his Utah drawl

but I asked polite questions to lead him on because I hadn't yet told him that the three fellows are actually two men and a woman, with no involvement other than that of fellow workers. It was a close call but Mrs. Love had decided she liked me, perhaps for my attentiveness as she showed me around. So when Parley appealed to her for the decision she figured it'd be alright.

At the motel Rick and his woman come over wanting to borrow my car. To avoid that I tell them I am about to go camping. I drive up toward Route 35 which I had sort of planned to explore this weekend. Eventually 35 becomes a graded dirt road where a sign says road closed although pickups just breeze right on through. Not wanting to take my aged car over the rugged road I take this opportunity to go hiking. I pack a light pack and take off toward the mountains. Nice and quiet, the sun is friendly. Two horses are in a large pasture, they seem content, grateful to be together. The horses are at first curious about me, I try to draw them near with celery, but they soon lose interest.

Walking on I spy a forested mountain, lush where others are brown and chaparral. I decide to climb. The climb goes well but the sun is sinking fast. I listen for bear and mountain lion. I am in good health, my breath comes rhythmically and efficiently, climb fast stopping to look over the valley below and the sinking orange sun between

two peaks. I could stop any number of pleasant places and take it easy, watch the sky change and then head down, but no, I must see everything from the top. So up I go but it's further than I thought and it's getting late. Near the top a hawk in a tree surprises me, it sits there a while contemplating me contemptuously and floats off leisurely between the trees. The top of the mountain is wooded so the view is unspectacular, I stay only a few minutes because now the sun is out of sight and the mountain is getting dark.

Somehow I lose my direction going down and this side of the mountain is much steeper than the side I came up. There are no trails to follow either. I crash through patches of dead spruce as opposed to the lovely aspen I came up through. By the time I reach bottom it's dark. I find a trail but it takes me the wrong way. I cut cross country, not in a panic but impatiently because I'm tired of this game the mountain is playing with me. I find a dirt road that ends at a stream. I ford a flooded field, find another road that I walk on for what seems hours under brightening stars, past three silent cautious horses, past fields, over a locked gate and at last out on the paved road. Lucky to see my car not too far away, drive home cold and sleepy, trying not to hit deer or rabbits.

Now that I have a regular home much of the unpredictability that filled the first two weeks has passed.

I still enjoy working with the crew. Allison and Craig are so far proving easy and even fun to live with. Roger and I dig holes together although we have nearly completed the fence and we could be separated or moved to another job any time. Today we had a difficult day, especially since I was taking personally the mountain's resistance to having holes dug in its side. But my strength grows each day and at times it's downright prodigious. I like the men and women on our crew so much that I resist the introduction of new members. Roger and I have been giving one Max the bad eye, sometimes for good reason since today he almost dropped a tree on my head. But Paul likes him, being fellow Mormons, so he's probably here to stay.

I am very much the lowest man on the totem pole but I like it there, just do my work with no real worries. Each hole is different and a personal encounter with the earth but when I say this Allison looks at me like I'm crazy. She's only kidding though—I think. Being without ambition frees me to enjoy whatever or whoever comes my way in a day. Today Paul tried to shuffle me off to do wiring but Roger and I just took our shovels and continued to dig holes anyway. I wear the same clothes to work each day and bring just about the same food for lunch: salami, cheese, bread, orange, raisins and nuts, and water. We sit in the sun and eat, talk some, or eat in the trucks if it's too windy or cold.

Hard day at work digging thistles, weeding the garden of paradise like God told Adam and Eve to do. Mormon joke. Allison asks amusing questions such as do I like women who wear lots of makeup. My pretentious answer is that generally the women I know don't wear makeup but when they do, they know how to wear it. Anyway the pleasure of Allison remains that I always enjoy seeing her and being with her although I'm sure our teasing and joking cannot satisfy her like her intensely spiritual and long relationship with her Pat. I like being part of the crew, working hard, side by side, naturally falling into the rhythm of the group effort, making people laugh. Paul and I are getting to be a good joke team. Allison and I are one. I sure like to be liked, and I feel almost love for these people collectively. They seem so gentle yet heroic.

At lunch today, for much of it, we all, some dozen of us, sat silent, like in a Japanese movie. In the afternoon Allison and I climbed to the mountaintop but on top I bored her by talking about my New York flower market days. I'm like Larry Broadhead who is always talking about the mine. Not like old Kent Young hard to talk to but a ready smile and eyes more discriminating than he'd lead one to believe. Allison says I'm too opinionated and it's true. Must try to stay lower and quieter, getting too loud, as with my yell this afternoon at Lamar in a joking way to

get out of my way. He was startled, too tired to smile. At the end of a day or week we're all tired but I'll bet everyone's happy with the crew.

On the mountain Allison asks how I make friends in the city. Larry Broadhead talks about the mine. Craig and Allison pick flowers to identify later. Paul keeps morale high while we dig nasty thistles. The two blonde girls, Candy and Jeanie, become friends, share their lunches with each other. Allison splashes water in my face. Everyone laughs when I dump a pint down her back. We all quit digging thistles by two o'clock, too hot. Paul does not push us hard, it's Friday. We sit in a long line in the shade of the truck by the spring. The aspen and lodgepole pine on the opposite mountainside grow straight and neat. The aspen in the wind wave like water. A new guy with a long beard, clear eyes that give light, does not eat any lunch. Paul, being Mormon, teases Ray about staying out all night drunk but will never reform him.

Got first paycheck Wednesday and after two weeks without money it felt good. Allison smiles at my and Craig's love of money, the men feel like men. At work I'm getting too loud, joking but also complaining a lot. Still too opinionated but now on dangerous ground—criticizing the bosses and the work (particularly spraying thistles) but perhaps even worse making fun of fellow workers, mostly to Allison and Craig but also Roger. Last night went to

Roger's girls' softball game, met his wife who said she wondered who that fool playing the trumpet in a horse pasture could be, must be one of Roger's friends. Allison is walking around talking to herself out loud. Rarely do I lay back enough to just look at her for who she is. Must admit to being a little bit in love with her but that can only be frustrating. Last night she climbed onto my back while I scrubbed the tub, and said playfully Now what are you going to do. I said Nothing, I'm kind of enjoying it. She hopped off right quick.

Another cloudless day, almost every day is dry with blue sky. Sometimes clouds pass through but each morning is "glorious". Today I think to drive to Salt Lake City to hear some music and if lucky see some dance. An all day musicfest at a well-known club called Hole in the Wall and also rumors that the Utah Dance Repertoire is performing for free. Impressed by the quality of work done in Salt Lake City, most particularly the Repertory Dance Theater which is doing something like what City Dance Theater in Boston attempted, but more successfully. They are totally funded by the state and these dancers are obviously able to dance and practice and exercise all day everyday if they wish. Their only struggle is with themselves. Modern dancers with the technique and precision of ballet dancers. As did CDT when I played trumpet for them three years ago, this company inspires

me to perform.

Heard a jazz trio that, although it was mediocre, was like water to a parched throat. Even mediocre jazz is more satisfying than the guitar picking and strumming and caterwauling I been hearing on the radio. Also went to a poetry reading and was generally impressed by the poets. Not overly narcissistic, and at least one with the most important quality for a poet—an intensity about the land he loves—in his case the high desert of southern Utah. Of the five poets I heard, three were passionate and exciting readers as well as writers. Two were uninspiring, including one who complained about the mediocrity of modern poetry. The audience was young, thirty or forty people, small bookstore called El Inca. The Hole in the Wall was the disappointment of the day, proving to be nothing more than its name, the music was typical country. However when I first arrived in Salt Lake, at the fair I saw a country band that, although a little too clean an act, had one of the best fiddlers I've heard anywhere.

Between acts, I walked around town. The city is laid out on a grid like NYC, organized so it can develop easily, but their system of zoning is screwy because all the banks are in one place, the industries in another, the motels in yet another, the Mormon institutions in another. On State St. which goes for miles and miles they've slopped all the junk food and gasoline but it would be an interesting

street if it were dense enough so people didn't need to drive everywhere. A trolley or train would intensify things but maybe people like it this way. There are still some old buildings which are crucial in a young city but they are disappearing rapidly. Instead of preserving them and building on the myriad parking lots that blight most streets, they are giving notice to an old fishing tackle store called The Doc's. I talked to Doc who also does some fine amateur painting. He has to be out in three years after some fifty years there. I thought highly of most of the new architecture though, of the same quality as much of the art in Salt Lake, thoughtful. But it is an automobile town now although their sensible original layout could still accommodate public transportation.

I'm considerably happier having had it out with Allison. Although much of what I wrote and said is true, one other thing is too: with me it has become as Virginia Woolf wrote in *To the Lighthouse*—most men cannot believe that any woman could prefer the company of anyone other than themselves. My love affairs are 9/10 with myself and this compulsion about Allison is mostly in my head. My conflicts at work are growing too. I think my opposition to spraying thistles has garnered some respect in a strange way. Maybe it's my willingness to speak up. I like it best at work when I feel at the end of the day as if I've been in touch with the weather, the crew and nature.

Yesterday was like that even though we sprayed thistles all day. I did all the spraying and although exposure to the spray has no obvious ill effects, I am going to argue that it's not necessary or fair for a crew to be spraying more than a week at a time without, let's say, a two week interval. I don't want to end up spraying thistles and sagebrush the whole summer.

I have been trying to tone down my heretofore loud opinions of people and projects and instead present cogent arguments at propitious times. A few months into this job and I'm far from my ego supports back East so the supply line is long and thin and easily broken. Thus, I can no longer afford the insult bouts I've had with Allison because I take them too much to heart. I cannot afford to make enemies unnecessarily. There is real peace working and walking in the mountains although, paradoxically, you just can't seem to get away from people in the country. In a big city people are not individuals, they are a force of nature. Here, everyone is friendly but not a friend. Women are cautious, they rely on having an "old man". People seem almost compulsively monogamous. Part of it, for the women, may be a long history of being outnumbered so they may have developed this strong but unwritten moral code.

August, and the nights are cooler. Soon the days will be too. Today was the miners' last day, I think no one will

miss them as much as Roger and I. At work I dug holes all day with Larry Broadhead, Roger built his last fence braces with Kent Young. We all shook hands at the yard to say goodbye, their hands so much more callused than mine. Kent bought beer for us and we flew in the face of the rules on the way to work. It was fun and comradely. Tomorrow Roger and I drive to Elko, Nevada to visit his mother, anything to get out of Heber for a day. There is more change. Allison and Craig move out this weekend. It looks as though the forest service will keep me on into October. Roger goes back to teaching sometime next week but I have two more months to go. Shrunken crews, I will sure miss the miners.

A hard northerly pushing in clouds now that the sun is going down. Climb ridge and cross razor's edge above Snake Creek. Then an unending climb along ridges, chased by a storm that runs me down atop one of the highest peaks. Several lakes below and the road to Park City in sight but mysteriously inaccessible. As usual, it is easy to get up high but there ain't no easy way down. Finally the storm forces me off the mountain and I make an all out flight down thousands of feet, scared, over huge boulders and slipping down hillsides, hanging onto aspens. Somehow, exhausted, I come to a road I know, along a now dry stream, one that I visited late last spring when it was full of snowmelt. I follow it grateful for the relatively

easy walking, and it leads me into my old nemesis, Snake Canyon that seems to be everywhere, no way out. At first I am resigned to this unwanted conclusion to my travels, sitting beside the stream where it emerges from the mountain. But refreshed from food and drink and less daunted by the weather now that I'm off the high peaks, I decide to cross country, bushwhacking across ridge after ridge, up and down, through stands of scrub oak, maple, aspen and pine. I follow sheep paths at first and when they peter out I just crash through the brush. Branches snap me in the eyes, amazing the speed of an eyelid's reflex. The brush is wet and soon my pants and pack are soaked. At last a quiet stand of pine, protection from the rain, and then the final descent into what I think is Pine Creek but it is only a rocky tributary. Finally attain the road along the creek and walk home wet as a lost dog.

Autumn equinox and now that I am no longer working I appreciate the subtle beauty of the changing seasons. Roadside plants turning various colors, flowering and dying back. The mountains red and orange with maple, yellow with aspen, black with pine and white with snow. Having been fired for refusing to work with herbicides, my typical exit from the scene, I'm hoping to receive unemployment compensation but there may be obstacles. I have spent this morning arguing with the forest ranger. I am in no great hurry to leave Utah,

enjoying the autumn which I will twice experience when I return east. The characters who have filled my life this summer have one by one passed out of it. The work had become tedious, particularly after the most interesting people, the miners, left in early August. The younger workers used their energies to avoid work. One September day we stayed in the truck all day instead of working. When Paul discovered us he said he would never have expected this of me. I was ashamed. I enjoyed working when there were people to work hard beside, who had histories full of experience. Menial labor can satisfy me only for a time but I do miss the simple identity an eight hour a day job gave me.

White Waits

Michael White has been in the Dare Mentor Program living in my home for four months, originally on detention from Lowell court on a charge of arson and later awaiting placement by the Department of Youth Services. The following is to aid those parties concerned in understanding Michael's situation and needs.

Michael is fourteen years old and lives with his mother and three brothers. His parents' divorce about a year ago seems to have destroyed much of the stability the family may have once enjoyed. Since then all four boys have been in trouble with the law and are presently committed to the Department of Youth Services or on probation; two older sisters are single mothers. The family moves frequently and is often short of funds. Mrs. White concedes that she has had difficulty controlling her sons' activities since the separation but adds that Michael has never been a behavior or discipline problem in the home. Michael's relationship with his parents is good, he loves and feels loved by his mother and admires his father and enjoys seeing him when he visits. His overwhelming desire is to return to his mother's home.

I would like to stress that Michael is in no way a pathological or habitual arsonist. During the time that he has lived in my home he has shown absolutely no

unnatural attraction for matches, fire or fires. He does not engage in this or other destructive activities when angry or frustrated. The circumstances of his involvement and arrest could apply to any child who spends quantities of time unsupervised on the streets, frequently absent from school in a poor neighborhood with few, if any, legitimate or organized activities for youths.

A 766 Core evaluation notes Michael's high absenteeism from school and also that he misbehaves in class and leads his friends into trouble. His reading level then was second grade and he failed a vision screening test and glasses were prescribed. Michael has never learned cursive writing and the evaluation suggests a possible reverse-writing problem. A normal educational program with some modifications was advised.

Perhaps what is most striking about Michael is the astonishing lack of common knowledge he exhibits. Although fourteen years old, he is unable to recite the days of the week or the months of the year consecutively or without omitting one or more. He is unable to read clock time or understand many units of measurement, for instance, how long a minute or a second is. He cannot solve the simplest multiplication problems nor did he know when he arrived that telephone numbers require seven digits. He does not observe common social courtesies and customs and seems unaware of the subtle

communications people employ during social intercourse.

One must usually speak slowly to Michael and give him time to digest what is said or he often fails to comprehend. Conversely, Michael is often unable to express his thoughts in logical sequence and is forced to say he knows what he's thinking but cannot say it. As a rule Michael confines himself to making the simplest associations such as "two of the same thing" and this at times leads him to absurd conclusions such as a chair costs thirty-five dollars because it weighs thirty-five pounds. Although generally an even-tempered boy, he becomes extremely defensive if he believes his intelligence is in question and will stubbornly defend even his most mistaken notions. He tries to cover up a possible inability to learn or retain knowledge by saying he doesn't have to learn if he doesn't want to.

Yet, Michael can and does learn. He is a talented and, when not feeling threatened or self-conscious, a curious person. During his stay here he has occupied himself far more creatively than most youths in the same situation. Entirely self-motivated, he has begun several art projects including drawings and rustic name plaques that he sees through to the finish with meticulous care. He has made and collected gifts for members of his family and many friends. At the beach he collects sea life and he has a strong and gentle interest in animals. He has even read

several books while here, and comprehended them. He has been obedient, generally trustworthy, and has adhered to the limits set for him. Although withdrawn and rather depressed when he first arrived, over the weeks Michael has become more open and talkative but without ever losing his intense desire to return home.

I conclude that Michael is subject to one or more learning disabilities that are causing his failure in and frustration with school. This accounts for his absenteeism and, compounded by a weak family structure and stagnant neighborhood environment, makes delinquency the obvious recreation. Therefore, a residential school for learning disabled children would be the ideal placement for Michael. He has in the last several weeks visited a few such schools and agreed to give it a try if accepted at one. Given a stimulating and supportive environment, I have little doubt that Michael can overcome obstacles and develop his considerable potential.

Michael wakes up, has a few crème-filled cupcakes for breakfast which I eventually stop him from eating, saying have something more nutritious for breakfast. Soon after he goes out to play basketball, I remind him to stay only on the ball court and when periodically I check on him he has adhered to the rule and has found two boys his own

age to play with. When he comes in he says he won two games of 21. Inside he works on the picture of a Mack truck he is drawing and borrows a quarter to trace the wheels. When he's done he shows it to me and like his last picture it is carefully detailed and neatly colored. Between the reading he has done and his drawings he has shown himself to be a talented kid.

We walk toward Harvard Square to buy records and this notebook. We run into Evan Larkin on the street and Michael sits by and listens to our conversation. I do not introduce them to each other and neither seems to mind. Michael has been less obtrusive when my friends are present than he was at first and this is a relief. Perhaps he was so demanding and present at the beginning because he was insecure. We return to Central Square where we see a film about the Seabrook conflict over nuclear power. After the film, Michael seems won over to the anti-nuclear side. He has several misconceptions that I am not energetic or talkative enough to correct, for instance that if you swim near a plant site you will get burned in hot seawater. However, I am sure my own misconceptions are just as glaring.

When we get home Michael goes out to play basketball. I remind him once again not to stray and to be in at 8:30. When I check up on him he is playing with a couple of boys about his age. He comes in earlier than

necessary since he has no way of knowing the exact time. I listen to my new records while Michael eats macaroni and cheese. Later we play cards and go to bed.

Michael has slept in his clothes as usual, and reads in his room. He asks if he can play basketball but returns soon in a bad mood, talking about how he's been here too long and wants to go home. It's obvious that he couldn't find anyone to play with and he's bored. But it irritates me because he is just picking numbers out of the air, saying he's been here three months, not even knowing how long a month is or how to measure time. So, in the guise of explaining his situation, I begin to goad him and he becomes aggressive, saying if DYS doesn't send him home, he'll just run away. I needle him in turn by saying DYS can do whatever it wants with him. The competition is fierce. He indicates that after two months at whatever school he is sent to, he will demand to go home even though his spoken commitment is to give it a fair try. He doesn't want to tell me what he plans on saying to John Brennan for fear that I will let Brennan know beforehand and its effect will be lost. I continue to goad him and he becomes even more resistant.

Over lunch the conversation takes a new and uncomfortable turn. In the same deadly playful mood I ask him if he'll remember me after he leaves here. He says

he'll forget me as soon as he leaves and he doesn't give a shit about me. When I press him he indicates he wouldn't care if I jumped out the window right now. He hates me and everyone at Dare for making it impossible for him to return home, for bringing up this school issue. By comparison, he believes that John Brennan does care about him. Michael wants to extricate himself from this conversation but I keep questioning him curious to find the parameters of his feelings. I ask him if he thinks I give a shit about him. The answer is no. If he thinks I'll remember him after he leaves. Hell no, he says. This is spoken with particular vehemence, as if he has found an opportunity to vent his hate at last. It is clear that my picayune obsession with his habits, i.e. toothpaste squeezing, running water, etc., has been a major obstacle to forming a good relationship. I also feel that in one sense his feelings are accurate; I don't like him and therefore he doesn't like me. Furthermore, I have been in direct opposition to his desire to go home, and it is my recommendations that most probably ruined his chances and have sent him on a path toward residential school. But his hate overlooks the good times we've had and my overall leniency with him. The whole incident leaves me depressed and resentful for the rest of the day.

We walk over to Copley Square to hear Stan Stafford's band play. Michael complains about the walk,

wants instead to take the subway. I remove myself mentally from him as far as possible, feeling wounded by today's talk. Michael however returns to his old ways, asks questions, points out things, even with some affection in his voice. I cannot connect the two attitudes. He asks at the concert for an Italian ice, I do not begrudge him the money. A woman friend of mine sits with us for a while and after she's left he says he doesn't like the man she went off with.

After the jazz concert we walk to the Hatch Shell to see the Boston Ballet perform. I am still reserved and distant, smarting from this afternoon. We must sit a long time in increasing cold and darkness for the performance to begin. I answer his questions in monosyllables and distract myself by looking at the crowd. The ballet is more enjoyable than I expected and I'm sure Michael will say he hated it but he does laugh at a piece called Jazz for Boston in which classical music is given a jazz-rock fusion interpretation.

Michael is particularly talkative tonight, pointing out animals and sharing all sorts of observations. I am amazed that he can be so affectionate after what he said to me this afternoon. I answer in nods and monotones, do not look at him, trying in childish ways to express my displeasure. Approaching home he jibes that he'll win at cards tonight and I take the opportunity to say How is it

you can be so friendly toward someone you don't give a shit about and who you'll forget the moment you leave? He is taken aback, completely surprised by this, and says he was only joking. The way he taps my arm in a companionable way when he says this makes me accept the veracity of it.

At home I make tuna fish sandwiches in silence trying to weigh his two attitudes. Michael puts out bread and dishes for each of us. At last I give in and joke with him about cards. Michael says simply, You know it was silly of you to take that fight so seriously, I forgot about it right away but you've been thinking about it all day long. We play our card game much relieved. There was something real as well as silly about the argument, which proved we do have feelings for each other.

We drive to Concord to deliver the Leland Hall application and brochure to John Brennan. The key breaks in the ignition but fortunately we are able to get home where we repair the damage. Tony is out front working on his car and he and Michael make a date to play basketball tomorrow afternoon. At home Michael awaits a phone call from his sister that never comes to confirm her visit tomorrow.

We go up to Central Square to see two films, Easy Living and Sullivan's Travels. We sit apart as is our habit. I

think the dialogue of these two comedies is too sophisticated for Michael to understand or enjoy. After the movies we shop for a few groceries. In the supermarket I do not let Michael buy macaroni and cheese because the way he cooks it and slurps it gets on my nerves. We argue in our usual contentious fashion about preservatives in macaroni and cheese. He says it's better than candy, his usual free-form thinking. After dinner he takes a shower and I sit downstairs peacefully. Then we play cards which he wins to his great satisfaction. It no longer bothers me to lose but in the after-game when we race to see who puts his cards away fastest, Michael loses.

We go over to Dare to meet with Chip Jones. Michael is unusually chipper and talkative this morning, even making jokes at my and Chip's expense. He exhibits no hesitation in standing by his commitment to attend a school for at least two months, and even says that he liked what he saw at Leland Hall. He takes special interest in the account of three kids who yesterday stole the Dare car. Two of them are from Lowell. I explain to Chip that Michael is so vivacious today because he won at cards last night, and we get into a joust about our card games, but actually he is excited in anticipation of his family's visit this afternoon.

At home Michael awaits impatiently a phone call

from his sister and each time the phone rings he is tempted in his excitement to answer it even though I have expressly forbidden it. This is an injunction remaining from the days when I felt Michael made himself too much at home, took too many liberties. At last she calls and I give her directions to Cambridge. Michael's visitors are his mother and sister and sister's baby, and two men, his mother's and his sister's boyfriends. I allow them to take Michael out to the MDC park for an hour. When they return Michael's mother shows me a summons she received for Michael to appear in court. A stolen television, Michael claims that he had nothing to do with it, and everyone is in a huff because they assumed the charges had been dropped because the two other kids involved had already paid for the crime. I tell them that nothing more can be done to Michael even if he has to appear, since he's already remanded to DYS. Michael gets in his aggressive mood, as if he's been insulted because the charges weren't dropped, and also starts again with how he's not staying in a school for more than two months and he doesn't like Leland Hall. His mother obviously doesn't like it either, it's too far away from Lowell although she doesn't know exactly where it is. The visitors leave and their parting words to Michael are to be good.

We sit on the front porch and Michael talks about how glad he was to see his family. They had called Chip to

ask if Michael could go home for the day. The idea sets me laughing, that they could think of it even as a remote possibility. Michael explains they knew what the answer would be, they just wanted to try. I let him play basketball and when I check up on him he is playing with people from the Dare group home. Later I receive a call from Gary Fitzgerald that Michael is at Dare house. I run over fuming, thinking that Michael disobeyed me but it turns out that Gary required him, thinking to do me a favor and warning me about constant supervision of my ward in light of the recent mentor firings. I am annoyed and tell him that Chip knows of and sanctions my practice.

It turns out Michael did steal the television although he doesn't think of it as stealing, he just carried it out of the house. I admonish him for his too convenient thinking. He is angry that he has been caught because he can't remember anyone seeing him. His outrage flabbergasts me, his sense of injustice even when he knows he's wrong. When asked why he didn't ask his mother or father for money if he needed it, his answer is he just didn't think of it. He believes he can stay out of trouble when he returns to Lowell but I seriously doubt it.

We walk up to Baskin Robbins where Michael wants to spend part of five dollars his mother gave him. On the way he reveals that it was his father who divorced his mother because she sometimes drank, and that she

wishes they were still together. His father draws and writes poetry and Michael respects and admires him. It is clear that the family troubles with the law started with this divorce, no longer having the father's controlling influence in the house, but I wonder if it could have been helped even with him there. At any rate, it seems to me that without the father's presence the troubles will certainly persist. Michael did the arson with the younger brother of his mother's boyfriend. At home we play cards at which Michael wins for the second night in a row.

We walk to a record store to exchange two records. We get into a discussion about smog in cities and I tell Michael that LA has one of the worst problems in the country. He, thinking this is just another one of our jousts, insists that LA's air is clearer than Boston's. I am annoyed with him, not because I want to defend Boston, but because he is so ignorant and stubbornly insists on remaining so. This has been the most irritating aspect of living with Michael. So I just drop the subject and try to close off from him. The day is beautiful and I just want to walk silently and enjoy it but Michael is jabbering away about things insignificant to me, particularly cars of all kinds. We stop in 100 Flowers Bookstore where Michael buys with the last of his money 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.

On the way to the MDC pool, Michael walks about ten paces ahead of me. Each time he gets ahead I slow down so he must wait for me. After a while I tease him about Lowell and we get into another joust. He mentions how he won this afternoon's joust but I tell him I wasn't in the mood for it then. He says how do I know he's in the mood now. I answer all you have to do is say stop and I'll stop. I drop him off at the pool and sit in my usual place to nap and read. Michael is helping to clean the pool when I check up on him. On the way home he complains about the many hours ahead indoors before he can go out again tomorrow. He wants to know if he can go out to play basketball this evening but it is now too late. We listen to *The Wind in the Willows* on the Spider's Web and afterwards, at his request, I find a copy of the book for him. He reads the end, from where the radio reader left off. We play cards at which I win quickly, frustrating Michael. He is a sore loser and wants to play one more to "beat my ass" and sulks in his room when I say no, one game per night. But I relent and we play again. Michael loses quickly again, making the same mistakes but this time he loses more gracefully. It gives me some satisfaction that winning matters to him, that anything matters to the withdrawn, depressed kid who first came here over six weeks ago.

We drive south to White Horse Beach near Plymouth. Michael hunts for various sea animals and I read in the dunes. Due to the noise my car makes, we do little talking while on the road. Driving home we stop at Manchester Fair. First we play some of the games of chance. We stop at a race track but no cars are racing. Then the fair gets interesting. We find an exhibit of homemade clothing and farm produce. Michael shows interest in the produce and a honeycomb of bees. We visit sheds full of farm animals, cows, goats, sheep, chickens and geese. Michael is excited and feeds hay to the cows and sheep. He says he wouldn't mind working on a farm and I believe it.

It is a long hot day indoors for Michael who passes most of the time reading. It is too hot even for him to want to play basketball. He wants to go to the beach but I am enjoying the quiet day at home by practicing and listening to music. Toward mid- afternoon Michael heats up one of the beef pot pies and when I ask him how long ago he put it in he says a minute or a second ago. It has been ten minutes at least but what astounds me, even after all this time, is that he doesn't know the units of time or their approximate duration. Rather than get into it, I let it pass. I sit downstairs on the front porch while he eats his pie.

We walk to Central Square to see several short films

at Off the Wall. Michael gets impatient waiting for them to start and once again reveals his miscomprehension of time. He says we left the house two minutes ago--it has been at least half an hour. Fourteen years old and such gaps in his learning—how is it to be explained? Nobody but me seems too impressed by this attribute. How is that to be explained? What really infuriates me about Michael is his insistence that he doesn't have to learn if he doesn't want to. He is nevertheless quite talented. This afternoon while I listened to music he boiled his crabs and lobster parts to make a necklace. They looked beautiful, vivid reds, exotic shapes. His drawings of trucks are meticulous, and he obviously can read and enjoys it more than most kids. But when he draws conclusions he overlooks so many obvious facts that at this point I must try not to listen or it annoys me. I feel not guilty but just plain bad that I don't like him better. And then I consider how unaffected by our arguments he seems and I no longer feel bad, I feel my opposition to him has been necessary if a little too intense at times, and perhaps good for him. But it would have been better if he could have had a friend in me and have me on his side. I don't feel that I have held him with a relationship.

Michael is awake early in anticipation of today's court appearance, perhaps because even a day in court is

better than a day at home, or maybe because he hopes to persuade Brennan to let him see his family while he is in Lowell. So he waits around, not reading or listening to music, just waiting, while I shower, eat and practice. At noon we go over to Dare house but Brennan is late so we return home. Michael is aggravated about having to wait on pins and needles, and it recalls to him the time he had to wait three hours for his family's visit. I consider it healthy, a sign of life, that Michael has expectations of people.

At last we get a call that Brennan has arrived. Before Michael leaves with him I try to get some information from Brennan while the car is pulling out but he is, as usual, in too much of a hurry to talk. Bubbling Brook won't take Michael because of the arson charge. Now they're applying to a place called Stetson Hall in Barre. I want to know why they don't apply to all the possible schools at once and save time. As for Leland Hall, Brennan says they haven't heard from them yet but I get the distinct impression that he doesn't take that school seriously because it is not his own idea. I even feel he might be giving me the runaround and hasn't sent in the application.

Later that afternoon I pick Michael up at Dare. On the way home he mentions that Brennan asked him if he liked Leland Hall and he said no. This gets us into a long two hour argument. I am infuriated that he changes his

mind and opinions according to what he thinks will get him home quickest. I tell him now he will probably be here even longer because if Leland Hall decides to take him Brennan will tell them that Michael doesn't want to go. I'm angry because I had told Brennan in a note that Michael liked Leland Hall enough to give it a try. Brennan has told Michael that he won't send him anywhere that he doesn't want to go but I inform Michael that that is bull shit, that he is going somewhere one way or another, that Brennan is not the nice guy cream puff he likes to come off as. I tell Michael that I've been square with him every step of the way since he got here and he better start taking that for what it's worth and work with me instead of against me. This seems to make some impression on him. I tell him that I think he's a talented person, something I imagine he doesn't often hear, and that because I believe he has a learning disability doesn't mean he's mentally ill or stupid. He eventually comes around and I think we end up liking each other a little by the end of the argument. Michael is less enamoured of Brennan today anyway because as they drove past his house in Lowell his mother came out and Brennan wouldn't stop the car to say hello. Michael is suffering from withdrawal because I have no television. One minute he says that Dare house is a horrible place, should be torn down, kids shouldn't be forced to live in such a place, he is ashamed to bring his

family there, and the next minute he says he wouldn't mind being there because they have television.

We wait for Chip Jones to arrive but he calls late in the morning to say he is unable to come and reschedules the meeting for tomorrow morning. I take this opportunity to vent my dissatisfaction with John Brennan's speed and openness about what is in the works for Michael, and that both Michael and I are tired of being tied together and want some action now. Afterwards, I pace. Michael asks if I'm nervous. I tell him no, mad. At who he wants to know since usually it's him. Brennan this time. This makes Michael feel chummy now that seemingly he has me on his side against the state. He is making name plaques by gluing sticks to cardboard and he makes one for my name also. We hang them in his room. We eat egg sandwiches and I practice the rest of the early afternoon. We walk to Harvard Square and see two William Friedkin movies, Sorcerer and The French Connection, intense, tight and violent films. Michael loves them. So do I. We stop in a bookstore on the way home and Michael asks if I'll buy a book for him. I do, but I warn him that it's the last until he finishes the other books I've bought for him.

I wake Michael up for our meeting with Chip Jones. When Chip arrives he is surprised to find Michael reading

in his room. Michael comes into the kitchen to sit with us. I make Chip coffee and Michael prepares tea for himself and he puts the teapot in front of me which Chip takes as a sign of affection. Perhaps. Today I am only concerned with spurring DYS to act quickly and get Michael out of my house and into a school. My surmise that Brennan has disregarded my recommendations was correct, and Chip has put pressure on DYS that will increase if some progress isn't made. I hog Chip's attention entirely although ostensibly he came over to see how Michael is doing. Downstairs I continue my angry harangue and Chip is responsive. He is proud of his self-image as a "fighter" but I am too involved in my own concerns to stroke his ego. When I return upstairs I notice that Michael didn't drink any of the tea, it was all for show and it recalls that day way back at the beginning of his stay here, this ordeal, at Liz's, when we all had tea and Michael made some for himself to be one of the crowd but didn't drink it.

After the meeting Michael returns to his book and when he is finished comes into the kitchen to tell me about it and show me some pictures. I am not much interested but he does not notice. He asks to go out and play basketball and I let him but check up on him every so often. No problems. At one point I go out and shoot a few with him. We have a little power struggle over returning the ball but unlike the early days of our relationship there

is not much question where the power lies. With me. And a good thing because Michael has it in him to be a little devil with someone who is weak. We drop off empties at the liquor store and stop in the bookstore to browse. Michael looks at a book about trucks, his passion, but fails to replace it on the shelf as we leave. I order him to do so and he rolls his eyes to show his annoyance. Outside I berate him for this gesture and force him to tell me why he did it. He doesn't feel any necessity to replace books, a person could find it where Michael left it if he couldn't find it on the shelf. At least he had a logical reason for his action. Michael returns to the basketball court with instructions to return before four. When I check on him he is watching a full court game that the Dare kids are playing.

We walk to Harvard Square to see two films, *The Thief of Paris* and *Tale of Two Cities*. On the way we meet Evan Larkin who walks us toward the theater. I separate Michael and Evan so I can have Evan to myself and not interrupt our conversation with Michael's simpleton thoughts. This strategy, physically placing my body between the two, and cutting Michael off, making clear to him his participation is not desired, works. But it has side effects. While Evan and I talk Michael is bored so begins to fling soda can tabs with a plastic spoon he's found. This distracts me and finally, when he nearly lands one in a passing car, I tell him to stop. He is sorely tempted to

continue anyway but I look at him ominously. He has succeeded in interrupting my conversation with Evan and it is a gall to me. This sounds like a perverse and ugly way of conducting a relationship with a child, but it is absolutely necessary to my continued sanity and patience. Michael merely serves to draw attention to his boring interests when permitted to participate in talks with my acquaintances, and I am ashamed to be living with such a dull wit, and ashamed that the dull child at times can dominate a conversation since adults, especially those I know, tend to politely defer to one louder, more insistent and less sensitive than themselves. Thus, I simply power play if necessary to avoid the discomfort. Nevertheless, on parting from Evan I am somewhat depressed that Michael managed to intrude even as far as he did.

We sit apart in the theater, Michael in the balcony and myself below. To show off his position he calls out to me to ask when the film starts. He calls three times and I ignore him each time, my bond with him being nothing I am publicly proud of. He is not hard to ignore, absorbed as I am in my thoughts. Between films I step out for an ice cream, treating myself but not Michael although when he comes by my seat I give him a taste. He makes a bid for one indirectly by asking how much it costs but I am not offering. Whenever I feel the constraints imposed on my life and person by Michael's presence I become most

hostile toward him. He finds a seat up closer for the second film. Walking home he fantasizes about the guillotine in the film. He says the decapitated bodies continue to move for about a second after the beheading. I show him with a snap of my fingers how long a second is. I refrain from impressing on him the vastness of his ignorance.

At home I play trumpet while Michael eats tuna fish. We then play cards at which Michael wins and he gets more obnoxious the closer he gets to winning. However, I am unaffected by losing, contrary to what he thinks, but I am still quite hostile toward him merely for existing in proximity to me. I am so on edge that I could not eat across from him this evening to hear his chewing and see him wash a full mouth of food down with an audible gulp of milk. So he wins with the illusion that it bothers me and then we race to put away the cards. He grabs for the deck I have chosen for myself and when I demand them he defies me. I look at him and warn him against making me take them from him. The threat of violence is sincere, for the first time I am quite prepared to beat him if provoked, and he sees it and turns the cards over to me. It gets to him that he loses the after-game again, especially when he sees that I cheated by hiding one of his cards. He retires to his room bragging loudly but I think my willingness to assault him is etched on his mind. I sit for a while thinking

this over, amazed but also strangely glad that I have shown him a source of the power he must respect, brute as it is, and unashamed of it because I dislike him. I then go to bed and read. Michael's good night sounds the same as always, actually affectionate.

After last night's fight I am not glad to see Michael this morning sitting in the kitchen when I get out of the shower. I have him do the dishes. For the remainder of the morning and early afternoon I practice while he reads and listens to the radio. We go over to Dare to witness Chip's call to DYS to berate them for their inefficiency in Michael's case but the officials are not in. So Michael and I walk up to the bank in Central Square. At the bank he takes a few envelopes as we leave and although I have no intention of making him return them I say You know this is another example of the petty stealing you do. He gets angry and says OK Bob, you want me to bring them back? I say no. He tells me there was a sign there to take some. After the bank we meet a friend of mine, Lee Post, and she and I hug in greeting. I introduce Michael to her and he blushes a little but is also proud and pleased to be introduced. He asks if that's the same woman we met at the jazz concert. Since the women do not look at all alike I wonder why he thinks she is. Because they both hugged you the same way he says.

We go over to Dare house for a mentor's meeting. I can hear Michael's cackle, enjoying himself with the other kids. I've decided today to take it easy on Michael, for my own peace of mind. We walk toward Harvard Square to see a few films at the Orson Welles—The Lady Killers, The Lavender Hill Mob, and we sit in on the last part of Outrageous. On our way we pass a guitar in some trash so I pull it out and give it to Michael. At the films he sits beside a young woman. I am concerned that he may bother the girl but from where I sit things seem innocent and harmonious enough. Outrageous is about a female impersonator and I feel slightly uncomfortable about bringing Michael. He makes the usual comments abhorring such a life style but on another level he cannot conceal his curiosity. Later, hoping to get me to talk about the film, he asks me what parts I thought were funny. I suppose I should counsel him about something that must be confusing but I do not feel like it. Walking home we run into yet another woman friend of mine, Rylin MacNeice, who hugs me in greeting. I introduce Michael to her and her man friend. When we part from them he comments on the many women I know and then tries to draw me into conversation about the girl he sat near at the movies. At home we play a close card game that Michael wins by a hair but I enjoy contradicting him about it. He cleans his

guitar, makes it shine, and goes to bed.

