

[Approximate date of composition by author: February 1999 —Editor]

1

Lilith: Her eyes take in, remake the World for us. Her glance unfurls in us the knot of time. Our breath, red-handed caught, restarts again. We rethink our lives in terms of forests & stars.

2

As biographies go, i suppose this is as good a place as any to stop.¹ Well, to pause, anyway. 'Cause i'm thinking: It might be wrong of me to presume, just because youre reading this you know what went before. And it might not even be your fault.

Case in hand. If youre² in prison, like me, you can get in some really testical-torquing trouble just for asking for a book by me—muchless getting caught with one. Now, if that's the case—if just owning one of my books puts you in danger—then i dont know what to say. Maybe just put this back where you found it and quietly slip away. 'Cause there's stuff comin' that will fershur seem outta-the-blue weird. (Lilith's twin, lalage, talked like that.) My point being: Maybe youll forgive me when the story starts to treat you like a rider on some madman's rollercoaster, with everything in the darkness upahead at the mercy of your just happening to catch it during a liteningflash or bombblast.

Lastly. I mean, “lastly” to *start* with. (Telling a story backwards can be tricky.)³ There is this equivalency thing. Goes like this: This Earth would need a whole new millennium of heroines & goddesses to again come up with a being more thoughtful, more unique, more beautiful, more desired, than Lilith McGrae. Having said that, i know i know. Youll want evidence. It is for this reason alone—for your questions, my friends & loved ones—that i risk writing even one word.

3

Catchup. Lex was last to see her. Before leaving for a speaking engagement in twin cities, i visited lex at his hotel. “Nathan, that’s crazy.” Whenever lex called me nathan i knew a lecture was near. “So one more time. Lilith is the girl of your dreams—*your* words, not mine. Yet here she is, still missing—kidnaped, raped, murdered, for all we know...for all *anyone* knows...and youre *still* leaving...?”

The f-b-i knows. Damnwell knows. Their stink is all over this.

“That may be. Still, still youre gonna walk out, just up ‘n’ leave? *That* makes no sense.”

But you dont know. For weeks her life has been coming at me like a planecrash. It’s been high drama from liftoff. Hell, she was kidnaped right under *your* nose, and you knew her for what, a week?

I could see lex startle recalling that eve in animaze studios’ parkinglot. “But none of it was her fault?”

You dont *know* that? I’ve been telling myself the same thing for weeks.

“But I do. I c’n tell. So quiet, so intelligent. Hates t’ tell her side o’ the story—sure sign of innocence. Hey, an’ talented. Holy flurking schnitt, nate. Ev’ry guy at the studio is stumbling around in awe. *You* did hollywood. You know firsthand what it’s like—what it’s like being young, innocent ‘n’ beautiful in this town—find yourself offered the world by ev’ry person you meet? Make that times ten for a beauty like her? Confusing does not even *begin* to describe it. An’ she’s even *younger* than we were back then—by years! [Lex re:d our nathan west “days of the locust”.] I’ve gotta be honest here, nate. If I were her, if I ever foundout you just up ‘n’ left the state, just took off while, for all you knew, I was being tortured ‘r even dead....”

Ferkryssake, lex. Her father threatened me with arrest, prettymuch accused *me* of kidnaping her! Have you *any* idea what the fed. would *luuv* to do with that?

"Fine. But I know you, nate. Arrest is how captain GreenEarth gets thru his day. Youve been arrested in ev'ry polluted port on the Planet. So, for me, that's *not* why youre leaving. Youre scared for her 'cause youre helpless to help. [index up] Okay, I'll leave it at this: Changing the scenery doesnt stop falling in love. That never works. And sooo..." The big man, smiling that famous hercules smile, slaps his knees, rises. "...So whaddaya say we grab a bite b'fore we lose you at lax?"

It was on the planeride home i scribbled this release to a song jon windstar never lived to finish, a lyric which rather unveils my dilemma.

And so i'm asking you, what can a poor guy do,
who knows he's deeply Green yet feelin blue?

And that wraps catchup.

4

It came about oddly. With Lilith somehow turnedup back home in dillon beach, and me back in appalachia, and with winter undecided as to a good white quilting or just another flirt with flurries, one eve i ambushed logic with three bottles of alpine dark, pickedup the fone.

With only a "hello" to go by, i guessed, lalage. After a tentative little catchup, lage said "Hang on. I'll get her". Repeatedly beatingback the urge to clickoff, out of a ridiculously long silence came a sudden, "Hello"—which slammed a knuckle into my sternum... & twisted.

Hey, it's me.

Following her "O, hi!" {What? She didnt know who's calling?} and an edgy pause {Kryyst, why am i doing this? Was lex right?}, i began, <I'm calling, well, b'cause i've d'cided: [deep breath] I want you to...well... come live at the sanctuary. [even *i* gulp at this] Look, no strings. [gulp again] Fact: A five-minute stroll up the driveway there's an empty house waiting [clear throat] for *you*.> Here i paused. Then, midst a repeat silence, continued. <Welp, that's really all i called to say. I suppose i'll be on my way. [a sense-searching sort of silence] Maybe we'll talk again... Then again, maybe not... Welp, okay. You take care, Lilith McGrae.>

I'm lowering the fone when i think i hear a small voice. <Did you say something?>

"Yes. I said wait. <O?> B'cause i...i don't know how...mmm quite...well, how to respond t' that...i mean, well, youre asking so totally outta-the-blue...."

Outta-the-blue for you maybe. And i understand that. [another pause] But not outta-the-blue for me. Look. Here's the deal. I've put all *my* cards faceup now. Yes, it took awhile. But suddenly it was important t' me. ["May i ask, well, why?"] Welp, hmm. {Now offscript, damn.} Maybe it took so long for the same reason youre afraid to answer? [glaring blank space] Look, i've thought this thru and, well, i concede the writing on the wall [sic]. So let's jus leave it at: I know now *that's* what i want? [similar silence] Welp, now that's *waymore* than i called t'say. Let me know your decision...*or* not, as you wish. I'll leave you now t' get back t' your life. Playsafe, Lilith McGrae.

Now I tremble at your name. Nothing in the world will ever seem the same....

A couple mins later, after our talk ended, i suddenly knew that, by leveling such an abrupt ultimatum...and, yes, fairly out-of-the-blue like she said...some latent fear in me was trying to scare her off. And for good, maybe—a fear out of reach for me at the time. And done in such a way as, this time, to make it *her* who rebuffs *me*. That said, when our conversation ended i was left to wonder why, why, with only a few moment's more of equivocation, she suddenly rose up and—lithe snow leopard arcing across a mountain woodscape, an ice-blued scene *chatoyant* with birch-slashed sunlite—why this Girl of a Lifetime suddenly rose up and, with me looking on stunned, leapt thru the fiery hoop i held aloft.

The End

→ → SPECULAR QUERISTS & RUMINISTS KEEP RIGHT → →

What's this? The column on the right should be seen no differently than when a movie director, needing to tease or to tell, flashes forward or back, switches to sepia or black&white, or to early celluloid flicker&flash, just so he/she can insert some key plot element. And our choice? None. We watch the movie or we leave. That's it. So think of my marginalia as text-with-a-choice, where you are free to both stay *and* ignore it.



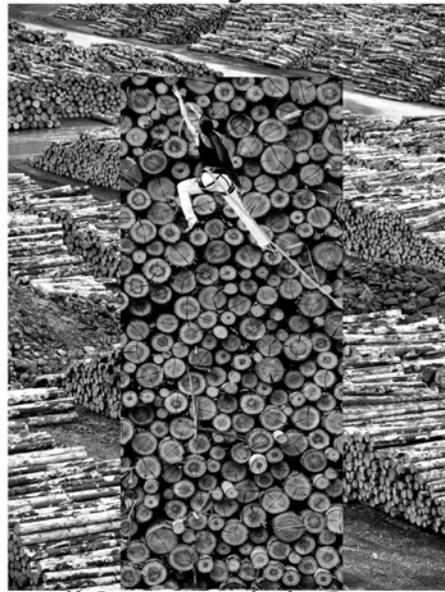
Clockwise: Lilage, piano practice
Dillon Beach ('93); 2) at GGNS
('94); 3) Competition, CA ('93);
4) Lilith, TN River, GGNS ('94);
5) GGNS Autumn '94); 6) the
twins, Dillon Beach ('93); 7)
Sorrel Le Rose, California School
of the Arts ('93)



Clockwise: Tara Pickford, GGNS ('91); 2) Lilith at GGNS ('94); 3) Lilith at Cape Charles, VA ('95); 4) Lilith ('95) hanging a banner at a coal-fired powerplant in NW Georgia. (Photo-Ad courtesy of GreenEarth U.S.A.); 5) Lalage, lakeside in MN ('92); 6) Tara P, GGNS ('94) on stump of tree forced by the State to destroy)



Alabama-Georgia Power, Inc.



Still Burning Whole Forests

5

When pepe & mariella helped Lilith move in the next weekend, i was off lecturing. For it was peak season in the series. As vividly as if it just happened, i recall the thrill that ran thru me when, in the middle of a lecture, in the middle of a thought, the picture of Lilith living back at ggNs [Goethe Grotto Nature Sanctuary—Ed.]—my home in the mountains, that place i love and love to be—crossed my mind. Need i say, i lost my place—again. And not for the last time.

Then there was that morn a few days after she'd moved in, waking, squinting to see if it was lite out, habitually assuming i was alone; then, the shock of seeing that apparition of dark hair spilled across the pillow next to mine, the dusky outline of a matchless munch-madonna face; fragile almost translucent features in the new day's dim, lying right there only a reach away!

And to hold that sweet pedal-tone of habituation a measure longer. We come upon me 1day down in scotsmoor. Several times during errands Lilith comes to mind, always with a jolt of heady surprise,



Book's end? *And so Lilith went to live with nathan at goethe grotto Nature sanctuary, one of the last remaining tracts of deep forest in the southern appalachians, there to live happily ever after.* My story might well have ended thus—with no need for the book you're holding. I mean, why not? For up til this very minute, in the typical story in these dangerous times, the union, or reunion, of the lovers *still* signals **The End**, the end of the tale. Even in these fragile & dark days the uniting of the lovers is *still* the whole point, *still* the main gear in that lethal mechanism we call <<progress>>. *Still* it is with the promise of *more* births (*more* people, *less* Planet) that we like to end our stories. For there was a time, not that long ago, when unrestricted mating guaranteed the survival of our species...an ending which, despite all the world-spanning damage overpopulation has caused, we civilizens *still* refuse to see as the sheer imbecilicide it is.

So i say, like it or not, our days of happily-ever-after are prettymuch done. Just keeping it real here. Sorry. One more generation of fairytale endings—that is, a couple more decades of the lovers uniting at last into 1big steamy incubating future—and **The End** will be written in the stars for us! Yet, Great Gaia! *Still* we cling to that ending! But why? Surely it cant be because we dont know better?

a jolt which somehow recalls my being a kid, sitting in school the day after a birthday, suddenly realizing—in the midst of a boring assignment—that a new bicycle, allbut unriden, was awaiting me at home!

On the way home, by way of quadrant, i stop for gas at the sign of the chevron. (Note: No choice. It is the *only* gasstation.) As i'm paying, a jacked-up pickup pulls in, nose-to-nose with me, blocking my forward exit—even tho mine is the only vehicle in 2islands of pumps! In these hills good ol' chevy& ford boys will abide a dodge truck in their path but not a "ricepaddy hopper". Yet such behavior had longsince ceased to surprise me. I pay, go to my truck, startup, slip into reverse. Hardly have i turned in my seat, easedoff the brake, when clunk.....i bump something. What the hell? In the time it took me to get in, startup, begin to back (5-7seconds, no more), a small car had zipped tite-in & blind behind me.

Now i need pause to note, my mirrors, rearview & outriggers both, offer farbetter resolution of things behind me than mere turning in my seat can achieve. Still, in close quarters, commonsense says to use *all* access. This time to no avail.

I think it's because *no one* dares ask: *By what right this fairytale ending?* Even when all the signs are waving & yelling: Turn back! Turn back before it's too late! Even with this, *still* it is the only ending we want to hear.

We must wake from this dream, my thoughtful reader. With every further day of denial we are twisting our dreams into a nitemare. Someone has to love us enuf to say the words: Overpopulation is a gruesome way to go. *Lovers uniting with great care* needs be the story of a new era; needs be *our* story. "Copulation without population", as james joyce put it so well so early-on. We must write a *new* tale, a tale with a thoughtful plot and a wise ending. We must let go of that old fairytale with its apocalyptic flameout.

Live from deathrow

Since no qualities in a person can evoke more fear (in *certain* others) than the following, imagine, my brave reader, this warning posted on my celldoor:

RIGHT-TO-KNOW

CONSCIENCE IS THE DYNAMO OF MY EXISTENCE,
A DENIAL-DEVOURING LOGIC DRIVES MY DAYS.
SORRY. I WAS JUST MADE THAT WAY.

—nathan schock

I also need to confess: For the last 15 of my 25months in prison here i have been writing about Lilith Lilith Lilith. I guess this amounts to a thousand or so pages (in print form) which i've spent testifying to events in the life of my Colleague Friend Lover & Mate, **Lilith Alithe McBrac.**

Because the car is so small, has pulled in so close behind (allowing no space even for me to pick up speed), added to the gentleness of the clunk, i jump down presuming no damage. Standing by her open door, eyebrows up, hands down, palms front, the young woman wails, "Are you blind?"

