

I had trouble at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow. Perhaps it will give some idea of my state, if I tell you that I had entirely forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been laundered, and I refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means of rendering dirty money clean. Yes, I had ^{a mental lapse and left} forgotten the passport was in the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit ^{that went} I threw into the washing machine. If you would enquire what sort of man puts a suit into a mangle, well, I was close to demented when I did it, and the manuscript that could offer explanations for this much skewed frame of mind was now nicely packed in one of the secret compartments of my valise. While that particular bag had been designed to take sensitive paper through any routine inspection, it would never bear up to a detailed search.

Now my passport, looking like a small layered pastry ^(a torte), was being held aloft by the incredulous Soviet guard at the cage window. I am a trained man--well-trained is more accurate--and one of the first things learned is to keep your papers in order. Yet, here was I proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. with the false name of one William Madden Libby about whose imaginary past I had much too insufficiently prepared myself.

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! ^{ooo} Why?"

His English was going to be no more use to ^{me} ~~us~~ than my Russian ^{to him}.

"River," I tried to say in his tongue, thereby suggesting that one had fallen in the river with one's passport. I did not dare admit I had consigned the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was saying, but later, studying the ^{phrases for tourists in} vocabulary section of my guidebook, I came to recognize that I

was using such words as *ruk* for arm and *ryebro* for rib, and *rubs*-- which are, respectively, arm and rib and fish, something like that--the word for fish! Yes, I was doubtless telling my

^{that}
 Sovietsky I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words, enough to leave him critically befuddled. Then, like a good stubborn dog, he would reply, "Passport--no good. Why?" After which he would draw himself to full height and eyeball me--they were obviously trained to do that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have forgotten how desperate this washed-out puffed-up passport would look under examination?

"Passport not good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the ^{long} line of passengers ^{waiting} behind me, ^{they were} beginning to focus on my tension, rather than their own.

"Expired. No. Not expired. *Pajalesta*," I said to him, ^{"please!"} and reached out.

He handed the little book to me with great suspicion and I turned with caution the faded worn out pages which were now as velvety to the touch as much-used dollar bills. Then, I found the expiration page. No, of course not, my passport had not expired, and I pointed out the date, and handed it back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between hysteria and happiness. For ten hours, as full of frenzy as a cockroach when the lights go on, I had been sitting in the middle of Economy, dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then, as if the cockroach had caught a whiff of poison spray, I would lay on my back in full recline--using all three inches of rearward slant available in the tourist-width chair--and know that stupor where the mind-flow is heavy in its viscosity, and one's limbs seem too massive to move, but one's nerves are racing like the lights on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept

promising the stomach a visit, never did.

Now, at least, I was on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that this confrontation fell somewhere in the void between farce and bureaucratic horror. At least I was standing up and talking. After ten hours of that seat in Economy, I would have been ^{ready} ~~happy~~ to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been a Minnesota farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, a Scandihoovian look, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger, "you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, waving my passport.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyad*," I said, "*bolshaye lyad*. Got it? Much ice." I spread my hand over an expanse of imaginary ice as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave the horizontal plane I ^{to} had just fashioned in the air, one ^{good} ~~feh~~ karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it sounded like ice cracking, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Voda. Bolshaye voda*--lots of water, right." I waved my hands in desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kaladno*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kaladno*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Beelyam Modyen Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at

one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening. ~~One's chances with the police usually improved as one impinged on their leisure time.~~

The blond kid stamped my passport. He was relaxed now. He gave a big kid's grin. "Pardone," he said, ^{giving} pronouncing it in a friendly hybrid of Italian and French.

~~The route through Sheremetyevo was gained step-by-step. It was the~~

showed the grayest airport I had ever been in. Some style in concrete brutalism had been appropriated ^{to} in its making--a showcase for the 1980 Olympics. ~~Enter~~ ^{rest of the Customs at} ~~Some~~ to our land where walls are gray. My bags went through customs without pain. Both the manuscript and the journal, which I had separately stowed away in each of the two secret compartments, attracted no notice--I passed through the last gate and encountered signs in English which told me to look for the Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum: people in the same profession, like waiters, tend to be the same all over the world. My cabdriver wanted twenty dollars, American, to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which my travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag for a reservation as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," he had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me even to the agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, paid him ~~in~~ cash in advance, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the

assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through now and again) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as Individual Tourist, Special, and now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his workable black market English that he wished to buy dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a dollar, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap, ~~however?~~ I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market, ~~and that before I had even had one opportunity to look at this harsh, unholy place I had chosen to visit.~~

Indeed the driver was taking up so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. ~~Travel, when relaxed, can wash your eyes; everything is fresh. Travel in a state of nerves, however, is like movement through a tunnel. One's senses are all pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some jerky flivver of a sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the landscape. The litany of the driver, "all right, tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell, just tell me, come on, what do you say?" was ongoing.~~ *Continued in my car.*

Out the window was clean snow ~~and~~ dirty snow, and melted fields about as sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, dark wooden funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and all yawning individually, their paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty-white for the most part in the dirty-white snow. They looked like the plaster had cracked on the lower floors

before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery was this land. The sky was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetyevo Airport, and this on a day in April. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver might not be some extension of KGB, ~~or even if the comedy at the customs cage had been a six-minute sketch for someone's delectation.~~ Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the four lane highway. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some ^{Daughter, doubtless,} burst to be certain of homilectic and loveless language. I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire was one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of my cab were mud-splattered, and ^{to the} the sights in front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers which kept drawing striated salt fans on the window. The driver was as sullen as heat in August.

Now we were on a ^{large} big boulevard, ^{many lanes} large, dull, not much traffic. Heavy old buildings, government departments, and specialist institutes ^{devambulated} slipped by the side windows. This place was like a grainy photograph of the worst of Washington, D.C. There was even some traffic now, if few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read МЕТРОПОЛ. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars for tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me ^{was} must have been pinched, for I

Peter: note! - The E in Metropole is $\exists$ not 3. $\leftarrow$
 The E at the end is Λ , not Λ
 - We're getting close,

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A short stocky wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat--he had been a hero of the Great War in one or another ^{degree} rank. He would show nothing to a stranger.

Nor was he in much of a rush to help ~~on~~ my two bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the voucher on my registration in order to get through the door. ^{There,} Then, the interior was grim. The lobby had a palette that went from faded cigar-butt brown to old railroad coach upholstery green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you stepped across it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those hotels in the side streets off Times Square that still rent rooms while waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather before and after the revolution?

If we are to speak of travelling through a psychic tunnel, I felt as if the

^{tube} tunnel had just debouched me back into the nineteenth century, ^{and} the old

time was gloomy. Off to my left a neon sign said, Dollar Bar. On this Sunday afternoon, it was not yet open. Further into the depths of the lobby ^{was the double} were a

^{glass door to a} couple of restaurants, both closed. A huge marble stairway spiralled in right

angle turns around the core of an elevator shaft. The girl at the registration desk was wearing a sweater and had a nose cold. She wore eyeglasses, was

plain, and pretended not to notice me until I seized her attention. Her English ^{unhappy} had an unpleasant accent that was reminiscent of such tortures as ballet ^{to the spirit and flesh}

lessons for unpromising girls. The elevator operator, another war hero, was gruff, and the concierge on the fourth floor was a big heavy blonde about fifty

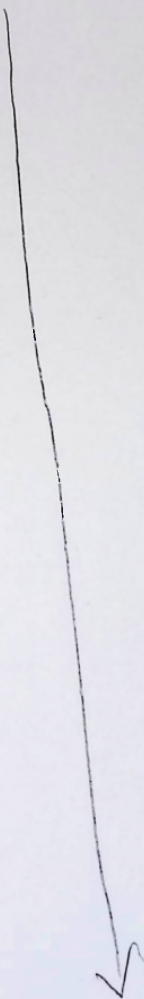
with a bee-hive and a big tough Russian face; she looked like a mate for the doorman on the street. She sat behind a little glass-topped desk facing the elevator, ^{kept a rose in a small vase,} and scowled as she looked for my key which was large, and bronze, and ~~as~~ heavy as a sack of change. The route to my room led down one long dark corridor and then turned a right angle to another. The walls were ~~shiny~~ ^{reflected} pea-green and ~~bounced off~~ the glare of a highly shellacked parquet floor that had occasional gaps where squares of plywood were substituted. Since the promenade to my room was over a red-runner carpet half a football field in length down the first corridor, then half a football field down the other to my room door, and since the floor still buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation--if I may allude to my passport once more--that this red carpet had been laid over frozen water, and I stepped from one ice floe to the next, a walk with considerable tipping and lurching.

My room was eleven feet by fourteen and had a ceiling twelve feet high. The window looked on a court. That red carpet, strong, strapping, and prepared to endure spilled vodka, coffee, soup, ink, and the occasional miseries of a drunk's stomach, was still under my feet, my companion from the lobby, up the elevator, down the corridors to here. I had a ^{chest of drawers,} ~~bureau,~~ ^{and a} narrow bed with a thin European mattress whose edges you could ~~feel~~ laid upon ^{a larger} ~~another~~ mattress. There was a bolster as heavy as a water-soaked log. And a TV set!

I turned it on. Lots of electronic snow, lots of wave-over. Black and white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed and put my head in my hands. I got up. I closed the curtains to the courtyard. I sat down again. I was here, and I could stay here--assuming I had entered without attracting official attention--I could stay here for a week at least,

and sort the questions of ^{some} my mind into categories. I had so many questions that I no longer looked for answers. Only for categories, to the questions. I needed some scheme, ~~some plan~~ ^{+ to put in place} of order for my mind before the pageant commenced once more. There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each night, for many nights now, the same people had appeared and spoke to me. I would fall asleep and soon wake. Then the visitors would speak. I would think of these visitations as neither a delusion nor ~~an~~ hallucination, but a pageant. Each person came before me like an actor, performing ^{alone (but for me)} before me ~~alone~~ in a theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent beyond what I would have thought was their measure, ~~and~~ ^{if} I no longer knew if all of their existence belonged to me, or if the rigors of this last year of working on my manuscript, that history of the ~~particular~~ one night in my life that had been without measure, was finally caught up to me. Do the mentally deranged visit those cosmic vaults where ~~all our history is stored?~~ I was surviving, as you may imagine, in a state of the most peculiar delicacy. A movie director ^{that} ~~knew~~ once told me how after he had made one of his movies, he continued to live ^{in his sleep} with his cameraman and actors each morning. The film was wrapped, but he would awaken with commands: "Ricky, we're going to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras ought to do it," ^{and} he would be out of bed and shaving before his ^{mind} eyes looking back at him in the mirror would show consternation and say, in effect: "The film is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot anymore." But he was, as he explained to me, ^{had} stepping through the looking-glass. The film he ^{had} shot ^{was} had become more real to him than the ^{was} ~~man left behind.~~ ^{life.} ^{was I equal to?} I was like that director. For a year, concealed in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived or ever

would) I had worked to raise a wall between the pageant and myself. Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night, and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves and the pits.



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Correct
and re-print

Peter - keep the irregular magni
at the right 1. Titled from now
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~~Now~~ Now my passport, looking like a small layered pastry, was being held aloft by the incredulous Soviet guard at the cage window. I am a well-schooled man, and one of the first things we learned was to keep our papers in order. Yet, here was I proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. with the name of one William Madden Libby about whose imaginary past I had insufficiently prepared myself.

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! . . . Why?"

His English was going to be no more use than my Russian.

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the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was saying, but later, studying phrases for tourists in my guidebook, I came to recognize that I used such words as *ruk* and *ryeba*, and *riba* --which are, respectively, arm and rib and fish! Yes, ^{was telling him} Doubtless I told my Sovietsky that I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words, enough to leave ^(my Sovietsky) him critically befuddled. Then, like a good stubborn dog, he would reply, "Passport--no good. Why?" After which he would draw himself to full height and eyeball me--they were obviously trained to do that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have failed to foresee that this washed-out puffed-up *tarte* of a passport would look desperate under examination?

"Passport not good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the long line of passengers waiting behind me. ~~They were beginning to focus on my tension, instead of their own.~~

"No. Not expired. Please," I said to him, "*pazhalesta!*" and reached out. He handed the ^{passport over} little book to me with great suspicion and I turned with caution the faded worn-out pages which were now as velvety to the touch as much-used dollar bills. Then, I found the expiration page. No, ^{of} course not, my passport had not expired, and I pointed out the date, and handed it back to him

him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between hysteria and happiness. For ten hours, as full of frenzy as a cockroach when the lights first go on, I had been sitting in the middle of Economy, dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then, as if ^{catching} ~~the cockroach had caught~~ a whiff of poison spray, I would lay on my back in full recline--using all three inches of rearward slant available ^{to} ~~in~~ the tourist-width chair--and ^{drift in} ~~know~~ that half-stupor where the mind-flow is heavy in its viscosity, and one's limbs seem too massive to move, ^{and} ~~yet~~ one's nerves are racing like ~~the~~ lights on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept promising the stomach a visit, never did.

Now, at least, I was on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that this confrontation fell somewhere in the void between farce and bureaucratic horror. At least I ^{could} ~~was~~ standing up and talking. After ten hours of Economy, I ^{was} ~~would have been~~ ready to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been a Minnesota farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, a Scandihoovian look, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger, "you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same

olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, ^{pointing to /} waving my passport, ^{as if it were a} wholly eccrable object.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyod*," I said, "*bolshoye lyod*. Got it? Much ice." I spread my hand over an expanse of imaginary ice as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave to the horizontal plane just fashioned in the air, one good karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it sounded like a river breaking up, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Voda. Bolshoye voda* --lots of water, right." I waved my hands in desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kalodno*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kalodno*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Veelyam Modyen Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have

papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening.

The blond kid stamped my passport. He was relaxed now. He gave a big kid's grin. "*Pardone*," he said, giving it a friendly spin of Italian-French.

The rest of the route through customs at Sheremetyevo showed a gray ^{concrete} airport, ^{built as} grayest ever. ~~Some offshoot of concrete-brutalism had served for the~~ ~~architectural style~~ ^{was ~~being~~} a showcase for the 1980 Olympics: Come into our land

where the walls are gray. My bags went through customs without pain. Both the manuscript and the journal, which I had separately stowed away in each of my two secret compartments, attracted no notice--the suitcase had been designed to take confidential papers through routine inspections. So, I passed through the last gate and encountered signs in English which told me to look for the Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum that people in the same profession, such as waiters, tend to be the same all over the world. My cabdriver wanted twenty dollars, American, to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which my travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," he had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been

obvious about me even to the agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, paid him cash in advance, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through occasionally) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as *Individual Tourist, Special*. Now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his workable black market English that he wished to buy dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a dollar, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market.

Indeed the driver was demanding so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel in a state of nerves is like movement through a tunnel. One's senses are all pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some flivver of a sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the landscape. The litany of the driver, "all right, tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell, just tell me, come on, what do you say?" continued in my ear,

We passed expenses of

Out the window was clean snow, dirty snow, and melted fields about as

sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, dark ~~wooden~~ funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and all yawning individually, their paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty-white for the most part in the dirty-white snow. They looked like the plaster had cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery was this land. The sky ^{March} was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetyevo Airport, and on a day in ~~April~~. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver might not be some extension of KGB. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the four lane highway. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some bouquet, doubtless, of homilectic and loveless language. I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire was one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of my cab were mud-spattered, and sights to the front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers which kept drawing striated salt fans on the glass. The driver was as sullen as heat ^(muggy weather) in

August.

Now we were on a large boulevard of many lanes, dull, not much traffic. Heavy old buildings--government departments, and specialist institutes--perambulated by the side windows. There were few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read **МЕТРОПОЛ**. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars for tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me was pinched, for I gave him five. My nerves, I repeat, were not what once they were.

A short stocky wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat--a hero of the Great War. He would not be about to show much to a stranger.

Nor was he in a rush to help me with the bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the voucher on my registration in order to get through the door. There, the interior was grim. The lobby had a pallette that went from faded cigar-butt brown to old railroad coach upholstery green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you stepped

across it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those hotels in the side streets of Times Square that is waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather before and after the revolution? If we are to speak of travelling through a psychic tunnel, I felt as if the tube had just ^{pulled} snuffed me back into the nineteenth century. ~~The old time was~~ ~~gloomy.~~ Off to my left, the neon sign which said Dollar Bar looked like an anachronism. On this Sunday afternoon, it was not yet open. Further into the depths of the lobby was the double glass door to a restaurant, closed. A huge marble stairway spiralled in right angle turns around the core of an elevator shaft.

^{woman} The ~~girl~~ at the registration desk was wearing a sweater and had a nose cold. She wore eyeglasses, was plain, and pretended not to notice me until I seized her attention. Her English had an unhappy accent that was reminiscent of such tortures to the spirit as ballet lessons for unpromising girls. The elevator operator, another war hero, was gruff, and the concierge on the fourth floor was a heavy blonde about fifty with a bee-hive hairdo and a big tough Russian face--she looked like a mate for the doorman. She sat behind a little glass-topped desk facing the elevator, kept a rose in a small vase, and scowled as she looked for my key which was large, bronze, and heavy as a

sack of change. The route to my room led down one long dark corridor and then turned a right angle to another. The walls were pea-green and reflected the glare of a highly shellacked parquet floor, but for the gaps where squares of plywood were substituted. *It was a parquet floor with a* Since the promenade to my room was over a red-runner carpet half a football field in length down the first corridor, then half a football field down the other to my room door, and since the floor still buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation--if I may allude to my passport once more--that this red carpet had been laid over frozen water, and I stepped from one ice floe to the next, a walk with considerable tipping and lurching.

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I turned it on. Lots of electronic snow, lots of wave-over. Black and white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed and put my head in my hands. I got up. I closed the curtains to the courtyard. I

sat down again. I was here, and I could stay here--assuming I had entered without attracting official attention--I could stay here for a week at least, and sort some questions into categories. I had so many questions that I no longer looked for answers. Only for categories. I needed some scheme to put in place before the pageant commenced once more.

There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each night, for many nights now, the same people appeared and spoke to me. I would ^{not} think of these visitations as ~~neither~~ ^{or} delusion ~~nor~~ ^{as} hallucination, but ^a pageant. Each person came before me like an actor performing alone ~~(but for me)~~ in a theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent.

I no longer knew if all of their existence belonged to me, or if the rigors of this last year of working on my manuscript, ^{which was} that history of the one night in my life that ~~had been~~ ^{had} beyond measure, ~~was~~ finally caught up to me. I was ^{proceeding,} surviving, as you may imagine, in a state of the most peculiar delicacy. A movie director once told me that after one of his movies, he had not stopped living with the camera crew and actors. They were gone, and the film was wrapped, but he would awaken from every sleep with fresh commands: "Ricky, we have to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras ought to do it." He would be out of bed and shaving before he could say in effect: "The film is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot anymore." But he had, as he

explained to me, stepped through the looking-glass. The film was more real than his life.

Was I equal to that director? For a year, ^{hiding out} ~~concealed~~ in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived, or ever would) I had worked to raise a wall between the pageant and myself. Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night, and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves and the pits.

Then without warning, the pageant would strike again. Strike is the operative word. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of *grand mal*. One misstep and the seizures would come. ^{After awhile} ~~So~~ the Bronx was no longer tenable for me. As if I had been engaged in some clandestine activity, running a network, let us say, in an occupied country, the warning bells had rung--I had to move.

That people were looking for me, was certain enough. What damage or deviltry I might be up to, they could hardly conceive. But the longer I did not surface, the more they would have to wonder. Where was he? Why had he gone under? Had he defected? They would have to wonder if I had moved to Moscow. How I laughed--in those paroxysms of silent laughter with which one entertains one's loneliness--how I laughed that all the while I was living in the Bronx, they would be thinking of me in Moscow.

Yet out of the logic of separate steps which seemed altogether rigorous to me--although I could not name the reason for any of these steps, I had come to the conclusion, so soon as the pageant picked up its operations once more, that I had to take a trip--for the first time--to the U.S.S.R. I did not know why. ~~So far as personal security was concerned~~ I was in trouble enough if they ever ran me down in the Bronx, but to be found in Moscow would put the worst interpretations on my case. And to go there with my manuscript and my journal was unforgivable even to myself, ^{what} at least if the Russians were to ^{uncover} recognize me for any reason, and look through the papers. [?]

~~Yet,~~ ^{however} part of the inexorable logic of making the move to Moscow was that the papers went with me. Who knows how the boxcars of obsession are moved around in the freight yards of the mad? I did not feel mad, only beleaguered, but there was a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. To pursue with diligence a major action that is odds-on to disaster has to be a fair description of the wholly unbalanced.

I clung to my papers, ~~however~~ ^{surgeon} as if they were one of those few remaining body organs that cannot be replaced. I could no more leave them behind than choose not to go to Moscow. And indeed I could hardly keep the ^{secret} fact ~~a secret~~ that I was taking them with me. The old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was already aware of

that.

"Oh, Mr. Libby," she said. "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Rosenthal."