I begin to cook sauce, interrupted by a call from Dare house that Michael has unexpected visitors. Michael's visitors are his mother's boyfriend, a woman friend and her children. I allow Michael to go out with them for a half hour. They come over to the house for a few minutes to see Michael's room and Michael gives them the gifts he's made for people back home. When they leave I return to cooking and Michael sits at the kitchen table and talks about home and how he wishes he was there. Later he asks to go out and play basketball. He is on the court when I check at 5:30 but when I check at 6:00 he is gone, on the run.

I drive up to Lowell to fetch Michael who I figure is with his mother but nobody is home. I kill some time downtown and then try again but still no answer. I call his sister but she hasn't seen him. I wait in a small park in sight of the house but no one goes in or out. Finally I decide to search at a friend's house and find Mrs. White and many neighbors sitting on the porch. Michael is indeed here and while I'm talking comes walking down the street but when he sees me he takes off through the backyards. I talk to Mrs. White for a while and we agree that she'll try to get Michael to her house tonight where I can speak to him. I

go back downtown and eat some dinner. When I return there's still nobody at the White house so I hide out again in the park. Every hour I knock at the door. Finally at midnight Mrs. White answers. Michael is staying over the Davis' tonight, she could not persuade him to return to Cambridge. So together we go over to the Davis' and surprise Michael in the kitchen. He is anything but happy to see me but at last I convince him it's in his best interest to return with me because if he doesn't by the end of the week he'll be in lock-up in Danvers. I offer to take him to Lowell once a week on Fridays to see his family and I tell him that if he's not placed by September 30 my recommendation will be that they send him home. But what clinches it is my ultimatum that if he says no I'll walk out now and let him deal with DYS and the cops on his own. I'll drop the case cold.

We go over to Dare house to meet John Brennan for court. At Dare we meet briefly with Chip Jones and I make my recommendation that Michael not be detained beyond September. Chip is skeptical that detention is damaging Michael and suggests that I talk it over with Brennan today. Michael comes in and jumps to conclusions. I snap at him to settle down and listen to what's going on. Chip shuts the door, the morning cartoons on tv are loud. He starts talking with Michael

about the theory that from being exposed to delinquents at Dare house he is beginning to get the same self-image. Michael of course does not know what the fuck Chip is talking about. At that point Brennan enters greeting everyone but me. I wonder under what strain we will operate today due to our battle by proxy over the past couple of weeks. As he whisks Michael away I mention that after court I intend to let Michael spend some time with his mother and Brennan answers, past me to Chip, that he's easy, it's alright. Michael is excited to be riding in a big, smooth car. I drive up separately in my bumpy Jeep.

Everyone is at court, Michael, his mother, his brother Rodney, Brennan and several other youths of their acquaintance. Michael spends the day cutting up with friends and I can see what a pain in the ass he must be in school. Brennan and I do not speak much while we wait hours to get into the courtroom. Later I suggest to Brennan that I can't promise I'll be able to hold Michael past September, that maybe we should give him the chance to go home and if he blows it, well then we'll know where he stands now and forever. Brennan makes no promises but does not reject it hands down. There is a good chance that Michael will be accepted at Stetson and then all this will be moot. We talk about Michael's mother who Brennan has no respect for because she's in and out of the sack with so many guys and allows them to drink

and get high in the house. How can she expect the kids to behave if they're exposed to that he says. I tell him a few things about the family he doesn't know, among others that she gets alimony from her former husband. It surprises me that Brennan is unaware of things like this. At last they get into court and the case is continued.

I leave the courthouse with Michael and his mother. They are upset that Bobby, her other son, is going to be sent away for a B&E just two weeks after he got home. They are trying to lay the blame on a guy who got him drunk. I don't feel like commiserating so I say it straight for them, that everyone is responsible for their own actions, drunk, stoned or sneezing. Michael gets angry about the continuance, afraid Brennan won't let him go home at the end of September. Eventually we all calm down once we get some food in our stomachs at a sub shop. Mrs. White and Michael sit at one table, I at another. Michael seems more aware of the awkwardness than his mother. All day long, whenever she wanted something from someone, a cigarette or a light, she sent Michael to get it. Michael for all his problems and liabilities is probably the least fucked up White in the whole bunch. And the most sensitive to his mother's needs, which is why she loves him best.

After lunch we head over to his father's place, a small dingy brick apartment complex, a bachelor pad. Michael thinks it's plush because it's carpeted. Mr. White,

for my benefit I assume, lectures Michael about behaving, going to school and seeing his detention through without running. Michael admires his father but it is difficult for him to accept this lecture. He looks down, just as when I lecture him. That duty dispensed with Mr. White turns his attention to me and we discuss his pictures and poems. Each poem has four line stanzas ABAB. They are all saccharine philosophies about how to be free and attain a higher consciousness. In form and to some extent content they remind me of myself some years ago and I realize that for all his shortcomings this man is making an honest search for his truth. I can see as he talks that his wife loves and admires him. Michael sits on the carpet near them and they make an endearing family portrait. He is the dad of six who threw it all away to search for truth. He lectures to his family like a guru. He looks like a guru in his goatee and white hair. His poems are so naïve and mass produced that I rather like them. I find it to say he would be popular if many people read poems. He, hip, says he does not care for popularity. He gives his books away to people. On the subject of Michael living with him it is I love my Michael but . . . if his slipped disc gets better he'll have to return to work and then Michael would be unsupervised nights. Although he is admired by his family, I doubt whether Mr. White could survive the daily test of his wisdom by even one of its members. In a way I find Michael the better,

more interesting man. Mr. White's parting shot to Michael is to listen to me because he can learn a lot from me, Mr. White can feel it. I wonder if he does because lord knows I haven't done or said anything to prove it. Michael and I drop his mother off at her house and we drive back to Cambridge. Michael asks how I liked his father. I liked him. Michael wins at cards for the second night in a row. Now he wants to keep a running record of wins and losses.

We drive up to Cape Ann. Michael is always careful to ask if I've forgotten anything before we leave the apartment since the time I forgot my bank book going to the bank. We drive up silently and find a small rocky cove to sit in and explore. Michael searches among the rocks for crabs but there are no tidbits for him here. He watches fishing boats come in with long trails of sea gulls flocking behind, and a lobster boat setting traps in the cove. We drive to the other side of the cape, to Long Beach where there is a sandy beach and surf and a cool wind off the ocean. We follow the beach to a large rock formation. Michael looks for sea creatures among the rocks. I find a sheltered spot and play trumpet and soon Michael comes by to say he's going swimming. I follow soon after to supervise his swim. He is not swimming but has found a large beautifully formed crab that he intends to take home, boil and mount. Not that I'm especially fond of

crabs, or even this crab perfect though it is, but I convince Michael to let it go. On the one hand it is to irritate Michael, and on the other to make him aware of his responsibility to living things, to make him conscious of the killing he does. Michael, as an artist, is crestfallen to lose the specimen but in his heart I believe he concurs with me. The sea is loud and windy today. Michael scares droves of gulls before us by waving his arms as we approach. The summer season is over and the beaches are far more pleasant. We drive through Gloucester and homeward as the sun sets.

Chip Jones arrives unexpectedly for a meeting with us so I wake Michael up and he does his toilet while Chip and I talk and drink coffee and tea. Then Michael joins us. At this point he is quite pliable, will agree to anything so long as it happens quickly. The conversation turns to trucks and police. All three of us participate. Downstairs Chip thinks Michael's attitude has improved. I tell him that's because he believes something must happen before the end of the month or he will go home. We all think, hope, that the Stetson school will accept Michael.

I am indecisive about what to do today. I spend most of the afternoon practicing while Michael reads his book, Cop-Hater. Michael wants to cook macaroni and

cheese so I let him, but then change my mind as he's boiling the water and say to cook corn instead. He misunderstands though and cooks the macaroni and cheese anyway and this makes me blow up. I tell him to refrigerate it, and then change my mind and tell him to eat it, this is the last macaroni and cheese we'll have in this house. I wonder why his damn macaroni and cheese has been the cause of so much conflict during the last two months. Eventually things calm down, I lie down for a while, Michael goes back to his book. We were going to go to a movie this evening but I cancel because there is a tenants meeting tonight. We go out for a stroll to Eastern Mountain Sports where there is a warehouse sale. We both become absorbed in the equipment at EMS, and the books. Michael looks up mosquitoes in an insect book. We inspect small trail stoves. Before we know it, it is dark and we have missed the Spider's Web. Coming home Michael finds a partially filled can of gold spray paint in someone's trash, so while I play trumpet he paints his crabs gold.

We go downstairs to a neighbor's apartment for the tenants meeting which Michael thoroughly enjoys. He is quiet and well-behaved. When he does speak he has as usual missed the point of the conversation and his suggestions are redundant or pointless. But he is sociable and likeable. He definitely enjoys the warmth of human contact and afterwards he is talkative, excited and

friendly. One of my neighbors asks him if he can take care of his dog, he will pay Michael a small amount and I overhear Michael saying he will check with Bob. I think it's a good idea, it will give Michael something to do, a sense of community and responsibility and a little pocket money to buy snacks when we go to the movies. However I make it clear to Michael that he will never be home the whole day and he should tell Seth this before accepting the job. I spend much time impressing this on Michael so he and Seth understand that the dog will spend considerable time alone.

Michael wants to keep a written record of wins and losses which is amusing. He erroneously believes that lately he has been winning most of our card games because he won a couple of games in a row about a week ago. So we tease each other amiably about who's winning how much. I look in my diary to see if I can tell who has won and lost recently. Michael says he thought only girls kept diaries. Today returning from EMS we somehow got on the subject of homosexual men. Michael has violent fantasies about what he would do if a homosexual approached him. I tell him I have several gay friends. He wants to know if he has met any of them. He has, but I tell him that he has not, that all of them live in New York. This fits his preconceptions about that city.

We leave for Lowell but get stuck in rush hour traffic. Michael brings his gifts for his mother and others, his golden crabs, etc., and asks if it is ok to bring his guitar. When we get to Lowell the family is in the middle of dinner and the house smells pleasant. Dave who is his mother's boyfriend, and Roger and Rodney, Michael's brothers, ignore me when I enter the house and only Dave, besides Mrs. White, greets Michael with any enthusiasm. I leave quickly not wanting to intrude on the family, reminding Mrs. White that Michael must be with her during the entire visit. I go downtown to eat and read in a restaurant. When I return Michael opens the door and by the downward slope of his mouth I can see he's not happy to see me. Some Star Wars scenes are on tv but Michael will have to miss them. Other than Mrs. White, the family ignores my presence.

In the car Michael says it's hard visiting home like this and then having to leave. I commiserate but tell him there's nothing I can do about it. Michael says his sister was knifed in the face in a bar a few days ago and I am amazed that he takes it so matter-of-factly. No outrage, no emotion, as if people in his family's position expect things like that to happen to them. Michael has a picture of her and his niece, has left his guitar with Dave who said he might repair it. Michael always comes home with so many gifts and new possessions I wonder what his family thinks

of his Cambridge life. He says his mother was going to invite me to dinner but I left so fast that she didn't get the chance. Just as well because Michael said this afternoon that he wanted to be alone with his mother. Michael has been open and talkative, not too obnoxious, for the last few days and I have controlled my temper by and large so that life has been tolerable lately. Contact with other people such as the tenants meeting or his visit home are releases for us both. Michael saves for me the last of a bag of cookies his mother sent along.

We go out to see Star Wars, a movie Michael has anticipated for about two months. Just as we leave we meet a friend of mine, Carol Termini, a few doors down at a yard sale. She and I talk for a while and Michael stands quietly nearby and listens. When I tell Carol we are off to see Star Wars she expresses enthusiasm for the movie and this moves Michael to try to explain his fantasy that after we come out of the theater the world will be as it is in Star Wars. But the idea comes forth scrambled and leaves Carol bewildered. After leaving her Michael remarks on how many friends I have. It doesn't seem like many to me and I wonder why he's so impressed since I've had not a single friend to my house the whole time Michael's stayed here. Further up Pearl St. we run into yet another friend, Rudy, who is moving to Georgia soon. I wish him good luck.

Michael sits nearby, interjects something about me needing to shave my beard if I join the Forest Service but is otherwise quiet.

We ride the trolley out almost to Chestnut Hill Reservoir. We are early so we walk a while, buy ice creams and watch a children's soccer game in which they are allowed to catch and punch the ball with their hands. The seats in the theater recline and the screen is high so there is no problem seeing over heads. The only discomfort is one it shares with all theaters, in its effort to make as much money as possible it put in too many rows so there is not enough leg room. Lots of kids and their parents, excitement is high for this show. At last the show begins, I had forgotten how wonderful it is. I get misty when Luke is flying his attack ship into the death station and OB Kenobie's dismembered voice urges him to trust the force. What a sap, I might actually believe in the force.

After the movie we catch a trolley back to Charles St. Michael asks me what is the force that they were always talking about. His question is so sincere I tell him to give me some time and I'll try to explain later. We cross the Gardens and attend the last hours of the Charles St. fair, listen to some folk singers. A beautiful, or rather interesting looking, woman catches my eye as I lean against a light post. She has a glinting gold cross at her breast, she wears a gypsy-like arrangement of clothes, and

her face is heavily painted. She is conspicuously alone and unique and at first sight may perhaps seem a little crazy. She senses my interest and comes to stand by my post. She peeks around the corner at me to see if I mind her presence and smiles a self-possessed and mature smile. I would ask her to tea but Michael's presence prevents it. Not for the first time I curse my job.

During dinner I try to explain the force to Michael. That which makes all things grow and move, causes all the changes in the world, is in us and around us and we can channel its power. He says it's the same as God. I say that is another word for it. We play cards and Michael repeats several times during the game "may the force, and God, be with me." It seems blasphemous but I hold my tongue hoping he will lose faith in the chant. He has no idea what power he is trying to invoke. But do I? Michael loses by a single card and I also outsmart him in the after-game. Because it was his idea to keep a record of wins and losses, I now want to win every game. Grow up.

My friend Cassandra is coming over this evening but I do not tell Michael until later. We shop for groceries. We unload the packages and begin our game of cards. I tell Michael that tonight a friend of mine is coming over who I want to be alone with, so after the game just go to bed. Cassandra arrives during the game and Michael loses a

little self-control. I am amused at how the two of them misunderstand each other. After the game Michael tries to linger but I send him to his room. He purposely leaves his door open as I discover later when he complains of the noise we made. During the night Cassandra and I get up to eat and Michael comes through the kitchen to go to the bathroom. He gets a glass of orange juice and tries to sit down with us but I send him to his room. I hear him grunting and coughing to attract attention. While Cassandra and I say goodbye downstairs, Michael leans out the window and yells. This is the last straw and after Cassandra leaves I go upstairs fuming. Michael is in bed and says goodnight trying to appear like a little angel. I tell him point blank that if he ever intrudes on me as he did tonight I'll smack him up side the head so hard he won't forget it for the rest of his life. We have a No you won't – Yes I will battle and I leave him.

Michael gets up late while I am practicing and I wonder if he hasn't hidden out in his room until he heard the trumpet to avoid me. I practice for a few hours, our meeting with Chip Jones is cancelled, and then I enter his room for our confrontation about last night. He is listening to the radio and I order him gruffly to make his bed. I sit down while he does it and ask for an explanation of his behavior last night. He acts innocent like it is normal

behavior. He says the yell out the window was just a joke, he thought it would be funny. I can't wait to get rid of the little fool. I tell him that until I get an apology from him his visit to Lowell is off for this Friday. He brags that he's going to Lowell whether I take him or not. I tell him that's a chance he'll have to take and he can deal with DYS if he does. I lure him into a discussion of last night by accusing him of being jealous of my evening with Cassandra. He uses all kinds of ploys such as I should have told him she was a girlfriend and not just a friend, and I should have told him earlier that she was coming. What are these to him is my response. Then, his most plausible argument, that I shouldn't send him off to bed, that he's used to staying up with people at his house. I tell him this is anywhere but the White household, and I had told him in advance that I wanted to be alone with Cassandra but still he tried to butt in.

I make the clinching argument that when we visited Lowell last week I didn't try to horn in on his family, when he told me that he'd like to spend the time alone with his mother I respected that and went downtown for dinner. I think he sees my point and although he still refuses to make an apology, I back off the Lowell threat. The disagreement continues onto other grievances. First of all, that I better never hit him or he'll get his big brother after me, and also how little his family likes me, they think I walk

like an ape. I am indifferent to his family's opinion and I repeat that if he ever intrudes on me as he did last night I will smack him in the head. He does not debate my sincerity. He says that he's tired of being ordered around, make the bed, do the dishes, etc. but I think he knows he doesn't work particularly hard around here.

Next is the issue of homosexuals which comes up in a name calling session. Obviously, after last night, given his limited life experience, I cannot be labeled a faggot but he ridicules me for having gay friends and caricatures me as walking down the street with "their hands on my ass." There is no way to enlighten him except to repeat that his stereotypes are not an accurate representation of reality. He puts on his tough act and claims he will not go to school even for the two months he promised. Of course it is a moot point, he will indeed go to school for as long as he's sent, but I am enjoying the argument fiercely. It is relieving me of my aggression and disgust toward this child. I say So you want to play the breaking promises game. Well, if you can break this promise I can forget about my recommendation for the end of this month. He wants me to read him the recommendation. He is shocked by my candor as to his learning deficiencies but he is moved by the praise for his talents that I included. After the long argument Michael offers me an oatmeal cookie but I am withdrawn. I am constantly amazed at how Michael can

argue and fight and then seem utterly unaffected by it an hour later.

Michael hangs around being solicitous. I at least consistently dislike him, I only repress it to varying degrees. He seems now to like me quite a lot, other times to hate my guts. At last it is time for our card game, which he waits for every night, even I await it with some anticipation. It has become a cornerstone of our relationship along with movies and arguments and a mutual desire to be rid of each other. He is loud and boisterous and succeeds in annoying me, as I so often succeed in irritating him. But I catch my balance by detaching myself, remembering that all things pass and so will Michael. When his antics cease to annoy me they are not much fun for him so he quiets down. I am to have the last laugh tonight. I leave him far behind in the game and finally win. I torment him mercilessly about losing six nights in a row. Although he tries to act unaffected, my taunts hit home. Then, in the race to put the cards away he wins but has hidden four of my cards. Later he tries to draw me out of my room to return the cards and when I won't respond he calls me a big baby. That I am.

We go out to the movies to see *Ossessione*, an Italian, Visconti, version of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. On the way to the film Michael mentions that he

will sit next to a solitary woman as he usually tries. I take the opportunity to vigorously cure him of what I consider a bad habit, one that implies a certain disrespect of women as interchangeable parts for his needs. If Michael saw a particular girl or woman who attracted him and approached her as an equal, eye to eye and person to person, I would have no criticism. But it does not matter to him, within very general limits, who the woman is, as long as she's alone and female. Like a pervert, he sits down beside the solitary person to absorb her vibrations whether she will or not, to subversively touch her arm under the guise of an accident, or to accidentally on purpose jab his elbow into her ribs. In short, to cop a feel. I mock Michael by recalling for him the time at the Brattle when he sat down next to a woman when there were only four people in the theater and she got up and moved away. As with the killing of crabs, I am not interested in stopping him from doing it since it is a natural instinct, but I want him to understand the dynamics of situations and respect the integrity of those lives he comes in contact with. Unfortunately, in my earnestness to prevent anymore surly exploits, I fail to define the circumstances under which the behavior is fine, how to approach a person openly, without slinking and copping territory. I do explain that when he wants to sit with someone he should ask if they mind if he sits down with them before imposing

on them, particularly when there are 300 empty seats in the house. When we are seated and I look around for him, Michael has positioned himself a seat away from two women.

As has been our habit lately, we are home for the entire day. A little to my surprise, this has been working out well. I think that knowing he can visit his family every Friday helps Michael endure anything during the rest of the week. I have spent all day everyday practicing trumpet and when I'm busy and absorbed, not bored, this affects the nature of Michael's day. Instead of being restless, he involves himself in his own projects knowing his restlessness would as soon change my practice as change the weather. This morning Michael takes a shower and then turns his attention to his sea weeds and plants. He collects and plants melon seeds. He may read and listen to the radio, I don't know. All in all it is a peaceful and productive day.

After spending the day indoors we're both dying to get out and do something so we take a walk to Harvard Square to buy a few things. Dressing to go out I sing and dance and act a little crazy and although he acts like he thinks I'm ridiculous, his smile shows he enjoys the clowning. The last few days I have taken few things too seriously, even Michael's transgressions, and preferred to

joke a little while correcting him. The result is less strained relations. Michael is talkative, friendly and open. We go out to buy peppermint and spearmint tea for Michael's mother. To do this we stop in several natural food stores and Michael says that he's really learned something about alternative ways of eating. We stop in the Harvard Coop and buy a notebook for me and one for Michael. Harvard Square with the thousands of students back has a confusing energy, the different summers have not yet blended to make a homogenous autumn. We walk through Harvard Yard and I build it up grandiosely for Michael, greatest learning institution, etc., but what he says is So this is where the Harvard police stay. We walk back to Central Square where life is a little homier, buy groceries, and stop in at Hundred Flowers. A fellow is singing and playing guitar informally and his interpretations of songs and the quality of his voice impress me. It turns out that he and Michael have played basketball together so they chat and then Michael sits upstairs and listens. I read downstairs, tap my foot. When we leave we debate the singer's qualities. Michael thinks he's a good guitarist but I think it's his voice that is unique.

At home Michael labels and packages his teas for his mother. He shows me what he's written in his notebook, all of it meticulously printed. A list of the girls he likes with stars next to their names to show how much he cares for

each, a list of boys in his gang at home, and a list of gifts he has so far given his mother since being in detention. It reminds me of my own penchant for lists and orderliness when I was a child. His meticulousness is the same that he applies to his projects and is perhaps his best, most valuable quality. We settle down to our card game which Michael loses once again. He is getting discouraged, I beat him so consistently now that it's not even fun to tease him about it.

The mentors meeting is full of simmering conflict. Several of us are vociferous about DYS inefficiency and precipitous changes. Not only is DYS a perpetual problem but even the Dare organization is becoming an annoyance. They now want all mentors to call in between 9 & 10 each morning to pick up messages so that there is daily contact. Even Chip thinks this is unnecessary and I can't help observing that it will be difficult to get through with fourteen people trying. Then there is talk about adjusting mentors' pay rates by rating kids on difficulty, or graduating pay downward as length of stay increases. I feel certain that between my disagreements with DYS and my growing dissatisfaction with Dare that I will be driven out of the program sooner than I originally expected. I wish I had more confidence in Chip, that he knew when politics stops being politic and is merely a game. It's not

necessarily a lumbering or unjust system but some decision-makers have lost sight of the primary purpose of the whole shebang—to aid kids. Since Michael’s chances are excellent at Stetson, I tell Chip that I am prepared to hold Michael to the fourteenth of October but that is the last extension, I want my vacation and will not be a martyr to DYS inefficiency. Chip says if it comes to that he’ll put Michael with another mentor but I warn him that Michael will certainly run in that case, and if he does we have lost him to delinquency for sure. Chip, as usual, asks for my concerns in writing, as if that will help. I’ve told Chip that if Michael runs I’m inclined not to retrieve him, what will Chip do? He smiles and says he’ll have to go up to Lowell and get him. He says if he didn’t feel that I had done a top-notch job under trying circumstances and did not have a case against DYS in the matter, that he’d “break my balls” for this. I must now find a way to persuade Michael to stay on with me past Sept.

We take the subway to my trumpet lesson. On the way we argue about who knows the most Beatles songs. At the lesson Michael is quiet, sits absorbed at the window, watching an attendant park cars in a parking lot. I have difficulty concentrating on what Mark Harvey is teaching because my mind is occupied with the affairs of this morning. The few things he and Michael say to each other leave Mark perplexed since it is clear to him after a

while that Michael does not understand what Mark's saying and does not make a lot of sense when he speaks. Again, I am amused to watch another person try to catch his balance with the astonishing Michael White.

We drive up to Lowell, avoiding the traffic this time. The jeep performs like a trusted friend. When we arrive we find the door to his mother's apartment locked so we go over to the Davis' where we find her. They are all brooding because today Rodney, her youngest, was taken away to Cap detention. She is as angry as she is able to get given her passivity. I can only console her by saying that Cap is an easy program for lightweight offenders, and that Michael is doing well in Cambridge. Hearing this, Michael brightens and sets himself to preparing the teas he has bought for his mother. Characteristically good-hearted and sociable, he watches out for me, makes sure I feel welcomed and comfortable, a result of our improving relationship. My strict trumpet regimen gives me crucial time apart from him and a feeling that he is not so much a hindrance to my personal development. It also provides a daily block of time during which he can and must create his own projects and work or read by himself. With no television there is no opportunity to vegetate. He uses this time creatively, concentrating on planting his plants or painting and mounting seashells, reading, or simply listening to music. Writing may become still another

pastime now that he has his own notebook. Evenings we go out to movies or places of my choice at which he is exposed to sights, sounds and people he has never experienced. As he prepares the “exotic” teas he has become familiar with, Michael is proud of all that he has been exposed to that his mother and his friends in Lowell have never known.

After commiserating with Michael’s mother, I leave them reminding her that Michael must be with her the entire time. I drive downtown and walk to the Merrimack River where I find a riverside trail to explore. Michael has obviously been telling his mother good things about the past week because the vibrations are trusting when I return to the house. Mrs. White walks us to the door and as we leave breaks down crying, kissing Michael goodbye. Michael starts to cry too but I walk a little ahead thinking that he would not like me to see him crying. He soon regains his control and as we drive home talks about how it’s bad for his mother to have to be alone. I flatly contradict him and say that it’s important for each person to learn how to stand strong and happy alone. To my surprise after a few minutes Michael assimilates this and salts his conversation all the way home with this theory.

Michael has spoken to his sister and found out that her boyfriend is opening a pool hall and game room.

Michael thinks he can work there and sees it as his ticket to return home. I am skeptical but hold my tongue. I will let Brennan put the dampers on this plan. I don't think it's wise to send Michael home, I don't believe he will be able to stay out of trouble. When anyone gets in trouble he, and his whole family, talk about it as if it happened to them rather than being something they did themselves. This refusal to shoulder responsibility for their actions is one of their central problems. They are right, his mother and Mrs. Davis, that Michael's a good-hearted lad, his concern for his mother's welfare is proof, a concern that I'm quite sure his brothers don't share. Indeed, he called his sister back this afternoon to ask her to give their mother some of the insurance money she will be receiving from an accident. But he is weak-minded. His moral code is flexible, changes with the situation. It is not wrong to break into someone's home and take their possessions, it is just stupid if you are caught. And when faced with this prospect, the Michael who now rants that he should be given a chance because he knows he can stay out of trouble, will tell himself he won't get caught. There is no moral imperative because they are passive victims even when they are committing offenses against others. There is no one around to enforce some moral code before the fact. Michael irritates me when he says that so and so was doing alright until he got in trouble. Obviously. Of course,

all this overlooks their economic disadvantage, in some cases these kids commit their crimes for money. In most cases, however, delinquency is a sport or recreation like baseball and football were in the neighborhood where I grew up.

Michael's thinking reaches the point of being real garbage when, considering his history and background, he distrusts and insults Puerto Ricans as common thieves incapable of doing skilled work. When we see five men exit from an abandoned building, even though they carry wood saws and levels among other tools, Michael assumes they have been stripping the building of the copper piping. I ask him why they would need a level but he is immune to logic until I threaten to drag him back to the house and ask the men whether they are workmen or thieves. If the Stetson School rejects him, Michael would run rather than wait another month while DYS starts the application process again. If he runs his self-image as a delinquent, and his identification with the local crowd of habitual petty criminals, will be complete. He will arrive home on the run and be slapped on the back by those more experienced boys and given hero status for a while. He will be in with the in crowd.

We plan to see movies this evening and Cassandra calls and says that she'll meet us there. We walk to

Coolidge Corner to see Spellbound and Bill of Divorcement both of which are so bad they are amusing. Cassandra does not show up. Michael and I sit together in the front row of the balcony, he sits with me obviously anticipating Cassandra's arrival and wanting to ensure his proximity to her. On the way home coming through the neighborhood we pass a pottery or clay workshop and stop to look at the window display. There are inexpensive classes each day, a teenage class from 3-5 on Thursdays the first of which is this week. I encourage him to attend and perhaps make gifts for his mother but he is fearful of the unfamiliar situation and wants me to come too, we can work on something together. I am reluctant because I see this as a potential two hour break but I have gotten so involved in Michael's case, exposing him to new experiences and expanding his horizons and opportunities, that I may suffer to attend the first class for his sake. It will be a way for him to meet kids his own age, and once he starts befriending girls I doubt he'll want me hanging around anyway.

Another rainy day. Michael gets up, there is no oatmeal for breakfast. He goes outside and cracks a coconut on the sidewalk. I practice all day, Michael is getting on my nerves because he is bored and just hanging around. His store-bought toys have effectively reduced his

creativity. He rolls his car across the floor like a six year old, making screech noises. His room stinks from his feet. Generally a day in which it would be best for me to stay away from him. To relieve the pressure of being indoors we go out for a walk toward Harvard Square, to the record store, health food store, etc. Michael wants a record but I say when he gets his own money he can buy whatever records he wants. This irritates him but I am not negotiating. If he wants it bad enough he'll wait for it and not spend his money on ice cream and toys which will be good discipline for him. My bad humor provokes him to his usual tough talk about how if Brennan doesn't give him his chance at home, he's going to just take it. I do not contradict him, just laugh to myself and let it go at that.

We decide to go to the movies since there's not much to do. We see Marcel Ophuls' *The Memory of Justice*, a great film. It is long and documentary but Michael gets through it with the help of some naked bodies on the screen. I can hear his response to them two rows back. I must agree with Yehudi Menuhin's conclusion that it is obscene for those who were never involved in the conflict to judge the actions of those who were. And that Nuremberg was one-sided given the American A-bombing of Nagasaki just two days after Hiroshima. Particularly disturbing was Telford Taylor who took an enthusiastic role at Nuremberg but then could not draw conclusions or

parallels for Vietnam. Perhaps the most provocative idea was that of the British prosecutor concerning the bombing of Dresden, that civilians should be involved in war and then perhaps war would not occur so readily. But civilians have always been victims of war, nobody would be upset and Nuremberg would be unnecessary if war never touched civilians. But Menuhin has the last wise word, that judgement must, for practical purposes if it is to have an effect, come from within each individual.

Michael has not really comprehended much about the film, at least intellectually, but he talks about being against nuclear power which comes up because of the atom bomb. But he is immune to the history, who were the Germans, the Jews, why the trial, even who fought on what side and who won. There is his usual resistance to learning when I start to explain. Somewhere along the line he has lost the belief that he can learn. All this learning seems so endless, minute and complicated that he is hopeless, and therefore bored. At home we play cards and Michael loses miserably again. I taunt him, saying he should open himself to my teaching, he could learn how to win. He is visibly frustrated but refuses to submit to instruction.

When Michael gets up he takes a shower. I tell him to open his windows right away because of the stink from

his feet accumulated during the night, and I hear him muttering since he is sensitive about his smelly feet. I call Stetson Hall to find out whether Michael will be admitted but they say all intakes have been frozen because they are having a dispute with the rate setting commission. I let Michael know it will be one or two weeks before they decide although the admissions officer from Stetson indicated it would probably be more than two weeks. Michael is disappointed but has come to expect such delays and accepts the idea of staying here until mid-October. Fortunately our relationship has been reasonably good so it won't be too difficult, and the Friday visits to Lowell help a lot. I inform Chip of the news, cynically proud that DYS has tried for two weeks to get the information from Stetson that I got in one phone call. He rants and curses about Stetson's rate setting dispute because rate setting is something he's had first hand experience with, but his knowledge of the politics of child care leaves me unimpressed. Brennan has put an application in at Revival House in Fall River and when I look up my notes I find that it's qualified to take learning disabled children although they accept some heavy hitters and I would have preferred sparing Michael such contacts. Michael is unhappy about Revival House because it means even if Stetson rejects him he will not go home. I assure him about October 14 being my last day, and soft shoe him

by saying the Fall River application is just in case they can do things faster, get him in and therefore out sooner. Full of small deceits.

We walk up to Harvard Square to see *Island in the Stream*, a terrible movie full of phony emotion that Michael claims to like perhaps because I dislike it. On our way to the show we see a white car turning a corner and right away Michael says it's the Harvard U. vice squad. His completely unsubstantiated conclusion irritates me and we argue all the way to the movie about it. His favorite phrase now is *Alright Bob, whatever you say*. We are attracting the attention of people we pass, our argument must sound ridiculous to them. But I feel it's important to make Michael ground his opinions in some semblance of reality. What would Harvard need a vice squad for, what markings did the car or the person in it have to indicate it, a thousand cars a day come from that direction, and even if it were a cop, which there is nothing to show for, not all plainclothesmen are on the vice squad. The weight of my evidence seems to eventually make him come around and even appreciate that I am concerned enough to argue with him about it.

In the theater Michael sits apart from me but, as a concession to my blistering ridicule, leaves a seat between himself and the girl he has chosen to be near. This makes me feel more comfortable, as well as the girl I'm sure.

After the film we have time before the next so we wander toward a bookstore, The Sphinx, near the theater. It is entirely devoted to occult, meditational and religious philosophies, smells of incense, and it takes Michael a while to get his bearings. I find a good book on the Tarot to read. While there, I ask Michael if he thinks he'll want to attend the pottery class tomorrow. He says yes and asks if I'll come. I say if he wants me to. He definitely does. We then attend the second film, an Indian film by Satyajit Ray, *The Big City*, an excellent movie. A straightforward story about a couple who love each other but who must support parents and other family and are having trouble making ends meet. So the wife, contrary to Indian tradition, takes a job at which she becomes successful, but she and her husband become estranged. In the end, perhaps too optimistically, she loses her job for defending an innocent friend's honor impugned by the boss, and is reunited with her husband. Michael has not been able to understand much because of subtitles. He believed the picture took place in Cuba. We walk home quickly to attend a tenants meeting.

Not many tenants are there. We make a contingency plan and set a meeting for Sunday night. Then we just chat about city and world conditions. Laura and I present the liberal point of view to Mrs. Peters' conservative. Michael listens occasionally inserting

thoughts completely missing the point at hand. Again I am amused, this time at Laura trying to make head or tail of Michael's mind. Back upstairs we cook up some spaghetti. Michael says he is amazed at how a conversation can flow from one subject into another like it did. This is a fairly sophisticated observation that illustrates Michael's interest in group dynamics, the pleasure he takes in being part of a group, perhaps learned by sitting on front steps with friends and neighbors of a summer's night. I have the radio on and he recognizes Betty Carter's singing, and I congratulate him for this. It is clear that he has potential to learn if he ever finds a teacher who cares enough for him, and is patient enough. Michael likes to succeed, likes being praised and this is a sure sign of potential. We play cards and Michael wins tonight.

We walk down to the ceramics workshop but the teen class has been cancelled for several reasons. Michael is disappointed, especially since this is all we had planned for today, so I arrange for him to attend tonight's adult class. We return home where I continue practicing and listen to music. We prepare the spaghetti and sauce and Michael puts a glass out for my wine. Every time Michael says "one more day until the thirtieth" I ask what he means by that fearing that he has not assimilated the fact that we have given DYS two more weeks, to the middle of

October, but he only means until he visits with his family again. We return to the ceramics workshop where they neither welcome us nor make us feel comfortable and the teacher gives us instructions to read while we wait to begin. Eventually Michael is allowed to start and he chooses a fireman hat which can be a piggy bank for his nephew. There are several pretty teenage girls who are an added attraction for Michael. One girl who I can see likes Michael helps him with his work. After a while I go for a walk and when I return Michael has finished for the night having cleaned the hat so it can be fired in the kiln. The teacher accepts no money and we arrange to return next Thursday.

We're up early to go to court. Michael is ready before me, he hardly slept in anticipation of visiting with his family. He half teases me and half admires my dressing up. It is an emotionally draining day at court. Mrs. White and Mrs. Davis are both either wearing wigs or with their hair in permanents for the occasion. Today Mrs. White is angry and calls Brennan aside to vent. I watch from a distance and when it is over I sit with Mrs. White to find out what she said. The substance is that if Rodney is committed she will refuse to sign the release papers, that she doesn't want to know these DYS guys from nothing if that happens. Michael is recommitted, Rodney sent home,

and Mrs. Davis is crying because her son Gary is taken away. As we leave the courthouse I explain to Brennan that I am dropping Michael's case in two weeks, I do not want to go to such an extreme but I will not be a martyr to DYS inefficiency. I tell Brennan that I will even go so far as to continue on the case if they enroll Michael in a day program but I will not be party to mere detention beyond the 14th. Brennan is a bandaid-on-a-cancer man.

After court I take Michael to visit his father, and faithful to a promise to Brennan to stay with Michael at all times today because he was recommitted and it wouldn't look good for him to be seen on the streets alone, I tag along. Mr. White gives Michael his usual pompous lecture and he and Mrs. White fight about who's ruining the kids by having affairs. Throughout the visit Michael hits each person in his family for as much money as he can panhandle. They have the ubiquitous boob tube on, the conversation is desultory. Mrs. White is hurt, Mr. White is childish and selfish and tries to open a conversation with me about poetry but I don't bite. Mary White is a woman with an infant, her man Woody is beatifically in love with the child but already I can tell their relationship is splitting at the seams by hints from Mary that he stays out late at night and by Michael's hopeful insistence that they will soon be married. Michael is an insensitive, almost cruel gold digger, Rodney is playing with green slime and

allowing the admonishments to stay out of trouble to roll off his back, and the baby is rocking in the mechanical rocker that is ticking away. The whole scene is so depressing that I go out for a walk. I return to find them all sacked out in front of the tv, Mr. White it seems left soon after I did.

I wake Michael up this morning, entering his room and opening the windows. We are going to Plum Island today but first he makes his bed and I have him do the dishes. I am not glad to see him today. Gruff. I've long put this trip off until a time when I'm not with Michael, feeling that he is not advanced enough to appreciate how special, and delicate, the island is, that his lower class sensibilities are incompatible with the idea of a preserve. And, of course, wanting to have a magical, meditative time on the island uninterrupted by the teenager. Of course, the root of my feelings, of all my actions against DYS and Dare of late, has been my desire to be alone and free and to also be with people on my social and intellectual level.

We drive a long way down to the lower half of the island that I have not yet explored. Hunters are shooting guns, training dogs, and this interests Michael. We cross the island to the beach. Michael is drinking a soda. After walking some time I strike inland telling Michael to meet me at a group of people about a half mile up the beach.

During this time apart it begins to rain so I must interrupt my exploration and find Michael. With some trepidation, I allow him to accompany me inland warning him to step carefully so as not to kill plants or touch poison ivy. He prefers to wear his shoes even though I tell him it's much easier to walk barefoot in sand. He talks incessantly about the hunters. We go back to the shore and sit down. It is here that I ask what he has done with the soda can, and I am furious because he has long ago strewn it on the beach. He defends himself stubbornly, refuses even to admit it's wrong to throw garbage on this beach. He is invulnerable and at this moment he represents everything I hate most about Americans and particularly the uneducated lower class. It is not that the litter would do any particular harm since there are many cans and bottles washed up on the beach as it is. But it is his disrespect and nonchalance that infuriates me. And even as I rant and yell and call him every name I can find and he gets more stubborn and flaunts his ignorant ways, I wonder why I am driving the situation to such an extreme. I want to because I hate Michael for existing in my life. For his lack of sensitivity toward anything living or inanimate that does not directly and obviously touch on his own life. I hate him especially for his lazy thinking and his inability to apply knowledge and morals across the board rather than with convenient selectivity.