No. [then i think] Actually, my life's goal is to have costly accidents with total strangers. [slowly the inaneness of her question occurs to her] *No*, i *didn't* see you. And i'm *not* blind. Hop up in that seat there an' you'll see. You're so close to me your entire car can not be seen.

"Well sure, after you've backed into me!" Reflexively, following the hit, i'd pulled forward to point A. "O damn! [arms go limp at her sides, head turns away] I don't even wanna see this!" Comes slowly around, as if sneaking up on the 'damage' will somehow lessen it.

<Why didn't you just pull under my truck. That would've got you even closer.> I think {Looks showroom fresh. Probably can't gauge where the front of her car is yet.} Change tack. <Is this skateboard new?>

Too rattled to hear, maybe? "My dad's gonna have a stroke. I just got this." Judging by the time, the cars just then pulling in, the age of their

Because of this, my reader has only a topsyturvy idea of Lilith's & my relationship. Because it's been my Lee my Lily my Lith for chapters on end, our story is now warped out of focus. A blurring, a bubble-lens distortion, has inserted itself between me & my reader³—you know, that lens which makes the face & nose of even a beautiful subject overlarge & her backdrop vanishing? Which is why there's no better time than now to stop, to take 1 skinny sidepanel to reassess the *vital* valency⁴ of the tale.

For truth is: Lilith began telling *my* story, the story of Nathan Schock, when she was a mere 12—b'lieve it—and *never stopped telling it*—writing sketching drawing painting & even animating my story—til that *inglorious day she disappeared!* (October 29th, 1996!!!) Compared to such dedication — compared to over a 3rd of her young life spent fabulating in her cartoon *captain GreenEarth*, my Green activism—*anything* i say here is but a feeble repayment. So here, in a quick sip, is a bit of that unspoken flipside.

Lilith on me: Within hours of my Love's *final* disappearance, while lalage & me scrambled thru a bloodied bramble of clues, we found the beginnings of a manuscript; or, better said, "notes for a manuscript". Its provisional title? *Lunch and a revolution*. Some will recognize the phrase immed. Apparently, to the very end, Lilith held me—flesh & blood me—in the same frame with which she fabulated the life of her, by then, world-famed cartoon hero,

occupants, i assume she has just come from school. Crouched now before the grill, the young woman—in bronze blouse & forestgreen leather-sheen skirt—runs fingertips back&forth over fold in cowling. “Hardly a day old ‘n’ look! <Looks fine t’ me.> What’re you doing backingup anyway?” I point to vehicle almost touching my grill. “Youre s’posed t’ look before you back up.”

Wait a sec here. You come skimming along the ground in this rollerskate o’ yours, zoomup behind me so close you disappear in my mirrors.... Ya know, there’s a reason they have laws about following too close? This is just one o’ them. Keep *this* up ‘n’ yer gonna get squashed by some idiot. We have our share hereabouts.

“I wasnt even *moving*. I was stopped when you hit me!”, smoothing all the while the brow of her insulted vehicle, her seeming-just-washed chestnut hair sliding to mid-back when she looked up.

Just a recommendation: Few will see you way down here—except maybe turtles ‘n’ toadstools ‘n’ other toy cars. And our locals in their jackedup pickups? They’ll fly over the top o’ you ‘n’ never notice the splot.

captain GreenEarth—capturing my life 4times over, actually. ① In comicstrip, starting age12 ② in tv series from age17, and ③ in animated film, from age 18. And here again, now 19, in her “notes for a manuscript”, we once again find her synopsising my life using the same expression, only this time ④ in book-style biography.

Lilith’s effort to explain—to a by then (1996) fascinated audience—her *reallife* relationship with “the captain”, was *this* very book-to-be; which full title was, *Let’s do lunch and a revolution: The prototyping of Captain Green-Earth*. Instead of succumbing to what audiences seem always drooling to know—details like, “What’s the captain like in bed?” and “How old were you *really* when you guys started having sex?”—my Love’s reply was tastefully oblique. It read like this: “How a flesh and blood man came to live in my art.” Nothing more. For her, art was also good taste, thru&thru & always.

Anyway. As to her “revolution” statement now being infamous?* This is thanx to the fed., and to its propaganda-parroting press, twisting Green activism into terrorism whenever possible—eventually placing me, *and* my works (*and* anyone daring to promote or apologize for them), at the top of the fed’s *terrorist-watch list*. Yes, my friends. An *actual* list. A list available, sad to report, to some *very* vicious people w guns & badges. And this is how, with my arrest & trial back in ‘97, my carefulest reader, the expression “Lunch and a revolution” became the seditious saying it is today.

Glances backward, then up at me, lips tense, squinting with exasperation. <I'm glad t' see you c'n turn your head. Whiplash is a terrible thing.> Pretty face, glinty eyes unsure of my meaning, she rises, scans hood from higher angle now, squats again; duckwalking in uncooperative skirt, runs fingers one more time over length of cowlings: mother with pretty polished knees caressing newborn. It's scary how much people i.d with their vehicles. Having traded-in our legs for wheels, our vehicles have become extensions of our bodies. Most people have no clue as to this unnatural adoration of a mere machine. Fingers keep returning to the same spot; where raised cowlings inserts into hood.

That's *not* a dent, ya know. The cowlings's designed that way. See, goes all the way across, matches the tuck-lines in the hood over here. The only mark i see is that smudge right there. No, below your hand, on the bumper there. [caresses new area of interest; smudge unsmudges at her touch] You see? Your loving touch has made it a///// better....

Some mid-thigh peekaboo now. Maybe we should go see if the clerk has a magnifying glass?

Glowers up at me. "Look, I didnt cause this. You did."

To this i would add only: Keep allowing your government to bully you, my brothers & sisters, at your own peril. Keep up the denial and you are guaranteeing not only a nasty future for yourselves, but a wretched future for your children!

*The *meaning* of "revolution" lies in the mind of the beholder. As the great harry belafonte has reminded us: The crushing of communism in u.s.s.r, & the ending of apartheid in s.africa, were "won without a shot fired". Thus—because even the mere idea of *peaceful* revolution strikes wrath into *today's* fascists, merely *talking or writing Green* these days is considered revolutionary, and by this onto-illogic all things Green are treated as terrorism!

NOTES

¹ Continuation of *Lilith: a biography*, Book 1 into Book 2, *Lilith: Testament of a life*.

² NS thoroughly explained in Book 1 the urgency for his <prison shorthand> which, if his story was to be told at all, he had no choice but to use. Also, for further details, see Editor's notes on page 26.

^{3, 4} Fully expecting to be executed by the U.S. Government before he could finish this biography, part way through N.S. stopped, began writing the story from back to front. "This way, when they silence me for keeps", he said, "at least the most crucial part of the story will have been told, and passed into safe hands."⁵ A juncture of this retrochronal method the reader will see when he reaches that point where chapter numbers suddenly cease, are replaced by chapter headings.

⁵ And this, I'm sure, is what NS means by the valency of his testament being "vital".

—Editor]

Hey, i'm sorry. But i believe *you* caused it... the way you jetted in behind me. T' be honest. Another three inches an' youduv hit *me*. You may be *technically* right but i'm legally innocent. Only a kid would park her new tricycle under a trailertruck.

Store person comes out. "Would you kids take it somewhere else! There's people waiting."

"Is she talking to us?" Turns, spots cars waiting for our pumps. Two goodolboys in camos exit as lady disappears inside, stroll slowly back to their truck, mouths affixed to straws, eyes glaring sidelong at our imports and, unavoidably, at my crash victim's bandylegged body just rising from a last squat.

You dont talk southern. Where you from?

"Florida. Are we s'posed t' call the police in this state?"

Whatever you like. I'll be happy t' pay for any damage you c'n find. But i jus dont see any. I hardly tapped you. [my best slowgrin]

Jackedup truck peels rubber backwards, swerves out to road, is soon whining away down the mountain, 2large confederate flags snapping in the wind, knobbies growling against all threat of silence, even longafter out of sight.

We look at each other blankly.

Good thing you didnt zoom in b'hind *them*. Youd be squashed. [seems now seeing my point] Ya know, there's an auto-bodyshop right down the street there. So you should be assured there's no damage, let's go enlist their expertise.

"Are we s'posed t' call the cops first?"

<If you want your insurance t' go up?> Fuelsup, pays, follows me there.

On my way home some things i said bother me. {The poor creature was more worried than angry, i guess... But 'worried' being uncool these days, anger steps forward.} More& more when i leave home i feel like a primitive suddenly confronted with the unNaturalness of civilization. A car flies around me, flips on a turnsignal, allbut skids to a stop at the very next street to make a right turn. I grumble aloud a line from Lilith's *captain GreenEarth*:

<So *many* fools and such a small Planet.> So *i'm* the one gets caught by the only traffic signal in town, while he.... <Goddamn videogame drivers!> {Where are the videogame cops...? If we still traveled on foot we wouldnt be so loose with distance...I pray the price of fuel quadruples!} I'm not thinking here civil religion's idea of "pray". Morelike Green-wishing—an enviro's sorta prayer. And thus thought leapfrogged thought as i drove. {She was waaay lovely, that green-skirted froglet...Bodyshopper billy spotted us in the parkinglot, fireup his torch for a max impression on a female he mistook for my latest... R'minds me of lalage...Spunky. Quick on the draw, she was.}

As i crossed the bridge over muir creek, banked into the turn, my peripheral vision, thru a brief space in the foliage—far behind the fence & well beyond the barrier of low-slung cedars—i spotted someone standing there, gazingout toward the road. For a moment i cant understand who it can be. How much time does it take the search-function of the brain to cover immed possibilities? A second? Less? So many neural glyphs are rushed by in that instant it seems like minutes. {Tara, rachel, becky, maybe? or the young woman jus met by accident?} Dressed in faded jeans, hair thonged in buttlength ponytail—with a high stag-leap of internal joy i realize: Wow! It's *Lilith!*

6

Finally—i mean, finally, as to Lilith's disappearance: Fact: Someone kidnaped her. Our traditionally renegade f.b.i.? Our newly renegade e.p.a.? Someone, or some thing, was behind her disappearance. One branch or another of our Green-hating fed. Yet the *big* question was: Who were the kidnappers *as individuals*? Rick [Barclay —Ed.] is convinced it is shill-for-big-coal & oil e.p.a czar charles strickland. But whom is he *really* wanting to punish? GreenEarth international? Of course! Me? Make an example to any person wanting to become a Green? Likely. But kidnap a "mere" girlfriend? That seemed a stretch. For Lilith's *captain GreenEarth* cartoon had only just begun to get traction. (Good Gaia, protect our loved ones when our corpolitical dissent goes platinum!) Surely their *end* target could not have been Lilith. At best she was a surrogate victim for crushing Green me. Surely her abduction was not to make her some cop's desdemona, some politico's lavinia? And what sort of person would even want such a thing? These were my shifting puzzleparts.

Tho it is true, her cartoon was, weekbyweek, exposing corporate america's antiGreen agenda, backthen her audience was not big enuf to arouse dread in corporoyal castles, or vengeance in their vestpocket politicos, or even personality-bashing by our *status quo*-ting poppress. Backthen her cartoon was merely an item for farright shockjock punditry, and clearly an excuse to fantasize Lilith's relationship w me.

[*LM's cartoon series, *Captain GreenEarth*, by then running on TV. See Book 1 —Ed.]

And so, my need was *still* to learn: Who abducted her? Who had hurt her so badly she could not chew or speak for 10days? And who had struck her face so violently the bruising was discernable for weeks? Still, if none of us could commiserate with her on this, if even lalage, her beloved twin, could not touch these tender questions, and when the only tack left to get to the truth is to patiently wait, to gently hint, gently hint again, then the future of one's concerns takes on a tiptoe fragility.

7

The gravics glossed: Yes, my name is nathan. After whom? Certainly no biblical nathan, since my given name was mother's to give, and no eve or ruth was she. (And father cared not a jot so long as his kid's patronym was schock.) And tho, like yankeedoodle born in u.s.a, i was likely conceived in vienna, possibly on the same street where freud conceived his own "primal scene". And that mother named me for her first lover, one nathan novalis (no schock there, hic),* is obvious in love letters from her 16th year—you should pardon the virgin's rorschach blot on these rumpled sheets. And, as *auto-bio* goes, that, my friends, will have to do.



*[The "hic" = NS'S acronym for <humor in copy>, equivalent of the editorial "sic". —Ed.]

Yet, while i've got you sidetracked....

Lilith & lalage's mom, leyda—while a certified stungun nympho, was noway stupid. Because at 1st sign of puberty, leyda—granddaughter of simone de beauvoir (sartre's rib, as i think i've said)—set the girls reading the diaries of her countryman, anaïs nin. And, for now, this fact (*alérté!*)—along w L's discovery of 14yr-old ann-frank genius—will have to serve as cause for Lilith's wisdom quest. A quick sample.