He was an eighty-year old arthritic, she, a seventy-five year old diabetic--we had had no more than passing conversations for a year, but I was content with that. Bless them--I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me, because I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good middle-class people, and while I expected they would be curious enough about my parts, I did not have the heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and possible marriages of one William Madden Libby, no matter how much I could use such a trial run for practise; I had done that once before, spent much of a year with a woman to whom I offered a bogus life not at all my own. Since she fell in love with me, I believe it did her damage in the same way that a capsule which is presented as a nutrient ^{when it} but is only a placebo, has to work a subtle damage on ^{relations} ~~communications~~ between mind and digestion. Somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the bell ^{that} tolls with a cracked sound. ~~suffers a hairline crack~~

Well, there was not much flim flam with the Rosenthals. We made

occasional conversation when we met at the door or in the hall, and that was all. They were able to supplement their retirement moneys with my rent, and *I could* keep ^{my} ~~their~~ privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except when I grew tired of soup on a hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote prodigiously. I was looking--we can move from the nineteenth to the twentieth century on the verbal conceits of this next remark--I was looking to find the viable parameters of my life.

It went reasonably well for a year. There were days when I felt neither haunted nor invaded. But I was like a boulder perched on the edge of a cliff. Sooner or later, it would all go. It did. The pageant picked up once more, and Moscow blinked in my mind like a neon sign. *lit-up billboard.* I saw the travel agent, made the preparations, tried to study Russian, and said farewell to the Rosenthals. I told them I was going to Seattle. I heard her say in reply, "Well, I guess you'll have a heavy bunch of papers to carry with you for your family to read?"

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like your book," she said.

"Well," I said, "I do too."

"Maybe, you'll even get a publisher."

"One hopes so."

"If you should, please mail me the book and I'll pay for it. I want you to

autograph the copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Rosenthal," I said, "I'll be delighted to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever found this lair in the Bronx, they would also hear from her how much I had been writing.

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and started to unpack. I took everything out but the concealed papers. The bag, now apparently empty, weighed a bit too much although not critically so. I put back my toilet kit which would thump about inside if someone shook the valise, locked it, and put it up in the closet. I opened my portable typewriter. But I was not ready to read, let alone to write. It was five now, Sunday afternoon, Moscow time, which was nine o'clock in the morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the evening from Kennedy airport, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with a transit stop in London) and had landed at 2 P.M. Moscow time, 6 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were by now upside down. If it was nine A.M. in New York, no wonder I felt full of the false vigor that comes on in the morning after a night of false sleep. I had to get out of this room for awhile.

So I took a walk. Let me say that no American tourist can feel

comfortable taking his first steps in Moscow, not after forty years of ~~Cold-~~
~~War~~ and media-din have brought one to the unconscious conviction that Communism is evil. I had had, however, stints of special scholarship to support such a grand thesis. It is an awesome and terrible thesis, but it is grand, or so it is if grandeur resides in the majestic notion that the simple subtends the complex. The king, after all, divides the land with a wave of his sceptre, and, evil, that devil's shellgame--where is evil hiding now?--can be subtended in the grand thesis that Communism is evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me. I was like a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years. Such a man does not know the world he is entering, does not, for example, know how to walk into a store and buy a pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. Here I, after the casual nature of American freedom, did not know what was allowed me here. I was not certain I could leave the hotel and go out on the street without the proper paper being stamped. I hung about the lobby for five minutes trying to observe the comings and goings, but soon felt uneasy. My presence itself might become suspect. So, I took a chance, walked to the entrance, stepped out, and was met with a scowl by the doorman--it would take awhile to realize that he was somewhat simple-minded, and had not placed me yet as a hotel guest, so was scowling.

At any rate, here was I on the street. Cabdrivers parked at the hotel curb, yelled at me as a prospect, passersby took their glances. I just walked. I made no moves to determine if anyone was following me for I did not wish to show any knowledge of evasive tactics but then I also felt light as if I were not being followed. I had put on an old jacket and wore a woolen hat that I pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was all right. I felt like giving a great whoop.

Off to one side of the hotel, a street and a square away would be, I knew, from my study of the guidebook, the statue to ^{Felix} Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, "Sword of the Revolution," and great-grandfather of the KGB. Back of him would be the Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew that place better than any American prison--I had listened a hundred times in the imaginary auditorium of my ear to the screams of the tortured in the cellars of the Lubyanka, but I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, and so ^{thus} debating, ^I followed my steps from Sverdlov Square and the Metropole to Dzerzhinsky Square, and ^{even} before me was the Lubyanka, as I had imagined it, and yet it was less, this late nineteenth century seven-story office building, once a palace for insurance companies, and still with white curtains in the windows, and highly polished brass fittings on the door. Its walls, however, were a soiled khaki-yellow. On the whole, it was a dismal old-fashioned

office building in and out of which ^{now} came and went a few men in officer's uniform on this late Sunday afternoon, cold as a New England forest in winter, ^{all the while} and I heard no screams, and felt myself ~~still~~ marooned in the tunnel of endless travel ^{for} this building--conceivably my future home--failed to stir ~~my~~ adrenaline.

I wandered away through side streets, gray in the light, near to black in the shadows, old streets of the merchants. Enclaves of gloom had not shifted here in a hundred years. It was nearly agreeable to discover depression this palpable, and I had a moment in which I understood the comforts of gloom--was this my first real thought in a week? For even as the acceptance of poverty was the greatest protection against corruption of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which one could live encapsulated from insanity. Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom would be here to find in Moscow, and thinking this, I came out of one more side street onto Red Square, a shock as nice as stepping from a Roman alley onto the great plaza ^{of} St. Peter's, except here was no Vatican, but a field of cobblestones near to half a mile long and hundreds of feet wide spreading out to the walls of the Kremlin. In the twilight, ^a pearly lavender ^{already} showed on the horizon of the gray sky, yet ^{but} still a line of Russians was ^{still} waiting to see the tomb of Lenin and his remains down below preserved in his vault. Two thousand people, two by two, were in that

line, and ~~it progressed forward, for I stopped to count~~ ^{moved} about twenty people ^{man} past a point each minute. If there were two thousand on line, the last would wait one hundred minutes in this cold, a reasonable mortification for a pilgrimage.

Now, however, I was ^{beginning to pay attention to} noticing the Russians on the street. They all looked middle-aged. Even the young had an air of relinquishment to speak of middle age. ~~One's dreams are given up, but any character gained has been fully earned.~~

^{→ All the same, Red Square seemed to be} ~~Still, it was a cheerful place. To my astonishment, Red Square was~~ ^(it) cheerful on this late and cold Sunday afternoon. There was a shimmer to the air, a conviviality to the faces red with vigor and the cold. Busloads of tourists--native Russians--were leaving, others were ^{yet} still arriving.

Hundreds of ^{others} people walking in the square were showing that simple happiness which comes to the hardworking when they are transported to an important place. These could have been Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses on a ferry to the Statue of Liberty. Same happy faces. One was getting a first return on the ultimate passage to heaven.

How much like a movie this was. ^{had precision for} The scene so precise to the eye. The center of Red Square rose higher than the sides and so people in the distance, ^{there} ~~there~~ were only visible from the thigh or the knee, but their shoes had disappeared

below the cobblestone horizon. Everyone bounced as they walked, even as heads bob on every step when a crowd is perambulating before a lens. I did not know the history of Red Square, which is to say what had produced this little harmony of the spirits, but my own were up--I felt delivered from the iron clangor of the Bronx and the ~~stone~~ walls of Moscow. I was ready for one irrational instant to celebrate, I hardly knew what. Maybe it was only the joy of coming to the end of ^a trip. I decided to leave the ~~S~~quare before I became too pleased with all of this, which is to say--too manic.

So I went back to the Metropole, received a thin slice more of good greeting from the doorman, the elevator man, and the ~~dezhurnaya~~ ^{the} ~~my~~ floor lady--returned to ^{the} my room, sat on my bed, sat on the chair next to the bed, took down my valise, opened the velcro to the false compartments, took out my novel and my journal, set them on the small desk I had been provided, and debated whether to look at either packet of papers, then took out a notebook, considered an entry for my journal, put down my pencil, and realized abruptly how tired I was. I was ^{heavy} ~~tired~~ from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings--about of mood, the rigors of the walk--everyone in Moscow seemed to move at top pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay along with them--and now I was tired with the real desolations of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt ^{so} ~~as~~ alone or ^{so} ~~as~~ dislocated.

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated at a table with strangers before a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, just no more immaculate, ^{than} a shirt that's been worn for a few hours. The only dish ^{available} ~~you could order~~ was Chicken Kiev, a rubber chicken fit for a routine political banquet with a gusher of butter that tasted like lubricating oil mixed with some sour sorrow emanating from the kitchen. The kasha was undercooked, the dark bread was coarse, the fresh vegetable was a ^{thin} slice of tomato. Then a cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy middle-aged woman with heavy troubles. It took all of the little attentions she could give to the world outside herself to ^{keep level with} ~~take care of~~ her job.

After I left the room, I realized that I had been in the equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an eating hall, so to speak, for guests alone. The real restaurant, for a prouder gang, was ^{entered} ~~off~~ by two glass doors. There, ^{Outside, in the lobby,} black marketeers and bureaucrats, accompanied by their wives, waited on line. Inside, a dance band as full of vitamins and used-up musical patterns as some of the prom bands that used to ^{work the} ~~come to~~ dances at Yale, was hacking away, a weird peppy band that sounded through the glass doors as if all five or six musicians and their instruments were hyper-ventilating ^{inside} ~~through~~ a balalaika.

I went back to my room. I needed to sleep. I prayed I would get to sleep. At the door to the elevator, as I got off, my ^{under} ~~dezhuynaya~~ ^{under} ~~with~~ her blonde

bee-hive gave me a real smile. I understood. I gave every evidence of going by her desk many times a day, of being a regular customer. The comings and the goings of her keys were her negotiations. True hell is to have no action.

I locked my door, undressed, washed my face, dried my hands. The sink was cracked, the soap was gritty, the towel was sparse and coarse. So was the toilet paper. This was one of the ten best hotels in Moscow. I was furious suddenly at I knew not what. How did these people presume to be our greatest enemy on earth? They did not even have the wherewithal to be evil.

Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. There was every intimation the pageant was on its way. I decided to ^{get up again and} read my novel. Will it tell you something of the year I spent in that rented room in the apartment of the Rosenthal's, that I no longer had to look at the first fifteen pages. I knew them by heart. I could use them as a counter-strike against the pageant. Even as we and the Soviets spent years learning how to interfere with each other's broadcasts, so could I begin to recite the novel to myself so soon as I knew the pageant was near. It did not always work, but for so long as it did, I lived within my novel. It was equal to me, and if I could pass from that early section I knew by heart into the pages I must still read, well, I had turned the corner. The pageant would recede, and the ghosts of all those long-gone deeds--patriotic, shameful, dedicated and contradictory--would not come

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back. The features of the principals would not appear, and I would not have to listen on this night to Howard Hunt and his wife Dorothy, to Kim Philby and Guy Burgess and Donald McLean, to Bill Harvey who always packed a gun, and to Lee Harvey Oswald who did not know how to shoot. James Jesus Angleton did not appear with his Golitsin, nor Yuri ^N~~K~~osenko with his woes, I did not have to hear my father recount his conversations with Johnny Rosselli and Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante. Poor ~~Dante~~ Frank Olson did not jump out of his ninth-story window again, and I did not have to listen to Jimmy Hoffa informing me one more time how Marilyn Monroe had left this world, nor nod to J. Edgar Hoover (whom I with my colleagues ^{used} ~~liked~~ to call J. Edgar Buddha) while he expatiated with pride on how he reamed the Democrats with poor Senator Eagleton. Jacopo Arbenz no longer had to breathe his last for me, nor did I submit to one more indictment from Fidel Castro. I was free of the pageant while the long slow roll of the novel I had fashioned was able to inhabit my mind, and so I recited the words aloud, slowly at first, intoning the first sentence like a mantra. Sometimes I would ^{repeat} ~~say~~ this first sentence ^{numerous times} ~~ten times and then another ten~~ as if the sounds themselves were forces in ^{might be} ~~that~~ combat of ^{unseen} ~~unseen~~ and warring silences that ~~was~~ waged each night.

"What if ghosts are real?" I would say, "What if ghosts are real?"

Crucial to these avoidances, especially (I would not have to look into the eyes of my wife, Kittredge. She was now the most fearsome witness of them all. ~~But~~ If I could allow the long slow roll of the novel to inhabit my mind, I could keep the pageant behind its screen. So I began to recite my own words.

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"What if ghosts are real?" I would say, "What if ghosts are real?"

I had trouble at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow. Perhaps it will give some idea of the state in which I found myself, if I admit that I had entirely forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been laundered ~~inadvertently~~, and I refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means of rendering dirty money clean, *Yes, I had* ~~no, I had~~ simply forgotten that the passport was in the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit I had ~~thrown~~ *threw* into the washing machine. If you would enquire what sort of man puts a ~~good~~ suit into such a mangle in the first ~~place~~, well, I was close to demented when I did it, and the manuscript that would offer explanations for this much skewed frame of mind was now nicely packed away in the ~~two~~ ultra-flat secret compartments of my valise. That particular bag had been well enough designed to take ~~sensitive paper materials~~ *(and I did)* through any routine inspection, but would

never bear up to a detailed search. And now my passport, ^{looking like} ~~a swollen~~
^{a small layered pastry} ~~mess three times its normal thickness~~ was being held up ^{by the} ~~before the~~

incredulous ~~and somewhat over-dramatized~~ face of the Soviet guard at

the cage window. I am a trained man--well-trained is more

accurate--and one of the first things ^{learned} ~~we learn~~ ^{one's} is to keep ~~our~~ papers in

order. Yet, here was I ^{the helm of} ~~proposing~~ under ^(proposing) ~~these conditions~~ to enter the

U.S.S.R. ^{with the false} ~~under the name of~~ one William Madden Libby about whose

imaginary past I had much too insufficiently prepared myself.

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! . . .
 Why?"

His English was going to be ^{more help} ~~no better~~ than my Russian.

"River," I tried to say in Russian, ^{his tongue,} ~~thereby suggesting~~ ^{that one had} I had fallen in

the river with ^{one's} ~~my~~ passport. I did not dare ^{admit I had consigned} ~~to suggest I was so curious a~~

~~creature to consign~~ the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I

was saying, but later, studying the small vocabulary section of my guidebook, I came to recognize that I was using such words as *ruk* for arm and *ryetra* for rib, and *ruha*--something like that, ~~was~~ the word for fish. ^{I was doubtless} Yes, I ~~must have been~~ telling my Sovietsky, I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words, and he would answer, with a couple, "Passport--no good, why?" And then he would draw himself to his full height and ~~bold-eye me~~ ^{me} eyeball to eyeball--they must have been trained to do that.

I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have forgotten how desperate this washed-out puffed-up passport would look under examination?

~~"Expired."~~ ⁿ Passport nyet good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the line of passengers behind me beginning to focus on

my tension, not theirs.

"Expired. No. Not expired. *Fajalesta*," I said to him and reached ^{out,} for

~~the little~~ He handed the little book to me with great suspicion and I turned

with caution the faded worn out pages ^{which were} now as velvety to the touch as

much-used dollar bills, ^{then, I} and found the expiration ^{page,} date. No, of course not, ^{my passport}

^{out the date, and} it had not expired, and ^{pointed to the item found} I handed it back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between

^(feeling it too) hysteria and happiness. For ten hours, often frantic as a cockroach when

the lights go on, I had been sitting in the middle of the largest

compartment in Economy dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why I ^{had}

^{gotten on the plane in the first place} ~~had done it~~, and then, like the cockroach who has caught a whiff of poison

^{as it was} ^{had} spray, I lay on my back in full recline--using all three inches of the ^{available} ^{vacuum and} ^{seat in the}

^{and knew} ^{she} tourist-width chair--knowing that stupor where mind-flow is heavy in

its viscosity, ^{and} one's limbs seem too massive to move, but one's nerves ^{can}

race like the lights on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It

kept promising the stomach a visit, never did.

Now, at least, I was ^(on my feet and) in action of a sort. No matter that this action

fell somewhere in the ^(a nameless void) gulf between farce and bureaucratic horror. ~~It~~

least I was on my feet and talking. After ten hours ^{of} on that awful seat in

Economy, ~~I~~ think I would have been half merry to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard ^{could have been} looked like an Iowa farmboy. He had blue eyes,

^{high} hunky cheek bones, almost a Scandihoovian look, and close-cropped blond

hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his

finger, "you--waiting," and ~~he~~ walked off to get assistance, came back

immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a

mustache, the same olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and

braiding.

"~~Serious~~ Why?" said the new one, waving my passport.

I found the word for ice and water. ^{separate} It came into my mind like a touch ^{pas-de-deux}

~~of grace. To hell with fancy explanations about the river.~~ "Lyod," I said,

"bolshoye lyod. ^{over an expanse of imaginary ice.} Got it? much ice." I spread my hand as if smoothing a

tablecloth. ^{then} I gave the horizontal plane I had ^{I went} just fashioned in the air/ created, one fell karate

chop, ^{Hopefully, it sounded like ice cracking, and I} and made a cracking sound. "Ye," ~~I said pointing to my chest, and~~

plunged my hand toward my feet. "Voda. Bolshoye voda--lots of water,

right." I waved my hands like a frozen swimmer. ^{In desperate} ~~Desperate strokes~~ ^A Frozen swimmer

^{the first} "Ochen kolodno," both guards said.

"Ochen kolodno. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked

at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled

with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Beelyam

Modyen

~~Mawdern~~ Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of ~~bad~~ names. Libby was not on it. They

stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could

feel something was wrong with me, and it was ~~not~~ *didn't have to be* the passport. On the

other hand, *should they take* if they took me off for further questioning, they would have

papers to fill out, *possibly a lost evening* and time lost from evening plans. One's chances with

the police *usually* ~~always~~ improved as one impinged on their leisure time.

The kid ~~who looked like he came~~ from Iowa stamped my passport. He

was relaxed now. He gave me a big kid's grin. "Pardone," he said,

~~pronouncing it in such a way~~ *trying to* I did not know if he were speaking Italian or

~~French.~~ *dean* "Par-deen," it came out.

route through / Jungs
The rest of Sheremet'yevo, passed step by step. It was the largest-

grayest airport I had ever been in. Some kind of concrete brutalism *style in* *had been* with

borrowed for its making - a
~~all sorts of pretentious gray buttresses had gone into its making--a~~

showcase for the 1980 Olympics. Come to *our* the land where the walls are

gray. My *bags* ~~legs~~ went through customs without pain. *That* The manuscript *which I*

had carefully arranged
spread out in flat fifty-page packets in both *secret* ~~flat concealed~~

compartments attracted no notice--I passed through the last gate and

encountered signs in English which told me to look for the Intourist

guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed

together snarling type ~~who reminded me altogether of a New York-~~ *type*

who reminded me
cabdriver and then of Thomas Wolfe's dictum that people in the same

profession tend to be the same *all over* around the world. My cabdriver wanted

"twenty dollars American" to take me to the Metropole *(a hotel)* which my travel

agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into,

The Metropole being almost as difficult to snag for a reservation as the

old National. "I can get you into the new National," he had said, "but you

don't want that. It's all tourist groups, ⁴and is run entirely by Intourist

~~which, by the way, they ought to call Outourist, the worst bunch of~~

people."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me even to the tourist agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, paid him in cash in advance, asked for speed on my visa (on the assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through now and again) and he did, and I tipped him for getting me the visa in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as Highly ^{Eager} Super Individual

Tourist, and now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver was off to his own races. He ^{wished} wanted to buy dollars from me, and the black market rate, three rubles for a dollar, was ^{almost four times} considerably better than ~~a dollar and more for each ruble~~ at official exchange.

^{Could be a} It was such an obvious trap, however. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed and kept holed for dealing in rubles on the black market, and that before I had even had one opportunity to look at the country, this harsh unholy place I had chosen to visit.

Indeed the driver was taking up so much of my sur-charged attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel, when relaxed, is ^{Can be like} like being on marijuana for the first good time--the eyes are washed in dew and everything is

But fresh. *like* Travel in a state of nerves is movement through a tunnel. One's

senses are all pulled in. The noise of the car--and *we were in* this was some little

jerky flivver of a sedan no more than a cut or two above the old

Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the

landscape. The ongoing litany of the driver in his unmusical

black-market English, "all right, *hey,* hey, you tell me, how many dollars you

can could sell, just tell me, You don't have to sell," on and on, and out the

window was clean snow and dirty snow, and melted fields about as *sprightly* happy

as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, *dark wooden* funky

little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and all

yawning individually, *paint peeling* then palisades of housing projects, dirty-white for

the most part in the dirty-white snow, *They looked* and looking like the plaster had

cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones.

What a misery was this land. The sky was as gray as the concrete walls

in Sheremetyevo Airport, and this on a day in April. Communism ^{was} irritating

me personally at this point, as if equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty,

depressed, eager for loot, out of date. And I still didn't know if the

driver ^{might not be} was some extension of KGB, or the comedy at the customs cage a

six-minute play for ^{someone's} somebody's delectation. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the four lane highway. A legend in

Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. ^{Some burst of} LENIN SAVES SOVIET PLAN

~~PROJECTIONS AND COMMUNIST COOPERATION.~~ ^{some} It had to be something like

^{homiletic and loveless language}
~~that~~ I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a

^{mean and} outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire was one.

Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably ^(I) didn't care. I

couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the

side-windows of the cab were ~~so~~ mud-splattered, and the front ~~did its~~

~~best~~ to the slip-slop of two overworked wipers ^{which} kept drawing

~~different kinds of striated salt and snow-mud-melt fang.~~ The driver, ^{fans on the windows.}

~~realizing I would not deal with him,~~ was as sullen as a ground-wave of

heat in August. ~~He must be bone-fide. A cab-ride from the airport~~

~~without the opportunity to deal for money must be a loss of hard-revenue.~~

Now we were on a big bare boulevard, large, dull, not ~~too~~ much

traffic. Heavy old buildings, government departments, and ^{specialist} ~~specialist~~

^{institutes} ~~institutes~~ were lost in the side windows. This place was like a grainy

photograph of the worst of Washington, D.C. There was even some traffic

now. Pedestrians, however, were few. ~~Of course,~~ it was Sunday. This

was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green

METROPOL
 six-story building outside the door. The sign read ~~METROPOL~~ I was at

the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars in tip. He wanted ten. He had his
 own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me must have been
 pinched for I gave him five.

METROPOL

July 2

Consent + reprint 1-24
tulle - space. 1

I had trouble at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow. Perhaps it will give some idea of my state, if I tell you that I had forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been laundered, and I refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means of rendering dirty money clean. Yes, I had had a mental lapse and left ^{it} the passport in the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit that went into the washing machine. If you would enquire what sort of man puts a suit into a mangle, well, I was demented when I did it, and the manuscript that could offer explanations for this frame of mind was ~~now~~ packed into one of the secret compartments of my valise.

Now, my
My passport, looking like a small layered pastry, was being held aloft *(at the cage window)* by the incredulous Soviet guard at the cage window. I am a well-schooled man, and one of the first things we learned was to keep our papers in order. Yet, here was I proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. with the name of one William Madden Libby about whose imaginary past I had ^{hardly} insufficiently prepared myself. *a sufficiently detailed life.*

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! . . . Why?"

His English was going to be no more use than my Russian.

"River," I tried to say in his tongue, thereby suggesting that one had fallen in the river with one's passport. I did not dare admit I had consigned

the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was saying, but later, studying phrases for tourists in my guidebook, I came to recognize that I used such words as *ruk* and *ryetra*, and *ruba* --which are, respectively, arm and rib and fish! Doubtless I was telling him that I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words, enough to leave my Sovietsky critically befuddled. Then, like a good stubborn dog, he would reply, "Passport--no good. Why?" After which he would draw himself to full height and eyeball me--they were obviously trained to do that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have failed to foresee that this puffed-up *tarte* of a passport would look desperate under examination?

"Not good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the long line of passengers waiting behind me.

"No. Not expired. Please," I said to him, "*pazhalesta!*" and reached out, *my hand*
^{*gave*} He ~~handed~~ the passport over with great suspicion and I turned with caution the faded worn-out pages which were now as velvety to the touch as much-used dollar bills. Then, I found the expiration page. Of course not. My passport had not expired. I pointed out the date, and handed it back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between hysteria

and happiness. For ten hours, as full of frenzy as a cockroach when the lights first go on, I had been sitting in the middle of Economy, dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then, as if ^{flattened by} catching a whiff of poison spray, I would ^{recline} ~~lay~~ on my back in full

~~recline~~--using all three inches of rearward slant available to the tourist-width chair--and drift in that half-stupor where the mind-flow is ^{viscous, and} heavy in its viscosity, one's limbs seem too massive to move, ^{but} ~~and~~ one's nerves ^{race} ~~are racing~~ like lights on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept promising the stomach a visit, never did.

Now, ~~at least~~, I was on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that this confrontation fell somewhere in the void between farce and bureaucratic horror. At least I could stand up and talk. After ten hours of Economy, I was ready to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been a Minnesota farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, a Scandihoovian look, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger, "you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, pointing to my passport, as if it were a wholly

execrable object.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyad*," I said, "*bolshaye lyad*. Got it? Much ice." I spread my hand over ~~an expanse of imaginary ice~~ as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave to the horizontal plane just fashioned in the air, one good karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it sounded like ^{an ice-pond} a river breaking up, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Vada. Bolshaye vada* --lots of water, right." I waved my hands in desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kaladna*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kaladna*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Veelyam Modyen Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening.

The blond kid stomped my passport. He was relaxed now. He gave a big kid's grin. "*Pardone,*" he said, giving it a friendly spin of Italian-French.

The rest of the route through customs at Sheremetyevo showed a ~~gray~~ concrete airport built as a showcase for the 1980 Olympics: Come ~~into our~~ ^{to our}

Communist

(land where the walls are gray. My bags went through customs without pain.

Both the manuscript and the journal, which I had stowed away separately in each of my two secret compartments, attracted no notice--the suitcase had been designed to take confidential papers through routine inspections. So, I passed through the last gate and encountered signs in English which told me to look for the Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum that people in the same profession, such as waiters, tend to be the same all over the world. My cabdriver wanted twenty dollars, American, to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which my travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," he had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me even to the agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, paid him cash in advance, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the assumption

he had connections sufficient to rush one through occasionally) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as *Individual Tourist, Special*. Now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his workable black market English that he wished to buy dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a dollar, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market.

Indeed the driver was demanding so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel in a state of nerves is like ^{passage} movement through a tunnel. One's senses are pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some flivver of a sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the landscape. The litany of the driver, "all right, tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell, ~~just tell~~ me, come on, what do you say?" continued in my ear.

We passed expanses of clean snow, dirty snow, and melted fields about as sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, dark funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and

all yawning individually, their paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty-white for the most part in the dirty-white snow. They looked like the plaster had cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery was this land. The March sky was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetievo Airport. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver might not be some extension of KGB. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the four lane highway. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some bouquet, doubtless, of homilectic language. I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire was one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of my cab were mud-spattered, and sights to the front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers which kept drawing striated salt fans on the glass. The driver was as sullen as muggy weather in August.

Now we were on a large boulevard of ^{without} many lanes, dull, not much traffic. Heavy old buildings--government departments, and specialist institutes--

perambulated by the side windows. There were few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read **ΜΕΤΡΟΠΟΛΙ**. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars for tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me was pinched, for I gave him five. My nerves, I repeat, were not what once they were.

A short stocky wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat--a hero of the Great War. He would not be about to show much to a stranger.

Nor was he in a rush to help me with the bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the ^{travel agency} voucher on my registration in order to get through the door. There, the ^{lobby} interior was grim. The lobby had a pallette that went from faded cigar-butt brown to old railroad coach upholstery green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you stepped ^{upon} ~~across~~ it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those hotels in the side streets of Times Square that is waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections

in place before ^{High Holies} the pageant commenced once more.

There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each night, for many nights now, the same people appeared and spoke to me. I would not think of these visitations as delusion or hallucination, but as a pageant. Each person came before me like an actor performing alone in a theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent.

I no longer knew if all of their existence belonged to me, or if the rigors of this last year of working on my history of the one night in my life which was beyond measure, had finally caught up to me. I was proceeding, as you may imagine, in a state of peculiar delicacy. A movie director told me that after one of his movies, he had not stopped living with the camera crew and actors. They were gone, and the film was wrapped, but he would awaken from every sleep with fresh commands: ^{"Tom"} "Ricky, we have to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras ought to do it." He would be out of bed and shaving before he could say in effect: "The film is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot any more." But he had, as he explained to me, stepped through the looking-glass. The film was more real than his life.

Was I equal to that director? For a year, hiding out in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived, or ever would) I had worked to raise a wall between ^{The High Holies} the pageant and myself.

Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night, and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves and the pits.

Then without warning, the pageant would strike again. Strike is the operative word. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of *grand mal*. One misstep and the seizures would come. After a while, the Bronx was no longer tenable for me. As if I had been engaged in some clandestine activity, running a network, let us say, in an occupied country, the warning bells had rung--I had to move.

That people were looking for me, was certain enough. What damage or deviltry I might be up to, they could hardly conceive. But the longer I did not surface, the more they would have to wonder. Where was he? Why had he gone under? Had he defected? They would have to wonder if I had moved to Moscow. How I laughed--in those paroxysms of silent laughter with which one entertains one's loneliness--how I laughed that all the while I was living in the Bronx, they would be thinking of me in Moscow.

Yet out of the logic of separate steps which seemed altogether rigorous to me--although I could not name the reason for any of these steps, I had come to the conclusion, so soon as ^{*The High Holidays*} the pageant picked up its operations once ^{*in my mind*} more that I had to take a trip--for the first time--to the U.S.S.R. I did not

(Bronx County, New York, NY)
know why. I was in trouble enough if they ever ran me down in the Bronx, but to be found in Moscow would put the worst interpretations on my case. And to go there with my manuscript and journal was unforgivable even to myself. What if the Russians were to uncover me, and look through the papers?

Part of the inexorable logic of making the move to Moscow, however, was that the papers went with me. Who knows how the boxcars of obsession are moved around in the freight yards of the mad? I did not feel mad, only beleaguered, but there was a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. To pursue with diligence a major action that is odds-on to disaster has to be a fair description of the wholly unbalanced.

I clung to my papers as if they were one of those few remaining body organs that surgery cannot yet replace. I could no more leave them behind than choose not to go to Moscow. And indeed I could hardly keep secret the fact that I was taking them with me. The old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was already aware of that.

"Oh, Mr. Libby," she said. "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Rosenthal."

He was an eighty-year old arthritic, she, a seventy-five year old diabetic--we had had no more than passing conversations for a year, but I was

content with that. Bless them--I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me. I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good middle-class people. While I expected they would be curious enough about my parts, I did not have the heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and possible marriages of one William Madden Libby, no matter how much I could use such a trial run for practise; I had done that once before, spent much of a year with a woman to whom I offered a bogus life not at all my own. Since she fell in love with me, I believe it did her damage in the same way that a capsule which is presented as a nutrient when it is only a placebo, has to work a subtle damage on relations between mind and digestion. Somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the bell that tolls suffers a hair-line crack.

Well, there was not much flim flam with the Rosenthals. We made occasional conversation when we met at the door, or in the hall, and that was all. They were able to supplement their retirement moneys with my rent, and I could keep my privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except when I grew tired of soup on a hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote prodigiously. I was looking--we can move from the nineteenth to the twentieth century on the verbal conceits of this next remark--I was looking

to find the viable parameters of my life.

It went reasonably well for a year. There were days when I felt neither haunted nor invaded. But I was like a boulder perched on the edge of a cliff.

Sooner or later, it would all go. It did. The ^{High Holidays} ~~present~~ picked up once more, and Moscow blinked in my mind like a lit-up billboard. I saw the travel agent, made the preparations, tried to study Russian, and said farewell to the Rosenthals. I told them I was going to Seattle. I heard her say in reply, "Well, I guess you'll have a heavy bunch of papers to carry with you for your family to read?"

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like your book," she said.

"Well," I said, "I do too."

"Maybe, you'll even get a publisher."

"One hopes so."

"If you should, please mail me the book and I'll pay for it. I want you to autograph the copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Rosenthal," I said, "I'll be delighted to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever found this lair in the Bronx, they would also hear from her how much I had been writing.

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and started to unpack. I took everything out but the concealed papers. The bag, now apparently empty, weighed a bit too much, although not critically so. I put back my toilet kit which would thump about inside if someone shook the valise, locked it, and put it up in the closet. I opened my portable typewriter. But I was not ready to read, let alone to write. It was five now, Sunday afternoon, Moscow time, which was nine o'clock in the morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the evening from Kennedy airport, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with a transit stop in London) and had landed at 2 P.M. Moscow time, 6 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were by now upside down. If it was nine A.M. in New York, no wonder I felt full of the false vigor that comes on in the morning after a night of false sleep. I had to get out of this room for awhile.

So I took a walk. Let me say that no American tourist can feel comfortable taking his first steps in Moscow, not after forty years of media-din have brought one to the unconscious conviction that Communism is evil. I had had, however, stints of special scholarship to support such a grand thesis. It is an awesome and terrible thesis, but it is grand, or so it is if *(as Harlot used to say, presiding over)* grandeur resides in the majestic notion that the simple subdues the complex.

The king, after all, divides the land with a wave of his sceptre, and, evil, that devil's shellgame--where is evil hiding now?--can be ^{contained} subtended in the grand thesis that Communism is evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me. I was like a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years. Such a man does not know the world he is entering, does not, for example, know how to walk into a store and buy a pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. Here I, after the casual nature of American freedom, did not know what was allowed me here. I was not certain I could leave the hotel and go out on the street without the proper paper being stamped. I hung about the lobby for five minutes trying to observe the comings and goings, but soon felt uneasy. My presence itself might become suspect. So, I took a chance, walked to the entrance, stepped out, and was met with a scowl by the doorman--it would take awhile to realize that he was somewhat simple-minded, and had not placed me yet as a hotel guest, so was scowling.

At any rate, here was I on the street. Cabdrivers, parked at the hotel curb, yelled at me as a prospect, passersby took their glances. I just walked. I made no moves to determine if anyone was following me for I did not wish to show any knowledge of evasive tactics, but then I also felt light as if I were not being followed. I had put on an old jacket and wore a woolen hat

that I pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was all right. I felt like giving a great whoop.

Off to one side of the hotel, a street and a square away would be, I knew, from my study of the guidebook, the statue to Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, "Sword of the Revolution," and great-grandfather of the KGB. Back of him would be the Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew that place better than any American prison--I had listened a hundred times in the imaginary auditorium of my ear to the screams of the tortured in the cellars of the Lubyanka, but I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, and thus debating, I followed my steps from Sverdlov Square and the Metropole to Dzerzhinsky Square. Before me was the Lubyanka, even as I had imagined it, and yet it was less, this late nineteenth century seven-story office building, once a palace for insurance companies, ^{It had} and still ^{had} with white curtains in the windows, and highly polished brass fittings on the door, ^{but its} ~~its~~ walls, ~~however~~, were a soiled khaki-yellow. On the whole, it was a dismal old-fashioned office building in and out of which now came and went a few men in officer's uniform on this late Sunday afternoon, cold as a New England forest in winter, and all the while I heard no screams, and felt myself marooned in the tunnel of endless travel. This building--conceivably my future home--failed to stir adrenaline.

I wandered away through side streets, gray in the light, near to black in the shadows, old streets of the merchants. Enclaves of gloom had not shifted here in a hundred years. It was nearly agreeable to discover depression this palpable, and I had a moment in which I understood the comforts of gloom-- was this my first real thought in a week? For even as the acceptance of poverty ^{might be} ~~was~~ the greatest protection against corruption of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which one could live encapsulated from insanity. Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom would be here to find in Moscow, and thinking this, I came out of one more side street onto Red Square, a shock as nice as stepping from a Roman alley onto the great plaza of St. Peter's, except here was no Vatican, but a field of cobblestones near to half a mile long and hundreds of feet wide spreading out to the walls of the Kremlin. In the twilight, a pearly lavender showed already on the horizon of the gray sky, but ~~a line~~ ^{we're} of Russians was still waiting to see the tomb of Lenin and his remains below, preserved in his vault. Two thousand people, two by two, were in that line, and about twenty people moved ^{into the tomb} ~~past a point~~ each minute. If there were two thousand on line, the last man would wait one hundred minutes in this cold, a reasonable mortification for a pilgrimage.

Now, however, I was beginning to pay attention to the Russians on the street. They all looked middle-aged. Even the young had an air of

^{that spoke}
 relinquishment to ~~spee~~k of middle age. All the same, Red Square seemed to be a cheerful place. To my astonishment, it was cheerful on this late and cold Sunday afternoon. There was a shimmer to the air, a conviviality to the faces red with vigor and the cold. Busloads of tourists--native Russians--were leaving, others were yet arriving. Hundreds of others walking in the Square were showing that simple happiness which comes to the hardworking when they are transported to an important place. These could have been Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses, on a ferry to the Statue of Liberty. Same happy faces. One was getting a first return on the ultimate passage to heaven.

How much like a movie this was. The scene had precision for the eye. The center of Red Square rose higher than the sides, and people in the distance, therefore, were only visible from the thigh or the knee. Their shoes had disappeared below the cobblestone horizon. Everyone bounced as they walked, even as heads bob on every step when a crowd is perambulating before a lens. I did not know the history of Red Square, which is to say what had produced this little harmony of the spirits, but my own were up--I felt delivered from the iron clangor of the Bronx and the walls of Moscow. I was ready for one irrational instant to celebrate, I hardly knew what. Maybe it was only the joy of coming to the end of a trip. I decided to leave the Square before I became too pleased with all of this, which is to say--too manic.

So I went back to the Metropole, received a thin slice more of good greeting from the doorman, the elevator man, and the *dezurnaya*--my floor lady--returned to the room, sat on my bed, sat on the chair next to the bed, took down my valise, opened the velcro to the false compartments, took out my novel and my journal, set them on the small desk I had been provided, and debated whether to look at either packet of papers, then took out a notebook, considered an entry for my journal, put down my pencil, and realized abruptly how tired I was. I was weary from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings--about of mood, the rigors of the walk--everyone in Moscow seemed to ^{perambulate} move at top pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay along with them--and now I was tired with the real desolations of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt so alone or so dislocated.

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated at a table with strangers before a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, just no more immaculate than a shirt that's been worn for a few hours. The only dish available was Chicken Kiev, a rubber chicken fit for a routine political banquet with a gusher of butter that tasted like lubricating oil mixed with some sour sorrow emanating from the kitchen. The kasha was undercooked, the dark bread was coarse, the fresh vegetable was a thin slice of tomato. Then a cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy middle-aged woman

with heavy troubles. It took all of the little attentions she could give to the world outside herself to keep level with her job.

After I left the ^{table} room, I realized that I had been in the equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an eating hall, so to speak, for guests alone. The real restaurant, for a prouder gang, was entered by two glass doors. Outside, in the lobby, black marketeers and bureaucrats, accompanied by their wives, waited on line. Inside, a dance band as full of vitamins and used-up musical patterns as some of the prom bands that used to work the dances at Yale, was hacking away, a weird peppy band that sounded through the glass doors as if all five or six musicians and their instruments were hyper-ventilating inside a balalaika.

I went back to my room. I needed to sleep. I prayed I would get to sleep. At the door to the elevator, as I got off, my *dezhurnaya*, under her blonde bee-hive, gave me a real smile. I understood. I gave every evidence of going by her desk many times a day, of being a regular customer. The comings and the goings of her keys were her negotiations. True hell is to have no action.

I locked my door, undressed, washed my face, dried my hands. The sink was cracked, the soap was gritty, the towel was sparse and coarse. So was the toilet paper. This was one of the ten best hotels in Moscow. I was furious suddenly at I knew not what. How did these people presume to be our

greatest enemy on earth? They did not even have the wherewithal to be evil.

Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. There was every intimation ^{The} ~~pageant was on its way.~~ *High Holes were on their* I decided to get up again and read my novel. Will it tell you something of the year I spent in that rented room in the apartment of the Rosenthal's, that I no longer had to look at the first fifteen pages. I knew them by heart. I could use them as a counter-strike ~~against the pageant.~~ Even as we and the Soviets spent years learning how to interfere with each other's broadcasts, so could I begin to recite the novel to myself so soon as I knew the pageant was near. It did not always work, but for so long as it did, I lived within my novel. It was equal to me, and if I could pass from that early section I knew by heart into the pages I must still read, well, I had turned the corner. The pageant would recede, and the ghosts of all those long-gone deeds--patriotic, shameful, *(wholly horrendous)* dedicated ~~and contradictory~~ ^{Maclean}--would not come back. The features of the principals would not appear, and I would not have to listen on this night to Howard Hunt and his wife Dorothy, to Kim Philby and Guy Burgess and Donald ~~McLean~~ ^{Maclean}, to Bill Harvey who always packed a gun, and to Lee Harvey Oswald who did not know how to shoot. James Jesus Angleton did not appear with his Golitsin, nor Yuri Nosenko with his woes, I did not have to hear my father recount his conversations with Johnny Rosselli and Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante. Poor Frank Olson did not jump out of his

ninth-story window again, and I did not have to listen to Jimmy Hoffa informing me one more time how Marilyn Monroe had left this world, nor nod to J. Edgar Hoover (whom I with my colleagues used to call J. Edgar Buddha) while he expatiated with pride on how he reamed the Democrats with poor ^{Tom} Senator Eagleton. Jacopo Arbenz no longer had to breathe his last for me, nor did I submit to one more indictment from Fidel Castro. ~~I was free of the~~ ~~pageant while the long slow roll of the novel I had fashioned was able to~~ inhabit my mind. So I recited my own words aloud, slowly at first, intoning the first sentence like a mantra. Sometimes I would repeat this first sentence numerous times as if the sounds themselves might be forces in that unseen combat of warring silences that waged each night.

"What if ghosts are real?" I would say, "What if ghosts are real?"

~~and~~ Most crucial of those avoidances, I would not have to stare again into the eyes of my wife, Kittredge. She inhabited my novel on every page, but only as she once had been, and now she might be the most fearsome witness of them all. Only when the long ~~slow~~ roll of the novel inhabited my mind, could I keep the High Holidays in place. ~~For myself, therefore,~~ For myself, therefore, I began to recite my own words aloud, but slowly at first, intoning

1-23 and now miss p24

Friday

+ p25 are all in tuffler space. 1

I had trouble at Sheremetievo Airport in Moscow. Perhaps it will give some idea of my state, if I tell you that I had ~~entirely~~ forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been laundered, and I refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means of rendering dirty money clean. Yes, I had ^{had} a mental lapse and left the passport in the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit that went into the washing machine. If you would enquire what sort of man puts a suit into a mangle, well, I was ~~close to~~ demented when I did it, and the manuscript that could offer explanations for this much-skewed frame of mind was now ^{into} nicely packed in one of the secret compartments of my valise. While ~~that particular bag had been designed to take sensitive paper through any routine inspection, it would never bear up to a detailed search.~~

Now my passport, looking like a small layered pastry (~~a torte~~), was being held aloft by the incredulous Soviet guard at the cage window. I am a ^{man} well-schooled ~~trained man~~ ^{well-trained} ~~is more accurate~~ and one of the first things ^{was} ^{our} we learned is to keep your papers in order. Yet, here was I proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. with the ~~false~~ name of one William Madden Libby about whose imaginary past I had ~~much too~~ insufficiently prepared myself.