As we leave I point to a bottle and tell him to pick it up and carry it to the car to make up for the can he left on the beach. He refuses. I have carefully considered this contingency. He wanted to bring back a lobster trap he found, and is carrying a bamboo rod that he wants. I tell him that unless that bottle goes with us, neither do the trap or the rod. He contradicts me but I make it quite clear that I will act violently if one thing from this beach enters my car. I head along the beach back to the car at top, exhausting speed. Michael keeps up, walking behind me and plunging his rod into the sand at each step. We pass the very can he left on the beach and I go by without acknowledging it. I think I hear him run back to it but I do not let myself turn around to look. We speed to the car and when we arrive I see that Michael carries nothing, rod or trap or can. I sit down to think this over. His stubbornness amazes me, that he would give up things he wanted when he could have picked the can up surreptitiously and still saved face. Of course, if I cared so much about having that can off the beach, why didn't I pick it up myself? It is a power struggle that I have won but that Michael has lost quite honorably, given the rules. We drive home in silence.

We eat dinner in stony silence. At ten we go downstairs to a tenants meeting at a neighbor's apartment, which is quick. Michael does not get a chance

to socialize like he had wanted. Back upstairs we play cards but I soon notice that all but one banana has been eaten. His greed sets me to arguing again, especially when he smiles, pleased instead of sorry. I send him to his room without finishing the game. This is the ultimate since he looks forward to our nightly ritual all day long. He gets to his room and calls me some nasty names. I tell him to stop. He calls me one last name. This is just what I'm waiting for. I kick open his door and cross the room toward him. Halfway across he says hurriedly he was only kidding but I grab him by the arms, lift him out of the chair and tell him not to say that again, and put him back in the chair.

Back in the kitchen my heart's thumping. I make tea. Michael laughs nervously every so often to show he's cool. I realize that unless this breach is mended he may run tonight and although overall I care little, this would rob me of my power to checkmate Brennan by dropping this case self-righteously on the 14th. I have a choice, I can prevent the run or let it happen. I can prevent Michael from running simply by confusing him as to just how serious our argument tonight was, whether we were playing or really fighting. As he emerges from the bathroom I tease him by asking why he quit the game tonight. He is not amused but he does come to the table, sits down, and deals out the cards. We play through the game and by the end the schism is healed. Michael goes to bed counting the days

until Thursday when he can go to ceramics class. And he writes “skill” instead of the usual “luck” in my column of wins, even though of all nights, tonight’s win was my luckiest.

I wake Michael up early for a meeting with Chip Jones during which I do my usual complaining, perhaps carrying it a little too far today. Chip defends Brennan and I feel drawn out and tired and even a little hysterical. Chip seems a bit alarmed. I reiterate the Oct. 14 deadline but in my mind I am prepared to go to Oct. 21 if it will do any good. Chip says that Michael changes every week, gets more open and talkative all the time. Chip is unimpressed by my joking observation that as the kids get less depressed the counselors get more, the kids get happy and healthy and the counselors turn to drink, see a shrink. I do not know whether to take it as a compliment or charge it to the puberty changes that would have come over Michael no matter where he was. Probably a little of me and a lot of nature, no man should presume to think that his will alone could effect even the smallest change in the world. After seeing Chip I am depressed by my own conduct and hysteria, and Michael is gay and talkative as he always is after contact with the outside world.

We walk into Boston to see Juvenile Court, a documentary by Fred Wiseman. After Michael finishes

complaining about the walk, when he sees I will not be swayed, it is quite pleasant and I feel playful and amused by the oddness of Michael's imagination. Tonight he holds forth on the dangers of swimming in a dirty river, not the least of which are "the blades", machinery that sweep up from the bottom of the river to the surface, for cleaning purposes. Then there are the water rats which you might step on in the slime at the bottom of the river. This while crossing the bridge. I tease him about his handcuffs. He wants to be a state trooper and I present several possible conflicts of interest he might one day have to work out. What if you had to arrest your brother? Given his feelings about his older brothers, that would be no problem. How about your mother? Only if she had a boyfriend who made out a report. What about demonstrators against nukes. He consistently holds that as a police officer, regardless of his personal feelings or opinions, he would have to uphold the law and never break it himself. Would you be an honest cop? Pretty honest, honest enough, he says realistically. What if someone was smoking pot in front of him? He'd ask for a toke. What if he were drafted into a war he was opposed to fighting? He would have to go anyway, for the country. A common, straightforward system of ethics, subordination of the individual to the state. A strong sense of caste, no thought of being a judge, just a cop.

Passing MIT we overhear several highbrow

conversations and Michael wonders why people in places like this are always talking about things “higher than themselves” like politics, national policy, etc. These things are up to the president he says. At the film he is something of a celebrity being the only juvenile present and during the film I see several people look toward him to see his reactions. With his headband and blue jean jacket it probably seems to them that he has been adjudicated himself. Michael reacts most strongly to scenes where Rorschach tests are administered since that was a part of his court testing that puzzled him and I think made him feel exposed and victimized. Indeed, this test impressed the evaluators because it indicated a somewhat violent tendency in Michael. He thinks the film was acted by professional actors and I correct him with some difficulty. He takes a film schedule to hang on his wall as a poster.

We walk down to Michael’s ceramics class where he paints his fire hat-piggy bank that he will give his nephew. We go grocery shopping, on the way talking about how soon Halloween will be here. Michael talks as if he expects to be here for Halloween and I cannot tell whether he simply does not comprehend how far off it still is (although stores are already advertising their candies and costumes) or whether he actually hopes to be here then. I have the distinct feeling that Michael has come to like it here and

that it will not be difficult to persuade him to stay an extra week beyond the 14th, or farther if necessary. If I did not need a change and a rest and contact with friends so badly we could go on like this indefinitely. Nevertheless, he does know that the 14th is the end date and talks about finally going home.

Before our landlord arrives in our apartment for a tenants meeting, Michael entertains our neighbors with the memorabilia and projects in his room. He has provided everyone with chairs, and made tea for Laura Blacklow who he has a crush on. He makes sure she and Mrs. Peters are comfortable. The meeting is conducted graciously and with humor. Michael occasionally speaks, always too late and missing the point, but he generally sits quietly, doesn't even really seem to listen. However, having guests in the house is the crowning event of the week and it brightens him, makes him lively and chatty. I sense Michael is a little sad to see the neighbors leave. I am pleased that Michael has learned his place among my people, not as an equal but as a child who would do well to listen and learn. At home in Lowell he has been brought up to take part in adults' conversations freely however wild his misconceptions or immature his outlook because the adults were not much better informed or more mature. Here though, after many fights in the early days of our relationship, he has learned on what terms he is welcome,

how not to intrude and dominate with his strong but wildly erroneous opinions. I am generally pleased with his behavior this evening, no one is too burdened with his attentions.

We go over to Dare house for a mentors meeting where I learn that Michael has an interview at Revival House on Tuesday. We meet Woody Hensly and get bullshitted about our rate increases. Dare hit the rate setting commission for an approx. 10% increase across the board but we mentors are getting an increase of a little less than 5%. I can't believe I said nothing but I guess I was mesmerized like everyone else by Hensly's charisma. If someone popped their head in the room he studiously interrupted himself to greet the person by name. He is tall and slender, dressed in cowboy duds, a short becoming beard and soft hair. He is impressive without his hat, but looks stupid, small and childish under his cowboy hat. In comparison, Chip is growing fat and ugly. I look to Dick Paramour across the room. I take time to look at the other mentors hypnotized by and looking up religiously at Hensly. Only Charlie Eliot is blasphemous. Afterwards I let Chip know that my confidence is somewhat restored after hearing about the reaming out he gave Brennan. He says he went mountain climbing up one side of him and down the other. When I report that I've been paid too much this

week he asks why I'm so honest. So I can make waves when I need to.

At home I tell Michael he has an interview. His good mood immediately gets ugly and he grows obstinate, talks tough. I decide not to argue. I make it sound less than it really is, just a visit to look at the school and see if he likes it. His intuition tells him though that this is the end of the line. Something tells me that it may not be, Revival House with its heavy hitters may not be appropriate and I may want to wait for Stetson. I'd like Michael to spend time in a small country town like Barre rather than another small city like Lowell or Cambridge which is what Fall River is.

We drive up to Lowell, dangerously because I am impatient with the traffic. Michael fears for his life but thinks it is bad Massachusetts drivers, not me. His mother is at Barbara Davis'. They are impressed by Michael's ceramic fire hat. I hang around for a while and then walk around downtown, follow quiet streets along the Merrimack River, witness a wedding and a square dance, eat salad in a quiet restaurant. When I get back to the car the tire is flat, I think I had a premonition about that. I get to the Davis' late but they are grateful because they think I'm late on purpose. I sit with them for a while and have a beer and listen while Mrs. White rationalizes her and her sons' problems. Michael acts like such an angel when he visits home that they conveniently allow themselves to

believe he'd be that way permanently if he returned home. I know, and know Michael, better than that. Mrs. White tells me that Michael said he learned to make his bed every day. They are manipulating and politicking for under all their prolific and vociferous gratitude is the hope that I will eventually concede to them their every wish. They are wrong, I am adamant about Michael's need for a school, but the right school and environment. I do not think he can succeed at home. When we leave Michael's mother keeps from breaking down until after we've pulled out, and though Michael is aware that she's now crying, not seeing it makes it easier for him.

At home we play cards. My friend John Larkin comes over during the game and sits with us in the kitchen while we play. John asks Michael what his plans are and Michael gives a rendition of his insistence on going home. This of course means nothing to John who doesn't know Michael's history so I instruct Michael to answer John's question so John will understand. Michael does not have the wherewithal to do this, so I help him out by asking him the pertinent questions, what have you been doing for the last few months? Where will you most likely be for the next three? Where would you like to be?, etc. He answers them as best he can. After the card game which he loses, he shows John the scorecard. John thinks we're a little crazy but he does not realize how important a simple silly

game like this, played regularly, is to our relationship. I ask Michael to leave us and he obediently reads in his room with none of the trouble he created with Cassandra. John is amazed at the change that has come over Michael since he last saw him back in July.

We take the long drive down to Fall River. At Revival House we meet the headmaster who shows us the living quarters. He is a nice enough guy but does not arouse any respect in me for his insight into kids yet there must be something to him if he can start a place like this. At the living quarters two counselors are heavy, muscle-bound and short, with stubby fingers. They are overworked and do not seem to enjoy the job. The furniture is broken and torn, institutional furniture, not a beautifully outfitted place by any means. The kids come in for lunch, among them is a happy and healthy Richie McCormack, and we all sit down to eat pizza. It is an interesting group of boys and they seem reasonably happy here. This begins to win Michael over.

After lunch Michael and I hang with the kids until the headmaster returns to show us the school. He talks about his school's fiscal difficulties and, when I question him, his own fairly extensive background. He shows us the classrooms which are sparsely furnished and decorated. At the moment we arrive discipline is a problem. The head

teacher is out, along with the social worker and assistant director at a Core evaluation. The house coordinator, another key staff member, is in court today. After seeing the school we are advised to take a walk for twenty minutes and come back when it is hoped they will have returned. We walk down to the river and see a battleship dock.

It turns out that our interview was supposed to be tomorrow, another DYS mix up, but I beg them to conduct a short one today. Barbara the social worker seems to be the mainstay of the school, mother of us all as the headmaster puts it. One by one the kids come in for a psychic stroking and grooming from her. The head teacher does not seem a particularly strong or interesting personality but the assistant director, a young three-piece suited man, is. They ask Michael a few questions which he answers as best he can. He cannot tell them his birth date, among other things. He is however reasonably congenial. They are kindly toward him as they size him up. Then the assistant director takes him out for the interview, and I pour information about Michael into the social worker's ear. She listens attentively but her first question is does he wet the bed. I ask her if there's anything else she'd like to know about him. She takes the joke well. When the assistant director finishes with Michael he wants to know why a residential placement was recommended. I correct

him that I am the one recommending a residential school to help him with his learning disabilities. I ask them to call me tomorrow after they have discussed Michael's case.

We drive to the beautiful Horseneck Beach but it is marred by huge parking lots. I sleep in a dune while Michael collects shells and when I awake I leave him on the beach to explore the dunes behind us. I am away until sunset but return to find Michael waiting. We walk along the beach talking. Michael liked Revival House. Driving home we come to a little restaurant with a gorgeous sunset view of a bay and stop to eat. I think how nice it would be to come here with a friend. We then continue along back roads through the night and take the highway up to Boston.

I get Michael out of bed for a meeting with Chip Jones. Michael is adamant about going home on Friday and not going to school at Revival House. We pressure him as hard as we can but he does not give in. There is nothing much to do anyway until we know Revival's decision, so we leave it at that. Chip finds Michael's obstinacy a positive quality and I suppose it is if one doesn't have to live with it. Chip and Brennan have felt all along that with a counselor Michael might succeed at home. I have felt this way too but this still does not solve Michael's learning problem and I am not convinced that Revival House is an

adequate or effective school, and I begin to concur that the kids there have gotten into far more trouble than Michael. While Chip and I talk Michael comes down to ask if I want him to wash the car. Chip takes this as a gesture of apology for the argument but I believe I know better. Michael has wanted to wash the car for three days, and he came down because he wondered what we were talking about. Chip believes that much of Michael's resistance to school is about being separated from me. This may be true, but to a lesser extent than Chip thinks.

We are indoors all day during which time Michael reads while I practice. Someone rings the buzzer downstairs. John Brennan climbs the stairs and says point blank, implying no choice, to Michael, You've been accepted at Revival House. Michael is taken by surprise and, to my surprise, he only asks for a weekend at home before going to school. Brennan hesitates but I signal him with my eyes to agree, so all is arranged. Brennan stays a few minutes longer while Michael talks on and on and shows John his drawings for his gang. Michael is aware of how angry his demands made me yesterday and this seems to be why he modified them. I walk Brennan downstairs where he tells me Revival House loved Michael but they were afraid his IQ was too low, in the fifties. This is a shock and a revelation to me, no wonder I've had such

trouble holding on to my sanity. Michael seems satisfied with the compromise he has made with Brennan. I am happy it's almost over and hopeful that Revival House is better than I think it is.

Chip comes over to see how I feel about the whole thing. Chip asks Michael if he'll miss me and Michael rather callously says no, indicates harshly that he'll never want to see or hear from me again. This does not upset me much since that's exactly how I feel about him. Chip in the usual clinician's style thinks this is not true, that Michael underneath the tough talk is feeling trauma about separating from me. I am doubtful but Chip thinks I underestimate myself, the inroads I have made into Michael's feelings. Chip points out all the shells and drawings Michael has put around the house, and the one that says "Bob's Room" over my door as proof of his affection. Michael's mother said to him she bets he'll miss Bob at the end of all this. Neither Michael nor I bother to make believe we'll miss each other. No love lost in this case, just a job. Michael mentioned to her how often and ferociously we fight. Considering our true feelings about each other, this relationship has gone reasonably well. But miss each other we will not, regardless of what Chip Jones and Mrs. White think normal human emotion would dictate. I tell Chip I will be on vacation until shortly after Thanksgiving. I feel him hesitate but he concedes the

month, saying I need it and deserve it. It is fortunate that he can rationalize it because I'd rather quit this job than shorten this vacation by even a day.

Michael is up early because today is the big day and he counts off the minutes until it is time to go over to Dare house for the mentors meeting. We go late. I have had a premonition all week that is soon confirmed. Michael cannot start school Monday because a Core evaluation has not yet been done and will not be done for another three weeks. At this point I am more amused than angry. Another DYS slip up, they could have asked for a Core three months ago. Chip presses me for an answer about what I intend to do. If I go on vacation Michael will be placed in-house which would be particularly bad for him now that the kid who set the fire with him is there. I decide to continue the case only to Oct. 28 since if Michael's Core is not done by then it is too late anyway because Revival House intends to fill its slots by the end of the month. It begins to look like I have been Michael's sole therapy and that may be all he gets. On the way to my dental appointment I explain to him the problem but let him believe it is just a week's delay. He is willing to accept the situation since all he really cares about is this weekend at home. I make a point of telling him that I can get him a different mentor now if he would prefer. He wants to stay

with me.

Michael says that if his mother has cooked he will invite me to stay for dinner. When we get to Lowell Michael hurries in way ahead of me. The house is smoky and confused, stereo blasting and a group of six or seven older teenagers, Roger's friends, hanging out. In the kitchen is Mrs. White and one of her hang-dog boyfriends. She draws me aside to tell me that now she too has been arrested on a charge of larceny. She got into a car with one of the Davis kids and when they got stopped it turned out it was stolen. I tell her not to worry about it but she is concerned what Michael will think and asks me to help explain. She also tells Michael that he, she and Rodney will stay at their grandmother's for the weekend. This is a definite disappointment for Michael and I can see she's going to have trouble with him about it. He wants to hang out with friends in the neighborhood. I help her out a little by telling Michael that if he doesn't give his mother any trouble and he's ready and waiting for me on Monday that perhaps he'll get another weekend at home before he goes to school. Although excited about being home and the gang of kids in the house (who don't seem to take as much notice of Michael as he does of them), he still has presence of mind to say a meaningful goodbye when I leave.

I pick Michael up in Lowell three hours late on my way back from Vermont. He gives me no trouble leaving, just a little last minute tough talk about how this is the last week and not to ask him for another extension. He has worked with a construction crew all weekend tearing down some of the abandoned buildings in his neighborhood and is sleepy. He talks about working with them if he returns home for good but I decide not to bullshit him and I tell him it's just hit or miss work, nothing steady. At home I eat and Michael cooks macaroni and cheese. Lastly we play cards and Michael wins for the third night in a row. I make several mistakes, I don't know what's happening to me. Perhaps just as I caught Michael's depression I've now inherited his intelligence. I am a bad, bad loser and go right to bed so I don't have to suffer Michael's teasing. Some of my own medicine forced back down my throat.

Michael gets up and right away we are at each other for little things that, after he has showered, eventually develop into an argument over his desire for this weekend at home. What bothers me about him is that he never thanked me for getting him last weekend, plus he threatens me with running if I don't let him go home this weekend. Actually, he really deserves both weekends after all the time he has put in here. Michael is angry,

doing his tough talk act but I am having a hilarious time irritating him by countering all his threats with a calm assurance that I can stop him if I want to. He harps on his last run but I cut him down to size saying anyone can run when someone gives him the freedom and trust I gave Michael. During lunch I receive several phone calls and it is arranged that Michael will go home on Friday and stay home until Tuesday when the Core evaluation will be done and he will be taken to Fall River. I tell Michael only that he got his weekend at home, not that it is until Tuesday, nor that he will go to school on that day. I am afraid that if I tell him he will arrange to disappear on Tuesday morning, so I will only tell him that Brennan will pick him and his mother up that day for the Core. Michael's demeanor changes entirely upon hearing the news.

We walk up to Central Square to see a couple of movies that star Robert Mitchum, *Crossfire* and *Out of the Past*, the second of which is an excellent detective movie, on a par with anything Bogart ever did. Michael and I sit separately as is our habit but he no longer makes an effort to cuddle up to some lone woman. I am always surprised that girls his age find him at all attractive, glancing at him as they pass on the streets. On the way to the films we argue about the respective merits and demerits of Lowell and New York. We must sound like a pair of prize idiots to anyone who overhears our absurd feud. Michael wins

pretty soundly with the theme of cockroach infestations. Back home we play our card game which he loses. Even though I have experienced the smart of Michael's ribbing when I lost the last few games, I tease him mercilessly. He goes to bed soon after claiming that I cheated him.

We decide to do a laundry sometime today. During the afternoon I paint my rocking chair and Michael sits in the doorway of my room to watch. Just as I finish Chip Jones calls to say Michael is to go home today instead of tomorrow. Michael is elated but there is also a trace of sadness at the end of an era, and shock at the suddenness of the change. Furthermore I tell him that he will be going home not just for the weekend but until Tuesday when he will start school. We must leave right away and, of course, find Mrs. White at Barbara Davis'. She wants Michael at home but says she's willing to try school if it will help Michael. She is satisfied that her boys are not getting in trouble, "doing good" she calls it, and has no higher aspirations for them. I shake hands with her, she is limp, and tell her to call me if she or Michael ever need help. I go out and find Michael just beginning work with a construction crew. We shake hands, the farewell is brief, warm and friendly.

Election Day

I wake up in a city that never sleeps. The city does sleep briefly from 3-4 a.m. if you've ever walked up 6TH Avenue from the Village to Penn Station stores are shuttered with metal gates and a periodic cab shoots up the avenue like a proton in a particle accelerator. Shortly after 4 surgeons begin arriving from the suburbs and OR crews are washing up checking charts and waking patients. I arrived in NY and got a tolerable clerical job with R.R. Bowker in a relatively pleasant office. My work was appreciated but I grew impatient with it and went to a better paying but more boring job digitizing documents for the AT&T antitrust case. I couldn't take the ennui and quit, thinking I could get another job easily enough. But it was not easy, I suffered rejection after rejection, ran out of money and had to start from scratch with NYPIRG raising money for progressive causes door to door in the suburbs on commission. It was difficult to approach so many people in a day without becoming mechanical and that is sure failure in a sales job. I was fired the same day the Museum of the American Indian fortunately hired me. While the museum wasn't challenging work, it was safe and secure and paid the rent.

Without a job, contributing purpose, yer nobody. Yet there is chaotic life all around me. A woman died of a

drug overdose next door. For a few days all the lights in the apartment were on and there was no movement. I thought the couple had gone traveling and left the lights on for security. A lamp had been shining brightly from their apartment into mine for several days. I was suspicious and last night, about 4 a.m., I put diffidence aside and tried to look in their windows. I thought I saw a body in the bed, in a strange upright position, but I couldn't be sure, I couldn't make sense out of the position so I decided to wait until tomorrow and get the landlady to open the apartment. I got home from work to a crowd and a police car. They are taking hours to bring the matter to a close. The light still shines but now it's personal, just me and the light. It seems pointless to tell anyone just how close to this death I have been living. I am sad for her death although I never knew her. I pieced together some of the story from people in the street. The guy who lived with her died last week of an overdose and was taken from the house in a coma. I feel ashamed that there were such desperate people living not ten yards away from me and I knew nothing about it due to my own insularity. I knew they had problems but I didn't want to get involved. It was four days before she was discovered. I suppose it would take that long for anyone to find me. They must have been very attached to each other for her to want to follow him.

I'm still striving for meaningful work. This week, as

part of the interview process, I must submit to Councilman Henry Stern a paper on the importance of Audubon Terrace for the surrounding neighborhood so he can decide if I get the job as his aide. Unfortunately, I haven't a lot to say on the subject. At yesterday's interview with Stern, I met almost every city official you can think of other than the mayor. It was hard to hear what they were saying because they talk just above a whisper and are all shorter than me. But I was in on all the conversations about what to advise the mayor on vetoing the budget. After work Henry and I went for a swim and a steam bath at Jack Lalanne's health spa in the Woolworth building. Henry seemed lonely. We sat by the fountain and talked when he ought to have been getting back to his wife and kid on the one night when he didn't need to go to meetings.

The day with Stern started out listening to him and Jane Trichter get interviewed by Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett. Mostly they talked about a possible Kennedy candidacy. No great insights, sounded like any other citizens. Newfield is intelligent and fluent, Trichter is a big woman, powerful and sure of herself, Barrett is young and glib but was the only one to introduce himself to me. What the interview was really about I never found out. Trichter did an analysis of Carol Bellamy, the Council President, how she is isolated so she is without real power, just making speeches every day without any impact. At the Council

meeting she was ineffective at even quieting the room full of council members who were like a high school lunchroom.

When Stern sent me on an errand I got the wrong room number and came back empty-handed and that looked like it put me out of the running for the job. But I figured I'd play my hand and it turned out to be an interesting night. Let's just say the city's politicians are human. They are subject to the process, no one gets above it in any more than theory and few have a vision. Stern asked What does the city need? I was pretty inarticulate, something about strengthening neighborhoods. I told him you see a lot on the subway but he said it takes too long to get around that way. It is a regular little social world around City Hall, the mayor asks Henry to go to the movies with him Friday night.

Well, I got the job. I carry a briefcase and wear a tie. This weekend I brought home a report on Section 501 Housing, a proposal for waste disposal and conversion, and taxi industry stuff for which I must present some ideas on Monday. The last six weeks since starting work in the City Council have been intense and busy but I don't feel much affinity for people at City Hall and this makes me believe that my future does not lie in politics. Tom, the other aide, is leaving soon but I have not made any of the contacts that he has in government. I will never be mayor which was an

amusing thought in the first place. I like uptown better than downtown. Uptown there is rain and the woods in the park in back of my house, it's quiet and there is not much commerce, far from the center of the empire.

Humid summer, air conditioned office, teeming streets. I don't enjoy researching and writing press releases although I can see how I have improved at that kind of writing. Paper pushers in the business of communicating and accounting. Who does the real work, operates and repairs the subway late at night, wee hours of the morning, men in orange, mostly black, covered with soot and carrying heavy equipment. On the streets women in high heels are like exotic birds. Can I walk a mile in those shoes? Can they climb a mountain? In Battery Park you can buy a joint and forget your troubles looking at the waves on the bay. You can go to Rockaway and play chess on the boardwalk with an old retiree. You can go to City Island for an afternoon drink at the Black Whale.

Today is Labor Day and laboring I am. This weekend I had a revelation that my dissatisfaction with working for Councilman-at-Large Henry Stern lies in the petty issues he chooses to pursue. This localizes my boredom, it is not something wrong with me, the issues I am compelled to research are simply not interesting. For instance, this week I enjoyed reading and understanding, becoming an expert on, the 208 Water Quality Plan. Henry told me to

stop studying it because it will result in no “written product” and get back to apartment referral services. If I can master the Water Quality Plan I ought to be able to knock off the apartment referral press release in a few hours. I’m better than that.

On the one hand I am tired of my work in the City Council, the sheer hours necessary, and am ready to quit, glad at least to have seen what politics and government are like and gotten the dream out of my system. On the other hand I feel that if I let myself I could be a competent administrator but that would mean giving up my arts, admitting that I never had the talent in the first place to make a contribution as an artist. A friend once said that I could die tomorrow secure in my place in literature because of Janie Huzzie Bows. That seemed a bit much. I attempt to write in fits and starts but nothing is produced. I come home drained from work (although there’s absolutely no guarantee that were I home all day I’d have something to say) and in the morning hurry to the subway.

Friday night was depressing because I ran around delivering press releases to news agencies with Tom and Henry. Tom thinks that my relationships with people are superficially dramatic but detached, not really affecting people below the surface, I’m holding myself aloof. Now that I am back in the city I dream again of the unpopulated reaches of Utah, the red cliffs of northeastern Utah where

few people go except sheep herders and dinosaur hunters. I cannot decide whether to give up in despair of ever creating order out of confusion or keep on struggling in noble evolution. The notion possesses me that our destiny is to make the earth a star.

This week I did my first major press release and the thrill was no compensation for the pain in the ass the project was in every other respect. When you boil it down I am nothing but an administrative secretary. I have never enjoyed writing anything but my own poetry. What tempts me to keep the job is that it's what I had decided several years ago I wanted to do, and here I am doing it. There is a certain ego gratification in knowing the inside story and I like working hard but work is impinging on my writing and music. However, it is secure, it pays the rent (although not much more) and I have mastered the job (more or less). Now the question is, is it something to grow in and express myself through? My feeling is no. Although I like Henry's honesty, even his obnoxiousness, and have fun doing battle with him, I don't feel I'm doing real work. The press releases are trivial compared to my work counseling youths which was the most vibrant work I ever did.

The other aides have been coming to me, taking the time to get to know me, but just as I am making friends I am considering leaving. Although I like the people I work

with, I always end up going and never seeing them again. I can go a long way back to gone relationships but just in the year that I've been back in New York there were Ernie and Angela at Bowker, Ted at Aspen, Fred and Beth at NYPIRG, Barbara at the museum, and now the other aides at the City Council. No lasting relationships. Last night after work the A train didn't come for a long time. Jim found me waiting a half hour after I left the office. So I took the E up to Penn Station where I mailed the press releases at the post office. The MUSE concert against nuclear reactors was starting and there were a lot of kids protesting. I wandered among them in my tie and jacket thinking how not so long ago I was one of them.

It is hard to know if I'm about to be fired or raised. The signals are so hard to interpret. The clothes I wore to work today made an outrageous combination, Henry took a double take but otherwise reactions were muted. When I told Henry I had no bank account he seemed shocked and curious. I tried to imply that it was because I wasn't paid enough to need one. He seemed amused by my press release on peddlers but in what way I couldn't say. Amused at the same old small potato issues, or amused at my simple ideas, or simply amused at the whole general attempt, kindly amused, understandably amused, amazed that I didn't have a bank account. Or perhaps he was laughing at my convoluted writing and enjoying it, so

confusing in an effort to say everything. You cannot do everything but you must do something, although it doesn't much matter what. There's so much to do and only me to do it. Fortunately, Leslie starts on Monday and in time she'll take part of the burden but for now training and teaching her is going to be an added task for which I have not quite worked up enthusiasm. I am managing well enough, however, so that Henry can be away the whole day and the office still functions in top form. When he's present we have our usual conflicts but even he has to admit that I'm doing the work and doing it well.

Yesterday I attended the mayor's bill signing, wrote two press releases, met the Commissioner of General Services and gave him a tour of the building. There wasn't much to show him but for official form and grace it was interesting. How the maintenance workers followed us around keen to catch every word and fearful of the commissioner's power over them. He is a little like Henry, a neurotic perfectionist. I could hardly find time to eat a couple of bananas. I certainly did not take an hour for lunch. Once I walked down to the Battery on a day I was depressed and thinking of quitting, Henry had behaved like such an asshole, and that was the longest lunch I ever took.

I like the quiet, depressed reality of north Manhattan and the Bronx, far from the commercial bustle

downtown. Drink tea and sweep the house, shake the rug out on the roof and write lyric poems about it. See the sun arc from northeast to southwest, observe it from the hill behind the house. The river and the morning as it has been for thousands of years. Instead I go downtown and participate in the government and politics of people. It has come to this bit of inexorable devilment, one must work and this job is not as bad as most. I leave the house looking handsome in my tie and shaven face and buy a newspaper going to the train. I have argued that there is no reason for everyone to work, that the social order can support more leisure time for everyone. But someone has to gather pinyon nuts. Someone has to draw water from the well and hunt for winter. Someone must gather wood for the fire. For now, that's me.

I'm taking a day off from work for the first time in three months. I walk uptown toward the Thalia to see Romeo and Juliet. Above Broadway I spy a flock of geese flying south for winter. How sad it makes me to see them go and how I long for a life in nature like theirs. Then I turn back to the street and children in particular pierce me with their beauty. At the theater there is a line and I think to myself this could be a way to attract more customers. Even though she is always suspicious of me because her theater is in what is now a marginal neighborhood with many alcoholics and addicts, I am rooting for the

proprietor to succeed. She is a heavy woman with a hairy face, bristles. There are many teens to see Romeo & Juliet, a good movie thanks to Shakespeare, the language and costumes, authentic medieval music and wondrous medieval dances. Although the kids, particularly the Latino girls up front, are loud at times I feel privileged to hear their reactions. They are crass at seeing Romeo nude and Juliet's bust and the girls laugh uproariously at the first sight of a codpiece. There is a misunderstanding with the whites behind them over how to view a movie, whether one can or should talk. I am in favor of a reasonable amount of talk, which I admit the girls occasionally overdo, but the whites behind them seek to impose quiet and largely, though not entirely, fail. I do not blame them, both groups make their views known and some compromise is reached but not without a near altercation which finally makes everyone a little more sensitive to differences.

I'm actually fairly pleased with my command of the office although I suppose in the last analysis it's no great accomplishment. Although I keep the shop running smoothly and everyone happily working, we don't produce any important studies, press releases or legislation. I don't have time to do these things and Henry does not provide much direction. Nevertheless I've learned a lot about managing and leading people, how to get the work done and yet have a place where rules don't

have to be enforced through fear, a place where relationships are based on mutual respect. So, while we're not doing much of substance that a legislative office should be doing, I do like being in charge. Last night after work I took a walk with Leslie and Sara. After giving up my attachment to having sex with someone, anyone, social relationships with women become much easier and more sensual. Instead of taking my desire for a relationship so seriously, I started joking and playing a little with Leslie. It didn't take long for her to warm up to it. I am attracted to her terse little sexual body that I imagine so pleasurably in just her underwear in many abandoned positions. Yet instead of Leslie, I ended up walking uptown with Sara. Leslie is a bit of a princess although she has for the most part proven herself willing to work hard, even staying late with me last night. Whether that was curiosity about me or commitment to the office I don't know. Nevertheless when I think of sex I think of Leslie in her underpants.

The thought of going to work tomorrow thoroughly repels me. I was amused Friday when Henry suggested I had learned much since first starting in June. Learned what? It's been a job with few high points that I have done not especially well or with distinction. While driving Henry to community meetings at night, I discussed my increasingly unhappy unsatisfactory performance and told him it's time to start looking for a new aide. I couched my

future resignation in the most general terms, that we should look now just so each of us is prepared and protected later. It was flattering (or a left-handed compliment) when he said that it can't hurt to look, we might come up with someone really super. Although Henry seems satisfied with my work, I am troubled, so troubled that I wish to give the job to someone more energetic who can write useful legislation and conduct important investigations.

Last night Leslie and I saw a bad play, *The Elephant Man*, and on the train I toyed with the idea of taking her home but decided not to. The prospect of waking up together and instead of a leisurely morning lying in bed, going to the office together did not inspire. She was torn between her modesty and desire. She almost approached me but ended up awkwardly standing at a distance, a little embarrassed and smiling too much. Not wanting her to go away discouraged, I kissed her lips as she left the train. They were tighter and smaller than I'd imagined. I do not doubt that she would be a total pleasure in bed. I believe she hasn't had a lot of experience with men but looks forward to it. She looks a little too much like my mother for comfort. So tomorrow early I return at least temporarily to the torture chamber where I engage Henry in our spelling bee and Leslie in our slow dance and indecision. On the other hand, there has not been so much

foolish talk of war in a decade and who knows into what massive fault of history my insignificant life will fall.

Saving and shaping New York City like Robert Moses or Jane Jacobs is, hopefully, out of my system. The worst horror would be to leave the job and then miss it and find the old fantasies about political effectiveness still plaguing me. It should probably be expected. Put in perspective, this job was a manifestation of a political upheaval, so to speak, within me which took earlier form as working for presidential candidates or taking over college buildings and protesting the war. My life may not be as disconnected as I have led you to believe. I am a political person and I have taken my ideas and ideals further than some. What poet, what great poet, has not been close to the center of his times politically. In this light my activities make more sense, that I do not sustain them as a profession may not be so dishonorable.

I will not try to gauge my effectiveness too closely but let it be said that while I satisfied my itch for experience, I have not moved the world even an inch. I am a bit player in the show and while I play my role with flair and drama, I play it superficially. I am a good man, good (and ineffectual) first and a man (of action) second. I have not really made a difference. I have almost made a fetish of not making a difference and have found the world too heavy to move. I also wonder if I'm becoming more

conservative. Working for Councilman-at-large Henry J. Stern is a more conservative activity than demonstrating in the streets and occupying buildings. My philosophy that the best government is the government that does least conflicts with the idea that a purpose of government is to redistribute wealth. Henry is inclined to distribute wealth to and through recognized institutions rather than individual innovators and renegades. One must learn how to read a budget. But I'm back from my ruminations to draft a lukewarm City Council resolution calling on the federal government to impose price controls on fuel oil.

A few days off from work to recover from the flu. Also, to see how Leslie manages the office on her own. Poor Leslie, unhappy with her job and just jilted by her lover. I offer sympathy, take her home for dinner and, of course, try to get her into bed with me but she says no and I was too sick to have enjoyed it anyway. I feel bad for her in her New York City loneliness and offer her friendship as an antidote. It is ironic that someone lonely as me should try to alleviate loneliness. She is young and it is odd to see her problems and hear her pronouncements. Much of her confusion comes from simply not having experiences to compare her present situation to. I probably made a mistake in hiring her since she has no political ideals and therefore has no reason to endure Henry's oppression. Even I, who came with relatively well-defined goals, suffer

and must periodically re-chart my course. Perhaps she should have taken that job with CBS, a job in private enterprise with no responsibility for setting policy. No doubt I am at fault for allowing my sexual attraction to influence hiring her. For myself, to my surprise, lately I am somewhat more interested in the job and have pretty much decided to tough it out until June.

Yesterday I interviewed four individuals interested in my job. Two were honest and intelligent with a commitment to working for social change. Working for social change, what does that mean. Anyway, barring antics on Henry's part or the candidates' seeing the job and Henry for what they are in time to avoid getting involved, it should not prove difficult to replace myself. The interviewing has clarified for me what the job, ideally, is about. Of course, in reality, it has been a great disappointment. Because I spent so little time with Henry, my resume looks no better than it did before I started, the resume of one who cannot stay long in any job and has seemingly never made a significant contribution. But the alternative, to continue with Henry, filing his appointments, faking our importance, is too soul-embalming to consider.

It is winter in New York, the difficult, dangerous season. Last night I got on the subway at 59th St. Young guy sitting across from me spits on the floor. Sees me look

disapprovingly and gives me the finger, scratching his chin with it. Does it a couple of times. Embarrassed as I am and willing to consider that I should not be policing the world, I hold my position. He's really looking for trouble provoking me because he's not as big as me and all that keeps my boot out of his ass is the possibility that he carries a knife or gun. He sleeps, or feigns sleeping. Near 200th St., next to last stop, he gets up and strides quickly to the next car. I wonder if he's afraid that I've stayed aboard to the end of the line to confront him. He may just have wanted to move up closer to the exit.

Is the world falling part or evolving or both? There is such contradictory evidence. The disappearance of so many species as a result of mankind's success is upsetting. I miss the other animals! And man is sometimes so violent. On the other hand, the hawk living in Inwood Hill Park is a sign of evolution, that perhaps animals can live with humans. The many, almost too many, hawks in Utah. The fact that the extinction of the snail darter was a consideration in building a dam, even though the dam was built anyway, may be an encouraging sign. So it continues, I work the pointless job, Henry is a tolerant enough boss, and I in my turn am a tolerant boss as well. I still desire Leslie but she resists, truly sensing I don't love or care about her. I don't know why I work other than to pay the rent and satisfy some law of existence. Under absolutely

no circumstances will I stay with Henry beyond June. I could be persuaded to try one more challenging job here in New York, youth work.