Anais nin said: "People fear wisdom I think because of its potential to expose them not just to the unknown but to the deeply unknown. I think people perceive wisdom as scary, even antisocial, as if it were the dangerous fruit of some tree we've been warned about since childhood." —L's *Diary 2, 1995*

A true specular querist & ruminist, the adroit anais nin, according to Lilith, spent her life "dancing around whisper-close always to your [my] best truths". L, who aged 14 thru 15, "devoured every word of ms nin", continues:

Her lifework says: We civilizens operate so far from our native humanity that, while we pursue knowledge we are suspicious of wisdom. It's no accident that this suspicion includes questioning our dreams and doubting the legitimacy of our intuitions. The whole treatment of wisdom by civil society is suspiciously similar to how we ignore the guilts hid away in our consciences. We civil have lost connection with the rich soil of conscience and the nitesky of deep caring.

As to 14yr-old genius? I get it. You dont believe it. But it happens. For instance, before they killed her ann frank wrote: "How wonderful that we can change society any time we please". Lilith thought like that.

8

Blameless as to causes, we bachelors & spinsters can be spoiled as to privacy. We'd warned each other we were accustomed to our own space. For me it was from being ignored as a child that i got used to isolation. While Lilith sought privacy from being, til aged 12, one half of an effort at untwinning from her sister. And then, from 12 til 16, after lage & her father moved away—during those few days a week when her "stepfather" was home—she absolutely sought the double-bolted steel-door isolation of her bedroom. [See side panel. —Ed.]

Tho small, the bluff house is called a chalet. While i offered to share my domicile, the unimposing Ms McGrae chose to settle into the manor (the larger orig house at the sanctuary)—it being understood that, if & when i found a caretaker, she would share the place, as it was comfortably roomy & private enuf for 4 should the need arise.

Lilith so trusted the safety at ggNs & environs she soon took to running every day ("Know your Earthplace")...so that, in the few days til i returned, 3neighbors, all male—persons who'd never workedout a day in their adult lives, males whom i knew chuckled every time they saw me running or biking—suddenly tookup the regimen! What? Yes.

In all my years there, never did anyone but me, or visiting friends, run or bike *anywhere* at *any time* on alp mtn. And so, in such stark absence of shame, how could i fail but note who these men were?

Being just over 2wks til she left again for ca, Lilith's stay was spent settling in—quiet whirlwind nest-adorning (rather than domestica-ting) everything she touched. She insisted on paying rent and nothing could dissuade her. <Fine. I'll bank all overage til you relent on this rent thing. [we stare at the floor] Come. A hug. If only b'tween deep-Greens.> She came. "You *are* a good friend, nathan schock", she said, head against my chest. Then, looking up, "Thank you for everything", then back down again the moment our eyes sensed a kiss.

I saw, by windowlite, a pale purpling around her lips was *still* discernable. {Bruising has got t' be serious to show for this long} i thought. I could only wonder why she did not

Bewail herself. Tear her hair as though it were to blame for the wrong.

"For the first time i'm feeling safe. <That's great.> I'd love t' get used t' this." I would have lifted her face, kissed her, but felt she wanted merely to lean against me, be held a bit, nothing more.

I could do nothing but hug little Lily in silence.

It was some time before i divined what, exactly, the period immed after Lilith moved in was reminding me of. Like dancers trapped in a tormenting choreography, we circled each other, not daring touch.

Young Lilith's bedroom vault: I wonder now about the installer of that door. Could they not see, the room being dead-bolted (from inside!) belonged to an extraordinarily beautiful girl? Did no one think to call the cops? or at least alert child services? How can so many of my fellow civilizens abide so much for a buck? I feel sick.



Bluff house: While not large, the bluff house has 4levels. Lowest: daylite basement; artifact of building on a slope. 2guestrms, bath & small gym/gameroom. 2ndlevel: greatroom (open to roof-height) w open stair to loft, dining/kitchen area, pantry & half-bath (beneath loft). 3rd: loft: houses bdrm-bath under rear gable, w sidelong catwalks (above greatrm) leading to prowfront sittingarea. Topmost: 6-sided all glass 5x5m cuppola, which i call "the eyrie", is reached by spiral stair from loft. The lot of it amounting to a small chalet w loft, plus a diminutive cuppola cap & open-ended foundation. All levels are daylit and look out over the tennessee rivervalley.

We focused on practical matters: her new career, my current book, and how exactly we might find time—an extended period—to spend together. Today i know the source of that *déjà existant* feeling: a wall not unlike the one juanita & i confronted when, suddenly we found ourselves permitted to spend freetime together. [Juanita Darque is a “first love” of NS. —Ed.] Our freetime just then too brief to fulfill the enchantments our imaginations had planned, we frozeup emotionally, assumed genteel poses. (Civil hypocrisy in action.) Spring break was our next hope for freetime—but again, too short. Past that, unless something was done, we were looking at may before i was free of commitments and aug before *she* was—the soonest the (for tv) animation of her *captain GreenEarth* would be complete enuf to cut her loose. In order to be at the sanctuary when she got home to stay, i decided to cancel my 94-95 tour, save for major (deepGreen) venues.

While finding my book tours linked to my sexlife came as no surprise, i was shocked to find there existed, quietly & unnoticed, a quest for a lifemate buried at the deepest root of my roamings. So it came to be that, the closer Lilith & i grew, the less fulfilling, and the more abstract, leaving on tour became for me. While the occasional venue (in the ideal place, in the perfect season) was still attractive, i could see fultime touring already fast-fading as a lifestyle. My ego just didnt need the attention and my libido, quite honestly, felt rightly isolated by its fixation with Lilith. I planned therefor not to tour fultime again, devote myself to my latest book: *Ecocosm: the Cosmic Gaia*.

9

Only days after Lilith moved in—oddly the day of the l.a earthquake—friend & colleague, rick, called from frisco. [Richard Barclay, executive director, GreenEarth America. —Ed.] “...Turnsout strickland proved his metal *b’fore* they crowned him. [EPA czar.] <How’s that?> Shur youre ready fer this...? Well, turnsout, he’s the one r’sponsible for takingout roy freeman. <You are fukking kidding me!> Kid you not. L-d-f gumshoes* now have it on solid authority. Early in ninetythree strickland promised the smirkly/snarley administration a ‘clean removal from the scene of EarthNow’s freeman. B’fore the year is out’, he promised.” [“Prez smirkly, viceprez snarley” are NS’ euphemisms for then U.S. president and vice president. —Ed.]

"Apparently that mystery gunshot you heard in muir woods back in june was a first failed attempt. <No shit! I r'member that!> Look at the timing, nate. The announcement of an ombudsman being assigned—presidentially, mind you—at the e-p-a, with that miraculously, ahem, followed by roy's quote *mysterious* death unquote...." *[U.G.L.D.F.: United Greens Legal Defense Fund. —Ed.]

Unfukkingb'lievable.... I'm so naïve about viciousness!

"Freeman was okay with violence, nate, and they knew it. To the fed. that's divine right to kill...I mean it's a greenlite for 'Green removal', as they call it. Their message being: If you dare to carry a sword we *will* find some way to make you fall on it. But more crucially—and this is really why I called—*who* did they try to pin roy's murder on? Happen t' r'member that one...? Right. *You*.* Which proves, even early-on, strickland had *you* in his sights, nate. You are his moral anathama. His perfect opposite. So, frankly, yes, I'm concerned. If Lilith's cartoon keeps growing in popularity, then what? Popular or not, there cant be *anything* in there that even hints of Green violence, Green revenge. I mean now that we know *for a fact* the person in charge of the e-p-a is himself a tactical 'remover'.... No, wait! Let's call a spade a spade. *The man now in charge of Greening america, the man supposed t' be a beacon to all nations for the reGreening of our Planet, is one ruthless Motherfukker godsaveus!*—which I mean, of course, in the sense of: Serial rapist of Mothernature 'n' now, at minimum, authorizer of murder as well!" [*All of this is attested to in detail in Book 1 —Ed.]

10

Meanwhile, during the l.a cleanup & rebuild, animaze studios ceo's more& more seemed downright spooked by the *captainGreenEarth* project—first by the kidnap-assault rumors swirling around all things Lilith; then by the earthquake itself [L.A, Jan. 17th]; both of which events those in charge saw as omens. Oooph. It was even suggested to brian [Nugent, chairman of the board at GreenEarth International, the film's producer. —Ed.] that perhaps "someone in a high place" might want this project scrapped. This cryptic stupidity could only be lain to rest by my written assurance that i fully supported the production and its syndication. Apparently studio lawyers were concerned over the numerous similarities between my life and Lilith's *captain GreenEarth* storyline.

Preview Part 1, pages 43 – 57

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By this point we'd taken my bash back to the hotel where glen (visibly overstimulated by the company & its sexually-tilted intrigue) soon dragged (by then giggly) robin off to their room for the nite.

And all this talk, please r'member tamorrow, is off the top o' my head t'nite. And with absolutely *no* help from this stuff i'm swilling. [i continue tentatively] And when i suggest castration it is *not* as a consequence for consensual—community sanctioned—playing sniffing flirting tasting 'r fantasizing. I am referring to coitus, or even "just" an attempt at coitus, with a child.

L: And what about rape?

Lifetime isolation with other persons of his ilk. Because sexual tastes are an imprint which can *not* be therapied or religioned away. And certainly not punished-away. And that includes lesser aggressions of ev'ry kind.

My Love again: Lesser than what?

To the lowly inquiring tilt of her Sister's head lage adds, "Lesser acts than akchual fukking, Sis. What else? He means stuff like forced head, suckoffs, polishing the helmet, beddowns 'n' bunnyboffs, hobbles, scrumps, get it ons, shtups, bone dancing, lap-clapping, mouth-plucking, the works. Right? Did I do good, teach? He means all manner of burying the bone or playing peekaboo with the dumbstick which aint of the baby-making variety. [Sorrel is again melting.] Sheesh, Sis! You want he should put up a diagram?"

L appears to flush, recoups: "Was *won'dring* how long it would take you guys t' turn this party into a pottymouthed orgy."

"Yesss!" cries sorrel, cowless now & hopped up onto the nearest bed.

While i, amazed, pose my britest grin, Lilith bursts out laffing, quickly covers an open mouth with 2fingertips, falls backward, giving an appearance of those fingers having pushed herself down against the couch-arm against her will.

{Mygod, is she drunk?} By this time i am, myself, not just flying at an unauthorized altitude but am dangerously distracted. I'm thinking, {Diana *and* apolla? [sic]. Could these twins play the part of both sun *and* moon...with aphrodite over here thrown in as temple supplicant?}

Lage: "Do you think it's some deep dark secret, my Sister, that you like sex as much as the rest of us?" Picture L at that moment as a girl in a clothing dept caught in the act of selecting a training bra by a passing boy whom she happens to like...alot. "So what thinkest thou, Sister?"

"You might not wanna know."

"But I do."

"Well then...[tentatively introspectively to those fingers now shoved aloft] All in all, i think sex *is* what it is *privately* to each of us. And all the public hype 'n' hoopla dont change a thing. We c'n either let it all hang out like any monkey 'r magpie or bury it in fantasy, 'n' pay the price for *that*. Either way, sex wont go away. It's always waiting."

Lage: Where?

"I guess, wherever instinct lives."

We all stared at the floor, thinking...or trying to.

An undulating figuration of the sisters spicily spliced arose in the purfield of my fast-forwarding future. {But what of aphrodite here?}

Lage broke the silence. "So you suggested b'fore, nathan, that the author of *alice in wonderland* was a perv? Did I catch that right?"

Only if your idea of a perv is a church elder who collects fotos of seven- 'n' eight-year-old girls posed to feature their undies.

Sorrel: He did that?

<Yes. A stunningly well-hid public secret, i'd have to say.> Had i possessed back then Lilith's familiarity with lewis carroll's oeuvre i would have said: He's one of those whom he himself described as "sin-begrimed and sorrow-laden men who wasteth childhood's happy day". Men he called "humbug[gerer]s of the social sphere whose little victims [lie] in swarms". And in harming children—as few know, yet all should be told—carroll was a priest-level expert. The lot of whom i think belong on island prison-farms where inmates like themselves, including gaggles of gay giants, have the freedom to take sexual advantage of them just as they did with their child victims.

"C'n I say something here?" interjects fairy gothmother [sic] sorrel who, suddenly ungiggly, adds: "This is important..."

"Scuse me, Jus gotta say. [lage] Any guy who wants sex with a kid is guaranteed t' have a small penis." [L: O?][†] Sorrel starts anew. "Wait, sar. Sorry. [L back at lage] *Where* do you get this stuff? I mean, wow. I'm sorry, sar, but i jus hafta ask sumthin here. [now to me] Why are you wasting time on this stuff when there's a waybetter way to explain it?"

Because i'm being asked?

"But you could end the whole issue in one sentence.

An' how's that?

"You wrote it. *You* cameup with it."

A-, sorry. Refresh me.

"With all the sexual deprivation of youth skulking around this room here t'nite, how could you miss it?"

Sorry. I'm still nowhere. What sentence is that?

"How about that gem which won bekky over? The one that's now the basis for her whole argument? Still no...? That one sentence which her whole organization is prettymuch founded on now...? Still nothing...? Okay then, the little masterpiece you wowed charlie chaplain with? The one he called the most elegant formula since einstein?!"



Okay-okay. I'm up t' speed. Sorry. It's the brew. No, the company. No, *both.* *Very* distracting. Butchur right. It is really all needs be said.

"It's the only thing you need *ever* say on this issue. As chaplain put it, 'All age-arguments fall speechless at its feet.'"

If anyone was breathing at this point, i forgot to notice.