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! . . . Why?"

His English was going to be no more use ~~to me~~ than my Russian ~~to him~~.

"River," I tried to say in his tongue, thereby suggesting that one had fallen in the river with one's passport. I did not dare admit I had consigned the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was saying, but later, studying ~~the~~ phrases for tourists in my guidebook, I came to recognize that I ^{used} was using such words as *ruk'* and *ryebro*, and *riba* --which are, respectively, arm and rib and fish! Yes, ^{I told} ~~was~~ doubtless telling my Sovietsky that I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words, enough to leave him critically befuddled. Then, like a good stubborn dog, he would reply, "Passport--no good. Why?" After which he would draw himself to full height and eyeball me--they were obviously trained to do that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have ^{failed to foresee} ~~forgotten~~ how ^{that} ~~desperate~~ this washed-out puffed-up passport would look under examination?

"Passport not good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the long line of passengers waiting behind me. They were beginning to focus on my tension, ^{instead of} ~~rather than~~ their own.

^{Please,} "Expired. No. Not expired. ^{Please,} ~~Pajalesta~~," I said to him, ^{"Pa zha le sta!"} ~~please~~ and reached out. He handed the little book to me with great suspicion and I turned with caution the faded worn out pages which were now as velvety to the

touch as much-used dollar bills. Then, I found the expiration page. No, of course not, my passport had not expired, and I pointed out the date, and handed it back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between hysteria and happiness. For ten hours, as full of frenzy as a cockroach when the lights *first* go on, I had been sitting in the middle of Economy, dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then, as if the cockroach had caught a whiff of poison spray, I would lay on my back in full recline--using all three inches of rearward slant available in the tourist-width chair--and know that ^{*half-*}stupid where the mind-flow is heavy in its viscosity, and one's limbs seem too massive to move, ^{*yet*} but one's nerves are racing like the lights on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept promising the stomach a visit, never did.

Now, at least, I was on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that this confrontation fell somewhere in the void between farce and bureaucratic horror. At least I was standing up and talking. After ten hours of ~~that seat in~~ Economy, I would have been ready to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been a Minnesota farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, a Scandihoovian look, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger,

"you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, waving my passport.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyad*," I said, "*balshaye lyad*. Got it? Much ice." I spread my hand over an expanse of imaginary ice as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave to the horizontal plane just fashioned in the air, one good karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it sounded like ^{a river} ~~ice~~ *breaking up*, ~~cracking~~, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Vada. Balshaye vada*--lots of water, right." I waved my hands in desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kaladna*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kaladna*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "*Peelyam Modyen Leeboo*?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the

other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening.

The blond kid stamped my passport. He was relaxed now. He gave a big kid's grin. "*Pardone*," he said, giving it a friendly ^{spin of Italian-French,} ~~hybrid of Italian and French.~~

The rest of the route through customs at Sheremetyevo showed ^{a gray airport,} the grayest ~~airport~~ ^(offshoot of) I had ever seen in. Some style in concrete brutalism had ^{served for the} been ~~appropriated to its making--~~ ^{architectural style--} a showcase for the 1980 Olympics. ^{Come into} Enter our

land where ^{the} walls are gray. My bags went through customs without pain. Both

the manuscript and the journal, which I had separately stowed away in each of ^{my} the two secret compartments, attracted no notice--^{(the suitcase had been designed} I passed through the ~~to take confidential papers through routine inspections.~~ ^{So, I passed} last gate and encountered signs in English which told me to look for the

Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum,

^(such as) ~~that~~ people in the same profession, like waiters, tend to be the same all over the world. My cabdriver wanted twenty dollars, American, to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which my travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag ~~for a reservation~~ as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," he had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been

obvious about me even to the agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, paid him cash in advance, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through ^{occasionally} ~~now and again~~) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as *Individual Tourist, Special,* ~~and~~ ^{now}, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his workable black market English that he wished to buy dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a dollar, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market.

Indeed the driver was ^{demanding} ~~taking up~~ so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel in a state of nerves is like movement through a tunnel. One's senses are all pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some ~~jerk-~~ flivver of a sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the landscape. The litany of the driver, "all right, tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell, just tell me, come on, what do you say?" continued in my ear.

Out the window was clean snow, dirty snow, and melted fields about as

sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, dark wooden funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and all yawning individually, their paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty-white for the most part in the dirty-white snow. They looked like the plaster had cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery was this land. The sky was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetyevo Airport, and this on a day in April. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver might not be some extension of KGB. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the four lane highway. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some bouquet, doubtless, of homilectic and loveless language. I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire was one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of my cab were mud-spattered, and sights to the front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers which kept drawing striated salt fans on the ^{glass.} window. The driver was as sullen as heat in

August.

Now we were on a large boulevard ^{of} many lanes, dull, not much traffic. Heavy old buildings--government departments, and specialist institutes--perambulated by the side windows. There ^{were} ~~was even some traffic~~, ~~now~~, if few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read **МЕТРОПОЛ**. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars for tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me was pinched, for I gave him five. My nerves, I repeat, were not what once they were.

A short stocky wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat--~~he had been a hero of the Great War in one or another degree. He~~ ^(not be about to show much) would ~~show nothing~~ to a stranger.

Nor was he in ~~much~~ ^{me with the} of a rush to help my two bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the voucher on my registration in order to get through the door. There, the interior was grim. The lobby had a pallette that went from faded cigar-butt brown to old railroad coach upholstery green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you

stepped across it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those hotels in the side streets ^{of} Times Square that ^{is} still rents rooms while waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather before and after the revolution? If we are to speak of travelling through a psychic tunnel, I felt as if the tube had just ^{snuffed} debouched me back into the nineteenth century. The old time was gloomy. Off to my left, ^{the} a neon sign said, Dollar Bar, ^{which} ~~On this Sunday afternoon,~~ ^{looked like an anachronism.} it was not yet open. Further into the depths of the lobby was the double glass door to a restaurant, closed. A huge marble stairway spiralled in right angle turns around the core of an elevator shaft. ⁹ The girl at the registration desk was wearing a sweater and had a nose cold. She wore eyeglasses, was plain, and pretended not to notice me until I seized her attention. Her English had an unhappy accent that was reminiscent of such tortures to the spirit ~~and flesh~~ as ballet lessons for unpromising girls. The elevator operator, another war hero, was gruff, and the concierge on the fourth floor was a ^{big} heavy blonde about fifty with a bee-hive ^{hairstyle} and a big tough Russian face, ^{she} she looked like a mate for the doorman ~~on the street~~. She sat behind a little glass-topped desk facing the elevator, kept a rose in a small vase, and scowled as she looked for my key which was large, ~~and~~ bronze, and heavy as a sack of change. The route to

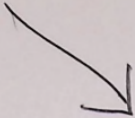
my room led down one long dark corridor and then turned a right angle to another. The walls were pea-green and reflected the glare of a highly shellacked parquet floor ^{but for the} ~~that had occasional~~ gaps where squares of plywood were substituted. Since the promenade to my room was over a red-runner carpet half a football field in length down the first corridor, then half a football field down the other to my room door, and since the floor still buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation--if I may allude to my passport once more--that this red carpet had been laid over frozen water, and I stepped from one ice floe to the next, a walk with considerable tipping and lurching.

My room was eleven feet by fourteen and had a ceiling twelve feet high. The window looked on a court. That red carpet, strong, strapping, and prepared to endure spilled vodka, coffee, soup, ink, and the occasional miseries of a drunk's stomach, was still under my feet, my companion from the lobby ~~up the elevator, down the corridors~~ to here. I had a chest of drawers, and a narrow bed with a thin European mattress laid upon a larger mattress. There was a bolster as heavy as a water-soaked log. ^{Plus} ~~And~~ a TV set!

I turned it on. Lots of electronic snow, lots of wave-over. Black and white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed and put my head in my hands. I got up. I closed the curtains to the courtyard. I

sat down again. I was here, and I could stay here--assuming I had entered without attracting official attention--I could stay here for a week at least, and sort some questions into categories. I had so many questions that I no longer looked for answers. Only for categories. I needed some scheme ~~of~~ ^{of} order to put in place before the pageant commenced once more. ~~If~~ There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each night, for many nights now, the same people ~~had~~ ^{First} appeared and spoke to me. ~~(I would fall asleep and soon wake. Then~~ ^{then} ~~the visitors would speak.~~ I would think of these visitations as neither delusion nor hallucination, but a pageant. Each person came before me like an actor performing alone (but for me) in a theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent ~~beyond what I would have thought was their measure.~~

I no longer knew if all of their existence belonged to me, or if the rigors of this last year of working on my manuscript, that history of the one night in my life that had been ~~without~~ ^{beyond} measure, was finally caught up to me. I was surviving, as you may imagine, in a state of the most peculiar delicacy. A movie director once told me that after one of his movies, he had ~~continued to~~ ^{not stopped} ~~live in his sleep with his cameraman and actors.~~ ^{living with the camera crew} ~~The film was wrapped, but~~ ^{They were gone and the} he would awaken ^{from every sleep} with fresh commands: "Ricky, ^{we have} we're going to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras ought to do it." He would be out of bed and shaving before ~~his mind looking back at him in the mirror would show~~ ^{he could say}

 [consternation and say] in effect: "The film is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot anymore." But he had, as he explained to me, stepped through the looking-glass. The film was more real ~~to him~~ than his life.

Was I equal to that director? For a year, concealed in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived, or ever would) I had worked to raise a wall between the pageant and myself.

Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night, and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves and the pits.

Then without warning, the pageant ^{would strike / strike} struck again. Struck is the operative word. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of *grand mal*. One misstep and the seizures would come. Now, ^{So the} I knew ~~The~~ Bronx was no longer tenable for me. As if I had been engaged in some clandestine activity, running a network, let us say, in an occupied country, the warning bells had rung--I had to move.

That people were looking for me, was certain enough. What damage or devilry I might be up to, they could hardly conceive. But the longer I did not surface, the more they would have to wonder. Where was he? Why had he gone under? Had he defected? They would have to wonder if I had ^{moved} gone to Moscow. How I laughed--in those paroxysms of silent laughter with which one entertains one's loneliness--how I laughed ^{that} all the while I was living in

the Bronx ~~that~~ they would be thinking of me in Moscow.

Yet out of the logic of separate steps which seemed altogether rigorous to me--although I could not name the reason for any of these steps, I had come to the conclusion, so soon as the pageant picked up its operations once more ~~in my mind~~, that I had to take a trip--for the first time--to the U.S.S.R. I did not know why. So far as personal security was concerned I was in trouble enough if they ever ran me down in the Bronx, but to be found in Moscow would put the worst interpretations on my disappearance. ^{case,} And to ^{go there} ~~travel over~~ with my manuscript and my journal ~~--to endanger all the~~ information they contained, was even unforgivable to myself, at least if the Russians were to recognize me for any reason, and ^{look through the} ~~find my papers.~~

Yet, ~~there was no choice.~~ Part of the inexorable logic of making the move to Moscow was that the papers went with me. Who knows how the boxcars of obsession are moved around in the freight yards of the mad? I did not feel mad, only beleaguered, but there was a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. To pursue with diligence a major action that is odds-on to disaster has to be a fair description of the wholly unbalanced.

I clung to my papers, however, as if they were one of those few remaining body organs that cannot be replaced. I could no more leave them behind than choose not to go to Moscow. And indeed I could hardly keep the

fact a secret that I was taking them with me. The old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was already aware of that.

"Oh, Mr. Libby," she said. "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Rosenthal."

He was an eighty-year old arthritic, she, a seventy-five year old diabetic--we had had no more than passing conversations for a year, but I was content with that. Bless them--I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me, because I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good middle-class people, and while I expected they would be curious enough about my parts, I did not have the heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and ^{possible} marriages of one William Madden Libby, no matter how much I could use such a trial run for practise; I had done that once before, spent much of a year with a woman to whom I offered a bogus life not at all my own. Since she fell in love with me, I believe it did her damage in the ^{same} way that a capsule which is presented as a nutrient but is only a placebo, has to work a subtle damage on communications between mind and digestion. Somewhere in the depths of the

unconscious, the bell tolls with a cracked sound.

Well, there was not much flim flam with the Rosenthals. We made occasional conversation when we met at the door or in the hall, and that was all. They were able to supplement their retirement moneys with my rent, and keep their privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except when I grew tired of soup on a hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote prodigiously. I was looking--we can move from the nineteenth to the twentieth century on the verbal conceits of this next remark--I was looking to find the viable parameters of my life.

It went reasonably well for a year. There were days when I felt neither haunted nor invaded. But I was like a boulder perched on the edge of a cliff. Sooner or later, ~~something would shift. It would all go.~~ *picked up once more,* It did. The pageant ~~began again,~~ and Moscow blinked in my mind like a neon sign. I saw the travel agent, made the preparations, tried to study Russian, and said farewell to the Rosenthals. I told them I was going to Seattle. I heard her say in reply, "Well, I guess you'll have a heavy bunch of papers to carry with you for your family to read?"

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like your book," she said.

"Well," I said, "I do too."

"Maybe, you'll even get a publisher."

"One hopes so."

"If you should, please ^{mail} send me the book and I'll pay for it. I want you to autograph the copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Rosenthal," I said, "I'll be ^{delighted} happy to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever found this lair in the Bronx, they would also hear from her how much I had been writing.

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and started to unpack. I took everything out but the ^{concealed} hidden papers. The bag, now ^{although} apparently empty, weighed a bit too much but not critically so. I put back my toilet kit which would thump about inside if someone shook the valise, locked it, and put it up in the closet. I opened my portable typewriter. But I was not ready to read, let alone to write. It was five now, Sunday afternoon, Moscow time, which was nine, ~~ten~~ o'clock in the morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the evening from Kennedy airport, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with a transit stop in London) and had landed at 2 P.M. Moscow time, 6 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were ^{by} now upside down. If it was nine A.M. in New York, no wonder I felt full of the ^{false} false vigor that comes on in the morning after a night

~~False~~ of ~~the~~ sleep. I had to get out of this room for awhile.

So I took a walk. Let me say that no American tourist ^{can} ~~is going to~~ feel comfortable taking his first steps in Moscow, not after forty years of Cold War ^{and have brought one to the unconconscious conviction} ~~media din to the certain conclusion~~ (that Communism is evil. I had had, however, stints of special scholarship to support ^{sachg} ~~this~~ grand thesis. It is an awesome and terrible thesis, but it is grand, ^{or so} ~~at least~~ it is if grandeur resides in the majestic notion that the simple subtends the complex. The king, after all, divides the land with a wave of his sceptre, and, evil, that devil's shellgame--where is evil hiding now?--can be subtended in the grand thesis that Communism is evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me. I was like a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years. Such a man does not know the world he is entering, does not, for ~~an~~ example, know how to walk into a store and buy a pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. Here I, after the casual nature of American freedom, did not know what was allowed me here. I was not certain I could leave the hotel and go out on the street without the proper paper ^{being} stamped. I hung about the lobby for five minutes trying to observe the comings and goings but soon felt uneasy. My presence might itself become suspect. So, I took a chance, walked to the ^{entrance}, ~~door~~, stepped out, and was met with a scowl by the doorman--it would take

+++ I made no ~~leaving~~ moves to determine if anyone was following me. So I did not wish to show any knowledge of evasive tactics but then I also felt light as if I were not being followed.

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awhile to realize that he was somewhat simple-minded, and had not placed me yet as a hotel guest, so was scowling.

At any rate, here was I on the street. Cabdrivers parked ^{at} ~~by~~ the hotel curb, gelled at me as a prospect, passersby took their glances. I just walked. After

+++
awhile I was part of the crowd. I had put on an old jacket and pants and wore a woolen hat that I pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was all right. I felt like giving a great whoop. ~~No one was paying any attention. I was, in fact, not unlike a good many of the Russians who were walking about.~~

Off to one side of the hotel, a street and a square away would be, I knew, from my study of the guidebook, the statue to ^{Dzerzhinsky} ~~Dzerzhinsky~~ founder of ^{Cheka} ~~Cheka~~, "Sword of the Revolution" and great-grandfather of the KGB. Back of him would be the Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew ^{that place} ~~it~~ better than any American prison--I had listened a hundred times in the great imaginary auditorium of my ear to the screams of the tortured in the cellars of the Lubyanka, but I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, and so debating, followed my steps from Sverdlov Square and the Metropole to Dzerzhinsky Square, and there ^{before me was} ~~was~~ the Lubyanka, as I had imagined it, and yet it was less, this late nineteenth century seven-story office building, once a palace for insurance companies, ^{and} still with white curtains in the windows, and ^{highly} polished brass fittings shined on the door. ^{however, were} Its walls, a soiled khaki-yellow, ^{On the whole, it} a dismal

Was a dismal) ^{came and went}
 (old-fashioned office building in and out of which went a few men in officers' uniforms on this late Sunday ~~March~~ afternoon cold as a New England forest in winter, and I heard no screams, and felt still, in the tunnel of ~~pointless~~ ^{myself} ~~endless~~ ^{marooned} February, and I heard no screams, and felt still, in the tunnel of ~~pointless~~ ^{myself} ~~endless~~ ^{marooned} travel for ~~the building~~ ^{this} ~~failed to stir my adrenaline yet there it was~~ ^{conceivably my future home} ~~conceivably a future home~~

I wandered away through side streets, gray in the light, near to black in the shadows, old streets of the merchants. Enclaves of gloom had not shifted ^{here} in a hundred years. It was nearly agreeable to discover depression this palpable, and I had a moment in which I understood the comforts of gloom-- was this my first ^{real} thought in a week? For even as the acceptance of poverty was the greatest protection against corruption of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which one could live encapsulated from insanity. Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom ^{be here to} ~~I would find enough of it in Moscow,~~ and thinking this, ^I came out of one more side street onto Red Square, a shock as nice as stepping from a Roman alley onto the square ^{great place} of St. Peter's, except here was no Vatican, but a field of cobblestones near to half a mile long and hundreds of feet wide spreading out to the walls of the Kremlin. In the twilight, ^{pearly} ~~pearl~~ of lavender ^{showed} showing on the horizon of the gray sky, ^{yet} was still a line of Russians ^{was} waiting to see the tomb of Lenin and his remains ^{down below} preserved in ^{his} the vault below. Two thousand people, two by two, were in that line, and it

progressed forward

~~moved~~, for I stopped to count, about twenty people past a point each minute.

If there were two thousand on line, the last would wait one hundred minutes in this cold, a reasonable mortification for a pilgrimage.

Now, however, I was noticing the Russians on the street. They all looked middle-aged. Even the young had ^{an} that air of relinquishment ^{to} which speaks of middle age. The dreams are given up, but any character gained ^{has been} is fully earned. Dignity enhances a plain face--one of the maxims now lost to post-modern aesthetics.

Still, it was a cheerful place. To my astonishment, Red Square was cheerful on this late and cold Sunday afternoon; there was a shimmer to the air, a conviviality to the faces red with vigor and the cold. Busloads of tourists--native Russians--were leaving, others were still arriving. Hundreds of people were walking in the square, and were showing that simple happiness which comes to the hardworking when they are transported to an important place. These could have been Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses on a ferry to the Statue of Liberty. Same happy faces. One was getting a first return on the ultimate passage to heaven.

How much like ^(the scene) a scene in a movie this was, so precise to the eye. The ^{rose} center middle of Red Square was higher than the sides and so people in the distance, on the other side of the ^{only} crown were visible from the thigh or the knee,

but their shoes had disappeared ^{below} over the cobblestone horizon. And ~~Everyone~~ everyone bounced as they walked, even as ~~one realizes how~~ our heads bob on every step when a crowd is ^{perambulating} ~~walking~~ before a Tens. I did not know the ^{what history} ~~constituents~~ of Red Square, which is to say the ^{what had} ~~history~~ that produced this little harmony of the spirits, but my own were up--I felt delivered from the iron clangor of the Bronx and the stone ~~faced~~ walls of Moscow. I was ready for one irrational instant to celebrate, I hardly knew what. Maybe it was only the joy of coming to the end of ~~a trip~~, any trip. I decided to leave the square before I became ^{pleased with all of this, which is to say -- too manic,} too manic.