No Cows to Look At

The interview at Spofford Juvenile Detention Center, which seemed to go well, sent me on a sidwinder. Why did Spofford launch me on this two day twister, temporarily knocking me from my course of quiet practice. Everything seemed quite possible, even likely, but soon the subway strike will begin and I'll be gloriously isolated in my cave in north Manhattan. I'll have to buy a car to get to work because there's no direct public transportation from here to the South Bronx. I wonder to what advantage I can use my music and poetry at Spofford. I envision a poetry group for incarcerated youths. It's been almost two weeks since leaving my job with Henry Stern in the City Council, now I enjoy my mornings drinking tea, sitting in the warm sun, listening to birds. This morning reminds me of cool, absolutely clear Utah mornings. I have been back in New York for almost two years. My philosophy that how you earn your livelihood defines you, defines me. My job would probably entail guiding a group of adolescents through a portion of their day's activities while at the same time providing inspiration, counseling and a role model.

The next day I had an interview at Covenant House as an overnight floor counselor. As in the interview the day before I was given a hard time about not staying with my

jobs long enough. The job market is tight enough so that my weaknesses can be attacked. The interview was rigorous and aggressive but I received an appointment for a second meeting. That's today in two hours. It was interesting that my response to what I'd feared would be my downfall clinched it. What is my attitude toward drug use? Coming off a three day high and feeling disgusted and anxious about myself, I could honestly answer that I think drugs should be avoided, they retard development.

I was impressed by Covenant House, people seemed happy. Also, a variety of and tolerance for other people and faiths although Covenant House is a Catholic institution. That's how the interviewer and I got into a long discussion about how I would counsel a pregnant teenager. Were the two young black women in blue habits novitiates or Muslims? I was grilled so severely that I forgot to ask anything about Covenant House or the nature of my potential duties. Afterwards I went to see the Empire Strikes Back, entertaining but I found the relationships vapid. No signs of life other than the central characters. Yoda is too much out of Lord of the Rings but recalls Da Liu to me, his impatience with my impatience and thoughtlessness. As with all master stereotypes of late, this depicts a skilled and wise being with many eccentricities and idiosyncrasies. Apparently all zen and tai chi masters absent-mindedly wear their pajamas to the

bank and fish market.

The days' dates and names do not have much meaning or reference for me now that I work nights. My original enthusiasm about working for Covenant House quickly waned into my usual complaint about the amount of time I must work and, correspondingly, the old concern about what is my true commitment to kids as represented by my running straight home to smoke pot after work. How much do I really care? It is basically the job of a hall monitor, residents asleep most of the time, and in the morning dealing with the anger and egos of fighting homeless street youths. Covenant House is also disappointing in that there is no serious supervision, no continuity with residents, I am merely expected to get them up in the morning and must deal with the surface of their problems, the most frustrating face of them, and never contribute to the solutions or develop the relationships I had at Dare. The best that can be said is that I'm seeing another side of social work and another side of New York City.

I am now seriously questioning how much longer I want to remain in NY. My commitment did not amount to much. This morning coming home from work through the stench of Saturday night vomit and dissolution, past bums who look like they've been cleaning sidewalks with themselves, seem part of the sidewalk. Stink of piss and

vomit in subway, dirt and sticky grime. On the other hand the incredible beauty of New Yorkers, young Latino, black and white couples, the energy of New York City youth. Even the kids at Covenant House, beautiful, not hopeless. My search is for that rare confluence of people, a group with common goals, philosophy and love. That seemed possible at first glance at Covenant House but now in talking with staff I see they are all disillusioned and discontent. I wonder how I can use my other talents to be more creative on the job. Is there any room for creativity, even a card or chess game with a kid? What a struggle life has become, for everyone it seems. Something is not quite working, survival of the fittest is now the only imperative. The guy I worked with last night, Butch, likes to talk about himself, hear the sound of his own voice and construction of his own sentences, but was not interested in knowing about me. When I started to speak he put on his glasses and went back to paperwork. People talk a lot of love and kindness at Covenant House but what opportunity is there to act on it.

I have definitely decided to quit Covenant House. All that enthusiasm and talk of commitment melted like an ice cube in hot tea in only three or four nights of work. I think I'm a little fucked up about work to say the least, although today I had an interview to provide job counseling at Jobs for Youth. Ironically, I made a good

impression on the program director who is setting up a second interview. The only drawback of Jobs for Youth is it's a 9-5 job. Otherwise, other factors are positive, one on one counseling rather than group work, a variety of tasks and contacts make up the job, not a desk job, some travel through the city required. Oh, another drawback is the low pay. The interviewer keyed in on the fact that all my jobs lasted less than a year but I made no bones about commitment, said in a year and a half I'd be deciding whether to stay in NY and that's the best I could offer. So, Covenant House was a mistake. I get to deal with the anger and danger of the youths without contributing at all to the solutions to their problems. I doubt that anyone at Covenant House is finding solutions. There is no program to speak of. Teens and young adults come to sleep and eat there, are encouraged to find work and that's it. I come to work and do the laundry or paperwork through the night, then wake them up in the morning and listen to them fight over stolen clothes, and suffer their bad tempers just because I'm the nearest counselor at hand and white. Fuck this, before I get shot in the face.

Times are hard for everyone but I am particularly selfish and spoiled. The other counselors at Covenant House have to work there for survival. I choose other forms of suffering. I'd rather live on \$50 a week, and never travel, give up movies and friends, just disappear, than

suffer eight hours a day or night of wage labor. The racial issue may or may not be important but I find myself around black people more than ever, on the job, working in or walking through neighborhoods, on the subway. My basic positive feeling for blacks remains, they are family and community as much as if not more than whites, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, but I am aware of how that does not reduce my chances of being randomly offed for having light skin by some angry, crazy individual or individuals. My size and bearing, willingness to fight, keeps a distant respect so far, but the summer has only just begun. Life is getting rougher and tougher, times are hard, and holding it together both socially and in one's personal life is difficult.

And I am still so alone. Should I follow Samantha Reads Your Stars advice and find an uncomplicated, happy go lucky woman? One or two of the women at Covenant House are attractive to me, and it's gotten so on the street I could climb aboard nine out of ten of those leggy well-dressed women I pass with no embarrassment. My mind is full of raw pornography and I have no time for a loving relationship. Getting her to my neighborhood seems an overwhelming obstacle and I don't feel patient enough to woo her, make her feel welcome and warm and wanted. My mind hurries ahead to tomorrow morning, next week, the next task, the poem or tune I am working on, the next

shift at work, the rent, an hour on the subway this way or that, what is my next step in getting my books published, how long can I afford to live in New York, will I ever be able to afford to leave. I am the male counterpart it seems of the new woman who is also sex lonely but has no time to indulge. I remember two observations a friend made about me. One, that he could see me as a middle-aged man, alcoholic and alone. I probably won't succumb to alcohol but pot is a good bet. And two, that the trines in my palm would make my life hard. The trines represent my competing aspirations, talents and interests, writing, trumpet, counseling, city, country, etc. that seem impossible to reconcile as a Rubik cube.

Last night I was dissatisfied with my performance at work. For one thing I need to get more sleep during the day so I don't fall asleep on the job. Now that I am more or less committed to this job, it is time to start attending meetings, staying awake and not bragging about dozing, using the system of paperwork and meetings to communicate my observations and ideas. Each of my ideas has some drawbacks, such as staffing continuity on the floors, since this would lock the staff into unchanging teams and reduce useful experimentation. By using the contact sheets to document changes in and needs of the residents, we work as one large team even if the parts are anonymous. I put in a maintenance request for lights in a

room and linen closet and when I returned after two nights off, the deed had been done. So, let's play the system the way it's built for a while. One of my worst habits has been to become a rebel long before I have mastered the existing system. There is some dissatisfaction on staff, but that is not yet my problem, I'm still new and learning. But not so new that I should continue to make mistakes like sending obviously psychotic young adults over from Eighth to Tenth Avenue. The thing for now is to learn more and serve more effectively. Service of course is the key, not my usual egoistical drive for leadership and, failing that, rebellion.

Work has settled into a routine, I am relatively insignificant, not making the contribution that I could. It is important at this point to remember I am still new, still learning, not yet responsible. Paula, my supervisor and now lover, is so deeply involved in the politics and personal disputes of the place that she and Covenant House have become inseparable, I cannot any longer imagine being at work without her. We keep our relationship a secret. Today the counselor I worked with last night asked Paula to breakfast but backed out upon learning I would be there too. Paula is a much sought after woman, it's curious that I should be the one to possess her so completely. She is loyal, devoted to our relationship, and so quickly. She was, as was I, very lonely. To keep it in

perspective, we have been together only a couple of weeks, every day, all day. For some reason, she believes this is it for her and there's something attractive about that, takes what is for me the great uncertainty out of love. I needn't waste energy being jealous knowing there can be no competition. On the other hand, Paula is a bright woman, but not brilliant. She values her insights into people yet they are sometimes crude and expressed insensitively. I fear getting involved with another person with all her foibles. Yet I like the companionship she provides and how she is so enamored of my meager talents. My ego is satisfied by so effortlessly beating out the other men at work for her affection.

Dark, passionate, on the edge of self-control, unable to refrain from arguing, sometimes confronting without having listened and understood. Yet, for me, Paula provides of a sense of completion, wholeness. Her active passion counteracts my inclination for passivity. And she is willing to want me. But is she willing it too much? Is this another relationship to be willed, or will it exist of itself. Is it as they say, all relationships take work, will, as well as needing to be made in heaven? For the answers to these questions alone Paula is worth pursuing. Paula is prepared to give up her relations with other men to be mine. It's almost amusing, and I will admit scary, to see her doubts about me, who I am, whether she really likes me much,

crossing her face like jet planes. This love dependency is counteracted by my need to write, be alone, accomplish my solitary ends. I love her commitment to monogamy, because that takes out of the relationship one of my great fears, that the woman may at any time switch her affections to another man. This has been the source of such bitter pain for me in the past. In turn, she demands the same loyalty from me, which I believe I can provide. The sexual abounds taking me beyond the point of pleasure into the realm of work. Paula insists on this sexuality while I sometimes lose interest. Perhaps I need to eat more meat.

I still find Covenant House interesting because so many different people make a variety of situations and problems to solve. I like working with the residents and enjoy talking with the staff. I have many suggestions for improving services: 1) office for job placement; 2) apartment referral service; 3) help residents open bank accounts; 4) expand referral possibilities; 5) a daytime athletic, recreation and education program. I am comfortable working with this population, which makes me confident that I can work with young people in any setting. This means I can go anywhere and live on this skill. How long will I remain at Covenant House? So far, so good. Paula is an assistant supervisor and therefore my boss a couple of nights a week. Our relationship is not quite what she was looking for I think. She wanted virtual marriage

but I am loathe to tie myself down. She is a good woman, devoted and loyal, intelligent and sensitive although sometimes too contentious, a skilled, hard worker who can handle herself well in the heart of darkness. Few women, or men, could take for long the intensity of working at Covenant House.

I have a strong urge to leave New York. Paula cries when I speak of going away. Take her too. Amazing that a woman likes me that much, I thought it would never happen. She is loyal, beautiful in her way, patient and loving, intelligent, talented and scrappy and I can be proud to be with her. But is what we're doing together, this life, right for me? I've sort of slipped into it, somewhat out of control, no forethought. Of course, the process can at any time be reversed by me. At Covenant House I remain quiet and gentle on the outside, firm and prepared within. I get along with most staff and residents although the intense factionalism of the place does affect me and I may not be accomplishing much. On the other hand, my effect may be greater than I know, having chosen to lay low and not attract attention. I don't feel my old ambition to create change through confrontation, to seem radical and different, dissatisfied with the old ways. Now I choose to be a team player and not a star. I am still dedicated to the youths, placing my work with them as it fits into the Covenant House system above any ambition for myself.

You serve others so that they in turn may serve others ad infinitum the species goes on. One acts blindly but with good will and malice toward none. I'm the tall, quiet white guy.

Paula is walking around the apartment in football jersey, underwear and sneakers. We've just completed moving her into my apartment and it is propitious that her possessions fit reasonably well. However, last night we had the inevitable discussion of sexuality, we do not make love frequently enough or with enough passion to satisfy her. I staved off further questioning and probing by saying it's a time of my life when sex is not a focus, an intense interest of mine, that it has been in the past and may be in the future, but not now. I suppose this is as close to the truth as we'll get about my sexuality for now. It is true that Paula does not excite me as other women have but what can one do? She is she and I am me and that is that. It is probably worth exploring the correlation between living together and lower sexual intensity. Liz, it would probably please Paula to know, was not an especial sexual turn on for me either. And Karen once complained that our sex wasn't wild enough. What can I say? I sigh. Paula seemed to enjoy telling me that other relationships she's had have been more sexually satisfying. I buy that, but I can't cry about it. So, what is it, have I achieved a distance from life too complete for me to live with a woman, a hot-blooded

Italian as Paula describes herself? The apartment is much warmer, more comfortable than ever with Paula and her possessions here but I may have let myself in for another bout of the angst called love.

I continue to work at Covenant House but now I need a change, not necessarily away from the profession or even the company, just a change of duties. So I am considering three alternatives: 1) cut back the number of days I work from nine every two weeks to eight which would give me more time for writing; 2) apply for a position on the walk-in staff which counsels the older youths, young men, who can receive no shelter at 10th Avenue for one reason or another, which would employ my greatest strength, one on one counseling and casework; 3) apply for assistant supervisor which would probably not change my hours, but would switch my counseling from the residents to the staff for the most part, my salary would increase and I would be more secure and committed to the profession. It would give me an opportunity to have a creative impact on the systems by which Covenant House operates. My best strategy is probably to aim highest first, for assistant supervisor and then, failing that, shoot for walk-in staff, and failing that, cut back my hours. Trite as this observation has become in these days of amateur, mass psychology, I have to admit that I fear success. I am, inclined to stay low, below, and

veil my light as the I Ching suggests in one hexagram. My political inclination is always to remain with the workers as opposed to joining management or administration. Yet, these very attitudes could be my strongest, most useful qualities in creating and conveying an attitude of service toward the staff, and independent thought and expression among administrators. It is as my father said yesterday at lunch, sometimes you have to become a boss to effect substantial change. I also believe that I could run more democratic and dynamic meetings than have heretofore happened.

Paula and I are suffering through another period of confusion and estrangement. They seem to recur every two weeks or so. I am disgruntled with my position in life and take it out on her. This causes her not to know how to be with me which makes her unhappy since our relationship seems to be the most important aspect of her life. Today she's angry because last night I made her lower the television. On most issues, when Paula gets angry and it seems our relationship is in danger, I back down. But not this one. I know it seems petty to any normal person, but I have spent much of my life escaping from television's constant influence. Paula argues that when I want to watch tv, it's alright for it to be on, but when I don't it must be off. There's truth in that since I did watch a movie while she was asleep. For me though, the fundamental issue is

what influences you choose to have in your life. I compromised by allowing tv into the apartment, although that statement may sound chauvinistic as well. Last night the sound of it in the next room intruded on my thoughts such that they could not take their own course, they had to take the television's course. It vividly recalled my childhood when television was on all evening, every evening, without respite. I insisted on making the sound low enough so that although I could still hear it, I couldn't make out the words. So the argument begins when I say make it lower, she complains, and I say what I'd really like to do is put the tv out of the house. Paula responds put it out of the house and you put me out too. So she set up the equation which this morning she claims was my statement. It's true that in the long run rather than put up with a constant daily or nightly dose of tv I'd live apart from Paula. I think that this plus all my other transgressions against true love may cause Paula to look for her own apartment. She said if television is such an issue to me, I need professional help. She claims that whenever things are good between us, I create an incident to throw us apart.

What about love, do I love her. I'd say so, yes. But it is not the love she is looking for, it is too general, indiscriminating, I could apply it to a lot of people. And her love for me? I am usually happy in it. Devotional, but

demanding. The demands I try to accede to, such as not showing my attraction to other women, such as being more responsive to her sexual needs. I appreciate her devotion although I try not to get too dependent on it. She complains that I really don't need her. For all my study of the I Ching, trying to accept the reality of my humanity, my dependence on society, my desire for complete independence continues to seduce me. Of course, I will never attain it. Perhaps we didn't give enough thought to living together. A friend's judgment was all too penetrating, that two people no matter how much they loved each other could not live together in this small apartment. I feel bad for Paula. After an argument, seeing her alone and feeling defeated makes me want to cry for her. My own loneliness just scares me, hers evokes real pity.

Early morning hours at work, 29 guys asleep, me and Joe Moore, counselors. Many negative assumptions about whites but we talked this morning and although I was bored at first I was in the end enlightened by our conversation. When I was younger, I took every opportunity, I treated it as a religious act, to open myself to anyone who approached me. I don't think I want to go to that extreme again because that's as meaningless as being closed all the time. I did the paperwork, handed out carfare, had a little fun teasing the residents while doing

it, why not? It's Sunday, I came home, had breakfast and crashed reading the Times. Work at Covenant House no longer engages my mind or imagination. I have successfully overcome my fear of groups of youths and street life. I am satisfied now with my macho self. I am not afraid of tough talk. Beyond this, my job holds no potential for growth. The staff I work with are all well-known to me and while I like most of them, they are an obstacle to my own style to varying degrees. Last night, or morning, I utilized my old tao, getting the residents up without expending a lot of energy hassling them. All the counselors, including me, create unnecessary confrontations.

A January night, homeless, Ralph Harris is in the Eighth Avenue office with me making believe he's looking for something he lost in his torn coat but really he's just trying to stay warm. It is one cold night to be without a home or even away from home. In about three hours I'll be on my way home to a warm bed which I have come to love more than a lot of things. Sleep has become one of my favorite activities, and then watching tv in bed. The bed is soft and warm and I need not exert myself or strain a muscle. I permit myself all the sleep my body wants until it is impossible to sleep more. I like to eat too but I like sleep most of all. Ralph doesn't want to leave and go back into the extreme cold, can you blame him. Why am I still

applying for jobs, jobs, jobs? I should just stay home and sleep, sleep, sleep. Work is an unfortunate necessity. I am collecting applications for summer employment out west, aiming for the Olympic Peninsula, ocean, rain forest, mountains. I guess I'm not a poet anymore or I'd write a poem about Ralph Harris and some of the other unfortunate people I meet on this job. Now he's taking his psychiatric medication. Nope I don't write many poems anymore and I'm not writing this one. My two books are done, done, done and ready for publication. Janie Huzzie Bows and Absolutely Smooth Mustard.

A week has passed since returning to NY after a year on the Olympic Peninsula. My return to Covenant House was full of warm welcomes. Brad Simmons and Doug Frazer were especially good to see. Looks like Sylvia Beatty and I may be working together, which I'll like. Big old Charles is still the security guard. Josie in supplies is still there. So, a lot of the solid strong staff are around. A few people like Doug McCown, Joe Donnelly and Sandy Hagan have been bumped upstairs into administration. I just want to work with and for the residents.

Each day I accomplish a little bit and get a better handle on my job as a youth employment counselor. So far, nobody has seriously opposed my plans. Today I did away with the appointment system for residents seeking

jobs. It was relaxing to have things so orderly but I wasn't seeing anyone! Now the office will be crazy but I'll be doing some counseling. The residents have been remarkably easy, no belligerence, no craziness but I've been pretty insulated so far. The system at CH is well organized and oiled but something seems a little unreal, like there are more staff than residents, or only staff. The relative calm of the residents may be the result of this high proportion of staff and highly developed organization. Not like the old rough and ready days, that's for sure. My goals are to publish the job list each day, offer a tight, complete job seminar a few times a week, counsel a lot of residents each day, start doing some serious job development. I'm sure I'll start running into resistance soon. Sylvia doesn't like to work too hard and I'm creating more work for us. Fred wants to see fewer kids in more depth but I'm going to attract more kids and work quickly with them. The counselors on 2C were relieved to hear there would be no more need for appointments.

The city streets were pretty interesting and intense before I started working but now I'm too busy to notice women. I have finally sculpted a weekend at home, serene and coherent without running away. I woke up late on Sunday and made the job list from the newspapers. It is getting longer as I take longer shots about what the residents are capable of doing. There's a lot to do toward

building a workable, effective program. I have to learn how to teach the job seminar better. I need to expand our resources for finding jobs for residents. Need to communicate better with the floor counselors. Need to be more sensitive to the residents I'm counseling. Need to clean up and organize that office. Work is about as intense as I can take it. What do you expect, finding jobs for the almost unemployable. But for all our failings, there has been some progress. My job development letter was approved and a thousand copies will be offset and sent to employers.

The kids are crazier this week, and so am I. Yet some hidden order sustains us. The anarchy makes it possible for those who want help most to get it and for everyone who wants it to get what they need. Some difficult placements this week. Allen Mason, and now Israel, unusual name for such a street toughened kid, want working papers and a job but have no conception of what it means. It will be difficult to place either of these young men. It points up the poverty of my knowledge and ability, and how brazenly I continue in my ignorance. Trying, trying everything. What kind of hero am I trying to be. I have a confrontational and adversarial approach to youth counseling, saying exactly what I mean. Should we get a typewriter for our office? It wouldn't hurt but my handprinted resumes for the residents have been a big hit.

Even nonchalant Donald Lott was impressed upon receiving one, almost like a diploma. You just need to work fast and with confidence you are acting correctly. That your actions, on balance, will have a nurturing and positive effect. Nonetheless, my office has gotten so crowded in the last couple of days that I was almost overwhelmed. Fred came in laughing about it but in the moment I didn't think it was funny. It was funny though, You asked for it, said Fred. During the case conference on 3C, Tony was so stern with the residents' shelter limits Carol asked if he's been going home to anyone lately.

Mid-summer night, full moon, alone. A three day weekend and so workaholic I'm finding it difficult to occupy myself. Today I went to work for five hours, voluntarily, and typed letters to businesses, soliciting jobs for our residents. An urge in me for completion and perfection. Last week I came to a decision not to take the higher paying job developer position because I'd no longer work directly with the residents, and because I don't want to live out Fred's archaic notions about job counseling. I'll tell him Wednesday and that will be that. Surprisingly, my father seemed to understand my position once explained.

Setting up a whole system of vocational services is challenging enough. It is more so while competing with Fred Wellington's ideas about how that should be done. Much can be done, but I will continue to do it from below,

where I have nothing to lose and no one to please, as a job counselor. If I stay low as the I Ching so frequently advises, I will remain invisible but in a powerful position. Working directly with the residents is what we're here for, I don't want to succumb to all the phony rank and self-importance that others do. My goal is to prepare the daily job list, develop jobs by letter, by telephone and occasionally in person, and counsel the residents directly about their goals and self-assessment, resumes and applications, telephone procedure and interviewing skills, proper dress and decorum, and educational aspirations. I don't want to lose touch with that in order to be "in the field" as Fred calls job development. As for the residents, working with them has been demanding but fulfilling. They are not always honest about their attitudes toward work but I try not to get so personally involved that their failures are my failures, and there are a few successes that make my work worthwhile. It's interesting how sympathetically most people respond to my vocation. I tell my stories with some passion, I'm deeply involved but I would not call myself committed.

Mainly I am trying to get my life under control, organize it. The excitement and my enthusiasm for my job may now begin to die down a little. I still have ideas but getting them implemented takes so much time and effort that I want to stop worrying about success. I am beginning

to realize again what I always knew about Covenant House, that I am completely expendable, unloved and even superfluous to the overall functioning of the system. In addition, maybe I'm not really as good as I claim to be. Of course, a major question should be what do I want from this job. I want to set up this department so it functions smoothly and efficiently to find jobs for many youths and in that process trains them to find jobs independently in the future. I don't worry much about the immaturity or lack of training of our clients. One has to believe that will come with time and experience. I try to put them into a work experience that will mature them and train them. I was once that young and a not much better or more reliable worker.

This past week I've taken to just doing my job, as much of it as I can without putting in overtime or taxing my personal strength and energy. I am not going to argue with Fred anymore about how understaffed we are. Anyone who doesn't like the statistics better be prepared to explain why we are so overworked. I got angry at Fred telling me I shouldn't take a week off because it interrupts services. Of course, I'll take a week in October, maybe two, and if they don't like it they can hire someone else. I am, as always, generally pissed off at Covenant House but no sense getting excited, I put in my time, do the best job I can, and move on.

My personal life is a shambles. I've been smoking far too much pot to the point of becoming a health problem. This has got to stop. In the past two weeks I'd say there's been only one day when I didn't smoke at all. It did serve one purpose though. Paula called, depressed and wanting to return to NY, even to start our relationship again. Paula has the most poignant sleep personality of anyone I know. All her fears and sweetness are exposed in sleep. I miss that. Being lonely, and concerned about her emotional condition, I offered to fly out west and drive east with her. But I was honest for once and told her I still smoke pot. This set her thinking about how realistic a relationship with me is, so we cancelled our grand plans. Another mistake avoided.

It's becoming clear that I need to leave NY and CH. I told Fred I'd be applying for the supervisor position when it comes up. It doesn't really matter much to me whether I get it or not. If I do, so much the better, more money and a healthier resume. If I don't it makes the decision to move on from Covenant House easy, no obligation to remain. I have been considering going to graduate school to study forestry and have ordered catalogues. It could get me out of NY and into a new and potentially interesting discipline that would include a lot of science and math. Something to study for the sake of scholarship, learning. It would mean a year of school in the forest preserve upstate.

Fred finally did the one thing to make me quit, took away the job list from me. Some explanation about the logic of the system more important than the individuals who are part of it. We'll see about that, whether the department is successful without me. So, once again, I am sending out resumes, checking the classifieds, this time for myself. My forte, how I became a job counselor in the first place. I really want to hurt Fred by getting out, not be part of what I expect to see, declining statistics. And the kids, those we work for in the last analysis? I can work for them anywhere. It's interesting how organizations are so callous toward individuals. I've always rebelled against this. So, on the road again, please yourself.

Somewhere in the last six or seven years I developed this high ideal of service to society. Now I'm not so sure. The people, yes. But the system, I don't know. Of course on most levels the two are inseparable. We are social animals and must work together to survive. But I wonder if my commitment to that fact has been overwrought. To me the nuclear family seemed too egocentric an expression of a person's place in society so I went for the organization, political and social. Now I want to be just an individual and use the social structure for my own survival. Much of what I valued most highly in myself is gone, my writing and music, even personal relationships. I've lost the art of listening and caring, strange to say for a social

worker, a professional listener and carer. I do it only for money now. My personal, non-professional relationships became purely hedonistic, just for fun. Nothing in the I Ching or my reading has prepared me for these disappointments. At heart, however, I am unconcerned. I've had so much trouble in my life, I've had to deal with being down and out, face economic survival squarely so often in the past, I almost feel best when I'm against the wall like an animal that fights best when cornered. I said at the outset that I'd be willing to fail at Covenant House and be prepared to walk out if necessary. Now I feel it's necessary, for my self-respect. I can't let anyone's notions of organization push me around, use me and abuse me at will.

Covenant House continues to get the best of me. As work goes, one could not ask for something more purposeful I suppose. But what difference does it make if I stay or go? There are so many kids I begin to lose sight of their individuality. They all become the same, to be processed. Of course, that's not entirely true, but my relationships with these young adults only scratch the surface, lack so much dimension, that I wonder how much any of us, myself or my clients, are getting from our contact. I know that one's work experience can profoundly influence one's future, and that my system of creating the most opportunities in terms of job and

vocational choice and then teaching youths how to take advantage of opportunity, works. But that is not enough for me personally. Which gets back to the fact that my function at Covenant House, while important and in some sense even indispensable, does not satisfy me.

Paula called last week with her plans. She found a guy, an acquaintance from Covenant House yet, who she happened to run into out west just as her living situation in Port Angeles had become untenable. He has agreed to travel with her to New York over the next few months by way of San Francisco, and he is well-situated financially. What luck for her. I was cool and supportive, giving her freedom from our codependence. It was a question of money. She wanted to be sure I wouldn't be angry that she was traveling on borrowed money. But this travel is a necessity. So, be well to her.

Barnwood has committed publicly to publishing me by printing that intention in their latest magazine. So, it seems, I've succeeded in breaking into print. That's fine, but the real issue is my inability to write, now. Poetry is a worthy art however small a star I may be. A perfect poem is more than a pleasure, it is a staff of life. My two books of poems, toms, tomes, youthful and aroused, are going to market, to a public likely to remain anonymous to me and I to them, thereby not appeasing even a little my desire to belong, to be known.

Walter, one of the messengers upstairs at work, made a joke about me: Watch out for Bob, he's always unhappy. My work, while it is a satisfying challenge, does not make me happy. It is traumatic, the numbers of young adults I see, and disappointing, how little I really get to know them. Of course, you say the answer is simple, I need someone of my own to be intimate with, a woman. Maybe I'm a misanthrope, strange for a social worker. The numbers of people everywhere depress me. Today an article from the Times about shrinking wilderness areas and wildlife becoming rare and extinct upset me. It accurately described the tree farms I labored on for the forest service. I circled an employment ad for an administrative assistant to an environmental organization. On the streets after work I am physically afflicted and abused by the fumes from autos and buses. But the indifferent, hostile crowds on the trains are equally damaging. Physically and psychically I am dying in my isolation.

Having spoken to Fred about money and gotten the impression that not only won't I get the supervisory position in our office but I may not even get a raise, and I will be getting no help in the near future to take some of the case load, I am seriously considering whether I want to stay at Covenant House even until next Spring. For the last eight months I have worked hard and with dedication.

I've done an excellent job and raised the number of working residents fourfold. Now however I am bitter. I make less money than almost everyone except the child care workers (who also deserve more money, and the corporate side deserves less) yet I feel I have contributed more than most and continue to put in place important services that CH has until now failed to provide. Most recently, I've been volunteering my lunch hour to put out a housing list, a list of available and affordable apartments and rooms for the residents. In return I have received stricter supervision instead of greater freedom and I am otherwise ignored or taken for granted. So I am in the process of forcing the issue. I've requested a raise and if I don't get it, I'm backing it up by looking for another job. I'm so angry and bitter at being underpaid, overworked and taken for granted that I'm sorely tempted to quit now just to spite CH. Why not just slow down and do less? Because my commitment is to the kids and I cannot take action by giving them shoddy service. So, rather than compromise my work standards, I will quit and go somewhere else. I really want to hurt these people but organizations are without feeling and leaving will go mostly unnoticed.

In Mathieson's Snow Leopard several animals play important roles, either in the imagination or really. The yeti, whom it is bad luck to actually see; the snow leopard,

of which we have signs and a good description from the lama, the wolves, the blue sheep, birds including the towhee, and the sherpas and porters, GS. The mountains and snow, streams and rivers, gorges and canyons, lakes and glaciers. Then he returns, descends inescapably into the lowlands, cities of men, the caste-crazy consciousness and realizes that in Tukten, the sherpa with snow leopard eyes and a lama's presence, who has heard the yeti and repeats its sound around the last campfire, he has met the yeti, the lama, the snow leopard, the mountains in one. Yet this good and simple man could not get a cup of tea at a hotel.

An ornery group in seminar today that it was kind of fun to handle. But we've had a rough week placing kids in jobs. Ten, by the end, which wasn't too bad. Harmony, more or less, among coworkers after a constructive meeting yesterday. Still I want my big nose in everything, down to Veronica typing letters for the job developers. I developed a system for client control, setting appointments at fifteen minute intervals. Jokes about that, maybe we can get it up to every five minutes, or Tony's, like taking tickets at a bakery. In many ways I enjoy my job, the kids especially, and the knowledge that I'm making a difference in their lives. Although many return, like Mike Matos and Jackie Cameron this week, I can see them maturing. Matos held a job and lived on his own the

last couple of months and seems more mature and self-assured now. But my conflicts with the administration remain galling and petty, and I feel overlooked, underpaid and unappreciated. I have decided to leave Covenant House. In the meantime, having no aspirations at Covenant House any longer, I can devote myself completely again to the task of counseling youths.

The past two weeks have been especially trying with Sylvia absent. I have twice the work load of what is considerably more than even one person should have. My superiors continue to take me entirely for granted. But now that I've set a date to leave, none of this matters. I'm nervous about going out into the cold cruel world of unemployment but if my clients can get jobs, god knows I should be able to. At the end of April I will have put in one full year since returning, a reasonable contribution. I estimate we see from 200-240 clients per month and help 40-50 clients per month find jobs, putting our success rate at about 25%, not the 33% I've been bragging about. There's a lot I could do to improve our services, even with statistical studies, if I had the time and anyone believed I was qualified to do it. But big organizations are so stratified that it is hard for raw, undocumented talent to find a place. Nevertheless, I've been successful and should take heart in that. More could be done but never mind, April is the end. I am so taken for granted that they've

forgotten what the vocational department was like before me but I have also pumped up my own importance in my mind. I am an expendable member of a large and impersonal organization. Still, I feel satisfied and fulfilled about my contribution over the past year. I have a few tasks to finish but the department has grown away from my guidance and control and I am now just one person among many. Time to go.

Today I had an interview for a job coordinating a youth employment program, a leadership, management, supervisory position. I have a second interview tomorrow at Stanley Isaacs Community Center on 93rd St. and First Ave. I'm convinced I could do an excellent job for them and have some fun at the same time. The salary is attractive and with those savings I could vacation almost anywhere I want. Having stopped smoking pot, I think I could discipline myself to write and practice every evening. If they offer me the job, I'll take it.

I got the final proofs of JHB and should have a published book in a month or two. Unfortunately there were a number of errors in the proof but the cover Barnwood designed is better than I could have done myself. I calculate that it took me six years to write each of two books. ASM should be out at year's end, hell, I can give sets of my books to people for Christmas.

I like the staff I'm working with at my new job and

Howard, the director of youth programs, seems easy-going but a good leader. I spent my first three days talking to Dagmar, the job counselor who's been there four years, and going through every file, scrap of paper and drawer in the place. I've culled the most useful information, and this weekend I'm going to work out the outlines and some details of the program. I enjoy organizing. It reminds me of keeping pitching and batting averages for Challenge the Yankees, a board game I played as a child, or doing my homework when I was in high school. The neighborhood is interesting and integrated. The kids are similar to and beautiful as kids everywhere in the city.

I've worked fast. We're starting to build a clientele although no one has gotten a job yet. It's funny, how I begin to hate the word job. This is because lately everyone throws it around as the panacea for life on earth. The only sentence I like that word used in is It's just a job. I'm recruiting youths to use our services. Dagmar, the job counselor, will need a lot of training and support. We'll have to start giving seminars next week. Once things start rolling it will only require maintenance, and if we're successful word should spread without having to do a lot of recruitment. Every day I enjoy the walk through Central Park going to and coming from work. The neighborhood and my office are physically uncomfortable and unattractive but for the money I can put up with it.

Financially, this is my ticket out of NYC eventually, and the experience may ensure my employability wherever I end up going.

Silence of Winter

Paula is out looking for Shade, our dog. Why Mathews insisted on giving us a pedigree black lab who was used to running free is beyond me. I'm not so attached that it matters much to me whether he returns but he's Paula's dog now and our responsibility I suppose. Run over by a car or just running wild, who knows. In the end I'll probably have to go out and find him myself. We're living in Quilcene, Washington, mountains in background, one room cabin, ramshackle houses around, pasture with horse, the Quilcene Hotel across the road. Everybody learns your business in such a small town but there's not much to hide, unless hide from too friendly neighbors. We keep the front and back doors open for a breeze. The mountains are shrouded by dragon-breath mists and clouds. Each day on the bus going up to the work site I space out on mountain flowers and try to decide if we made a mistake coming here. It cost all our savings to get out here and rent a place.

We got Shade gratis while driving through Michigan along Lake Huron from Claude Mathews, a true poet by his bearing and manner though probably alcoholic. Shade is an affectionate horny male black lab who listens but lacks discipline. Michigan was beautiful, we enjoyed the blue waters of Lake Huron, not too heavily visited by tourists.

Mathews had a large tract of land along the lake shore, secluded, over a mile from the beaten path where he rents cabins. Then came the hot afternoons of Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana plains. We rested every afternoon and in this way got to know some towns and their parks. Montana offered good beef and spectacular mountains. Now we are on the Olympic Peninsula in Quilcene. Paula has an interview to be a pre-school teacher.

I don't understand anymore who I am or what my goals are. If life here weren't so peaceful and comfortable it might provoke a panic. Actually it has, last night, which I took out on Paula who merely wanted to make love but who I claimed was forcing me to compromise and yelled her into serious hysterics by saying we don't belong together, I ought to live alone. Ironically, she's been gone about two hours at the pre-school parents' meeting and already I miss her, the dusk is lonely. Anyway I will not again threaten her with leaving, not unless I intend to follow through, because Paula is more sensitive and dependent on me than I realized.

Forest Service work is easy enough, it's physically demanding but other than that no strain at all. I work with pleasant people but doubt I'll make any friends among them. The wildfire in California last week was like a Civil War campaign, a thousand or more firefighters

bivouacked in meadows below the mountain, wall to wall white paper sleeping bags, mess tents where you can eat all you want coming off the fire line, steak, potatoes, salad, pop. Up before dawn, climbing the mountain to the fire, a line of head lamps stretched a mile ahead and behind. The Oregon fire was the first I'd seen that crowned the trees, it boomed like a giant's footsteps as heat built and the fire advanced taking out thousands of trees at once like matchsticks. We were run off the fire line cats had helped us cut and we and the machines took off right fast as the fire approached. I forget work when I get home except that I'm too tired in the evening to do much. Clearly I don't make love to Paula enough, I just want to read a little and fall asleep. Paula and I are on the verge of another fight about love-making, me too tired, she too lonely, bad combination. This past week I was on another fire, difficult for Paula, fun for me and a lot of money. Other than the strain on our relationship, strain on my bones, and strain on my writing, I'm so healthy I hardly feel the work.

The summer season is over, the rainy season sets in. Paula and I have decided to break up, we are amicable and sad about it. Living together was ill-conceived from the first and it is almost a credit to us (to her mostly) that so much love sprang from it. I think of all the people who said we should be married or believed that we were. We were simply not compatible and both of us were deluded to

believe this could be overcome. Best to spend as little time as possible lying side by side in bed. What is the Pacific Northwest like? Emerald hope, moody sky. I still have not been into the backcountry. I want to cross the peninsula on foot to the Pacific Ocean. Rain and cold, steep rugged climbs, glaciated peaks, forest bushwacking.

People have described Port Townsend to Paula as a place for healing, regenerating after broken love lives. It is interesting how differently Paula and I used our time apart. She made new friends who took her sailing and horseback riding. I met nobody, saw a few movies. Today I embark upon what will almost certainly prove to be a painful and difficult task, to continue living with and loving Paula even as she loves and spends her days and nights with another man. The ache inside me is like but worse than, the ache I have felt at the end of other love affairs. I am in constant, perpetual pain and fear. I fear, and even expect, that Paula's liaison with the man called Bob Winter will succeed and last many years. I hope against all odds that it will be a short romance that will evolve into a friendship and that she will return to me.

Not that I don't deserve this, and not out of any Catholic or Christian guilt. I pained Paula so severely this summer and throughout the last year and a half that it's a wonder she can still love me even as a friend. However, there are glimmers or signs that she may yet love me as a

lover and a mate. Given a chance, just one chance, I would love her tenderly for the rest of our lives. But all the chips are stacked against me now and my opponent is formidable—talented, wise, creative, successful. There are only a few bright spots, not least of which is I appreciate Paula so much now I cherish every moment with her—ironically now that our moments will be fewer and fewer as she spends more and more time with Winter. We still sleep together as brother and sister— our secret— but even that may, almost certainly will, change once their sexual affair begins—which is today or tomorrow.