No, *you* r'membered it. *You* do the honors... Please, really. It wont sound sexist coming from you.

"Fine. Here it is. *You* guys ready? [unanimous duh] *If a person is old enuf to suffer the pain of sexual deprivation, then he/she is old enuf to own the right to assuage that pain...*"

Blank looks all around. <I'm thinking it's the alchohol.>

"Okay, again. Here goes. Listen closely. *If a person is old enuf to suffer the pain of sexual deprivation* [long pause]...you guys with me? *If a person is suffering pain from sexual privation...then he/she is old enuf to own the right to assuage that pain...*"

Sorrel softly: "That's heavy." Then lage: "You are the chief shit, sir."

"Pain should be the moral impulse here, *not* some stupid law based on somebody's age. That's the sentence i was tryin t' tell you t' use yesterday to help robin. <O?> If you'd used it, she'duv understood rightoff...as *anyone* would. A moral society should *want* to end pain in the young or in the old, wherever and whenever it arises."

She'll get to it in beky's book. But... [What?] butcha know? That rule should never stand alone.

"O? Now *i'm* lost."

I mean, tho one should own the right to *assuage* sexual suffering it should *never*...welp...should never be assuaged at cost to another.

"Yes! Chaplin's quorum." Room again breathless.

Right. *Pleasure without harm? Always.*



"Right. Chaplain's 'honest man summit': 'When it comes to sexuality, it's the only law we need: *Pleasure without harm, always.*'"

Now this might have been the point on which we talked til dawn. But there's a funny thing about pithy aphorisms. They tend to make people go silent. And specially silent if the aphorism seems, by its very nature, to own universality. A moment later sorrel interjects: "Look, I've been trying to bring this up all nite but you guys never give it a rest."

"Speak, *please*, sar." [L] Lage: "Put it out there, gurl."

"This's not what I've been waiting t' say but it is important. What I wanna know is why so many kids like to have sex in graveyards. [all share one big 'Huh?'] This's no kidding. [lage: Graveyards?] Yes. It's a phenom that really deserves looking into." She hiccups her maddeningly infectious little chortle again, her sclera flashing between harlequin lashes—a form of micro-styling where 5-or-so eyelash hairs are gathered into little peaks or points, each peak equidistant from the next.

Dont you mean *certain* kids?

"I was gonna say that. [L] Young people unafraid to ask questions."

Unafraid to critique the lishment.

"Goth friends, no?"



Sorrel yods.

<Yes. 'Cause it's youth's job t' see the cracks in the cavewalls of society—a genetic mandate.> L: An' civilization's paranoia *is* such a danger...<A big crack in our civil cave-roof.> An' goths feel this flaw more than others. Sorrel: It really freaks some people out. 'Cause we shutout 'n' deny death, and all its trappings, when death is an essential stage of life... Lage: And what better way t' make peace with death than t' enjoy that *piece* on someone's grave? [Ungh. Ooph] L: Since procreation is the *very antithesis* of death, having sex there makes a stark example. {Did my Lover say that? What's going on here?}

Lage: Isn't that why it's called a headstone anyway? [laffs all'round] Plus, a good fuck in the graveyard lends new meaning to bury-the-bone."

Everyone: Oooooof, groannnnn.

Sar: But wait. What i've been trying t' say is this. It's a quote from anäis nin. Wait.... Okay, I've got it: *And the day came when the risk of blossoming became less painful than the risk of remaining in the bud.*

Again all look at each other.

Sar to L: You gave me her book, r'member...? So now it's my turn t' repeat. It's like he [yodding me] said about suffering with one's virginity: *And the day came when the risk of blossoming became less painful than the risk of remaining in the bud.* Ya see? Really poetic way of explaining nathan's "pain of sexual deprivation"...from a female point of view.

Lage: Wait. One more time. Shit, this is like shakespeare.

Sorrel repeats. Then silence.

Nice. Never heard that. *Damn* nice.

L, deeply reflective, and w no want to correct: Anäis[†] means, when the pain of sexual deprivation grows greater than the pain of virginity loss, it may be time. Nice find, sar. Dont know how i missed that gem. Wow.

Me: Waydago, sar.

"Now it's you who's queen shit, miss rose. You go, gurr!"

L: No doubt. Sweet. An' sweetly spoken. A real keepsake. Thanks.

([†]L's *Diary 1994*: Here's hoping, Sis, no one ever forces you to choke on the exceptions to your small-penis rule. [‡]Lilith's diary, on anäis nin: "She courts my imagination, my intellect, to the cusp of the Cosmic, leaves it to me to step over, or not. She is my civil gateway into humanity's basic Nature-aligned (not Nature-fearing) state of being.)

My dialog too condensed? I'm guessing my worst reader would prefer i wasted trees by plastering the page w the usual pop pablum?

Lucky looked up. "So where'd she go?"

"I dunno."

"Well, where did she say she was going?"

"Out."

"Just out?"

"Just out."

"Hmm. I wonder if...." Lorna moved to the window, thinking....

Lucky took a breath, sighed, for he now could see the outline of her body in the backlite of the window.

Lorna turned.

Lucky looked away.

Lorna did this.

Lucky did that.

Lorna.

Lucky.

Page almost full. Great! Let's see. Then Lorna walked back.... No. Then Lucky, exhaling, said.... Etcetera etcetera *ad barfeum*. Then come the critics hailing this shit as "smart lean literature". Bythebye, this pop formula would make this testament 10times its size. Tripe to the tenth. Can you not then see, my good reader, why i must compress compress compress, til done or exterminated, one. But then, i guess, exterminated means "done", doesn't it? 20mins to go. Must return to my cell or lose [library] privilege, shaky at best right now. Anywho....

Where were we? ...The reason flora 'n' fauna giveoff scents; the reason feathers 'n' flowers are colorful. Pleasure 'n' fun are only the *hook* of procreation—the nectar-scent which draws the bee, the butterfly, to the blossom, *not* its purpose. We might play with that hook, and we should, but when it comes to...well...the *real* purpose...It's why we get dead serious when it comes to, let's jus say, *doing it*. ["Yessss!" Sorrel again] ...*if* we are healthy, that is. But most of we civilizens have no way back to such sexual health. Shame-free health, that is...shame-free sexuality. Most of us cant even *imagine* it.

"I can. [lage] But let's say some over eighteen guy d'cides he wants to nog a girl only, ahem, sixteen 'r seventeen?"

Big prob. 'Cause that's almost *always* a woman. The language we abuse leads to laws we might choose. We shouldnt be talking age. I thought we agreed? Age-terms can be cruel.

"Okay, a young woman, then. My bad. But *still* he c'n go to prison—jus for giving her exactly what she wants!"

Which is cruel beyond imagining.

Sorrel: An' they could even be classmates!

(Jealous old legislators wet-dreaming the pleasures of the young.)

Track this: [lage] All the zine ads movies beauty contests amateur contests teevee shows, all that stuff implies that a dude has good taste if he likes what the media treats as *untouchable* nectar—the *crème de la crème*.

Sorrel index up & grinning: Hey, barely-legal- outsells clearly-legal [porn] by three-t'-one in the u-s! So what does *that* tell us?

It says our latent desires reveal themselves when at all possible.

L: That's commerce normalizing what popculture treats as perversion.

What popculture *fakes* as perversion—*while* marketing it to us, laws bedamned! In fact, it is popmedia which mostly *create* our mate preferences. For we humans are designed to mimic every aspect every nuance of the silverbacks 'n' alpha-females of our pop zines 'n' silverscreens. It's monkey see/monkey do. And the token *attractors* are planted everywhere! Calvin klein's bony teen is renoir's chubby teen is titian's fat teen. It's simple. Culture dictates the *appearance* of our sexual ideals, whatever types 'n' tastes, feathers 'n' paints, our popmedia *imprint* on us. That is, what popmedia puts-up as sexual omega, slyly 'r *not* so slyly, very soon that's exactly what we're seeking in a mate. And woe be to our hypocrisy when culture 'n' instinct finally agree.

Lage: But why would a legislator pass a law he knows he's going t' break first chance he gets?

L: Because, exactly like kings 'n' all royalty, lawmakers always see themselves as beyond the reach of the laws they make.



Lage: Yeah: When's the last time you saw a judge 'r priest perpedoff t' prison for statutory *anything*? Even when their vics are *actual* kids!

Sorrel: O I could tell you guys a story you wouldnt b'lieve. Sixteen is like an old woman t' some o' these creeps! Don't hold yer breath if ya think yer gonna see them b'hind bars.

Lage: But there was this *one* politician...ferget his name now...went t' jail a few years back...

"Yes! But *only* if he gets caught! [Lilith lurches forward, hand stopping traffic] An' that *only* happens if he's made political enemies. Otherwise those pervs cover each other's sorry asses! It's the oldest ol'boy's club in civilization! And it's soooo bad, when their crime is only *alleged*,

theyre still considered a good citizen—a governor a senator a priest a mayor a c-e-o a director. The bastard c'n still work on a railroad, bark fer a carousel, or be president if he wants t' be, so long as he wasnt *convicted* of what he did." Tho i didnt get the allusion at the time, all present could not miss the cargo of cynicism in Lilith's sing-songy interjection. Tho likely the soberist among us, i cannot forget these cameo glimpses of an almost out-of-character Lilith that nite.



Offer personal example. <Society expects me not to notice your Sister when she attends a lecture of mine—i mean, sexually notice her—or when she comes to work where i work. Or i'm expected to at least *pretend* i dont notice her.* This relentless hypocrisy is the castrating knife-edge of rules 'n' expectations based on age alone.> [*How NS met LM. Book 1 —Ed.]

"And youre expected not to notice her *sister* either, right? [segues droll Lee drolly] if 'n' when that sister comes sashaying around for a visit...Wait, i'm not done...Even tho that sister may have an *excruciatingly sexy* style 'n' a thrashing bod. *Still* you are not supposed t' notice her there in the jumpseat, right? <Er-, yes. Do not mark the twain.> An' even if the sisters have a beautiful friend of almost the same age...scuse me, maturity...you are not supposed t' notice her *either*, right? *even* if you notice that the sisters *themselves* acknowledge the friend's striking beauty 'n' allure."



Sar: And sincerely feel for the cruel depth of her sexual privation.

Lage, rocking, chafing, adds "Yes. And even if you *do* notice that friend's exposed thigh [gently pats it], you *definitely* know you are not supposed to have any desire to fffffuh- to fffffuh-, to...well let's jus say, to *touch* her." Lage, w a frankly fake questionmark face, looks at nathan as nathan picks a point midway & above sorrel & lage—*both* of whom are now hoppedup onto the nearest bed—makes as if looking at the slice of city nite wedged between the suggestively cleaved drapes.

Vom feuchten Spiegel [dreimal] wieder/Ergötzttem Auge zugebracht! —goethe

...Are *triple* displayed to my aching eyes! Clearing his throat, schock continues. And b'side all that, i'm expected to marry or to bed only my peers, and to love it...or *act* like i love it.

"And if you should ever marry...jus ferinstance [says lage yodding at L]...you would be expected to be true to that one and *only* that one, even after she gets all gray 'n' wrinkley."

Your Sister will never be all wray 'n' grinkley says i, looking at my Love.

"I wont?"

Not in *my* lifetime.

Sorrel on way to bathroom: "Ray 'n' grinkley?
Sounds like a news team."

All devil's advotes enjoy a tension-releasing laff.

"Older guys..." begins lage.

An' more than *that*. Scuse me. More than jus sticking to my peers for mating (pardon the gluey visual)... ["Ungh", lage] ...i will be expected to perform, in bed 'n' beyond, with that all-gray-n-wrinkley mate of mine, perform like i'm a cross b'tween romeo 'n' rambo.

"O, youre not? [lage looses trill of laffter] Sometimes our natty professor can be soooo mzinformed (get it?). As I was saying. [sorrel follows w' impossibly high-pitched chirp] Older guys must feel trapped when they see a girl they like...scuse me...a young *woman* they like."

"All this beating around the bush" says L, flungback on the couch-arm again, fingers to lips.

"Really, you *are* acting a bit oddly t'nite, Sister..."

"How come you dont just up 'n' try your little lap trick on nathan again? Only stick it this time...pardon my mouth." ["Stick it" is a gymnastics term meaning "flawless landing". (Lalage was an "elite" gymnast.) —Ed.] Earlier in the café, and back in ca too, on a trip back from the restroom lage had perched for a few moments on my lap, posing as a naughty waitress.



As if not hearing, Lage turns back to me. "I've never really stopped t' think about a guy's side o' things. Look but dont touch. Dont *dare* touch! That's gotta be a bitch sometimes."

L: Like bekky says, it's no wonder we all act so erotic'ly bizotic.

Me: Quickdraw hypocrisy everywhere.

Lage: We skirts who *actually* wouldnt mind *being* fffffuh- fffffuh- let's jus say, sniffed. [grins. Then, drawing on her still fresh uc/davis lit classes, adds] Shakespeare said, Let thy love be younger than thyself and the bent of thy affection will not stay long bent 'r somethin like that."

There is a quite long silence, then Lilith begins laffing—which, on hearing, gives sorrel, now in the bathroom, door ajar, a triplet of adorable-sounding hiccups. (More about this sexy voice later maybe.) L, chuckling, asks, "Will not stay long bent? Is that what you said...? [Yup.] When did you get so suddenly literate?"