So I went back to the Metropole, received ^{a thin slice} ~~an increment~~ more of ^{good} greeting from the doorman, the elevator man, and the ^{dezturnaya -- my floor lady} ~~dezturnaya~~ -- which was the ~~Russian title of my floor-concierge~~, returned to my room, sat on my bed, sat on the chair next to the bed, took down my valise, opened the ~~artfully~~ ^{false} concealed velcro to the ~~fake~~ compartments, took out my novel and my journal, set them on the small desk I had been provided, and debated whether to look at either packet of papers, ^{than} took out a notebook ~~from my shirt~~, considered an entry for my journal, put down my pencil, and realized abruptly how tired I ~~was~~,
 I ^{tired} was from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings--about of mood, the rigors of the walk--everyone in Moscow seemed to move at top pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay along with them, and now ~~I was tired~~.

with the real desolations of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt as alone or as dislocated, ~~and it could be said, I had always been a lonely man.~~

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated at a table with strangers before a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, just ~~not~~ ^{no more} immaculate, ^{than} like a shirt that's been worn for a few hours. The ^{only} (dish you could order was Chicken Kiev, a rubber chicken fit for a routine ^{political} solitary banquet with a gusher of butter that tasted like lubricating oil mixed with some sour sorrow ^{emanating} ~~that could only emanate~~ from the kitchen. The kasha was undercooked, the dark bread was coarse, the fresh vegetable ~~was~~ a slice of tomato. Then a cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy middle-aged woman with ~~her own~~ heavy troubles. It took all of the little attentions she could give to the world outside herself to take care of her job.

After I left the room, I realized that I had been in the equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an eating hall, so to speak, for guests alone. The real restaurant, for a prouder gang, was off ^{by} two glass doors. There, black marketeers and bureaucrats ^{accompanied by} with their wives, waited on line, ^{inside,} and a dance band as full of vitamins and used-up musical patterns as some of the prom bands that used to come to dances at Yale was hacking away, a weird peppy band that sounded through the glass doors as if all five or six musicians and their instruments were hyper-ventilating through a balalaika.

I went back to my room. I needed to sleep. I prayed I would get to sleep.

At the door to the elevator, as I got off, ^{my deskhurnaya} the heavy-faced blond ~~deskhurnaya~~
^{her blonde} with the bee-hive ~~haire~~ gave me a real smile, ~~this time~~. I understood. I gave

every evidence of ~~being a regular customer~~, of going by her desk many times a
^{of being a regular customer. The earnings and the going}
 day. ~~Not all transactions need be commercial nor carnal~~ True hell is to have
^{of her keys were her negotiations}
 no action.

^{I locked my door}
 The door locked behind me, I undressed, washed my face, and dried my
^{The sink was cracked, the} sparse and coarse. So was
 hands. The soap was gritty, the towel was rough. The sink was old, the toilet

paper, ~~was processed from a corncob~~. This was one of the ten best hotels in
 Moscow. I was furious suddenly at I knew not what. How did these people
 presume to be our greatest enemy on earth? They did not even have the
 wherewithal to be evil.

^{There was}
 Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. Instead rose every intimation
~~that~~ the pageant was on its way. I decided to read my novel.

the pageant was ~~in its way~~ I decided to (24)
read my mood, Will it tell you something
of the year I spent in that rented room in the
apartment of the Rosentals, that I no longer
had to look at the first fiction pages. I knew
them by heart. ~~I~~ I could use them as
a counter ^{piece} against the pageant. Even
as ~~the Americans and the Soviets~~ ^I ~~had~~ ⁱⁿ ~~had~~ ^{been} ~~with~~
year learning how to ~~for~~ ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ ^{with} ~~each other~~
~~radio~~ broadcasts, so could I begin to
~~write~~ the novel to myself so soon as
I knew the pageant was near. I did not
always work, but it ~~did~~ ~~for~~ ~~so~~ ~~long~~ ~~as~~
it did, I lived within my novel, it was
equal to me, and if I could pass from
that early section I knew by heart into
the pages I must still read well, I had
turned the corner. The pageant would ~~soon~~ ^{recede}
and the ghosts of all those long-gone deeds,
patriotic, shameful, dedicated and
contradictory, would not ~~come back~~. The
features of the principal would not
appear ~~before me~~, and I would ~~not~~ ~~not~~
have to listen on this night to Howard
Humbard and his wife Dorothy, to Kim Mulvey
and Guy Burgess and Donald McKay,
to Bill Harvey, who always pashed
gun, and to Lee Harvey Oswald who did

not know how to shoot. James Jim (28)
Angleton did not appear with his Golitsin,
nor Yuri Nosenko with his woe. I did not
have to hear my father recount his conversation
with Johnny Roselli and Sam Biancone
and Santo Trafficante. Poor Doctor Frank
Olsen did not jump out of his ninth story
window again, and I did not have to listen
to Jimmy Hoffa informing me one more time
how Haroldo Monro had ~~left~~ ^{not to} this world,
nor ^{not to} Edgar Hoover (whom I with my
colleagues liked to call) Edgar (Buddha)
^{while he} expatiated with pride on how he reamed
the Democrats with ~~poor Senator~~ ^{most long} ~~had to~~
Bayleton. Jacopo Arbenz ~~did not have to~~
breathe his last for me, nor did I have to
submit to one more indictment from Fidel
Castro. I was free of the pageant ^{which the}
long glow of the novel ^{I had} ~~had~~ ^{was able to}
~~the novel would inhabit any mind~~, and so
I recited the words slowly, slowly at
first, intoning the first sentence like a
mantra. Sometimes I would say ^{this first} ~~the first~~
^{sentence} ten times and then another ten ^{as if the}
sounds themselves were forces in ^{that combat} ~~the combat~~
of unseen and warring elements that was waged each night.
"What if ghosts are real?" I would say, "What
if ghosts are real?"

Peter - correct pages 1-17, and
reprint in the original font,
double-space. I want to see how that looks.

1

I had trouble at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow. Perhaps it will

give some idea of ^{my} the state in which I found myself, if I ^{tell you} admit that I had

entirely forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been laundered; ^{and I}

refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means

of rendering dirty money clean. Yes, I had forgotten the passport was in

the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit I threw into the washing machine.

If you would enquire what sort of man puts a suit into a mangle, well, I

was close to demented when I did it, and the manuscript that ^{could} ~~would~~ offer

explanations for this much skewed frame of mind was now nicely packed

^{one of} in the ~~ultra-flat~~ secret compartments of my valise. That particular bag had ^{while that}

been ~~well enough~~ designed to take sensitive paper through any routine

inspection, ^{if} but ~~would~~ never bear up to a detailed search. ~~It~~ Now my

passport, looking like a small layered pastry, ^{alost} ~~was~~ being held up by the

incredulous Soviet guard at the cage window. I am a trained man--well-

trained is more accurate--and one of the first things learned is to keep

~~your~~ ^{your} papers in order. Yet, here was I ~~under the helm of these conditions~~

proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. with the false name of one William Madden

Libby about whose imaginary past I had much too insufficiently prepared

myself.

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport!"

Why?"

His English was going to be no more ^{use to us} help than my Russian.

"River," I tried to say in his tongue, thereby suggesting that one had

fallen in the river with one's passport. I did not dare admit I had

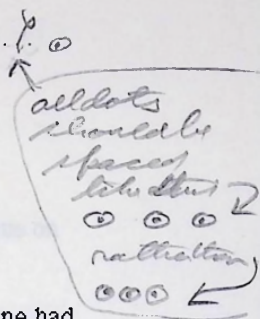
consigned the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was

saying, but later, studying the ~~small~~ vocabulary section of my guidebook, I

came to recognize that I was using such words as *ruk* for arm and *ryebro*

for rib, and *rubra*--something like that--the word for fish! Yes, I was

doubtless telling my Sovietsky, I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an



arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words,
enough to leave him critically saddled. Then,
like a good stubborn dog, he would reply,
 and he would answer, "Passport--no good. Why?" *Then* he would draw

himself to full height and eyeball me--*were obviously* they ~~must have been~~ trained to do

that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in

some degree I was. How could I have forgotten how desperate this

washed-out puffed-up passport would look under examination?

"Passport ~~not~~ *not* good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the line of passengers behind me beginning to focus on
rather than their own
 my tension, ~~not theirs.~~

"Expired. No. Not expired. *Pasaporto*," I said to him and reached out.

He handed the little book to me with great suspicion and I turned with

caution the faded worn out pages which were now as velvety to the touch

as much-used dollar bills. Then, I found the expiration page. No, of course

not, my passport had not expired, and I pointed out the date, and handed

it back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between
 hysteria and happiness. For ten hours, ^{as full of frenzy} ~~feeling frantic~~ (as a cockroach when
 the lights go on, I had been sitting in the middle of the largest
~~compartment in Economy~~ dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why
 I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then, as if the cockroach
 had caught a whiff of poison spray, ^{would} ~~I~~ lay on my back in full recline--using
 all three inches of rearward slant available in the tourist-width chair--and
^{know} ~~knew~~ that stupor where the mind-flow is heavy in its viscosity, and one's
 limbs seem too massive to move, but one's nerves ^{are racing} ~~can race~~ like the lights
 on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept promising the
 stomach a visit, never did.

Now, at least, I was on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that
^{confrontation} this action ~~fell~~ somewhere in the void between farce and bureaucratic
 horror. At least I was ^{standing up} ~~on my feet~~ and talking. After ten hours of that seat
 in Economy, I would have been merry to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been an ^{a Minnesotan} ~~Iowa~~ farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, ~~almost a~~ ^{Scandinavian} Scandihoovian look, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger, "you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, waving my passport.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyad*," I said, "*bolshoye lyad*. Got it? Much ice." I spread my hand over an expanse of imaginary ice as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave the horizontal plane I had just fashioned in the air one fell karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it sounded like ice cracking, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Voda. Bolshoye voda*--lots of water, right." I waved my hands in

desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kolodno*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kolodno*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Beelyam Modyen Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening. One's chances with the police usually improved as one impinged on their leisure time.

blond
The kid from Iowa stamped my passport. He was relaxed now. He

gave a big kid's grin. "Pardone," he said, pronouncing it in ~~such a way I~~ *a friendly hybrid*

~~did not know if he were trying to speak~~ *of and* Italian or French.

The route through Sheremetyevo was ~~passed~~ *gained* step by step. It was

the grayest airport I had ever been in. Some style in concrete brutalism

had been ~~borrowed for~~ *appropriated in* its making--a showcase for the 1980 Olympics.

Come to our land where walls are gray. My bags went through customs

without pain. *Both the and the journal, which I had separately* That manuscript ~~which I had carefully arranged in flat-fifty-~~

stowed away in each of the two ~~page-packets in both secret compartments~~ attracted no notice--I passed

through the last gate and encountered signs in English which told me to

look for the Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough

tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of

Thomas Wolfe's dictum *(like writers)* that people in the same profession tend to be the

same all over the world. My cabdriver wanted "twenty dollars American,"

to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which my travel agent in New York

had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being

almost as difficult to snag for a reservation as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," he had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me even to the agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, paid him in cash in advance, asked for speed ^{in processing} on my visa (on the assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through now and again) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the ^{permissions} visa in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as ~~Highly Eager Individual Tourist~~, ^{Special} and now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver ^{announced} ~~was off to~~ ^{in his workable black market English that he} ~~his own races. He wished to buy dollars from me, and the black market~~

^{His} rate, three rubles for a dollar, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap, however. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust

him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market, and that before I had even had one opportunity to look at this harsh unholy place I had chosen to visit.

Indeed the driver was taking up so much of my ~~sur-charged~~ attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel, when relaxed, can be ~~like~~ *wash your eyes* ~~marijuana on the first good time--the eyes are washed in dew and~~ ; everything is fresh. ~~But~~ *however* travel in a state of nerves is like movement through a tunnel. One's sense are all pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some jerky flivver of a sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the landscape. The ongoing litany of the driver ~~in un-musical black-market~~ English, "all right, you tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell, just tell me, come on, what do you say?" *was ongoing,* ~~was ongoing,~~ *don't have to sell,* ~~on and on~~ *off*. Out the window was clean snow and dirty snow, and melted fields about as sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats.

Bits of Moscow began to appear, dark wooden funky little gingerbread

shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and all yawning individually,

their paint peeling, *I came high-rise* then palisades of housing projects, dirty-white for the most

part in the dirty-white snow. They looked like the plaster had cracked on

the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery

was this land. The sky was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetyevo

Airport, and this on a day in April. Communism was irritating me

personally at this point, ~~as if~~ equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty,

depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver

might not be some extension of KGB, or the comedy at the customs cage *annit* *had been*

sketch six-minute ~~play~~ for someone's delectation. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the four lane highway. A legend in

Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some burst *to be certain* of homileptic and loveless

language. I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a

mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire was

one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of ~~the~~ ^{my} cab were mud-splattered, and the sights in ^{were only visible} front peered through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers which kept drawing striated salt fans on the window. The driver was as sullen as heat in August.

Now we were on a big bare boulevard, large, dull, not much traffic.

Heavy old buildings, government departments, and specialist institutes ^{slipped by} were lost to the side windows. This place was like a grainy photograph of the worst of Washington, D.C. There was even some traffic now, ^{if few}

~~Pedestrians, however, were few.~~ It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read ^{МЕТРОПОЛ.} ~~METROPOLE~~. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars ^{for} in tip. He wanted ten. He had his

own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me must have been

pinched for I gave him five. My nerves, I repeat, were not what once they were.

wide-jawed equal to
A short stocky ~~old~~ *boy* who looked like a retired Mafia soldier

of the lowest rank was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of

he had been a
his gray coat—hero of the Great War in one or another rank, ~~and a stern~~

~~wide-jawed~~ face. He would show nothing but wrinkles and scars to a

stranger.

Nor was he in much of a rush to help on my two bags. His function

was to keep people out. I had to show *him* the voucher *on* for my registration

in order to get through the door.

before he let me in. Then, the interior was grim. The lobby had a pallette

that went *old*
which ran from faded cigar-butt brown to ~~dirty~~ railroad coach upholstery

green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum

stepped
when you ~~walked~~ across it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those hotels

in the side streets off Times Square that still rent rooms while ~~they are~~

waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather ~~just~~ before and after the

revolution? If we are to speak of travelling through a psychic tunnel, I felt

as if the tunnel had just ~~debouched~~ ^{debouched me back} (into the nineteenth century, and it ~~was~~ ^{the old}

^{time was} A gloomy ~~place~~. Off to my left ^{noon} ~~was~~ a sign that said Dollar Bar. ^{On this Sunday afternoon,} It was not

yet open, ~~on this Sunday afternoon~~. Further into the depths of the lobby

were a couple of restaurants, both closed. A huge marble stairway which

spiralled in right angle turns around the core of an elevator shaft ~~went up~~

~~into what I am tempted to call the bowels of the hotel although they were~~

~~above me~~. The girl at the registration desk was wearing a sweater ^{and} had a ^{NOF}

^{She} cold, wore eyeglasses, was plain, and pretended not to notice me until I

^{Seized} ~~worked~~ for her attention. Her English had an unpleasant accent that

^{was reminiscent} spoke ^{unpromising} of such tortures as ballet lessons for girls without talent. The

elevator operator, another war hero, was gruff, and the concierge on the

fourth floor was a big heavy blonde about fifty with a bee-hive and a big

tough Russian ~~no-nonsense~~ ^{she} face ~~who~~ looked like a ~~proper~~ mate for the

doorman on the street. She sat behind a little glass-topped desk facing the

elevator, and scowled as she looked for my key which was large, and ~~as~~ ^{as} bronze,

^{sack} heavy as a ~~bag~~ ^{The route to me} of change. ~~My room was~~ down one long dark corridor and ^{then}
^{turned a right angle to} then ^{and} another and the walls were shiny pea-green which bounced off the

glare of ~~the~~ highly shellacked parquet floor that had occasional gaps where

squares of plywood were substituted, ~~and~~ since the promenade to my

room was over a red-runner carpet half a football field in length down ~~one~~ ^{the first}

^{then} corridor half a football field down the other to my room door, and since the

floor still buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation--^{if I may} ~~to~~ allude to

my passport once more--that this red carpet had been laid over frozen

water, and I stepped from one ice floe to the next, a walk with

considerable tipping and lurching.

My room was eleven feet by fourteen and had a ceiling twelve feet

high. The window looked on a court. That red carpet, strong, strapping, and prepared to endure spilled vodka, coffee, soup, ink, and the occasional miseries of a drunk's stomach, was still under my feet, my companion from the lobby, up the elevator, down the corridors to here. I had a bureau, a narrow bed with a thin European mattress whose edges you could furl laid upon another mattress. There was a bolster as heavy as a water-soaked log. And a TV set!

I turned it on. Lots of electronic snow, lots of wave-over. Black and white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed, and put my head in my hands. I got up. I ^{closed} pulled the curtains to the courtyard. I sat down again. I was here, and I could stay here--assuming I had entered without attracting special official attention--I could stay here for a week at least, and sort the questions of my mind into categories.

I had so many questions that I ^{no longer looked} could not look for answers. Only for ^{to the} categories of question, I needed some scheme ^{some plan} of order, ^{for my mind} before the pageant

commenced

began once more. There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each

for many nights now,
night the same people appeared and spoke to me. I would fall asleep and *soon*

had then
then I would wake. The visitors would speak. I would think of these

visitations as neither a delusion nor an hallucination, but a pageant. Each

person came before me like an actor, performing before me alone in a

theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent beyond their measure. *what I would have*

thought was the measuring
or mine, and I no longer knew if all of their existence belonged to me, or if

the rigors of this last year of working on my manuscript, that history of

particular *had been* *was*
the one night in my life that was without measure, *had* finally caught up to

Do the mentally deranged
me. Do the insane transcend a barrier and visit those cosmic vaults where *all our*

the history of ~~all of us~~ *?* is stored. I was surviving, as you may imagine, in a

state of the most peculiar delicacy. A movie director I *knew* ~~spoke to~~ once told *me how*

after he had made one of his movies, he
~~me how~~ he continued to live with his cameraman and actors each morning.

The *but*
after his film was wrapped, and he would awaken with commands: "Ricky,

we're going to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras

ought to do it," and he would be out of bed and shaving before ^{his eyes} the face

looking back at him in the mirror would show ~~the~~ consternation and say, ^{in effect!}

"The film is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot anymore." But

he was, as he explained to me, ~~no better than a burly, an overweight six~~ ^{middle-aged}

~~foot-two~~ Alice stepping through the looking-glass. The film he had ~~made~~ ^{shot}

^{had become} was (more real to him than the man left behind ^{now that} ~~once the film was done~~ ^{shot}).

I was like that director. For a year, concealed in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived or ever would) I had worked to ^{raise} brick up a wall between the pageant and myself. Sometimes a month would go by ^{without incidents} and I would sleep through the night and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves and the pits.

Then without warning, the pageant ^{struck} ~~had come~~ again. ^{is} Struck again was the operative word. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of *grand mal* ~~watched where I set my feet in order not to stumble.~~ One misstep and the seizures would come. Now, I knew. The Bronx ^{was no longer tenable for me,} ~~had become intolerable to me.~~

As if I had been engaged in some clandestine activity, running a network, let us say, in an occupied country, ~~and all~~ the warning bells had been rung--they ~~were on to me!~~--I had to move.

That ^{people} ~~they~~ were looking for me, was certain enough. What damage or deviltry I might be up to, they could hardly conceive. But the longer I did not surface, the more they would have to wonder. Where was he? Why had he gone under? Had he defected? They would have to wonder if ^{any} ~~reports of my~~ ^{I had gone} ~~presence in Moscow,~~ would pop up one day. How I laughed--in those paroxysms of silent laughter one entertains ^{ones loneliness} ~~oneself with when alone~~--how I laughed ^{all the} ~~while I was living in the Bronx~~ that they would be thinking of me in Moscow, ^{the} ~~that I was not in Moscow, but in the Bronx.~~

Yet out of ^{the} ~~some~~ logic ^{separate} which seemed altogether rigorous to me--although I could not name the reason for any of ^{these} ~~the~~ steps, I had come to the conclusion, so soon as the pageant ^{picked up its operations once more in Moscow} ~~commenced again,~~ that I had to ^{take a trip for the first time to} ~~pay a~~ visit to Moscow--I had to visit the U.S.S.R. for the first time. I did not know

why. So far as ~~my~~ ^{was} personal security was concerned I would be in trouble

enough if they ever ran me down in the Bronx, but ~~all that was subject to~~ ^{to be found in Moscow}

~~what the first focus would be. The verdict on my actions had not been~~

~~written yet. To go to Moscow, however, was to put the darkest lining on my~~

~~sets, the worst interpretations on my disappearance. And to go with my~~ ^{would put} ^{travel over}

manuscript and my journal--with all the information they contained, ~~would~~ ^{to endanger}

even be unforgivable to myself, if the Russians ~~recognized me for any reason,~~ ^{at least} ^{was to}

and ~~found~~ ^{find} my papers.

Yet there was no choice. Part of the inexorable if mysterious logic of

making the move to Moscow was that I ~~had to take my papers with me.~~ ^{the} ^{with} Who

~~knows which boxcars of obsession are moved around in the freight yards of~~ ^{how the}

the mad? I did not feel ~~at all~~ ^{mad to myself,} only beleaguered, but there was

a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. To ~~persue~~ ^{pursue} with diligence a major

action that is ~~bound to lead you~~ ^{odds-on} to disaster has to be a fair discription of the

wholly unbalanced.

I clung to my papers, however, as if they were one of those ~~rare body~~ ^{few remaining}

organs that cannot be replaced. No more would I ~~leave them behind than~~ ^{I could no more}

could choose not to go to Moscow. And indeed I could hardly keep ~~it~~ ^{the fact} a secret

that I was taking them with me. The old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was ^{already} wholly aware of that.