Can Paula continue sleeping with me, however innocently, when involved passionately with another man? Can I sleep with her with that knowledge? Sharing our nights together and some days are my deepest inroads into their relationship. I am concentrating on controlling my pain and hurt (remembering how richly I deserve it) so that I never get angry or sulky with Paula. I want to enjoy our few remaining moments together as joyously as possible under the circumstances. I want to show her how I've changed, how deeply I appreciate her, and never remind her of what a cruel, insensitive bastard I was in the past. Hopefully a steady diet of love will heal old wounds.

I have a few weapons with which I can conceivably bind Paula to me long enough to take advantage of weaknesses in their relationship. I make no bones about

what I want and have been truthful to Paula that I will be courting her as any man might and has a right to. In all the old romances, especially Shakespeare, the old masters acknowledge and even delight in the fact that love is war, and one may need cunning to win the hand of the fair one. Fair one indeed! Winter has said it and so had I long before him although I doubt whether Paula remembers it—she is magical, she is a queen, she is an original. Maybe in some way I contributed to that development? Or perhaps merely retarded it temporarily.

Perhaps Winter's sexual attraction for and to her will fade in time but Paula is an easy woman to satisfy, I say that as praise, and she looks better now than at any time since I've known her. However, I gather Winter has complained at least once about her weight. Perhaps the rustic way Winter lives will be unsuitable for Paula and this will put pressure on them, Winter won't be able to accept graciously Paula's need for the civilized comforts. However, they are already adapting his house for her needs and such a project can bring two people closer together. Also, Winter does not like Shade and maybe this will create stress. But Shade lives with me for all intents and purposes. Lastly, Winter has expressed some jealousy which can poison any alliance (but which like arsenic is a necessity for health in the correct small quantity). If I can keep what remains of my connection with Paula, this may

drive him to desperation and cause him to make mistakes. Then, admittedly a long shot, I will have the love of my life back and be happy with her.

What does Winter have going for him? I shudder to take his measure. Talent and integrity—living on the land and showing Paula a whole new world. Experience—and this is his ace of spades—he knows what he wants and is sure to treasure it when he finds it. Intelligence and cunning—already he is probing the weak spots in my and Paula’s past and pointing them out to her. He has waited for this and this patience may indicate heartfelt love. And there is a strong sexual attraction between them that may never die. I am in big trouble. Except when she broke down crying last night and asked me not to leave her in case Winter didn’t work out.

Paula and I woke up as we had slept, deep in each other’s arms after our last night together before she becomes the lover of her new man. I feel such tenderness for her and want only to squeeze every ounce of beauty from whatever moments we have left. In the night while we watched tv she was the one to snuggle closely, entangle her legs with mine, hold my hand, and for a moment I thought she might want to make love. But I did not instigate it since I want her to be totally non-threatened with me and I had told her that I would not come on to her, that I would always wait for her to say or

directly show she wanted to make love. I think I was right because this morning, as we lay together talking, I began to get hard and she felt it and drew away.

Paula is looking more beautiful than ever, and these are not merely the observations of a man who no longer possesses her and therefore desires her more. It is the result of her long attempt to get her weight under control, originally in order to be more attractive to me. I think back on our first time together in bed, when while and after making love I noticed her rolls of fat, her varicose-like veins and was moved to draw away from her. Had I done so Paula would still be on 83rd St. or would have found some other man in New York City. Who knows what course our lives would have taken separately. As it is, I chose to oppose my own instincts every step of the way, asked her to live with me, took her to Washington state with me, and here we are in Port Townsend, sharing the same house but living separate lives. That such love (although Paula claims not to love me anymore) could have issued from events that contradicted themselves is almost a psychic phenomenon. But this morning, perhaps for the last time, we were contentedly entangled.

Paula and I arose and got dressed, took a long time getting ready to go out. We drove a new, back way to Chimacum with two black labs, Shade and Ebony, to a flea market and bought books, clothes, utensils and a chair, as

we used to do in New York, one of those things we shared easily. And she bought a portable toilet seat since she has to poop in the woods at her new man's house. This pained me and I was moved to beg once more that she remain friends with this man and be my love. No, not possible, and she asked me not to make her cry.

Afterwards we drove to Quilcene, site of our last pitched battles, the horrible months during which I finally and irrefutably lost Paula due to my meanness and pettiness, my complete disregard for her sensitivity. But today it is only another place where we share last hours together, get the mail, get the spare tire repaired, go to the dump (where she finds more objects useful to her new life with her new man) and have a breakfast prepared especially for us during the lunch hour at the Breakfast Nook. Paula is well-liked, even loved, by everybody she deals with here—the cook, the men at Sandy's garage, the women at the flea market in Chimacum, all take pleasure in being near her. I am a dark unknown to them, quiet, I don't feel superfluous but Paula is the one they love and I exist for them only in her reflected light.

During the drive back to Port Townsend I am keenly aware of the last minutes of our relationship receding into the past, as if the van's forward motion is leaving them behind in the road, in the woods along the roadside, and I tell her how I just want the rest of our time together,

however brief, to be this happy and easy. With a residue of anger from the last year and a half, she says frankly it's only been good because you haven't been difficult. I tell her my difficult days are over, a man learns the hard way what to value in life. As we pass through Chimacum she scans the roadside for signs of her new man who lives nearby. When we get back to Port Townsend we make keys to the house for me but one key doesn't work. While Paula dresses to meet her new man this afternoon, and anticipates their first night of love, I go back and forth to town getting keys made that don't work. In this way I spend the last hour that Paula is in the house. It is just as well, she needs privacy for the physical and spiritual preparations she is making for the night.

In town I am maddened by the slowness with which I am served, and how I am spending this precious time. But then, on the street, I pass who I somehow know to be Paula's new man although I have not had too detailed a description of him. He is coming toward me slowly when I spot him, he is traveling at a leisurely pace, just passing time as he awaits his newfound love, my old love. He has a rich, long black beard and is about an inch taller than me. He walks with his hands in his pockets and wears white sneakers, blue jeans and a tan shirt-jacket. His hair is almost shoulder length, brown and cut straight across in the back. He is very clean, having just bathed, for Paula.

He has spotted me too for who I am but he cannot tell if I know who he is because, in passing, I do not even glance at him, I am walking faster than him and acting preoccupied with my task. I choose to deceive him in this way because I am not ready to meet, or even acknowledge, Paula's new man. I enter the hardware store and he turns around up the street and comes back, hoping for another look. He succeeds because when I come out of the store, there he is again. As we pass, I still refuse to acknowledge him but now he is sure of my identity because he has seen the van on the street. He takes my measure and decides that Paula has made the right decision in coming over to him. I am not sensitive and receptive enough for her, I am too possessed by things to appreciate the magnitude of loving a woman like Paula, the all-encompassing commitment, the awesome beauty of Paula. He associates the stories, the bad times she has told him about, he puts a face to the perpetrator of the hurt Paula has suffered, he now understands as if a mere face could provide the answer to these puzzles, how this man could fail to appreciate, even worship, life with Paula.

We cross paths once more, as I drive through town back home. I am coming toward him as he crosses the street in front of me. He is surprised and confused to find himself in this position, entirely under my scrutiny, unable to free himself from my gaze, completely exposed. He can

only walk in front of me having already committed himself to crossing the street, and I notice that his posture is very much like my own, leaning backwards but moving forward at the same time, the upper body transported by the long legs in symbiotic relation. He goes into the Town Tavern where he is to meet my love and his love, and I turn toward home to take leave of the sweetest creature I have ever known.

At home Paula has dressed carefully and sexily, showing cleavage, a knockout. My key still doesn't work so I offer to drop her off in town to meet her new man, no real sacrifice, simply an acknowledgement of reality. She eschews all sentiment in these last few moments, she does not want to cry, she is well on her way in her mind. She asks me to look her in the eyes and tells me that she may not be home tonight. I have looked her in the eyes many times and heard many truthful, many beautiful and many hurtful things but now I must hear this. I hear it and accept it with at least some lightness of heart, with some relief and sense of freedom, and with some hope and gladness for her happiness. We drive downtown and I tell her I've seen her new man and describe him. I am not even close to crying. I drop her off a few blocks from the tavern and she leaves me and walks away up the street without a look back. In her gait there is no regret.

When I get home and try out the key, it works. I am

devastated by the loss of Paula and want to lie down and sleep forever but I decide not to atrophy, not to let depression paralyze me, and instead light a fire and take a hot bath. It is relaxing, the hot water dissolves a little of my grief. Then I dress and write a poem, practice trumpet, re-establishing some of the old rhythms, those that existed before Paula. Tonight I will go to the Town Tavern, hear the jazz band but there is a half hour before going, so I succumb to bed and sleep. The bed without Paula, the thoughts of the bed she now shares, torture me, the utter loneliness and despair, the certain knowledge that all this could have been avoided and I could have been happy if I had not abused this woman who wanted only to give me her love.

I wake up and force myself to dress, get in the truck and go downtown. The jazz band is excellent and the music soothes me somewhat. I sit alone, at a table against the wall, stationary, making no attempt to circulate, looking at people and listening to the music. I drink two glasses of wine and this helps, too. Cal, our landlord, comes over and we talk briefly but he is not too interested in me. Joanne, the woman Paula and her new man suggested would be good for me, comes in. She is popular, many men handle her, laugh with her. She has a lot of forehead, extremely thin wrists, blonde hair. When she passes me she greets me shyly and I say hello but she

makes no attempt to talk. When she passes again I try to engage her in conversation but she sits elsewhere. I listen to the rest of the set. A woman, young or old I cannot tell, sits in the darkness nearby and listens intently also, we seem to acknowledge each other's interest in the music. When it is over I get up to leave, and as I pass she looks and smiles. Outside, I wonder why I didn't try to talk to her, and go back inside, but cannot find her. Shade and I drive through streets so foggy that we can't find the house for a while. Upstairs in the bedroom I turn on television but fall asleep during a movie. I wake up a couple of hours later to the buzz of the blank screen. This is how my last day as Paula's lover passes.

Thursday morning Paula and I are to have breakfast together in Quilcene, almost like lovers on the sly. It is as if Winter is the wronged husband and I am the passionate lover. And I am passionate. I pace the house, my heart wrung with hope, phrases and promises and plans circling my head. I am concentrating all my power, cunning and intelligence on getting Paula back so that if I fail, at least I will have tried. I am trying to undo a year and a half of deadly mistakes. My best hope is that Winter's life style is too rustic for Paula and he cannot compromise it enough for her. My gambit is that as long as I am available, as long as I want her back, Paula does not have to settle for less and therefore Winter may have to stretch himself to the

breaking point in order to accommodate Paula. I am even hoping that the strain will cause Winter to mistreat Paula and cause her to come back to me, her original abuser. Of course, Winter, being experienced, is aware of this and not likely to be blind to these pitfalls without extreme provocation. My chances are so close to zero that it seems superfluous to be charting these plans and possibilities. Yet, like Shakespeare, I am aware that more than love comprises a love affair. So I lay a plan and follow it through to the best of my emotional ability. I do what I have to do to keep myself emotionally fit and my few moments with Paula beautiful. I increase the odds of success at every opportunity but prepare myself for failure at worst, and a long, painful wait at best.

Winter has won. Paula spends every night and day with him. She has made it absolutely clear, beyond a shadow of a doubt that she is completely committed to making her relationship with Winter work, to exploring all its possibilities. Paula and I will remain good friends always. For now, we will share this house. At present my greatest pleasure is sleeping with her. Last night, having more or less explained ourselves absolutely to each other, we saw a bad movie, entertained a friend of hers that dropped by, and slept together in easy comfortable bliss. Holding her in bed now is actually a greater pleasure than it was during our sexual intimacy. Our union was never

complete, always stormy, I was forever ambivalent and uncomfortable. Now, with the pressure of permanence or duty removed, I cherish every moment with her, as friends. How many men continue living with a woman, sharing the house and even the bed, after she has begun an affair, more than an affair, a life, with another man? Only masochists. Paula said she hasn't lost respect for me because I'm sticking around, she said I am a better person than she. Well, perhaps. The pain I feel is deeper than it was a week ago, but not as sharp.

What did Paula learn from our attachment? Not to take shit from any man, no matter how much she loves him. She is a stronger person, with a stronger identity, than ever before. Already she is making Winter toe the line regarding his demands and any craziness he may be exhibiting. However, things must be going well because she's been gone all weekend and all last weekend and most days last week with nary a word from her. She complains occasionally about this or that about him but that's only because this is the easiest aspect of the situation for us to share. Of course I like to hear the bad things, her doubts. But these are minor, even I can see that, and Paula is Winter's.

She came home yesterday and we spent the night together after an initial rough spot. Our finances are very bad, I have to pay the rent because Paula simply hasn't got

any money. At first I thought she was looking for an excuse to split up entirely and when I confronted her she blew up in my face. An argument is the last thing I need given my position with her, so I managed to quiet her down. She was insulted that I would impugn any deviousness to her. I said I guess it's just my bad side showing through again. She said I was acting as I had during the last year and a half. But we went for a drink and she talked about her relationship with Winter which is going extremely well. I told her I wished her the best and expected this one to work out for her. As for myself, I want to find someone new and start loving again. Paula says to be careful not to waste it on a bitch. I'm interested in the bass player who performs often at the Town Tavern. I'm supposed to sit in with her band on Wednesday night. Paula wishes me well, displays no jealousy.

We came home and watched a fun movie on tv, Cactus Flower—Walter Mathau, Ingrid Bergman, Goldie Hawn, really enjoyable. And we slept together with all of the ease that we usually do, cuddled and warm. In the morning we danced together in our underwear. Paula jokes how she'll give Winter a dulled out account of her activities last night and this morning. She also cries because today she's bringing a lot of clothes over to Winter's and she's afraid he'll reject her. Nothing she's said about him indicates he might, but I console her and

tell her she's safe since if it doesn't work out with him, she always has me. It seemed to me that she had a good weekend with Winter and came back to me ready to start a fight and leave for good but the next morning she was warm and weepy with me. So it goes. I can take it—for a while.

Paula has moved in almost completely with Winter. Other than the sadness of loss, the humiliation of losing her to another man, and the feeling of shame when I think back on my treatment of her during our affair, I feel somewhat relieved and free. While the nights are lonely, my days are enjoyable and I'm getting lots of work done, writing and playing trumpet. I am attracted to Joyce the bass player in the band. She is tall and willowy and I love the way she moves while she plays. I also like her directness, how she looks into your eyes when she talks, her unpretentiousness. It wasn't easy to talk to her Wednesday night, I felt constrained to keep the conversation going although at least when it lapsed, she picked up the melody so that's a good sign. Also, her complete devotion to her music might get in the way of any love interest she might have. And, of course, she may already be involved with someone. The last difficult installment in the Paula saga will be meeting and talking to the victor, Winter, but it might be possible to do that graciously.

Poor Shade, he's getting a bum deal out of this breakup. Paula can't take him with her and I don't want him, certainly can't afford him, so we have to look for a new home for him. Yesterday he managed to fuck the dog across the street, a purebred huskie or something and the owner was extremely upset. It was my fault for having my dog off the leash. So now either Shade is indoors or outdoors on the leash, just what Claude Mathews wanted to avoid when he gave Shade to us. It's a sad situation. Mathews said to call him if ever we couldn't keep Shade but that doesn't seem realistic since he's in Michigan, and why worry him about the dog when he believes he did the right thing in giving him to us. When we accepted Shade I had reservations, mostly to do with returning to New York and the confinement that would mean for the dog. Now of course I realize Paula knew she'd never be returning but I don't think either of us anticipated this situation.

Each time Paula comes by I feel the pain of our separation but when she stays a while and we talk or have dinner together, it feels good to still have each other as friends. Winter is jealous and doesn't like her to spend any time with me. Hard to believe he doesn't realize how completely and inexorably over it is between Paula and me as lovers. Another beautiful woman in my past. Let's hope I learned something this time for the next time I fall in love. Paula is gone and glad to be gone, taken all her

belongings and went with Winter. Poor Shade now has to spend all his time on the leash and Paula thinks it enough for her to come by once a week and throw his ball for him. Each time Paula visits she takes more stuff, the house is bare as a monastery. No money, no job, a 20% unemployment rate and a landlord who wants me out of this house. It looks pretty certain I'll be living in the van, the van I just put a new starter in for sixty bucks I don't have.

Paula just left here in useless, pointless tears with all of her possessions because Winter doesn't want her having contact with me in any way. She accedes to his wish. Suddenly I am actually angry, instead of always taking the blame. Granted, I was difficult during our mishmash of a relationship but I sure got the shaft in this past month or so. I'm angry for all the sweet talk on the telephone that drew me here hopeful of a renewed, strong partnership only to see Paula go off and live with another man. Nice as I've been trying to be lately, I couldn't help pushing guilt on her, even though fundamentally I have only myself to blame. All that sweet, hopeful talk and then the hard jilt. Of course, no matter how guilty I make Paula feel it will never change things. Why does she care so much whether she has hurt me? She almost had one of those uncontrollable crying fits that used to tear my heart out.

There are still three or four ties between us, just business. Shade is the first. If I can take him with me I will, but otherwise it is going to be yet another foster home for him. I almost feel worse for him than for myself. Maybe he'll find a better home than we could provide. Paula is jettisoning every living thing that was ever dependent on her for Winter and something called happiness. I just want to be happy is what she says, how she justifies all this. Of course, most of the blame for this breakup lies with me, my constant ambivalence from start to finish. Another tie is the possessions she still has in our New York apartment. That will be an unpleasant moment, she and Winter back east, just dropped by to collect her bed, chairs, etc. Then there's the money she owes me. It'll take her a long time to pay that off unless Winter helps but I doubt his desire to separate Paula and me for good goes quite that deep. Finally, there's any mail she may receive in our Quilcene mailbox which is now my mailbox exclusively. Winter is of course correct that I can get by on my own and that Paula owes me nothing.

Paula was most concerned, after not wanting to hurt me, that I would try to destroy her relationship with Winter. If I felt there was some foolproof method of doing that, I'd probably use it. But there is none, anything I did would probably backfire and draw them closer together. She was concerned that I should not mail to Winter her

last card to me, the one with the two herons, saying how she had high hopes for our future together, loving together but flying freely. It was a beautiful card, probably the most beautiful I've ever received from anyone. Ironic that one week later she had made her decision to start a life with Winter. Mail that card to Winter she feared, and their bond would suffer. Shit, if a simple subterfuge like that worked, Winter would be no great loss and not difficult to dislodge.

Last night two women attempted to scale the cold, craggy façade of my presence. The first an older, superficially unattractive woman who has been eyeing me for a week, at last tried to talk to me. I welcomed her attempt because beyond her unaesthetic features I sense a sweet, good person not so much waiting to be discovered as just longing to be enjoyed. I entered the tavern as she was tending bar and I asked for a dark beer. She brought it and asked if I found the tavern smoky tonight. I answered that it wasn't too bad and expected her to continue the conversation. Instead she looked nonplussed and disappointed with my answer, took my money and said not another word.

Later I was standing at the cork board looking over the notices posted there and a woman dressed in the punk style with some country grace notes and a lot of rouge, short haircut, approached me and said she loved the long

soft curls on my neck below what hair is left on my head. I really wasn't offended by what I took to be an inadvertently left-handed compliment. Instead I tried to be witty in what I thought was a gentle way and responded that I'll make an eccentric old man someday. I guess it wasn't too funny because she looked at me as if one of us had farted and she left without another word.

As I arrived at the tavern Joyce was unloading her bass from her car, a new, green economy car. After a second's hesitation I threw caution to the winds and said hello. She greeted me pleasantly in her usual way, friendly and unpretentious but still reserved, and asked if I had my trumpet. Then she said she'd heard I was moving to the country. I asked her if she lived near Discovery Bay and she said yes, about four miles away and then she moved into the crowd and toward the stage. I was disappointed in our conversation, that she didn't take time to nurture it along, to treat me as someone special, so I sulked for the rest of the night.

Paula was here this morning and she seemed confused and ambivalent about Winter and was even making noises about coming back to me. For all my talk to the contrary, I am still pretty receptive to that and had no difficulty feeling loving toward her. In fact, kissing her was getting me excited. I don't know exactly what the trouble is with Winter but he sounds bossy and difficult to satisfy.

Paula was repentant about leaving me so coldly, and seems to still be attracted to me. She even said she's thinking that she may have jumped into a relationship with Winter more as a reaction to me than anything else. It's sad because if we do get back together it's going to create problems, the thought of her having made love with another man. But this separation and crisis has been good in that my appreciation of her value and importance may now be permanently instilled in me. If she came back in time, that is before I move too far on in life, I would marry her and quit this dilly dallying for good.

Sunday morning was emotionally intense and although I am feeling reasonably happy and strong in myself, seeing Paula was almost too much for me. It seems that she is beginning to think that perhaps she went with Winter more because she really loved me but was too afraid of becoming attached again and getting hurt. But this I take with a grain of salt. My explanation is that things with Winter are not as idyllic as Paula in her naivete about men imagined they might be. Now the grass on the side of the fence she just left looks greener. What am I to make of all this? Above all, is this unhappiness and ambivalence about Winter just the result of a bad day or two, or is it something endemic to the relationship? I think that next time I see her she will be strong and cold again, keeping her distance from me and enthusiastic about Winter.

What should I do to protect myself from this see-sawing? I don't want to do anything that would cut me off from Paula if indeed she is seriously reconsidering our relationship. On the other hand, I don't want to be strung along hoping to be reunited with her. If Paula wants to come back to me, why does she need a month or two to figure it out? It is all too much, waiting and hoping, while one day Paula wants me and the next she is happy with Winter.

Now I am living in Discovery Bay, sharing a farmhouse with Dave and Gale. Basically I like it here as much as I can like sharing a house. Dave and Gale are easygoing, generous about sharing. I don't think I could ask for better roommates out of the luck of the draw. The surroundings are lovely, wooded hills and farmland, although I have not yet explored them. My rooms are larger than I remembered and more comfortable than I thought possible for me to make them. They are warm, reasonably roomy, with big windows. Even Shade, after one day here, is finding things to interest him and is a little happier, the cattle, a cat, Dave and Gale themselves. And if Paula came back we could even live here together in all likelihood. Today Shade and I drove to Port Angeles where I took my DSHS caseworker test. Then I checked at unemployment about my claim but there is nothing I can do but wait for New York to get around to me. I made a

tactical error, as usual when I deal with bureaucracies, by filing in New York. I stole two small bales of kindling wood from Safeway justifying this by my impoverished condition. Passing through Sequim I had a brainstorm and an uncharacteristic burst of courage, and I called Dennis Blank at Bayview Boys' Home, ostensibly to apologize for missing him in October. I blamed Paula for not communicating with him. Then I popped the real reason for my call, would he consider an unmarried relief houseparent. He said yes, if it were a man. So I offered my services. He'll call later this week with his decision. I also bought more kindling. Now all I need is a cord of fuel. If Bayview hires me, then that's it, I'm all set for as long as I want to remain on the peninsula.

It is my second full day in Discovery Bay. Shade and I went walking up the mountain and got thoroughly soaked. Hard going through the brambles in the old clear cuts. Steep down to the stream through the woods. Not really a helluva lot of fun. Another late night at the tavern, wanting to join Jerry and Joyce on stage but holding back because of this deep-rooted inferiority about my trumpet playing. Music is a communal experience and I feel left out of the community. Last night I met Mary at the library but things are not clicking between us. I think I'm too depressed, too down on myself and too emotionally and financially unstable to come across as having a clear,

strong and interesting identity. To all who see me I am a depressed, lonely individual who cannot even converse easily. At one point last night I just collapsed from tiredness and depression, sat in a corner and spoke to no one. Finally Mary was kind enough to come over and talk. Let's face facts, I am not going to break into this crowd as a trumpet player. I spoke to Joyce last night and I did not hang around and beat it to death. She said a friendly goodnight.

Paula came back to me in December having left Winter in the San Juan Islands. That very night, by full moonlight, we moved her possessions out of his trailer camp and into this house. The past two weeks have been good, and for my part at least, her involvement with Winter increased my appreciation of her, as well as increasing to a small degree my insecurity. My only complaint is that I feel Paula holding back a little bit emotionally from me. I'm not overly concerned, it's only natural in going from one emotional involvement to another, and besides I owe her a long period of reserve to compensate for my year and a half of ambivalence. I've been surprised by my level-headedness regarding jealousy about Winter. Somehow, without really trying at all, I've accepted their love for each other not as something to be opposed, but almost as something to be thankful for, for the growth it caused in Paula, she is so much more the

self-assured woman, and for giving her a sweet memory to correspond to my own sweet memories of other women. The self-assured woman brings out the passionate lover in me and our sexual union has been exciting. Another thing is, if Paula ever changed her mind again and left me, I am even able to face that because in the time we were separated I proved to myself beyond a doubt that I can live singly. I don't expect to need to though, I believe Paula, although still holding back somewhat, intends to follow through with our relationship and will remain loyal and true. That is why even though she is now having her car repaired by Winter, I am not too concerned that anything unfortunate will occur. Paula and I sent out Christmas cards to all the relatives. Nobody back east knows what Paula and I have been through except her mother and sister. The Christmas cards, the living together again, indicate Paula is taking our relationship public. We've even spoken of marriage and children.

Last night we again attempted to make love, using the condom. At first when we made love I was aroused. If I had put on the condom and entered her immediately our feelings now would be entirely different. We'd be sitting in bed naked, in each other's arms, talking and hugging. Instead we sit clothed in the living room reading. Although I was able to enter Paula with it on, I could hardly feel

anything. It was like I had been given a shot of novocaine. Paula was understanding this time, and gave me the attention I needed. The fundamental problem now is not so much sexual as our emotional role reversals. Paula is reserved and claims not to be in love with me. That her love is that of a friend. I told her not to come to any rash conclusions because the next conclusion we come to will be the final one. I really don't know if this can be overcome. I will hang in there being good to her and loyal for as long as possible but I think I'm in for a fall. Paula starts work on Monday and her work may give us enough time apart to appreciate each other when we're together. It is a little difficult to feel aroused, since arousal requires a certain security, knowledge that you are desired in return, with a woman who is retreating from you.

It seems that we're destined to live apart. It is obvious that Paula is having a hard time feeling and showing love for me. This is painful but best to acknowledge it. I suspect her of missing Winter although this does not really evoke any jealousy in me. Where she goes after our relationship is her business. More importantly, I feel insecure about sharing my feelings with her because she is indifferent. Another role reversal. During the first year and a half of our time together I was the indifferent one. So it is only fair that I should persevere until she initiates a final break. As long as there is any hope

at all, I want to be good to her. We have said we'd give it one more month, but as usual matters are moving toward their conclusion more quickly. One complicating factor is our finances. I've spent nearly all my money on us, so I will be dependent on her for the next month. She has a new job and her income from her ex-husband. At the moment I have nothing, although I have an interview on Tuesday.

Tomorrow we move to Port Angeles where Paula's job is, into a small, quaint apartment overlooking the town and the straits. We had to give Dave and Gale only one day's notice, this is unfortunate, but I guess we'll pay them fifty bucks to compensate. Although I'll miss the country life here, I'm not sorry to be leaving, getting our own apartment where we'll have more freedom, to practice, make love, etc. And the town will be convenient. I guess we're city people alright, I look forward to exploring a completely new town. Also, we'll be even closer to the mountains and to the water than we are now. It should be a good place to live for three or four months. Beyond that, I am itching to return to New York, get back to work at Covenant House if I can.

Little by little Paula is settling back into our relationship, and I have had no trouble at all being the mature adult I promised to be. I am happy with her, she seems happy with me. It required a relatively minor adjustment in my approach. I simply had to apply the

concentration I always had for love but that had never before been appreciated, to someone who could appreciate and wanted it. I overlook minor differences between us and simply take pleasure in her presence. For Paula's part, she seems to be more at ease with me and we are finding our old stride and rhythm without the periodic arguments that blasted us apart. She saw Winter yesterday briefly to return some money she owed him but he seems to present no threat to us. In fact, I almost enjoy hearing about him, mostly because I enjoy analyzing with Paula people's actions and motives. Her job is going well and that makes the move to Port Angeles worthwhile. We fit into this small cozy apartment and only Shade seems especially unhappy. It will be my job to see that he gets an hour or two a day running outdoors.

The town is semi-industrial with three major forest industry companies, ships in and out each day picking up whatever wood products are made here. The water, the strait, is right in front of us, yet I don't feel or notice it much, just a placid channel for ships to use. On especially foggy nights there's a foghorn. The town is pleasantly, realistically working class, enough restaurants and a movie theater to keep us entertained. The mountains behind the town are perhaps its greatest attraction although I don't get up into them much with the van feeling so rickety. So, it's a relatively confined small town existence we have

here. Paula is working full time, finding her job painless if not especially fulfilling. Occasionally I am there to pick her up, residents and staff alike are interesting and kind. Two days ago Paula volunteered me to dig out a staffers house from a mud slide. We went for drinks afterward and then had soup at the group home.

I spend much of my time at home reading. My energy is low, low, low. When Paula is at home we watch a lot of television. I have not been able to get up any interest in my writing or trumpet. I hope that by sinking into and through my malaise I will discover a new purpose and energy. I am close to landing a job, right here in town, training developmentally disabled adults in their homes in life skills. Besides the forest products industry, the developmentally disabled industry is big here. I must be going through some life change now. My poetry and trumpet, it doesn't seem to matter if I never do them again. Where I live is losing importance too. I can stay home and do nothing anywhere.

Our relationship, other than our foolish argument yesterday, seems ok, but just ok. I guess I was feeling confined and lashed out at Paula, forgetting my promise not to be nasty to her. This two days straight. She was rightly angry but fortunately realized that it was not a serious infraction of our rules. She is still distant today, but hanging in there. I feel that such an incident will not be

repeated too frequently. I've gotten a handle on how to respond to her non-defensively and by and large it has worked out well. Coincidentally, Winter tried to reach her by phone at work the day of our argument, as if sensitive to any chinks in the wall. I had to laugh. Partly it's because I don't feel threatened, at this point I want the relationship to just take its honest course, without vituperation. If it doesn't work, it will not be because I'm throwing tantrums. I want either an honest, friendly separation or a happy, long life together. I am a little afraid we may run into problems sexually, or at least a need to make a conscious effort in that area. But right now I am just going to let that be natural too and see what we have to work with. It's ironic that Winter should have called in this respect too. Although he promises the world, I am pretty sure his desires do not really go beyond the sexual. It may be that I'm not greatly attracted to Paula, or I may just not be attracted to anyone right now. It may just be part of a general depression, or just my general makeup.

What is one trying to accomplish by having a relationship? Biological urge to reproduce? Companionship? Social organization? I wonder if marriage is destructive to the individual. Some kind of negative romance. The television watching, the small, working class town of no distinction, the estrangement from poetry and music. If I'm not careful I'll be living a seedy, anonymous

novel instead of merely writing it. The distance from people in general, not interested in being nice or listening to their stories. Preferring to read a book or go to the movies, not caring much how I look or dress. Bored. I wonder what Paula sees in me that makes it worth going to such lengths to stay together. Although there are definitely times when we seem happy together, I think we may both want to go separate ways.

Shade and I spend all day together. He's a good dog. I've said this before, but it's funny how just before I'd met Paula, I had finally come to terms with being single and alone. I'm pretty sure I know what would become of me if we separated, somewhat disheveled, not much happier or unhappier, having to deal with a self-image as a loner again but enjoying aloneness, the weather, a few affairs, etc. But what of Paula. Would she stay here or return east. Being attractive she'd find other men but to what end? An older man who really wants to settle down? She could probably do much better than she has in me. There's so much I love in her too. Her face, its expressions, when she reads, or sleeps, or just wakes up. The way she walks, especially with her flat, cloth shoes, the green ones. She is very pretty and womanly. It's good that we've given each other this extra time to decide the future.

Sunday night Feb 14, Valentine's Day. Well, we've come to a final decision not to continue living together. It

feels right for both of us, certainly for me. I feel free again and relieved of an oppressive burden. I can enjoy life at liberty. Now the only problem is financial. How soon will I be solvent enough to move out on my own. In the meantime, we make the best of an uncomfortable situation living together.

This is too perfect, having moved into my new home last night. Paula and I are through, at last, finally, and other than relief and a sense of almost exhilarating freedom, I feel guilt that I should have landed in what seems to be an infinitely more pleasant situation and surroundings than Paula's. The house is large, beautifully but comfortably furnished, clean but not neurotically so, full of dried flowers, perfumes, incenses, delights only a female would think of. Rhoda, my roommate, seems easy going and relaxed. My last three months out west should be completely satisfactory. In addition my financial situation may be resolved. There is movement on my unemployment and I may be receiving checks within two weeks. My work with Community Living should tide me over. Then I can save enough money to get back east and get restarted at Covenant House. If I get another client next month, so much the better. The neighborhood even has a place to sit and overlook the straits, about a half mile from the house. It was the one thing I'd been missing since Port Townsend. Now all I have to do is work out a

schedule, write, practice, work, read, go for hikes in the mountains.

What a day yesterday was! Between Paula and Rhoda there was plenty of excitement. Paula had an auto accident, and Rhoda was harassed by someone knocking on the doors and windows while she was in the bath. I found Paula limping in the Pay & Save parking lot, so I took her home, gave her a bath and backrub. Just bruised. As I was leaving, who should knock on the door but my old nemesis, Winter, not pleased to see me at all but I was secretly happy to tease him like this. He's a pretty sullen character, and from what I've seen myself and heard through Paula, probably not worth it for her to get involved with him again. But she will. She's not very good at picking men. I got home and Rhoda was upset about the harassment. She had called the cops who arrived as I did. Probably just some teens having fun but to my relief the cops convinced her to keep the doors locked instead of behaving like a flower child and keeping them open all the time. We sat and had tea together to calm her down. Today she came home with a puppy that will someday be protection for her. This is the best place I've lived in Washington. Jobs, proximity to unemployment, a country setting in a town, comfortable home, enough time alone, not too much time working, water, mountains, just about everything.

I got a letter from my father yesterday, no guilt, no vituperation, just wondering where we are and how we're doing. I'll have to explain about Paula and I splitting up, the letter was addressed to both of us. Asked what our plans are come spring or summer. Guess I'll be heading back east, my apartment will be waiting. It's pretty clear I could make a life out here if I wanted to. So why do I want to go back to New York? I honestly don't know. For reliable transportation, the subway, no auto dependency. Because I miss my neighborhood and my habits. To contribute to the life of the city. Not because I miss the streets, I have no friends to speak of there. Maybe because I have my own apartment. Here I have mountains, oodles of outdoors, even a reasonably steady job, and I'm still not content and secure. Not unhappy by any means, just restless, itching to move on.

Paula and I have moved easily enough into a comfortable friendship. I am perfectly settled about the end of our life together, glad it is over, and I think she is too. I worry about her ability to be happy and secure on her own but I have no trouble giving her plenty of space. I don't mind seeing her but don't long for it either. I don't know if I learned much in these last two years except what I started out knowing, that being alone is not so bad and can be enjoyed. I allowed myself to get in deeper and deeper with Paula largely because of a personal ethic

which forced me to prove my loyalty, or that I wasn't just using her for sex, once I had slept with her. That was part of it. From the very beginning, her apartment, dark and confused, the way she walked upstairs, overweight and out of shape, I knew she was completely wrong for me, and yet I allowed the relationship to continue and grow. When I asked her to move in with me it was partly guilt (backing out would give the lie to all my past actions with her), partly economics (to save money on the rent), and partly curiosity (can the obvious drawbacks be overcome, and what will it be like to live with a woman in a relationship in which I am dominant because I don't care that much if it succeeds or fails).

Now that it is over and there's no chance she might read this, I can write the truth. Because I was ambivalent about the relationship, actually hoped it would end but could not end it outright because of that silly personal ethic, unable to admit my feelings had changed, that they were always negative and therefore I had been living a lie, not just a mistake. I made no effort to bridle my anger and tantrums and actually created scenes hoping they would finally rupture the relationship. But when they threatened to, I would pull back and apologize, and perversely, do everything I could to prevent it from ending. Partly out of fear of being alone again, partly out of not wanting to admit a mistake and give up, partly because over a period

of time I had really come to love things about Paula that I didn't want to lose, and a little that I worried or was saddened at the thought of Paula being alone again.

This craziness continued through our summer here, creating scenes partially intended to end the relationship, and then making up. But each scene further distanced Paula from me. Having effected a break, why did I want her back? Thoughts of how sweet Paula is and all we had shared made me sentimental, in addition to which I felt guilty about how shabbily I had treated her throughout our relationship although at least it may be said in my favor that I never hit her. I begged her to take me back and promised the world even though I was becoming more aware that we would not succeed on a second trial either. But I had chosen a course and stuck to it obstinately. Paula alternated between enthusiasm (this is what she always wanted to hear) and doubt (but can you really change). I assured her that I had and would change, my commitment to her was total, but I did not feel it deeply, I only believed it might be possible. Events I had initiated swept me along.

When Paula told me on the phone she didn't want to get back together, she'd found a new man, I was more amused than upset, almost glad because Paula was initiating the break, absolving me of guilt and responsibility. But it was too late to turn back, so I kept going, ironically frantic that it would be too late to stop

the new romance. Nothing I said convinced Paula not to become involved with Winter. I began the process of living alone again and although it was painful to see Paula, I was actually quite happy on my own. But, again perversely, to see things to their ultimate conclusion, to play every card, I did everything necessary to get her back and, to my surprise, succeeded. Paula moved back with me.

I easily controlled my temper and was sweetness itself but Paula had trouble feeling any of the old excitement. I tried to overcome my lack of sexual passion and made love to her zealously for a couple of weeks but it was a charade. In the end we both became desultory about the relationship and agreed, without animosity, to end it. It is remarkable how every seed of doubt I had from the beginning was an obstacle right to the end. If I had followed my instincts from the start and ended it when I realized my sexual attraction to her was not what it should have been, what would these two years have been like, and where would I be now? But I wanted to try a long-term relationship, the idea of it held me probably due to seeing friends marry, and in Paula I found someone eager and naïve enough to try.

Today I received a note from Doug McCown inviting me back to work in the vocational department at Covenant House. He says it's expanding rapidly and that job counseling per se is nearly obsolete. I wonder what

that means for a vocational department. In any case it's both flattering and reassuring that I'm still in demand. I imagine things have changed so much it would be like an entirely new job. This period out west has been a financial disaster, income now barely what I need to get back east and squeeze out a month to a first paycheck. It will be unpleasant to give notice at Community Living, another disappearing act. I wonder what to do about Shade and the van. I think the van can make it across again, so maybe it makes sense to keep it. Without the van it makes absolutely no sense to keep Shade, with it it makes very little sense. I like him and will be sad to see him go but if I can effect a separation from Paula, I can certainly live without Shade. Perhaps Rhoda will take him. I feel responsible for him although supposedly he's Paula's dog. I knew from the moment we took him he'd form a stronger attachment to me than to Paula even though Mathews officially gave him to her.