"I'll have you know we jus finished *twelfth night*. So li'l laly here might su'prise you one day. Fer now, will the honest b-day boy commit to *any* vestige of age limits?"

You cannot *still* be wanting me t' hang a number on it!

Sorrel, echoic: Especially define your low-end number, please, keeping in mind that sexual privation is often more painful than a girl c'n bear.

Fifty thirtynine twennyeight seventeen, whatever works for you.

"Hike!", yells Lage. All chuckle.

L: *What* has gotten into you?

"Nothing lately, sad t' say...So go a-kissing while ye may, sweet 'n' sixteen ev'ry day! For youth's a stuff will not long stay...er- somesuch." Lilith just stares, eyes slitted, jaw ajar, lips "w"d.

<I'll tell ya this much: Ninedy percent of the young women i see i do *not* find attractive. In fact, more'n'more lately i find the looks of most young women becoming harsh and *unattractive*. [Lage: Present company excepted of course.] Of course.> Find self thinking {Wish i had a binatal [hic] brother or two i could offerup on balance here t'nite. Then again, maybe not.} Beyond that, with this trend of trying t' look

tuff 'n' cool 'n' rich, i waaay prefer the 'im-material girl'. Which makes you guys the *true* madonnas [a singer. —Ed.] of civil culture. Your thoughts are still dancing. Your minds are not yet slammedshut. Joy 'n' wisdom 'n' truth 'n' passion are still possible for you. What's in this pilsner anyway? [grin] Think i may be seeing double.

Lage: *That* works fer me.

"Hey, triple here" cries sorrel, still from the bath. "A friendly shower clatch would be fun. This shower's *huge*. <What's she *doin* in there?> Like I was saying, any number of girls start t' menstr'ate at ten 'n' eleven. Some never menstr'ate at all! What *then*? The law doesnt think so but, well, isnt a sixteen-year-old whose had her period for a whole five years at least as much a woman as some sixty-year-old who's never *had* a period? [silence] So, what then? Is Nature's lying to us?"

How is it she c'n be that tipsy an' not slur a single word?

L: Yeah. Like what are the hormone levels in this room here t'nite?

Lage: Yeah. Like whooosh! Thru the frikkin' roof wuldja b'lieve?

"Oooo, gothic," says that voice returning to the bed, head toweled & body cowl-draped again. {Has she *any* clothes under that thing?} How 'bout if society made us proud as sunlite when our bodies reached adulthood, not secretive 'n' ashamed?

L: Yeah. Like our fear of getting t' the point in this room here t'nite.

S: Hey. No fear from this quarter.

Fer you 'n' for hollywood 'n' most of humanity since the dawn of man.

There followed here the kind of quiet that follows a eulogy. Just then sorrel slips off bed, heads back to the bath. {Again?} "Yeah. I've seen more action in a graveyard." Flash of inner-lining scarlet as she passes. Her hair, untoweled now, i notice is a shiny jetblueblack when wet. {Wow. And quite long.}

"So wouldja do *her*? [winks lage] Huh? She's smokin 'n' law-breakin hot 'n' with a legal i-d t' prove it?"

S, hairdryer paused, head out the door: Wanna see it?

Returning to the bed: An' talk about cruel rules. My choice in sex partners? O, that's right! I *have* no choice! Jus some under-eighteen chronic masturbator. That's it. He's what society thinks I deserve for a firsttime lover? I'd rather hookup with a blind warthog, whatever that is.

Lage: Except the warthog's a better deal allaround. It wont popoff in two mins 'n' then brag shit about you alllover town.

L: Better even than that. The warthog wont leave you pregnant.

Triplicate fistpumps hiss "Yessssssssssss!"

And unless anthropology has been lying to us bigtime, it's *you* guys—your *physical* peers—who not only gave birth t' the human species, youre also the ones who carried, literally, humanity into the future for at least the last two million years! That's just the simple science of it.

Lage: With all that being so, like I asked, wouldja do 'er?

Sorrel, now plunked wide-eyed on the bed, draws cloak veillike across her face, revealing most of 1thigh, deepening her voice: "Sheherazade awaits calif with tales of passion 'n' adventure." {Such a voice, nnnn.} Drops veil, all chuckle. "Been sleeping with my fotog [double hiccup] teach since october for fair disclosure." {Even her hiccup is a turnon.}

L: Plus a sidelite experiment a little bird told me about?

"O them...I suppose. Then again, I could confess to years o' stuff I wish I *didn't* passup." Glancing to where i sat w the naughtiest eyes in the room...in the whole townl. And maybe the state too!

And it's his birthday! [Lilith] Huge blues anodyning!

Lage: Thighs clamped on coupled fists. "Or it's about t' be."

1on1 i am equal to their patter. But triple-teamed? (When sorrel crawled back onto the bed a flash of scarlet velvet assured her nakedness beneath.) As tho i've been drugged, conversation more& more has dropouts in linearity. Even as this is happening the talk around me seems gradually to be accreting a spherical continuity, a sphere whose orbit (w a saturnalian ring i glimpse only in tilts & flashes) i cannot reach & ride as *they* seem to be riding it. So, as my triaddled state intensifies, i go from speaking at will to feeling as if i must be *invited* to speak.

And thus, to a pulseline pounding, i drop into & out of the rite of passage seeming raging around me.

"Hey" says lage, now the one in the bath, {What?} door wide, clothes in a heap. "This shower *is* huge. Fit four peeps easy. C'mere. Look!"

Because i'd chosen a middle-tack thru this tempestuous terrain, i found myself midway in scotsman bell's theorem...and loving it!

L: This is the World thru a glass darkly, huh? <Yes.> An absinthe-filled glass. <Yes.> What i'm saying is, when the painter's palette (which is what all this age-crap amounts to: just one pigment in a rainbow of Reality)...when the palette becomes more interesting to the painter than the attractive body of his subject, the end result can not be art.

Preview Part 1, pages 179 - 184

.....

Primal event: In my tormented state before waking that morn, i'd had this most vivid incredibly detailed erotic dream of Lilith. And tho it had effectively evacuated the terrible volume of my desire, it served only to hone the esthetic edge of my need to *give* pleasure. From the moment i woke i knew the time for action was upon me. <I have to skip our sitting t'day. ["O?"] Yes. I've decided...It's time we reconsummate this relationship. ["O?"] Is there anything *un-clear* about what sitting for days in front of you...c'n do to a healthy 'n' virile...well, look. Enuf. It's reconsummate this affair at once or-, well, prepare to be raped by aching weeks of crushed adoration! *Meaning* [glance at watch] i will be at your place t'nite around eight, whole armies 'n' highwalls bedammed!>

19:55. With debussy's *prelude to the evening of a satyr* playing softly, i started up the driveway. Driving w paws & tail proved challenging. At 20:05 i am standing in front of the manor in white panther guise, dancing to the Earth-drumming of delores laChappell & fiona glengary, before a blaze of lite from the rover's litebar.

Since i'm a mediocre dancer perhaps 'dancing' is overstating—or does my lofty taste in dance do me an injustice? Prancing crouching pacing leaping turning growling grooming clawing creeping, i stalked the outer darkness of my mate's domicile. If not quite dance, i at least gave a good lekking-show. Were Lilith more emotionally secure—that is, had she not been stalked & abused in her youth—i would have surprised her in deb-danzi-fantasy style. For deb would have been eros-maddened by such a "stalking/rape", if only because of the tantalizing possibility she might in fact *not* know her attacker! [Debra Danzi, model, former intimate of NS. —Ed.]

I shutoff litebar, go to door. Locked. Fine. I have key. Middle of livingarea floor, facing front window on blue plaid horse-blanket {From our day at dillon beach, wow!}, in that yoga pose called "panther crouch" (head on outstretched forelegs, legs accordioned under, looking straight ahead), clad in pearl-sheened silver-white bodysuit (like some ecdysian salomé in a penultimate skin), face scrubbed to a wetsheen, hair wound in rivers of styx blackness. Dark silken lashes lift, reveal a fay twinkling, a spritish glimmer i'd seen but twice before in those libido-lashing lanterns of hers! Earth-drumming throbbing thru the closed windows, i reach down, draw her dreamily to her feet, lean in, kiss lightly that persimmon pucker, dance her about the room, her lethiferous loins, my lepto hips, well-met.



["Insert 'erotic scene'" is written in the margin here. However, the only similar heading this editor can locate is titled "Eroscena", a word-collage posted with the author's warning "still in draft". I insert it here believing it is what NS meant to abut the chapter above. —Ed.]

Eroscena: I peel, o slowly slowly, her marblized skin away into 1, 2, elastic balls; toss them aside, find her wearing charmeuse swallowtailed panty beneath, the gloss of its cranberry pink, like the gloss of her flesh, silvering wetly in the soft lite. {Is this lage's or ree's? Lilith would *never* buy such a panty...would she?}

"What?"

May i just sit, look at you...? If we can admire a sunset in silence, why not each other...? Well, yes. I did sniffter a brandy or two into my irish cream while getting ready.

Drink me in only with thine eyes
and i will imbibe thee with mine.

Lift hands, kiss selfconscious fingers.
<Nonsense. Your hands are lovely, as
are your kissable feet.> Trace the
venous splay in her (seeming frail)
wrists, follow 1paleblue wriggle up the
glabrous underside of her forearm.
Palmsdown now, smooth & resmooth
the lissofine down of her arms' tanner
topside, trace the deeperblue of her
radial artery up up up past her
leanlong bicep the distance to her
carotid. Touch the wispyfine hairs-peak
at her temple. <Would that i knew
your inguinalia so well.> Querity eyes,
wondering mimple of lips, my naughty
curiocale coaxing a dubity of dimpling
at their wicks. <Look over there.>
Slipoff her dancer's snood, unleash a
cataract of hairfall which confounds the
ear with its lack of watery splash. I am
4play to the power of 10. You may
accuse my entend.

I roll knead caress that skin of hers
like resilient cookie dough. Heel of
one foot in palm. <If i were to name
this [squeeze] foot i would call it
revillplace. And this one [squeeze
other] i would call loredos. And if i
should follow their converging paths
til i can go no further, will i not find,
in a warm humid culdesac, with its
own private aurora and field of stars,
a rare species of butterfly just
awaking from sleep.>

Intimate to the 10th (a vulval monolog)

(Lilith said that in h.s her peers called
sexEd an organ concert, and when penis-
specific, a pipeorgan concert.)

Semafora sexualis. For today's
class i would like, before we get into
our subject (Oops), to say, i
repeatedly come across shrinks who
claim, males have a deep-seated fear of
vaginas. Having myself made peace
with the Earthmother, and even with
my own catachthonic mother, i won-
der when i hear that just what sort of
vaginas must these men 'n' women
have encountered to feel thus? Now
that scares me. Therefor i need say
at the outset. If there are any present who
have this fear, or any fear of the naked
human body, today would be an
excellent day t' skip class.

...And now, continuing from last
week with the pelvic arch...if Ms
McGrae [who, out of all you
women, pulled the pink straw] will
kindly sit and face the class... No.
Like so, my dear. Thank you... Now
then, located at the top of the mons
[veneris] proper we see a small island
of hair, here. This is, typically, a far
broader, 'n' v-shaped, magic carpet.
But in Ms McGrae's case, as we c'n
plainly see, it is a discreet oval of soft
dark—ay, in science-speak, lissotri-
chous—pilation vertically crowning
the centerline of the pubic symphysis,
a pilation conspicuously absent
elsewhere in the area. Hmm.

(Ah, shameless paraphrase.) Her eyelids flickered shut as i folded outward & down one lovely leg (of my journey), sallied forth w 2licked fingers-from-nowhere onto the filigreed satin of her lepidopteral undies—when suddenly that filigree (where the thorax should be) separates, gradually revealing to my descending mouth the perfect arcs outlining her mons. (i)

(Dream or fact: I believe all my darling's innards were so perfect that an international congress of coroners would find the linings of her lungs, the limbus of her liver, lovely; the shades of her spleen, the shapes of her sphincters, prim, smart & seductive...But dont dare lay a hand on her, you ghouls! And if i may say, my presentation here is more than a mere meeting-place for metaphors.)