"Oh, Mr. Libby," she said. "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Rosenthal."

He was an eighty-year old arthritic, she, a seventy-five year old diabetic--we had had no more than passing conversations for a year, but I was content with that. Bless them--I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me because I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good middle-class people, and while I expected they would be curious enough about me, ^{my party,} I did not have the heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and marriages of one William Madden Libby, no matter how much I could use such a trial run for

practise; I had done that once before, spent much of a year with a woman to whom I had offered a bogus life. ^{not at all} It had not been my own, and since she fell in love with me, I believe it did her damage even as a nutrient we pretend to ^{is} present as a nutrient ^{only} ~~is only a placebo, has~~ ^{in the way that a capsule which} feed someone in the form of a capsule, which is not that nutrient must in ~~to work a subtle damage on the~~ ^{to work a subtle damage on the} communications between mind and digestion. Somewhere in the

~~time prove a slow pollutant to the mind and the digestion. Somewhere in the~~
~~depths of the unconscious, the bell has to toll with a cracked sound when one~~
~~believes a friend's life that in fact is an absolute lie.~~

to 11s
not much flim flam
 Well, there was ~~no such question~~ with the Rosenthals. We made

occasional ~~small~~ conversation when we met at the door or in the hall, and
 that was all. They were able to supplement their retirement moneys with my
 rent, and keep their privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except
 when I grew tired of ~~my~~ *soap opera* hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote
 prodigiously. I was looking--we can move from the nineteenth to the
 twentieth century on the verbal conceits of this next remark--I was looking
 to find the viable parameters of my life.

reasonably *(There were days when I felt neither)*
 It ~~all~~ went ~~as well as possible~~ for a year. But I was like a boulder

perched on the edge of a cliff. Sooner or later, something would shift, and ~~it~~
~~would go.~~ *all* It did. The pageant, ~~as they~~, began again, and Moscow blinked in

my mind like a neon sign. I saw the travel agent, made the preparations, tried
 to study Russian, and said farewell to the Rosenthals. *I told them I was going to Seattle,*
 I heard her say in reply,

"Well, I guess you'll have a heavy bunch of papers to carry with you ~~to Seattle~~
 for your family to read?"

never had nor needed

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like ^{your book,} it," she said.

"Well," I said, "I do, too."

"Maybe, you'll even get a publisher."

"One hopes so."

"If you ^{should} ~~do~~, please send me the book and I'll pay for it. I want you to autograph the copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Rosenthal," I said, "I'll be happy to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever ~~picked up my trail and~~ found this lair in the Bronx, they would also hear ^{from her} how much I had been writing. They would ~~know there were papers.~~

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and ^(I took everything out but the hidden papers.) started to unpack. The bag, ^{now} when apparently empty, weighed a bit too much

but not critically so. I put back my toilet kit which would thump about inside ^{valise,} if someone shook the bag, locked it, and put it ^{up in the closet.} aside. I opened my portable

typewriter. But I was not ready to read, let alone to write. It was five ^{now, Sunday} in the

^{Moscow time,} afternoon ^{by now,} which was something like nine or ten o'clock in the

morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the

from Kennedy airport
 evening, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with a transit stop in London) and had landed at 2 P.M. Moscow time, 6 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were now being held upside down, by the clock. If it was nine A.M. back in New York, no wonder I felt full of the awful fake vigor that comes on in the morning after a night of fake sleep. I had to get out of this room for awhile.

So I took a walk. Let me say that no American tourist is going to feel comfortable taking his first steps in Moscow, not after forty years of Cold War and media din to the certain *conclusion* effect that Communism is evil. I had had, however, more *training* religious disposition and stints of *special* scholarship to support this grand thesis. It is an awesome and terrible thesis, but it is grand, at least *it is* if grandeur resides in the majestic notion that the simple subtends the complex, *after all* the king divides the land with a wave of his sceptre, and yes, evil *that* the devil's shellgame, where is evil hiding now? *can be* -- is subtended in the grand thesis that Communism is evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me. I was like a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years, *a Sachaman* he does not know the world he is entering, *for an example* he does not know how to walk into a store and buy a

pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. Here I, after ~~a life~~ ^{the casual}
^{Nature of American}
~~of relative freedom,~~ did not know what was allowed me here. I was not
 certain I could leave the ^{hotel} lobby and ^{go out} walk on the street without ^(the proper) having a ^{stamped} paper.
 I hung about ~~in~~ ^{the} lobby for five minutes trying to observe ~~a few~~ ^{the} comings
 and goings but ~~then~~ ^{soon felt uneasy,} began to feel self-conscious as ~~in~~ ^{my} presence
~~downstairs, prolonged any more, would become suspect. On the consequence,~~
^{might itself,}
 So, I took ~~my~~ ^a chance, walked to the door, stepped out, ^{and} was met with a scowl by
 the doorman--it would take ^{awhile} ~~two days~~ for me to realize that he was somewhat
^{and} simple-minded, ^{as a hotel guest,} had not placed me yet, ^{and} so was scowling. Three days
~~down the road, aware at last that I was a hotel guest, I became part of his~~
 flock, and he smiled at me.

At any rate, here ^{as a prospect} I was on the street. Cabdrivers parked by the hotel
^{their}
 yelled at me, passersby took quick glances. I just walked. After awhile I
^{put on}
 was part of the crowd. I had ~~taken along~~ an old jacket and ~~old~~ pants and I
 wore a woolen hat that I pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was
 all right. I felt like giving a great whoop. No one was paying any attention to
^{in fact}
~~me.~~ I was not unlike a good many of the Russians who were walking about.

Off to one side of the hotel and ~~not~~ ²⁵ a square away would be, I knew, from my study of the guidebook, ^{the talents} Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, ^{the "Sword of the Revolution"} ~~and~~ ^{and} great grandfather of the KGB. Kachofim would be the Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew it better than any American prison - I had listened a hundred times in the great imaginary auditorium of my ^{ear} ~~ear~~ to the screams of the tortured in the ~~cell~~ ^{hall} of the Lubyanka, but I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, and so debating followed my steps from Sovolov Square and the Metropoli to Dzerzhinsky Square, and there was the Lubyanka, as I had imagined it, and, ^{however} ~~however~~, this ~~late~~ ^{late} nineteenth century ^{superstition} ~~office~~ building, once a palace for insurance companies, still with white curtains ^{on the windows}, and brass fittings, stoned ^{on the} ~~stone~~ ^{stone} but its walls a soiled khaki yellow, a dismal old-fashioned office building ^{inwardly} ~~outwardly~~ of which went a few men in officer uniforms on their late ^{Monday} ~~Sunday~~ ^{afternoon} cold as a New England forest in February, and I heard no screams, and felt still in the tunnel of pointless travel but the building bailed to ⁱⁿ my alienation yet there it was - conceivably a ^{human} ~~human~~ home.

I wandered away through side streets, grey ⁽²⁶⁾
in the light, near to black in the shadows, old
streets of the merchants, ~~not quite so~~
Enclaves of gloom had not shifted in a hundred
years. It was nearly agreeable to discover
depression thus palpable, and I had a moment
in which I understood the comforts of
gloom — was this my first thought in a week?
~~For~~ even as the acceptance of poverty was,
the ~~first~~ greater protection against complacency
of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which
one could live encapsulated from insanity.
Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom,
I would find enough of it in Moscow, and
thinking this, came out of one more side
street onto Red Square, as black as vice
and complete as stepping from a Roman
alley onto the square of St. Peter's, ^{except here} ~~at the~~
was no Vatican, ^{but} a birth of cobblestones, ^{not far} ~~many~~
near to ~~hundreds~~ ^{hundreds} of feet wide, ^{spreading out} ~~long and (half)~~
of the Kremlin, and in the grey twilight
~~hardly~~ a pearl of lavender ^{showing on the horizon of} the gray
sky, was still a line of Russians waiting
to see the tomb of Lenin and his remains
preserved in the vault below. ~~Two~~
thousand people, two by two, were in that
line, and it moved, for I stopped to count
about twenty people past a point each
minute. There were two thousand online,

~~they would be~~ the last would wait for ⁽²⁷⁾
hundred minutes, in this cold, a reasonable
mortification for ^a pilgrimage.

Now, ^{however,} ~~never~~ noticing the Russians on the
street, ~~however~~, they all looked middle aged.
Even the young had that air of relinquishment
which speaks of middle age. The dreamy
^{given up} ~~relinquishment~~, ^{and they} ~~and the~~ character gained ~~to~~
~~beautifully~~ earned, Dignity, ^{now} ~~now~~ ^{one of the} ~~lost~~ ^{maxims} ~~of~~ lost
plain face ~~and~~ to post-modern aesthetics.

Still, it was a cheerful place. To my
astonishment, Red Square was cheerful on
^{this} ~~a~~ late end cold Sunday afternoon. There was
a ^{to the} ~~slimness~~, a conviviality to the faces
^{very and the} ~~red with cold~~, ~~busloads of tourists~~ - ~~not~~
Russians - were leaving, ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~thus~~ ^{waiting} ~~even~~
still arriving. ~~Hundreds of people were~~ ^{on}
the square, and were showing that smooth
happiness which comes only ~~to the unimaginative~~
~~and~~ ^{to the} ~~hard working~~ ^{when they are transported}
to an important place. These could have
been ~~Normans~~ or ~~behaviors~~ witnesses on
a ferry to ~~the Statue of Liberty~~. Some happy
faces. One was getting ^{a first return} ~~the~~ ^{on the}
ultimate passage to heaven.

How much like a scene in a movie ~~the~~
way, so precise to the eye, the middle
of Red Square was higher than the sides,
and so people in the distance on the other

rich of the ~~crow~~ way visible from (28)
the high ~~with~~ distance, but their ~~shoes~~ had
disappeared over the cobblestone horizon. And
everyone hunched as they walked, even
and realized how our heads bob on every
step when a crowd is walking before a man.
I did not know the constitution of Red Square,
~~the~~ which is to say the territory that produced
this little harmony of the spirits, but my own
were af - I felt delivered from the crow
danger of the Brone and the high ~~stone~~ of the
rock face that are the high stone of the
of Moscow, I was ready for one or or or
instant to celebrate, I hardly knew what; then
I decided to leave the square before I became

too manic, Play it was only the joy of coming
to the end of a trip, any trip. ↑

As I went back to the Metropole, received an
increment more of greeting from the door man,
the elevator man, and the de gl man man - which
was the Russian title of my floor concierge,
returned to my room, sat on my bed, sat
on the chair next to the head, look down
my valise, opened the valise, concealed
velcro to the fake compartments, took out
my novel and my journal, set them on
the table small desk I had been provided,
and debated whether to look at not either
packet of papers, took out a notebook from
my suit, considered an entry for my journal,
put down my pencil, and realized

abruptly how tired I was from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings-about of mood, the rigors of the walk—everyone in Moscow seemed to move at a top walking pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay along with ~~the~~ them, ~~to other pedestrians~~, and now the real derelictions of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt as alone or isolated, and it could be said, I had always been a lonely man.

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated at a table, well strangers before a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, just not immaculate, like asling that had been worn for a few hours, the dish you could order was ~~beef~~ chicken - a banquet public kitchen fit for a routine political gangster's with a question of butter that landed like lubricating oil ~~plunged~~ some so now that could only emanate from the kitchen. The kasha ~~that~~ accompanied it was undercooked, ~~the bread~~ was coarse, the fresh vegetable was a slice of tomato. Then a cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy middle-aged woman, with unknown heavy troubles. I took all of the little attention she could give to the world outside, ~~leaving her to take care of her job.~~

After ~~and~~ ^{we} realized that ~~it~~ ^{was} in the
of equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an
eating ~~room~~ hall, so to speak, for ~~quite~~ ^{some} time,
the real restaurant for ~~providing~~ ^{providing} food, was
off two glass doors. There, black maids
and housekeepers, with their

wives waited online, and a dance band as full of vitamins and doped up musical patterns as some of the from bands that used to come to dance at Yale was backing away, a wind peppy band that sounded through the glass doors as if all five or six musicians and their instruments were hyper-ventilating through a kalalika. (30)

I went back to my room. I needed to sleep. I prayed I would get to sleep. At the door to the elevators ^{as I got to} the heavy-faced blond daylurnaga with the bee-hive hairdo ~~but~~ gave me a real smile this time. I understood. ~~She~~ gave every evidence of being a regular customer, if going by her desk many times a day. No all this ~~business~~ need be commercial, nor carnal. Trunkell is to have no section.

The door locked behind me, I undressed, washed my face, and dried my hands. The soap was gritty, the towel was rough, the sink was old. This was one of the ten best hotels in Moscow. The toilet paper was procured from ^{a cognate}

I was furious suddenly at I know not what. How did these people presume to become greatest enemy on earth, they did not even have the wherewithal to be evil.

Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. Instead rose every minute and that the pageant was on its way. I decided to read my novel.

July 11

concord
1-24 double-spacing - established
1 margin

PROLOGUE

(getting by border control)

I had trouble at Sheremetyevo Airport (in Moscow). Perhaps it will give some idea of my state, if I tell you that I had forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been laundered, and I refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means of rendering dirty money clean. Yes, I had had a mental lapse and left it in the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit that went into the washing machine. If you would enquire what sort of man puts a suit into a mangle, well, I was demented when I did it, and the manuscript that could offer explanations for this frame of mind was packed into one of the secret compartments of my valise.

Now, my passport, looking like a small layered pastry, was being held aloft at the ~~cage window by the Soviet guard~~ ^{glass booth by the Soviet guard, from the border pass}. I am a well-schooled man, and

one of the first things we learned was to keep our papers in order. Yet, here was I proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. with water-soaked credentials in the

name of one William Madden Libby about whose imaginary past I had hardly prepared a sufficiently detailed life. ^(by way of Sheremetyevo International Airport holding)
^(Life whose details would be to bear up under interrogation. Leave it that I had been too preoccupied with my real life which now seemed all too often imaginary.)

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! . . . Why?"

His English was going to be no more use than my Russian.

"River," I tried to say in his tongue, thereby suggesting that one had fallen in the river with one's passport. I did not dare admit I had consigned

the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was saying, but later, studying phrases for tourists in my guidebook, I came to recognize that I used such words as *ruk* and *ryebro*, and *ruba* --which are, respectively, arm and rib and fish! Doubtless I was telling him that I stuck my passport up my rib, and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. I'd say two or three words, enough to leave my Sovietsky critically befuddled. Then, like a good stubborn dog, he would reply, "Passport--no good. Why?" After which he would draw himself to full height and eyeball me--they were obviously trained to do that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have failed to foresee that this puffed-up *tarte* of a passport would look desperate under examination?

"Not good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the long line of passengers waiting behind me.

"No. Not expired. Please," I said to him, "*pazholesto!*" and reached out my hand. He gave the passport over with great suspicion and I turned with caution the faded ^{puffed-up} worn-out pages which were now as velvety to the touch as much-used dollar bills. Then, I found the expiration page. Of course not. My passport had not expired. I pointed out the date, and handed it back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between hysteria

and happiness. For ten hours, as full of frenzy as a cockroach when the lights first go on, I had been sitting in the middle of Economy, dreading my arrival in Moscow, wondering why I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then, as if flattened by a whiff of poison spray, I would recline on my back--using all three inches of rearward slant available to the tourist-width chair--and drift in that half-stupor where the mind-flow is viscous, and one's limbs seem too massive to move, ^{All the same, my / craced /} but one's nerves ^{in any case} race like lights on an electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept promising the stomach a visit, never did.

Now, ^{at least} I was on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that this confrontation fell somewhere in the void between farce and bureaucratic horror. ^{in any case} At least, I could stand up and talk. After ten hours of Economy, I was ready to meet my executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been a Minnesota farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger, "you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same ^{dull-green} olive-drab soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, pointing to my passport, as if it were a wholly

execrable object.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyad*," I said, "*bolshaye lyad*. Much ice." I spread my hand as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave to the horizontal plane just fashioned in the air, one good karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it sounded like an ice-pond breaking up, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Voda. Bolshaye voda*--lots of water, right." ^{isn't that so?} (I waved my hands in desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kaladno*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kaladno*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Veelyam Modyen Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening.

The blond kid stamped my ^{papers,} passport. He was relaxed now. He gave a big

kid's grin. "Pardone," he said, ^{attempting to give} giving it a friendly spin of Italian-French, ^{spin} spin.

The rest of the route through customs at Sheremetyevo showed ~~camp~~ ^{Sheremetyevo}

a concrete airport built as a showcase for the 1980 Olympics: Come to ~~our~~ ^{the} Communist land where ~~the~~ walls are gray. My bags went through customs without pain. Both the manuscript and the journal, which I had stowed away separately in each of my two secret compartments, attracted no notice--the suitcase had been designed to take confidential papers through routine inspections. ^{after a time} So, I passed through the last gate and encountered signs in English which told me to look for the Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum that people in the same profession, such as waiters, tend to be the same all over the world. My cabdriver wanted twenty dollars, American, to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which my travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," ^{the travel agent} he had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me ^{to the agent?} even to the agent? Of course, I had popped in on him, ^{the agent} paid him cash in advance, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the assumption

he had connections sufficient to rush one through occasionally) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a special KGB list which went under some such category as *Individual Tourist, Special*. Now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his workable black market English that he wished to buy dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a dollar, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market.

Indeed the driver was demanding so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel in a state of nerves is like passage through a tunnel. One's senses are pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some flivver of a sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--was more prominent to me than the landscape. The litany of the driver, "all right, tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell me, come on, what do you say?" continued in my ear.

We passed expanses of clean snow, dirty snow, and melted fields about as sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, dark funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows and

all yawning individually, their paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty-white for the most part in the dirty-white snow. They looked ^{as if} ~~like~~ the plaster had cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery was this land. The March sky was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetyevo Airport. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver might not be some extension of KGB. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the ^{superhighway.} ~~four lane highway~~. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some bouquet, doubtless, of homilectic language. I had seen the same banners across the highways of many a mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. ^{had been} ~~was~~ one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba. Uganda probably. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of my cab were mud-spattered, and sights to the front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers which kept drawing striated salt fans on the glass. The driver was as sullen as muggy weather in August.

Now we were on a large boulevard without much traffic. Heavy old buildings--government departments, and specialist institutes--perambulated

by the side windows. There were few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read **МЕТРОПОЛ**. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars for tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me was pinched, for I gave him five. My nerves, I repeat, were not what once they were.

A short stocky wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat--a hero of the Great War. He would not be about to show much to a stranger.

Nor was he in a rush to help me with the bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the travel agency voucher in order to get through the door. There, the lobby was grim. The palette went from faded cigar-butt brown to old railroad coach green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you stepped upon it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those hotels in the side streets of Times Square that is waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections

proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather before and after the revolution?

If we are to speak of travelling through a psychic tunnel, I felt as if the tube-
~~had just pulled me back into the nineteenth century.~~ ^{myself} ~~Off to my left,~~ ^{despite} the neon
^{to my left} sign which said Dollar Bar, ~~looked like an anachronism.~~ On this Sunday

afternoon, it was not yet open. Further into the depths of the lobby was the
 double glass door to a restaurant, closed. A huge marble stairway spiralled ^{upward in}
 right angle turns around the core of an elevator shaft.

The woman at the registration desk was wearing a sweater and had a
 nose cold. She wore eyeglasses, was plain, and pretended not to notice me
 until I seized her attention. Her English had an unhappy accent that was
 reminiscent of such tortures to the spirit as ballet lessons for unpromising
 girls. The elevator operator, another war hero, was gruff, and the concierge
 on the fourth floor was a heavy blonde about fifty with a bee-hive hairdo and
 a big tough Russian face--she looked like a mate for the doorman. She sat
 behind a little glass-topped desk facing the elevator, kept a rose in a small
^{at the task of looking} vase, and scowled as she looked for my key which was large, bronze, and
 heavy as a sack of change. The route to my room led down one long dark
 corridor and then turned a right angle to another. The walls were pea-green
 and reflected the glare of an old shellacked parquet floor. It was a parquet
 floor with a considerable number of gaps in which squares of plywood had

been inserted. Since ^{this} the promenade ~~to my room~~ was over a red-runner carpet half a football field in length down the first corridor, then half a football field down the other to my room door, and since the floor still buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation--if I may allude to my passport once more--that this red carpet had been laid over frozen water, and I ^{was perambulating} stepped from one ice floe to the next, ^{it} ~~a walk with considerable tipping and lurching~~:

My room was eleven feet by fourteen and had a ceiling twelve feet high. The window looked on a ^{gray} court. That red carpet, strong, strapping, and prepared to endure spilled vodka, coffee, soup, ink, and the occasional miseries of a drunk's stomach, was still under my feet, my companion from the lobby to here. I had a chest of drawers, and a narrow bed with a thin European mattress laid upon a larger mattress. At the head, was a bolster as heavy as a water-soaked log. Plus a TV set!

I turned it on. Lots of electronic snow, lots of wave-over. Black and white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed and put my head in my hands. I got up. I closed the curtains to the courtyard. I sat down again. I was here, and I could stay here--assuming I had entered without attracting official attention--I could stay here for a week at least, and sort some questions into categories. I had so many questions that I no longer looked for answers. Only for categories. I needed some scheme to put

in place before The High Holies commenced once more.