Exhilarating crossing the GW bridge at sunset, skyline of the city I love to hate. Pennsylvania was beautiful, deep gorges and majestic rivers, there's nothing to complain about the scale and landscape of the northeast. Two hawks float above the roadway. Manhattan island nestled among waters. I may be bored with my own mind but not with the land. The van performed admirably. The van, Shade, Paula, Community

Living, the Forest Service, Port Townsend, Port Angeles, everything we leave behind as we move on. But left behind does not describe it, for they live on independently of me. It is as if I had died. But, of course, I haven't. Tomorrow, back to work at Covenant House.

Plate Tectonics Versus Gamma Ray Bursters

It is hard Monday morning and we begin the climb through the work week. Today I have meetings to get the Bellevue and St. Lukes hospital programs going. Also, Summer Youth Employment Program starts today and Tsehai my summer intern comes on. We'll have our normal flow of clients seeking jobs. Beyond the summer programs, what needs to be done? Prepare the office space for Chris Love-Fox who starts August 12. I also need to update and expand my job development mailing list, a key task too long deferred. If I can accomplish just that much this summer I'll have done well. Dagmar has been difficult to work with lately because I got too bossy rather than letting her pick up her own clients at her own pace. Once I stopped assigning, she started accepting clients on her own. Filling job orders has been difficult and time consuming, the program is impossible with just two people. July will be worse because Dagmar will be on vacation for three weeks and Tsehai is inexperienced. Better Tsehai than no one. I don't even need to recruit anymore, word of mouth alone brings in more clients to Stanley Isaacs Center than we can handle.

The hot and humid summer is definitely upon us. At the office the air conditioning makes work possible. Here at home the peace and solitude is like air conditioning. I

stayed home this entire weekend, not even going to the movies. Without tv time passes slowly, I am immersed in my reality. This weekend I compiled the job list, of course. Read *A Glass of Blessings* by Barbara Pym, one of her best. Went for a two hour walk to the river and through the park. Last night I began reading a book about marriage customs in the east and west, really the broader subject of women's status which is in turn the subject of work and sex and the human condition. At one point in this long meditative weekend I thought to myself I'm ready for a woman. Coincidentally, my horoscope in the Daily News said a special person would be visiting me. Then Liz called, said she was thinking of coming to NYC for a few days to get away from Alan, could she stay with me.

So much of my past seems confused and directionless. My time with Paula, particularly out west, for instance. It's amazing how unconscious I've been and makes me wonder how conscious I am now. There is only one way to be safe—document it through poetry. Otherwise all is lost, as it is anyway since as time passes the poems stand alone without their umbilical cord to actual events. As one becomes a better, more useful (to others) poet, the poems are less personal although not necessarily just generalities. I've produced three books, all of them honest efforts. Getting them out there has been difficult—*White Waits* is still stalled at the foundering

Barnwood, and finding a publisher for Brother Death won't be easy. No sales that I know of for Janie Huzzie Bows, a thousand copies sitting in Tom Koontz's basement or attic. Nevertheless I am happy just to struggle writing poems. As I think Davies said, we poets are fortunate to be so neglected by the public, it gives us complete freedom. I've been reading much more of everything including poetry and of course there is too much, to try to read it all is as futile as trying to walk the world. I am going to start a binder of favorite poems to see what my personal anthology would look like and perhaps use it as a teaching tool or to somehow define my approach to the art. It will be a big book because as I read more I become sensitive to more styles and stories. This is surely a good thing.

I want to get a raise, a hefty raise at work. In preparation for this request, I am sending out resumes in case there is to be a battle. I'd rather stay at Isaacs but want more money to compensate for the wear and tear of my position. The program upkeep is complex, far more complex than anyone but me realizes and there is much to do to keep up with its growth. Today will be a brick. Four or five job orders, numerous clients, and only myself and young Tsehai to handle it. The clients are so hopeful, want so much. Resumes are time consuming and so are job orders. The employers are demanding. Yet we chug along, and pretty successfully. If I can get the program growth

and daily work load under control, and the staff trained, my next big task is to improve our job development efforts. Then perhaps outreach for even more clients and expand again. Without clients you can't fill the job orders.

A thunder and lightning storm last night, right overhead, over my apartment. I thought maybe a bolt would jump through the window and electrocute me so I was awake all night and am now tired which means the day will be difficult but the night's sleep deep. Saturday White Waits arrived and a fine production it is. No typos and a cover like the Beatles' white album. It is a short book, the bare minimum of 48 pages. Tom says perhaps I'll receive some attention as a poet now that I have two books published. I doubt it. What I'll enjoy most is sending the book out to friends and family, many of whom may not even read it. To be reviewed once or twice might be interesting. The book is attractive, the poems are good, but what does it add up to? Does it change or enhance anybody's life? It is an egoistic thing I've done, publishing two books. I wish I had done a better job editing JHB but in the massive flow of artistic production that comes from America my own work is so insignificant as to be hilarious. I doubt I have one reader who I do not personally know. Now to publish Brother Death, then I'll be finished with this fun. I wanted to prove that my commitment to writing was not the usual soft underbelly but now I am not writing,

like everyone else who finally had to get a job and pay the rent, too.

I accomplished a lot this weekend, particularly sending away for forest service maps of wilderness areas and writing to three women from the personals. The problem has always been there are too many eligible women to write to, no way to narrow the selection. This weekend I found a criteria. Since I'm always searching for a camping partner and they are in short supply, I will answer ads of women who mention an interest in the outdoors. In thinking back over my lovers, none have been campers and their need for city comforts compromised my own interests. With the forest service maps, I'll know all the wilderness areas in continental U.S. I could spend my life exploring those areas but each time I've had the opportunity, I've returned to NYC. The old battle is raging within me, must spend the summer in the city, continuity of my youth employment program, my career, but miss terribly the mountains and the outdoors. I feel like the main character in *Apocalypse Now*, shut up in Saigon, going crazy, getting weaker, wishing he was back in the jungle. But let's face it, working for the forest service is boring, and it is a job without a future, and it is rough on you physically, and there is no security. Most weekends you're too tired to go hiking, you desire the comforts and entertainment of city life.

My recent visit to Boston was intense. Liz and I have added another dimension to our deepening friendship by making love. She is a wonderful lover, and so much better than I remember her ten years ago, more giving and more in touch with the pleasure she is receiving. Right now my body and mind feel massaged clear through by the weekend with her. In a way this is a culmination of my love life. It is important now not to get neurotic about it. To somehow regain my separate individuality and not try to attach all my feelings and plans to Liz. To still be able to talk to her and listen and even advise without self-interest. It is amazing how my body is still humming, thrilling. A great after-pleasure is to remember moments from this weekend. I catch myself smiling and strangers looking. I don't think this will cause us any regrets but we both want to approach each other fresh each time, not expecting to make love or even hold hands. We want our relationship to be whatever works for us, completely independent of the norm.

I must have been noticing teens and people in their twenties yesterday because I could feel myself passing through life, getting older, knowing it must end. Look how quickly, silently, stealthily 1985 has slipped by. Or you could say it marched relentlessly. As a joke you could divide life into work and love. Sometimes I make that joke with my job search clients—I don't know how your love

life is but if it's anything like your work life, you're in trouble. Or, there are only two things in life that really matter: work and love. There's not much I can do about your love life, but here's what we'll do about work. This of course is not true. Sleep is more important than both of these. How sweet the summer nights, the crickets creating their rhythm hour after hour, all the people asleep, silent for once, the air cooling. But morning approaches inexorably, just as the end of life, or the end of the year. For work to be satisfying it must be a kind of love.

Making love to Liz last week made me happy and I thought about it with pleasure for days after. It also created some apprehension that I might become too attached to her. After all, she is involved with Alan and our relationship must definitely still be considered a friendship. Yesterday she called in a blue funk over Alan and I had to monitor my own feelings. I had clearly made more of our night of lovemaking than she, which I always do be it Liz or another woman. Talking to her I hurled invectives at Alan, which wasn't helpful, and only later in the conversation did I regain my balance. I use my relationship with Liz to keep off the dogs of family and friends who want progress and constant updates on my movement toward marriage and procreation. I give them enigmatic hints about Liz and me, the changes our long relationship has gone through. They are not convinced,

although a man's (or woman's) illusions about love are sacrosanct.

After talking to Liz and seeing how hung up on Alan she remains, I went out and chased after Maggie Brady for a half hour like a dog in heat. She continues to resist my advances while getting pleasure from being desired. I try to keep the whole affair light and fun. I got her to agree to go to a movie with me next week. She says she doesn't want to mix love and work. I gotta laugh at that, what could matter less? I don't want to mix death and earth. So I continue to answer ads in the personals but the women who place them, although the ad says "very pretty", are not very pretty. Otherwise they wouldn't need to place ads, right? The woman I met Thursday night, another Susan, all my susans, was not very pretty but we talked for two hours and I liked her. She laughed at my jokes which is a big plus and I found myself feeling her pain when she talked about her last affair. Sweet, how she looked away and could not control the hurt in her face, almost tears, so vulnerable. When she accused me of being defensive, I told her Liz and I were working on something, who knows what for sure, so I could not give her (Susan) what one places a personals ad for. She told me I was "grown-up" unlike most men and that my life seemed all of one piece instead of disjointed. She had a fine, strong handshake when we parted in the subway. Poor, unfortunate Liz has

graduated to the lovers section of love where things never work out, from the friends section of love where there is order and contentment.

Liz is a dream come true. Unlike the push and pull tug of war with some women, everything with Liz is natural and easy. A total pleasure. We have been happy together in every way. I love Liz, am proud to be with her, consider her a true friend, a wise and intelligent person, a beautiful woman. I respect her and wish only for her happiness and continued growth. I enjoy deeply both giving to her and receiving from her. I like being touched by her. I think it's possible for us to explore ourselves together for a long time. Take time. She's one of the few people, perhaps the only one, who I have unlimited time for. Kissing her is sensuous. Making love is emotional and joyful. We've agreed not to pre-conceive ideas about our sexual relationship. Just let whatever happens happen without applying any of the standard norms. This frees me to respond in any way and it's alright. When I'm with Liz there's no place else I'd rather be. We don't have to talk, or we can. Monday for instance was a wonderful day. She came to work and saw Isaacs Center. We had lunch at the little Indian restaurant. We took a cab to EMS and bought hiking boots for her. Then we went to her uncle Jerry's and lay together talking. We played cards. In the cab to the train station we got romantic, stuck in traffic. I think that

whatever happens to us as lovers, we will always be friends. She has changed so much in ten years it's almost a miracle. So open and loving now. I feel fortunate to be able to accept her love.

September comes in like a lion from the hot, dusty African veldt and hopefully goes out like a lamb from the cool English highlands. Hayfever season and even my ornade spansules cannot handle the high pollen count. Weather hot and humid, New York specialty. Burned out from work, no vacation since early May. End of next week start two week vacation, nine days in Rocky Mountain National Park and four days in Boston. Business has been a little on the slow side and I wonder should I put up fliers again around the neighborhood. Outside is hell, inside is boring. My next big task is to update my neighborhood inventory of businesses. Then update the job development brochure, include businesses from the job lists on the mailing list. Also closely supervise Dagmar and Chris who are actually doing a decent job, and train the two Fordham interns who will start Sept. 30. Last night we played softball against the girls' team and won by one run, a close, well-played game, good defense in the field. I played first base. We were quite tired after seven innings, had some fun.

Last weekend Liz and I went camping with Ken. I think Liz enjoyed the camping although she had difficulty

carrying a backpack. Our love making Sunday night was intensely wonderful. I've never wanted her so much. We're both dreaming of living together again, sharing a life where we can support each other's growth and be together a lot. Living in separate cities, separated for two or three weeks at a time, is difficult. Liz has become such an open woman, a good lover, I can't believe my luck that she should love me. I've never felt so sure of my feelings for someone, no ambivalence. Without hesitation I participate in this relationship. No other commitment, nor work, takes precedence. Perhaps it is too early to make such statements. Love flares up and dies down so often. But I am enjoying feeling and watching the changes our friendship goes through. I still don't have any desperate stake in a particular outcome. I think that for the next few months we'll just see how things progress on this level, visits between Boston and NY. If our feelings for each other remain strong, I'll start looking for a job in Boston aiming to move there and share a place with her. I still can't believe this is happening to me, who has been alone for so long.

Things with Liz continue to be strong although occasionally, like last night, she seems attracted back to Alan again. She's been straight with me, however, and kept me informed of how she's feeling. As long as she does there won't be any unpleasant surprises. We can sure talk,

our minds must work similarly or we have the same interests because we like to understand the dynamics beneath whatever's happening. Every night since I left Boston two weekends ago we have talked for over an hour. I still plan to move to Boston, possibly even if Liz and I decide not to live together. I still feel attached to Isaacs Center and my apartment, although not NYC and the grief it gives me just to cross the street. Liz and I have considered where we'd like to live and how our apartment would look and what kind of life we'd share. These physical separations of two weeks or more give everything an unreality though, like a novel or movie. I still feel no ambivalence about being involved with her. She is the woman for me. There are still many obstacles—a job, an apartment, and Alan remains the most serious of them all. Last night it sounded as if he was very clear, direct and open with Liz and she liked that. If he could do that consistently it could change the direction of my involvement with Liz. How would I feel? A return to gray loneliness, which would be nothing new for me.

Saturday I saw the geese go south, each goose calling out the weather signals, changes in flight, above the earth and water below. I stopped balancing the checkbook and stepped outside to see the V-formation, hear the constant calling and communicating. Liz and I continue to go deeper into our relationship, our

connection growing stronger. We visit about every two weeks and talk an hour or more on the phone every night. I have never felt so clear and unambivalent about a woman, I have no doubt that if it can work out I would gladly share my life with her. We've even talked of marriage and children and it actually seems possible. I accept, however, whatever direction the relationship takes. I like talking with her and exploring what's going on either between us or in our separate interests. We can be honest with each other and don't have to fake what we feel at a given moment. She handles things I say that most women would become upset or defensive about. Both of us have been intimate with other people and those experiences stand us in good stead. I look forward to living together and sharing our lives everyday but I cannot predict when that might happen. Liz still has strong feelings for Alan and it's possible for those to come in the way of us. Yet she seems quite happy in and committed to our relationship so I don't worry too much. I imagine our apartment, preferably in Cambridgeport, she teaching dance, me with a challenging job in youth services. We have a garden, we cook together, people visit us, we drive to the beach or mountains together, we each do our work, we talk. What a good life. I'm quite amazed that this is possible for me. Not long ago I had given up on any kind of long-term happiness. Now it is possible with someone I've

known for ten years.

I am disciplining myself again. Up at 6 a.m. On alternate days I write and practice trumpet. It feels wonderful to be playing music again. I do exercises, then work on a tune. The writing is much more problematic. My mind is usually a blank but I will write something bad every day. Maybe I'll just try to write as badly as possible, that will be my discipline. I feel in myself the potential for discovering new poetry as I know I have in the past, notwithstanding the criticism of friends and acquaintances, rejections from publishers and my own anonymity. These mornings from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. are sweet, in winter, the sky is dark and then reddens and lightens in the east. If and when Liz and I live together, I must find a way to continue writing and playing trumpet.

Last weekend in Boston we ran into a problem, the old destructive dynamic between us. Liz was angry at me about something but instead of expressing it she denied it (because good girls don't get angry) and she withdrew from me. In response, I fawned over her, simpering to elicit some response, a love call, and this made her withdraw further because it reminds her of her own and her father's relationship to her mother. Somehow we broke through and were able to enjoy the rest of the weekend. Some of the best times were the morning of my interview, Liz sitting with me while I bathed and following

me around the apartment as I got dressed; brunch on Sunday and the walk home along Mass Ave. buying used clothes from an apartment sale; the hour or so before I left, me lying in bed half asleep and Liz just holding me. And it's still good to make love. I realized this week it's important for us to maintain a certain mental attitude, that we will not assume we're lovers but that we'll check our feelings all the time and if we don't want to be together, we won't rather than following some script. Not even necessarily talking on the telephone everyday as we have been. When I can create this mental distance, I feel closer to Liz than when I feel compelled to be connected to her all the time.

Work has been going well and I'm resolved to accomplish a lot in the next four weeks before Christmas. We're understaffed again and may need a second Fordham intern next semester. The staff is doing reasonably well and I believe we are a good influence on the youths using the program. We've been swamped again with high school and even junior high students and this is not great for our placement rate. October was our biggest month ever, I've had to do more counseling again and less of other tasks but I like the mix, the unpredictability of a day of counseling combined with administrative work. I need to get the babysitting/home handyhelper portion of the early adolescent program

underway. Also need to complete my efforts to expand our job development outreach. Later will come Career Day, then I'm supposed to study the possibility of evaluating our program in a more qualitative way. Do we really have a significant positive impact on our clients' lives? Nevertheless, even given a salary increase, I'm continuing to apply for positions in Boston and submitting forest service applications for next summer, just in case.

Last weekend I went to Boston and made it clear to Liz that I needed a final choice from her—me or Alan. Our weekend together was pleasant although relatively sexless and Tuesday she was to see a counselor with Alan and attempt to come to some decision about their future. Liz was supposed to call Tuesday night but didn't. I suppose it means she and Alan have decided to explore their relationship further, which leaves me out. How do I feel about this? Pretty depressed about the failed relationship. Had high hopes. No matter how often this happens and how accustomed you become it always hurts. It hurts to look back on the good, trusting times and compare all the love lines you said and plans you made to the current desolation. You feel like a fool. Again. You wonder when you're going to accept, finally as death, that life is lived alone. And people wonder why this should be a major theme in my poetry. What else is there? The failure of romantic love. Only agape, love for humanity

and the world and life can permanently satisfy. And even then, even if the whole human race dies, you die alone.

Even if Liz does not go back to Alan, which I think she has since I haven't heard from her in almost a week, I can't continue to be intimate with her because she said that if Alan offered her a commitment she would return to him. That makes me second fiddle, as usual. I'm angry at myself for being such a sucker. Once again a woman is telling me that I'm wonderful, sensitive, etc., but is choosing the other guy. I really don't understand it. I'm puzzled. I have no answers. Liz has psychological problems, her relationship with her parents causes her to become involved in destructive relationships with men where she is rejected after being strung along. Then I come along, a plain, simple, straightforward dope who wants to share equally and openly with her. What do I get? I get a few months of marital bliss and a few years of hellish pain. I'm doing a little better with it this time. I'm calling a spade a spade. Not making believe there's hope for this relationship. Too bad for her and too bad for me. Or lucky for both of us.

OK so Liz called this morning from her uncle's, she took a sucker punch. I had left a message on her machine Thursday night that made me sound open to her. I regretted it right away but now I'm glad because I needed to take the initiative by rejecting her. She called this

morning to see if we could get together today. I said no. It made me feel like I was in control again. I told her the bottom line for me was still her interest in a relationship with Alan. Under these circumstances I can't be her "friend", I don't think we can talk or be together at this time. She said You know how I feel about you Bob. I said I knew she "cared for me." I could feel her trying to interpret that statement. I offered nothing more. She said she still hopes our relationship can work out. Actually I'm a little hopeful too, but I'm not even going to think about it. I'm going to proceed just as though we are permanently separated. Whereas all week I felt anxious and depressed, now I feel fine because I've initiated the separation. I'm holding to the relationship as I conceived of it two weeks ago, no calls, no visits. Complete separation. Ken called right after I hung up. He let me vent my anger and frustration. Each friend I've described the situation to has sided with me definitively and admired my course of action. Of course, if my friends could sit down with Liz their opinions might not be so one-sided.

At work I did an annual cumulative statistical report that showed the highest client count so far and the highest placement rate yet at 49.8%. I expect our client count and placement rate to rise even further. I believe we are providing a solid, indisputable service to youths and young adults. There is much for me to do yet, more job

development on a city-wide basis, complete our local business mailing list, then Career Day will be upon us, I need to develop the babysitter/home handyhelper business for 14-16 year olds, and design a qualitative evaluation of the program. Then the summer programs will begin, the internships. Joanne and I may be starting a poetry seminar at P.S. 198.

Last night I had dinner with Liz and I'm very happy about the clarity I achieved. We had a rocky start, calling each other names, and for a while I was afraid she'd refuse to talk. But we had dinner in an Italian restaurant and got down to business. I had basically two questions for her: where is her relationship with Alan now; what kind of relationship with me does she want. She talks to Alan occasionally but doesn't see him. However she can't say her relationship with him is resolved, there is some chance they will get back together. Her relationship with Alan mirrors her relationship with her mother in which she strove for love and acceptance but was rejected. She thinks that psychologically she is still working through this dynamic and that may be why she can't give up Alan yet. At this time she wants a relationship with me that includes soup to nuts, see each other as often as possible, hang out, make love. Even though she might go back to Alan at some point and even though she can't honestly say I'm the man she wants. There's some element of not wanting or

valuing what she can have (me) and striving after what she can't have (Alan).

I noted what I called her irresponsibility in being willing to hurt me by going back to Alan. She said our relationship has changed, it's no longer on the level it was. I said that for me spending that kind of time together and making love would deepen it. Her position about this seemed unusually shallow for Liz and it's something that makes me question her true nature, whether she's as sensitive and caring as I've always thought. I asked her what she'd meant each time she said she hoped our relationship could work out and it turned out that it didn't mean she hoped she could resolve her feelings and be with me. It was much more impersonal, it had nothing to do with me actually. It's painful to think I may have misjudged Liz's depth of feeling about me or even her ability to feel for people beyond her own needs. Liz implied that I was attracted not to some special depth or sensitivity in her but rather the person she was as a result of her particular, life-long emotional struggle. This could be true. Anyway, it was clear that the depth of feeling she was operating at could not be satisfying for me and could be deeply destructive.

So I told her what I had to tell her. That I needed a complete and total separation from her because our intermittent phone conversations during the past month

had pulled me back into an emotional turmoil that I can't afford. I told her not to under any circumstances call me or try to see me, that if she needed to communicate with me she should write. And that this was absolute, no exceptions whatsoever. She seemed crestfallen but accepted the terms. She started to offer if I wanted to call her . . . but I cut her off, don't even offer, it isn't going to happen, I'll write. I felt liberated from her. Whereas for the past few weeks and at the start of the evening I'd felt angry and anxious, now I felt happy. I enjoyed my meal, I even enjoyed Liz. It's not clear to me why she should care at all about this since she seems to value our relationship so much more lightly than I do but she asked if she decided not to be involved with Alan, could she and I get back together. I said I'd be willing to explore our relationship in any way as long as she wasn't involved with anyone else. After dinner I walked her to Jerry's in the rain. It was a pleasure to walk in the rain with everything clear and resolved. So that is basically the end of this chapter of the Liz and Bob story. I guess what happened is I fell in love with a woman who didn't love me in the same way. We had some good times, then we realized this was the case.

Most decisions have now been made, it is a question of riding it out and trying to enjoy winter. I am frequently amazed that only a little while ago the air was

hot, the trees had leaves, we wore no coats. My mind has changed little but I am crying inside about something, my ultimate loneliness I suppose. But the apartment is comfortable, the job is satisfying, the body healthy. There is even enough heat this winter. I have held to my decision not to speak to Liz and a week has gone by. I've been tired and depressed but I don't know if that's because Liz is no longer in my life or because I haven't had a vacation since September. Liz has held to her part of the bargain although I believe she was the one who called and hung up after the Bill Cosby Show Thursday night. I can't gauge at all how much I miss her. How close were we after all? I feel as if I have forgotten her like I forgot summer, I can't feel it or her and I have no record because I've written no poetry. I am sad for this. I am 34 and my life passes unspoken for in so many ways. This one week since I saw Liz has felt like a month or more, a season, maybe even a year. Occasionally I doubt my decision but generally feel right about it. She's dangerous for me to be emotionally involved with. I let her go. Fly away little bird. Do not come back.

Lately I've been unable to discipline myself in any area of my life, except not to call Liz. These Saturday nights at home, listening to jazz radio and reading and writing, then watching a movie on tv, safe from the winter cold or emotional pain, have been soothing, and fattening. Football on tv does not do it for me although I've tried.

Nor does Norman Mailer's most recent effort. Anyway no writing is happening, life passes unrecorded, snow falls, leaves bud, summer heat, autumn colors, snow falls. I expanded *Brother Death* to make the 48 page minimum for a poetry collection and have decided I like this expanded version. It's a good book, I don't need to apologize although finding a publisher won't be easy. My work is not identifiable as belonging to any particular school or style. In fact I pride myself on the variety of forms displayed but my work is flotsam in the flood of poetry published today.

Liz called me on Monday to ask if we could start seeing each other again. She said she still could not honestly say that she felt entirely finished with Alan. She said she wasn't seeing anyone. She said that this separation was resulting in stagnation for us. I said I'd think about that and get back to her in about a week. I've been thinking and I feel that I want to continue our separation. I don't hear her saying anything substantially different about Alan and I still don't want to get caught in the middle. I don't think our relationship can be healthy while there's a possibility she might go back to him. That pretty much precludes an intimate, sexual involvement for us but what about some middle ground? Do I have to continue to enforce this total separation? This is the area in which I have more thinking to do. I have not enjoyed

being pulled back into this emotional turmoil as a result of her phone call although it has been mild compared to a month or two ago. While seeing her and talking to her on the phone regularly would allow us to share our lives again which was the best part of our friendship, it would also expose me to emotions which I have been healing from lately. Right now I don't feel strong enough to abstain from sex with her and I don't want to spend a lot of time and energy thinking about her. It feels like I'm going to continue our separation, not see her or talk to her until I feel healed enough to approach her as a friend.

Who is Liz? I'm not sure. A woman I lived with in Boston ten years ago. How much of my identity is defined by my relationship to Liz? About an eighth to a sixteenth. How much of Liz' identity is defined by her relationship to me? About a sixteenth to a thirty- second. Do I still hope to be together? Yes, but I wish not to have that hope. What does the I Ching say? Perseverance furthers, of course. I'm a little amazed that I'm making this choice. The dream woman of my life calls and begs to be with me and I'm saying no. From a certain perspective it seems crazy and I wonder if I'm just playing it safe. But right now this separation feels right. I guess I could lose Liz completely, even as a friend. I happened to turn to my newspaper horoscope yesterday and it said that someone would be shocked to the core by my decision to close certain doors

but that person should have figured out what I wanted and needed a long time ago. I think Liz may be deeply shocked although that's not why I'm choosing this course. She may find it hard to imagine that someone could turn down her offer, or that I could. Or it may cause her to examine her assumptions more carefully. I want to be sure none of my decisions are made to get back at her or hurt her. I just want to do what's right for me. To be refusing the love, such as it is, of a woman I've admired and desired for over ten years, that shocks me.

Liz and I parted in a friendly, even pleasant, way. A happy ending. Thursday I had lunch with Paula. She is doing well, her marriage to Peter is working out. She gave me some gifts and was a good listener to my Liz story. Paula has changed, doesn't use makeup anymore or scent, lets her hair go a little wild under the influence of Peter who doesn't believe in such artificiality. And they have plenty of money and options. She's finishing her B.A. at Hunter College.

Yesterday Darryl Ashe called saying the stock clerk job we got him at State News stinks. They're prejudiced and they want him to do things he wasn't originally hired to do and after three weeks they haven't given him a raise. I started yelling. How are they prejudiced, how do you know? Nothing specific, they just are, it's Martin Luther King's birthday. In addition to stocking magazines he has

to stock newspapers too! And they're still paying him \$3.50 per hour after three weeks. I know the job stinks but I yell at him anyway because he has all the wrong reasons. So do I. Time for a vacation.

Last October the Meredith Organization, a large real estate concern in midtown, placed a job order with the Isaacs youth employment program requesting an office assistant. The employment counselors carefully screened potential applicants and from the few interviewed by Meredith, Tracy Atkins was selected. Six months later the expanding real estate firm contacted the employment program for an additional office assistant and Gloria Bailey was hired. Three months ago Claudine Cole was also hired. Last week Tracy Atkins was promoted to administrative assistant and called to request someone to fill her vacated position. Yesterday Renee Chavis was hired.

East Harlem to the Grand Tetons

My Giant goes with me wherever I go. The Olympic Peninsula attracted me because the mountains, and plenty of them, are right there in walking distance, no logistics problems getting to them. In NYC the crowds, the lines, the dogs, the interminable subway travel are obstacles to a normal physical life. The closest you get to nature is your lady's queynt. But perhaps all I need to satisfy my nature is a lady's queynt, an occasional camping trip and regular runs in the park. When I lived in the Olympics what did I miss about NYC? The ethnic variety, the speed of life, the energy of the streets, the wide choice of movies, the public library, watching well-dressed women, the newspapers and feeling that you're at the center of the empire. Some of this is also what I want to escape, the high speed life style, the women with their inflexible stylishness and expectations, the traffic, the crowds and bad air, the subway, the distance from remote wilderness, the lines everywhere.

In October my grandmother, Clara Lindenstruth Ronnow, died. I believe she lived the life she willed and died relatively easily and you can't ask much more from such a world. She died when the weather was still warm and the leaves were changing. Of hers I have some furniture and blankets and a box of powerful photographs,

an intense lifetime of photographs that most nights I can't even open because they knock me out. My parents nearly threw them away having decided to save nothing personal. I didn't object when they discarded her letters, but not her photographs. My grandmother chose to leave the world without ceremony or fanfare, a practice I too wish to adopt. No wake, no religious preachers, no heavenly bull. Cremated without an audience, interred without prayers.

Stanley Isaacs Center remains a wonderful place, a neighborhood center for every age group, like family. So simple and human. How did I get in the middle of so many lives, I think the center alleviates problems by making people feel less alone and isolated. A social place. I also get to act freely, virtually act out. Talk tough detective talk if I want. The job itself is just a system, a numbers game, finding jobs for people. The kids' Christmas show really warmed my heart and the staff party brought us even closer than we ought to be. I told Lorraine twice that I loved her, and kissed Maggie full on the lips. Young adults and teens have to be among the sweetest creatures, along with children. At what point do I stop liking people, at what point do they harden into maturity? I feel unique, there are many college professors, even poets, but how many youth employment counselors? Of course, the system is sly, making me happy and using me up. But work

remains rewarding, an emotional storm I'm at the center of. Jobs, jobs, Bob's jobs.

Work takes up more and more of my mind, and what's more, I don't mind. The program has made long-term, beneficial relationships possible with clients. Originally I thought we'd see clients once and quickly lose touch with them but it has evolved that we work with our clients over the course of a year or two and presumably this could continue onward. We reach them at various stages and get to know them pretty well. The many different ways we contact them makes them feel we are concerned about their futures, so they come to us for advice. It's been rewarding and exciting. We'll be expanding again, new counselor, other program initiatives. This job is the foundation of my current happiness. For all its shortcomings, particularly in terms of space and physical plant, Isaacs is still the best place I've ever worked.

We are being treated to a lovely snowstorm. Life has been good and I can actually say I am happy. It didn't take much, a reorganization is all. The gym once a week and dating one woman per month. This way I do my part once a month and nobody can say I haven't tried. Last night was my January date, with Lorraine. We attended a virtuoso concert performance by Patti LaBelle, had an enjoyable dinner before the show and drinks afterward. Our

conversation centered too much on office gossip but I had a pleasant time anyway. This date was expensive yet I don't mind spending it on Lorraine who I like. Time to start thinking about this month's date. I find that as I go out with women relationships slowly develop, simply getting to know and trust each other. My once a month date has become a mild source of humor among my friends. I feel far from the flash loves of my twenties.

Last night was my February date, with Maggie Brady. We went to hear Kenny Rankin who was easy to listen to, even after a hard day's work. I enjoyed laughing with Maggie, she's easy to have fun with, takes a joke well. After the concert we went for a long walk and started to feel close. Then in the cab home we started kissing. I sort of gave in, I mean what the hell, I've been resisting these feelings a long time. We'll just have to see how strong this becomes. I still don't know her well at all so it's hard to say what last night means to her. At last, being with women, asking them out, dating, perhaps sleeping with and making love to them, has become relatively easy. My once a month plan was a great idea. It takes everything out of my hands in a sense, I simply have to satisfy one requirement, a date with a woman that has romantic potential, once a month. It has worked splendidly, keeping my sense of manhood alive without making me search around frenetically for contacts. And I

also get to hear good music. It just costs money, which I have enough of at the moment. Now I wonder whether I'll continue dating Maggie, which makes sense, or want to check out a new woman every month, which could become a bad, and complicated, habit. Well, I have most of March to decide.

Work is work. I've been depressed about it and a few other things for the past two weeks. All these guys in their twenties who are hopelessly unskilled. My techniques will not work for them, they need training but in what and how to get it? Right now they need a job and money and perhaps they're right, just get on their feet to make the next move. Monday is always a brick of a day, many clients, all clamoring for jobs, all disappointed when it's more difficult than a handout. No hope of finding a meaningful job that will last a long time. Many high school dropouts for whom it is next to impossible to help except to open the phone book and have them make calls. It's a little overwhelming the number of black male young adults that come to us. Their limitations are frustrating to deal with. Further education is probably not even a solution for them. And in general, young people think working is somehow going to make their lives right, when actually almost all work is boring and a dead end. After two weeks they are disillusioned and so is the employer. One cannot take it to heart and survive emotionally. The

human condition is 7/8 confusion and pain and only 1/8 a movie or song.

Since I last stopped writing, then started again, have I written anything the world would miss? Have I written any poems not flawed by my preoccupation with myself, by writing about my experience of perception rather than purely perceiving and recording? It's weird to be your own only fan. Secretly I believe my books are going to slowly prove themselves worthy but that does not change my current state of self-criticism. Unfortunately I fear that by not writing poetry an, perhaps the, essential part of my existence will disappear. That I will be just a body, a soulless shell, a zombie looking out from my own eyes. I'm actually *afraid* to stop writing poetry! It is part of my identity but it can no longer be denied that I am a minor poet, so minor that I am embarrassed to say I am a poet. Poet is an archaic word anyway. Even writer is old-fashioned. I should not feel bad about discontinuing my efforts to eke out a little poem now and then like a constipated turd.

Sitting on the roof, the wind in the trees is wonderful, so special for NY. The noise and energy release is intense, sirens and firecrackers at the moment, earlier B.J., Felix's kid, throwing a massive tantrum and the drummer across the street practicing. Fortunately, other than car alarms, I don't mind. On the Memorial Day

weekend when everyone is running around looking for a good time, there is no cooler, quieter place than my own bedroom looking out on Inwood Hill Park. The clean oxygen coming off the breezy trees. I did a lot of reading and watched some tv. I read through those diaries, *The Day Dreams*, I wrote back when I lived in Boston, a three-month project where I detailed each day's events the following day. I was amazed at how many people I was involved with, including sexually. It was fascinating to me, and probably a good exercise, but not literature unfortunately. I am seeking some form for my writing now that I feel empty of poetry. I've considered writing short stories by picking events from my past and retelling them in detail from memory.

Poetry is somehow more lasting. Yesterday I was crossing Central Park in the rain. The midtown skyscrapers were half covered by storm clouds. All my life as a poet I have consciously tried to invest such images with profound meaning. It may now be wise to simply chronicle what I see without my biases. In other words, try to take the I out of my work. See without commentary on seeing. What was special about that image? The skyscrapers, a powerful human creation meeting the storm clouds, a powerful natural event. The grays and shades of grays, there are no pink or blue skyscrapers, they run from white to black basically. The rectangular sharp-edged buildings

and the rounded, bumping clouds. This is the kind of analysis I need to do, and find a form and words to hold it. Then, finally, I might be writing poetry.

Yesterday Steve Costanzo, who we've been working with for almost a year, finally landed a stock clerk position, full time permanent with one of our business contacts in a large Hallmark card and gift shop. It only occurred to me yesterday, a last minute thought, to send Steve. Howard says that's the level of caring we attain at Isaacs, not to give up on someone. Also Ray Peterson, another learning disabled individual who has been messing up on his job delivering meals to the homebound elderly. I was able to speak to him and I think solve the problem so that he'll be able to keep his job. Both pretty big victories if they last. This in addition to the many smaller victories with our more competent clients. Dagmar put in a good week at work. She may not be innovative but she is reliable. Our weekly supervisions are helpful, she feels good because she gets praise and constructive criticism and understands the overview, the direction the program is taking. I feel good because I get to address the issues bothering me in a mutually agreed upon and non-threatening forum.

I enjoy work best when I can simply concentrate on counseling clients and not worry about administrative issues. Carol, our executive director, is probably right that the goal must be to make your work perpetuate itself after

you're gone. That's the hard part. But I don't care very much about that really. I went to a meeting at a foundation yesterday, wore my new suit, hot for summer, and felt out of place. Our fast-paced placement program is so different from the long term job training programs. I like ours better and clearly so do our clients. Spencer Moss got a job at a hardware store. Somehow that is not satisfying for anyone but me, Spencer and the hardware store manager. Everyone is aiming their clients toward long term trades and professions but there are still a lot of youth out there not yet ready for that. Who helps them with employment? Us. Summer will come and go and I'll hardly notice. This is dangerous, that seasons and years should pass without really feeling or enjoying them.

Today is my 35th birthday. In many ways it's a good age. I'm healthy and feel young at heart but have the experience and maturity now to make good decisions (usually) and be of use to other people. My life is similar to my childhood in basic ways. My life in the community is diverse with many different friends and colleagues, while my intimate life is still spent alone, involved in various projects and self-disciplines. Overall I'm happy and busy, although just Thursday I was depressed, feeling isolated. Perhaps the most important skill that comes with experience and maturity is knowing how to recognize and ride out your feelings and moods. In other words,

understanding change. Change is the one constant. Yesterday two relatively new people in my life had the most important roles. Chris Fox, the new job counselor, took me out to lunch and Juan Ortiz, who is going camping with me in Maine next month, showed up after work and we had a few drinks.

Stormy, windy day. Something about it fits my mood, not stormy, just not too sociable. Yesterday at work we were extremely busy again but it wasn't bad. Each of us, me, Dagmar and Chris, just hunkered down and did our work. I didn't nag, there's no way to watch everything the counselors do. They're good anyway. Little by little I'm getting pieces of work out of the way. Our system of helping youths and young adults find jobs really works, a lot of people have found jobs recently. The job market is hot, and of course, as Chris likes to remind us, we're good at what we do. Occasionally lately, mostly because of my own isolation and loneliness, I've wondered what's the point of all this activity. I'm a bit burned out and sometimes I doubt whether we're really helping our clients in any meaningful way, or are we just rotating them through a series of dead end jobs. On the whole though, I think we help people substantially. Knowing there's a job market and a place for resources motivates people to look for work. And I've seen many cases where young people return from a job feeling much more mature and self-

confident about themselves.

A clear, crystalline crescent moon left in the sky this morning. Days getting a little longer at both ends, cold dark January, endless month, finally over. Living has been difficult, a burnt out case indeed. No vacation from work since September, a miscalculation. Blame it on Chris Fox's broken ankle. So, the trip to southwest New Mexico, Gila Wilderness Area, will have to wait until April. Try to keep in perspective that all his negative outlook comes from long months without any rest. I must absolutely keep to my schedule of a week or two week vacation every three months. A camping outdoors, fresh air, high peaks, free living, good dying, natural animal vacation. Two days ago, Friday, I took off from work, claiming sick, and played trumpet unmuted for the first time in what seemed like a year. I almost cried it sounded so beautiful. What's happened to all the other sides of me since I committed myself to Bob's jobs?