N&Schock, McLith 'n' tobedwego:
So the reader should know into what sweet ethers i am nosediving, smoking & aflame in my tailspin tonite—into the drenched & shining landscape of her limber lissome loins, down where one typically gets 2smiles for the kissing of 1—my scrupulous tung scoured her sonsy soma like some mesmerizing riddle, toes to temples, from one bonny end of her to the other, toward the midway magnet of the mons veneris:

That is to say—for those who have not crackedopen their books—hairless. Here on the mons itself we encounter an unusual fullness & padding. The function of this fatty pad, and its flattening with age, needs more depthly discussion...If you could, just a little wider, please. There. Thank you. I know this is not easy for you. But you have been a true trooper, i want you to know ...so padded in fact is our present example [of the mons] that, even with legs apart [knees fairly indicating opposite walls of the exam room]—which of course happens in any gynecologist's chair, by the way, which you women in the class should by now know only too well... [weak smile]

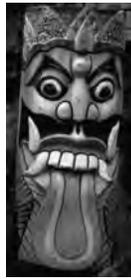
There are some persons so intensely beautiful that there is, literally, nothing they can do—no curse they can utter, no pose they can assume—which suggests pornography. What looks obscene when most of us do it, miraculously turns into art when they do it. Unfair? Of course. But there it is. —gunner kathe

.....still, even thus splayed—in this frankly quite lovely example—only the upper train of the clitoral veil is visible. However, if the lite is brite enuf [as at noon, say, in a sunny grotto], the hint of an inverted v (called in your notes from last week's class the clitoral cowl or -hood) can be seen. (No need to wince, my dear. I shant touch it.) Vulgar persons call it the man in the boat, the monk in the gondola, soforth. (Oops, sorry. My bad.)

sudden chincushion for linguatorsion-ist; adoring her inguinal grin, briefly briskly brushing *w* lambent lips & blazing breath the rouge & pink idol of my pagan pilgrimage, doing tung twizzles on the ambrosial spigot & groove, kitzler, pinkish thingum (*klytoucher! klytorturer!*), teetering on the cusp of those conglutinate kisses, then capturing *en passant* a pawn of early passion; her *succhiello* (glabrous gimlet) thingamabub, *peu de chose*, pink trinket (or trifle), pursy plaything, pert pinky *w* a hood, canthus *w* a cowl, pink widget, resilient & rosy gibblet (taste of spring waters splashing on grotto walls), edible rouge rose, pink asterisk wink pulsing over the chink, cleave dilate divulge unclutch unclench unclasp unwimple unhug unsqueeze unpucker ungather unfledge unsnuggle unnuzzle the most private infolds of her sighbysigh, crybycry, as i tung-plunder asunder the wonder of her downunder; pry apart the pretty petalation of my patient/victim *w* to & frolicking mouth & tung, lickerishly laving her licit-no-longer-libelous labia, let us sing the sonata of her involucrata; plunder the wonder of her sububicunda, her vulvaceousness; carefully entering probing the propylæum, 2fingering the ridges of titillæ at the roof of

As for the rest of the way down here, only the shadow of a straight smooth cleft can be seen in today's example; even with thighs spread thus. This is *most* unusual. Some opening of the vaginal lips normally occurs with the legs thus positioned... however a smooth tiny valley of softest shadow down thru here...this fullness of Miss McGrae is redolent of the privacy inherent in the baby-fat folds of an immature female, actually. Most unusual...unusual in that our lovely 'n' shy model is a fully developed adult...we see that, even in a state of slite arousal—i mean, how could anyone *not*, given all this manipulation...sorry...and intensely intimate focus. Even still, only the *outer* labia can *barely* be seen; this fleshy brace here, the distal halves of the labia majora, more taut than ever now, straight 'n' pouty (you should forgive the pulpfiction terminology) are reddening as they perfuse with blood. Note also, up here, the simultaneous enlargement in the clitoris—actually being similar to the engorgement of the penis in males. Even still, under some arousal now, the fullness of the mons is not entirely giving up the little nob of flesh, right here...Help me, Miss McGrae, *please*. There. Thank you... Can everyone see the engorgement in question here—tho only incipient it may be? the pink empurpling, right *here*...sorry, one more time...just like our male volunteer last week...not quite hidable under the cowl of the clitoris any longer.

her ardor, its upper anterior palate, if you will, situated on the underside of the panic button, behind the inner doors of the throne room: aka the g-pad pressed intriguingly into the ceiling of the royal chamber; totally delabatory laving of lips & tung, 1petit malish *clittortiller* after another, i turn her page on page, petal on petal, until i've tapped all the sweet tangy sasaparilla, unguent vanilla, apple-sweet apple-fresh fluids of her, that saliva-mimicking p-h taste of her brookwater freshness, as i vent my gynophagustic gusto; my mad



mute ecstasy underscoring the sweet summer thunder of her breath above me, mouth open to the Cosmos. <Read my lips, i've always been gay for girls, a guy on demand only.> "Please please pulllll-eeease..." in her most suspirous whisper, whose worst obscenity bent to whistful threnody: "Please...pleeeese... phhhhhhucme. I luv the way you phhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhucme!" Thus, finally, disclosing her deeply reposing erosy erosy-ISH-ness. With really, the whole point being, to delay the male's orgasm (and resulting inutile collapse) to a point longpast the female's

And finally, lifting enuf (thanks to all this fussing for good presentation, sorry) lifting enuf to reveal this tiny asterisk of flesh here, which of course is the urethral port, located however in the penis in the male. Thus women have the advantage of being able to urinate even when aroused. But mostofall, the clitoris is the only prime organ of sexual pleasure in we humans which has nothing whatever to do with reproduction of the species. This is seen by the finer anthropologists as an evolutionary leap forward. And i must say, i agree. Again however there would be farmore exposure in this area in the average example...as you can plainly see in figures sixtyeight and sixty-nine in your workbooks.

Some authorities view this infolding of flesh we are seeing, both up here in the mons 'n' down here in the labia—this quite rare extra plush of padded privacy Ms McGrae possesses—tho common in juvenals, in adults is called neoteny; also can be a sign of extraordinary virginity or cohabital abstinence. Quite remarkable, actually. Specially i want you women to see this. [to Ms McGrae] It's as if Nature is rewarding your shyness with a unique physiological privacy. Please dont blush. This is not a bad thing. Many is the pastmaster (painters sculptors fotogs alike) who would have given a rib or two just to find a model possessing your symmetrical subtleties; that is, what usta be called privates in the most literal sense.

"starter orgasm" to her own ultimate (and likely distant) collapse. In plainer prose: A good monogamist needs to become the dry-run equivalent of 3wet-release partners. Even so, jung is still right when he says: "The prerequisite for a good marriage, it seems to me, is the license to share."

In our time together Lilith less & less tried to mask a sound of passion i've never heard from other than asian females: a tiny focused childlike squeal isolated in the nasal dome (uppermost palate); a sound signaling intensification of feeling not so much by volume increases as by metranomic ones, and whose most maddening example i found in

What the misogynist genius joyce called "The cry of a young girl's love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her, that cry that has rung through the ages."

veronika.* Like tuning a satellite dish, the finely attuned lover found himself ever striving to transform those individual beeps (squeals of passion) not just into a blur of high-pitched bleats but into 1final unbroken tonal arc of bliss! And since we are risking such intimate terrain anyway, may i note how nika managed to overcome a couple hundred (asian) generations of women pretending to suffer their man's need for sex; that ancient tradition of quiet nasal wailing.....

[A sadsack saint's dream-sculpture! is what i called it in my powerful dream that morn before i wokeup.] We might better do this again with a more typical example t'morrow. I mean, so our textbook examples have practical meaning for the class as a whole... No, please. Hold there for a minute longer, Lilith, -er, i mean miss mcgrae. Just one more thing, an' this will be a wrap, i promise.

Again, the labia majora, here, as you can see (as they are beginning now to peel apart), have none of the curving 'n' crenolation so common in mature females, and of course as shown in both your texts. In this unusual case, it is as if the puffy erectness of the mons, here (pardon my latex index) is acting as a firming and uplifting superstructure, from which fullness 'n' straightness the labia can neither emerge or diverge. That is to say (as my instructor usta say to lighten the atmosphere), "I am referring to those asymmetrical crinkles beneath where she tinkles"...well, they are *totally* absent in Ms McGrae's exinkle...i mean, example...even when we take 'n' fold them open 'n' aside like this...It's alright. I *know* my probe feels cold...Not a crinkle has she, as you c'n see—not for their *entire* length!—doubly mounded 'n' subtly rounded...Gosh, that rhymes... and straight as any arched thing c'n be! Hmm. So full are these lips in fact, i see we must actually pry apart...Help me here, Miss [grunt] McGrae.... Pardon.... Oooph, mmm....

Preview Part 1, pages 256 – 261

.....would hate being enslaved." Lage went on to repeat her "Why I dont vote" mantra: "I find politics repulsive". L went straight to: The more repulsive it seems, the closer we are to enslavement.

False lead: Early sept. Days slipped by. We'd been disagreeing over my idea of a temporary separation. L's argument for staying was, she felt safer at ggNs "than anywhere else on Earth". She gave no reason except to say, "I jus know i am, that's all." The thought of leaving shook her to her roots. I know that only now. And only now do i fully understand why. The facts in hand back then gave only arbitrary answers. Safe to go, safe to stay? I could argue either way. "Where would we live, l-a?" And if there was more i *should* have known, no one was divulging it. Retrovision is certain: Reticence was L's way of not exposing me, or her sister, to any more pain or worry than she felt she'd already caused.

As to domesticated libido: I knew when i woke that morn it was a predator friday; that point when instinct pushes up thru millennia of religious & state repression like a mushroom lifting, then splitting, a slab of concrete. Unspoken, our inner & smoldering Selfs had been circling eachother all week. So it was that mr chance (i think, liking to watch) stepped in. Beside, oral & dexter were arriving next day and lage needed to be escorted home from school. It was sure to be a crazy weekend. It was now or never. Before i begin however, i should, explain. . . .

From the time it was built i felt the chalet was a very private place to live & work—so private, the only window coverings were at groundlevel and in place merely for guest-from-guest privacy. The only other covering was on the 2nd level window by the fireplace, and this only because the ramp to the front entrance reached that far. To repeat. Only roof & eyrie of the chalet could be seen from the front road. And these windows, like the glass house i lived in, were a concession to this claustrophobe, and to the gorgeous views it gave onto. After Lilith moved from manor to chalet—to make room for lage oral & dex—the drapes in the daylite basement were always drawn after dark. I teased her about this. <Tho i *am* relieved to know youre not down there twitterpating all the forest Wildlife outside your windows.> With the new security in place, i felt we were morethanever safe from curious eyes—human eyes, anyway. Still, when intimate, i would switchedon the blind of the outside floods.

The gazelle emerged from the falls (loft shower) clad only in tufty cimmaron towels—1around chest & hips, held w/ fist; other wrapped turbanlike around her hair to the waist. The panther (minus costume) leapt from the shadows. Slungover 1shoulder i carried the sleek Creature, coat shining, down from the loft. Halfway there the lower towel slipped off, slithered over the railing, fell like a waterlogged fowl to the floor below. All the way to the contourcouch she protested, thumping her predator's rippling back like a drum w/ her fists, laffing yet admonishing sternly by turns, threatening all she would do the moment she got free. The remaining towel opened & slippedaway when her head hit the plush of the couch. More amazed than dazed, she just lay there, staring up. I flipped her, stood her on edge so to say. 4play would have to wait for less-feverish phase2, as by then i was delaying the 2nd coming.

We need to note: Except from the obs tower, using powerful binoculars, unless one had a huge telescope setup some 12k across the valley on the side of gunter mtn; unless he had a silent hovercraft w/ a good scope; or unless one stood on the 2nd level deck (accessible only from inside), one could not see into the livingarea. Only if he stood in a small copse of dwarf cedars—using a scope at a point on the ridge just beyond where the ground rose, became the plateau of the garden—could one see to floorlevel; and all this providing one had the means to scale the perimeter fence...failing these, our privacy was impenetrable. Even knowing this, in the midst of my impassioned assault, Lee—head inverted, looking backward thru the legs of the creature big as myth convulsing behind her—suddenly gripped my left wrist and, using it as anchor, snaked herself sideways as only a dancer or yogi can. I saw that her wide eyes were full of the blackness beyond the glass.

"Nathan!"

I paused, closed my eyes, pushed "instinct reset", attempted to hold onto the animal single-mindedness i fartoo seldom allow.

"Nathan!"

What's wrong? [patience on holiday]

"Someone's out there!"

Her eyes not her words stopped me. <That's prepos'trous!>

"Dont stop! [she whispered] Dont let on!"

Was someone on the deck behind me? Had the baptist cops broke in?

"Dont look. Dont stop. [she hispered] Pretend you dont know."

That was easy. I didnt. I guessed her seeing things. (In retro: I saw Lilith panic only twice. Both times it was life & death. While not quite panic, emergent-seeing was obvious. Beside, faith in her intuitive faculties had, by then, put down a taproot in me. Against my will (that is, against my ache to finish our jungle tangle), i did as told. Heaving back my head, i managed a fake finale to our adroitus interruptus, all the while asking what she saw and where she saw it. Keeping my naked butt to the gable windows, i bent, picked up the towel, wiped & handed it to this cat's meow, headed toward bathroom. Lilith, meanwhile, lay back (a leg up for decency), shook & stroked her hair as tho nothing were amiss.

Once behind plants & trellis (which lined the stairwell), i ducked into the basement, went to a closet, removed from between a startled mop & broom a rifle, and, her other towel as loincloth, slipped out into the deck-covered carport. Passing our vehicles, i emerged beneath a corner of the bluffside deck. Nothing drew my attention save for a lone moth swirling & banging in the halo of a floodlite above my right temple. A perimeter of mist (false boundary erected by floodlites) hid the darkness beyond. A quartermoon, which hung in the trees to the e, cast a feeble but long shadow of treetops across the bluffside decking & gardens; there the shadows leapt into darkness above the lites in the valley.

Creeping to the sw corner of the chalet, 2amber eyes shown in the darkness. Before the impulse to shoot crossed consciousness i knew the familiar masked bandit sitting on hindlegs beside the mulchpile, a quartermoon of melonrind cradled in his paws. It sat watching & chewing as i planned my route up the slope. But as i left the apron, stepped onto the path, not dropping the rind, the 'coon bounded its fat self off a ways, turned to watch. The rattling antiphonals of crickets along the bluff were tearing the nite in half as if along a dottedline. First 1chorus then the other rasped its codex left to right & back again. 1choir, to the n, was wingscraping at full voice, while the chancel queue, working the face of the bluff, was less loud. It was the usual s chorus which was curiously silent.