There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each night, for many nights now, the same people appeared and spoke to me. I would not think of these visitations as delusion or hallucination, but as a pageant. Each person came before me like an actor performing alone in a theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent.

I no longer knew if all of their existence belonged to me, or if the rigors ~~of this last year of working on my~~ history of the one night in my life which was beyond measure, had finally caught up to me. I was proceeding, as you may imagine, in a state of peculiar delicacy. A movie director told me that after one of his movies, he had not stopped living with the camera crew and actors. They were gone, and the film was wrapped, but he would awaken from every sleep with fresh commands: "Tom, we have to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras ought to do it." He would be out of bed and shaving before he could say in effect: "The film is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot any more." But he had, as he explained to me, stepped through the looking-glass. The film was more real than his life.

Was I equal to that director? For a year, hiding out in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived, or ever would) I had worked to raise a wall between The High Holies and myself.

Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night, and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves and the pits.

Then without warning, the pageant would strike again. Strike is the operative word. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of *grand mal*. One misstep and the seizures would come. After a while, the Bronx was no longer tenable for me. As if I had been engaged in some clandestine activity, running a network, let us say, in an occupied country, the warning bells had rung--I had to move.

Certainly That people were looking for me, *That* was certain enough. What damage or devilry I might be up to, they could hardly conceive. But the longer I did not surface, the more they would have to wonder. Where was he? Why had he gone under? Had he defected? They would have to wonder if I had moved to Moscow. How I laughed--in those paroxysms of silent laughter with which one entertains one's loneliness--how I laughed that all the while I was living in the Bronx, they would be thinking of me in Moscow.

Yet out of the logic of separate steps which seemed altogether rigorous to me--although I could not name the reason for any of these steps, I had come to the conclusion, so soon as The High Holies picked up their ~~operations~~ *again* ~~once more~~ in my mind that I had to take a trip--for the first time--to the

U.S.S.R. I did not know why. I was in trouble enough if they ever ran me down in Bronx County, New York, but to be found in Moscow would put the worst interpretations on my case. And to go there with my manuscript and journal was unforgivable even to myself. What if the Russians were to uncover me, *were to* and look through the papers?

Part of the inexorable logic of making the move to Moscow, however, was that the papers went with me. Who knows how the boxcars of obsession are moved around in the freight yards of the mad? I did not feel mad, only beleaguered, but there was a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. To pursue with diligence a major action that is odds-on to disaster has to be a fair description of the wholly unbalanced.

I clung to my papers as if they were one of those few remaining body organs that surgery cannot yet replace. I could no more leave them behind than choose not to go to Moscow. And indeed I could hardly keep secret the fact that I was taking them with me. The old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was already aware of that.

"Oh, Mr. Libby," she said. "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Rosenthal."

He was an eighty-year old arthritic, she, a seventy-five year old

diabetic--we had ^{entertained} ~~had~~ no more than passing conversations for a year, but I was content with that. Bless them--I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me. I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good middle-class people. While I expected they would be curious enough about my parts, I did not have the heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and possible marriages of one William Madden Libby, no matter how much I could use such a trial run for practise; I had done that once before, spent much of a year with a woman to whom I offered a bogus life not at all my own. Since she fell in love with me, I believe it did her damage in the same way that a capsule which is presented as a nutrient when it is only a placebo, ^{must} ~~has to~~ work a subtle damage on relations between mind and digestion. Somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the bell that tolls suffers a hair-line crack.

Well, there was not much flim-flam with the Rosenthals. We made occasional conversation when we met ^{at} ~~at the door, or~~ in the hall, and that was ^{it} ~~all~~. They were able to supplement their retirement moneys with my rent, and I could keep my privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except when I grew tired of soup on a hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote prodigiously. I was looking--we can move from the nineteenth to the

twentieth century on the verbal conceits of this next remark--I was looking to find the viable parameters of my life.

It went reasonably well for a year. There were days when I felt neither haunted nor invaded. But I was like a boulder perched on the edge of a cliff. Sooner or later, it would all go. It did. The High Holies picked up once more, and Moscow blinked in my mind like a lit-up billboard. I saw the travel agent, made the preparations, tried to study Russian, and said farewell to the Rosenthals. I told them I was going to Seattle. I heard her say in reply, "Well, I guess you'll have a heavy bunch of papers to carry with you for your family to read?"

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like your book," she said.

"Well," I said, "I do too."

"Maybe, you'll even get a publisher."

"Maybe,"
"One hopes so."

"If you should, please mail me the book and I'll pay for it. I want you to autograph the copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Rosenthal," I said, "I'll be delighted to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever found this lair in the Bronx, they would also hear from her how much I

had been ^{typing,} writing.

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and started to unpack. I took everything out but the concealed papers. The bag, now apparently empty, weighed a bit too much, although not critically so. I put back my toilet kit which would thump about inside if someone shook the valise, locked it, and put it up in the closet. I opened my portable typewriter. But I was not ready to read, let alone to write. It was five now, Sunday afternoon, Moscow time, which was nine o'clock in the morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the evening from Kennedy, airport, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with a transit stop in ^{Heathrow} London) and had landed at 2 P.M. Moscow time, 6 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were ~~by~~ now upside down. If it was nine A.M. in New York, no wonder I felt full of the false vigor that comes on in the morning after a night of false sleep. I had to get out of this room for awhile.

So I took a walk. Let me say that no American tourist can feel ^{at ease} comfortable taking his first steps in Moscow, not after forty years of media ^(conscious and) ~~can~~ have brought one to the unconscious conviction that Communism is evil. I had had, however, stints of special scholarship to support such a grand thesis. It is an awesome and terrible thesis, but it is grand, or so it is if

grandeur resides in the ^{sovereign} majestic notion that the simple, as Harlot used to say, presides over the complex. The king, ^{can} after all, divides the land with a wave of his sceptre, and, evil, that devil's shellgame--where ^{does} is evil hiding ^{hide itself} now?--can be contained in the grand thesis that Communism is evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me. ^(not unlike) I was ~~like~~ a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years. Such a man does not know the world he is entering, does not, for example, know how to walk into a store and buy a pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. ~~After the casual nature of American freedom, I did not know what was~~ ^{Now, I} Here I, after the casual nature of American freedom, did not know what was allowed me here. I was not certain I could leave the hotel and go out on the street without the proper paper being stamped. I hung about the lobby for five minutes trying to observe the comings and goings, but soon felt uneasy. My ^{continued} presence ~~itself~~ might become suspect. So, I took a chance, walked to the entrance, stepped out, and was met with a scowl by the doorman--it would take awhile to realize that he ~~was~~ ^{is} somewhat simple-minded, and had not placed me yet as a hotel guest, so was scowling.

At any rate, here was I on the street. Cabdrivers, parked at the hotel curb, yelled at me as a prospect, passersby took their glances. I just walked. I made no moves to determine if anyone was following me for I did not wish to show any knowledge of evasive tactics, but then I also ^{did not feel} felt light as if I

were ~~not~~ being followed. I had put on an old jacket and wore a woolen hat that I pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was all right. I felt like giving a great whoop.

Off to one side of the hotel, a street and a square away would be, I knew, from my study of the guidebook, the statue to Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, "Sword of the Revolution," and great-grandfather of the KGB. Back of him would be the Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew that place better than any American prison--I had listened a hundred times in the imaginary auditorium of my ear to the screams of the tortured in the cellars of the Lubyanka, but I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, and thus debating, ~~I followed my steps from~~ ^{went from} Sverdlov Square and the Metropole to Dzerzhinsky Square. Before me was the Lubyanka, even as I had imagined it, and yet it was less, this late nineteenth century seven-story office building, once a palace for insurance companies. It still had white curtains in the windows, and highly polished brass fittings on the door, but its walls were a soiled khaki-yellow. On the whole, it was a dismal old-fashioned office building in and out of which ~~now~~ ^{came and went} a few men in officer's uniform ^{The air was as} on this late Sunday afternoon, cold as a New England forest in winter, and all the while I heard no screams, and felt myself marooned in the tunnel of endless travel. This building-- conceivably my

future home--failed to stir adrenaline.

I wandered away through side streets, gray in the light, near to black in the shadows, old streets of the merchants. ^{Had these} Enclaves of gloom ~~had not~~ shifted here in a hundred years? It was nearly agreeable to discover depression this palpable, and I had a moment in which I understood the comforts of gloom-- was this my first real thought in a week? For even as the acceptance of poverty might be the ^{first} ~~greatest~~ protection against corruption of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which one could live encapsulated from insanity. Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom would be here to find in Moscow, and thinking this, I came out of one more side street onto Red Square, a shock as nice as stepping from a Roman alley onto the great plaza of St. Peter's, except here was no Vatican, but a field of cobblestones near to half a mile long and hundreds of feet wide spreading out to the walls of the Kremlin. In ~~the twilight,~~ ^{twilight} a pearly lavender showed already on the horizon of the gray sky, but Russians were still waiting to see the tomb of Lenin and his ^{body} ~~remains~~ ^{below} below, preserved in his vault. Two thousand people, two by two, were in that line, and ^{perhaps} ~~about~~ twenty people moved into the tomb each minute. ^{By now} ~~If there were~~ ^{suggesting that} ~~two thousand on line,~~ the last man would wait one hundred minutes in this cold, a reasonable mortification for a pilgrimage.

Now, however, I was beginning to pay attention to ^{the so} ~~the~~ Russians on the

street. They all looked middle-aged. Even the young had an air of
 relinquishment that spoke of middle age. All the same, Red Square seemed to
 be a cheerful place. To my astonishment, it was cheerful on this late ~~and cold~~
 Sunday afternoon. There was a shimmer to the air, a conviviality to the faces
 red with vigor and the cold. Busloads of tourists--native Russians--were
 leaving, others were yet arriving. Hundreds of others walking ^{through} in the Square
 were showing that simple happiness which comes to ^{people} the hardworking when
 they are transported to an important place. These could have been Mormons,
 or Jehovah's Witnesses, on a ferry to the Statue of Liberty. Same happy faces.
 One was getting a first return on the ultimate passage to heaven.

How much like a movie ^{it) to me,} this was. The scene had precision for the eye.
 The center of Red Square rose higher than the ^{corners,} sides, and people in the
 distance, therefore, were ^{usually not below} only visible from the thigh or the knee. Their shoes
 had disappeared ^{underneath} below the cobblestone horizon. Everyone bounced as they
 walked, even as heads bob on every step when a crowd is perambulating

before a lens. I did not know the history of Red Square, which is to say what ^{old great}
^{events} had produced this little ^{bouquet} harmony of the spirits, but my own were up--I felt
 delivered from the iron clangor of the Bronx and the walls of Moscow. I was
 ready for one irrational instant to celebrate, I hardly knew what. Maybe it
 was only the joy of coming to the end of a trip. I decided to leave the Square

before I became too pleased with all of this, which is to say--too manic.

So I went back to the Metropole, received a thin slice more of good greeting from the doorman, the elevator man, and the *dezurnaya*--my floor lady--returned to the room, sat on my bed, sat on the chair next to the bed, took down my valise, opened the velcro to the false compartments, took out my novel and ~~my journal~~ ^{the other manuscript}, set them on the small desk I had been provided, ~~and debated whether to look at either packet of papers,~~ then took out a notebook, considered an entry for my journal, put down my pencil, and realized abruptly how tired I was. I was weary from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings-about of mood, the rigors of the walk--everyone in Moscow seemed to perambulate at top pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay along with them--and now I was tired with the real desolations of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt so alone or so dislocated.

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated ^{among strangers} at a table with ~~strangers before~~ a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, just no more immaculate than a shirt that's ^{has} been worn for a few hours. The only dish available was Chicken Kiev, a rubber chicken fit for a routine political banquet with a gusher of butter that tasted like lubricating oil mixed with some sour sorrow emanating from the kitchen. The kasha was undercooked, the dark bread was coarse, the fresh vegetable was a thin slice of tomato.

Then a cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy middle-aged woman with ~~troubles~~ ^{obvious personal concerns}. It took all of the little attention she could give to the world outside herself to keep level with her job.

After I left the table, I realized that I had ~~been~~ ^{supped} in the equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an eating hall, so to speak, for guests alone. The real restaurant, ^{designed} for a prouder gang, was entered by two glass doors. Outside, in the lobby, black marketeers and bureaucrats, accompanied by their wives, waited on line. Inside, a dance band as full of ^{pep} ~~vitamins~~ and used-up musical patterns as some of the prom bands that used to work the dances at Yale, was hacking away, a weird peppy band that sounded through the glass doors as if all five or six musicians and their instruments were hyper-ventilating inside a balalaika.

I went back to my room. I needed to sleep. I prayed I would get to sleep. At the door to the elevator, as I got off, my *dezhurnaya*, under her blonde bee-hive, ^{as she handed over my keys} gave me a real smile. I understood. I gave every evidence of going by her desk many times a day, of being a regular customer. The comings and the goings of her keys were her negotiations. True hell is to have no action.

I locked my door, undressed, washed my face, dried my hands. The sink was cracked, the soap was gritty, the towel was sparse and coarse. So was the toilet paper. This was one of the ten best hotels in Moscow. I was

furious suddenly at I knew not what. How did these people presume to be our greatest enemy on earth? They did not even have the wherewithal to be evil.

Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. There was every intimation The High Holes were on their way. I decided to get up again and read my novel.

Will it tell you something of the year I spent in that rented room in the apartment of the Rosenthal's, that I ~~no longer had to look at~~ ^{knew} the first fifteen pages ^{Sometimes I spoke the words aloud to help} I knew them by heart. I could use them as a counter-strike. (Even as we and the Soviets spent years learning how to interfere with each other's radio

broadcasts, so could I begin to recite the novel to myself so soon as I knew the pageant was near. ^{warming up.} It did not always work, but for so long as it did, I lived within my novel. It was equal to me, and if I could pass from that ^{first} early section I knew ^{so well} by heart into the pages I must still ^{work over} read, well, I had turned the corner. The pageant would recede, and the ghosts of all those long-gone

deeds--patriotic, shameful, dedicated, and wholly horrendous--would not ^{appear} come back. The features of the principals would not appear, and I would not

have to listen on this night to Howard Hunt and his wife Dorothy, to Kim Philby and Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, to Bill Harvey who always packed

a gun, and to Lee Harvey Oswald who did not know how to shoot. James Jesus Angleton did not appear with his Golitsin, nor Yuri Nosenko with his ^{host of contradictions,} ~~was~~ I did not have to hear my father recount his conversation with Johnny Rosselli and

off all other things.

Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante. Poor Frank Olson did not jump out of his ninth-story window again, and I did not have to listen to Jimmy Hoffa informing me one more time how Marilyn Monroe had left this world, nor nod to J. Edgar Hoover (whom ^{some of us} I with my colleagues used to call J. Edgar Buddha) while he expatiated with pride ^{scored on} on how he reformed (the Democrats with poor Tom Eagleton. Jacopo Arbenz no longer ^{was there} had to breathe his last for me, nor did I submit to one more indictment from Fidel Castro. ^{Nor did I} Most crucial of these avoidances, I would not have to stare again into the eyes of my wife, Kittredge. She inhabited my novel on every page, but only as she once had been, and now she might be the most fearsome witness of them all. Only when the long roll of the novel inhabited my mind, could I keep The High Holies in place. For myself, therefore, I began to recite my ^{sentences} own words aloud but slowly at first, intoning the first sentence like a mantra. Sometimes I would repeat ^{these words} this first sentence numerous times as if the sounds themselves might be forces in that unseen combat of warring silences that waged each night.

^{they} "What if ghosts are real?" I would say, "What if ghosts are real?"

PROLOGUE

~~I had trouble getting by border control in Moscow. Perhaps it will give some idea of my state, if I tell you that I had forgotten the condition of my passport. It had been ~~foundered~~, and I refer to the primary meaning of the verb, not its latter-day use as a means of rendering dirty money clean. Yes, I~~

I had had a mental lapse and left it in the breast pocket of a gray-flannel suit that went into the washing machine. If you would enquire what sort of man puts a suit into a mangle, well, I was ^{deranged} ~~demented~~ when I did it, and the manuscript that could offer explanations for this frame of mind was packed into one of the secret compartments of my valise.

Now, ^{this} ~~my~~ passport, looking like a small layered pastry, was being held aloft at the glass booth by the Soviet guard. I am a well-schooled man, and one of the first things we learned was to keep our papers in order. Yet, here was I proposing to enter the U.S.S.R. by way of Sheremetyevo International Airport holding water-soaked credentials in the name of one William Madden Libby about whose imaginary past I had hardly prepared a life whose details would bear up under interrogation. (Leave it that I had been too preoccupied with my real life which now seemed all too often imaginary.)

"Passport," said the fellow from his glass cage, "this passport! . . . Why?"

His English was going to be no more use than my Russian.

"River," I tried to say in his tongue, thereby suggesting that one had fallen in the river with one's passport. I did not dare admit I had consigned the thing to the washing machine. "River" I thought I was saying, but later, studying phrases for tourists in my guidebook, I came to recognize that I ^{had} ~~used~~ ^{the} ~~such~~ words ~~as ruka and ruchenno, and ruka~~ -- which are, respectively, ^{for} arm and

(which are respectively ruk and ryebro and rubka)²
rib and fish. Doubtless I was telling him that I stuck my passport up my rib,
and lost an arm to the fish--God knows what he heard. ^{It was} ~~I'd say two or three~~
~~words~~, enough to leave my Sovietsky critically befuddled. Then, like a good
stubborn dog, he would reply, "Passport--no good. Why?" After which he
would draw himself to full height and eyeball me--they were obviously
^{groomed} ~~trained~~ to do that. I was perspiring as profusely as if I were wholly
innocent--which in some degree I was. How could I have failed to foresee
that this puffed-up *tarte* of a passport would look desperate under
examination?

"Not good," he said. "Expired."

I could feel the long line of passengers waiting behind me.

"No. Not expired. Please," I said to him, "*pazhalesta*" and reached out
my hand. He gave the passport over with great suspicion and I turned with
caution the faded puffed-up ^{leaves,} ~~pages~~. Then, I found the ^{proper} ~~expiration~~ page. Of
course not. My passport had not expired. I pointed out the date, and handed it
back to him.

I was feeling that livid anxiety which is somewhere between hysteria
and happiness. For ten hours, as full of frenzy as a cockroach, ~~when the lights~~
~~first go on~~, I had been sitting in the middle of Economy, dreading my arrival in
Moscow, wondering why I had gotten on the plane in the first place, and then,
as if flattened by a whiff of poison spray, I would recline on my back--using
all three inches of rearward slant available to the tourist-width chair--and
drift in that half-stupor where the mind-flow is viscous, and one's limbs
seem too massive to move. All the same, my nerves raced like lights on an
electronic game. Nausea was my neighbor. It kept promising the stomach a
visit, ~~never did~~.

Now, I was at least on my feet and in action of a sort. No matter that

this confrontation fell somewhere in the void between force and bureaucratic horror. I could, in any case, stand up and talk. After ten hours of Economy, I was ready to meet ^{any} executioner.

The Soviet guard could have been a Minnesota farmboy. He had blue eyes, high cheek bones, and close-cropped blond hair. I don't think he was twenty-five. "You,"--he fixed me with his finger, "you--waiting," and walked off to get assistance, came back immediately with a higher officer, a man of twenty-eight, dark hair, a mustache, the same dull-green soldier's tunic with tight collar and braiding.

"Why?" said the new one, pointing to my passport, as if it were a wholly execrable object.

I found the separate words for ice and water. They came into my mind like a pas-de-deux. "*Lyad*," I said, "*bolshoye lyad*. Much ice." I spread my hand as if I were smoothing a tablecloth. Then I gave to the horizontal plane just fashioned in the air, one good karate chop. I made a cracking sound. Hopefully, it ^{might sound} ~~sounded~~ (like an ice-pond breaking up, and I plunged my hand toward my feet. "*Voda. Bolshoye voda*--lots of water, isn't that so?" I waved my hands in desperate strokes. A frozen swimmer.

"*Ochen kaladno*," the first guard said.

"*Ochen kaladno*. Right. Ice cold, very cold."

They nodded. They studied the passport back and forth, they looked at my visa which was clean and had the stamps it needed. They fumbled with my name aloud. "William Madden Libby?" It came out: "Veelyam Modyen Leeboo?"

"Yes," I said, "that's it."

They studied a hit-list of names. Libby was not on it. They stared at one another. They sighed. They were not that dumb. They could feel something was wrong with me, and it didn't have to be the passport. On the

other hand, should they take me off for further questioning, they would have papers to fill out, possibly a lost evening. *They must have had enjoyable plans for the evening since the*
~~The blond kid stamped my papers. He was relaxed now.~~ *now* He gave a big kid's grin. "Pardone," he said, attempting to give it a friendly Italian-French spin.

way through Arrivals
 The rest of the route showed me Sheremetyevo--a concrete airport built as a showcase for the 1980 Olympics: Come to the Communist ~~land~~ *country* where the walls are gray. My bags went through customs without pain. Both the *novel and the memoir*
~~manuscript and the journal,~~ which I had stowed *(away separately)* in each of my two secret compartments, attracted no notice--the suitcase had been designed to take confidential papers through routine inspections. I passed, after a time, through the last gate and encountered *(multi-lingual signs)* signs in English which told me to look for the Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached me, a tough tightly-packed snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum that people in the same profession, such as waiters, tend to be the same all over the world. My ~~cabdriver~~ *man* wanted twenty dollars. ✓
~~American,~~ to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which *the* my travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag as the old National. "I can get you into the new National," the travel agent had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me? Of course, I had popped in on the agent, paid him cash in advance, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through occasionally) and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Madden Libby on a ~~special~~ KGB list which went under

unappetizing *(like)*
 some ~~even~~ category ~~as~~ *Individual Tourist, Special*. Now, not even properly settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his workable black market English that he wished to buy ^{*American*} dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a *buck*, ~~dollar~~, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market.