It's been a fairly mild winter, a few snowstorms, only a couple of cold snaps. Almost Spring but only February Anyway, one more month then what, two more months until what? What are the categories—work, writing and trumpet; friends, women and mountains. Friends Women Mountains. Good title for a book. It's hard to know right now whether I'm bored with my job or just burnt out because Chris Fox has been out for three months.

Yesterday I saw about ten clients all by myself, Susan and Dagmar were at meetings. It's hard to know whether this program is my life or is costing me my life. Escape from New York is becoming a high priority, I may take the forest service option this summer if it is offered. What a stink and roar that will raise. It will be tough for those left behind, just as it is rough for us with Chris out. There is no knowing whether this youth employment program is making any serious difference. A lot of youths get shitty jobs, some find good ones, some learn to find their own. I feel there is no way to teach positive work habits, they must be developed on the job. And that can happen only with a wise and attentive employer or supervisor. These are few, certainly in the retail world. Retailers are greedy or under the gun to survive, the whole world including their employees is under suspicion. Just as I now suspect Chris Fox of taking an extremely long paid vacation. I'll have to call her next week, and her doctor, and get a definite commitment to return by a certain date.

We see between 100 and 150 clients per month, 20 to 50 of them find jobs or placements. It translates into 600 to 750 clients per year with 250 to 350 placements. I tried to have fun yesterday, enjoy the clients, joke with them a little, not get overwhelmed by the numbers waiting, only do what I could. Job development has been rather slow. Our last mailing did not bring much in and because of the

pressures on me I have not been able to develop the city-wide business list I had planned. I'm about a year behind on that. One should not care too much. We are not in a life and death business. More of a happiness and opportunity business. Room and board, roof overhead, food on table, then maybe opportunities for personal growth, learning, satisfaction, contributions to society. I think I'll start spot-checking, reviewing cases, of the permanent staff once a week as I've been doing with the social work interns. It motivates them and sharpens their counseling skills, and gives me peace of mind that the job's getting done well.

Actually, as jobs go, I can't complain. My problem is living in New York City, disconnected from nature, mountains. This scares me, to die here without ever living free again. This is my struggle, my problem, that while my work is satisfying, my environment is not. Will several two week vacations each year satisfy my need to be outdoors, or must I work for the forest service summers. I don't know. I tell myself to relax, my next vacation is in April. I plan two weeks in the southwest, with or without company. Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. But a vacation or two or three may not be enough. Perhaps I need a total change in life style.

The entire question makes my palms sweat and my heart fibrillate. I feel weak, sick. Yet my apartment is a haven, a cave with everything I need. I work well here,

write, read. If I were financially independent this situation might be perfect. But a working class hero is something to be. In less than an hour I must exercise, shower, dress in tight collar and tie, pressed pants, carry briefcase and newspaper to subway, sit scrunched with other mostly annoyed, uncomfortable, unhappy people in the dirty and graffiti train. But the uncrowded local, loud and taking its time, soothes. The stroll through Central Park is a bandaid on the cancer. The Center is the extended family I never had, good kids, friendly fellow workers and my day is busy. So, what's your problem, boy? The old, old one, old as I am, of being scheduled rather than free to do what I want when I want. Of course, this is asking too much. Kill the poets! Make them punch clocks! Run them over in rush hour traffic! Replace flowers with bricks! Until they've said Enough of life! I can feel how this stresses me out, especially Mondays and Tuesdays. I feel weak, sick. Like I may die. Then toward Thursday I feel strong, healthy, like I may live. Wednesday is a toss up.

Spring is coming closer, like a wild animal, hungry but cautious. Even though it's been a mild winter, most New Yorkers seem strung out, desperate for the sun. Today is cloudy although the last few days have been lovely. This past weekend was horrible for me though, panic attacks galore. I got into the bad habit of holding my breath and listening for my heartbeat. This way I could worry about

impending heart attack. And of course my usual aches and pains, in the left shoulder and arm and headaches did not help. I had a severe panic attack Saturday morning. I thought I would die and went up to the park to do it. I recognized it as panic but of course a part of me really believed I was dying. That's what makes it panic. The day was quite beautiful, it would have been a good day to die but I still can't accept nonexistence. I started climbing toward the river overlook and here things got serious. I couldn't climb, I felt no pain but I felt so weak! I feel some anxiety just writing this. I felt that perhaps my system was shutting down. After a while I did manage the hill, viewed the river, then found a patch of dry grass in the sun. I lay there a couple of hours, relaxed, slept, watched the sky and treetops. Something I do not do often enough in this sad, ridiculous adult life of clean shirts, borrowed books, subway rides, always working, buying lotto. While lying there I planned an escape from my life. I knew I would survive this time otherwise I wouldn't be planning.

In most respects my job is fun, we keep on rolling along, have a steady flow of clients, many of whom find jobs even with Chris Fox out for three months. But do I want to do this forever? Overall I'm content, not especially ambitious. If I went for a second degree it would be in forestry, not social work. In addition to the usual employment counseling, Joann and I have been running a

poetry workshop on Wednesday evenings. It has been fun sharing and talking about poems, and I'm amazed I have so much to say. Howard is trying to implement an idea I had to install a bank of computers for a core competencies learning program so youths and people from the community can come in any time and improve their math and English at their own rates and levels. Flexible enough to accommodate any level of performance at any time of day.

I chose New York because of the Power Broker, Robert Moses. I too wanted to be a benevolent despot. Of course it turns out I have no power, although I am a bit of a broker. I broker jobs for youths. The youths must conform to my standards of appearance, skill and attitude, making me a despot. Actually I am revolutionary in my approach, making information about jobs and training accessible to all youths whether they conform or not to my ideals. I let the market do the selecting and sorting but I'm no better than a youth, unable to hold a job for a steady year or more. I could disappear into the Olympic or Inyo or Uinta mountains any moment. Nothing to stop me. I am mist, vapor, no record except my initials in the files. You can leave at any time. You can return without being seen. A way to learn your insignificance, freedom to have never been. But lately, some nights, this brave philosophy turns into panic. To die without a trace, a completely insignificant

existence. Alone in the bed, the genetic inheritance trapped in the dead cells. The end of Bob's job.

The enlarged heart, newest concern in my community of concerns. You could kick off anytime. You pays you money and you takes you chances. What are the possible causes, high blood pressure, congenital or otherwise, or a malfunctioning of the organ itself. Perhaps I always wanted a death threat to live under, put life's activity into perspective. Oddly, I feel healthier than at any time in the past four years, other than while working for the forest service. I continue to run two miles, play one to three basketball games and swim eight laps two to three times per week. Could all this physical activity have enlarged my heart? Can it be shrunk or is this it? Someplace in a corner of myself there is a certain peace, some acceptance of mortality. I really played hard at the gym last night. A two mile run of course, but then three half court games against a strong and talented opponent. We lost all three but had a good time doing it. The pool water was too cold for me to want to swim. I weighed in last night at 190 and weighed out at 185. I woke up three times during the night to drink huge glasses of grapefruit juice mixed with seltzer water, nodding out at the kitchen table. I'm sure I've replaced the five pounds of water I lost.

The trip to New Mexico seems assured now. Benny has a friend from work who wants to go both weeks. We

met last night, went over the plans, and I liked him. Intelligent and personable, enthusiastic about camping, Juan seems easy to get along with. Long black hair, Spanish accent. I think we'll have a good time. Seems about my age, works with Benny at the sign shop. With Ken, we'll make a good group. Yesterday I flirted with Maggie and Elise. Maggie I disrespected as usual, she told me she was proposed to and was thinking it over. To my surprise she took it hard when I said jokingly You're just interested in marriage, not the man you're marrying. I was kidding. She feels that I treat her badly. I feel that she's attracted to me but denies me to punish me for something. I guess I feel that she's not steady or loyal enough, she'd always be on the lookout for a new hero, rock star. As for Elise, I'm attracted to her maturity but for all my close Jewish friends, I feel separate from her ethnically or culturally. Without knowing for certain, I guess she could never seriously date a goy. But whoever she is involved with, I'm sure she's loyal and committed, no straying. I don't sense that she has anything but friendly feelings for me. I told Howard and Maggie about my beautifully enlarged heart. It was good to share it, they both commiserated, with feeling. Of course it becomes another reason for Maggie to marry someone else. I felt a brotherhood with Howard, he takes medication for low blood pressure and has dizziness and panic attacks due to exposure to agent orange although I'm currently

reading an article in Scientific American that claims dioxin is not as harmful to humans as previously thought. I hope to find another article saying enlarged hearts are desirable.

Bad weekend with a good moment or two. Extremely high anxiety, severe panic attack Friday night then continued high anxiety. Except at a party Saturday night when I had some human contact. That may say it all, starved for human contact, much too much alone. It more or less started Thursday night after the gym although I had been anxious since Tuesday when my doctor called to say my heart is enlarged. For the first two days I felt both depressed and amused, like the star of a movie. I had a good time at the gym on Thursday but waiting in the subway a panic came over me. I managed to control it by hitting my knee rhythmically but it showed I was losing my composure again. I've had severe panic attacks every two weeks for the past six weeks. In the subway I was thinking what an ugly place, what a lonely place to live, how easy it would be to die of heart failure and my thoughts sped up and got out of control until I was afraid I was actually dying. I got through the rest of the evening by watching tv until I was exhausted enough to sleep. Friday morning I felt good, did the laundry, cleaned the apartment, read the topo maps for the Gila trip. But on the way to work my anxiety was present and during the day it grew so I had a hard time accomplishing anything. I ate poorly all day, just some

crumb cake left over from a board meeting, and I was bored, sent clients home without services, just couldn't get started. So I left early.

On the subway I was extremely anxious and my fear grew and grew. By 145th St. I was panicking. A girl with hair dyed black and blonde watched as I bent over holding my knees. I had a hot flash and thought I was having a heart attack. Usually I do almost anything to avoid a public scene but this time I was out of control. I sat down, put my head between my legs. I got off at 168th and went to the Columbia Presbyterian emergency room. I really believed I was dying. The staff was routine, the nurse didn't get to me for a long time, and I went totally out of control, started beating my knuckles on the floor. I scraped the skin off one knuckle. The desk clerk ran back for the duty nurse. She took my blood pressure which was 170/100 in the exact middle of a panic. Interesting piece of information. Then I had an EKG which was normal. The nurse was down to earth, talked about her own anxiety attack she once had. They sent me to wait for a long time in Area B. Another nurse saw me briefly and sent me back to await a doctor. I waited about two hours, just looking at the wall in front of me, completely traumatized and exhausted. The doctor who finally saw me was young and funny. He said I was perfectly ok. That there was no drug he could prescribe. Valium would be ineffective and I should wait for a

psychiatrist to prescribe imiprine which is a drug with side effects and that must be taken daily, not just during an attack. My blood pressure was 132/84 by the time I had calmed down. He was not concerned about the high blood pressure during the attack, that was to be expected. As for the enlarged heart, he said neither the panic attacks nor my exercise program could have caused it. He felt it was probably a faulty xray! The young doctor said I should take a snort of scotch once in a while, see how that works. I took a cab home, watched a little tv and fell asleep.

The backcountry trip to the Gila is over. It was the most satisfying of my three backcountry trips so far. A little sad to be back, feeling sentimental about sitting in the dirt, as always. Juan, Ken, Benny and myself made a fun team. Joking and joshing. The landscape was among the most spectacular I've ever seen. Intense rock formations at the lower elevations. Then ponderosa pine and white fir forests up high. We had heat and we had cold. Even snow and hailstones. Above 10,000 feet there was four feet of snow. Being outdoors for six days camping was beautiful. The hiking, especially the first three days, was rugged. The trail was tough, many stream crossings, bushwhacking to find the trail and bypass huge blowdowns. We saw some wildlife, golden-mantled squirrel, turkey vultures, wild turkey, hawks, red-tailed and others, herons, ravens, many small birds, we heard an owl, saw much scat including bear

scat. I was glad to be with friends, not alone, but got to spend some time alone also. Played recorder under full moon one late night. We played horseshoes with three found horseshoes, played hearts of course, told stories, had two small campfires. We caught a lot of rain for a couple of days. And on the last day the most spectacular canyon I've ever seen, Whitewater Creek 300 feet below, canyon walls rising 1,000 feet above with trees in them like hanging gardens of Babylon, rock spires, two miles of this peace and beauty. Juan and Benny were great to be with, as was Ken of course. Then Benny and Ken went back to NY and Juan and I stayed in El Paso, explored the city, heard some jazz at a local bar, drove to the Gila Cliff dwellings, saw the Mimbres Mountains, had an enjoyable relaxing last three days, stayed at an inexpensive hotel downtown and slept out in the hills at the cliff dwellings. So this was just some of our wonderful trip. I'll miss it.

Today I committed myself to another East Harlem summer. It's still Spring, a cool summer would be welcome. Broken beer and whiskey bottles are just the street façade. Throughout the seeming decay is Latin jazz, family ties, teenage dreams, children reading at the public library. Even subways show the effort to be creative and help each other. All this surrounded by natural beauty and natural death. Hudson River, view from Triborough Bridge over East River to midtown, deepest darkest Brooklyn. No

forest service this year, the two week recreational backcountry trips actually expose me to more various country than a summer working in the same mountains every day. I make a good salary, good enough to buy almost everything I want and live here comfortably and inexpensively. I have a balanced life, work, home, friends, the gym, and no need for a car. My panic attacks have subsided and I believe I'll be alright as long as I keep to my vacation plan. I'm content with this decision.

The program has been busy but I'm not totally satisfied with several aspects of it such as the quality of our job orders but most especially the quality of Dagmar's and Chris' counseling. They've gotten into a routine of intake, job list, phone, resume without thinking creatively about their clients. Just get 'em a job, any job, without regard for their interests or future goals. This bothers me and I went over it with Chris at case review but I'm not sure she'll respond. She kind of withdraws when she receives anything but praise. They're not getting to know their clients well enough even though superficially they seem to have better relations with them than I do. But it's all a mutual admiration club without delving into a person's mind and dreams and history. Dagmar and Chris are getting too content to just plug clients into the system I've built without giving it any further thought. For myself, I find it most interesting when I can match a client with

some form of his or her dream. Otherwise this job is no challenge at all. Well, it will give me something else to do for the next several months, retraining Chirs and Dagmar. One thing's sure, it will usually be best not to preach but instead shape my suggestions to encourage Dagmar and Chris to ask the right questions during counseling.

Last weekend the youth staff went upstate and did some cabin camping. I had a good time, ran and played basketball with Paul, played softball and cards, did some hiking in the woods, reading and writing. My writing has been extremely slow but not hopelessly bad. The women were a loud, wild, laughing bunch, all good-hearted. Work was shared cheerfully. Very hot weather, nice to be away from the city. Paul told me on our run together that before my program arrived there were staff at the center but no kids. Now the place looks busy. That gave me some perspective on my role there. We're still seeing many clients and many are getting jobs. Those that really want jobs find jobs. Others are just looking casually. I think we're helping a lot of people, in different ways. Chris is an excellent counselor, no complaints there. We're doing personnel evaluations soon and it's then that Ill try to work out a plan to get Dagmar to carry her share of the load. Strangely, however, when I'm not actively involved in counseling, our client load drops off as if instinctively the population senses the best is not available right now.

I must look for an apartment since Sirma wants to tear down these old beauties and build a condominium. Understandable, everything's so old and decrepit in these buildings that she can't make a profit. But the buildings will be missed in the neighborhood for the break in the line of six story apartment houses. This place has been good to me, with the park out my back window and the street in front. I took photos of the back and front and they truly describe my life. The lush green of the park trees and the ivy on the brick wall in back. And the clean lines of the buildings and streets in front. So be it, I've had eight good years here. This coincides with starting our housing assistance program at Isaacs, so I can be one of my own first customers. I want to stay in Inwood near the park, I don't see how I can live in NYC without it. No neighborhood offers the combination of amenities that this one does. Being at the end of the subway line, in the corner, at the edge of the city, rather than stuck in the middle, matters to me. It's not going to be easy but I have some deep faith that the right apartment will turn up at the right time. I'm excited to see what this change will bring for me, and concerned about the disruption in my life.

This weekend I received a call from Liz. One day I counted up all my relationships with women that my illusions about Liz had adversely affected and it was a

considerable number. I am good humored enough to get a chuckle from this. Liz wants to demonstrate her Alexander technique on me for her teacher. Until now I have successfully kept her at arms length but I've made a decision to be friendly so we had two long telephone conversations over the past few weeks. Fortunately I banned calls during work or after 11 pm and that has cut down considerably the need to talk with her. I don't want to get too involved, just be pleasant and friendly and maintain some emotional distance. I guess every man has some woman who is the bane and sometime joy of his existence. I will have to listen to her confusions and contradictions again, but also her insights and wisdom. At least the Alexander technique may help my body feel better.

I am also lately, continually, wanting to bed Maggie Brady. Friday I went so far as to blow her a kiss. I'm pretty sure she's attracted to me in the same way, inexorably, uncontrollably, notwithstanding her Israeli lover. We resist each other or rather whatever is drawing us together. We do not trust each other. This relationship is easier however since Maggie is not assertive like Liz, I can just float on this buzz of sexual attraction without necessarily acting on it. What seems absurd, given the brevity of life, is that this little drama, unknown to anyone but us, has been going on for almost three years. Others

raise families, accomplish some life goal, contribute to the advancement or destruction of humanity. I circle equidistantly these two women, alternately baring my teeth, my feelings and my dick.

At work I am caught in a constellation of relationships with colleagues. Yesterday I wandered around the center playing with the women. They thought I was in a good mood but actually I was bored and feeling a little sick. At the end of each day, they go their ways and I go mine, absorbed into the city. The metropolitan area, its trucks and highways, planes and airports, stadiums and museums, fire companies and police departments. Big, but also small, it's all in your head, as is your stress. One day walking to work is a bird watch, the next a bus exhaust. Many clients find jobs but so what. The question arises often lately, do I really need to be in NYC?

Change is happening. First, the impending eviction from my apartment. It will be difficult or even impossible to find an inexpensive rental with a view that is distinctive. People must consider me effete with my need for a constant connection to nature. What's wrong with a street scene like most New Yorkers have? Not me, I'd suffocate. I need trees or water, something to remind me there is a world beyond the human community. Without that I'm lost, living in a coffin. Another change is a dispute at the center over my compensation for preparing the job list

every Sunday. Carol and Howard believe I should be donating this time since I am considered a professional. This means that each week I would be expected to put in 45-50 hours. Carol claims that all the professionals at the center do it but this is not true. Yesterday I asked several and they only occasionally put in even as much as 40 hours. So, no apartment and no job. There is freedom in owning nothing and not belonging. Just give me two good reasons to leave and I'm gone.

If I stay in NYC where will I live after Inwood? I've thought of Far Rockaway, the other end of the A line, near the ocean. This would be fine except it might be a two hour commute each way. Too much! But I have visions of darkness and quiet at night, sky and open space, runs along the boardwalk and the constant sound of the sea. And inexpensive rent. Yesterday I called about an apartment. I am somewhat bored at work and feel I may be entering some terminal stages of departure. I've actually worked hard lately but is my program successful or necessary, or have I cooked the numbers expertly? I don't even know anymore. I mean I know they're cooked but are they overcooked? Apparently not, since clients continue coming to us.

I fell in love with a photo of a friend of Bobby Kaplan's at Benny Kaplan's bar mitzvah, a black woman named Cleandra Greene, aka Toots. It takes just one

person to change your outlook on life and plans, at least temporarily. I have a forest service application in and I'm waiting to see what happens with my apartment. I won't be able to afford Manhattan so I'll have to look in the boroughs to stay in NYC. Although I talk constantly of forests and mountains, I have chosen a huge anonymity-creating, smokestack, urban and suburban, automobile truck superhighway, high rise split level, rich homeless, night life workday metropolitan area for my home. It's ironic that just as I'm thinking of pulling out of here, I'm digging in deeper. It's a sign that I also imagine moving to Mount Vernon and living with Cleandra Greene. I must also remember that getting up and going to work for the forest service is just as painful, grueling and boring as going to work in NYC. And that keeping oneself occupied and directed while unemployed is no easy task either. I'm not enough of a writer to make that a reason for being. Could Cleandra Greene save my life? Take me home and give me an identity?

Yesterday I explored Rockaway and looked at apartments and it seems hopeful that I can find something affordable. I discovered that Belle Harbor is the only coherent community in Rockaway and that transportation to Manhattan is merely adequate. I absolutely loved being out in the wind and sun all day by the ocean and begin to believe my depressions about NYC are a result of not

getting enough sunlight. Sunset across Jamaica Bay returning on the train was magnificent.

I had my January date, with Cleandra Toots Greene, who turns out to be even more beautiful and charming than the photos suggested yet probably too much woman for a quiet shy guy like me. I took her at her word that she was not interested in romance but may want friendship. She wore a seductive outfit, leather mini-skirt that showed off her excellent legs and she has style and a healthy look. She laughs easily and is intelligent but she seems a little wild and is on a freedom jag now that her daughter is away. Therefore it would be smart to just cultivate a relaxed friendship and forego the heavy breathing. In fact that is good advice for all my relationships with women. I dreamt about her last night, mainly about losing power and control to her as her lover which would probably happen in real life. Nevertheless I was definitely attracted to this wild, bright woman who loves life.

I've done no writing in a week or two due to preoccupation with work and now housing. So at some point I'll need to start digging and searching for the words and forms. It's hard and there are no great poems, just little lyrics strung together. I've been reading more than usual and truly enjoying others' poems. And using poems as part of my telephone answering machine message. It's going over well. Someone called and left an anonymous

message, addendum to my answering machine poem, that said: And Irving says nothing beats a good piece of pussy. I think of pussy as a single whole, not a piece, but what the fuck.

Moving to a new apartment in Rockaway Beach, the full moon over the beach, the white bellies of seagulls flying over. I think the A train will be my pathway, not the bus to the 5 train. The long rickety ride over Jamaica Bay, then the underground travel through deepest black Brooklyn—East New York, Bed-Stuy. Then change for Manhattan lines, the sophisticated energized crowds. Something appropriate about that long ride from the quiet emptiness of the bay and seabirds, through black Brooklyn to intense Manhattan. The commuting will be difficult and may defeat me.

I think and think about a total life change, giving up my social agenda and leaving NYC. I've struggled hard these last six or eight years to assert my individuality and creativity in the workplace. I've achieved a lot and had a big influence in one small place, hard to gauge what my leaving would do to Isaacs. But how long do I want to be so closely associated with these particular people and this place, so divorced from nature yet so deeply connected to the human community. I feel the rhythms, the reason, behind the community we serve. The people are beautiful. There is great wisdom, Chinese wisdom, in not so quickly

dismissing the people, the community as a form of nature, however far from nature we may have come. The I Ching describes everything in both its natural matrix and in the matrix of the human community. Even Chuang-tzu must deal with the problem in these terms. So no matter where I go I will be deeply involved in some human community and without that I would be lost, with only half an identity. I am not enough of a writer to work all day at it. Therefore my choices will be determined by something mundane such as can I tolerate the daily commute between Rockaway and Manhattan.

One person with so many possessions, so much junk. Vacuum cleaner, notebooks, games, band aids, pots and pans, dishes, galoshes, lamps, tables, bed, rug, chairs, camping equipment, clothes, books. It goes on and on. Too much for one person. What do I use all this stuff for? Typical American, or is this just human. And there are many people with much more (and many with much less). I need to have another go at throwing things away. Clothes I never wear. I own three times as many towels as I ever use. But no bathrobe. I am a material junkie. My important papers— Jesus! Iron, teapot, paper towels, aluminum foil. What an inventory! Six pair of shoes, sneakers and boots. Needle and thread. But no sewing machine. Pens and pencils. Fancy paper for letter writing in case someday I write a letter. No letterhead at least.

Four decks of cards, two backgammon sets, two chess sets, two cameras. A baseball mitt, a blood pressure machine. Cans I've saved for eight years and never opened. A box of spaghetti that's been in the closet for three years. A rearview mirror from a van I owned five years ago. Laundry detergent, broom, toilet plunger. Lugging all this debris around like an ant towing a dead beetle to its den.

I am completely installed in my new Rockaway home. A major improvement over the past eight years, I don't think I realized how dark and depressing my Seaman Ave. apartment was. This one gets wonderful light, already I can feel my panic and depression lifting. I'm at the kitchen table with the full moon and a well-branched sycamore out the window. Also the great beautiful ships of wooden houses on the block. The apartment is cozy and warm, my remaining possessions fill it perfectly and there is still plenty of space for dancing and lying on the floor. After moving this weekend I got quite sick, either flu or food poisoning but I had to go out twice for newspapers and food. The fact that I'm new in the neighborhood attracted the attention of many people, guys hanging out in the newspaper store, and especially women. I was amazed at the number of seemingly unattached women looking at me with interest, assessing, even hungry. I accepted all looks and glances with equanimity, I feel open

to people and wonder if this feeling will remain as a result of more air, space and light. I'm slowly scoping out the neighborhood for services and I've liked each person I've met who lives in this house. However the next big question is how will commuting in and out of the city be?

The subway ride into Manhattan yesterday was tolerable. Rockaway shuttle to Euclid Ave., A express from Euclid to Broadway-Nassau in Manhattan, 4 or 5 express to 86th St., door to door about 1¾ hours. I can just about live with that. But the commute back from work last night was hell on wheels. If it remains that bad I'll be saying goodbye to NYC. Giving the system the benefit of the doubt, there were delays, a fire in Brooklyn, and even the regular commuters seemed upset, so I'm assuming this was an aberration and things can only improve. Nevertheless, the return train was quite crowded, had to stand all the way to Euclid Ave. I could have cried crossing Jamaica Bay, the after-sunset sky was so lovely, the air so clear that the colored lights of midtown danced.

So we have arrived at March, a favorite month for the change in seasons that begins to begin. I have a tentative life plan I am now exploring, to attend a two year forestry school starting in September. This will give me a skill with which to move to the country, a purpose or role in a community. But I am also interested in the knowledge for its own sake, to know the trees, plants, animals, rocks

and their relationships. The ecology of nature just as I now know the city economy. The college is located in the Adirondacks, tuition is only a couple of thousand dollars per year. I'm concerned that I don't have enough science or math to qualify. The more I think about it the better it sounds as a path away from Isaacs Center and out of NYC, an honorable departure. Even if I didn't use the degree, if I continued in social services, it wouldn't be a waste of time. I only recently realized Isaacs cannot be a lifelong commitment for me, especially given the commute. I've always questioned the value of my work although the fact that young people use the service steadily proves its value. The center is beginning to feel small and confining but it's this growing need to understand and connect with the natural world that motivates me most. I realize what I learn in school will be technical but that does not prevent me from using that knowledge in the service of my own philosophy. I have no idea what kind of work I could get with such a degree but it doesn't really matter. Little by little I will find my correct place.

Saturday night Liz called. My heart is still hard against her although she doesn't seem to know why. I have continued to be superficially friendly, even enjoying some laughter, but avoiding any deeper connection. She calls infrequently so I don't think it really matters. Why she tries at all is a mystery to me. I know she wants to talk

about what happened a year and a half ago, amazing that it was so long ago! A little dangerous that I have made love to no one since her but I like being alone most of the time. I agreed to have dinner with her Friday night, she'll be in town for her uncle's birthday. And I suppose she'll force me to talk about our relationship, or lack of it. Actually I'm a afraid there could be some explanation that would make my reason for not liking her invalid. Then what? I can continue to not like her for no reason at all. Anyway Friday gives me something to look forward to, a bit of emotional chess. I think I will avoid her uncle's birthday party on Sunday, however, even though some old friends will be there.

It looks very possible that I'll be able to attend forestry school in Wanakena starting in September. On Monday I'm going to attend an open house and orientation. If I like what I see and hear, I'm going for it. It means going to school here in NYC full time this summer to take two biology courses, one trigonometry and one economics. I'll try to study at Brooklyn College, that would be most convenient, but if not, any college will do. The course work at Wanakena is intense and professional and I'll learn a lot. What happens after I earn this degree in forest technology I don't worry about. Right now I'm primarily interested in the luxury of a year of study in a field I'm interested in. Also, a year in the quiet backcountry

but with a purpose and goal. The summer here in Rockaway should be pleasurable, studying and enjoying the beach. I have three main goals for the next two months: to position myself to begin school in Wanakena; to finish up my work at Isaacs Center; and to get a commitment to publish *Brother Death*.

The last is the most uncertain. Yesterday I made one more revision deleting a poem that always bothered me and replacing it with a recent poem that is somewhat risky. Once again I feel I've come to the end of my poetry, squeezed the last bit of publishable work out of my writing. To some extent I feel liberated but there is always the desire to continue for posterity. However it wouldn't hurt to enforce a silence for the next year or so. This would be a good time, when I have to devote myself completely to a new discipline, forestry. As an escape from Isaacs, this is perfect. Even more important, this is my escape from New York City, the air, the crowds, the general unhappiness, the carcinogens, the built environment, the anonymity although none of these factors is as extreme as outsiders like to caricature. Great as this city is, it is not the only place to be.

Yesterday I told Howard I'd be leaving Isaacs in a couple of months. He took it much better than I expected, no histrionics, and he understood my goals. He said he felt lucky to have had me for as long as he did, he said I was

someone who is in control of my life. I wanted to give him more than just a month's warning, at least that's done and I can concentrate on preparing Chris and Dagmar. I want to show them how the systems that make up the program operate to keep jobs and clients coming in. They seem to think good counseling is enough but unfortunately it is not. You need resources to offer clients and a system to track clients and employers. And of course you need to generate statistics for funding and to understand patterns and trends. I'll also need to write all this down so Howard can fill in when he needs to. I hope to leave feeling strong but I don't want to miss the center and the kids too much either. The kids are special, beautiful, the youths in the employment program as well as the children in the after school program. Under all of New York's wealth and soot, they are the shining star of this city.

I visited Ranger School on Monday, the sun and moon that morning at equal and opposite points on the horizon. Quite lovely, driving north into the Adirondacks. The school is professional and technical and two of the teachers gave short talks, both fascinating. The students seem pleasant and relaxed. The staff takes its work seriously. Equipment is old but well-maintained. The school is not in its heyday, trouble recruiting future foresters, which is good for me. It means class size will be only around thirty, I'll be able to have a single room thank

goodness, and since all forestry programs are low on students, job opportunities will be plentiful when I graduate.

In a few months, I'll be starting a year of intensive forestry studies in the Adirondacks. I can hardly conceive what that will be like but it is certain I'm starved for peace and quiet and a slower, more contemplative life and to leave behind the magic mess of New York for good. Nevertheless, the past week or two has been mental hell for me, panic attacks run amok. On the beach at 2 a.m. to walk it off or at least die in a natural setting. Moon in the clouds and the sheer cleansing waves, smell of salt and sand and comforting night everywhere, no crowds, private. I look around at the chaos of beer bottles left on the beach, yet there is some invisible network of people I've never met, a secret society of people who fight the social, political, ecological good fight, who not only share my values but do something about it. At some point will I join that fight, will I make some contribution? Did I make any permanent contribution to solving the social problems I worked on during my time in the city? Are my poems doing anything for anybody? One must live and do what one enjoys and does best and hope it adds up to some good. Yesterday I went into the belly of the beast one last time to collect my possessions, furniture, clothing, books and appliances that I no longer need. "A robe and a bowl"

should be my motto and a guide to the future. I must edit my possessions like a poem, excising all inessentials. Juan has many useful sayings, one is: There is no place to go. Another is: Everything must not be expressed.

Clocks changed yesterday, my grandfather, Bartholomew Nicastro, dying from cancer, I'm going back to college, Spring is here. It seems no easier to die at 86 even if you believe in God, than it is for a young atheist like me. Is it the pain or the permanent unconsciousness we fear most? A question for which there is no answer. Perhaps pain helps us welcome death. It's an incredible fact that everyone dies, no exceptions whatsoever. Commonplace as eating, shitting and fucking. It is amazing that human beings did not always exist as a life form. The oldest human bones v. the movement of tectonic plates. My grandfather figures in the poem Plate Tectonics Versus Gamma Ray Bursters. It seems pointless and pretentious to go to him now when we spoke only occasionally in health. What a disappointment I am, no grandchildren. But there are so many children, including those of my cousins, what difference if I go without. In fact I still forbear partly not to overwhelm the planet with our issue and crowd out other species. It may be a less abundant world due to the abundance of humans. This grandfather had five children and I believe 19 grandchildren and the great grandchildren are still coming. Once he said the

great grandchildren do not interest him much, he can't remember them all. I was the first born grandchild, a life of no great significance among the millions. I hope getting out of NYC will improve my health, mental and physical. As of this writing, there is no chance that, once out, I will ever return.

Dendrology

I'm quite content here at Ranger School in Wanakena, NY. The work is demanding and challenging, the school is clean and well-organized, the students are friendly and the staff is competent. The forest is beautiful. Mornings are spent in class and afternoons in the field, a felicitous combination. Today the entire class canoed across the Cranberry Lake flow and walked in the woods. We saw a tremendous, four foot diameter eastern white pine and a stand of hardwoods, mainly American beech. I am not reaching my potential as a student yet but plan to bear down this weekend. My private room makes it possible to enjoy the other students since I can choose when to be with them. The whole class reminds me of the movie Platoon in our orange hard hats, but a companionable platoon, cooperative, nonviolent. I've attempted to work out a schedule for myself that allows some personal time but also lets me study about four hours per night. Classes from 8-5, write or trumpet 5-6, dinner 6-6:30, exercise 6:30-7:30 and study 7:30 to midnight. Six hours sleep then start over at 6 a.m. I miss neither my friends nor the city.

I want to be able to identify any tree at any time of year. There are insects to know, and the big picture, ecology. The technical courses are surveying and graphics.

The food tastes ok but is a bit heavy on eggs and red meat for good health. I occasionally gently debate the ecology professor about the “timber beast” point of view but am prepared to accept any perspective. The city is pretty far away now. The subway across Broad Channel, Inwood Hill Park, the A train, Stanley Isaacs Center, the ethnic mix. All behind me and a part of me, no regrets, not even much nostalgia. It was a hard, lonely life.

Overall good vibes and mutual respect from the students here. Soon it will be winter. I must learn to be outdoors in winter, not get cabin fever. My room is comfortable, spacious, the desk large, the bed firm, enough closet space and drawers. When I asked, the school director opened a vacant room for me to practice trumpet in, and when they saw several of us play basketball, the courts were painted. I asked for fresh fruit and it is provided at every meal now as an alternate dessert. The students have become friends rapidly, they are talkative, easy together. I found a decent chess partner, Bob from Buffalo, quiet introvert, but a wide boyish smile when I tease him about chess. Each morning I awake to a sunrise, spectacular red clouds, touch of green-blue in the vortex, and the flow from the lake. Trees all around, air clean and fresh. I may wake up hurting, as I did this morning but the surroundings are healing. Soon it will be dark well into the morning and that too will be

wonderful.

I'm beginning to feel singed by the intense work load but tonight I am relaxed, in control notwithstanding only four hours sleep last night to cram for an entomology lab today. I managed to cram most of it in time for the test but many did not. I dislike doing badly too much to let any tests go by unchallenged although I got my poorest grade on the easiest test so far, the ecology field quiz. Fortunately, it doesn't count for much. Apart from constant quizzing and testing, I am enjoying the course work, even surveying which I don't perform well in. I enjoy the discipline of studying four hours per night, 20-30 hours per week in addition to classes daily from 8-5. Leaves not much time for other activities. Forty five minutes or an hour before dinner and an hour or hour and a half after. It irritated me when the surveying instructor scheduled an exam after dinner. I came close to some old fashioned rebellion, even posted a nasty note on his bulletin board, only to reconsider and go with the flow. I learned that we'll be expected to work some evenings in other courses too, so I backed off. Some teacher attitudes are beginning to grate on me, the constant threatening with bad grades. I've taken to guerilla action by teasing the teachers I don't like and by exposing mistakes aggressively. The program, however, may be a brilliant conception, the intensive hands-on approach and quantities of information. I think I

did well in the entomology exam which many will have bombed, and it did force me to learn my bugs which I never would have attempted without that spur. So I chafe under authority, nothing new in that, but still enjoy the coursework and the challenge mastering it.

It's still too soon to think about where to go from here, but three ideas occur. Summers with the forest service, BLM or Parks Service and winters back east. A second option is try to land a job perhaps in Taconic State Park and live in that corner of the state, close enough to Boston and NYC for visits. Edna St. Vincent Millay lived in Austerlitz, I even imagined being groundskeeper at the historic site. And finally there is the dangerous option, Stanley Isaacs Center, NYC. Right now I doubt I'll take that direction but Howard contacted me and it sounds like they're not doing well without me. On some level I miss the bittersweetness of my life in NYC, the sense of accomplishment I had, forgetting the horror of it all. Howard sounded depressed, dead in the water, surrounded by program coordinators with no new ideas. Lonely at the top and looking for a way out.

Trumpet continues to go remarkably well here. One reason is no commuting, so there is time and energy. Just walk downstairs. I have a special room all my own for practice. Good acoustics, privacy, and Joe Pitcherilli, ex-Marine, lifting free weights in the next room. I've been

learning new tunes and improvising. Decent, not great, chops. Writing is another story. I may be written out, that old story. I may have one or two passable poems in this notebook, not more. Those that are minimalist are more tolerable than attempts at expansiveness. Writing poetry is still important to me, unimportant as it is in the world. From it, silently, I draw much of my identity. This identity to which I am subtly attached, sparingly attached, secretly attached, allows me not to become too attached to my other, worldly, identities, be it social worker, trumpet player, "A" student, forest worker. All of them are tangential to, and feed, the central identity which remains unseen by nearly everyone, so when the enemy shoots they cannot hit me, when they look they cannot find me. If you look in my poems, can you find me? For all this I am not too attached to an identity as a poet either. I certainly am not accepted by other poets, by students of poetry, or editors and audiences. They don't even know I exist. In a way, I don't exist as an ego in any of my pursuits, I can purely join in the pursuit, be one with it, have no reasons for it other than that I enjoy it. A form of great wealth. But it is sometimes sad, lonely, rarely to be seen, everyone is satisfied with whatever face you present. As the I Ching says, the superior man goes among the people and does not stand out. So it is that age 36, in fear of death, I have come to appreciate life.

Since I've changed my life, left NYC, at least three women have shown an interest in me direct enough even for me to recognize. One from Syracuse is a little too big, brash, raw and direct for me. I've been side-stepping her advances. She's an elementary school teacher. She has said on at least two occasions that her ex-boyfriends, plural emphasized, get mad when she jilts them, her control emphasized, and go on to accomplish unusual tasks, irony emphasized. Even if it's not true, just exaggeration, this immodesty turns me off. In Boston friends matched me at dinner with a woman from Larry's graphics company. M.E. Walkowicz, as I've come to call her, is attractive but not beautiful, an Eastern European face, slim body, brown hair cut straight across her forehead, small breasts. She is neat and trim, which I like, she is aware of what's going on around her and does not intrude wildly but contributes to the communal endeavor and space. In other words, mature. She sent me, a week or two later, a humorous, balanced card to say she'd be interested in meeting again. Just enough said. She was more effusive about her feelings with Larry, which she must have known would be passed on to me. All of which set me thinking, may have been calculated to set me thinking. Larry, who knows so much about me, has allowed her to see more of me than most people can without a guide. As for her, it seemed to me that her

purpose, vocation, lacks definition, that her work is not her heart and soul, and that she is not a devoted artist. She is different from women I am normally attracted to in that she is conventional, not extraordinary in any obvious way.