The distance to the top of the rise was about 100m. It was another 50 across this table of tilled soil to the cedar copse. The plateau of the vegetable garden slopes *se*, away from the house, in such a way that if one were standing in the cedar copse—tho he could easily see the Beauty reclining in the livingarea—he could *not* see the lower part of the house; that is, he could not see the carport, the mulchpile, or even a tall man moving there. He would however see an approaching racoon if it had sufficiently gained the rise before stopping, turning & sitting—the better to watch the man scuttling up the slope.

I decided it was a poor idea to approach the plateau—that spot Lilith had stared at—*w* floodlites behind me! Dumb, i mumbled, turned & broke for the bluff instead. As the slope declined toward intersection *w* the bluffline, i crouched ever lower, loping along til i reached the intersect of soil & ridgeline rock, only then turning *se* along the ridge. Cold mist, threading up from the rivervalley, soaked my face. How stupid, i thought, slowing...if all this is for nothing. {The glintings she saw were probably only coon eyes emerging from the copse.} Yet intuitively i found myself regretting already my earlier discounting, just before her shower, of her “I smell cigaret smoke? [i smelled nothing] Maybe not.”

I was soon moving over the slabs of ridge rock toward where the s floodlamps spread their lite. Some 20m ahead, from the copse, i heard a sound, like...well, like the grunt of a Wild pig. Like creakings in a boat, 2large trees, chafing each other, can also make such a sound. Yet the dwarf cedars seemed not nearly large enuf for that sound. I dropped to the ground as out of the shadows came a gurgling sound, like the exhale of a drowning man, for some uncanny reason, trying to laff. The sound switched to a machinegun-like *chukka,chukka,chukka*, so close i almost fired. With a malice-edged staccato a male voice rasped out of the darkness, its serrated metallics brilliantly imitating the sound of an automatic rifle. His *chukka,chukka* gouging out a clot of entrail from my wartime recall, i fired into the copse, a bit high to hit man or beast. Soft sound of pine leaves falling, settling; a backdrop of stunned quiet now somehow “blaring” thru the distant line of silenced crickets behind me.

In the recesses of my brain an ugly face from the past began to form. Just the sound of that gunfire...no, more likely, its acrid scent, flashed a phrase across consciousness, a phrase i didnt even know i remembered. Vietnamese for "little red cap": *Cô bé quàng khăn đỏ*. [She was Little Red Ridinghood —Ed.]

"If ah was a gook youd be *daid*, gyrene" a voice gurgled. Then, laffing, it spit a few more rounds of *chukka, chukka* malice my way.

{What's wrong with me? I dont run, but then neither do i shoot to kill. Shitdamn! ...Old gyrene curse.} From the house Lilith screamed, "Nathan!" Then again, more frantically, "Naaa-than!".

"One mo time a bit lowah, gyrene, 'n' mebbe yall 'll hit sumpin." The voice was familiar but the face it went *w* refused to emerge, refused to replace the heinous grin of the lieutenant who still prowls the jungled periphery of my subconscious.

And the things you can't remember tell the things you can't forget....

In the faint lite there was a flash of chrome; then a twig snapped. It seemed only a matter of a moment before the real *chukka-chukking* would occur—not a gravelly voice from the shadows imitating an m16 but the real thing. For i was experiencing the wellknown "premonition of being shot"; the sense of searing pain which wounded soldiers report getting nanoseconds before the soft lead, or shrapnel, rips into them.

Crunch of pine-needle blanket, snap of another twig, and, jerkily, out of the shadows, rocking sidetoside from the effort, a skeletonlike wraith wheeled into view. It had the broken eyes & teeth of a failed deathwish. "Go ahaid. Shoot me. Be mah guest. Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh." His laff too was rapid-fire.

"Nathan! God! Please answer me!"

"Ayunsah yalls li'l sweety now. Tell uh yall's alraaaght."

Hating to follow his lead i yell, It's okay! Back in a couple minutes!

The large pivot-mounted floodlamp on the sw corner of the deck ignites, sweeps the area once *w* its wide brilliant beam, finds what looks to be human shapes in the fog, stops. "Nathan! You okay?".....

Preview Part 2, pages 377 - 388

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The next preview takes up when Lilith and Nathan are in the second week of a "return to our roots...breakaway so-called vacation" which Lilith in her travellog calls "Our Odyssey to Catharsis: Our now-or-never attempt to hunt down and purge the relationship-paralyzing traumas of my youth".

May '95 (trial in toronto): Infesting this flux in her spirits which, hindsight only today can see, was the fate, right across the border, of tammy, leslie & kristen...the ghastly details of which our hotel room tv went orgasmic enumerating every hour, and alongside which coverage the antics of u.s senator packwood—& the gum-chewing hair-tossing trip journal of one christine rosado (which u.s popmedia was touting as tangential titillation to its usual fame-sucking lip-flap)—did not help matters. In fact i fail to see—now, today, knowing all of what i am soon to discover—how my Lover could have escaped taking on a terrible empathy for those 3young women, so long as we remained anywhere near eastern canada. Network media couldnt seem to get enuf of repeating, "All their young victims were girl-next-door types". After a few rounds of this L grabbed the remote and, muting the sound w an exasperation i'd never seen, said to the world generally, "If everyone loves the girl next door so fucking much how come she's usually the one who gets kidnaped raped 'n' murdered?"

<Wow. Really.> Consciousness jumped erect: *Yes, how come!*

"Anyone baffled by how that pair could go around kidnapping raping torturing 'n' murdering girls, on a monthly basis, hasnt been paying attention; has not the foggiest notion how numbed to brutality we civilizens are by the time we're adults. What baffles me is *not* the grisly behavior of that pair—afterall, as you once wrote, *the brutality of civilizing predisposes us to understand ALL reactions to it*—what baffles me is that most of us can not, for the life of us, see how robotically

we throwoff violence. It just...just...*escapes* us. Nobody sees the mass hullucination; nobody sees Cruelty's totalitarian trance. Is it invisible b'cause *all of us* suffer the *same* psychic pain? It's like...well, we treat it like air is to breathing. A fact of life. [some hitch in her voice chokedback a sob.] If this is so, then we are doomed."

When visiting the lakota in minnesota later that year, Lilith would carry this pitiful rant still further. "No wonder primitive peoples have always been scared of us. I believe they c'n see what we are absolutely blind to: the depths of frite 'n' pain which civilizing has buried in us; but worse, has made us capable of foisting on others, sometimes without even knowing it. I feel these sweet people pity us...in the way one pities a wounded 'n' angry elephant...from a safe distance."

So upset was she i was sure any spoken response would fail. Having no better plan, spotting her hairbrush, i went for a slow soft-tackle onto the bed. "*What* are you doing? Nathan, *w-what... !?*" [takeup brushing her hair] Have you lost it?" <Time to hush now. My turn to talk.> Brush,brush-brush, long smooth easy flowing strokes; down,down,down that amazing sweet-scented forest of shining hair.

"Nathan... !? So say it...What...?"

I wanted t' say...umm...it's been ages since mm-, i brushed your hair.

Brushbrushbrushdowndowndown. I wished i could see her expression.

On the way to ithaca...: Deciding to forego the hotel scene, we drove e til evening; stayed at a tiny campground in a place called corfu. Had we pushed on the three or so hours to cornell that day, taken a room instead of a tent for our honeyless-moon, things might have turned out differently. But then, differently would not necessarily have triggered what the therapist was after?

Camping was primitive w pay by honor system. Beside getting set up well before dark, i cant remember 1thing that went right that nite, from trying to pay for the campsite to trying to find a reasonably elevated one, for the park was located in a narrow cove. "If it rains hard we're gonna drown." She spotted washout signs. But there was not a cloud in sight, and the trip so far had been splendid wx.

Even before dark the place proved literally overrun w raccoons. <We've killedoff all their predators.> "Except for our vehicles 'n' our poisons." Thru the nite they banged around tent & campsite tho every crumb of our food was titeshut out in the runner. By sound alone, one would have thought that incredible racket could only be 2-3 small bears on a rampage? "It's like a pack o' monkeys loose in a pots 'n' pans fact'ry out there". And it was. So persistent were they, i expected to find in the morn, paint clawedoff the runner and the sides of the tent in shreds. Around 2a, just when it seemed they were giving up (and our sense of humor was gone), the wind came up and it started to pour like the sky was ringingout its soggiest clouds in a fury. Once assured the tent wouldnt rent in the torrents, i drifted off (finally) to sleep. No sooner had i shut down than Lilith, alarm in her voice, wakened me. "Nate...nathan! What's that noise?"

No big deal. Just a frikking tornado...an' i cant find my fukkin keys... Aaargh, got 'em! i said as the fabled freighttrain sound fell full-upon us. We ran-slopped thru a body-slam of wind & mud, jumped in the runner. "You see? Nature maybe *is* man's worst enemy!" she said, plunking down into her seat and slamming the door. In profile, thru clots of dripping hair, the whites of her eyes flashed stunningly. "Never thought that as a kid. But as an adult i c'n see how a person might. [she stared out toward somewhere far beyond the water-distorted windshield] A person weary of fighting just ta stay alive, or ta keep a loved one alive against insurmountable odds, could get pissedoff at Nature beyond caring, beyond good sense." In the intensity of her features i glimpsed the subtle power of femaleness. Using the 4th & 5th fingers of her left hand, she swept the dripping dark locks away from her cheek. "Imagine, if we feel like this now, imagine your desert denizen, og, rising up one day in the midst of whole generations of famine, cursing the gods with all his being in front of everyone...whose gods wayback then, of course, were the great goddess of the Universe and her many Nature-spirits. Yet no litening strikes him down. {Never seen her so flippantly matter-of-fact.} And imagine that even tho he curses her til they run him off, *the goddess fails to take revenge*. So, what might an angry sick depressed starving paranoid 'n' even dying people, witnessing this unpunished heresy, conclude?"

Too late to run for it, or even to see *where* to run, there we sat, rocking like a cube of cork in a northsea squall. Lilith, i must pointout, was strangely calmer than i. It was like the pandemonium, at its height, actually gave her peace. "Nature is boss. The *Big Boss*. And she will do *what* she will *when* she will... despite our wishes *and* our gods." In june L will write in *the captain*: "Nature c'n do *what* she wants *when* she wants—from a sunshower in the dead of winter to bumping the Earth into the Sun. Ponder *that*, mister bloody blagree!"

Only now do i remember that, for Lilith, all degrees of wind—from the puff of breeze which reveals the tree in which the air spirit has been resting, to this cyclone just passing thru—are that evanescent spirit ancient sumerians called *lil*. Lil, the *original* lilith.

When the roar diedaway and we switchedon the litebar for a looksee, thru hand-swipes in the fogged windows we saw a wind-trail on the other side of the campground where *everything* was layed flat, as if readied for powerline installation! A couple nearby trees were down, *w* their foliage debris everywhere incl'g all over the runner; one thump of which (felt at the height of the storm) turnedout to be an arm-sized limb whose crepitating crack began the shattering of our *entire* windshield! The rain was still coming down in monsoon mode and our tent was nowhere to be seen. Said she: "Died of tornado in corfu". As to what *other thing* she meant by that, back then i had no clue.

To shorten this hardly pointless trial. Come daylite (still raining), we located the tent dashed on some rocks to the other side of a brook (by then a small river), waded across, folded it up *w* its contents, stashed it between the kayaks on the roof. Muddied & unbathed, we changed into dry clothes & departed... thankful to be alive of course but unslept & probably in shock. Retrieval of our tent showed huge oaktrees had been lifted out whole by their rootbowls, thrown 20-25meters! It was evident a lethal force had let us live.

At the entrance <O fukking great!> a large downed tree blocked our exit. A call to the park's emergency# got a recording. A 911 call seeming selfish following a tornado, we dug out the 2person saw i bring for such adventuring. In a sometimes icy downpour, and a mere 2hrs later, having givenup on *ever* being warm or dry again, i put the runner in 4wheel & towed the lighter part of the saw-halved tree aside.

Trial 3: Not 10mins later we found ourselves in a line of cars waiting to get onto the thruway (downed powerlines). Some 40-50mins after that, 2unslept & mud-caked bums in a stolen vehicle, we headed eastward, trying to watch (thru rain and the rapidly fragmenting maze of cracks in the windshield)...to watch for a truckstop w showers.

"There's one outside syracuse..." but our odyssey wasn't going that far. Both of us grumpily philosophic, she asserted how "This reminds me of a camping trip plath took with hughes. It too was a disaster". I wanted to say i'd heard quite enuf about ghoulish ms plath but bit my tongue. She used the silence to fire up "the best" of her new cd's. When plath read a line about human eyes staring out from a jar of formaldehyde i said, Do we really need such negativity just now? I felt her stare as her hand reached into view, cut off plath mid verse. <We are filthy soggy caked with mud tired hungry blinded, way behind schedule and maybe even lost for all we know. I just don't think we need t' be dissecting corpses just now. Maybe after breakfast...if we ever find any.> After a minute or so of silence i add <Sorry if my civility is showing.> Just then, off the thruway and heading into a town to buy a new wiperblade (driverside!), an oncoming car, right turn signal blinkingblinkingblinking, made a *left* turn in front of us. Visibly impaired & bleary-eyed beside—even having slowed, anticipating some fool might pull some stunt—still we wound up sliding sideways down the road to keep from hitting him.