Indeed the driver was demanding so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel in a state of nerves is like passage through a tunnel. One's senses are pulled in. The noise of the car--and we were in some ^{*kind of mini-flivver*} ~~flower~~ ^{*vacket*} ~~of a~~ sedan no more than a cut above the old Deux-Chevaux put out by Renault--~~was~~ ^{*impinged*} ~~on me~~ more prominent ^{*to my senses*} ~~to me~~ than the landscape. The litany of the driver, "all right, tell me, hey, how many dollars you sell me, come on, what do you say?" continued in my ear.

We passed expanses of clean snow, dirty snow, and melted fields about as sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, ~~dark~~ funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows ^{*but*} ~~and~~ ~~at~~ yawning individually, their paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty-white for the most part in the dirty-white snow. They looked as if the plaster had cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones. What a misery was this land. The March sky was as gray as the concrete walls in Sheremetyevo Airport. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. I still didn't know if the driver might not be some extension of KGB. Was I being played with?

A banner stretched across the super highway. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some bouquet, doubtless, of homiletic language. I

had seen the same banners across the highways of many a mean and outrageously under-equipped Third World Country. Zaire had been one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Cuba, Uganda ~~probably~~. I didn't care. I couldn't come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side-windows of my cab were mud-spattered, and sights to the front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers ^{that} which kept drawing striated salt fans on the glass. The driver was as sullen as muggy weather in August.

Now we were on a large boulevard without much traffic. Heavy old buildings--government departments, and specialist institutes--perambulated by the side windows. There were few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

We came to a stop in a public square. There was an old green six-story building outside the door. The sign read **МЕТРОПОЛИ**, I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cabdriver two dollars for tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me was pinched, for I gave him five. My nerves, I repeat, were not what once they were.

A short stocky wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat--a hero of the Great War. He would not be about to show much to a stranger.

Nor was he in a rush to help me with the bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the travel agency voucher in order to get through the door. There, the lobby was grim. The palette went from faded cigar-butt brown to old railroad coach green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you stepped upon it. I felt as if I had

~~It~~ ^{step in} landed in one of those hotels ^{on} the side streets of Times Square ^{which are} ~~that is~~ waiting to be demolished.

Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather before and after the revolution? If we are to speak of travelling through a psychic tunnel, I felt myself back in the nineteenth century, ~~despite the neon sign to my left which said Dollar Bar.~~ ~~On this Sunday afternoon, it was not yet open.~~ Further into the depths of the lobby was the double glass door to a restaurant, closed. A huge marble stairway spiralled upward in right angle turns around ~~the core of~~ an elevator shaft.

The woman at the registration desk was wearing a sweater and had a nose cold. She wore eyeglasses, was plain, and pretended not to notice me until I seized her attention. Her English had an unhappy accent that was reminiscent of such tortures to the spirit as ballet lessons for unpromising girls. The elevator operator, another war hero, was gruff, and the concierge on the fourth floor was a heavy blonde about fifty with a bee-hive hairdo and a big tough Russian face--she looked like a mate for the doorman. She sat behind a little glass-topped desk facing the elevator, kept a rose in a small vase, and scowled at the task of looking for my key which was large, bronze, and heavy as a ^{pocketful} ~~book~~ of change. The route to my room led down one long dark corridor and then turned a right angle to another. The walls were pea-green and reflected the glare of an old shellacked ~~parquet~~ floor. It was a parquet floor with a considerable number of gaps in which squares of plywood had been inserted. Since this promenade was over a red-runner carpet half a football field in length down the first corridor, then half a football field down the other to my room door, and since the floor still buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation--if I may allude to my ^{frozen water} passport ~~once more~~--

that this red carpet had been laid over frozen water, ^{that} and I was ^{hopping} perambulating from one ice floe to the next.

My room was eleven feet by fourteen and had a ceiling twelve feet high. The window looked on a gray court. That red carpet, strong, strapping, and prepared to endure spilled vodka, coffee, soup, ink, and the occasional miseries of a drunk's stomach, was still under my feet, my companion from the lobby to here. I had a chest of drawers, and a narrow bed with a thin European mattress laid upon a larger mattress. At the head, was a bolster as heavy as a water-soaked log. Plus a TV set!

I turned it on. Lots of electronic snow, ^{pulses} lots of wave-over. Black and white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed and put my head in my hands. I got up. I closed the curtains to the courtyard. I sat down again. I was here, and I could stay here--assuming I had entered without attracting official attention--I could stay here for a week at least, and sort some questions into categories. I had so many questions that I no longer looked for answers. Only for categories. I needed some scheme to put in place before The High Holies commenced once more.

~~There was a pageant taking place in my mind. Each night, for many nights, now, the same people appeared and spoke to me. I would not think of these visitations as delusion or hallucination, but as a pageant.~~ ^{Something close to Unaccountable was} Each person came before me like an actor performing alone in a theater. Each spoke, and well. They were eloquent.

I no longer knew ~~if all of their existence belonged to me, or if the rigors of working on a history of the one night in my life which was beyond measure, had finally caught up to me.~~ ^{writing a novel about} I was proceeding, as you may imagine, in a state of peculiar delicacy. ^{that altogether} A movie director ^{from once now} told me that after one of his movies, ^{films was} he had not stopped living with the camera crew and actors. They were gone, ^{had departed,}

^(swapped) Some were alive, ^{and} ~~but~~ most were dead, but ~~yet~~ I did not name these visitations delusions or hallucinations. I saw them as a pageant.

~~and the film was wrapped~~, but he would awaken from every sleep with fresh commands: "Tom, we have to re-shoot the market sequence today. A hundred extras ought to do it." He would be out of bed and shaving before he could say in effect: "The ^{movie} ~~film~~ is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot any more." But he had, as he explained to me, stepped through the looking-glass. The film was more real than his life.

Was I equal to that director? For a year, hiding out in a rented room in an apartment house in the Bronx, (where no one I knew had ever lived, or ever would) I had worked to raise a wall between The High Holies and myself. Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night, and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning the thread that would guide me out of the caves ~~and the pits.~~

Then without warning, the pageant would strike again. Strike ^{is} the operative word. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of *grand mal*. One misstep and the seizures would come. After a while, the Bronx was no longer tenable for me. As if I had ^{were} been engaged in some clandestine activity, running a network, let us say, in an occupied country, the warning bells ^{were ringing - I} had rung had to move.

Certain people were looking for me. That was certain enough. What ~~difficulty~~ I might be up to, they could hardly conceive. But the longer I did not surface, the more they would have to wonder. Where was he? Why had he gone under? Had he defected? They would have to wonder if I had moved to Moscow. How I laughed--in those paroxysms of silent laughter with which ^{larger would become their frame of reference,} ~~one entertains one's loneliness~~ ^{entertained} how I laughed that all the while I was living in the Bronx, they ^{were} would be thinking of me in Moscow.

Yet out of the logic of separate steps which seemed altogether rigorous to me--although I could not name the reason for any of these steps, I had

Peter - this is a dash. I ignore the cross-stroke)

come to the conclusion, so soon as The High Holies picked up again in my mind that I had to take a trip--for the first time--to the U.S.S.R. I did not know why. I was in trouble enough if they ever ran me down in Bronx County, New York, but to be found in Moscow would put the worst interpretation on my case. And to go there with my ^{manuscripts?} ~~manuscripts~~, unforgivable even to myself. What if the Russians were to uncover ^{my alias,} ~~me, were to look through the papers?~~

Part of the inexorable logic of making the move, however, was that the papers went ^{along} ~~with me~~. Who knows how the boxcars of obsession are moved around in the freight yards of the mad? I did not feel mad, only beleaguered. ~~Yet~~ but there was a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. To pursue ~~with~~ ^{diligence} a major action that is odds-on to disaster has to be a fair description of the wholly unbalanced.

Of Course, I ^{writings} ~~clung to my papers~~ as if they were ^{the} ~~one of these few remaining~~ body organs, that surgery cannot yet replace. I could no more leave them behind than choose not to go to Moscow. And indeed I could hardly keep secret the fact that I was taking them with me. ^{a man with manuscripts.} ~~The old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was already aware of that.~~

"Oh, Mr. Libby," she said. "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Rosenthal."

He was an eighty-year old arthritic ^{she}, a seventy-five year old diabetic--we had entertained no more than passing conversations for a year, but I was content with that. Bless them--I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me. I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good middle-class people. While I expected they would be curious enough about my parts, I did not have the

heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and possible marriages of one William Madden Libby, no matter how much I could use such a trial run for practise. I had done that once before, spent much of a year with a woman to whom I offered a bogus life not at all my own. Since she fell in love with me, I believe it did her damage in the same way that a capsule which is presented as a nutrient when ^{indeed} it is only a placebo, must work a subtle damage on relations between mind and digestion. Somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the bell that tolls ^{has to} suffers a hair-line crack.

Well, there was not much flim-flam with the Rosenthals. We made occasional conversation when we met in the hall, and that was it. They were able to supplement their retirement moneys with my rent, and I could keep my privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except when I grew tired of soup on a hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote prodigiously. I was looking--we can move from the nineteenth to the twentieth century on the verbal conceits of this next remark--I was looking to find the viable parameters of my life.

It went reasonably well for a year. There were days when I felt neither haunted nor invaded. But I was like a boulder perched on the edge of a cliff. Sooner or later, it would all go. It did. The High Holies picked up once more, and Moscow blinked in my mind like a lit-up billboard. I saw the travel agent, made the preparations, tried to study Russian, and said farewell to the Rosenthals. I told them I was going to Seattle. I heard her say in reply, "Well, I guess you'll have a heavy bunch of papers to carry with you for your family to read?"

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like your book," she said.

"Well," I said, "I hope so, too."

"Maybe, you'll even get a publisher."

"Maybe."

"If you should, please mail the book here, and I'll pay for it. I want you to autograph the copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Rosenthal," I said, "I'll be delighted to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever found this lair in the Bronx, they would also ^{learn} ~~hear~~ from her how much I had been typing. *interesting*

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and started to unpack. I took everything out but the ^{hidden} ~~concealed~~ papers. The bag, now apparently empty, weighed ~~a bit~~ ^{a pair of books} too much, although not critically so. I put back my toilet-kit (which would thump about inside if someone shook the valise, locked it, and put it up in the closet. I opened my portable typewriter. But I was not ready to read, let alone to write. It was five now, Sunday afternoon, Moscow time, which was nine o'clock in the morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the evening from Kennedy, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with a transit stop in Heathrow) and had landed at 2 P.M. Moscow time, 6 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were now upside down. If it was nine A.M. in New York, no wonder I felt full of the false vigor that comes on in the morning after a night of false sleep. I had to get out of this room for awhile.

So I took a walk. Let me say that no American tourist can feel at ease taking his first steps in Moscow, not after forty years of media have brought one to the conscious and unconscious conviction that Communism is evil. I had had, however, stints of special scholarship to support such a grand thesis. It is an awesome and terrible thesis, but it is grand, or so it is if grandeur resides in the sovereign notion that the simple, as Harlot used to say,

presides over the complex. The king can divide the land with a wave of his sceptre, and, evil, that devil's shellgame--where does evil hide itself now?--can be contained in the grand thesis that Communism is evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me. I was not unlike a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years. Such a man does not know the world he is entering, does not, for example, know how to walk into a store and buy a pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. Now, I did not know what was allowed me here. I was not certain I could leave the hotel and go out on the street without the proper paper being stamped. I hung about the lobby to observe the comings and goings, but soon felt uneasy. My continued presence might become suspect. So, I took a chance, walked to the entrance, stepped out, and was met with a scowl by the doorman--it would take awhile to realize that he had not placed me yet as a hotel guest, so was scowling.

At any rate, here was I on the street. Cabdrivers, parked at the hotel curb, yelled at me as a prospect, passersby took their glances. I just walked. I made no moves to determine if anyone was following me for I did not wish to show any knowledge of evasive tactics, but then I also did not feel as if I were being followed. I had put on an old jacket and wore a woolen hat that I pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was all right. I felt like giving a great whoop.

Off to one side of the hotel, a street and a square away would be, I knew, from my study of the guidebook, the statue to Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, "Sword of the Revolution," and great-grandfather of the KGB. Back of him would be the Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew that place better than any American prison--I had listened a hundred times in the imaginary auditorium of my ear to the

screams of the tortured in the cellars of the Lubyanka, but I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, and thus debating, went from the Metropole to Dzerzhinsky Square. Before me was the ^{edifice} ~~Lubyanka~~, even as I had imagined it, and yet it was less, this late nineteenth century seven-story ^{marque of an} ~~office building~~, once a palace for insurance companies. It still had white curtains in the windows, and highly polished brass fittings on the door, but its ^{exterior was} ~~walls were~~ a soiled khaki-yellow. On the whole, it was a dismal old-fashioned ~~office~~ building in and out of which on this late Sunday afternoon came and went a few men in officer's uniform. The air was as cold as a New England forest in winter, and all the while I heard no screams, and felt myself marooned in the tunnel of endless travel. This ^{Lubyanka} ~~building~~—conceivably my future home—failed to stir adrenaline.

I wandered away through side streets, gray in the light, near to black in the shadows, old streets of the merchants. Had these enclaves of gloom shifted in a hundred years? It was nearly agreeable to discover depression this palpable, and I had a moment in which I understood the comforts of gloom—was this my first real thought in a week? For even as the acceptance of poverty might be the first protection against corruption of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which one could live encapsulated from insanity. Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom would ^{not be hard} ~~be here~~ to find in Moscow, and thinking this, I came out of one more side street onto Red Square, a shock as nice as stepping from a Roman alley ^{into} ~~onto~~ the great plaza of St. Peter's, except here was no Vatican, but a field of cobblestones near to half a mile long and hundreds of feet wide spreading out to the walls of the Kremlin. A pearly lavender twilight showed its early signs on the horizon of the ~~gray sky~~, but Russians were still waiting to see the tomb of Lenin and his body, preserved below, in ^{its} ~~his~~ vault. Two thousand people, two by two, were in that line, and

perhaps twenty people ^{entered} moved into the tomb each minute, suggesting that the last man would ^{have to} wait one hundred minutes in this cold, a reasonable mortification for a pilgrimage.

Now, however, I was beginning to pay attention to these Russians on the street. They all looked middle-aged. Even the young had ^{that} an air of relinquishment ^{which speaks} that spoke of middle age. All the same, Red Square ^{was} seemed to ^{be} a cheerful place. To my astonishment, it was cheerful on this late Sunday afternoon. There was a shimmer to the air, a conviviality to the faces red with vigor and the cold. Busloads of tourists--native Russians--were leaving, others were yet arriving. Hundreds of others walking through the Square were showing that simple happiness which comes to hardworking people when they are transported to an important place. These could have been Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses, on a ferry to the Statue of Liberty. Same happy faces. One was getting a first return on the ultimate passage to heaven.

How much like a movie ^{when it appeared to be} it was to me. The scene had precision for the ~~eye~~. The center of Red Square rose higher than the corners, and people in the distance, therefore, were usually not visible below the thigh or the knee. Their ^{feet} shoes had disappeared ^{beneath} underneath the cobblestone horizon. ^{So, everyone} Everyone ^{Seemed to} bounced as they walked, even as heads bob on every step when a crowd is ^(toward a telephoto lens) perambulating before a lens. I did not know the history of Red Square, which is to say what old great events had produced this bouquet of the spirits, but my own were up--I felt delivered from the iron clangor of the Bronx and the walls of Moscow. I was ready for one irrational instant to celebrate, I hardly knew what. Maybe it was only the joy of coming to the end of a trip. I decided to leave the Square before I became too pleased with all of this, which is to say--too manic.

So I went back to the Metropole, received a thin slice more of good greeting from the doorman, the elevator man, and the *dezhurnaya*--my floor lady--returned to the room, sat on my bed, sat on the chair next to the bed, took down my valise, opened the velcro to the false compartments, took out my novel and the ^{memoir of my career} ~~other manuscript~~, set them on the small desk I had been provided, took out a notebook, ~~considered an entry for my journal~~, put down my pencil, and realized abruptly how tired I was. I was weary from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings--about of mood, the rigors of the walk--everyone in Moscow seemed to ^{walk} ~~perambulate~~ at top pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay along with them, ~~and now~~ I was tired with the real desolations of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt so alone or so dislocated.

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated among strangers at a table with a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, ^{but} ~~just~~ no more immaculate than a shirt that has been worn for a few hours. The only dish available was Chicken Kiev, a rubber chicken fit for a routine political banquet with a gusher of butter that tasted like lubricating oil mixed with some sour sorrow emanating from the kitchen. The kasha was ^{over} ~~under~~cooked, the dark bread was coarse, the fresh vegetable was a thin slice of tomato.

^{Came one} Then a cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy middle-aged woman with ^{weighty} ~~obvious~~ personal concerns. ^{she sighed a lot} It took all of the little attention she could give to the world outside herself to keep level with her job.

After I left the table, I realized that I had supped in the equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an eating hall, so to speak, for guests alone. The real restaurant, designed for a ^{more prosperous} ~~premier~~ gang, was entered by two glass doors, ^{those} ~~off~~ the lobby. ^{Now} ~~Just~~ Outside, in the lobby, black marketeers and bureaucrats, accompanied by their wives, waited on line. Inside, a dance band as full of pep and used-up musical

patterns as some of the prom bands that used to work the dances at Yale, was hacking away, a weird ~~poppy~~ ^{bouncy} band that sounded ^(whose sound reverberated) through the glass doors as if ~~all five or six~~ ^{the} musicians and their instruments were hyper-ventilating inside a balalaika.

I went back to my room. I needed to sleep. I ^{hoped} prayed I would get to sleep. At the door to the elevator, as I got off, my ~~dezhurnaya~~, under her blonde bee-hive, gave a real smile ^{when} as she handed over my key. I understood. ^{Already} I gave every evidence of going by her desk many times a day, of being a regular customer. The comings and the goings of her keys were her negotiations. True hell is to have no action. *Homage to Sartre. Tip of the hat to Beckett.*

I locked my door, undressed, washed my face, dried my hands. The sink was cracked, the soap was gritty, the towel was sparse and coarse. So was the toilet paper. This was one of the ten best hotels in Moscow. I was furious suddenly at I knew not what. How did these people presume to be our greatest enemy on earth? They did not even have the wherewithal to be evil.

Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. There was every intimation The High Holies were on their way. I decided to get up again and read my novel. Will it tell you something of the year I spent in that rented room in the apartment of the Rosenthal's, that I knew the first fifteen pages by heart. Sometimes I spoke the words aloud to hold off ~~all~~ other things. Even as we and the Soviets spent years learning how to interfere with each other's radio broadcasts, so could I begin to recite the novel to myself so soon as I knew the pageant was ^{near} ~~warming up~~. It did not always work, but ^{when} ~~for so long as~~ it did, I lived within my novel. If I could pass from that first section I knew so well into the pages I must still work over, well, I had turned the corner. The ghosts of long-gone deeds--patriotic, shameful, dedicated, and wholly horrendous--would not appear, and I would not have to listen on this night to

Howard Hunt and his wife Dorothy, to Kim Philby and Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, to Bill Harvey who always packed a gun, and to Lee Harvey Oswald who did not know how to shoot. James Jesus Angleton ^{would} did not appear with his Golitsin, nor Yuri Nosenko with his host of contradictions, I did not have to hear my father recount his conversation with Johnny Rosselli and Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante. Poor Frank Olson did not jump out of his ninth-story window again, and I did not have to listen to Jimmy Hoffa informing me one more time how Marilyn Monroe had left this world, nor nod to J. Edgar Hoover (whom some of us used to call J. Edgar Buddha) while he ^{informed me} expatiated with pride how he scored on the Democrats with poor Tom Eagleton. Jacopo Arbenz no longer was there to breathe his last for me, nor did I submit to one more indictment from Fidel Castro. Nor did I have to stare again into the eyes of my wife, Kittredge. She inhabited my novel on every page, but only as she once had been, ^{I could live with her in my novel} and now she might be the fearsome ~~witness of them all~~. Only when the novel inhabited my mind, ^{first} could I keep The High Holies in place. For myself, therefore, I began to recite my sentences aloud but slowly ^{at first}, intoning the first words like a mantra. Sometimes I would repeat these words numerous times as if the sounds themselves might ^(which went to use) prove to be forces in that unseen combat of warring silences that waged each night.

"What if they are real?" I would say, "What if ghosts are real?"

1

I have a tale to tell. Some ghosts are real. *In Maine, the ghosts are real.*

On a moonless night in March I took the coast road from Bath to Bucksport, ~~in Maine~~ the road that goes by Camden. In every cove was fog, and it covered one's vision like a winding sheet, a fog worthy of the long rock shelf off-shore where sailing ships used to founder. When I could see nothing any more, I would pull the car over, and the grinding of the buoys out at sea would sound as mournful as the loughing of cattle in a wet field. ^{Then the} ~~The~~ silence of the mist came down on me. You could hear the groan of a drowning sailor in