A woman Liz introduced me to in NYC just before I left, however, is unconventional. A painter, but more amazingly, a disciplined thinker who can relate complicated scientific and philosophic ideas coherently and speak at length, improvise upon them. Brilliant. When I arrived the two of them were engaged in girl talk, albeit more stratified than most, so I paid only mild attention. Then I asked her some simple questions and somehow began to draw out, or it just emerged, this remarkable mind. It was then, when I realized how special her thinking is, that I became sexually attracted to her. And her to me. She is a skinny one but when I started to look I had no trouble finding the soft lines and imagining the soft lips. Like Liz, she is financially unstable and not a homemaker.

I'm a little overwhelmed with school after seven weeks, strung out on quizzes, tests, projects and grades. I cannot help but reevaluate my presence here. It is becoming clear that the work I am training for is not the work I want to do for the rest of my life but I do clearly want to finish this year of education and obtain the degree. If I'm not going to make a career of this, this year

is gravy, nothing but enjoyable pastime, to be indulged purely for the knowledge. Yet I get upset when my grades fall below the A level and alternately livid and depressed about a C. Currently I am planning a campaign against one of the teachers who seems to grade our projects too subjectively, holding him accountable just as we're held accountable as students. I hate such passions, time-consuming, irritating, distracting. The teacher-student relationship fraught with opportunities for power abuse and disrespect. A good short story, old time forestry teacher who flaunts his individuality, sovereignty, the right to smoke his cigar publicly, crosses paths with a student older than most, child of the rebellious sixties. A floundering school that could close in the near future for lack of enrollees and the current student body's hilarious idiosyncrasies, such as saying "pipe" in a falsetto when passing in the hallway, short for "lay some pipe", metaphor for sexual intercourse. Why devote the time and energy to either writing the story or doing something about the situation?

My classmates are alternately entertaining and irritating, mostly the former fortunately. Much teasing, woofing, most of it goes over well. On the whole I don't feel left out. I complain and tease right up there with the loudest of them. Lately student-teacher relations have not been so friendly. They have the grading power, we have

the power to cut up and destroy. A crude balance. They run us pretty hard, we say some nasty things. Around the holidays work will get even more intense, with reports, tests, projects. I like to succeed at the level I'm accustomed to, top level, but that isn't easy here. Grading is not always totally fair but overall no major complaints. I feel little warmth for the teachers, they show little warmth for us. No need to become overexcited about grades, passing and genuine learning is enough.

However, I've become obsessed with being #1 in the class. Why not leave that honor to someone who really needs it to identify themselves? But I want this degree because I want it, even if I never use it to land or do a job. And it cannot be denied that my relationship to the forest is changing, more knowledgeable, more involved, more varied. This is primarily what I wanted. I have also discovered new levels of discipline in myself that I hope to apply beyond this year of school. No need for television, able to put in 18 hour days regularly, able to fit in trumpet and writing and accomplish something in a limited amount of time. I'm feeling almost athletic about this discipline. Applied to a workaday life I could get much reading and writing done even with a full-time job and continue to play music, too.

Each friend or relative I speak with on the phone asks don't I feel lonely and isolated here. I've answered,

surprised by the question, not at all. In fact the thought never crosses my mind and it took several repetitions of this question from as many people for me to examine what it might mean. I am no more isolated and lonely, perhaps a bit less, than I was in NYC. I define overcoming loneliness and isolation in terms of belonging to a group rather than loving another individual. It makes sense then that I don't feel lonely or isolated here, my love is not intimate, one on one, but at my best I can define a group and help it find direction and cohesion without necessarily assuming an official leadership position. So it is here at school. While I was ill and angry I refused to sit with my classmates or even say hello to them. They shunned me, they were a little afraid. Their fear frustrated me and made me angrier. When I got better I laughed at myself. I've been quiet in class for the past week, trying to keep a low profile. Today I asked a question and although I'd be hard put to say how I know or what I noticed, I felt a surge of interest come from the class, as if they were focusing for the first time that day. I realized that to some extent they depend on me to make the teachers clarify the material. I had a similar focusing role at Isaacs Center and Covenant House, advancing the group's purpose (even when the authorities were hindering it). There are situations, extreme, hidden from history, when authority resides with the unseen, unknown participant. This

focusing must come from giving up the self to the work and of course being able to recognize the work.

This answers isolation, but what about intimacy? What need does intimacy satisfy? Liz had a good answer, through intimacy we learn things about ourselves that can be learned in no other way. Well, that's not really an answer, it just makes it seem more urgent to find an answer. What is it we learn? For me intimacy is the expression of your authentic self, without masks or reworking, in the presence of another. I'm planning to pursue M.E. Walkowicz in Boston after the new year, from whom I've received a third pleasant postcard, to explore the multidimensional hypervolume of her soft lips, to expose naked female to naked male. I think talking in the night after making love is the intimacy I'm looking for. It need not be a marriage. Some women, when they sense you're not making plans for a love nest, fly off. Others, when they sense you are.

Snow flew earlier today, about three inches, and a cold winter wind. Indoors we are strung out, burned out, struggling to finish the aerial photography map and study for final exams. We hate our teachers for their snide, unsupportive attitude, trying to break us or keep us down. We each respond in our individual ways. I have earned a reputation as one of the best students, and as a result have seen some teachers soften toward me. I keep my

distance, don't get close to someone who has power over you, you can only get hurt. Also I dislike the teachers' attitudes toward those not doing well, always threatening us with "points off". I have just begun to care less about my grades, not be so compulsive. My B in Installations didn't please me and my Surveying grade may be even lower. The teachers of these two courses are the ones I like least, and who I feel have the most confrontational approach to students. Wisely these last two weeks I have kept to myself and not spoken negatively or positively about what's happening. Do my work and get the degree and I may still be learning too, crammed and rammed down my throat as it is with threats.

I have four main vocational fantasies. To be a trumpet player, not necessarily famous, just working steadily and playing music to please others. Another vocational fantasy is to solve society's organizational problems. To provide quality life opportunities to those with limited options. Lately I've dreamed of becoming chancellor of the NYC school system. All I need is to convince the powerful, the guardians of society, that my experience as a forestry student qualifies me for this position.

Another fantasy is to be a forester, a great conservationist like Aldo Leopold, John Muir. To know my trees and ecology. Or not be great, so what, just work in

the mountains, contentedly. That's right, what's this obsession with greatness and fame. Poof! you're gone. To work during my life in a variety of forest types throughout the continent and world. To know the trees and their ecosystems intimately. To not fear snow. The calm, meditational contentment with living in the woods, away from the disco-funk mainstream, far from the symphony orchestra and redlight district, unknown as an old turtle, and as long-lived. Lastly, a writer. Not a poem a week, but prose eight hours a day. Treat it like a job. Produce short stories, novels, essays and poems for human consumption. No need to make the 8:00 train, or go to school. Up early, exercise and run. Write, read, make dinner, read more.

My highest gpa in the class and scholarship essay seem to have commanded respect from the teachers. I sense a subtle change in attitude from them, they answer questions promptly and without irony and give me plenty of space if that seems to be what I want. At the same time relations with fellow students are fine. We definitely felt love for each other when we returned after a month's vacation. I value this bond, even when I feel isolated and irritated. The cheers from guys hanging out in the hall when I first returned were moving. Apparently, I am one of them, different as I may be in certain ways. This week we played basketball twice. I hope my relations with Brian

who is a natural leader, are not strained. I had to cross him publicly over some foolishness that could have caused damage in the gym. He responded well but may have felt he lost face.

During our personnel management course I have not spoken up in class. I feel that the material is not worth the energy expenditure and it would require crossing swords with old Remele again. I'm sure with a little thought I could make some comments in a non-threatening way, perhaps examples from my previous work life in support of concepts in the text. I'm still enjoying, luxuriating, in this year of study. What more could one want? All needs cared for, nothing to do but immerse myself in the subject matter, a few entertaining diversions now and then like basketball or a movie. Unlike in my youth, and unlike the youths around me, I feel little or no restlessness. I hope this can carry over to a life beyond school.

Life is confusing in the long view right now but orderly on a day to day basis. This is less disorienting than the other way around. My vacation was satisfactory. The week and a half with my parents was comfortable because I was working so hard on the scholarship essay. They seemed to enjoy having me around the house. Overall, the dynamics were good, they really know how to give me space. I could be with them or alone and feel no pressure.

Their ability to create this environment is almost zen-like. NYC was a disappointment. The city felt cold, commercial, and hardened to the many unfortunates living in the streets. I feel estranged from the city, even a little angry. I had started the vacation with Ken, the perennial friend. Even when we're bored we're fine. It's the ultimate in unconditional friendship. I may have strained relations by rejecting M.E. Walkowicz in Boston. I was so bored with her and at the same time felt her managing our relationship that I behaved coldly, almost rudely. She was hurt and let Larry know. I was unapologetic. Liz bailed me out and I stayed at her place a couple of days. When she was there it was good, we seemed to repair our damaged friendship somewhat. We danced to Talking Heads, discussed Scott, her boyfriend, for the first time, attended Susan Rose's dance concert. But when she left, her apartment turned out to be too dirty to tolerate, especially the cat hairs. I couldn't even sleep in the bed, so I slept on the floor.

The unusual thaw of the last few days has moved on, and it snowed this morning. Schoolwork intensifies, which suits me fine. I still await hopefully, but trying not to be too hopeful, the potential \$2,000 award for my essay written over vacation. The vacation already seems long ago, now I look forward to devotion to my studies, no travel to southern escapes, just contented study. Soon the

great timber cruise begins. I had intended to ask Linda Valentine to be my partner but Joe Stillwell asked me first and I said yes. For the past few hours I've been angry with myself, thinking I've let another opportunity for romance slip away. But as far as I know, Linda still has a boyfriend in Syracuse. And also, it is good that the two top students not work together, to share our talents with others instead. I was tempted to ask Joe to let me off the hook but held my tongue feeling it would not be honorable. I'm glad I didn't ask. I have accumulated substantial reserves of respect from both students and teachers and although the responsibility for fulfilling their expectations causes some nervousness, overall it is pleasant. My days are filled and spoken for.

Forestry makes me all too aware of my mortality. Trees grow so slowly, live so long. Almost any stand outlives us. In a way, it is sublimely unselfish, transcends the human world. Today has been ok, afternoon spent in deepening snow discussing the silviculture of two stands. The discussion interesting, the surroundings lovely. I belong. When I accepted a place in the ping pong tournament and participated in the potty mouthed, good natured goading, Director Miller was surprised that I "conformed" finally. I was not offended. I like being one of the group, quite sure it would be impossible anyway to shake my individuality.

Workday ends frustratingly, failure to master the planimeter. So I'll use the dot grid and cook my numbers. That in itself will be a challenge, to arrange the calculations so it looks like I used a planimeter. Some algebra. Next weekend I'll try to complete the road project so the following weekend I can escape to Schenectady. Go to movies, eat Ken's healthy food. Then the timber cruise begins. Time marches. Grades still ok although I can feel Linda Valentine pushing to catch up with me. It would take a lot for her to overtake me. I wonder if it's even her goal. She would need to get 4.6 more grade points this semester than me, equivalent to her getting an A and me a D in a 2 point course, or her an A and me a C+ in a 3 point course, something like that. If she got all A's and I got all A-'s she'd have me well beat. Why does such a thing matter to me. Probably because I have no lover, I no longer write poetry, and my trumpet playing has temporarily deserted me, so I have no other identity. I have no job, I make no useful contribution, my friends are far away and leading very different lives from me.

In an evil mood tonight, I should stay wide of other people. Night outside is cold, snow deepening steadily for past week. Headaches, foul humor, no energy, my guess is I'm coming down with the cold or flu that's been circulating. Many tests and projects due this week as we finish fifth week of semester and several courses are

completed. So, I'm just scrambling to prepare for tests instead of keeping up with reading. Lowered my resistance by working maniacally since Friday to finish the Roads project. Movies, movies, movies is all I want to do, total escapism into other characters' pains and pleasures. After this weekend my next opportunity to leave will be in five weeks, at the end of March for Spring break. After Spring break it will be a fast downhill to graduation.

I've sent out numerous applications for summer employment. I also want to call environmental organizations, see what kind of prospects exist there. In the last analysis I'll go where the job takes me because my financial health is poor. Five thousand dollars in debt, half to my parents and half to the bank for a student loan. I won a \$2,000 scholarship from Northern Loggers Association for my essay. This will be seed money to get me where I'm going this summer and set up in a job. I should give my parents some good faith money. The essay is circulating among the students here who want to read it.

The old half moon, like a thin-walled skull, in the sky. I have been concentrating on detailed map-making, graphics and memorizing certain facts to pass tests. The longer I remain here with mostly young men, the lovelier young women look to me. Could an older gentleman, thin and worn, interest the plump pretty ones? Quite doubtful,

best to continue pleasantly flirting. I've been ill with a cold the last few days, not too debilitating, now improving. I find the weeks pass more quickly when I'm sick. Why would I want a week to pass rapidly? Why not slowly, luxuriously? Most of us count days to the weekend, count weeks to the end of school. Wouldn't it be paradise if every day were so complete a pleasure that we looked neither forward nor behind for relief?

Last week we were outdoors all day, every day and I liked getting to know the winter, and the trees in the area we were cruising. Joe Stillwell was a good partner. I remain obsessed with getting good grades, but I'm more relaxed than last semester. The end is almost in sight and I realize I'll feel nostalgic when school ends, notwithstanding some negative feelings about the teaching staff. The program itself is brilliant, an intensive learning and self-learning device. It is executed with less grace than is possible and could use some refinement and editing in certain areas. If I speak at graduation, I will speak to these points. I'm growing tired of being with younger people or perhaps just longing for a normal social life.

Mentally I have been less anxious and obsessed with death than in the past several years and this is a relief. I'm more prepared to die, if a statement like that can be made. It results from living closer to nature, it's that simple and therefore I must seriously doubt any plan that

takes me back to a human dominated environment. I have found the intensity of city life is not necessary to live fully. Reading about New York in the Times is sufficient, although the Times has a decidedly upper middle class, white slant that misses aspects of the city I was most attuned to and involved with. Soon the ice and snow will be breaking up and trees and plants budding out. No need any longer to miss the seasons, I can spend the rest of my life near them.

Spring is here, there is no doubt. To live another Spring!, and this time smell the balsam poplar buds, know the white pine cones from the red. Today the sky was cloudless and the evening was warmer than usual. The work load has been intense but I don't mind. Relations between me and the teachers are poor as ever and dormitory life is wearing thin, the food is dangerous. We don't get out much but when we do I have no trouble enjoying the silence of the forest, and the birds. Many job offers but I don't know if I'll like the work or be able to support myself doing it. Today I received a call regarding a forest inventory position at Blue Hills Reservation in Boston. Ironic that I could end up back in Boston by way of forestry. Right now we have four major mapping and inventory projects which makes for the kind of pressure we experienced as new students last fall. However, my habits have been slipping, starting my studies later each

night, writing instead of studying, a few poems of dubious worth. But I read in my books recently and found enough worthwhile poetry to make me not want to give it up. Keep digging for whatever poets value.

I spoke to Howard a long time about Isaacs Center and it made me almost want to return. Fortunately for me I'm priced out of New York City. I feel nostalgia, sometimes deep, for my brief stay in Rockaway, the summer of community college, the beach and the house in Belle Harbor. For Inwood, in north Manhattan, I feel less nostalgia, more familiarity, it was my home for almost a decade. But there is too much I could no longer tolerate about NYC—the hardness, the loneliness I endured, the unhappy crowds and my own profound unhappiness.

Yesterday was a lovely day, sky. A softball game was childhood bliss, homerun the best moment of a day marred by bombing surveying test. The bombing was not serious, no children orphaned, all Marines alive and well, we're not at war except with our inner demons and obsessions, to be or not to be, to eat or fast, to stay up late and watch tv or study and go to sleep. All day in the sun planting trees and playing baseball. First base, twenty years ago that ball would not have skidded by. I may be burned out on school but not at all on the woods, mountains and backcountry life. Always happy to hear the wind in the pines, the many birds, and the underlying

silence. In NYC a day like today felt wasted but here, even if I'm not outdoors I feel close to it. Logging Friday and Saturday, felling trees and setting chokers, work as play, helping out everywhere I could.

In contrast, today not much matters, not my good grades which look worthless now. I cringe at the thought of speaking to my class at graduation, as one so far from their age and interests. No family or friends will attend my graduation. I walked in alone and I'll walk out alone. Apparently good weather is not enough for happiness. There must be a sense of belonging. After logging yesterday I climbed Toboggan Hill and found forest flowers blooming and small butterflies everywhere. Peepers peeping tonight and the forest cool compared to 42nd St., sodium streetlights, bus exhaust, exhausting street life. No one place answers your restlessness wholly. Walk hours into the night, strange neighborhoods, old growth tree stands, meet the inhabitants, hear their calls. You cannot be everywhere, therefore you must be here in the heat, in the snow, in the scatter, in the sorrow, in the holy bowl. From nowhere you arrive, occupy the light a wrinkle in time and return to the unregarding river. Summer is short and sweet, winter is long and silent. Movies are released before and after you're deceased.

Forest thunderstorm, swamping through snapping regeneration, with a hey ho the wind and rain. Sunlight

and storm simultaneous with lightning strikes, balsam fir and black spruce down, roots upturned, rocks, raindrops, two yellow birch perched on a hummock. I lay down to sleep but black flies drive me forward through the swamp, to the highway, up the skid trail, into the hardwood regeneration snapping and slapping, loving the falling rain. Feet wet, peepers diving for cover, air bubbles floating on black water. Now I'm back, socks dry, writing about the urge to live of everything I've seen. Test on fire weather tomorrow. Just eleven more days of school. I accepted a 12-week summer position hiking in the High Peaks correcting and educating campers. All this worry about how to spend my summer, my future or a single day, is relentless but pointless. One day follows another to the last day and on that day there will be weather.

Silver Bay, Lake George, training for my seasonal ranger job. Friendly people, one woman I feel considerable attraction to, not merely or only sexual. I have been approaching Patty slowly, in small friendly conversations, not crowding her. I learn little things about her. She prefers not to directly confront the chauvinist comments of her supervisor, however, she seems almost military in her demeanor, disciplined in her approach to work. She gave a useful talk at the start of our training stressing education of the recreating public over law enforcement. She nearly died one year ago in a grizzly

bear attack and wears supports over her knees and scarred calves. For the first time tonight she wore tight clothing that showed her small, pert breasts. She has a pretty face and long, slightly wavy brown hair. My job will take stamina and it will also be important to protect myself against insects. Garlic has been suggested and vitamin B- 12, as well as Avon Skin-So-Soft.

The High Peaks job is undemanding. I've maintained my interest in the job by studying wildflowers which gives purpose to each day beyond endless hiking up and down mountains. Thus far I've learned to identify close to 40 species, including scientific names. Knowing what tree and plant species I'm looking at keeps me from getting bored. Usually I don't mind talking to the public, reminding them to hang a bear bag, put out their fires, don't shit near the water. Mornings in camp go slowly, it takes time to prepare for the workday, wash up at a stream, eat breakfast and pack a day pack. Late morning and all afternoon I put in my eight hours, choosing an area to hike. Often I make no effort to reach the peak and since trail hiking is least interesting, I may start bushwhacking cross country just for fun. I won't see many hikers but no one will know the difference. Evenings I enjoy returning to camp, having dinner and reading or listening to radio but often I'll play chess with the ADK people or DEC caretakers. After a couple of days off in Port Henry I

actually look forward to returning to the woods. I admit to getting tired of balsam fir and white birch, not a lot of diversity at the higher elevations, but this has been another reason to learn herbaceous plants. Occasionally I get to show off my knowledge to a hiker. Someone brought me just one leaf which I was able to identify as tall meadow-rue, *Thalictrum polygamum*, in the buttercup or Ranunculaceae family.

I have a job offer doing forest management with a consulting forester in Vermont. It's exactly what I want to be doing but I have reservations about the stability of the business. Pete Fish is not requiring me to honor my commitment to DEC, even encouraging me to take the job. I need to expand into tree diseases, as my interview with Skakel indicated, I don't know enough tree pathology. I think I can be happy in the Rutland area, I was favorably impressed by the town's size and offerings when I visited after the interview. Thursday I looked at five apartments: two in Rutland that were on busy streets in the center of town, two in West Rutland, a rather depressed area, and one in Wallingford in a house with slanting floors. I learned I want to live in the rural area south of Rutland, not in town.

Next day I cancelled all appointments to look at a house share in the country near Clarendon Springs. The house is 2 ½ miles south of West Rutland with woods and

fields all around. I'd have a corner bedroom with light from two directions. The house has a large kitchen, a dining table, a living room and several bedrooms. The couple, Lisa and Eric, are sort of amateur psychiatric social workers and are taking in mentally ill people as boarders. In that sense, I qualify. Lisa is six months pregnant and attends college. Eric is a house painter and musician, plays sax and guitar with a local band. It would be exciting if I could find musicians to play with regularly. The house therefore combines many elements of my life: the apple tree and room with two windows will help my poetry; Eric's music may stimulate mine; the mentally ill roommates may require some of my social work skills; and my job will fully utilize and expand my forestry skills.

Saturday night I had a date with a woman whose ad I answered from the local classifieds/personals. She did not fit my mental image—I had maybe Rylin in mind—tall, green eyes, slim at her best, attractive face. Lee is not beautiful and she weighs in at about 200 pounds. On the other hand, she has smooth skin and a friendly personality and she's actually athletic, a strong and frequent swimmer. At some point during the evening, when the lightning storm began, I decided to seduce her. She resisted a little but couldn't help giving in because my hands massaged her deeply. I masturbated her but received nothing in return. When I tried to penetrate her

I was not erect enough so we never actually had intercourse. Yet, I realized I didn't necessarily want or need intercourse. Exploring and opening her body is what I enjoyed doing, and feeling the power in my hands to do this. Had she responded similarly I wouldn't have resisted but her guilt about having sex on a first date with a stranger prevented her from reciprocating. She wants a steady lover and I am definitely not it. But I was curious about a large woman's body. It's a powerful summer we're having, a tigerish heat.

Early this morning, squatting on a mossy log, shitting urgently, suddenly a yearling buck appeared not ten feet away, six-inch pronghorns. Getting accustomed to such sights: dark brown fisher bounding up trail until he recognizes my white, other-species face. Poetry said William Carlos Williams can be grocery lists, scientific names of vegetation, insects, wildlife, driving between mountains in mists, cursing tourists, leaving cities. Mornings wandering among wildflowers: rough-fruited cinquefoil, mullein and speedwell, turtlehead!, bladder campion, daisy fleabane and the other asters, great burdock, hedge bindweed, red clover, a trefoil, northern bedstraw, bunchberry and wood-sorrel, orange hawkweed, heal-all and buttercup. Immense riches! Friday I'll go back for more flowers, and start on shrubs.

Today is my first day in a new home in Vermont. A

wooded hill to the west but a somewhat noisy road to the east. An opportunity to play music with Eric and his friends but a rather crowded household. The good and the bad. I can hear the birds but also pickup trucks taking men to the early shift. My room is comfortable, with lovely light and the night is quiet, the mornings cold. I was surprised going to the state fair last night, how cold it is becoming. Today is cloudless. Moving was difficult, I own too much. Plenty of privacy and space in my room, people to talk to if I leave my room. Eric's and Lisa's psychiatric clients are somewhat difficult to be around, involved in themselves so that their social skills are not developed. The hill to the west and the road below create an echo chamber that the house sits in. So this is not a permanent location for me, temporary until I feel secure in the job with Skakel Forest Management. Outside my window is a vigorous apple tree but with one dead branch on the road side. Even here in Rutland there is a morning rush hour. The traffic makes a relatively soft whoosh but it depresses me because I thought I could escape it by coming to the country.

Having received another resounding rejection as a musician, Eric is showing me how chord progressions work and if I study hard and memorize, maybe I can make sense of music. We ran out of work on Friday at Skakel and I had to make do with make work and Kathy seemed a bit short with me although I'm not sure why, perhaps I work too

slowly. This weekend I want to familiarize myself with tax laws, the silviculture guides and the office computer. Between the forestry and the music I've got my work cut out for me. Brother Death has been rejected by everyone who has seen it, and why not? I haven't the heart to try again, seems like a waste of postage. I can't see putting energy into trying to convince people these poems are relevant to their lives. They're not. Perhaps I'll even fail as a forester. I thought I did a good map, contributed to inventorying the Peterson property and helped with the report but there was no reinforcement forthcoming. I can and will master the skills needed to do this job, assuming the bottom doesn't fall out from Skakel Forest Management or they decide, like the musicians of Nuts & Bolts, that I'm just an oddity. Lucky for me I still enjoy all my little triumphs and adversities. In the meantime, I should feel fortunate to be passed by, free to pursue any interest or whim without disturbing anyone or being disturbed. I could pack up and leave Vermont overnight, no difference, no matter, except that I'd be the same person elsewhere.

Unusual to say, I am happy today, nearly content, almost joyous. Vermont suits me, countryside all around, no need to search for a tree or mountainside, and every week on the job I get to stomp around in the woods, close to the vegetation and leaf litter, off-trail and off-road,

identifying and prescribing. But each day I can return to a warm comfortable room, eat a meal and ply my arts, poetry and trumpet. There was a time not too long ago when I believed such an existence was impossible. I live with Eric and Lisa and would stay here indefinitely were it possible, especially because Eric has been playing music with me and introducing me to music theory and other musicians. But they are starting a community care residence for the mentally ill, and as the house fills with clients I will have to go. Last week I bought a truck, 4x4, $\frac{3}{4}$ ton, 1978 Ford 250 pickup. Some truck, looks good, red and white, for \$3400 which I have a 3-year loan on, co-signed by my father. The truck came so cheaply because it has 138,000 miles on it but it runs tight, like new, and I hope I got a sweet deal.

The forestry job is superb. I'm doing everything I was trained for in forestry school and more. Inventory, management plans, maps, cruising timber, logging plans and supervision. In addition, in order to expand and improve the business I've worked on business cards, a brochure, developing a mailing list and a system for billing clients and estimating jobs. I'm becoming familiar with Vermont laws and programs, and the silvicultural guides we use to make prescriptions. Each day I work with Kathy who I like personally and admire professionally. We have an excellent working relationship and I feel I am already

contributing to the company. I also like Mark Skakel, the owner, although I don't yet know him as well.

The past two weeks have been packed with activity but what has it amounted to? Work continues to go well but the winter drought of projects is setting in. When not in the field, I've been working feverishly to get our marketing campaign underway. We've got our business card and brochure at the artist, then the printer. I drafted designs for both items and also wrote the text for the brochure. I'm feeling a little unrecognized for these contributions but always try to remember that the goal is not to feed my ego, it's to feed my wallet so I can feed my face. So, if my work advances our business prospects, that's what matters. Kathy continues to be easy and fun to work with but I'd like to get beyond being an assistant and feel more comfortable making decisions. This would require working more independently, another reason to market intensely, swamp the business so I have to handle situations on my own. I have also designed an entire recordkeeping system to generate information about income and expenses both for us and our clients. I'm looking forward to doing my first financial report for the business just to see what it looks like. I'm becoming more facile with the computer, there's no doubt that it's a powerful tool.

I also prepared a business proposal that outlined a

profit-making and profit-sharing scheme which Kathy and Mark seem to have accepted. The meeting at which it was considered turned out to be stressful for me even though it went perfectly well. Mark suggested that my share of the profits should be less than Kathy's due to seniority. I pointed out that I was already being paid less than her. I felt I had been slapped in the face. There's no doubt that Kathy's experience makes her far more valuable than me but considering I've been employed here for only seven weeks, I think I've already made some important contributions.

Since that meeting my relations with Mark have been strained, also because I have at times pushed too insistently on certain subjects like the business card. I have tried to back off, remembering it is after all his business. He has not been easy to connect with either and I sense some difficulty on his part in working with males. So I will continue to leave him plenty of space and accept my inferior position while still advancing the fortunes of the firm. At any rate, I'm glad to have this flurry of organizational activity behind me and get back to what matters most, learning all I can about forestry. The need for this was once again highlighted when Kathy and I had our usual quiz competition and I could not identify several cones. I want to get back to studying silviculture, insects, diseases, site factors, etc. I mark trees almost as efficiently

as Kathy now although there is still much for me to improve, especially in dealing directly with landowners and loggers.

Music is becoming increasingly important to me. Eric and I have been working on arrangements one night per week and yesterday he asked if we could up this to two. I'm the first to admit that I'm a slow study at music. I try not to let my ego or sensitivity prevent me from hearing and accepting criticism. Today I am devoting the entire day to memorizing chords and scales, pure memorization, like dendrology, so that when someone says G# minor I know automatically what notes to use. Tonight Nuts & Bolts is playing at the Valley Club, but I got no invitation to play even though I know the band is livelier with me. Audiences love the trumpet, whether it's me or just the more exotic instrument. Nuts & Bolts is not interested in working with me, understandably I guess, my musicianship leaves a lot to be desired. Knowing and making the chord changes and filling a solo is still not coming easily to me. I'll go down tonight, sneak in quietly and listen to the band, try to understand how I would best fit in if I were up there. Halloween weekend we played at a small party and had a hot time but somehow the band still does not see me as an asset. I'm at a disadvantage playing by ear all the time, always feeling my way for a niche in a tune. Much as I enjoy performing rock and roll,

my heart belongs to jazz, and my ultimate goal is to be able to improvise through the chord changes of my jazz repertoire.

I moved into a new apartment last week. The apartment is large, comfortable, private but it is not quiet due to a lot of traffic on surrounding roads. Will I get used to this traffic or will it be necessary to move again when my lease expires in six months? Ironic that I should escape New York to Vermont only to have a noisier apartment than I had in NY. Don't take every passing vehicle as a personal attack. Nothing can be done about it now, so I listen and wait. The privacy is wonderful. I am decorated and settled in, all that remains is to live. Which entails first of all making my job more secure by increasing our clients. The business is largely set up as I would have it, systems, contracts, just need the clients to try it out on. Brochures have not brought any responses but landowners are unlikely to be impulsive about forest management. So we must be patient. Tomorrow we meet a potential new client, our first pitch since assembling our materials and reorganizing the business. Although we are in the slow period, winter, we have been keeping busy anyway, preparing timber sales. And next week we will start a forest management plan update. Trying to spend more time in the field on income-producing projects, less in the office pushing papers. The next three or four months will tell whether I'll be kept on

with Skakel or not. Mark still relates pretty exclusively to Kathy although, whether he knows it or not, I am now making a substantial contribution to the business. Kathy and I work together efficiently and can accomplish a lot accurately and rapidly. I have a long list of ideas and innovations to my credit and can only hope they are appreciated. Hopefully I can get through the slow winter without using too much of my savings.

Activity has reached a nadir, end of February, end of winter. We have come to a standstill at work, no new clients and no new jobs. Our marketing campaign may have failed. My personal finances are running a deficit each month and this cannot continue or I'll be a pauper but no important changes can occur until June when my lease expires. I can think of no other approaches to marketing short of calling landowners directly. Last summer I knew Skakel Forest Management would be a gamble. The USFS is always an option and looking more attractive all the time. Now is the time to start arranging options to have a fallback position if the bottom falls out at Skakel. I estimate we need 100 clients to keep us busy, at present we have just 35. If the business is still stagnant by June I will have to find another job.

I developed an idea whereby Kathy and I would subcontract to other foresters on the theory that it would be profitable for them to hire temporary technicians when their work load is heavy rather than maintaining a full time

permanent staff. Kathy liked the idea but it was rudely rejected by Mark. The rudeness of the rejection upset me and now I am withdrawn, just doing my job, offering no enthusiasm or creativity, avoiding contact with Mark, and setting up options for the future in case it becomes necessary to leave. I may go ahead with my plan to hire out temporarily to foresters, start my own business. I don't know if Mark would fire me and I really don't want to have to discuss the issue, or any issue, with him again. I'm angry with myself that once again someone else has power over me but if I get fired and I don't get any temporary jobs, I'm fucked. I ran the idea past a few foresters at a meeting Thursday who seemed to think it would be a useful service. I'm beginning to doubt that Skakel Forest Management will ever grow as we had hoped, I think it will always be a struggle to find enough work, but I won't know for sure until June when my funds will be dangerously low and I won't have any room for failure.

Approaching Spring equinox! Today we're having steady, lovely rain, the first we've seen since November or December. I'm feeling a certain peace and comfort, even as I grapple, once again, with impending change. Two factors make me want to leave Skakel, that there is not enough work and there's no sign that the business will grow, and that I dislike Mark Skakel, the owner, and feel unappreciated, treated as a burden, even distrusted, rather

than counted as an asset. The time has not been totally wasted, this employment looks good on my resume, a stepping stone to move on. But where is the question. There are currently five options: 1) to start my own business working on a per diem basis as a technician for foresters throughout the northeast, either working alone or with Kathy who likes the idea but may not be willing to risk a break with Mark to pursue it; 2) return to ESF in Syracuse for a B.S. in forestry or a dual major of forestry and environmental biology, I would need the state resident tuition which I may have jeopardized by living in Vermont, and I would probably need to borrow heavily from my parents; 3) work seasonally for Green Mountain National Forest preferably in Middlebury or Manchester, either commuting from here or moving there, I've put in an application but jobs may already be taken; 4) work for NYS DEC as a ranger again this summer, keeping my apartment here, saving a little money and buying some time to get my per diem tech business off the ground; 5) cut loose completely and work seasonally out west for the forest service.

Another day without work. Mark and Kathy went over to the Samuels property to look over their firewood thinning but I was specifically asked by Mark not to come. It seems to be time to seriously look for work and expand my horizons in terms of types of work I'll do and places I'm willing to live.

Survival demands it. Today I mailed more Northeast Forest Tech fliers and gave the go ahead for the SAF ad but I have little confidence that our business venture will fly. Therefore, I am also looking at newspapers each day, Glens Falls Post-Star, Rutland Herald, Addison Independent, Burlington Free Press, for job opportunities. I guess any of these towns would be satisfactory. Any reasonably interesting, steady, well-paying job will do, not necessarily in forestry, even social services.

Unbelievably, ironically, surprisingly, frighteningly, perversely, I have even considered returning to the big, bad, ugly, dangerous, exciting, lonely, soul-killing New York City. A killing field but everyone dies somewhere, sometime. Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association, sister settlement house to Isaacs Center, had an ad in the Times for a year round job directing an urban ecology program in the city schools and a Connecticut camp. Horrible to imagine a return to NYC. On the other hand, reading the ad made me realize that pure forest technician work will not constitute meaningful employment for me. This job in NYC could combine my natural resource knowledge with my need to have a direct impact on and contact with other people's lives. Rationalization? One thing is sure, in these next two months I must make a serious, concerted effort to find steady work or I'm gonna be in deep shit.

I've sung this NYC song before, after previous failures

at setting up a life in rural America. It seems I am destined to live and die in the urban wasteland and write my poetry about it and the unhappiness it gives me. The decrepit, imposing, soot-covered structures, high-rises, bridges, the sad, murky rivers, the regal Hudson on a sparkling day, Long Island Sound, Jamaica Bay. Why can't I just accept my fate, stop fighting it. There are flowers, trees and birds to identify everywhere, even in the human-tortured ecology. Although it is disappointing to have failed again in rural America, and depressing to know I must move all my belongings again, it is also exciting to be exploring and testing my mettle against survival.

My financial situation is not improving. April so far has been the worst month yet for income, and since buying all that forestry equipment for Northeast Forest Tech, may prove to be the worst month for expenses. It is time to consider alternatives, a job as a child care worker at a place called Berkshire Farm Center in Canaan, NY near Albany, is beginning to occupy my fantasies. First, the pay scale approximates reality. Secondly, it deals with court-referred teens, my specialty. It's on a 1400 acre property, plenty of room to roam. It's more centrally located than Rutland. With a decent salary and vacation schedule I could go out west again on camping expeditions in wilderness areas. And the Adirondacks and Green Mountains are within striking distance of a weekend trip. I'd be perfect for this place and

it might provide me with a community and meaningful work.

Which brings us to the question can I survive here for another year if I need to? If Skakel Forest Management picks up significantly this spring, summer and fall, if I get a few jobs through Northeast Forest Tech, and if Eric and I can make some money playing music I might survive one more year here. All big ifs. Yesterday things seemed more positive on all fronts, but then I'll go a week or two without a sign of life. As yet, there is no job offer, so no choice to make. I look at all the newspapers each week for jobs. Lately my attitude toward Kathy and SFM has been detachment, let the chips fall where they may. I go to work when I'm called but I've given up trying to take an active role in the company, accepted by position as Kathy's assistant. I let Kathy make all the contacts and plans and let her tell me when and where I'm supposed to work. Loggers and landowners still perceive me as secondary, transient, just as they did when I started this job. As for Eric, I realize that my musicianship is inadequate so I should not allow any of my plans to be rerouted by our music.

How lovely Spring has been this year, notwithstanding my personal problems. The young leaves tender, various shades of green, wildflowers, many birds, the warmth, even insects. The second interview at Berkshire Farm Center was inconclusive, I couldn't get control of the interview because my interviewer was a compulsive, non-

stop talker. We chatted about everything from the job to his children. I'm still interested, the salary, vacations and benefits are all nothing less than excellent. But I'm ambivalent about leaving forestry and Vermont. Business has picked up and we're getting more response from our brochure mailings. Yesterday, solo, I met with two potential forestry clients and handled myself well. And the countryside is so relaxing and lovely. I like my independence and the idea of owning my own business but my personal finances have reached critical condition. There may be no choice left but to find a stable position in social services. No decision yet as to what Mark wants to do with the business so everything is on hold while Berkshire Farm Center and Mark Skakel decide my fate. In the meantime, I continue to put out resumes like Spring flowers.

Well, the die is cast and a new venture, future begins. I have a job offer, to coordinate and direct services for homeless and at risk families in North Adams, Massachusetts. It will be intense, starting a complex program from scratch, leading what may become a medium-sized organization, and dealing with community leaders at every turn. I wonder if I'm ready to work this hard and I worry about walking away from forestry with so much left unexplored. I tell myself that Kathy and I can maintain Northeast Forest Tech for weekend jobs but this is probably unrealistic given the demands of the position I'm about to

take. But it is a sop to my conscience.

North Adams seems like a good area for me, the town is small, pop. 18,000, and the people seem friendly. It is compact with little unsightly sprawl, and surrounded by steep, pure green, cool mountains. It is about an hour from Albany and a few hours from Boston and NYC. The sister town, Williamstown, contains a college, a stage theater, and an art movie theater. There are three newspapers serving the area. Rents are affordable and other costs seem reasonable. It is not too far from Vermont or the Adirondacks. I doubt that I can do better than this. I am not unhappy to be leaving Vermont, enjoyable as it's been, not much has worked out, not the forestry and not the music. My new job organizing the Family Life Support Center will force me to commit and succeed. During two interviews with the advisory board, I surprised myself with my self-assurance, authority and speaking ability. I want to settle down and participate fully in a community. Could this be it?