By then i'd had it, yelled <What route into what madhouse was that asshole signaling...? [silence] What, no opinion?>

"No." Whispered smilelessly w a never-seen-before sidelong squint.

*From women's eyes...doth spring...Promethean fire....
Do we not likewise see our learning there?*

That's it? Jus one-word answers from now on?

More wet road w wipers whacking away. Shyly: "Why carry two scythes when one will cut the mustard?"

Oooph. The quiet which followed was thick as the fogging inside our vehicle. After nearly half an hour of silence, when i looked over again, she was sitting erect, fists hard-pressed into the wet denim of her thighs, and, sure enuf, w that scary distant stare i knew by then to fear—sure sign my Love was slowly, implacably, turning to stone.

Five or so mins later, on a hunch (exhausted, strungout & spontaneously careless) i shot for the road shoulder. Thru a drizzle of traffic-blown mist i went to her door, opened it, reached in, took her shoulders, <Lee... Lee... Lilith, listen t' me!>

Still staring, thru me, past me, she sat, fists *and* teeth clenched. <Lee!> I shook her. Her lips began to lille. [Obsolete, means 'to quiver' —Ed.] Slowly, chin jutted & oddly dimpled, face strangely slack & pale, she blubbered back toward awareness. <I'm sorry, but you cant switch off. Not now.> I held her hands, staring into her face, looking for assurance she was hearing me. In that o-so-delicate moment i could almost feel the magellanic cloud slide a thousand-k closer to the milkyway. In a flash of recognition i saw what needed doing. I needed to get her to at least straddle the partition between the subconscious and the rational, just long enuf for a connection to spark across that fast-widening gap. Then, at the perfect moment, yank that connection out of shadow into lite for her to identify. Then, like suddenly spotting in the water *w* you some scary dark serpent youve met before yet do not know, allow that identity to slip back into the oceanic deeps which are its native habitat—except that she would then, *finally*, own a conscious snapshot of the Scary Gryllos which haunted her days, scoured her nites—thus be able to i.d it *for sure* from that time forward...and *w*out which confrontation no catharsis could be effected, no freedom won.

I dabbed her mouth, gave her to hold in one tense fist my handsker. <You cant have an epilapse, Lilith McGrae. Not *this* time. Youre not allowed. We have a job t' do.> I shook her, was probably growling a bit. Because, from out of the gut of what i had thusfar convinced her was a love as big as the World, appeared this startlingly new me, bold & arrogant as zeus yet impelled only by compassion. <If you slip away on me now, these priceless trials we've endured for two days will have been a total waste of time.>

"Sssso-, this is some sort of-...sort of- experiment?", her voice weak, quavering & low-pitched.

No. This is us struggling t'gether t' stay together.

With crinkly eyewicks, dimpley chin, she seemed to accept this.

<Now i need you to listen carefully. Look in my eyes. No. In. My. Eyes. Here. [i point] Now, then. *We have got to...do you hear me?* GOT TO...*conquer this ugly stepfather abuse-business t'day.* Not later. Not t'morrow. T'day. TO-DAY. Do-you-un-der-stand? *We're doing* this. It's GOING to happen.> Once i felt assured, and once i was certain she would "hang in there", i closed her door, got us on our way.

I was about to break her new silence when: "Did i ever say, simone de bouvoir had what i've got?"

No. What's that? What youve got, i mean.

"I dunno. Epilapsing? Seisure? *Whatever...* She was a fine person, so it cant be *all* bad." She followedup her words w a grim little grimace—a perverse mask shaped as if by glowing lava from within.

And you too are a fine person. Dont ever *ever* doubt that. The *finest!*

Denying the rutting ritual: Never finding that truckstop, feeling too gross to stop to eat, we pushed on for ithaca. I think, more than just losing a nite's sleep, it was the psychic impact of a tornado, the removal of that huge tree, of having then to drive blind while Lilith went into meltdown over the murder of those girls, which exhausted me! After that she sat as if mesmerized. The fixation in her wide gaze made me think: "Hare in the jaws of a fox." Mind had raced ahead w the wind, in dread of one or both of us being killed or maimed, a thing which seemed, for several extraordinary mins, *very* likely, given the way the vehicle was pitching rolling & (get this) lifting off its springs! *This* sailor was several times almost certain our little ship would be dashed to splinters on siren shoals.

"Remember what you said about bad luck back in frisco? <Ya-, yes.> Well, that's me too."

<But bad luck is not what i suffer from. My belief in statistical inevitability, 'n' your belief in a destiny which affects one negatively, are two entirely different things.> With the rain only intermittent now, insane concentration was able to relax, but not too much.

"Actually it started even b'fore dad 'n' sis left..." In fact, it had begun in the evening of the day she began menstruating—her latest of which our tornado trauma cut short. "That nite" her parents (leyda & don)

had "this unbelievable fite." Theyd fought before, "but nothing like *that*". She & lage figured out later that leyda stabbed don. (I said nothing of the *déjà vu* stabbing from my own childhood.) They thought he'd left home but he'd only driven himself to a doctor. "We saw a bandage with a blood spot on it thru his shirt next day. Then bloodstains on the garage floor. That was the beginning. Soon dad 'n' sis moved away—fearing t' leave an address 'r fone number. That was *really* bad." The expression on her face, even coupled w the silent stare which followed, didnt belie *how* bad. But i couldnt know that then. Probing next elicited this gem. "Everything in my life was good til sex entered the picture. Ever since, i've been-...i've been, the lame duck o' the family, the unlucky gosling, the last one crossing the busy road of life."

I tried a personal angle. <Wish i'd had more impact on your bad luck.>

"You *know* i dont mean it that way."

But there *is* something, or someone, standing between you, me, 'n' sex. *Something* happened...and it's choking the bloom of our love.

Like a return litening stroke she threw back at me a quote from *scapegoats*. "I dont see what the big deal is. The gazelle bounds away after sex without a second thought. The alpha wolf just shivers her skin 'n' walks away. So what's our problem?"

When i wrote that i was talking about civilization's fixation with sex. Maybe i was wrong. You know as well as i, only certain males are acceptable to females in Nature. Most are not. I would think you of all people would know that. Think about it. Dozens of guy-animals standing around while one or two get to mate. The sex act must be pretty damned important for its rituals to get imprinted as indelibly as instinct. An' beside, i'll bet that gazelle of yours never mopes around in *denial* of her sexuality, or gives bad p-r about the rutting ritual. Maybe *that's* what i *should've* written. Furthermore, it's my contention, your periodic withdrawal (no pun intended) from sensual pleasure is a form of punishment. ["For who?"] For *you*. Punishment for needing something you have a severe disdain for. The monk's dilemma. Namely, sex. Since deep inside you view sex as the cause of all the bad luck in your life. Which unfortunately includes me.

And wouldnt you know, she broughtup my gazelle analog *again*. I knew my *scapegoats and fallgirls* was her fave but i had no idea....

Our fixation with sex is just another artifact of our civilizing, of being deprived of our instinctual Natures. Many caged animals fondle themselves bloody, a thing never seen in the Wild. Repressed creatures become sadomasochistic. We need t' find the wound that wont heal; that oozing malignancy toxifying us. We need to expose the secret instinct!

<Well there it is! You jus said it! Our job is t' find the wound that wont heal.> To self: {Hey, it's now or never. Spit it out now or forever hold the pieces!} <So we're there. [she looks up, glances around] No, i mean: we have arrived "where" i *must* tell you: *Your silence about this okka person, and all that he did to you, is wrecking our relationship, Lilith McGrae. It is suffocating this rare little flame we've managed to lite in the wide cold 'n' friendless nite of our civil existence.*

Odyssey to Catharsis: Her full mouth hung parted, head tilted in the pose of the questionmark it contained. Those splendid sad blues held me for a long moment like wet stars shining from between the blackness of butterfly wings, wee wings fantastically motionless! "Ya know", said she, thumping knees w/ fists, speaking w/ a voice that reminded me of a pissedoff but much slower-speaking lalage. "If a certain relationship was beautiful, retelling it only tends to add a bunch of grunting 'n' groaning where there was mostly silent ecstasy. 'N' if that relationship was ghastly, rehashing it only makes it ghastlier."

Here she looked away, and her face began to scrunchup, her voice became a pinchedoff sort of cry, which i did not right away realize was a result of trying heroically not to burst into tears. "Sex, nathan, is *what* it is *when* it is 'n' then it's *done!* It's great 'r it's awful. But when it's over IT'S OVER! Can *no one* see that? [voice small now & cracking thru half-octaves] Why we hafta do this i dont know. When we go t' the bathroom we dont reflect on it for weeks. When we blow our nose we dont press it like a flower in a book. So why why why do we hafta remember things sexual? We're sick, nathan, *that's* why. [in a whispering sob] An' *you* said it first, not me!"

Now i *really* rued the day i wrote that. But how right she was. At this point i fully expected she'd sink to silence again, that i'd have to pull over again, shake her, insist we keep at it.

<Lilith McGrae. Dont you dare go silent on me!> I knew something was crazywrong as soon as she began {Is she humming...? Yes. *She's humming!*}, ever so softly, lai's tendersweet theme from *bilitis*. <O me.>

Few dozen seams of concrete roadway thump muffledly under us. With that little wincing squint of hers she looked over at me: orphan looking for its parents in a blizzard. Then, eyes wide, overbiting her lip like we were about to have a headon, w a *real*/freighttrain this time, she began a distraught soliloquy. "You think you know me...you think you c'n expound on any topic that crosses your cranium...you think i have no answer for your accusations...you think you have hit upon some great truth...you presume i'm at a loss for words...you imagine i am afraid to tell you the whole truth 'n' nothing but...You have the audacity to think i suffer from erica jong's *fear of flying*...You think, because we share a bed i hafta share everything with you...*But this rough magic I here abjure*...because you think that because we..."

With the delivery of each ardent plaint she would rock back&forth, moving as if her body were mummy-bound. She punctuated each deadend pronouncement by striking her knees hard w fists; when these began to hurt she took to striking the dashboard, first w fists, then, as these began to inflame, w the flats of her hands. Tho staring straight ahead the whole time, clearly the road *she* was seeing was headed to the last place on Earth she wanted to go! If the reader has never empathized w the panic of a Wild creature finding itself suddenly in a cage, then i must ask him to imagine a paralyzed deafmute, one incapable of violence, a person whose only means of self defense is frantically signing (unintelligible to her attacker) & mumbling incoherently. The image of actress marlee matlin, pleading thru the belljar walls of her being, always came to mind when Lilith became emotional. Is this why plath's faces preserved in jars so haunted her? And isnt civilization itself the most hermetic belljar ever invented for trapping & crushing the Wildness in us all?

"Who woulda guessed, you...you...I mean, do you think you c'n just come into my life, manipulate me like some manikin in a store window? Do you think you c'n, c'n...jus because i love the way you see me, the way you touch me...? I'll tell you this, if i werent so..."

so *totally* unequipped for battle. God, please! I mean, you jus cant walk into a person's life 'n' jus-... 'n' jus-.... It's too much, nathan! Too much...! A body can only take so much, you know!... *Ça ne fait rien. Nothing* matters. So jus...so just.... God! Why dont you jus...jus fuckin strangle me 'n' *be...*'n' *be done with it?!*" Tho the last 4 words were thrashed out by her fists on the dashboard, somehow her criticisms seemed borne on frangible wings. Picture a hulkybig well-meaning guy being sternly corrected by a furious butterfly.

I havent written even half of her stuttering soliloquy, for it went on doubly as long. In all my life i'd never heard so many false starts, so little said. And if her logorrhea was a repetitious loop of frite, i was concerned mostly w what was going on in her *unconscious*. Yet it was the lenis, the little stops & starts, the gaps & gasps, small things lost to the eye in the reading, that in fact gouged me. They were heart-rending...and went on long enuf for me to pull off the road, break to a stop, get out, go around to her door, open it, pull her up, grasp her in my arms—and *still* she was going on, beating my chest, rocking forward & back as if trying to get away from something rising up out of the depths of her. Tho her words said nothing her mx could not have been clearer: "I'm coming apart, nathan 'n' i cant stop it!"

I let her beat away on me til she felt she'd hurt me, hurt herself, sufficiently, after which i set her back on her seat. Hanging around my neck, she soon melted into a fury of sobs. To anyone watching, it would have seemed we were parting absolutely & forever. She shuddered & shivered by turns (yes, they feel different: wide v narrow amplitudes) and sobbing so bitterly i was reminded of an ambulance call once where a mother had backed her car over her daughter, a child big enuf w time enuf to have gotten out of the way but could not because she was strapped in a car seat. Suddenly, w a lurch of alarming strength, she broke free of me, lunged backward onto the seat and reached for her bag, which was on the floor. Hunched over it, hands trembling, she yanked her keys from a side-pocket, shoved its coffinlike leather fob (i'd seen so often) into her mouth, and abruptly slid to the ground. There on the roadside gravel she lay, crumpled up in a fetal position, shuddering like a mechanical toy which could no longer perform because it had toppled onto its side.

